The Book of the Pomegranate

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The Book of the Pomegranate: Moses de Leon’s Sefer H-Rimmon.

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Chapter Two

The Book of the Pomegranate: *Sefer ha-Rimmon*

2.1 Description of the MSS

*Sefer ha-Rimmon* is extant in four manuscripts,\(^1\) only one of which is complete. What follows is a brief description of each of these manuscripts.

(1) Oxford Bodleian MS Opp. 344, Neubauer Catalogue 1607

This manuscript contains only the first part of the text dealing with the positive commandments. The name of the scribe as well as the date and place of the MS are not known. The MS is written, however, in a clear Spanish Rabbinic script. It may be assumed therefore that the MS is from the fourteenth

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\(^{1}\) Cf. Jellinek, *Quntres Taryag* (Vienna, 1878), p. 15, who mentions three extant manuscripts of *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, one complete (owned by R. Joseph Almanazi), one on the positive *mitzvot* (R. David Oppenheimer), and one on the negative *mitzvot* (Eliakim Carmoly which is the MS Cambridge Univ. Add. 1516). And cf. Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 393, n. 116, who mentions no less than six manuscripts of *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. Scholem does not enumerate the list of manuscripts and I am not certain how he came to this number. See, however, Scholem, *Peraqim be-Toledot Sifrut ha-Qabbalah* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1932), p. 132, where he mentions MS Cambridge Dd 4.2.6 as containing *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. See also Herbert Loewe, *Handlist of Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, revised and completed by J. D. Pearson and Raphael Loewe (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1964), p. 277, no. 755, who likewise identifies this text as *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. In point of fact, however, the manuscript under question contains the first part of Joseph Hamadan's *Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot* and not *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. See Altmann, "Li-She'elat ba'aluto shel Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot," *Kiryat Sefer* 40 (1965): 256; Menahem Meier's critical edition of Hamadan's *Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzwot* (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1974), pp. 5-6 (of the Introduction). Cf. Aaron Freimann, *Union Catalog of Hebrew Manuscripts and Their Location* (New York, 1964), 2: 381. nos. 9716-17. Freimann lists the following six manuscripts of *Sefer ha-Rimmon*: Oxford 1607; British Museum 759; Moscow Guenzberg 219; Carmoly 4 (= Cambridge 1516); Milano-Ambrosiana 57: 21; and Cambridge Dd 4.2.6 The last manuscript, as we have seen, does not contain *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. As far as I was able to discern, moreover, the Milano-Ambrosiana manuscript similarly does not contain *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, but rather a collection of anonymous *sodot* on various precepts.
century or perhaps the early fifteenth century. On the title page of the MS there is a brief note written in an Italian cursive script disclosing such information as the author of the text and its recipient, the date of composition, the subject matter of the treatise and its division into seven parts. In that note, moreover, the title of the work is given as *Sefer ha-Rimmon* or *Sefer ha-Mitzwot* ("Book of the Commandments").

The MS contains 111 folios with approximately 25 lines on a page and 8-10 words on a line. The readings preserved in this MS have for the most part proved to be the superior ones. I have, therefore, used it as the basis for the first part of the critical edition. Some material, however, is missing from the MS. The lacunae occur at: ff. 33b-34a; 44b-45a; 68b-58a; 79a; 89b-90a; 99b-100a. In each of these instances I was able to complete the text by using the other MSS. In addition to the missing material in the Oxford MS certain folios have been bound out of order. The correct order should be: f. 57b followed by ff. 69a-78b, then 68a-68b and 58a.

Of particular interest in this MS are several marginal notes, apparently added by a second hand, some of which draw our attention to parallel Zoharic texts. I will note here some of the more prominent ones.

The first occurs at f. 39b concerning the hidden matters of the soul and inner essence of Torah. Unfortunately, much of this note is indecipherable. In the critical apparatus I have tried to reconstruct as much of the note as was possible.

On that same page there is a second note which copies a section from *Zohar*, referred to in the abbreviated form "S.Z." (i.e. *Sefer Zohar*). The reference is to *Zohar* 2:161b-162a, an interpretation of Deut. 4:35. The relevance of this marginal remark is evident from de León's discussion concerning the unity of the divine attributes of mercy and judgment. This accounts as well for the other three Zoharic passages copied unto the margin: the first is from 3:40a, the second from 3:30b, and the third from 2:26b. The latter passage is of special interest for, in my view, the author himself alludes to it when he writes:

> However there are those who explain the matter of the verse, 'Return unto your hearts' (Deut. 4:39). And they point out with regard to the words 'Return to your hearts' that it refers to the secret of the evil and good inclinations which are contained together and are united into one.²

The esoteric meaning of this verse thus relates to the notion of the containment of the evil inclination in the good.³ This meaning is elaborated in precisely the same terminology in *Zohar* 2:26b.

²*SHR* 101:7-9.

There is again another reference to a Zoharic parallel on f. 109b in the context of de León’s discussion concerning the commandment of levirate marriage with respect to the case of a completely righteous person who does not merit to have children but who has already merited a reward in the afterlife. The problem posed by the author concerns the necessity of performing this action in such a case: to what avail will it be if the person who has died has already earned a place within the supernal realm? An astute reader of the MS notes in the margin: "All this is [contained] in the Zohar, the section on Va-yeshev." The reference is to Zohar 1:187b.

2) MS Moscow-Guenzberg 219.

This MS likewise contains only the first part of the text on the positive commandments. The text covers 100 folios from 76a-176a. There are 25 lines on a page with about 11-12 words per line. The script is Spanish-Rabbinic. At the end of the MS there is a scribal colophon in which the name of the scribe is given as: Isaac ben Abraham ben Uziel. This family is known to us as a prominent family of Spanish exiles whose members were found in Safed, Italy, Salonika and Fez. The MS was written in the year 5267 (1507) for Judah ben Joseph. More information about the owner of the MS is to be gathered from a signature after the colophon: "The young man, who anticipates the mercy of my Creator, Judah the son of Joseph bar Ḥayyun may his memory be for a blessing." It is possible that the father of the recipient of the MS referred to here is Yosef ibn Ḥayyun, a Portuguese Jew who went to Turkey before the Portuguese expulsion and who died in Istanbul in 1496. The MS may have been written in Salonika. However, at the very end of the MS, after the signature of the owner, there is a signature of the censor, Dominico Irosolimino (i.e. Irosolimitano), dated 1598. Now it is known that Irosolimitano was acting as a censor in Mantua during the years 1595-98. It is not impossible, however, that the MS was written in Salonika in the early part of the 16th century and made its way into Italy sometime later on.

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4This was already noted by Neubauer in his Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886), p. 562.
7See William Popper, The Censorship of Hebrew Books (New York: Ktav, 1969), p. 61, n. 219. But see ibid., p. 141, where the suggestion is made that in 1598 Irosolimitano was in Ferrara.
3) MS British Museum Add. 26,290; Margoliouth Catalogue 759

This is the single complete MS of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* which has survived. It is 113 folios long. There are 32 lines a page with about 13-14 words per line. The script is described by Margoliouth as an "Oriental Rabbinic writing." The name of the scribe as revealed in the colophon (f. 113a) is Moshe Adjiman, i.e. from the town of Jimena in Spain. The MS was completed in Cairo, Egypt on the seventh day of Ab, 5325 (1565) for Isaac Sarug, apparently the father of the well-known kabbalist, Israel Sarug.

These three MSS may be divided into two families. The Guenzberg and British Museum MSS belong to one family; in most cases they are nearly identical in their alternative versions as well as in their omissions and additions. The Oxford MS would appear to represent another family. Despite the lacunae and occasional scribal errors in the latter, I have selected it to be the basis for the critical edition of Part One because it does, in most cases, preserve a better reading.

4) MS Cambridge University Library Add. 1516; Loewe Handlist 756

This MS contains only the second part of the text on the negative commandments. The exact date and place of the MS is unknown; the script, however, is Spanish cursive. It is probable that the MS was written in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. The text of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* extends to 60 folios. There are 28 lines on a page with approximately 11-13 words on a line. On the top of every new page the title of the text is given as *Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot* or simply as *Ta'amei ha-Mitzwot*. In several places the MS is badly damaged and the reading illegible. At the end of the MS, ff. 61b-62a, there is appended to the text a responsum written by Moses de León to Joseph b. Todros Abulafia, the recipient of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* itself, concerning the nature of the parts of the human soul. Unfortunately, only about two thirds of the responsum is decipherable. In the part that can be read there is mention of the lower gradations or demonic powers which derive from the left side and parallel

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10 Cf. Scholem's article on Israel Sarug in *EJ*, 14: 889. Scholem mentions this manuscript of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* written for Isaac Sarug, the father of the well-known kabbalist, Israel Sarug. Scholem further claims that the signature of Israel is on this manuscript, but I could not find it in the microfilm of the manuscript that I examined.
11 This was noted already by Eliakim Carmoly. See *Catalog der reichhaltigen Sammlung hebräischer und jüdischer Bücher und Handschriften* (Frankfurt am Main, 1875), p. 49, no. 4.
the powers of the right. It is possible that the author himself appended the responsum to the body of the text insomuch as it begins: "The question of the great prince, Joseph, the son of the honorable great Rabbi Todros, concerning the matter of the mystery of these gradations which are the nefesh, ruah and neshamah according to what was said above" (f. 61a). In several sections of Sefer ha-Rimmon itself there is a discussion on the tripartite nature of soul, including one at the very end of the text. It is also possible, however, that the responsum was appended to the text by the scribe and the reference to the previous discussion was added by him.

I have chosen the Cambridge MS as the basis for the second part of the critical edition because it preserves the best readings in the vast majority of cases.

2.2 Relation of Sefer ha-Rimmon to de León's Other Writings

As we have stated above in § 1.2, Sefer ha-Rimmon, written in 1287, comes at the very heart of de León's campaign to disseminate the theosophic doctrines which inform the Zohar. The only other text of the author mentioned in Sefer ha-Rimmon is Shushan 'Edut, referred to on numerous occasions. The extant fragment of the later work was published by Scholem. The vast majority of references in Sefer ha-Rimmon to Shushan 'Edut comprise sections that have not yet been found. In addition, there are stylistic similarities between Sefer ha-Rimmon, especially in the opening section, and 'Or Zaru'a, though the later is not mentioned by name.

A more difficult relation to establish is that between Sefer ha-Rimmon and the untitled fragment in MS Munich 47. There are important parallels between the two works, common modes of expression, at times identical passages, and, perhaps most importantly, repeated paraphrases and/or citations from the Zohar. The difficulty in dating the later work consists of the fact that there is no mention in this treatise (at least the part that is extant) of any other of de León's works, a trait which is quite characteristic of our author. One might conjecture, therefore, that this fragment belongs to a work composed sometime after the completion of the Zohar and before the writing of Shushan 'Edut (1286). This hypothesis, however, is challenged by de León's own assertion in the opening

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13 Cf. ShR 26:8; 28:10; 50:3; 58:4-5; 65:11; 76:11; 78:3; 85:6; 94:20; 98:9-10; 103:16; 104:5; 107:15; 112:4-5; 113:16; 116:19; 133:6; 168:4; 172:10; 174:17; 175:16; 179:15; 181:7; 186:12-13; 190:11-12; 193:5; 195:12; 220:15-16; 224:19-20; 226:15; 229:20; 231:20-232:1; 233:20; 236:5; 239:8; 245:14; 289:1; 305:4-5; 310:7; 315:13-4; 320:1-12; 332:17-18; 338:1; 358:13; 364:19; 382:17. See also the variant reading to 170:9 given in the critical apparatus ad loc.
14 Qovez 'al Yad, n.s. 8 (1975): 325-70.
paragraph of Sheqel ha-Qodesh (1292) that "the first of the treatises which I composed is a work called Shushan 'Edut." When considering this evidence in light of his claim that 'Or Zarua' was written around 1274, and thus a decade before Shushan 'Edut, Altmann suggested that perhaps one should understand by the word "first" not the first of all de León's writings, but the first of the theosophic works that succeeded the Zohar. Unfortunately, such a possibility cannot be assumed here. From its style and content this fragment does seem to have been composed sometime between 1286 and 1287, perhaps after Shushan 'Edut and before Sefer ha-Rimmon. Yet even this hypothesis is problematic inasmuch as the only other work mentioned in Sefer ha-Rimmon, as was said above, is Shushan 'Edut. The dating of the Munich fragment remains uncertain, and this despite the many parallels between it and Sefer ha-Rimmon, as well the other theosophic writings of de León, particularly Shushan 'Edut.

The Sefer ha-Rimmon is itself periodically referred to by the author in some of his subsequent works, to wit, Sefer ha-Mishqal, Sheqel ha-Qodesh, Mishkan ha-'Edut and the Sha'ar Yesod ha-Merkavah. Moreover, the influence of Sefer ha-Rimmon, even when not mentioned by name, is evident in these works as well as the rest of de León's theosophic corpus. Thus, for example, in the small treatise on the mystical intention of the daily liturgy, Maskiyyot Kesef, large paragraphs are simply copied from the section in the first part of Sefer ha-Rimmon that deals extensively with the prayers. This fact is in keeping with a general tendency that one finds in de León's works to make use of his own words from a previously composed treatise. In the vast majority of instances where this occurs, especially in the later works, he does not mention the source-text by name.

2.3 The Title

Although the main title of the work is Sefer ha-Rimmon, "Book of the Pomegranate," the treatise is also referred to by the author himself in a later

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16 Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 1.
17 Altmann, Qovez 'al Yad n.s. 9 (1980): 244.
19 Sheqel ha-Qodesh, pp. 31, 42, 52, 73, 83, 84, 86.
20 See MS Berlin Quat. Or. 833, ff. 42b, 53a.
21 See MS Vatican 283, f. 169b.
22 See MS JTS Adler 1577, ff. 103a-116a. The text was edited by J. Wijnhoven (Master's thesis, Brandeis University, 1961).
work\textsuperscript{24} by the more general title \textit{Sefer Ta'amei Mitzwot}, i.e. "Book on the Rationale for the Commandments." The latter is known to us as well from some of the extant manuscripts.\textsuperscript{25}

De León informs the reader of the significance of the title he has chosen. He thus begins \textit{Sefer ha-Rimmon} with the words: "See the pomegranate in the garden of delight."\textsuperscript{26} After describing this Garden of Eden and especially the "image of the precious stone" and the "tree of life" contained therein, the author concludes: "Thus it is called pomegranate, and it is filled with the secrets of God and the commandments of One who dwells in habitations."\textsuperscript{27} In this context the reference is somewhat ambiguous: does the "it" refer to the book which is being written or to the fruit situated in the garden of delight? In truth, the ambiguity is intentional or, better, no ambiguity at all. The text woven by the author symbolically reflects that pomegranate which itself is nothing but a symbol of the \textit{Shekhinah}: as the fruit described at the beginning of the book is filled with the mysteries and commandments of God so too is the book that will be written. Thus somewhat later on in the proem de León states that he has called his book \textit{Sefer ha-Rimmon} "because it is filled with \textit{mitzwot} like a pomegranate."\textsuperscript{28} The allusion here, as is noted by de León, is to the rabbinic interpretation of Song of Songs 4:3, "Your brow behind your veil gleams like a pomegranate split open." "What is [the meaning of] 'your brow' (\textit{raqatekh})? Even the empty (\textit{reqanin}) amongst you are filled with \textit{mitzwot} as a pomegranate."\textsuperscript{29}

That the symbolic referent of the pomegranate is the \textit{Shekhinah} is evident, moreover, from a comment de León makes in the introduction to the second part

\textsuperscript{24}See \textit{Sefer ha-Mishqal}, p. 136; \textit{Sheqel ha-Qodesh}, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{26}\textit{ShR} 1:2.
\textsuperscript{27}\textit{ShR} 1:11.
\textsuperscript{28}\textit{ShR} 12:14.
of the text. The last divine emanation, we are told, is like the moon "which has
no light of her own but only what she receives from the light of the sun"...even though the moon does not illumine at all she is entirely filled with
mitzvot as a pomegranate, as it says, 'And full of the Lord's blessing' (Deut.
33:23), a cup filled with the Lord's blessing, and she is the 'pomegranate split
open'.” Although the mitzvot are divisible into positive and negative
categories corresponding respectively to the masculine and feminine potencies,
Yesod and Malkhut, they are all contained within the latter. Shekhinah is the
locus of all the mitzvot, positive and negative, for She receives the flow from

30This is a standard kabbalistic characterization of Shekhinah based on the
medieval astronomical description of the moon. Cf. Zohar 1:181a, 249b; ShR
188:3; 257:6-7; Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 85; Shushan 'Edut, pp. 338, n. 60, 381.
In the same context in Sefer ha-Rimmon de León applies the description of the
first heaven, wilon, in BT, Hagigah 12b, to Shekhinah. This is a recurrent theme
in Sefer ha-Rimmon as well as in the rest of de León’s theosophic corpus. See e.g.
Zohar 1:207b, 233b, 3:239b; Shushan 'Edut, p. 338; Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 15;
ShR 6:7-8; 112:13-14; 257:7; 321:16.
31Implicit here is the identification of the mitzvot with the divine potencies
which unfold in various stages of emanation, the sefirot. This notion, though
undoubtedly traceable to Provençal kabbalistic sources, is first fully developed
from a literary-historical perspective in the circle of the Geronese mystics. Cf. R.
Ezra of Gerona, Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim, in Kitvei Ramban, ed. by H.
Chavel (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1967), 2:538; R. Azriel, Perush ha-
'Aggadot, ed. I. Tishby (Jerusalem: Meqize Nirdamim, 1945), pp. 33, n. 15, 38,
n. 13. It should be emphasized that in the case of R. Ezra, the mitzvot are
identified specifically with the seven lower sefirot which are called the "edifice of
the mitzvot." See Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2:431-432. See below, nn. 35 and

32Cf. Zohar 1:233b; and Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 3, 5.
33ShR 257:6-10.
34See below, § 2.8.
35Cf. ShR 234:1-2; 256:16-17; 257:10-11; 371:21-372:1; 381:4-6; 388:3-4. This
idea finds its first literary expression in the Sefer ha-Bahir § 190 (noted by Matt,
"The Mystic and the Miqzovot," p. 377). As Tishby noted, Mishnat ha-Zohar,
2:432, n. 27, the anonymous author of the Ra'a'ya Meheimna and Tiqqunei Zohar
remarks several times that Shekinah is the divine gradation which contains all
the mitzvot. Cf. Zohar 1:24a; 3:123b, 278b; TZ 21, 60a: "Shekinah is called
positive mitzvot from the right side [i.e. the masculine] and negative mitzvot
from the left side [i.e. the feminine];" ibid., 18, 32a; 20, 60a; ZH, Tiqqunim,
119c: "And Shekinah is [called] mitzvah for all the mitzvot are contained in
Her." The inclusion of all the commandments in the last potency may be related
to another idea expressed in the Tiqqunim, viz. the identification of Shekinah
with halakhah, the law, or what is called elsewhere torah de-beri'ah, the 'Torah in
the state of creation, i.e. the Torah as interpreted through the prism of talmudic
tradition. See Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism (New York:
According to one text, in Her impoverished state, i.e. before She receives from the
masculine Tiferet, Shekinah is called halakhah (i.e. on the way) whereas in Her
satiated state She is called qabbalah (i.e. having received). See TZ 21, 58a, and cf.
all the upper emanations. "Indeed positive and negative [mitzvot] are all [contained] in the Bride comprised [from all] (ha-kalah ha-kelulah)36 which is from Eden, the garden of God. . . . And this is the mystery of 'Look at it [the fringe garment] and recall all the commandments of the Lord' (Num. 15:39)." Inasmuch as all the mitzvot are contained in the mitzvah of fringes, it is appropriate for the last sefirot, which comprises all the sefirot, to be symbolically represented by the fringes for "all the supernal mitzvot37 are bound to this mitzvah."38

In sum, then, the title of Sefer ha-Rimmon alludes to the mystical concept, first expressed in the Sefer ha-Bahir,39 concerning the containment or inclusion of all the precepts in the Shekhinah. While the exoteric significance of the title is based on the talmudic-midrashic explanation that all of Israel, even the ignorant, are filled with mitzvot as a pomegranate is filled with seeds, the esoteric meaning is based on the identification of this pomegranate with the divine Presence which similarly is said to be filled with mitzvot. The title of the work in its mystical sense is thus a symbol for Shekhinah40 in Her capacity


37That is, the sefirot. See above, n. 31; and cf. Menahem Recanati, Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot (Basle, 1581), 3a.

38ShR 234:1-2. Cf. Shushan 'Edut, pp. 364-65; Sod 'Eser Sefirot Belimah, ed. G. Scholem, Qovez 'al Yad, n.s. 8 (1976): 383; Isaac of Acre, Sefer Me'irat 'Einayim, pp. 194-95; Joseph Hamadan, Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot, ed. M. Meier, p. 70. Cf. ShR 58:3 and note ad loc. The equivalence of the mitzvah of fringes to all the other mitzvot is an idea expressed already by the rabbis. See BT, Nedarim 25b; Numbers Rabbah 18:21; Tanhuma, Qorah, 12. For an interesting parallel to the theme of the containment of all 613 mitzvot in the mitzvah of fringes in Samaritan literature, see Ayala Loewenstamm, "Li-She'elat tar'ag mitzvot 'etzel ha-shomronim," Tarbiz 41 (1972): 310-12.


40It would seem that the composition of the work itself betokens some sort of participation in the divine Presence or at the very least a special relation between the author and the Shekhinah. Indeed, it may be shown that several of de León's titles refer kabbalistically to Shekhinah. That this is the case with Shushan 'Edut is stated explicitly by the author himself; see Scholem's edition, p. 332. That Sheqel ha-Qodesh likewise is a name for Shekhinah may be adduced from a passage in Zohar 1:33b and a parallel in ShR 14:14. In the case of Mishkan ha-'Edut, while there is no explicit evidence to support this hypothesis, it is nevertheless clear from other contexts that the tabernacle is a standard symbol for the Shekhinah. It stands to reason therefore that this title too is a reference to the last emanation. That the same conclusion may be stated with respect to Nefesh ha-
as the repository of all the mitzvot. The message of the author is clear: one who lives a life of pious devotion by fulfilling the commandments partakes of the Pomegranate.

2.4 Literary Structure and Form

The Sefer ha-Rimmon is a voluminous treatise marked by verbosity and repetition. Time and again, de León draws the reader's attention to a previous discussion with the words: "as we have already noted," "according to that which we have already said." It is thus not difficult to lose sight of the inherent structure of the text and the ground covered by its author. In this section I will discuss three topics related to the issue of literary structure and form: literary genre, division of the text, and classification of the mitzvot.

A. Literary Genre

The Sefer ha-Rimmon technically belongs to the literary genre known as ta'améi ha-mitzvot, the exposition of the reasons for the commandments. In terms of kabbalistic sources, the central concern and impetus which generated this literature was the reinterpretation of traditional normative Judaism in light of mystical doctrine, specifically the theosophical system whose literary expression flourished in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. It should be emphasized, however, that a good portion of the first part of Sefer ha-Rimmon

Hakhamah may be deduced from the fact that this very expression is used as a name for Shekhinah in Mishkan ha-'Edut, f. 35b. On de León's special relation with the Shekhinah, see the remarks of Yehuda Liebes, "Ha-Mashiah shel ha-Zohar," in The Messianic Idea in Jewish Thought: A Study Conference in Honour of the Eightieth Birthday of Gershom Scholem (Jerusalem: The Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982), pp. 204-5. Cf. also Scholem, Major Trends, pp. 229-35; idem, "Ha-Shekhinah," in Pirqe Yesod be-Havanat ha-Qabbalah, pp. 259-307; Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 1: 219-64; Arthur Green, "Bride, Spouse, Daughter," in S. Heschel, On Being a Jewish Feminist (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), pp. 248-60. Finally, it should be stated that in the Zohar the mystic exegete, one engaged in Torah study, is portrayed specifically as one who achieves union with the Shekhinah. See Liebes, "Ha-Mashiah shel ha-Zohar," pp. 98-99, 130-32, 198-203; and E. Wolfson, "Circumcision, Vision of God, and Textual Interpretation: From Midrashic Trope to Mystical Symbol," History of Religions 26 (November, 1987).

41In addition to ta'améi ha-mitzvot there were at least three other main literary genres dominating kabbalistic circles by the end of the thirteenth century: biblical exegesis, commentaries on the liturgy, and commentaries on the sefirot. Cf. the remark of Meir ben Solomon ibn Sahula (early fourteenth century) in his commentary on Sefer Yetzirah: "And [they] call qabbalah the wisdom of the ten sefirot and some of the reasons for the [biblical] commandments" (cited in Scholem, Reshit ha-Qabbalah, p. 17). See idem, Origins of the Kabbalah, p. 38. In some kabbalistic circles supercommentaries on Nahmanides' biblical commentary were also prevalent. See Gottlieb, Meḥqarim be-Sifrot ha-Qabbalah, pp. 259-61.
incorporates commentaries on the daily and Sabbath liturgy as well as that of the High Holy Days. In a sense, therefore, de León has combined two separate literary genres, rationalization of the commandments and commentary on the prayers, known to us from a host of thirteenth-century kabbalistic writings. Although these two genres are closely related, they are nevertheless distinct. If, for instance, one were to compare Sefer ha-Rimmon to Joseph Hamadan's treatise on ta'amei ha-mitzwot or that of Menahem Recanati, the combination of literary genres that one finds in the former would be brought into sharp relief.

In addition to the above-mentioned genres, one finds yet a third kabbalistic literary genre embedded in Sefer ha-Rimmon, viz. perush ma'aseh bereshit, commentary on the act of creation. De León inserts a rather lengthy exposition on this matter in his treatment of the commandment to sanctify the new moon. The commentary consists of a comparative analysis of the first chapter

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42 See ShR 51:1-20 (evening prayer); 60:8-87:8 (morning prayer); 87:9-22 (afternoon prayer).
43 See ShR 120:1-15 (evening prayer); 121:8-125:17 (morning prayer); 128:13-129:7 (additional prayer); 129:8-18 (afternoon prayer).
44 See ShR 145:17-156:2 (Rosh Hashanah morning prayer); 156:3-162:16 (Rosh Hashanah additional prayer); 168:10-170:11 (Yom Kippur morning prayer); 170:12-171:23 (concluding prayer, Ne'ilah). See also 190:17-191:8 for a commentary on the blessing of the new moon.
45 Joseph Hamadan's Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzwot consists of two parts: the first part covering 94 positive commandments and the second part 114 negative commandments. Only the first part has been edited; see above n. 1, Ch. 2. Cf. A. Altmann, "Li-She'elat ba'aluto shel Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzwot," Kiryat Sefer 40 (1965): 256-76, 405-411.
46 Recanati composed a commentary on the liturgy which was printed in the Basle 1581 edition of his Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzwot. The two works are, however, independent treatises.
47 A similar phenomenon occurs in David ben Yehudah ha-Ḥasid's Or Zaru'ā, a kabbalistic commentary on the liturgy. Interspersed throughout this commentary one finds individual sodot on various commandments which technically belong to the literary genre of ta'amei ha-miswot. See MS JTS Mic. 2203 ff. 1a-99a. Cf. e.g. ff. 52b-53a, where one finds a mystical explanation of the two loaves of bread and the three meals of Sabbath interposed between a commentary on the prayers for Saturday night (ff. 52a-b) and those of the havdalah service (ff. 54a-b). Concerning this treatise, see Scholem, "Peraqim mi-toledot sifrut ha-qabbalah," Kiryat Sefer 4 (1927-28): 321-22; Daniel Matt, The Book of Mirrors: Sefer Mar'ot ha-Zove'ot (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 4.
48 See ShR 191:14-206:13. It is particularly fitting to place the commentary on ma'aseh bereshit in this context for the moon, symbolic of the Shekhinah, is the creative force which sustains all existence. The lower world, or the "world of the separate existents" as it is called by de León (cf. ShR 46:3-4, 106:9-10; this kabbalistic usage of the philosophic term originates in the school of R. Isaac the Blind; see Scholem, "Hitpathut torat ha-olamot," Tarbiz 2 [1931]: 63-64), emanates out of Shekhinah in a manner that parallels the emanation of the upper "world of unity" (cf. ShR 129:20 and note ad loc.) out of Binah. "And this is the
It is based on R. Ezra of Gerona's "Secrets of Creation," *Sodot Ma'aseh Bereshit*, which forms part of his *Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim.* De León himself alludes to his source by the name "commentators." In some places he rejects the Geronese explanation in favor of a Zoharic notion, but on the whole he accepts the former. Indeed, at times he simply copies R. Ezra's language verbatim.

**B. Division of the Text**

The basic division of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* reflects the traditional rabbinic categorization of biblical law into injunctions and prohibitions, positive and negative commandments. Yet, each part is itself divided into seven sections or, as the author refers to them, "gates." It is possible, although it is nowhere

mystery of the world-of-the-feminine (i.e. Shekhinah; cf. *ShR* 9:9 and note ad loc.) which generates an image and pattern from the world-of-the-masculine (Binah; cf. *ShR* 23:6 and note ad loc.) and the two worlds generate the mystery of worlds according to their kind, an image of their face. And thus the two parallel worlds are united, 'they are interlocked so they cannot be parted' (*Job* 41:9) (*ShR* 192:3-5). The act of creation thus occurs on two levels simultaneously: the world of sefirot emerging out of Binah, the hidden world of masculinity, and the lower realms of existence out of Shekhinah, the revealed world of femininity. The one process is a mirror image of the other. "And this is the mystery of the [letter] bet [numerically equivalent to two] in [the word] bereshit: 'from world to world' (1 Chron. 16:36).... And thus the one builds a world as does the other, and they stand parallel to one another in love as the image of a male and female" (*ShR* 192:7-11). Cf. *Zohar* 1:29a-b, 240b (cited and explicated by Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 222). Cf. *ShR* 61:2-16; 105:21-106:10. The connection between Shekhinah and the act of creation, particularly with reference to Sabbath, is also made by de León; see *ShR* 119:3-5; 333:16-334:4. On the various accounts of creation in early thirteenth-century kabbalah, see Gottlieb, *Mehqarim be-Sifrut ha-Qabbalah*, pp. 59-87.


51 See *ShR* 191:15; cf. 183:18, 195:16, 201:11. And see below, § 2. 5.

52 See *ShR* 201:12-202:7; and 203:8-10. For a fuller discussion of these passages, see below, § 2.5.


54 See *ShR* 14:10-14.

55 See *ShR* 14:16-17; 263:6-9. Cf. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum*, p. 64, who notes that the first part of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* (MS British Museum 759) is divided into six chapters and the

in Genesis and Psalm 104. It is based on R. Ezra of Gerona's "Secrets of Creation," *Sodot Ma'aseh Bereshit*, which forms part of his *Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim.* De León himself alludes to his source by the name "commentators." In some places he rejects the Geronese explanation in favor of a Zoharic notion, but on the whole he accepts the former. Indeed, at times he simply copies R. Ezra's language verbatim.
stated explicitly, that this division reflects the kabbalistic notion of the seven extremities which constitute the seven lower sefirot from *Hesed* to *Malkhut*. This possibility is suggested by two texts. The first occurs at the beginning of the seventh gate of Part One:

The gate of this part is the seventh because in all gradations the seventh is the greatest as you find in the mystery of the heavens, the seventh is in the highest level of them all. And this is the mystery of their saying *(the seventh heaven is)* "Aravot in which there is righteousness, charity, justice, treasures of good life, blessing, peace etc.*

Now, inasmuch as in the writings of de León, as well as in other thirteenth-century kabbalistic authors, the seven heavens symbolically correspond to the seven lower sefirot, it would be safe to assume that the seven gates of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* similarly correspond to the seven sefirot.

The second allusion is found in the beginning of Part Two. The author states:

I have divided this book [i.e. the second part on negative precepts] into seven parts to establish its divisions, its entrances and its exits, so that we may know "what is recorded in the book of truth" (Dan. 10:21). "Open the gates, and let a righteous nation enter, a nation that keeps faith" ( Isa. 26:2). "This is the gateway to the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it" (Ps. 118:20).

The juxtaposition of these two verses to de León's mentioning of the seven parts of his own book is significant. It seems to me that he is suggesting a correspondence between the parts of his book to these gates, i.e. the sefirot. In the remainder of this section I will present a systematic breakdown of each of the book's divisions.

In both parts of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* the author provides us with a list of the commandments which are to be discussed. The list of positive commandments occurs on pp. 14:18-17:18. It includes thirty-two commandments, but some of those that are listed actually comprise more than one commandment. Thus,
number 10 comprises two commandments, to sanctify and to rest on the Sabbath; number 11 three, to sanctify and to rest on the festivals and the particular mandate to bring joy to the poor on the festivals; number 12 two, to rest on the first day of the seventh month, Rosh Hashanah, and the laws concerning the blowing of the shofar; number 14 two, to sit in a sukkah and to take the four species; and number 22 two, to honor and to fear one’s parents. The total of all the commandments mentioned in the list is therefore thirty-eight. With respect to the negative commandments it should be noted that there are two such lists: an abbreviated one in the first part of the text (ShR 18:7-19:13) and the more elaborate one in the second part (ShR 257:13-261:23). The former contains twenty-two mitzvot whereas the latter is extended to include seventy-two. If we compare the two lists, we notice that all of the former are included in the latter. However, number 21 on the first list is divided into two on the second list (20 and 21), while number 13 on the former corresponds to number 58 on the latter. In the case of the second list, moreover, number 26 is identical with numbers 39 and 40. The second list, therefore, in actuality comprises seventy-one prohibitions.

The following table represents an analysis of each section and the respective commandments discussed therein. The numbers in the right column correspond to the lists of commandments which the author gives at the beginning of each section, whereas the left column gives the corresponding pages of each section in the critical edition.

I. Part 1: Positive Commandments (מבואות טよい)

1. Gate One (19:21-38:4) 1, 2
2. Gate Two (38:5-88:5) 3
4. Gate Four (102:1-187:21) 7, 8, 32, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
5. Gate Five (187:22-219:10) 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 22, 21
7. Gate Seven (235:9-255:9) 29, 26, 27

II. Part 2: Negative Commandments (צמות לא חסן)

1. Gate One (262:11-277:21) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 31
2. Gate Two (277:22-283:16) 41, 39, 40, 42, 37, 43

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61 Of course, it may be argued that the first commandment in no. 12, to rest on the first day of the seventh month, is already included in the second commandment listed in no. 11, to rest on the festivals, and thus should not be counted separately.
62 According to the reading of MS British Museum, the seventy-two mitzvot correspond to the seventy-two letters of the divine name. See ShR 261:24; 148:14-149:6 and notes ad loc.
A perusal of the above table indicates several interesting features. First, the presentation of the material in the first part of Sefer ha-Rimmon follows the initial list in a more systematic way, though not absolutely, than in the second part. Second, while all the positive commandments that are listed are discussed, the same may not be said with respect to the negative commandments. The following commandments which appear on the second list are not discussed at all: 14, 20, 21, 25, 27, 30, 50, 64, 65, 66. Moreover, in both parts of Sefer ha-Rimmon de León discusses commandments which are not included in the initial lists. Indeed, in part two the sixth section contains no commandments which are initially listed (see below). This is to be expected as the author himself has told us, after enumerating the positive commandments, that "there are other mitzvot attached to these, for just as you find in the case of the moving spheres that there are other spheres attached to them and which move by their motion⁶³ so you shall find that there are mitzvot attached to those which we have mentioned."⁶⁴

In still another place he writes that the mitzvot are "bound one to another" forming one "perfect unity."⁶⁵ Inasmuch as the commandments form one organic body, it will follow that they are connected to one another as limbs⁶⁶ and one would quite naturally suggest another just as one limb is attached to another.

Thus, for example, we find that in the first part he discusses the following commandments which are not specified on the list: (1) to fear one's teacher (33:2-13); (2) to wash one's hands in the morning (56:11-57:16); (3) six commandments⁶⁷ connected with Passover: (a) to remove the leaven (131:21-133:16), (b) to tell the Exodus story (133:17-135:6), (c) to eat unleavened bread

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⁶³Cf. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Yesodei ha-Torah, 3:2; Guide of the Perplexed, 1:72, 2:4.
⁶⁵ShR 235:16-17.
⁶⁶Cf. ShR 132:1-3; 341:3-5. See below § 2. 8.
⁶⁷It may be argued that (d) and (e), the commandments to rest on the first and seventh day of Passover, are contained in no. 11 on the list of positive commandments (ShR 16:2-3) which itself comprises three mitzvot, to wit, to sanctify the festivals, to rest on them, and to give food to the poor so that they rejoice. Yet, cf. no. 12 (ibid. 4-5) which specifies the mitzvah to rest on the first of the seventh month.
(135:7-18), (d) to rest on the first day of Passover (136:13-20), (e) to rest on the seventh day (136:7-14), (f) to count the 'omer, i.e. the forty-nine days between the second day of Passover and Pentecost (136:15-139:2); (4) to verbally confess one's sins on Yom Kippur (169:18-170:10); (5) the sanctification of the new moon (188:1-191:8); (6) to have honest measures and scales in business (218:20-219:10); (7) to fulfill vows and oaths (220:13-224:8); (8) to give one's life for the sanctification of the Name (225:14-226:14); (9) the priestly blessing (254:4-255:9). In addition, there are at least two prohibitions mentioned in the first part: not to have sexual relations with a non-Jew which is subsumed under the prohibition of having other gods and is discussed in the context of the commandment to love the convert (212:16-213:1), and the interdict against masturbation which is referred to in the context of the law of levirate marriage (242:14-18). The former reflects a particular Zoharic usage and may be the intent of commandment number 25 on the list of negative precepts. In the initial list de León includes in number 11 the obligation to gladden the poor on the festivals. From the extended discussion of this commandment, however, it is clear that the author considers this to be part of the larger obligation to be joyous on the festivals (see 140:1-11).

In the case of the second part the following commandments are discussed but do not appear on the initial list: (1) not to walk in the ways of the nations or to dress like them (293:10-19); (2) not to slaughter an animal and its child on the same day for a sacrifice (310:6-9); (3) not to eat flesh torn by beasts (311:9-313:10); (4) not to drink wine touched by a heathen (319:8-320:13); (5) not to embarrass one's neighbor (331:18-332:18); (6) not to desecrate the Sabbath (332:19-335:14); (7) not to desecrate the Festivals (335:15-336:18); (8) not to take the mother-bird together with her young (338:16-339:19); (9) not to have relations with a woman in her menstrual period (344:16-345:10); (10) not to lead astray anyone in Israel (346:1-6); (11) a man should not take as a wife the woman he divorced after she has been married to another man (355:21-356:8); (12) a woman should not take as a husband any man who has been castrated (356:9-20); (13) not to burn a fire on the Sabbath (357:11-358:3); (14) not to go out beyond the bounds set for the Sabbath (359:4-360:8); (15) not to curse a

68Cf. Zohar 1:131b; 2:3b, 87b; 3:84a, 142a (Idra Rabba); ZH 21a (MhN), 78c (MhN).
69De León distinguishes between various types of tereffah amongst which is to be counted "flesh torn from a living body" (see 311:19ff.) which appears on the list (no. 51). It might be argued, therefore, that this mitzvah is included in the list insofar as it is contained in one of the specified mitzvot.
70According to de León, the sages found support for this law in Lev. 19:16. Cf. BT, Baba Metzi'a 58b. The verse itself, however, is treated as a separate mitzvah (no. 16 on the list). Cf. ShR 336:19-337:8.
71It might be suggested that this mitzvah is included in no. 24. Yet, it may counterargued, de León does discuss it independently of the other forms of illicit sexual behavior which he groups together. See ShR 346:7-355:20.
judge (360:9-18); (16) not to curse one's mother and father (360:19-361:8); (17) not to avoid helping another with his load (361:9-15). In addition to the above commandments, in the case of illicit sexual behavior (number 24 on the list) de León specifies certain examples: relations with one's father or mother (347:17-18); relations with one's sister (349:14-350:11); relations with the wife of one's father (350:12-351:4). All these, however, are to be tallied as one commandment and not individually. In the initial list number 44 refers only to the prohibition of a man wearing a woman's garments; however, in his extended discussion (292:4-293:9) de León includes the prohibition of a woman wearing a man's garments as well. Yet, these too should be treated as one commandment. The same may be said with respect to commandment number 54. In the initial list de León records this as a prohibition to eat milk and meat together. In his discussion (313:11-12) he refers to it as the prohibition of cooking milk and meat together. He then goes on to note the rabbinic tradition which interpreted the recurrence of the key verse three times (Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21) to refer to three prohibitions, viz. eating, cooking, and deriving benefit. In Sefer ha-Rimmon, however, de León does not elaborate on each particular prohibition and the reason for all three is identical. It seems, therefore, appropriate to count all three as one mitzvah.

From the above calculations the net result is that in the first part of Sefer ha-Rimmon de León discusses all thirty-eight mitzvot on the list plus an additional fourteen, making a total of fifty-two. In the second part he discusses sixty-one of the initial list plus seventeen others. If we then add to these the two prohibitions he mentions in Part One, the total of negative mitzvot discussed is eighty.

C. Classification of the Mitzwot

The classification of the commandments in Maimonides influenced such kabbalists as R. Ezra of Gerona,74 Joseph Hamadan,75 and Menahem

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72 Cf. ShR 313:12-16.
73 Cf. Mekhita de-R. Ishmael, Mishpatim, 20, (ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p.336); BT, Qiddushin 57b; Hullin 115b. See, however, Maimonides, Sefer ha-Mitzwot, negative 187. According to Maimonides, the prohibition of deriving pleasure or benefit is to be included in that of eating. Hence, two separate commandments (nos. 186-87) are codified: not to cook milk and meat, and not to eat milk and meat. Cf. Sefer ha-Hinukh, no. 113 (ed. H. Chavel [Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1952], p. 173).
75 See Altmann, "Li-She'elat ba'aluto," p. 258. As Altmann argued, the first fifty-five positive precepts and the first fifty negative precepts in Hamadan's work
Recanati. In the case of Sefer ha-Rimmon the influence of Maimonides is also quite clear. If one were to examine the list of positive and negative mitzvot in Sefer ha-Rimmon with their corresponding number in Maimonides' lists as they appear both in the introduction to the Mishneh Torah and in his Sefer ha-Mitzwot, the following conclusions could be drawn: In all, there is only one mitzvah included on de León’s list that is not found in Maimonides (number 25 on the list of prohibitions). In the positive list, numbers 8 and 32 are classified by Maimonides as one (number 11). On the other hand, some of the mitzvot which de León lists under one heading correspond to separate classifications in Maimonides (e.g. numbers 10 [154-55], 11 [159, 160, 162, 165-67, 54], 12 [163, 170], 14 [168-69], 22 [210-11], 29 [12-13]). Of the additional fourteen mitzvot which de León discusses in Part One of Sefer ha-Rimmon (see above) twelve are contained in Maimonides' list in the following order: 209, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 73, 153, 208, 94, 9, 26. The one mitzvah which de León discusses which does not figure into Maimonides' enumeration is the injunction to wash one's hands in the morning. Particular note should be made of de León's inclusion of the obligation to gladden the poor on festivals (number 11). Maimonides too classified this as part of the larger obligation for every Jew to be joyous on the festivals (number 54).

With respect to the negative precepts, we again find that in some cases one mitzvah listed by de León comprises several listed by Maimonides (e.g. numbers 24 [330-52 in Maimonides], 26 [32-33], 29 [278, 280], 37 [8-9], 66 [252-53]), whereas in one case (numbers 35-36 = number 60 in Maimonides) the opposite is true. Moreover, number 44 in Sefer ha-Rimmon actually entails numbers 39 and 40 in the classification of Maimonides, while number 54 entails numbers 186-87. Of the additional mitzvot which de León mentions which do not form part of the initial list (see above), all appear in Maimonides in the following order: 30, 101, 181, 194, 303, 320, 323-29, 306, 346, 299, 356, 360, 322, 321, 315, 318, 270. In certain cases the formulation used by de León reflects verbatim the language which Maimonides uses in the introduction to the Mishneh Torah rather than in Sefer ha-Mitzwot (see, e.g., positive precept number 28; prohibition numbers 10 and 11). There is, moreover, ample evidence from other passages in Sefer ha-Rimmon that de León was intimately familiar with the Mishneh Torah. I am inclined therefore to believe that in compiling his lists of commandments de León made use of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah and not his Sefer ha-Mitzwot.
Notwithstanding these many similarities, there are a few significant discrepancies that should be noted. Conspicuous is the lack of Maimonides' sixth commandment, to cleave to God.\textsuperscript{79} It is true that in many passages de León writes about devequt, cleaving to God, as if it were the overriding purpose of all the commandments.\textsuperscript{80} Moreover, in one context in the second part the author specifically writes: "And thus every thought must cleave to Him and should not stray far from Him to another place other than Him, as it is [established] in the positive mitzvot, as it is written, 'And cleave to Him' (Deut. 10:20)."\textsuperscript{81} Still, in the whole of the first part of Sefer ha-Rimmon the author nowhere mentions cleaving to God as an independent mitzvah. Another important difference can be noted with respect to the commandment to know God. While for Maimonides the biblical basis for this precept is Ex. 20:2, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt," de León's prooftext is Deut. 4:39, "And know this day, and consider it in your hearts, that the Lord is God in the heavens and on earth." The choice of the latter, as we may gather from other contexts in Sefer ha-Rimmon,\textsuperscript{82} reflects the kabbalistic understanding of divine unity as the unification or integration of masculine and feminine, represented in the latter verse by the divine names, \textit{YHWH} and \textit{Elohim}.

With respect to number 4 on de León's list we have a peculiar phenomenon. This \textit{mitzvah} seemingly corresponds to number 9 on the list of Maimonides. If we look closely, however, it becomes evident that the commandment which Maimonides codifies as number 9 is not reflected in number 4 of de León's list

\textsuperscript{79}In one place de León mystically transforms the Maimonidean conception of \textit{imitatio dei}, i.e. to act in accord with God's \textit{middot}. See \textit{ShR} 313:5: "God commanded Israel to act in accord with His \textit{middot} that are known in the mystery of His name." For de León, the \textit{middot} equal God's name which in turn comprises the ten \textit{sefirot}. See e.g. \textit{Shushan 'Edut}, pp. 354-55; \textit{ShR} 22:16; 34:13; 376:5.


\textsuperscript{81}\textit{ShR} 266:16-18.

\textsuperscript{82}Cf. \textit{ShR} 101:5-7; 157:11-12. In 101:7-9 de León notes that "there are some who interpret the secret of the verse" to refer to the containment of the evil inclination in the good. His reference, as noted already by a reader of the Oxford MS (see above, § 2.1), is to \textit{Zohar} 2:26. According to the Zoharic text, the unity of masculine and feminine in the divine, \textit{YHWH} and \textit{Elohim}, can be gathered best by turning inward and focusing on the unity of the two inclinations. That is, just as the evil inclination is contained in the good, so the attribute of judgment, \textit{Elohim} or the feminine potency, is to be contained in the attribute of mercy, \textit{YHWH} or the masculine potency. I have discussed this text in detail in "Light Through Darkness: The Ideal of Human Perfection in the Zohar," \textit{Harvard Theological Review} (October, 1987). It should be pointed out, however, that Bahya ibn Paquda in his \textit{Hovot ha-Levavot, Sha'ar ha-Yihud}, chap. 3, already derived the injunction to know God from Deut. 4:39. And cf. R. Ezra, \textit{Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim, Kitvei Ramban}, 2:521 who cites both prooftexts, Deut. 4:39 and Ex. 20:2.
but rather in a subsequent discussion on the sanctification of God's name which occurs at ShR 225:14-226:14. In that context the prooftext cited is Isa. 29:23. Instead, the fourth commandment, as may be gathered from the beginning of Part Three, the "gate of holiness" (ShR 88:7-11), actually comprises two parts: the daily sanctification of God through the utterance of the Trisagion, on one hand, and the sanctification or purification of body and soul in such matters as speech, eating, and sexuality, on the other. Whereas the former is linked exegetically to Lev. 22:32,83 the latter is linked to Lev. 19:2.84 De León's discussion is based, or is parallel to, a discussion in the Piqqudin85 concerning "the command to sanctify [God] each day to elevate His holiness from below to above... And this is the secret of 'I will be sanctified amidst the children of Israel' (Lev. 22:32) above and below."86 The means to fulfill this commandment, as the continuation of the text indicates, is the uttering of the Trisagion, for this corresponds to three levels of holiness within the divine realm. It is clear from an examination of the relevant discussion in Sefer ha-Rimmon87 that the latter reflects this passage from the Piqqudin. Hence, the discrepancy between de León and Maimonides with respect to the precept of sanctifying the name can be explained by the parallel in the Zohar.

An obvious difficulty arises with respect to the question of the order of the mitzwot in Sefer ha-Rimmon. Although, as I have suggested, there seems to be good evidence that Maimonides served as de León's literary model, the latter did not strictly adhere to the former's order of classification. Still, it may be shown that in several cases the order of de León's classification does reflect that of Maimonides. If one looks closely at the lists of commandments in Sefer ha-Rimmon, one can detect a discernible pattern: de León seems to have borrowed consistently from different sections of Maimonides' lists and rearranged them according to his needs. The overall process of selection has been determined by his own demand that only those commandments that "are always necessary"88

83Cf. ShR 91:11-19.
84ShR 87:10-11; 92:2-3. It will be noted that in the "fourth principle" at the beginning of Sefer ha-Mitzwot (ed. H. Chavel [Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1981], p. 64) Maimonides criticized those who would count Lev. 19:2 as a separate commandment. In his view, this verse is inclusive of all the commandments of the Torah and therefore should not be tallied as an independent precept. Cf. Guide of the Perplexed, 3:33 (Pines ed., p. 533).
85On this stratum of Zoharic literature, see references in n. 17, Chap. 1. See also Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2:212, n. 13.
86Zohar 3:93b. According to the order of the commandments covered in the Piqqudin this precept is no. 9. Cf. Gottlieb, Mehqarim be-Sifrut ha-Qabbalah, pp. 228-29. Interestingly, the ninth commandment on Maimonides' list is to sanctify His name, albeit with a different connotation. See n. 84.
87ShR 90:1-91:10 and notes ad loc.
88ShR 17:19; 19:14. See D. Matt, "The Mystic and the Mizwot," p. 389. It is of interest to note that at the end of the first part of Sefer ha-Mitzwot Maimonides enumerates sixty commandments "that are necessary in every time and in every
will be discussed. Particularly in the list of prohibitions de León shows consistent use of Maimonides.

In at least two cases the shift in ordering can be explained in terms of a Zoharic paradigm. If we compare the first five commandments enumerated by both writers a glaring discrepancy becomes apparent. In the case of Maimonides these consist of: to know (or believe) that God exists, to unify God, to love God, to fear God, and to pray to God. In the case of Sefer ha-Rimmon the first five are: to fear God, to pray, to love God, to sanctify the Name, and to unify God. The obligation to have knowledge of God has thus been dropped to the sixth place. Let us focus on de León's substitution of the fear of God for the knowledge of God at the top of the list of positive commandments.

This alternative classification clearly reflects the theosophic doctrine of the Zohar according to which fear symbolically corresponds to Shekhinah, the first of the divine emanations from below to above. In a subsequent passage, based entirely on Zoharic parallels, de León writes:

It should be noted that the fear of God is the first commandment according to Saadia's enumeration. See Sefer ha-Mitzwot le-RaSaG (Jerusalem, 1963), 1: 63. Cf. ShR 147:3-4; 371:21-372:1; Zohar 1:7b-8a, 11b; ZH 45d; Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2: 294-95. As Tishby notes, loc. cit., according to the passage in the ZH, Shekhinah is called "fear" in virtue of Her correspondence to the first sefirah, Keter, which is called the "supernal fear." The symbolic connection of fear with Keter appears in some of the Geronese kabbalists, notably Azriel and Jacob ben Sheshet, though at times the former fear symbolizes Hokhmah. For other Geronese kabbalists, such as Ezra and Nahmanides, fear is connected especially with the fifth sefirah, Gevurah or Din. Cf. Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2: 287-288. The different views are all reflected in the anonymous Ma'arekhet ha'-Elohu (Mantua, 1558; Jerusalem reprint: Maqor, 1963), ch. 4, wherein the name fear is associated with four of the sefirot: Keter, Hokhmah, Gevurah, and Malkhut. It should be noted, moreover, that Gikatilla differentiated between an "inner fear" (yir'ah peninit) and an "outer fear" (yir'ah hitzonit), the former corresponding to Hokhmah which is above the attribute of love, the sefirah of Hesed, and the latter to Malkhut. Cf. Sha'arei Tsdeq (Cracow, 1881), 33b; Sha'arei 'Orah, ed. Ben-Shlomo, 2: 101-02; Kelalei ha-mitzwot u-ma'alahon, MS Paris 713, f. 171. See Vajda, L'Amour de Dieu dans la Théologie juive du Moyen Age (Paris, 1957), pp. 205-6; Gottlieb, Mehqarim be-Sifrut ha-Qabbalah, pp. 126-27. Gottlieb suggests (p. 126) that in his discussion about fear in Sefer ha-Rimmon de León was influenced by Gikatilla. This suggestion, in my opinion, cannot be upheld. In fact, in Sefer ha-Rimmon, as in the Zohar, de León distinguishes between four types of fear (cf. ShR 30:2-32:6; Zohar 11b). Moreover, he does not use
The secret of this matter is called the fear of the Lord for that is the secret of the verse, "And fear your God" (Lev. 19:14), for it is the secret of the lower court. And there is the gradation of fear for it is the first gradation and the opening from below to above, as it says, "Open the gates of righteousness for me that I may enter them and praise the Lord. This is the gateway to the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it" (Ps. 118:19-20). And since this [gradation] is the attribute of judgment they said\(^9\) that She receives from the upper Gevurah for Her cause is [on the] left.\(^9\)

The fear of God is thus mystically transformed into a symbol of the divine Presence and, accordingly, the commandment to fear God is placed at the head of the list of positive precepts. This mystical explanation is alluded to briefly by de León already in the enumeration of the first mitzvah: "To fear the honorable and awesome Name, blessed be He, as it says, 'Fear the Lord your God' (Deut. 6:13), and it is written, 'And fear your God, I am the Lord' (Lev. 19:14). And this [fear of God] is the beginning of everything as it says, 'The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord' (Ps. 111:10)."\(^9\) The expression "beginning of everything" has a double connotation: the fear of God is the first commandment but it is also the beginning of man’s coming into contact with God, i.e. the last sefirah which is the first from the human perspective. The author's intent is elaborated upon later in a lengthy discourse.\(^9\)

After discussing various standard symbolic characterizations of Shekhinah, de León focuses his attention on the theosophic implications of the characterization of fear:

And thus [Shekhinah] is the beginning [for one] to enter inward into the Palace, for She is the opening through which to enter. Inasmuch as She is the fear of the Lord, the secret of the attribute of judgment, the beginning of everything and the initiation to everything is to begin to cleave to the secret of fear in order to enter inward.\(^9\)

An exact parallel to this is to be found in the list of fourteen precepts which is incorporated at the end of the introduction to the Zohar.\(^9\) At the head of this

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Gikatilla’s precise terminology or anything even approximating it. Finally, for de León, there is no aspect of fear which corresponds to Hokhmah. In Sefer ha-Rimmon, as in the Zohar, the higher aspect of fear is that which is connected to love, i.e. Hesed, the fourth emanation.

\(^9\) Cf. Zohar 1:90b, 237a, 175b; ShR 63:11; 142:3-7; Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 70.

\(^9\) ShR 24:9-12.

\(^9\) ShR 14:19-20.


\(^9\) ShR 25:2-5.

\(^9\) Cf. Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2:212, n. 13, who assumed that the discussion of these fourteen commandments at the end of the introduction to the Zohar (1:11b-14b) formed the beginning of the Piqqudin section. See, however, Gottlieb, Mehqarim be-Sifrut ha-Qabbalah, p. 215, n. 1, who has argued that this discussion does not belong to the Piqqudin but to another Zoharic stratum. The passage from the Zohar is discussed by Vajda in L’Amour de Dieu, pp. 206-7.
list likewise is the commandment to fear God: "In the beginning (reshit) Elohim created' (Gen. 1:1): this is the first commandment of all and this commandment is called the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning (reshit), as it is written, 'The beginning of wisdom (reshit hokhmah) is the fear of the Lord".97 Yet, by contrast, according to a passage which belongs to the Piqqudin section, the first commandment is to know God:

"And I will take you as a nation and I will be your God, and you will know that I am the Lord your God" (Ex. 6:7). This commandment is the first of all commandments. The beginning, first of all commandments, to know the Blessed Holy One in a general way...[that is] to know that there is a supernal Ruler who is Master of the world, who created all the worlds, heaven and earth and all their hosts.98

The above passage thus reflects the Maimonidean model. There is, prima facie, a conflict between the stated position in Zohar 1:11a and its parallel in Sefer ha-Rimmon, on one hand, and the view affirmed in the Piqqudin, on the other. The apparent tension is already addressed in the Zohar itself. After distinguishing between two modes of knowledge, a general knowledge (kelal) connected to Ex. 6: 7 and a more specific or particular knowledge (perat) connected to Deut. 4:39, de León comments:

And if you ask, is it not written "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7)? The answer is that [one must] know in a particular way who is the fear of the Lord. For even though a person must fear God before he has knowledge, it is written here, "the beginning of knowledge," i.e. to know Him, for this [fear which symbolically corresponds to the Shekhinah] is the beginning of knowing Him in the particular way. Therefore the first commandment is to know Him, in general and in specific, in the beginning and at the end.99

There is no contradiction, therefore, between setting fear as the first commandment in one place and knowledge in another, for fear itself constitutes part of that knowledge. In the case of Sefer ha-Rimmon, however, de León chose to list fear in the first place and knowledge sixth.

The Zoharic theosophy is reflected as well in the second and third positive commandments in Sefer ha-Rimmon: to worship God and to love God. In the case of the Zoharic list, the second commandment is to love God, but, as it is explained there, this love itself comprises two aspects: fear and love. Such a love is called the "great love" ("ahavah rabbah) or the "perfect love" (rehinu shelemuta)100 for it combines both the left and right, judgment and mercy. In

98Zohar 2:25a.
99Zohar 2:25a.
100An exact parallel to this usage is found in ShR 43:6-7, 44:18. Cf. Zohar 3:68a.
the list in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* de León places the worship of God, i.e. prayer, between fear and love. Yet, as he tells us, "worship divides into two aspects, the side of fear and the side of love."\(^{101}\) Hence, prayer itself comprises the two attributes contained in the "perfect love." Indeed, prayer is identical with this love for through prayer the left and right hands are united, the attribute of judgment mitigated by the attribute of grace.\(^{102}\)

### 2.5 Rabbinic and Kabbalistic Sources

The *Sefer ha-Rimmon* is a composite work drawing together a host of classical and medieval sources, perhaps most significantly passages from the *Zohar*. In the author's mind all stages of rabbinic literary tradition are blurred together. He thus cites talmudic, midrashic, and kabbalistic sources (including the *Zohar*) in the name of the rabbis. The intricate weaving together of the various strands of rabbinic tradition, coupled with the author's penchant for paraphrase rather than accurate citation, make the task of a critical reader a difficult one. It would appear, moreover, that the author, following the norm of his day, cited biblical and rabbinic sources by rote.\(^{103}\) At times, therefore, it is difficult to ascertain with certainty which literary document serves as his source. It is indeed more likely that several sources were combined in his mind, producing thereby an inaccurate rendering of the base text.\(^{104}\) In the body of the critical edition I have fully annotated the text, giving all the sources I could identify which the author may have used. In this section I will only briefly summarize my findings and note some of the more interesting examples.

#### A. Rabbinic and Medieval Sources

Unquestionably, de León's major resource was the Babylonian Talmud. It is also abundantly clear that he made use of such standard midrashic compilations

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\(^{101}\) ShR 15:3.


\(^{104}\) See, e.g., ShR 20:9-10 (cf. 375:8-11); 273:10-12; 352:5-9; 393:11-13. Cf., however, Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 198, who writes: "The manner in which Moses de Leon makes use of the Zohar contrasts sharply with the attitude he displays where his source is a genuine midrash. With the latter, he does not vary quotations or combine them into a new context." It seems to me, on the contrary, that in some cases de León's use of midrashic sources exemplifies the same liberty as his use of the Zohar. It is not at all clear to me that Scholem is correct in assuming that de León distinguished in his own mind between use of a standard *midrash* and use of the *Zohar*. 
as *Genesis Rabbah*, *Leviticus Rabbah*, *Pesiqta de-Ray Kahana*, *Pesiqta Rabbati*, *Tanhuma*, and *Pirqei de-R. 'Eliezer*. In one case he refers to the Jerusalem Talmud by name. He also made use of the various Aramaic translations of the Bible to which he refers explicitly on a few occasions. In several places he makes use of *Midrash 'Otiyot de-R. 'Akiva*. From several passages it is evident that the author was well acquainted with *Sefer Yetzirah*. Finally, mention should be made of a text which de León cites in the name of the "rabbis" which appears in *Heikhalot Rabbati* as well as *Midrash Konen*.  

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105 Cf. *ShR* 107:14 (cf. 326:13-14); 125:19; 171:18; 181:9-10; 183:4-5 (cf. 196:1-2); 197:10-11; 202:13-14; 271:2-3; 288:5; 291:6-8; 316:2; 317:21; 318:1; 319:2; 350:18; 352:15-16. In one place, 368:19, de León refers to *Bereshit Rabbah* by name. However, in that case I was not able to locate a source for the view which he cites. Cf. BT, *Sanhedrin* 38b. It is possible that the reference to *Bereshit Rabbah* was suggested to the author by the allusion directly preceding the citation (368:18) to the aggadic idea that Adam "cut the shoots." Such an idea is indeed found in *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:3, p. 172.

106 Cf. *ShR* 74:13-14; 174:19ff.; 201:12; 221:13-14; 271:2; 297:6-7; 306:13ff.; 345:5; 352:2 (but see note ad loc.).

107 Cf. *ShR* 25:13-14; 402:22. Cf. also 132:1; 144:4; 175:21; 228:5. With respect to the first source, see Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 199-200. On p. 396, n. 143, Scholem makes the claim that in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* de León "quotes all the motifs and associations of thought which occur in the passage (Deut. 33:1) in Zohar 1, 236b in the name of the *Pesikta*. In particular, the surprising connection with Num. 30:14 in both passages is most interesting." It seems to me, however, that the passage from *Pesiqta* (ed. Mandelbaum, [New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962], p. 443) which de León had in mind here escaped Scholem's view. In the case of the Zoharic text, which Scholem notes, there is a combination of two sources from *Pesiqta*, the one just mentioned and *pisqa* 1 (ed. Mandelbaum, p. 9). The latter, however, is not mentioned in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*.


114 Cf. *ShR* 5:3; 10:10; 264:21-22; 376:5-6. It is of interest to note that in MS Munich 47, f. 363a, de León refers to a passage from *Sefer Yetzirah* as that of the *ba'alei sod ha-heshbon*.  


The influence of medieval sources is also readily noticeable in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. No less than twenty-two times\(^ {118} \) in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* de León refers to the "commentators." In some of these cases the reference is clearly to medieval exegetes.\(^ {119} \) Thus, for example, in one instance de León cites the explanation of the "commentators" to Deut. 14:1 by which he means Rashi and Abraham ibn Ezra.\(^ {120} \) The influence of Rashi is discernible in at least three other places.\(^ {121} \) In yet another passage a remark of de León reflects ibn Ezra's commentary to Lev. 17:7, however, it is probable that his direct source was Nahmanides who cites ibn Ezra in his commentary to the verse in question.\(^ {122} \) In at least one case it appears that de León adopts a view expressed in the *ba'alei tosafot*.\(^ {123} \) But beyond question the medieval non-kabbalistic source that exerted the most influence upon de León is Maimonides. In a previous section I have suggested that de León's enumeration of the commandments is essentially derived from Maimonides' list at the beginning of the *Mishneh Torah*. The influence of the later work as well as the *Guide of the Perplexed* in both philosophical and halakhic formulations is evident in several places in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, particularly in the discussion on the laws concerning idolatry\(^ {124} \) in the beginning of the second part.\(^ {125} \)

\(^ {118} \) Cf. *ShR* 49:6; 61:2; 64:11; 68:5; 70:1; 74:13; 83:7; 90:1; 130:5-7; 132:8; 143:8-9; 176:16; 183:18; 189:4; 191:15; 194:9; 195:16; 201:11; 249:1; 298:12; 321:20; 394:7. One time, 101:7, he refers to those "who explain." The reference there is to the *Zohar*; see above, § 2.1.

\(^ {119} \) The use of medieval biblical commentators in the *Zohar* has been studied by Wilhelm Bacher, "L'exégèse biblique dans le Zohar," *REJ* 22 (1891): 33-46, 219-29. The particular influence of Rashi has also been noted by Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 173.


\(^ {121} \) Cf. *ShR* 245:3-4 (cf. Rashi's commentary to Gen. 38:8); 296:14-15 (cf. Rashi's commentary to Isa. 29:23; *Zohar* 1:75a); 384:16-19 (cf. Rashi's commentary to Lev. 19:16). In the latter case de León refers to his source as "the rabbis, blessed be their memory." Cf. also 68:5; 212:13. It is of interest to note that in *Mishkan ha-'Edut*, f. 59a, de León attributes an opinion of Nahmanides to the "sages, blessed be their memory." See A. Farber, "Li-Meqorot," p. 82, n. 32.

\(^ {122} \) Cf. *ShR* 278:14-15 and note ad loc. That de León's direct source was probably Nahmanides is strengthened by the fact that the subsequent discussion is based on the latter. See *ibid.* 18-19 and note ad loc.


\(^ {124} \) The particular influence of Maimonides on the author of the *Zohar* with respect to the view of "paganism as a form of astral worship closely linked with magic and idolatry" has been noted by Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 173. For references see *ibid.*, pp. 390-91, n. 77. There is some irony in this insofar as de León himself sharply criticizes the philosophic view and in one place in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* even
It is of special interest to note one of these instances. The reason for the prohibition of eating flesh torn from a living body, according to de León,\(^{126}\) is that the Torah wanted to prevent unnecessary cruelty in the world. Out of its concern for the welfare of all creatures and the special obligation upon Israel to act with mercy,\(^{127}\) the Torah prohibited such a course of behavior. De León notes that the same reason may be adduced for the prohibition to slaughter an animal and its child on the same day (cf. Lev. 22:28): "for when a person slaughters one [animal] the other [animal] is anguished when he sees it for, as they said, animals have this type of understanding and [can feel] anguish."\(^{128}\)

The source for de León is undoubtedly Maimonides' discussion of these mitzvot in the *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:48. What is particularly interesting in this case is the fact that the view of Maimonides is mentioned—indeed in language which approximates *Sefer ha-Rimmon*—and then rejected in *Zohar* 3:92a. Hence, we have here a rather unique example of de León's accepting a rationale in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* which is repudiated in the *Zohar*.

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\(^{126}\) Cf. *ShR* 310:1-5.

\(^{127}\) Cf. *ShR* 144:8; 151:21-22; 303:20-304:3; 310:3-4; 312:19-20.

\(^{128}\) *ShR* 310:7-9.
In another context de León repudiates Maimonides' interpretation of Gen. 32:25 offered in the Guide of the Perplexed 2:42. In the view of Maimonides, angelic revelations recorded in the Bible, such as Gen. 32:25, must be understood allegorically as referring to states of prophetic (i.e. intellectual) apprehension and not literally to an actual (i.e. physical) seeing or hearing of an angel. "It should by no means occur to your thought that an angel can be seen or that the speech of an angel can be heard except in a vision of prophecy or in a dream of prophecy."129 Obviously alluding, albeit in the most respectful terms, to this interpretation, de León writes:

And you must know and contemplate what [the rabbis] of blessed memory said concerning the verse, "And a man wrestled with him" (Gen. 32:25), and they said: "That [man] refers to the guardian angel of Esau." However, there are correct views (!) which say that the seeing of an angel is not an actual seeing as the rest of the other things which are visible to the eye, but rather their (!) view is that in those places which speak of the seeing of an angel a vision of prophecy is meant. But this is not the truth of the matter.130

De León goes on to note that Nahmanides had already criticized this view. He then concludes: "In truth, the seeing of an angel is in all events nothing other than an actual seeing."131 The aggadic interpretation is upheld in face of the philosophic-allegorical one. Two points are noteworthy: de León does not mention Maimonides' name explicitly. Indeed, he refers to the latter in the most ambiguous and neutral terms possible: "there are correct views which say etc." On the other hand, this is the only time in all of Sefer ha-Rimmon, indeed in all of de León's literary corpus, if I am not mistaken, that he mentions Nahmanides by name. It is clear that out of respect for Maimonides de León was very cautious in presenting and criticizing the former's view. Yet, given the central importance of the issue at hand, the understanding of angelic revelations recorded in the Bible, he felt that Maimonides' position had to be attacked. It was to his benefit, therefore, to rely in such a case on a recognized authoritative figure like Nahmanides.

B. Kabbalistic Sources

It is highly uncharacteristic of de León to mention his sources by name. In Sefer ha-Rimmon there are only two such occurrences: once he mentions R. Jonah of Gerondi132 and once, as we have seen, Nahmanides.133 Yet, despite his reluctance to note his sources, it is clear that he drew upon a wide range of

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130 ShR 316:1-6.
131 Ibid. 7-8.
132 Cf. ShR 215:8. I was not able to locate a source for R. Jonah's commentary on Prov. 27:5 to which de León refers.
kabbalistic materials. In this section I will discuss these sources with the exception of the Zohar which will be discussed independently in the following section. Before noting these, however, it is important to stress that de León had other contemporary mystical texts, as for example those of the German pietists, particularly Eleazar of Worms. The influence of the latter can be discerned in several places in Sefer ha-Rimmon.\(^{134}\)

Although he never mentions it by name, it is clear from several contexts that de León made use of the Sefer ha-Bahir.\(^{135}\) Indeed, in one passage he refers to a text from the Bahir with the words, "as the ancients (qadmonim) taught,"\(^ {136}\) the very expression he uses elsewhere to introduce passages from the Zohar.\(^{137}\) There are also a few indications that he had before him texts deriving from the Provençal school of R. Isaac the Blind and his nephew, R. Asher ben David.\(^ {138}\) In at least two places a possible influence of R. Judah bar Yaqar's Commentary on the Prayers and Blessings may be detected.\(^ {139}\) It can be safely assumed, moreover, that he had some of the pseudepigraphic treatises which derived from the so-called Hug ha-‘Iyyun, the "Circle of Contemplation," a thirteenth-century


\(^{136}\) ShR 194:12-14.

\(^{137}\) See ShR 224:12-13 (cf. Zohar 3:187a and 122b [Piqqudin]). The Zoharic parallels, as the passage in Sefer ha-Rimmon itself, is based on part on BT, Shabbat 118b. Cf. Mishkan ha-‘Edut, f. 23b, where the hakhamei ‘elyon ha-qadmonim are quoted as saying that "the one who spills seed in vain gives power to the other side," an idea similarly expressed in Zohar 1:57a and 3:90a, 158a. And see ibid., f. 64a, where the same expression is used to introduce another standard Zoharic notion on the nature of Gan Eden. Concerning this latter passage as well as the use of the expression ha-hakhamim ha-qadmonim in de León's 'Or Zaru'a, see Farber, "Li-Meqorot," p. 77, n. 22. To be sure, the expression ha-hakhamim ha-qadmonim in de León's Hebrew writings can also refer to the sages of the Talmud. See, e.g., Mishkan ha-‘Edut, ff. 34b, 51b; and cf. ShR 43:8. At times de León also uses the term qadmonim to refer to Provençal and Geronese kabbalists such as R. Asher ben David and R. Azriel. See Scholem, Qovez 'al Yad n.s. 8 (1976): 329, 371, 375, n. 26; Farber, "Li-Meqorot," p. 82, n. 32. Finally, it should be noted that in the Zohar itself the expression ‘מעי is used to refer either to ancient rabbinic writings or to contemporary mystical sources. See, e.g., Zohar 2:95b, 101a, 228b.


\(^{139}\) Cf. ShR 148:5-6; 10.
school of mystics who were considerably influenced by Neoplatonic writings and who show a close affinity to the works of R. Azriel of Gerona.140

The use of the Geronese kabbalists is also readily apparent to the acute reader. Thus, for example, de León uses the term "commentators" to refer on separate occasions to R. Ezra,141 Nahmanides,142 and Jacob ben Sheshet.143 As we have seen in a preceding section, in his account of creation de León includes a lengthy segment from Ezra of Gerona's Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim.144 De León does not simply copy from Ezra's text,145 but rather intersperses his own views which vary from Ezra's and often reflect the Zoharic viewpoint. Indeed, I have found at least three examples of this in ShR, two in the aforementioned section and one elsewhere. (a) In ShR 201:12-202:6, after presenting R. Ezra's explanation of Gen. 1:11 and Ps. 104:14 (200:21-201:11), de León offers a more esoteric interpretation which is based on a midrash extant in several versions.146 De León's alternative explanation, which involves the doctrine of demonic forces devoured by the Shekhinah, has a parallel in Zohar 3:217a. The Zoharic view is presented as revealing a deeper truth than the

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140 Cf. ShR 5:3-4; Sheqel ha-Qodesh, pp. 10-11. Cf. G. Margoliouth, "The Doctrine of Ether in the Kabbalah," JQR o.s. 20 (1908): 83ff.; Scholem, "'Iqvotav shel Gabirol ba-gabbalah," pp. 168, 173. On the possibility that this circle originated in Castile, and not Provence as Scholem had suggested, see Mark Verman, "Sifrei ha-Iyyun" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1984). It is worth noting here that in MS Munich 47, ff. 386b-387a, incorporated in the midst of de León's text is a fragment from the Midrash R. Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq, one of the pseudepigraphic treatises that belongs to this circle. It is not entirely clear, however, if this is an original part of the text or a scribal addition. If the former, then it would present a most unusual instance of de León citing a source by name. On this text, see Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, pp. 321-22, n. 249, 343-47; Verman, op. cit., pp. 76-81. Cf. ShR 91:15 to Midrash R. Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq, printed in Verman, p. 79. The influence of the 'Iyyun circle on the Zohar has been duly noted by Scholem; see Origins of the Kabbalah, pp. 335, 339, 343.


142 ShR 248:14-249:12.

143 ShR 70:1-2. See however n. 2 ad loc., where I pointed out that Jacob ben Sheshet himself (cf. Meshiv Devarim Nekhošim, ed. G. Vaja [Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1968], p. 172) refers to 'the commentators' by whom he means Rashi and the Tosafot. See BT, Shabbat 119b s.v. "with all your force." It is not impossible that de León likewise has them in mind. For another possible influence of Jacob ben Sheshet in ShR, see 146:1.


146 See e.g. Leviticus Rabbah 22:10, Tanḥuma, Pinhas, 12, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, 6 (ed. B. Mandelbaum, p. 112).
Geronese view. (b) In the case of ShR 208:11-13, while de León is clearly influenced by R. Ezra he changes a slight detail in the latter’s text which he paraphrases so that it will accord with an opinion expressed in the Zohar. According to R. Ezra, the angels that had a transient existence were created on the fifth day, whereas according to de León these angels of judgment were created on the second day (corresponding to the attribute of judgment). (c) In ShR 130:7-10 de León first interprets the havdalah service on Saturday night as symbolizing the separation of the unholy forces (the weekdays) and the holy sefirot (Sabbath), a view which has a parallel in Zohar 2:204a. De León then offers the view of “the commentators” according to which the six weekdays are not demonic forces but six lower extremities within Shekhinah corresponding to the upper six extremities or the sefirot. The latter view seems to reflect the kabbalah of Gerona. In this case again, therefore, the Zoharic view which involves the secret of the demonic is contrasted with the Geronese view.

148 See Zohar 1:17b, 18b; 2:173b; 3:217a. And see, in particular, Zohar 2:144b, which again reflects R. Ezra’s language but which affirms the creation of these angels on the second and not the fifth day. Cf. Idel, “’Olam ha-malakhim bi-demut ha- ’adam,” Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought 3 (1984): 35-36, who already noted the influence of R. Ezra on this passage from the Zohar (p. 35, n. 132). See also Liebes, Peraqim Be-Millon Sefer ha-Zohar, pp. 37-38. According to the Zohar, moreover, angels of mercy were created on the first day and the rest of the angels on the fifth day. Cf. Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 1:448-49. This discussion doubtless reflects the debate in the midrash as to whether the angels were created on the second or the fifth day of creation. See Bereshit Rabbah 1:3 (p. 5); Ginsberg, Legends of the Jews, 5:20, n.61.
149 See the comment of Isaac of Acre in his diary, ‘Otzrot Hayyim, cited by Gottlieb, Mehqarim Be-Sifrut ha-Qabbalah, pp. 341-42: “’For aliens entered the sacred areas of the Lord’s house’ (Jer. 51:51). ‘Aliens’ alludes to the outer gradations [i.e. the demonic forces].... This is the way of the kabbalists of Sefarad [Castile] who merited to receive the kabbalah of the outer gradations. However, the kabbalists of Catalonia received a proper kabbalah concerning the ten sefirot belimah, but did not receive anything with respect to the outer gradations.” See Liebes, “Ha-Mashiah shel ha-Zohar,” pp. 124-25. See, however, Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, pp. 293-98, who discusses the doctrine of two powers, the demonic left corresponding to the holy right, already suggested by R. Isaac the Blind of Provence. In this regard it is interesting to note that the explanations which de León gives for the laws of kil’ayyim, mixed species (ShR 295:5-296:8), and sha’atnez, combination of linen and wool (ShR 293:20-295:4) are based on the language of the Geronese kabbalists (cf. Ezra, Kitvei Ramban, 2:544; Nahmanides on Lev. 19:9) who interpreted these mitzwot in terms of the prohibition of changing the act of creation by “mixing” disparate “forces” or “species.” Yet, for de León, unlike his sources, this mixing involves combining the holy and demonic powers. Here too a Geronese formulation has been transformed in light of a Castilian doctrine.
In still other places it is clear that de León's source is R. Ezra's commentary, even though he is not quoting. In one context he writes: "I have seen [those] who have said," thereby alluding to an opinion found in R. Ezra. In his exegetical comments on the prayer for *musaf* on Rosh Hashanah de León copies, though he does not cite any source, from R. Azriel's *Commentary on the Musaf of Rosh Hashanah*... De León also made use of Azriel's *Commentary on the 'Aggadot*. In still other places the use of Nahmanides' *Commentary on the Torah* is discernible. In one place de León makes use of Nahmanides' *Commentary on Job*. It is interesting to point out that in that context de León combines Nahmanides' interpretation with a parable of the "rabbis" the source of which is *Midrash ha-Ne'elam* on Ruth.

In addition to the Geronese kabbalists, it is quite clear that de León was familiar with Castilian sources. Special mention should be made of Gikatilla whose alphabetical mysticism is evident particularly in one part of *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. The opening section of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* betrays an influence of Isaac ibn Sahula's *Mashal ha-Qadmoni*. With respect to the "gnostic" circle


151 ShR 144:6-7.

152 ShR 148:2-155:1. I have indicated exact citations throughout the notes in the critical apparatus to the text. On the attribution of this commentary to R. Azriel, see Martelle Gavarin, "Perush ha-Tefillah le-R. 'Azri'el mi-Gerona," (M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, 1984), Introduction, pp. 20-23. On pp. 24-25 the author notes the use which David ben Yehudah he-Hasid made of Azriel's commentary in his *Or Zaru'a*, but she does not mention de León. On the particular influence of Azriel on the author of the *Zohar* with respect to matters concerning prayer, see Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:157; and see above n. 7. Chap. 2.


154 Cf. ShR 278:18-279:13 (Nahmanides' commentary on Lev. 17:7); 382:5-12 (ibid., Ex. 23:20); 390:13-14 (ibid., Num. 14:9).


156 See ZH 89a.


from Castile, which included such kabbalists as Jacob and Isaac ha-Kohen, Moses ben Simon of Burgos, and Todros ben Joseph Abulafia, the conceptual influence on de León is indisputable. It is thus that he affirms on several occasions the doctrine of a demonic force which he refers to by such terms as the "external cause," the "left end," the "lower" or "external gradations." Suprisingly, there is little actual textual borrowing from these sources. In one place, however, in the context of discussing the Shema', de León refers to "another esoteric explanation" of the 'aggadah in BT, Pesahim 56a, according to which the "fluid spices" (brought to the king's daughter) are "the secret of the twisting serpent (cf. Isa. 27:1) in the outer gate (cf. Ezek. 40:15)" i.e. the satanic force. I have found a similar explanation to this 'aggadah in a text by R. Moses of Burgos. It stands to reason that the latter was de León's source.

2.6 Relation to and Use of Zohar

It is no exaggeration to say that Sefer ha-Rimmon is replete with dozens and dozens of parallels to the Zohar. This parallelism was first noted by Jellinek who properly characterized Sefer ha-Rimmon as a treatise "comprising ta'amai ha-mitzwot according to the kabbalah of the Zohar." This characterization was reaffirmed and expanded by Scholem who thus remarked with respect to the first two Hebrew theosophic works of de León, Shushan 'Edut and Sefer ha-Rimmon:

Both, but in particular the latter, are replete with allusions to mystical sources. Although the Zohar is never directly mentioned, a detailed analysis shows that he is already making systematic use of all its parts, from the Midrash Ha-Neelam to the commentaries of the main part of Leviticus and Numbers.

Bibliotheca Bodleiana (Berlin, 1931), 2: 1463. See also Scholem, Kabbalah, p. 433, who assumes that de León in fact wrote a book using his friend's title. See, however, Altmann, Qovez 'al Yad n.s. 9 (1980): 264, n. 137, who suggests that perhaps de León appropriated the work of ibn Sahula as that of his own. It will be noted that the passage to which de León refers is not found, as far as I am aware, in the extant versions of ibn Sahula's treatise.

See Scholem, Major Trends, p. 175.

Cf., however, ShR 113:6; 149:9-10; 189:3-4.

ShR 77:11-78:1; and cf. Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 103.

Published by Scholem in Tarbiz 5 (1934): 196-97. See also ShR 1:2 and note ad loc.

See Jellinek, Quntres Taryag, p. 19, no. 116. Cf. also the remark in the Catalog der reichhaltige: Sammlung hebräischer und jüdischer Bücher und Handschriften aus dem Nachlass des seel. Herrn Dr. G. B. Carmoly, no. 4, p. 49. The close relationship between Sefer ha-Rimmon and the Zohar was apparent to a reader of MS Oxford as is evidenced by an occasional marginal note. See above, § 2.1.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 187.
The *Sefer Ha-Rimmon* in particular abounds with such quotations where the quotation marks are actually applied to only a very small portion of long passages lifted textually from the *Zohar*, sometimes even from a single paragraph. He is simply quoting himself under another name; even when he paraphrases a Zoharic passage with his "own" words, these turn out upon analysis to be nothing but a repetition of the words used in some other part of the *Zohar*!  

In an article written at a later stage in his career Scholem reiterated his view, this time noting that all of de León's writings, and not just the first two, "are extraordinarily replete with expositions, ideas, linguistic usages, and other matters to be found in the *Zohar*, from the stratum of the *Midrash ha-Ne'elam* and the main body of the *Zohar*, including those particular fragments which constitute the *Pekuda* at the beginning of some sections of the *Ra'aya Meheimna".*  

In the critical edition of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* I have noted on practically every page the many uses of the *Zohar* found therein. It is quite clear that the position of Jellinek and Scholem is beyond dispute. Through my work, however, certain interesting problems have emerged which may call into question the claim of Scholem that "a detailed analysis" of de León's writings "proves that they presuppose the existence of the *Zohar* as a completed work."  

In this section I will mention what I consider to be the few but significant inconsistencies between *Sefer ha-Rimmon* and the *Zohar* with the hope of elucidating some areas where further research is still needed.  

Before noting these, however, I will briefly summarize my findings with regard to the uses of the *Zohar* that one finds in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*.  

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168I have for the most part confined my remarks in this section to theosophical matters. A separate study of investigation is the relationship of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* to the *Zohar* with respect to matters pertaining to *halakhah*. Briefly, it may be said that there are many more points in common than at variance between the *Zohar* and *Sefer ha-Rimmon* in this domain as well. Thus, for instance, according to both sources, it is incumbent upon the individual to put on his fringe garment and phylacteries while still in his home, prior to going to the Synagogue for morning prayer. Cf. *ShR* 58:7-9 and *Zohar* 1:301a; 3:120a, 265a; *ZH* 41d. As far as I know, the *Zohar* is the first source to affirm such a view. On the basis of the *Zoharic* discussion this custom was later codified as law; see *Bet Yosef* on *Tur*, 'Orah Ḥayyim, 25; *Shulḥan 'Arukh*, 'Orah Ḥayyim, 25:2. According to both the *Zohar* and *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, moreover, ḥe'edushah de-yotzer is not said by the individual but only when a quorum of ten men has assembled. Cf. *ShR* 72:12-13 and *Zohar* 2:129b. Finally, there are several liturgical innovations that are found in both sources, such as the recitation of Psalm 104 on the day of the new month (cf. *ShR* 191:15 and *Zohar* 1:97b [*MhN*]) and that of Psalm 33 on Sabbath morning (cf. *ShR* 122:10 and *Zohar* 2:137b). I have found only a few halakhic discrepancies between *Sefer ha-Rimmon* and the *Zohar*. For example, according to
as we noted above, no uniform approach to Zoharic materials in de León. As rabbinc texts in general are conflated in the author's mind, so too Zoharic sources.\(^{169}\) He draws from various parts of the text, often pulling together separate passages which deal with a common theme or present a similar exegesis.\(^{170}\) Indeed, at times, even when there is no extant Zoharic parallel to the text in Sefer ha-Rimmon, the Zoharic tone is most apparent to the trained ear. Three cases, in particular, are noteworthy. In one place, de León writes: "And a wise man said in his book: Alas! The people of the world stumble and they do not know when they go down and when they go up."\(^{171}\) The context of this remark is a discussion about the holiness required in sexual intercourse, here referred to euphemistically by the expression "going down and going up."\(^{172}\) It seems fairly obvious that the language here sounds remarkably close to that of the Zohar; yet I was not able to locate an exact parallel. While it is not impossible that we have here an instance of de León quoting a genuine Zoharic source that has been lost,\(^{173}\) it seems to me more likely that he has imitated the Zohar and "invented" a new source for the purpose of this treatise. A second example of this is to be found in another passage where an esoteric explanation

ShR 86:5, the pitum qetoret, i.e. the rabbinic passage dealing with incense, is to be recited daily at the end of the morning prayers, after the so-called qedushah desira, in accord with standard Sephardic practice. Cf. Sefer 'Abudarham ha-Shalem (Jerusalem, 1963), p. 124; Bet Yosef, Tur, 'Orah Hayyim, 133. (According to the Ashkenazi rite, this passage is recited only on the Sabbath; cf. the marginal note of R. Moses Isserles to Shulhan 'Arukh, 'Orah Hayyim, 132:2.) From Zohar 2:2:219b, however, it would seem that this passage must be recited as a prelude to the morning prayers and not at the conclusion. And cf. ShR 272:8-10 where de León asserts that the prohibition of making idolatrous images extends to all forms and not just that of a human being. However, the ruling as established in the traditional sources (see BT, Rosh Hashanah 24b and 'Avodah Zarah 43b; Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, 'Avodah Zarah, 3:10; Shulhan 'Arukh, Yoreh De'ah, 141:4) as well as the Zohar (2:87a) permits all images with the exception of the human form. Finally, in ShR 349:17-18 de León asserts, following prior rabbinic sources (cf. PT, Yevamot 11:1; BT, Sanhedrin 58b; Pirgei de-R. 'Eliezer, 21) that the law prohibiting sexual relations between a sister and a brother was suspended by God in the case of Cain and Abel as an act of lovingkindness. The Zohar (3:78a), by contrast, states that permission to marry one's sister was given to men only after the death of Cain and Abel.

\(^{169}\)See above, n. 104.


\(^{171}\)ShR 92:15-17.

\(^{172}\)The expression has a sexual connotation in the Zohar as well. See, e.g., ZH 58b. Cf. also Seder Gan Eden, in Jellinek, Beit ha-Midrash, 3:132. See below, n. 186.

\(^{173}\)On the knowledge by kabbalists writing before 1350, such as Menaḥem Recanati, of genuine Zoharic passages which are no longer traceable, see Scholem's comment, Major Trends, p. 185. See also Scholem, Kabbalah, p. 236; Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 1:35, 37, 109-10 (Introduction); Matt, The Book of Mirrors: Sefer Mar'ot Zove'ot, p. 15.
of Deut. 30:15, based on a well-established kabbalistic theme, is given in the name of the rabbis: "Accordingly the [sages], blessed be their memory, said [with respect to] the mystical [meaning] of the verse, 'See, I set before you this day life and good, death and evil,' for when a person goes in the good way the attribute of goodness is drawn upon him...and when a person goes in the evil way the attribute of evil is drawn upon him."174 Although this theme is a standard one in the Zohar,175 no extant Zoharic source, as far as I was able to discern, specifically connects the thematic under discussion with the scriptural verse interpreted in the passage from Sefer ha-Rimmon.176 One final example is the following passage which again cites an interpretation of a verse in the name of the rabbis, this time adding the words "in the midrash," which sounds Zoharic in its tenor, though I could not locate an exact parallel source:

"And who does what is righteous?" (Ps. 15:2). What is [the meaning of] "who does what is righteous?" You must know that the one who walks in the way of his Creator and fulfills the commandments...that is one "who does what is righteous" [for] he draws forth the desire and the will from the source of life [i.e. Binah] and causes the true light to illuminate the moon [i.e. Shekhinah] to shine upon the lower [entities]... And thus the matter of drawing forth the desire and the will from above to below, that is the fulfillment of the commandments and the worship of the Creator.... And the [rabbis,] blessed be their memory, said in the midrash: With righteousness the world was created and [He] carried out His work. And who "worked upon Righteousness" [Tzedeq, i.e. Shekhinah]? The tzaddiq, as it says, "And who acts upon Righteousness," when he performs the commandments.177

This passage, as the other two that I have mentioned, may either reflect an authentic Zoharic source that is not in the printed editions or is an original composition by de León written in the vein of the Zohar. Be that as it may, this phenomenon reflects well on the unique use of the Zohar that one finds in the writings of de León. Other kabbalists who imitated the syle of Zohar, such as Joseph Hamadon and the anonymous author of Tiqqunei Zohar and the Ra'a'ya Meheimna, never quite capture the spirit of the text in the way that de León does. Both the substance and form of his discourse is that of the Zohar.

174ShR 28:1-4. The passage reflects the language of R. Ezra in his Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim; see Kitvei Ramban, 2: 528-29. Cf. ShR 337:16-18; 368:1-3. 175See, e.g., Zohar 1:54a; 99b; 125b. 176See, however, MS Munich 47, f. 347b, where the verse from Deuteronomy is indeed interpreted in a similar context. The closest parallel in the Zohar, which I was able to find, is in ZH 78c (MhN): "'See, I set before you etc.'... 'life and good' refers to the good inclination, 'death and evil' to Samael." See ibid., 82c, where a similar exegesis of Deut. 30:15 is given following a brief discussion on the mystery of spiritual arousal above by human actions below. This context, even more than the first, thus approximates the comment in Sefer ha-Rimmon. 177ShR 377:13-21. See below, n. 195.
Four types of Zoharic usage can be distinguished in Sefer ha-Rimmon: conceptual-symbolic, linguistic, textual, and exegetical. Inasmuch as I have noted examples of each of these classifications throughout the critical apparatus to the text, I will not repeat all the results of my research here but will simply outline the general characteristics of each category. In the first instance, there are those passages in Sefer ha-Rimmon which reflect the identical theosophic perspective or present the same symbolism of the Zohar without relying on any given textual parallel. I could not reproduce in this context even a fraction of the shared symbols as there are quite literally on almost every page at least two or three, and sometimes many more, examples.

In the second instance, there are Hebrew expressions scattered throughout Sefer ha-Rimmon which clearly reflect the Aramaic idiom or the peculiar style of Zohar. Again, it would be virtually impossible to record all such occurrences as they are indeed numerous. I have, however, noted as many of these as was possible in the critical apparatus to the text. To cite but a few examples: (a) In ShR 39:1-2 de León uses the expression, "to be engaged in [God's] Torah," which corresponds to a terminus technicus used frequently in the Zohar,178 (b) de León employs the expressions הַשָּׁם הָאָדָם (ShR 6:2, 23:1) and הַשָּׁם הָאָדָם (8:8) which correspond respectively to the Zoharic terms טַאָה דַּהֲעַיָּה179 and טַאָה דַּהֲעַיָּה180 (c) the following interpretation of the "rabbis" to 1 Kings 5:10, "And the wisdom of Solomon increased," given at ShR 24:7-8, המלך מצוהו הלכות מלוחות, is nothing other than an exact translation of a Zoharic expression, used in similar contexts;183 (d) in ShR 43:4 de León uses the expressions גַּלָּא תַּאָה תָּאָה and קָוָא שְׁמֵר בְּעָדָה which correspond respectively to the Zoharic expressions קָוָא שְׁמֵר בְּעָדָה184 and קָוָא שְׁמֵר בְּעָדָה185 (e) several times (e.g. ShR 46:6, 82:15-16; 92:17) de León employs various forms of the expression which corresponds to another terminus technicus used repeatedly in the Zohar,

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178 Cf. Zohar 1:132b, 168a, 184b, 189a-b; 2:27a, 46a, 61b, 83b, 95a; 3:36a, 58a, 73a, 98b, 112a, 153a (Piqqudim).
179 Cf. Zohar 1:152a (Sitrei Torah), 158a; 2:29b.
180 Cf. Zohar 152a (Sitrei Torah); 154b; 158a-b; 2:29b; Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 31; She'elot u-teshuvot be-'Inyenei Qabbalah, ed. I. Tishby, Qovez 'al Yad, n.s. 4 (1950), 1: 16 [reprinted in Tishby, Studies in Kabbalah and Its Branches (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982)], 1:42.
182 Cf. Zohar 1:147a-b, 149a; 2:101a; Shushan 'Edut, pp. 332, 343; MS Munich 47, f. 375b; and the reference to Scholem's article in the preceding note.
184 Cf. Zohar 1:15a, 51a, 83a; 3:268b; ZH 4d (MHN); Liebes, Peraqim be-Million Sefer ha-Zohar, pp. 356, n. 4; 356, n. 31.
185 Cf. Zohar 1:66b, 168a; Liebes, Peraqim be-Million Sefer ha-Zohar, pp. 355-56, n. 3.
(f) the phrase which occurs in ShR 86:18-87:1, סלע אפי התוכנה, is nothing but a direct translation of the Zoharic phrase, אפי התוכנה על המנה, סלע אפי התוכנה;187 (g) in ShR 161:16-17, 165:21, and 309:15 the expression הנבון is used to connote the mitigation of stern judgment which reflects a unique Zoharic usage based on the Spanish endulzar;188 (h) several times (see, e.g., ShR 27:10; 213:8; 390:12) de León employs the word אתיי to emphasize the mystical nuance of the scriptural verse that he is interpreting, a usage that is familiar to us from the Zohar as well;189 (i) in ShR 50:14-15 de León asserts that "blessings dwell only when male and female are united," which is again nothing but a paraphrase of the Zoharic idiom;190 (j) descriptions of specific sefirot, such as that of the feminine Shekhinah, "the moon which has no light of its own,"191 and that of the masculine Yesod, "the river which never ceases,"192 are paraphrases of the exact terminology employed in the Zohar in the same symbolic context. The examples given above, which could be greatly multiplied,193 represent a minute portion of the evidence that could be cited in support of the claim that de León freely employed Zoharic expressions and idioms according to his wont and will. The essential point to bear in mind here is that these borrowings flow so effortlessly from de León's pen that he leaves one with the impression that he is not so much using the Zohar—as some external source—but rather thinking in its very modes of language and thought.

In the third instance, there are actual textual parallels between Sefer ha-Rimmon and the Zohar, i.e., passages lifted out from the latter and translated almost verbatim. In these cases, the source is cited in the name of the rabbis or the sages,194 or in the name of a "midrash,"195 or anonymously as "and they

186Cf. Zohar 2:95b, 100a, 130b, 132b, 136b and elsewhere; Shushan 'Edut, p. 340.
187Cf. Zohar 1:230a; Zohar 3:11b. It is of interest to note that in MS Munich 47, f. 347a, words which correspond exactly to the passage in Sefer ha-Rimmon are cited as a quotation from the "rabbis, blessed be their memory," i.e. the Zohar. See below, n. 194.
188See Scholem, Major Trends, pp. 165, 388, n. 44.
189See Gikatilla, Sha'arei 'Orah, ed. Ben-Shlomo, 1:149, n. 3.
190Cf. Zohar 1:165a, 182a; 3:5a, 17a; ShR 224:15-16; 325:1-4.
191Cf. ShR 188:3 and Zohar 1:149b. See above, n. 30, Chap. 2.
192Cf. ShR 199:3-4; 229:11-12; 293:6; and Zohar 1:186b; 3:150b.
193See, e.g., ShR 20:8-9 (cf. Zohar 1:154a); 26:3 (cf. Zohar 1:46a; 3:93b, 134b [Idra Rabba]; Shushan 'Edut, p. 335); 89:3 (cf. Zohar 2:121b); 112:8 (Zohar 1:208a); 122:2-3 (Zohar 1:121a); 153:1 (Zohar 1:115a); 223:16 (Zohar 3:145b); 279:22-280:1 (Zohar 1:126a-b); 327:16-17 (Zohar 1:193a); 333:4-5 (Zohar 1:158a).
have said in the secret [interpretation] of the verse." In a few isolated cases de León introduces the Zoharic source with words like "I have seen a matter concerning etc.," 196 "I have seen in a deep place," 197 "I have found in the secret of things hidden in the words of the sages," 198 or in one case, "And I have seen in the Yerushalmi another esoteric meaning to this." 199 In some places a Zoharic source is introduced as the view of the "commentators," 200 or of the "ancients," 201 or by the words "there are those who explain." 202 More often however the text is simply inserted by de León into the natural flow of his own thoughts. It is of interest to note in this regard that on the basis of several

195 See ShR 84:14-15 (cf. ZH 42a); 134:9-12 (cf. Zohar 2:45a-b); 202:20 (cf. ZH 13c [MhN]); 233:1-3 (cf. Zohar 1:148a; 3:242a); 287:9-10 (cf. ZH 3d [MhN]); 297:10-12 (cf. Zohar 3:126b); 317:5-7 (cf. Zohar 1:144a; 369:3-4 (cf. Zohar 1:53b, 237a). See also 377:20-21 (discussed above). In de León's other Hebrew writings the Zohar is likewise occasionally referred to as the midrash. See MS Munich 47, f. 374a (cf. Zohar 2:60b); Sheqel ha-Qodesh, pp. 13-14 (cf. Zohar 1:21b; see below, n. 209). It should be noted that Isaac ibn Sahula in his commentary to Shir ha-Shirim and Todros Abulafia in his Otsar ha-Kavod ha-Shalem already cited the Midrash ha-Ne'elam in the name of the midrash. See Scholem, "Peraqim mi-toledot sifrut ha-qabbalah," Kiryat Sefer 6 (1929-30): 109-18; idem, "R. Mosheh mi-Burgosh, talmido shel R. Yitzhaq" Tarbiz 3 (1932): 181-83; idem, Major Trends, pp. 187-88. It is also of interest to note that Isaac of Acre cites the Zohar in the name of the midrash. See, e.g., Me'irat 'Einayim, ed. A. Goldreich, pp. 57-58 and cf. to Zohar 2:4b.
199 ShR 35:6-9 (cf. Zohar 2:226b). I have discussed the passage at length in "Mystical-Theurgical Dimensions of Prayer in Sefer ha-Rimmon" (see above, n. 102.) The same source is quoted in the name of the "Yerushalmi" in Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 50, and in Maskiyot Kesef, MS JTS Adler 1577, f. 110a (ed. Wijnhoven, p. 22; see, however, p. 56, where the editor incorrectly gives the source as "Talmud Yerushalmi"). And cf. Shushan 'Edut, p. 343; Sod 'Eser Sefirot Belimah, p. 383, n. 93 (cf. Zohar 3:231b). See above, n. 18, Chap. 1.
201 See above, n. 137.
passages in Sefer ha-Rimmon we are able to establish the correct reading of a parallel in the Zohar.\textsuperscript{203} Noteworthy also is the particular use which the author makes of the Piqqudin section which has been printed erroneously as part of the Ra'aya Meheimna.\textsuperscript{204} There are several exact parallels between Sefer ha-Rimmon and this section\textsuperscript{205} which lends credence to the thesis of Scholem that this section was indeed composed by de León. Finally, there is the exegetical parallelism between Sefer ha-Rimmon and Zohar, i.e. the occurrence of similar exegesis both with respect to biblical and rabbinic passages. Countless times in the critical apparatus to the text have I noted a verse from Scripture or a passage from the Talmud or Midrash which is interpreted in Sefer ha-Rimmon in an identical way in the Zohar.

In the remaining part of this section I will address the few instances where there is an apparent discrepancy between the Zohar and Sefer ha-Rimmon.

(a) The first case we have already had the occasion to discuss, viz. de León's affirmation of Maimonides' explanation for the prohibition of slaughtering an animal and its child on the same day. Whereas in Sefer ha-Rimmon the view of Maimonides is accepted, in the Zohar it is rejected.\textsuperscript{206}

(b) In his discussion of the 'Amidah, de León writes that the first three and last three blessings symbolically correspond to the six extremities: Hesed, Din, Rahamim, Netzah, Hod, and Yesod.\textsuperscript{207} From the parallelism which he establishes between the first three and the latter three, it follows that Netzah is on the right side parallel to Hesed and Hod on the left side parallel to Din.\textsuperscript{208} This contradicts the viewpoint expressed in the Zohar according to which Netzah is on the left and Hod on the right. Lest one consider this to be a somewhat trivial and pedantic point, it will be recalled that in Sheqel ha-Qodesh de León himself cites this latter view in the name of the midrash, i.e. Zohar, against the opinion of the "commentators," i.e. other kabbalists, who asserted the opposite.\textsuperscript{209} It would appear, therefore, that in Sefer ha-Rimmon de León


\textsuperscript{204}On this treatise, see above, n. 17, Chap. 1.

\textsuperscript{205}Cf. ShR 30:5 (cf. Zohar 3:263b); 34:14-15 and 362:14-18 (Zohar 3:270b-271a); 41:10-11 (Zohar 3:263b); 58:1-2 (Zohar 2:43a); 90:1-2 (Zohar 3:93a); 98:11 (Zohar 3:263b); 118:6 (Zohar 2:92a); 136:1-2 (Zohar 3:97a); 137:12-138:2 (Zohar 3:97a); 139:3-4 (Zohar 3:97b); 177:11-178:2 (Zohar 3:103b); 180:3-5 (Zohar 3:103b); 181:6-7 (Zohar 3:145a); 221:13-20 (Zohar 2:91b); 226:16-17 (Zohar 3:43b); 228:8 (Zohar 3:43b); 231:17-18 (Zohar 3:263b); 232:18 (Zohar 3:263b); 331:20 (Zohar 3:86a). See, however, the remark of Scholem, Qovez 'al Yad, n.s. 8 (1976): 359, n. 231.

\textsuperscript{206}Cf. ShR 310:6-9 and Zohar 3:92a (discussed above, § 2.5).

\textsuperscript{207}ShR 82:7-8.

\textsuperscript{208}ShR 82:17-83:1.

\textsuperscript{209}Cf. Sheqel ha-Qodesh, pp. 13-14; Zohar 1:21b.
agrees with the very commentators against whom he argues in *Sheqel ha-Qodesh* on the basis of the Zohar.

(c) In *Sefer ha-Rimmon* 193:9 de León writes that "all depends on mazzal." The exact expression in Hebrew appears in *'Idra Rabba* (Zohar 3:134a) as a citation from an ancient source and in the Aramaic form in *'Idra Zuta* (Zohar 3:289b). Yet, upon examination it becomes evident that the particular usage of this expression in the context of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* and the two passages from the Zohar differs. In the former it is clear that mazzal refers symbolically to Yesod, so-called because this gradation, which corresponds to the phallus, is like a river that overflows (Hebrew: bn). This word-play between mazzal and the root bn is found in the Zohar as well, referring as in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* to Yesod. However, in the *'Idrot* sections mazzal refers not to Yesod but rather a technical name for the highest manifestation of the divine, the "beard" of the countenance of 'Atiq Qadisha, the "Holy Ancient One," or 'Arikh 'Anpin, "the Long-Faced [Long-Suffering] One." Hence, it follows that the identical saying which appears in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* and the *'Idrot* does not have the same symbolic correlation. This discrepancy may be explained in one of two ways: either de León's use of this saying is independent of the *'Idrot* context, both drawing on a third source, or he transformed the original intent of the *'Idrot*.

The relationship between the two texts is further complicated by a second remark that de León makes in the same context. After citing the rabbinic dictum that "children, livelihood, and sustenance depend not on merit but on fortune," he writes: "And indeed this matter is like the great mazzal upon which the Torah scroll is dependent." This remark again has an exact parallel in the *'Idra Rabba*: "R. Eleazar rose and began to expound. He said: 'All depends on mazzal even the Torah scroll in the ark.'" In the first place it should be noted that the key phrase is given in the *'Idra* as a citation in Hebrew. Furthermore, in the Zoharic context the mazzal clearly refers to the highest

210 Cf. Targum to Eccles. 9:2.
211 Cf. *Zohar* 1:115a, 137a, 156b, 159b, 181a; 2:152b; 3:163a; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, p. 82. The same word-play is found in Gikatilla, but with a symbolic valence closer to that of the *'Idrot*, i.e. mazzal refers to the highest sefirah, Keter. See Sha'arei 'Orah, ed. Ben-Shlomo, 1:78, 163.
214 *ShR* 194:2-3.
manifestation of Keter and the Torah scroll to Tiferet. Hence, the meaning of the saying is that all things ultimately are dependent upon Keter, even the central sefirah of Tiferet. In the case of Sefer ha-Rimmon, however, it seems that the "great mazzal" refers to the sefirah of Binah and not Keter.\textsuperscript{216} Proof for this may be adduced by a closer look at the context. A few lines prior to this text de León asserts that the "hidden world," i.e. Binah, "stands upon twelve mazzalot which pour forth in their secret in complete unity."\textsuperscript{217} The twelve mazzalot, we are told, are the six extremities which are all gathered in the one mazzal, i.e. Yesod.\textsuperscript{218} The "great mazzal," in turn, is Binah, the gradation from which the twelve mazzalot, or the six extremities, pour forth. It is thus that de León, after making the claim about the dependence of the Torah scroll on the great mazzal, writes:

And all the matters that we have mentioned are dependent on the secret of the "hidden World" [i.e. Binah]. And from there all descends and emanates until the Foundation of all [i.e. Yesod] for he is the secret of the masculine which drops and pours forth everything unto the feminine [i.e. Shekhinah]. . . . And thus everything is dependent on mazzal.\textsuperscript{219}

Once again we have a situation wherein a similar expression is found in Sefer ha-Rimmon and the 'Idrot, but with a variant symbolic correlation. In this case the matter is rendered even more problematic by the fact that the very same teaching, but with a symbolic correlation which approximates that of the 'Idrot, appears in Gikatilla's Sha'arei 'Orah:

For upon that very mazzal children, livelihood, and sustenance are dependent, and even the Torah scroll is dependent upon it, and that is what [the rabbis], blessed be their memory, said: "All depends on mazzal even the Torah scroll in the ark. . . . And that is the supernal mazzal that is known in Keter for all the sefirot are dependent upon it and all of the created entities, even the Torah scroll in the ark.\textsuperscript{220}

In the case of Gikatilla, therefore, mazzal refers to a stage within the highest emanation, Keter, as it does in the 'Idrot. Moreover, the exact language which appears in the 'Idrot as a Hebrew citation appears in Gikatilla as a saying of the rabbis. As Ben-Shlomo already pointed out in his edition of Sha'arei 'Orah, the precise relation between the Zohar and Gikatilla is not clear; he even suggests the possibility of a third source common to both.\textsuperscript{221} What is clear, however, is

\textsuperscript{216}Cf. Sheqel ha-Qodesh, p. 82.  
\textsuperscript{217}ShR 193:8.  
\textsuperscript{218}Ibid., 10-12.  
\textsuperscript{219}Ibid., 194:3-6.  
\textsuperscript{220}Gikatilla, Sha'arei 'Orah, 1:162-63.  
\textsuperscript{221}Ibid., p. 162, n. 27. See also p. 29.
that Gikatilla's usage is identical to that of the 'Idrot,\textsuperscript{222} whereas de León's usage differs from both.

(d) Another apparent discrepancy between Sefer ha-Rimmon and the Zohar also involves a context which is connected to the 'Idrot. In the second part of Sefer ha-Rimmon de León discusses the prohibition of desecrating the Sabbath. This discussion occurs after a somewhat extended deliberation on the correspondence of the three vowel points, \textit{holem}, \textit{shuruq}, and \textit{hiriq}, to the three \textit{sefirot}: Hokhmah, Tiferet, and Shekhinah.\textsuperscript{223} The three aspects of Sabbath, the night, day, and the "Great Sabbath" which symbolize Shekhinah, Yesod, and Binah respectively, are said to correspond to these three vowel points:

The first Sabbath is the lowest vowel point and is the night of Sabbath [i.e. Shekhinah]. The Sabbath that stands with Her and in which She is contained is the second vowel point which is the [Sabbath] day. And if you say that the [Sabbath] day is the life-of-worlds [i.e. Yesod], in any event it is [contained] in the middle vowel point [i.e. Tiferet]. And this is [the mystery of the letter] waw, \textit{n} [i.e.] two [sefirot, viz. Yesod and Tiferet]\textsuperscript{224} that are one... The Great Sabbath [i.e. Binah] is the highest vowel point for in that vowel point [i.e. Hokhmah] is contained the supernal one [i.e. Binah]. In any event the three vowel-points are one... The two upper ones, \textit{holem} and \textit{shuruq}, are the secret of the masculine, and \textit{hiriq}, which is the lower vowel point, is the feminine.\textsuperscript{225}

The three aspects of Sabbath are contained in the three vowel points. De León thus concludes: "And therefore we must make three meals [on the Sabbath] corresponding to the three vowel points, which are all in one mystery and are called Sabbath."\textsuperscript{226} From this it follows that the three meals on Sabbath correspond to Shekhinah, Yesod, and Binah. By contrast, the correspondence of the three Sabbath meals to the sefirot according to the Zohar is: Shekhinah, Keter and Tiferet.\textsuperscript{227} It will be recalled, moreover, that the author of the Zohar

\textsuperscript{222}On Gikatilla's relationship to the 'Idrot, see references given above, nn. 27-29. Chap. 1.
\textsuperscript{223}ShR 329:2-331:12.
\textsuperscript{224}Cf. Zohar 1:182b; and parallel in MS Munich 47, f. 374a.
\textsuperscript{225}ShR 334:14-335:6.
\textsuperscript{226}Ibid., 335:3-4.
\textsuperscript{227}Cf. Zohar 2:88a-b. And see Gikatilla, \textit{Sod ha-Shabbat}, printed in Heikhal ha-Shem (Venice, 1607), 40a: "The three meals are the mystery of the sefirot. How is this so? In the meal of Sabbath eve [one] brings the sefirot of Malkhut close to Yesod. The meal in the daytime is the meal of Tiferet. And the third meal is the meal of the joining of Tiferet to Binah in the mystery of the Supernal Crown [Keter ha-'Elyon] and that is the time of mercy." For yet another interpretation of the symbolic correspondence of the three Sabbath meals to the sefirotic pleroma, see David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, 'Or Zaru'a, ITS MS 2203, f. 53a: "The three meals correspond to the attributes...the meal of Sabbath night alludes to 'Atarah [i.e. Shekhinah] which governs at night. The second meal alludes to Hesed which governs in the morning. And the third meal alludes to Gevurah which governs at dusk."
uses in this context terminology which reflects the particular theosophy of the \textit{Idrot}: the meal on Sabbath eve corresponds to \textit{Haqal Tapuhin}, the "Apple Orchard" or \textit{Shekhinah}, the second meal to 'Atiqa Qadisha, the "Holy Ancient One" or \textit{Keter}, and the third meal to Ze'ir 'Anpin, the "Short-Faced [Impatient]" One or \textit{Tif'eret}. Indeed, in the 'Idra Zu\(a\) the very same correspondence is affirmed: "One [meal] is the meal of the Matronita [Shekhinah], and one is the meal of the Holy King [Tif'eret], and one is the meal of the Holy Ancient One, the Concealed of all Concealed [Keter]" (Zohar 3:288b). Two conclusions may thus be drawn. First, the doctrine affirmed in the main body of the Zohar and the 'Idra Zu\(a\) is consistent. Second, there is a discrepancy between de Leon's account in \textit{Sefer ha-Rimmon} and both passages in the Zohar.

In the case of both (c) and (d), therefore, there is an apparent discrepancy between \textit{Sefer ha-Rimmon} and the 'Idrot. Admittedly, this is scanty evidence to derive any definitive conclusions about de Leon's authorship or knowledge of the 'Idrot at the time of the writing of \textit{Sefer ha-Rimmon} in 1287. The fact of the matter is, however, that the above discrepancies coupled together with the fact that none of the characteristic doctrines of the 'Idrot are reflected in \textit{Sefer ha-Rimmon} raises a few questions. If one were to argue, on the contrary, that the above examples do indicate a knowledge and use of the 'Idrot, then we must say that in \textit{Sefer ha-Rimmon} de Leon either misinterpreted or transformed the meaning of the latter. This in itself is very peculiar insofar as de Leon's use of the Zohar in almost every case retains the original intent of the primary source. One would do well here to recall Scholem's own admission:

> For a long time I searched for criteria which would positively exclude the possibility of Moses de Leon being the author, such as for example flagrant misunderstandings of the text of the Zohar by Moses de Leon himself. But although hundreds of quotations from the Zohar occur in the writings published under his own name, be it textually or paraphrased, I

\[228\text{See above n. 212.}\]
\[229\text{In the 'Idrot themselves Ze'ir 'Anpin refers to the totality of sefirot from Hokhmah to Yesod; in the body of the Zohar, however, it refers exclusively to Tif'eret. See Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 1: 111, n. 1.}\]
\[230\text{To be sure, on occasion in the critical edition of Sefer ha-Rimmon I have indeed made reference to passages in the 'Idrot. See, e.g., notes to ShR 24:7; 26:3; 117:2-3; 297:6. The crucial point is, however, that in all of these cases the passage from the 'Idrot had parallels in other parts of the Zohar, and did not represent the unique theosophic posture of these sections. There seems to be no trace of the particular theosophy of the 'Idrot in any of de Leon's Hebrew texts. See D. Matt, Zohar, the Book of Enlightenment, p. 26; and my discussion in "Sefer ha-Rimmon: Critical Edition and Introductory Study," 1: 27-31. I have found, however, an exact parallel in MS Munich 47, ff. 377b-378a to a passage in 'Idra Zu\(a\) (Zohar 3:288a) which describes the nature of the sefirot in terms of the metaphor of a candle and its lights. Here again there is no substantial thematic link between the Hebrew text and the 'Idra. See ShR 278:18 and note ad loc.}\]
have been unable to discover a single case in which it is possible to speak of a significant misunderstanding.231

If we assume that the 'Idrot were in front of de León when he composed Sefer ha-Rimmon, an assumption we must make if we accept Scholem's view that the Zohar was a completed work at the time that de León began to compose Hebrew theosophic works under his own name, then the two examples that I have mentioned qualify as misunderstandings or, at the very least, reinterpretations. One might assume that the 'Idrot did not influence Sefer ha-Rimmon in these cases. Having said that, however, then one must accept the further consequence that in all of Sefer ha-Rimmon there is no influence of the 'Idrot sections of the Zohar. If that is the conclusion to be reached, then Scholem's claim that a "detailed analysis" of all of the books written under de León's own name "proves that they presuppose the existence of the Zohar as a completed work" is not fully substantiated, at least in the case of Sefer ha-Rimmon.

2.7 References to Sefer ha-Rimmon in Subsequent Kabbalistic Literature

It can be safely said that in comparison to the Zohar the Hebrew works of Moses de León in general exerted a minimal influence upon subsequent generations of kabbalists. The Sefer ha-Rimmon is no exception to this rule. I have been able to locate but three sources which can be said to have made direct use of Sefer ha-Rimmon.

(a) Sefer ha-Ne’elam: This text, which is fully extant in MS Paris 817, ff. 55a-91b, and partially in MS Parma 966, ff. 155b-188b, and MS JTS Mic. 1886, ff. 1a-25a, is a kabbalistic anthology written at the beginning of the fourteenth century.232 The work contains, inter alia, Moses of Burgos' "Commentary on the Thirteen Attributes,"233 material from Gikatilla's Sha'arei

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231 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 193.
'Orah and de León’s Sefer ha-Rimmon, two explicit references to the Zohar and other quotations from it,234 and a text of Joseph Hamadan.235

In MS Paris 817 the material from Sefer ha-Rimmon appears on ff. 68b-71a. The fragment of Sefer ha-Ne’elam in MS Parma mostly comprises the material derived from Sefer ha-Rimmon, though other kabbalistic explanations on various commandments are included.236 In one case explicit mention is made of R. Todros Abulafia (f. 184b). The treatment of the mitzvot from Sefer ha-Rimmon which are included in Sefer ha-Ne’elam are copied from both parts of the text. In almost all cases the author of Sefer ha-Ne’elam presents the sodot in a condensed form or simply as a paraphrase of de León’s longer expositions. From the first part of Sefer ha-Rimmon the topics covered in Sefer ha-Ne’elam include: various sodot derived from de León’s commentary on the liturgy, the blessing after meals, sodot dealing with Sabbath and the festivals, the mystery of the sanctification and blessing of the new moon, laws concerning loaning to the poor and giving charity, the law of mezuzah, and the priestly blessing.237 From the second part the following prohibitions are discussed: not to follow the desire of one’s heart and eyes, not to hate anyone in Israel, not to have illicit sexual relations, not to swear falsely, not to give false testimony, not to take a bribe, not to curse a judge, not to try the Lord, not to wear the attire of an opposite sex, not to eat or cook milk and meat together, not to eat on Yom Kippur, not to drink heathen wine, not to burn a fire on Sabbath, and not to embarrass one’s friend.238

(b) MS JTS Mic. 1768: A collection of kabbalistic varia written in Spanish script from the fourteenth century. The manuscript contains, inter alia, a section from R. Isaac ha-Kohen’s "Treatise on the Left Emanation," mystical rationale for various commandments including one on. f. 86a attributed to Qabbalat Saporta,239 a text attributed to Hai Gaon, passages from the Zohar, a

236 See Farber, "Li-Meqorot," p. 68, n. 2.
selection from Gikatilla's *Sha'arei Tzedeq*, a passage from Jacob ha-Kohen's *Sha'arei 'Orah*, sections from de León's *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, and Gikatilla's commentary on the Passover Haggadah. In two places there are citations from *Sefer ha-Rimmon* which is mentioned by name. The first occurs on f. 81b and corresponds to ShR 178:14-17, and the second on ff. 109a-b which corresponds to ShR 292:4-293:8. In yet another place in the manuscript, f. 92a, the influence of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* can be assumed (cf. ShR 132:10-11 and note *ad loc.*) though the source is not cited.

(c) Meir ibn Gabbai: Jellinek already noted that *Sefer ha-Rimmon* was cited by ibn Gabbai in his *Tola'at Ya'aqov*. The citation occurs in the section on the prayers for *Rosh Hashanah* (33b) which draws upon de León's commentary contained in ShR 147:19 ff. There is one other passage in ShR 69:9-10 which is copied verbatim by ibn Gabbai in *Tola'at Ya'aqov* (12a), though he does not mention his source. In addition, as Ephraim Gottlieb suggested, it is clear that ibn Gabbai made use of *Sefer ha-Rimmon* in his *Avodat ha-Qodesh*, though in this case as well he does not mention his source by name. The influence can be seen particularly in his classification of four types of fear in *Sha'ar ha-Yihud*, chapter 26, which is based on a similar classification in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*. I have found as well several other places in *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* which seem to reflect the language of *Sefer ha-Rimmon*.

### 2.8 Onto-Theological Divisions of the Commandments

The kabbalistic categorization of the *mitzvot* reflects the particular theosophic posture of the given mystical writer. In this section I will discuss what I consider to be the main ontological and theological divisions of the commandments adopted by de León which inform his mystical transposition of normative halakhic practice. In a separate study I have discussed at length the treatment of *ta'amei ha-mitzwot* in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, analyzing three main conceptual structures, to wit, commandments *qua* fulfillment of divine need; commandments *qua* maintenance and ground of existence; and commandments *qua* means for the separation of the sacred and profane. Here I will confine

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242 Cf. ShR 30:12-32:13. It appears that the classification in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, in turn, is based on, or is parallel to, *Zohar* 1:11b which distinguishes three types of fear. See above, n. 90. For a threefold categorization of fear in R. Eleazar of Worms, which may have influenced de León, see references above, n. 134.

243 See ShR 25:12-13 (cf. *Avodat ha-Qodesh, Sha'ar ha-Yihud*, chap. 24); 39:5-6 (ibid., chap. 27); 44:20-45:6 (ibid., chap. 28).

244 Cf. E. Wolfson, "Mystical Rationalization of the Commandments in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*," *HUCA* 59 (1988).
myself to an elucidation of several motifs not fully discussed in my previous study.

In Sefer ha-Rimmon there are various modes of categorization of the commandments, each imparting to the reader a specific dynamic within the divine pleroma. Thus de León at times speaks of the containment of all the commandments in the Decalogue, which, in turn, corresponds to the ten divine gradations, the sefirot. The significance of this characterization can only be understood if the reader bears in mind the critical assumption made by de León with respect to the ontic nature of the commandments. The view either explicitly stated or implied in any number of contexts in Sefer ha-Rimmon is the idea, which may be traced to some of the earliest historical documents of the kabbalah, that the commandments are identical with the attributes of God. Such a notion was openly affirmed by the Geronese kabbalists, though it is already implicit in both the Sefer ha-Bahir and other Provençal mystics. The spiritual grounding of the commandments in the realm of the divine is enhanced by the mythological conception of the Torah as the divine body and the mystical identification of the Torah qua body with the divine name, the Tetragrammaton. The mitzvot, accordingly, were viewed as the limbs of the

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246 On the correspondence of the ten sefirot to the ten dibberot, see Sefer ha-Bahir § 124. On the development of this theme in later kabbalistic sources, see Ephraim Gottlieb, Ha-Qabbalah be-Khitvei Rabbenu Bahya ben 'Asher, pp. 99-101.


Torah, the divine organism. This is the underlying conception of de León's use of the older midrashic motif concerning the containment of all the commandments in the Decalogue: the Ten Commandments correspond to the ten *sefirot* which, in turn, constitute the name of God, which itself is identical with the divine anthropos or the Torah in its mystical essence. As such, it follows that all the commandments will be comprised within the root ten. One of the more potent ideas to develop in medieval kabbalah was doubtless this explicit identification of God and Torah, reminiscent of Logos theories known to us from patristic literature. Whether or not there were earlier Jewish sources for this conception, the forthrightness with which the thirteenth-century kabbalists expressed these ideas is especially noteworthy. By means of this identification the mystical, mythological, and ethical dimensions all converged: to fulfill the commandments, as the kabbalist understood it, meant, first, to participate in the drama of divine life by cleaving to God and, secondly, to maintain and strengthen the divine structure. Further, by identifying the Torah with the Tetragrammaton and the divine corpus, the kabbalists were able to infuse the traditional modes of practice with added significance. The divinization of Torah, in short, resulted in a concomitant sacralization of orthodoxy. This factor seems to be one of the key elements in explaining the relatively easy acceptance of kabbalistic doctrine into mainstream Judaism.

Alternatively, de León expresses the view, as we have already seen in a preceding section, of the inclusion of all the commandments, positive and negative, within the last divine emanation, *Shekhinah*. Indeed, the *Shekhinah*, the feminine potency *par excellence*, is the divine gradation which most properly corresponds to *mitzvah*, i.e. Oral Torah, complementing the

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251 See *ShR* 131:22-24: "You must know that God chose Israel for His portion and prepared them for His worship. And from His great love and admiration gave them the Torah, and bound them with the knot of love, to bind them in the mystery of his name, blessed be He, and gave them the commandments so that they would cleave to it." See also 326:3-9 (for an interpretation of this passage, cf. M. Idel, "Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah," p. 147); 367:18; 376:1-8.


254 On the correlation between Oral Torah and *mitzvah*, see BT, *Berakhot* 5a: "R. Levi bar Ḥama said in the name of R. Shim'on the Just... 'Torah' means Scripture (*miqra*), 'and the commandments' means *mishnah*"; and the introduction of Maimonides to the *Mishneh Torah*: "'And I will give you tablets of stone and the Torah and the commandments' (Ex. 24:12). 'Torah' refers to the written Torah, 'and the commandments' refers to that which is called the oral Torah." Cf. *Sefer ha-Bahir* § 149; *Zohar* 2:166b; 3:40b.
masculine potency which corresponds to the Written Torah. The identification of Shekhinah with the Oral Torah, which represents both the theoretical exposition and practical implication of the Written Torah, places the focus of religious life in this gradation. Shekhinah is the portal through which one gains access to the realm of divine emanations. It is thus that de León identifies this gradation as the locus of faith. "Shekhinah," writes de León, "is the 'peak of Amanah' (ראיה אמתה).... And all people must enter into the mystery of faith...for whoever does not have faith has no portion in the God of Israel,"257 "for one is not without the other, as you find that there is no day without night."258 In theosophic terms, through the feminine Shekhinah one comes into relation with the masculine God of Israel and thereby unites the aspect of day with that of the night.259 That the ultimate expression of this faith is through the performance of the commandments may be gathered from another passage: "whoever is not occupied with the commandments is 'devoid of sense' (Prov. 9:16) for he has no portion in the God of Israel, for all the commandments are linked to the mystery of the great name."260 The use of the same terminology in these two passages is not coincidental. Neither the one who has no faith nor the one who is not occupied with the commandments has a portion in the God of Israel. Indeed, the essence of faith is to be so occupied. Insofar as Shekhinah symbolically corresponds to the mystery of faith, sod ha-'emunah, it follows that she will be the locus of all the commandments as well, the very means to express that faith in action.261 To employ the imagery of the Bahir,262 as the passageway to enter the divine palace, Shekhinah contains within herself all the pearls, treasures, jewels, and precious stones found in the interior chambers.

The centralization of the commandments in Shekhinah is additionally expressed by de León by the fact, as have seen above (see § 2.4), that this

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255 Cf. ShR 108:10-12; 387:15-17; Zohar 3:40b; ZH 45b. See Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, pp. 47-50. For the source of this symbolism in the Sefer ha-Bahir, see Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, pp. 170-71. On the identification of Shekhinah as mitzvah, see above, n. 35.
256 Based on Song of Songs 4:8. The biblical expression was interpreted as a reference to faith already in Exodus Rabbah 23:5; and see Zohar 2:3a.
257 Cf. BT, Berakhot 63b.
258 ShR 25:15-26:3.
259 The expression "there is no day without night" to depict the unity of masculine and feminine potencies within the sefirotic realm is a literal translation of a Zoharic expression. See Zohar 1:46a; 3:93b; 134b (Idra Rabba).
260 ShR 219:18-19. Just as the Jewish people have a portion in God through the commandments, so too through the very same means God has a portion in the Jewish people. See citation from ShR 131:22-24 given above, n. 251.
261 See ZH 82a (MiN) where the commitment to the laws and statutes of Torah is identified both as the "yoke of faith" and the "yoke of Shekhinah." Here again we see the intrinsic connection between faith, the commandments, and Shekhinah.
gradation is symbolized by the particular commandment of the fear of God. The Shekhinah, as a feminine potency, is situated on the left side of the divine pleroma and, consequently, is sustained by the attribute of judgment. It is thus appropriately symbolized by the commandment of fear as the latter involves the quality of judgment. "Worship through fear is the beginning [through which] to enter into the cleaving of the Creator. It is the opening to enter upward so that the upper attributes will rest upon him and he will be complete... for if fear does not rest upon his head... he is not worthy to cleave to the Torah and the commandments." The commandment to fear God can be said to comprise all the commandments, for without fear one cannot begin to cleave to God or the Torah. That is to say, the fear of God is the one commandment that holds the key to all the other commandments and, as such, contains the others within itself. It was the unique achievement of Moses that he established all the commandments in this one commandment, as it says, "Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you but fear" (Deut. 10:12). This is the import of the talmudic dictum, based on this biblical verse, that for Moses fear of God was but a small matter (*moi r rPD), i.e. the one matter which, like a Leibnizian monad, reflects the totality of the divine potencies from its own point of view. Inasmuch as all the commandments are contained in this one commandment, it follows that fear of God constitutes the proper expression of faith. Indeed, de León puts it quite simply, "if there is no fear there is no faith, for all is one matter and one secret." From the perspective of the divine axis, fear and faith have the same symbolic reference; from the perspective of the human axis, one without faith has no fear and, conversely, one without fear has no faith. Faith in God, therefore, translates into the fear of God, the one commandment that contains all the commandments. Just as one without faith has no portion in the God of Israel, so too one without fear.

Devotional life is thus centered about this one commandment and the divine emanation which it symbolizes. The overriding purpose of the commandments, for de León, is to cleave to the Shekhinah in order to facilitate both the possibility of the individual's ascending upward on the sefirotic ladder and of creating a downward flow of energy from the uppermost source to the other divine gradations and the cosmos. In emulation of Moses, the one who truly fears God is united to the level of the fear of God and, consequently, merits the whole range of commandments contained therein. By cleaving to Shekhinah, therefore, one has attained the level of proper faith:

263 Cf. Judges 13:5; 1 Samuel 1:11. De León has substituted the word, מָרָר, i.e. fear, for the biblical expression, מִשְׁר ה, i.e. razor.
264 ShR 32:7-11.
266 BT, Berakhot 33b. And see ShR 25:7-15; 41:4-7.
268 On the Zoharic view of Moses' union with the Shekhinah, see Liebes, Peraqim be-Millon Sefer ha-Zohar, pp. 182-84.
The verse, "He who walks without blame" [דַּיְוָלָה נַחֲמָך] (Ps. 15:2), corresponds to "I am the Lord your God" (Ex. 20:2). Here is an allusion to the mystery of divinity (데ָהוָה נַחֲמָך), for the mystery of divinity is the attribute of אֵל. You must know that the word אֵל is the mystery of faith (דַּיְו). And ponder the mystery of א לא for the matter of א לא and א לא is one mystery. And this is the matter said with respect to Abraham, "walk before me and be without blame" [דַּיְו הֵלֵךְ] (Gen. 17:1), for he was constantly cleaving to the word א לא. You must know...the one who is without blame instructs [others] about the sovereignty and divinity of God, and the obligation that is upon those who walk in His ways to accept the yoke of the kingdom of heaven so that one will fulfill the commandments and be engaged in them with all one's strength.269

The injunction to walk without blame is further explained by the first of the Ten Commandments which corresponds to it, "I am the Lord your God." That is to say, to walk blamelessly means to cleave to that aspect of God represented in the first person pronoun, א לא, which is identical with the א לא.270 This aspect of God is the "mystery of faith," i.e. Shekhinah, which is also the mystery of divinity for all the gradations are contained within Her.271 Such a state was characteristic of Abraham who was likewise described in the Bible by the expression walking blamelessly with God because he constantly cleave to the gradation of the א לא. Like Abraham, who according to ancient Jewish legend was the first proselytizer on behalf of monotheism, the one who cleaves to the Shekhinah, the mystery of faith and divinity, instructs others to accept the yoke of heaven and to fulfill the commandments. Again, we see the intrinsic connection established by de León between the Shekhinah and the mitzwot. Theosophically, the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven (kingdom = malkhut = Shekhinah) is identical with the yoke of the Law.

In the key passage where de León states that Moses272 comprised all the commandments in the one commandment, viz. the fear of God, he offers two

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269ShR 380:2-381:3.
270Similarly in the Zohar the first person pronoun is a standard symbol for Shekhinah. Cf. Zohar 1:6b, 65b, 204b, 228a; 2:236b; 3:178b (Piqqudin). And see Scholem, Major Trends, pp. 216, 401, n. 38.
271Cf. Zohar 1:89a, 228a; 2:85a-b. The basis for this symbolism is in Sefer ha-Bahir § 49: "Since there are ten sayings for the ten kings...the [word] א לא is written [in the Decalogue] and it contains all ten."
272According to the passage in BT, Makkot 23b-24a, which de León is here interpreting, as well as the parallels in several midrashic collections, it was the prophet Habakkuk who established all the commandments in one. The change of detail here is doubtless informed by the interpretation of Deut. 10:12 in BT, Berakhot 33b, according to which the one thing that God required of Israel, to fear Him, was a small matter for Moses; see n. 266. But, more importantly, the symbolic intention is crucial: Moses corresponds to the gradation of Tiferet, which is the masculine consort of Shekhinah, symbolized by the commandment of the fear of God.
other possibilities. The first refers to the prophet Micah. To be precise, de León develops the talmudic interpretation\(^{273}\) of Micah 6:8: all the mitzwot can be reduced to, or are contained within, three, viz. to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

These three things are a great principle and they contain all the commandments. . . . "Do justice," that is the attribute of Tzedaqah, the containment of everything. . . . "And love mercy," that is the right side which is the attribute of the right. . . . And these two attributes are the principle of all positive commandments. "Walk humbly," this is the root of the negative commandments. . . . Thus in these three you find the principle of all the commandments.\(^{274}\)

Hence, all the mitzwot, according to this passage, are contained in three of the ten divine emanations: Ti'feret (called here Tzedaqah), Hesed, and Malkhut. The former two constitute the root of the positive commandments and the latter the root of the negative ones.

The third alternative that de León discusses alongside the innovations of Moses and Micah is that which he attributes to himself. Significantly, in contrast to Moses who established all the commandments in one and Micah who established them in three, de León asserts that he has "established them upon two, i.e. zakhor and shamar."\(^{275}\) The fundamental categorization of the commandments in Sefer ha-Rimmon, indeed that which determines the very structure of the book, is that between positive and negative precepts.\(^{276}\) This traditional typology, however, is subsumed under the kabbalistic categorization of zakhor and shamar:

All the commandments that were given to Moses at Sinai [may be divided] in two ways, positive and negative, corresponding to zakhor and shamar. The positive commandments correspond to zakhor and the negative to shamar. . . . Zakhor contains all the positive commandments. "And those that were numbered according to the number of every male" (Num. 3:34). Shamar contains all the negative commandments. "The equivalent for a female shall be taken by the sanctuary weight" (Lev. 27:6; Num. 3:47).\(^{277}\)

The basis for this categorization can be traced to the following comment attributed to Rava in BT, Berakhot 20b (see also BT, Shevu'ot 20b where, however, the name of Rava is not mentioned): "Zakhor and shamar: Whoever has been included in [the commandment of] observing (shemirah) has also been included in [the commandment of] remembering (zekhirah); and since women have to observe, they also have to remember." Rava's statement is cited in

\(^{273}\)See reference in preceding note.

\(^{274}\)ShR 372:3-9; cf. 40:2-41:4.

\(^{275}\)ShR 371:20.


\(^{277}\)ShR 14:10-14.
support of R. Ada bar Ahavah's ruling that by the ordinance of the Torah women are under the obligation to sanctify the Sabbath day over wine, even though this is a positive commandment that is time-bound, a category that generally is inapplicable to women. Rava's logic is that just as women are included in the shemirah of Sabbath, i.e., the prohibition of doing constructive labor, so too they are included in the zekhirah, i.e., the injunction to sanctify the day over wine. The implicit correlation in the Talmud between zakhor and the masculine and shamor and the feminine underlies the passage in Sefer ha-Bahir where the textual discrepancy between Ex. 20:8, "Remember (זָכַר) the Sabbath," and Deut. 5:12, "Keep (שָמָר) the Sabbath," is explained in the terse remark: "Zakhor refers to the male and Shamor to the bride." The allusion here is to the kabbalistic notion of the androgynous nature of Sabbath: the eve of Sabbath corresponding to the feminine aspect and the day of Sabbath to the masculine. In the writings of Ezra of Gerona the Bahiric correspondence zakhor-male and shamor-female was used to explain the rabbinic division of the commandments. Just as Sabbath in particular comprises two aspects, night and day, feminine and masculine, so the commandments in general can be broken up into two categories: negative and positive. Zakhor represents the root of positive commandments and shamor the root of the negative. While the kabbalists generally agreed upon these as the roots for all the commandments, they differed as to the exact correlation between these two categories and the divine attributes. There are basically two models, one represented by Ezra of Gerona and the other by his younger colleague, Nahmanides.

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279 For a thorough discussion of this kabbalistic theme, see Elliot Ginsburg, "The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah," (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1984), pp. 136-51. Insofar as the Sabbath does in fact comprise these two aspects, masculine and feminine, it is appropriately the time of hieros gamos, the sacred union of king and bride. The special connection between the eve of Sabbath and sexual relations, albeit human and not divine, is already suggested by the comment of R. Samuel in BT, Ketubot 62b, that the scholar's marital duty for cohabitation is on the eve of Sabbath. The purely pragmatic modus operandi of the talmudic dictum became a mythological principle in the kabbalah. Cf. Zohar 1:50a; 2:63b, 89a; 3:49b, 78a, 143a (Idra Rabba); Liebes, "Ha-Mashiah shel ha-Zohar," p. 122.
280 Cf. Ezra, Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim, Kitvei Ramban, 2:496-97; Vajda, Le Commentaire d‘Ezra de Géronie sur le Cantique des Cantiques (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1969), p. 87. R. Ezra's categorization is, of course, based in part on the comment of Rava discussed above in the body of the text. Whereas for Rava, however, the zakhor refers specifically to the positive commandment of sanctifying the Sabbath day and the shamor to the specific negative commandments related to doing work on Sabbath, for R. Ezra, and subsequent kabbalists who followed him, the zakhor and shamor comprise all the positive and negative commandments.
For R. Ezra the categories of zakhor and shamor flow out of the divine potencies of love and fear. These potencies, in turn, correspond in the divine realm to the attributes of Hesed, the right hand, and Din, the left hand, and in the psychological realm to the good and evil inclinations.

You must know that all the commandments are dependent on two roots, positive and negative. The positive commandments grow out of the attribute of zakhor and the negative out of the attribute of shamor. It is known that zakhor and shamor correspond to two of God's attributes. Therefore he who fulfills the commandment of his Master and establishes it derives from the attribute of love...which corresponds to the positive commandment. And he who refrains from doing something because of the fear of his Master derives from the attribute of fear which is below the attribute of love, as the negative commandment is below the positive commandment... Thus you find that many principles concerning the negative commandments emerge from the positive commandments, for the power of the attribute of love is within the power of the attribute of fear, for fear emerges out of love and is contained within it.²⁸¹ And you must know that man...comprises and is formed with these two attributes, i.e. the elemental power and root of the positive and negative commandments, water and fire, the one from his right and the other from his left,...the good inclination on the right...and the evil inclination on the left... And since these two attributes, the good and evil inclinations, which correspond to positive and negative [commandments] were formed in man, and the Torah was given with positive and negative commandments, a man must accustom himself to go in the way of the good qualities so that the evil inclination will be drawn after the good inclination and will be nullified against it. Thus the sages, blessed be their memory said, "'And love the Lord your God with all your heart' (Deut. 6:2), with two inclinations, the good and evil."²⁸² For this purpose were the commandments, sacrifices, prayer and fastdays given, so that the evil inclination would be subdued and would be subordinate to the good inclination.²⁸³

It is clear that R. Ezra has combined the symbolism of the Bahir according to which zakhor refers to the masculine principle, presumably identical with Yesod and shamor to the feminine, i.e. Shekhinah, with the idea that all commandments are grounded in the attributes of love and fear. R. Ezra may have taken over the second idea from Maimonides.²⁸⁴ In any event, for R. Ezra, all

²⁸¹Cf. R. Ezra, Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim, Kitvei Ramban, 2: 523: "In the category of love it is impossible that there should not be any fear." The idea of the containment of the attribute of fear within love, judgment in mercy, is one of the basic principles of kabbalah that is traceable to the earliest historical documents from Provence. See my extended note to ShR 146:1.
²⁸²BT, Berakhot 54a.
²⁸⁴See Maimonides' commentary to Pirqei 'Avot 1:3. This possibility was already suggested by Tishby in Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2: 288, n. 52.
positive commandments are conceived of as branches which derive from the root of divine mercy and the negative commandments branches which derive out of the root of divine judgment.

Nahmanides interpreted R. Ezra's passage in his commentary to Ex. 20:8 with a slightly different emphasis: zakhor corresponds to the attribute of mercy, located either in the sixth emanation, Tiferet, or the ninth, Yesod, which emerges out of the potency of love, the fourth emanation, whereas shamor corresponds to the attribute of judgment, i.e. the tenth emanation, Shekhinah, which emerges out of the potency of fear, the fifth emanation. For Nahmanides, therefore, the 248 positive commandments have their root in either Tiferet or Yesod, whereas the 365 negative commandments have their root in Shekhinah. In the text interpreting Micah 6:8 which I mentioned above, it is clear that de León has combined the views of R. Ezra and Nahmanides. Hence, according to that passage, the root for positive commandments is located in both Tiferet, following Nahmanides, and Hesed, following R. Ezra.

The correspondence of positive precepts to Tiferet and negative to Shekhinah is the view of subsequent kabbalists such as Isaac ha-Kohen and Todros Abulafia. It is generally espoused in the Zohar, although at times traces of the view of R. Ezra may be found in that book. Still other kabbalists, such as Bahya ben Asher and Joseph Hamadan maintained

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285 That this represents Nahmanides' position is borne out by medieval commentators of his work. See Isaac of Acre, Me'irat 'Einayim, ed. by Amos Goldreich, p. 107 (of critical edition); Recanati, Commentary on the Torah (Jerusalem, 1961), Ex. 20:8, f. 41a. Modern interpreters, however, have failed to distinguish between the viewpoints of Ezra and Nahmanides. See Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2:288, n. 52; C. Henoch, Ha-Ramban ke-Ḥoqer u-khi-Megubbal (Jerusalem: Harry Fischel Institute, 1978), pp. 70-72, 318-24; Jacob Katz, Halakhah ve-Qabbalah, pp. 22-23.


288 Cf. Zohar 1:259b; 2:70b, 91a, 162a; 3:264a. See Tishby, Mishnat ha-Zohar, 2:432, n. 27. It should be noted, however, that in the Zohar the word zakhor is a standard symbol for Yesod. See, e.g., 2:92b; and references to Sefer ha-Rimmon below in n. 322. Recanati follows the view of R. Ezra. See his Commentary on the Torah, f. 41a; Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzwot, 4b.

289 See Bahya ben Asher, Commentary on the Torah, Ex. 20:8 (ed. Chavel [Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1982], 2:198).

290 See Joseph Hamadan, Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzwot, ed. Meier, p. 23 of the introduction, and references given in nn. 40-41 on p. 54. See, however, p. 31, where Meier refers to a passage (pp. 414-15 of the critical edition) in which Hamadan repeats Ezra's view. See ibid., p. 57, n. 36. Cf. Moshe Idel, "Tefisat ha-torah be-sifrut ha-heikhalot ve-gilguieha ba-qabbalah," pp. 64-65; idem, "'Olam ha-malakhim bi-demet ha-'adam," pp. 50-51.
that the ground for positive commandments, the zakhor root, was in Yesod. This view was upheld by Moses de León in Sefer ha-Rimmon as well.\(^{291}\)

Of all the divisions of the commandments in Sefer ha-Rimmon which I have examined in this section, the division of zakhor and shamor is beyond question the most significant for de León. His seemingly unassuming remark, "Behold I have established [all the commandments] upon two which are zakhor and shamor,"\(^{292}\) encapsulates in a microcosmic form the essential teaching of de León's kabbalistic system. By the term "essential teaching" I have in mind a particular usage of Martin Heidegger. In his masterful work on Friedrich Nietzsche, Heidegger wrote that the great nineteenth century German philosopher belonged to the class of "essential thinkers" by which he meant "those exceptional human beings who are destined to think one single thought, a thought that is always about beings as a whole. Each thinker thinks only one single thought...around which...all beings turn."\(^{293}\) If we were to apply Heidegger's characterization to de León, it seems to me that a fitting choice for his "single thought" would be the idea of the unity of masculine and feminine in the divine realm, for it is this one thought to which he constantly returns in all his writings and which shapes his conception of being as a whole. While it is certainly not the case that de León was the first kabbalist to affirm the syzygy of the masculine and feminine within God, indeed one might well argue that this idea stands at the very core of kabbalistic thinking from the outset and it is that which places kabbalah within the framework of ancient gnostic speculation,\(^{294}\) it is true that no kabbalist before de León emphasized the matter to such an extent, especially stressing the sexual and mythological nuances implied thereby. It is the doctrine of the unity of sexual polarity which underlies de León's statement that he has established all the commandments upon two, zakhor and shamor. For de León, the two aspects of Sabbath adequately characterize the nature of the entire Torah. "The Sabbath is the Torah in its entirety...and the one who observes the Sabbath observes the entire Torah."\(^{295}\) "With respect to the matter of Sabbath one finds at one time the expression zakhor and another time shamor in the manner of the mystery of the entire Torah and all the

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\(^{291}\) Cf. ShR 14:12-13; 128:24-129:1; 376:10-12. It is of interest to note in this context the following remark of Moses Cordovero in Pardes Rimmonim, ch. 23, s.v. zakhor: "Zakhor and Shamor correspond to Tiferet and Malkhut. And this accords with those kabbalists who say zakhor refers to the male and shamor to the female. There are those who explain that zakhor refers to Yesod, but this is not fundamentally so."

\(^{292}\) ShR 371:20.


\(^{294}\) See Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, pp. 151-60.

\(^{295}\) See ShR 335:11 and parallel in Zohar 2:47a. See also Zohar 2:89a, 92a, 151a. The equivalence of Sabbath to all the Torah is an idea expressed in talmudic and midrashic literature as well. See PT, Berakhot 1:5; Nedarim 3:9; Exodus Rabbah 25:12; Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa', 33.
commandments, for some of them are contained in zakhor and the others in shamor. All the Torah and the commandments are contained in the zakhor and shamor."\textsuperscript{296}

Hence, the Torah, which is for the kabbalist nothing but the form or shape of the divine being, may be reduced to two principles, the active-masculine and the passive-feminine, represented in the positive and negative commandments. Yet, although there are two roots for the commandments, in truth they are one. "Positive commandments and negative commandments are two gradations which are one."\textsuperscript{297} In the preface to the second part of the text, which deals extensively with the negative commandments, the aspect of shamor, de León is careful to emphasize the ontological unity of the two poles:

Although we have written the first book on the mystery of positive commandments, and it appears from our grouping them in one separate book and the negative commandments in another book, God forbid that they should be separated. . . . The intention is that knowledge should attain (literally, return to) the cause of their existence so that they should be united. . . . And their cause is such that they should interact one with the other, for the mystery is that the negative commandments are contained in the positive commandments, and from the positive one always comprehends the negative.\textsuperscript{298} Therefore one is joined to the other to act as one.\textsuperscript{299}

In contrast to Moses who established all the commandments within the one commandment that symbolically corresponds to Shekhinah, de León establishes all the commandments upon two roots which symbolically correspond to Yesod and Shekhinah. Notwithstanding the distinctiveness of these two roots, in their source they are in fact one. In the Zohar this unity is referred to as the "mystery of faith," raza di-meheimanuta.\textsuperscript{300} Above we have seen that de León uses an exact Hebrew equivalent of this expression, sod ha'-emunah, to specifically characterize the gradation of Shekhinah and the act of cleaving thereto. In

\textsuperscript{297} ShR 367:4-5. Cf. Zohar 3:92b (Piqqudin):
All the commandments of the Torah are [comprised] in two aspects which are one: zakhor and shamor. Zakhor refers to the male and shamor to the female, and everything is one principle. . . . The 613 commandments of the Torah are [contained] in the principle of male and female, and all is one mystery.

See also Zohar 2:162a and 3:264a. This kabbalistic principle may be seen as a theosophic elaboration of the talmudic dictum, "zakhor and shamor were uttered in one word" (see BT, Rosh Hashanah 27a, Shevu'ot 20b; PT, Nedarim 3:2). Cf. ZH 85a (MhN), 120a (Tiqqunim).

\textsuperscript{298} A talmudic principle; see BT, Nedarim 11a.
\textsuperscript{299} ShR 256:11-16.
\textsuperscript{300} See Zohar 1:49b, 55b, 101b, 160a; 2:26b, 161b; 3:264a.
another context in Sefer ha-Rimmon, however, de León warns the reader against cleaving exclusively to Shekhinah:

The [gradation of] fear is not found alone but in union [with another]. And the one who cleaves to it alone without [its] being united [to the other] is, as it were, separated from life, for in all events it is never alone without in union. And thus the foundation of fear is to be in union with all (כְּבָאָרִי הָאָלָל) and then fear is in its completeness.301

The perfection of Shekhinah is only realized when She is united with the "all," ha-kol, i.e. Yesod, so-called because it receives the totality of divine energy from the upper spheres. In striking contrast, therefore, to the passage where Abraham was extolled for his exclusive cleaving to Shekhinah, de León here stresses that one who cleaves exclusively to Shekhinah is separated from the flow of life because Shekhinah Herself is only complete when She is united to the masculine grade above Her. He who attaches himself to Shekhinah alone causes a separation above between masculine and feminine, a sin which the kabbalists referred to by the rabbinic expression "cutting the shoots."303 The ultimate task is to unite the masculine and feminine potencies, zakhor and shamor, and thereby be united to both.304 The purpose of the commandments, which by their very nature participate in both the masculine and feminine poles, is precisely to achieve this union. It is thus that the very verse, Ps. 15:2, "He who walks without blame," interpreted in the passage discussed above as a reference to cleaving to the feminine Shekhinah is interpreted elsewhere as a reference to the perfection of the phallus, i.e. the covenant of circumcision, which symbolically corresponds to the masculine Yesod:

A person must be without blame in his worship of the Creator, blessed be He. . . . and fulfill the commandments. And here is an allusion to the perfection of the covenant which Abraham received in his flesh, on account of which he was called blameless [גָּאוֹן], to show that a man's body is not perfected except through the perfection of the seal of God inscribed on his flesh. And here is an allusion to the positive commandments which are the mystery of zakhor...the totality of the positive commandments. . . . And hence [the meaning of] the verse "he

302 Cf. ShR 129:1-2; 154:1-3; 227:11-15. The source for this symbolism is to be found in Sefer ha-Bahir. Cf. Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, pp. 71-72, 263.
303 See ShR 27:11-12 and note ad loc.
305 Cf. BT, Nedaram 32a; Zohar 1:200b, 246a; 3:142a (Idra Rabba), 166a; ShR 228:9-10.
who walks without blame" is that every person must be perfect in his ways to serve his Creator.\textsuperscript{306}

In the one verse, then, de León finds a reference both to man's relationship with the feminine Shekhinah and the masculine Yesod. That is, to be complete or blameless, \textit{tamim}, means concomitantly to perfect the phallus (\textit{zakhor}) and to cleave to Shekhinah (\textit{shamor}). In this there is no contradiction, however, for only the one whose phallus is so perfected can cleave to the Shekhinah.\textsuperscript{307} Moreover, the perfection of the phallus itself, the ritual of circumcision, as determined by rabbinic law comprises two procedures, \textit{milah} and \textit{peri'ah},\textsuperscript{308} corresponding respectively to the masculine and feminine potencies.\textsuperscript{309} The ideal of perfection, then, expressed biblically by the term \textit{tamim}, involves the union of masculine and feminine aspects. It is through the commandments, positive and negative, that this perfection is fully realized. As the commandments of Sabbath and circumcision\textsuperscript{310} in particular, so the whole of Torah, the entire corpus of the commandments, is structured by the male-female polarity. The union of these poles characterizes the fundamental nature of the covenant given by God to Israel on Sinai, the abiding testimony of religious faith:

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\textsuperscript{306}\textit{ShR} 376:6-13. \\
\textsuperscript{307}For a discussion of this thematic, particularly from the vantage point of visionary experience, see E. Wolfson, "Circumcision, Vision of God, and Textual Interpretation: From Midrashic Trop to Mystical Symbol," \textit{History of Religions} 26 (November, 1987). \\
\textsuperscript{308}Cf. BT, \textit{Shabbat} 137b. \\
\textsuperscript{309}Cf. \textit{Zohar} 1:13a, 32a-b (\textit{Tosefta}); 3:163a; Gikatilla, \textit{Sha'arei 'Orah}, 1:115-16. According to some passages in the \textit{Zohar}, the relationship is reversed: the act of cutting the foreskin corresponds to Shekhinah, and that of pulling down the membrane to Yesod. See \textit{Zohar} 2:40a, 60b, 125b; 3:91b. \\
\textsuperscript{310}Just as the commandment of Sabbath comprises the entire Torah (see references at nn. 295-96), so too the commandment of circumcision which likewise has two aspects, one corresponding to the masculine and the other to the feminine (see preceding note). The syzygy of masculine and feminine constitutes the very nature of the covenant of which Sabbath and circumcision are prime examples. In terms of Zoharic theosophy, both the Torah (see above, n. 249) and circumcision are identified on several occasions with the name of God (cf. \textit{Zohar} 1:95a, 96b; 2:3b, 32a, 87b; 3:91a). Hence, it follows that circumcision in some sense is equivalent to the Torah. This equivalence, for example, underlies the Zoharic prohibition of disclosing secrets of Torah to one who is uncircumcised; see \textit{Zohar} 3:72b-73a. Cf. Liebes, "\textit{Ha-Mashiah shel ha-Zohar}," p. 140, n. 205; and my study referred to above, n. 307. The equivalence of circumcision, Torah, and the name of God is brought out with particular clarity in the following passage from \textit{Zohar} 3:13b: "Whoever lies with respect to the sign of the holy covenant [i.e. the circumcision of the phallus] which is inscribed in him, it is as if he lies with respect to the name of the King, for the name of the King is inscribed in man. . . . Whoever observes [the laws of sexual propriety connected to] this covenant, it is as if he observes the whole Torah, and whoever lies with respect to it, it is as if he lies with respect to the whole Torah." \\
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Tzaddiq (Yesod) and Tzedeq: [both] refer to the covenant and they are called covenant. . . . Therefore zakhor and shamar are bound together, zakhor in the day and shamar in the night.311

"If not for my covenant day and night the ordinances of heaven and earth I would not have established" (Jer. 33:25). "If not for my covenant" is well and good. What, however, is the meaning of "night and day?" R. Shim'on said: It has been taught that two crowns [Yesod and Shekhinah] are united together as one, and they are the opening to all the other crowns...the one is judgment and the other mercy, one is mitigated by the other...the one is masculine and the other feminine...and that covenant is united in both, "in day and night," in judgment and love.... That is the covenant which is called "day and night" for it is united in both.312

311Zohar 3:115b.
312Zohar 3:14a.