

The History of Gentile Wisdom According to R. Zadok ha-Kohen of Lublin

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In the late hasidic system of R. Zadok ha-Kohen of Lublin the great Lurianic drama of cosmic catastrophe and slow rebuilding takes on a decided epistemologic cast. The *nizgōzot qadoshot*, the “holy sparks” are, to mix a metaphor, nuggets of true wisdom, exiled within the essential falsehood of non-Torah wisdom. Vivified by them, however, this foreign wisdom takes on a life of its own and becomes the subject of R. Zadok’s historiography. It is that historiography which is the subject of the following remarks.

R. Zadok ha-Kohen Rabinowitz (1823–1900) was born to a rabbinic/mitnagdic family in Latvia; a prodigy, he reportedly began the study of Talmud at age three-and-a-half, and completed it for the first time at eight. As a young man he became a hasid, and a follower, of R. Mordecai Joseph Leiner of Izbica, the “Izhbitzer,” one of whose successors he eventually became. He was incredibly prolific, and many of his works, none of which was published in his lifetime, were presumably lost in the destruction of the Lublin ghetto, though some seem to have been

¹ For a study of R. Mordecai Joseph’s thought, together with a short biographical sketch, see Morris M. Faierstein, *All Is in the Hands of Heaven: The Teachings of Rabbi Joseph Leiner of Izbica*, New York: Michael Scharf Publication Trust of Yeshiva University Press, 1989. As Faierstein puts it, the scholarly literature on Izbica is minimal, two articles by Rivka Schatz (“Autonomiyah shel ha-Ru’ah ve-Torat Mische,” *Molad* 21 (1963), pp. 554–561 and “Self-Redemption in Hasidic Thought,” in R.J.Z. Werblowsky and C.J. Blecker, *Types of Redemption*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970, pp. 207–212.) and J.G. Weiss, “A Late Jewish Utopia of Religious Freedom,” in his post-humously published collection, *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, OUP, 1985, pp. 209–248. For a reprise of the facts of R. Zadok’s life in hagiographic style, some selections from his works, and a bibliography of his published and unpublished works, see A.Y. Bromberg, *bi-Admor mi-Lublin* in his series *mi-Galut ha-Torah veho-Hasidut*, reprinted Jerusalem: Bet Hillel Publishing, 1982.

saved and brought to Tel Aviv;² little of this latter treasure has been published. What remains, though, runs to thousands of closely-printed pages in a terse, elliptical style, and permits a fair reconstruction of much of his thought, for most periods of his life, including his prehasidic, early hasidic, and late work. The major gap in documentation seems to be for the two decades before he became Rebbe.³

His teachings have had a great impact on a number of twentieth-century Jewish thinkers, among them the late R. Eliyahu Dessler, R. Yitzhak Hutner and R. Gedaliah Shorr,⁴ but systematic research and analysis of his thought is in its infancy.⁵

The strongly historiographic bent of R. Zadok's thought has often been remarked.⁶ The observation is true as far as it goes, but it must be emphasized that to R. Zadok, the only history worth tracing is that of the rise and diffusion of knowledge.⁷ Elsewhere I have delineated R. Zadok's view of the history of Halakhah, or, more precisely, the Oral Torah, which is a product of the intellection of the sages of Israel, the successor to the Written Torah of the First Temple period.⁸ If the dominant figure of the First Temple period was the prophet, that of the Second was the sage. The "mirror image" of this process also occupied R. Zadok a great deal, though full scale treatments of it are scarce. In this paper, I propose to examine his history of the rise of human knowledge ("the wisdom of the Nations").

² According to Prof. S.Y. Leiman; Prof. Simcha Fishbane has succeeded in obtaining from the Kitov family a xerox of part of the manuscript of *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq* used in preparing the "Alef" edition (see next note); my thanks to all concerned. Despite various attempts, no more material has come to light.

³ Aside from his halakhic output, selection from the following works will be discussed in the analysis that follows: *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq*, Lublin: 1912, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1973, but note *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq ha-Male'*, Jerusalem: "A" Publishers; in addition, we have recently been blessed with yet a new "edition," Bet El, 1988. This contains notes, indices, and some additional source references by Eliezer Melamed, though neither it nor its predecessor contains any textual changes; noteworthy is the detailed table of contexts; *Resisei Laylah*, Lublin, 1903, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1967; *Mahshevet Harnag*, Pyotrkow, 1912, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1967; *Divei Seferim, Sefer ha-Zikbrnot, Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, Lublin, 1913, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1973; *Paqod 'Agarim*, Pyotrkow, 1922, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1973; *Taqqanat ha-Shavin*, Lublin, 1926, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1967, and now available in an edition by Eliezer Melamed, Bet El, 1988; *Sifot Mal'akhei ha-Sharet*, Lublin, 1927, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1973; *Yisrael Qeloshim*, Lublin, 1928, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1973; *Peri Zaddiq* (5 volumes), Lublin, 1907-1934, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1972; *Or Zaru'a la-Zaddiq*, Lublin, 1939, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1973; *Dover Zeddeq*, Pyotrkow, 1911, repr. Bnai Brak: Yahadut, 1973.

This list is not at all exhaustive, but merely records essential bibliographical information on the works cited below. For precision, references are to the Arabic numbered page and column rather than the more usual Hebrew number and obverse/reverse.

⁴ For R. Hutner, see my "History," (see below, n. 5) pp. 20-22. For R. Shorr, see the posthumously published *Or Gedalyahu: Sifot u-Ma'amarim 'al Mo'adam*, Brooklyn, 1981, esp. the talks on Hannukah. For R. Dessler, see *Mikhtav me-Liyahu*, vol. 3, Bnai Brak: Committee for the Publication of the Writings of E. L. Dessler, 1964, pp. 277-278. For the question of the relationship of R. Zadok's thought with that of R.A.I. Kook, see I. Hadari, "Shenei Kohanim Gedolim" (see n. 5).

As noted, the history of human intellectual creativity was one of R. Zadok's abiding interests, and he discusses various aspects of it in a num-

⁵ Rabbi Isaiah Hadari has published a number of articles on particular subjects, "Roshet Hodashim be-Mishnat R. Zadok ha-Kohen," *Sinai* 56/1-2 (1965), pp. 84-99, "Purim be-Mishnato shel R. Zadok ha-Kohen (Rabinowitz) mi-Lublin," *Sinai* 46/6 (1960), pp. 353-369, "Shir shel Yom be-Torat R. Zadok ha-Kohen," *Sinai* 53/1-6 (1963), pp. 75-91. In addition, see his discussion of the possible influence of R. Zadok on R.A.I. Kook in his article "Shenei Kohanim Gedolim" in Y. Raphael, ed., *ha-Re'iyah: Qavetz Ma'amarim be-Mishnat Maran ha-Rav . . . Be'etnam Yitzhak ha-Kohen Kook z.t.l. im Melo't Sheloshim Shanah le-Histalputa*, Jerusalem, 1966, pp. 164-165.

Bezalel Naor has examined certain aspects of R. Zadok's thought, primarily as a foil to his studies of R.A.I. Kook, "Zedonor Na'asch ki-Zekhuyot be-Mishnato shel ha-Rav Kook," *Sinai* 97 (1985), pp. 78-87, and includes selections from his works in his anthology *Lights of Prophecy*, New York: Orthodox Union, 1990.

Uziel Fuks, "He'arat 'Biqortiyot' be-Kitvei ha-Admor R. Zadok mi Lublin," *Katlemi* 15 (1990), pp. 564-574, contains a good deal of useful information on R. Zadok's use of text-critical, historical-critical and literary methods. My thanks to Dr. Dov I. Frimer for calling this article to my attention.

My own work has concentrated on R. Zadok's historiography; see "R. Zadok Hakohen of Lublin on Prophecy in the Halakhic Process," in B.S. Jackson, ed., *Jewish Law Association Studies I: The Torah Conference Volume*, Scholars Press, 1985, pp. 1-16, "R. Zadok Hakohen on the History of the Halakha," *Tradition* 21/4 (1985), pp. 1-26.

Allan Brill of New York is at work at a dissertation examining the sources of R. Zadok's mystical thought which will in addition, from all indications, contain a valuable introduction which will provide, *inter alia*, a chronology of R. Zadok's works.

Finally, after the research for this article was complete, I was apprised of a source and statement index in preparation by Rabbi A.Z. Naiman of Baltimore, parts of which he graciously sent me. Subsequently, both this index and another one reached me (March 27, 1992). There are now two privately published indexes to R. Zadok's hasidic (as opposed to halakhic) works. Two volumes of a projected three-volume *ha-Matte'ah ha-Shalom le-Sifrei R. Zaddiq ha-Kohen z.z.v. 'l mi-Lublin*, by Hayyim Hirsch (Jerusalem, Shevat and Il Adar, 5752, n. p.), have been published. They cover all R. Zadok's hasidic works but *Peri Zaddiq*, which will be in the third volume. Aside from the subject index, there are two indexes of historical figures, biblical and rabbinic. The second volume contains source indexes.

The second work, by Abba Zevi Naiman, alluded to above, *Mativ 'ab Kitvei R. Zaddiq ha-Kohen mi-Lublin z.z.v. qllb' b'* (Jerusalem, 5752, n.p.), includes *Peri Zaddiq*, as well as a source index for classic rabbinic literature and the Zohar, but not for other kabbalistic works. It is less complete than the Hirsch, and somewhat less analytic in its sub-entries. However, in the nature of these matters, those interested in R. Zadok's hasidic works will want both. To some extent they complement each other, and to some extent both must be supplemented by the researcher's own assiduousness.

⁶ A similar perspective is found in R. Hayyim Vital's *Lev Hayyim*, Heikhal 6, Shaar 36; see Y. Tishby, *Torat ha-Ra' v'ha-Kelipah be-Qabbalat ha-'Ari*, Jerusalem: Magnes, repr. 1984, pp. 121-125. Needless to say, R. Zadok's development is all his own.

⁷ It is instructive to compare R. Hayyim Vital's historiography, which concerns the admixture of Good and Evil in different eras of world history (the gathering of the *nizqot qadoshat*, "holy sparks"), with R. Zadok's, which is nearly exclusively concerned with the history of Torah and its counterpart, gentile wisdom. In general, when he refers to the "holy sparks" it is in connection with stray bits of true wisdom (and all true wisdom has its roots in Torah, see *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 81b) among the Nations. In a sense, knowledge and falsehood are his substitutes for Good and Evil; epistemology is his theology.

Though this aspect of R. Zadok's reinterpretation seems unique to him, this reinterpretation of Kabbalistic concepts harks back to the very beginning of the basidic movement; see R. Elior, "Ha-Ziqqah she-bein Qabbalah la-Hasidut — Rezivut u-Temurah," *Divei ha-Qongres ha-'Olam ha-Tishi' le-Mada'ei ha-Yahadut*, Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1988, III, pp. 107-114.

⁸ See "R. Zadok Hakohen on the History of Halakha" (see n. 5); hereafter: "History."

ber of differing contexts. Nowhere does he combine these separate discussions into a general theory or history of human intellectual endeavor, but a careful examination of these separate treatments⁹ show that he worked with a consistent complex of themes which varied according to the needs of his exposition or the particulars of the historical and cultural situation. By comparing and contrasting the emphases in these discussions, we may reach an understanding of his general scheme. Moreover, since the principle of *zeh le'umat zeh*,¹⁰ or symmetrical structure (in this case, symmetrical development), plays such a large role in his thought on the subject, the symmetrical development and the symbiotic relationship of "the wisdom of the Nations," as contrasted with the wisdom of Israel, enables us to utilize the latter as a check of our analysis of the former. Thus, the present paper draws on my earlier discussion of R. Zadok's history of Halakhah.

I

Given the essential parameters of R. Zadok's thought,¹¹ it is by no means inevitable that the Nations should be able to produce a wisdom of their own, and so any investigation of the history and purpose of the Nations and their wisdom must begin with its ground of existence.

Ultimate wisdom according to R. Zadok consists of the recognition that all comes from God, and the world has no existence independent of Him.¹² Moreover, the world itself was created only for the sake of the Torah. But because Israel and the Torah are mystically coexistent and coextensive,¹³ the world was created for Israel's sake as well.¹⁴ Aside from the mystical consideration just raised, there are midrashic sources for both

⁹ Primarily in *Liqqutei Ma'amarim* and *Sefer ha-Zikkaronot*, slightly different formulations are to be found in *Resisei Laylah*, *Taqqanat ha-Sharim* and *Yisrael Qadoshim*, and significant points, not duplicated elsewhere, are made in *Or Zarua la-Zaddiq*, *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq* and *Peri Zaddiq*.

¹⁰ Taken from Koh 7:14; see *Zohar* III, p. 47b. The principle of symmetry is used in many different contexts in kabbalistic thought, most especially in tracing the structure of realms of purity and impurity; see Y. Tishby, *Torat ha-Ra'*, pp. 62-64. For a more proximate source for R. Zadok, see Maharal, *Gerurat ha-Shem*, ch. 4, ed. London, pp. 28-29.

¹¹ See immediately below.

¹² See, among many other examples, *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 83. A number of other sources will be quoted below in the course of discussion.

¹³ "God, Torah and Israel are one" is the way this is usually expressed; see *Zohar* III, 73a for part of this equation, and see Y. Tishby, "'Qudsha' Berikh Hu', Oraita ve-Yisrael Kula' Had Hu' — Meqor ha-Imrah be-Ferush 'Idra' Rabba' le-Ramhal," *Kiryat Sefer* 50 (1935), pp. 480-492 and "Hashlamot le-Ma'amari 'al Meqor Imrah 'Qudsha' Berikh Hu', Oraita ve-Yisrael Had Hu', *ibid.*, 668-674.

¹⁴ Thus, when a nation is bereft of its nugget of true wisdom, it may continue to exist by virtue of the continued benefit Israel derives from its activities; see *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 68a, and see nn. 76 and 81.

concepts: Creation as contingent on Torah and Creation as contingent on Israel.¹⁵

The Nations, on the other hand, are part and parcel of the world and thus have no independent existence of their own.¹⁶ Alienated from Truth and Torah, their existence is dependent on Israel no less than it is on the holy sparks which are exiled among them. They are by their very nature essentially incapable of apprehending the Truth, which is the contingent nature of existence. Since for R. Zadok truth and existence are inextricably intertwined, this inability renders the Nations' existence in an absolute sense not only precarious, but untenable, and in the world to come, they will cease to exist as such.¹⁷

In the light of the foregoing, it is by no means inevitable that there should be any wisdom at all among the Nations. Midrashically, however, there is good warrant for the existence of such wisdom.

If someone says to you that there is wisdom among the gentiles, believe him; that is what is written, "I will destroy wise men from Edom and understanding from the mount of Esau" (Obad 8) [implying that there is wisdom and understanding there]. [If someone says to you] that there is Torah among the gentiles, don't believe him, as is written, "her king and nobles are among the Nations [where] there is no Torah" (Lam 2: 13).¹⁸

This is R. Zadok's essential proof-text, and it constitutes the warrant for his inclusion of gentile wisdom within his system. It ensures the existence of a body of valid gentile wisdom,¹⁹ which is associated with and implicit in Torah. However, given the contingent nature of the Nations' existence, their essential inability to comprehend and hold to the monistic truth of the contingent existence of the world and of themselves, valid gentile wisdom and its progenitors exist at cross purposes. This tension is resolved by the mechanism of Israel's exile, which operates as a medium of transfer of valid gentile wisdom to Israel and thus its (re)incorporation into Torah.²⁰ Those parts of gentile wisdom, as absorbed and transmuted into Torah by the sages of Israel, will continue to exist. But the Nations them-

¹⁵ Gen R 1:4. Though a number of other *menot* regarding those values or humans for whose sake the world was created are brought together here (Moses, the taking of *hallab*, *ma'aserot*, *biketurim*), it is these two—Torah and Israel — which R. Zadok, clearly under Zoharic influence, cites over and over. Note that in *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 101b the reference is to Yalqut Shim'on Genesis r. 2.

¹⁶ This doctrine is found in the *Zohar* as well, and may be seen in a sense as a corollary of the Gen R 1:4; if "the world and all it contains" was created for the sake of Israel, the Nations too fall into that category, and have no independent existence of their own; *Zohar* III, 122b makes this connection explicit.

¹⁷ Except as proselytes, whose nature and status was of great concern to R. Zadok, and "the pious of the Nations of the world;" see *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 101a.

¹⁸ Lam R 2:13; see *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 150b.

¹⁹ For an insight into just how far this validity extends, see section VII.

selves will not, with the exception of proselytes and “the pious among the Nations.”²¹

Given all the difficulties, one may well ask how the gentiles became the proud possessors²² of nuggets of true knowledge. Though R. Zadok nowhere says so explicitly,²³ to my knowledge, its origin is nonetheless clear. Its origin is from God, as it must be, and its “exile” among the Nations is part of the process of *shevirat ha-kelim*. The function of Israel’s exile is thus merely R. Zadok’s restatement of the general kabbalistic view that exile serves as a vehicle for collecting the scattered “holy sparks” from their “exile” among the *kelipot*. Thus, while in an ultimate sense the Nations’ existence is contingent on Torah, their “root” is in the *kelipot*.²⁴ With this background in mind, we may proceed to trace the history of gentile wisdom.

II

In *Liqqutei Ma’amarim* at least, R. Zadok attempted to adapt the biblical and rabbinic schematic of the Four Monarchies (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome) which have dominated Israel in exilic times, and use it as the basis of his epistemological history of humanity. In the end, however, as his later works (*Yisrael Qadoshim*, the notes of his table talks in *Peri Zaddiq*, see below) attest, the basic antinomy of written/oral Torah, or prophecy/intellect, shaped his history even more decisively. His attempt to integrate this insight within the Four Monarchic scheme seems to have proved abortive. In the end, the Four Monarchies are distinguished less by their relationship to wisdom as to their moral qualities, while R. Zadok’s epistemological history of the human race essentially divides into two periods: the pre-Hellenic era of prophecy and magic, and the post-Hellenic era of the human intellect and Oral Torah. In this scheme, Rome is aligned with Greece, Babylon with Egypt, and Persia and Media play minor roles. Indeed, in one talk,²⁵ he explicitly replaces the Four Monarchy scheme mooted in Pesikta de-Rav Kahana Eikhah (end),²⁶ with one which contains

Egypt, the prototypical land of exile,” Babylon, Greece and Rome, with the first two representing magic and sorcery, and the third Hellenistic wisdom. Interestingly, Babylon seems to occupy a “swing position,” as the counterpart of the Holy Land and a place suitable for Torah.

In part this dual role for Babylon is due to the attractiveness of the antinomy of prophecy/intellect to R. Zadok. In addition, the difficulties he had in working with the exact rabbinic (and other) sources on the Four Monarchies may have led him to abandon the scheme and downplay this factor. For example, while Babylonia may be said to have excelled in the occult arts, this is even truer of Egypt, which was not one of the Four. On the other hand, Persia, which was one of them, was not known as a representative of gentile wisdom in any of the sources available to R. Zadok. Thus, while the beginnings of a more detailed epistemological historiography are sketched in, with each of the monarchies representing a certain typology of moral and intellectual qualities, R. Zadok’s intellectual and spiritual history consists of two eras: pre-Hellenic and post-Hellenic.

Freed from the constraints of the Four Monarchies, his history includes the Generation of the Dispersion (*dor ha-palagab*), the Generation of the Flood,²⁷ and the Egypt of the bondage for the pre-Sinaitic period, with Moses-Balaam and Solomon-Queen of Sheba for the post-Sinaitic/pre-exilic periods. Note that though there are four periods (taking the Generation of the Flood and the Dispersion as essentially Babylonian) of particular interest to R. Zadok in the pre-exilic period, which might have been seen as corresponding to the Four Monarchies eras, he never seems to have incorporated these eight into one comprehensive scheme. And this despite the crucial change which the Sinaitic revelation made in the nature of gentile wisdom itself (see n. 83).

It is primarily in a work of his middle years, *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*,²⁸ that R. Zadok considers the relation of each of the Four Monarchies to wisdom.²⁹ In discussing the trait which the Midrash ascribes to Esau-Edom-Rome,

²¹ *Resisei Laylah*, p. 128a; see *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 207a.

²² See section VIII.

²³ The phrase “proud possessors” is especially apt in the case of Greece and Greek wisdom; see *Peri Zaddiq* I, p. 139a-b, and see below.

²⁴ Though he approaches such a statement in *Tagganat ha-Shavin*, pp. 67b-68a.

²⁵ Which *kelipot* are involved will be discussed below.

²⁶ *Peri Zaddiq*, V, n. 14, pp. 15b-17a; the most relevant portions for our point are pp. 15b-16a.

²⁷ On Is. 1:24; ed. Buber, p. 123b = ed. Mandelbaum, p. 262.

The Midrash is described *en passant* as *ha-nidpas me-hadash*, which must refer to Buber’s edition of 1868; see Bernard Mandelbaum, *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana ‘al pi ketar yad Oxford*, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962, pp. 7-8 [Hebrew numbering] of the Introduction.

²⁷ Based on Lev R. 13:5 (ed. Margulies, p. 283), which interprets the *Mizraim* as *mezirim*, “persecutes.” Relevant also is Egypt’s position as the first of Israel’s exiles.

²⁸ See *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 107a-b, 112a, 116b, and *Peri Zaddiq* I [*Qadoshat Shabbat*], pp. 56b-57a, I [Genesis], pp. 26b-27a.

²⁹ Written sometime after *Tagganat ha-Shavin* (in his mid-thirties) and *Yisrael Qadoshim* (mid-forties or later). All dates in this study, relative or absolute, have been confirmed in several long, enlightening conversations with Alan Brill, the most recent October 12, 1991; Brill takes up the question of dating in his (forthcoming) dissertation, and I tender him my thanks for his help.

³⁰ *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 179a; see below.

that of “*peshitat telafayim*” (“stretching out the[ir] hooves”)³¹ R. Zadok contrasts the wisdoms of (in his order) Edom, Egypt, Babylon (from Nimrod to Nebuchadnezzar and finally to the time of R. Ashi), Persia and Greece. Each one of these is taken as the exemplar of the wisdom of the Nations for its time and clime; indeed, it is for this reason that they were given power over Israel.³²

Leviticus Rabba 13:5 identifies each of the Four Monarchies with one of the four impure creatures which are accorded separate mention in Lev 11: the camel, rabbit, hare and pig represent Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, respectively. The distinction which the Midrash draws between the first three Monarchies, on the one hand, and Rome on the other is variously interpreted by R. Zadok in his discussion of these matters.³³

In *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, the difference between the first three and the last (and to some extent Greece as well) inheres in their hypocrisy, their pretense of ruling in the name of morality, while their real aims are to satisfy their own appetites, as the pig, which possesses one of the characteristics of a pure species (i.e., cloven hooves) but lacks the other (it is not a ruminant), lies down in such a way as to show its hooves and thus pretend to a purity it does not possess; the other species are ruminants, and thus show their unclean characteristic to the world. In contrast, the earlier kingdoms — but for Greece in part, which is allied with Rome (see n. 65) — do not pretend to this morality. In support, R. Zadok sometimes cites A.Z. 3b, which also attributes a similar hypocrisy to Rome.

In *Yisrael Qadoshim*, a late work, however, all four monarchies are charged with hypocrisy; the difference between Rome and the others is only that while the first three attempt to disguise their attachment to “evil desires” — wealth (Babylon) gluttony, lust (Persia), honor and domination (Greece), Rome is taxed with the cold-blooded desire for murder rather than the more innocuous human appetites of the others. Rome disguises this predominant drive by pretending an interest in lust.

³¹ The phrase is taken from the (pejorative) description of a pig's habit of showing its hooves, which are cloven, so as to give onlookers the impression that it is fit to eat according to biblical law (Lev 11); the phrase comes from Lev R 13:5; it is thus a metaphor for hypocrisy. So too Esau/Edom, who the Rabbis consider Rome's progenitor (see nn. 65, 171), successfully represented himself to Isaac as a pious individual, and this is taken as a characteristic of Rome; see A.Z. 3b. R. Zadok himself cites Lev R 13: 5 and Gen R 64 as his examples of the syndrome. A more detailed discussion of this matter is to be found in *Yisrael Qadoshim*, p. 114a.

³² I hope to discuss R. Zadok's understanding of the purpose of Israel's exile on another occasion, D.v. Suffice it to say that Israel was exiled to centers of gentile wisdom either to gather the scattered “holy sparks” which it contains (in Lurianic terminology), or to prove that Israel's wisdom constitutes true knowledge (in Izbica terms). I owe the realization of the separateness of these two strands in R. Zadok's writings, at least at the level of formulation, to conversations with Alan Brill.

³³ See *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 177a–b and 178b–179b, and esp. *Yisrael Qadoshim*, p. 114a–b.

In his earlier analyses in *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, as R. Zadok develops the theme of gentile wisdom in relation to Edom, Egypt, Babylon and Greece, his discussion of Persia is sharply curtailed. This would seem to be due in part to his lack of sources, but also, as he asserts still earlier in *Resisei Laylah*, the Persians are the “antithesis of wisdom.”³⁴ Proof of that is that Ahasuerus is the only monarch known as “a foolish king” in the Midrash.³⁵ The Persians' essential characteristic is an egregious appetite for the pleasures of the table and the bed, as noted above.³⁶ The best he can do is to suppose (*mistama*)³⁷ that each was the exemplar of gentile wisdom for its time, since Israel was delivered into their power. In related discussions, including two in the same work, no mention is made of this aspect of their culture.³⁸

Instead, in one place R. Zadok suggests that Ahasuerus, rather than becoming Mordecai's counterpart in wisdom, gains enormous wealth from the divine effulgence which fuels the growth of the Oral Torah in Israel. In mundane matters this effulgence accrues to the Nations in the form of wealth — but not wisdom.³⁹ By contrast, in his later *Yisrael Qadoshim*, the theme of wealth is dropped in connection with Persia and only “evil desires,” namely lust and gluttony, remain. As noted above, wealth is now assigned to Babylonia rather than to Persia, and in place of the idolatry of Babylon.⁴⁰

³⁴ *Resisei Laylah*, p. 130b.

³⁵ Esther R. 4: 12; see bMeg 12a.

³⁶ See *Yisrael Qadoshim*, pp. 114b–115a. The two are related; see *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq*, p. 136b, where R. Zadok cites bHul 4b (“There is no seduction without eating and drinking.”) Along the same lines he interprets the Talmud's praise of the Persians for their modesty in coition (Ber 8a) as intended merely to spur their lust. In the same context he reports (“I heard” — in Izbica) the identification of Persia with miserliness (*zarut 'ayin*), which explains the consequent inability (on the part of the Jews of Elam) to propagate Torah knowledge (see Sanh 24a).

³⁷ *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 179b. *Mistama* consistently marks assumptions made without the support of R. Zadok's sources; see n. 80.

³⁸ See *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, pp. 161b, 167a, 177a–179b, and *Yisrael Qadoshim*, pp. 113a, 114–115.

³⁹ See *Mahshevet Haruq*, pp. 179b–180a, *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 167a. Though Ahasuerus was King Solomon's counterpart in respect of honor and wealth, he possessed no wisdom but was a “foolish king” (*Mahshevet Haruq*, p. 180a) and “had no relationship to wisdom” though he prided himself on being wise and discerning (ibid., p. 180b). This is in contrast to R. Zadok's emphasis on the connection between wisdom and the other three Monarchies, and his frequent admission that a wise man among the Nations is also called a sage; see section 1.

It is noteworthy that here, in contrast to the case of Balaam, where R. Zadok was willing to create “external books” without a source (see n. 80 below), he yields somewhat on a perfect symmetry. The reason is clear: in the case of Balaam, there are no sources, either Jewish or secular; in the cases of Persia and Ahasuerus, enough counterindications exist in rabbinic literature, along with a silence in secular sources regarding Persian wisdom, to preclude such a strategy. The best he can do is to identify Persia with Elam, and then Elam with the Jews of Elam, in accord with Sanh 24a; see n. 36. Thus, R. Zadok does an “end run” around his sources, and locates wisdom with Haman and Amalek and (ultimately) Edom rather than Persia.

⁴⁰ *Yisrael Qadoshim*, p. 114a, as opposed to the idolatry of earlier works.

On the individual level, R. Zadok counterposes Haman to Mordecai and the Men of the Great Assembly.⁴¹ This theme appears as early as his discussions in *Resisei Laylah*,⁴² and his attempt to work Ahasuerus into the scheme in *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, but the latter more or less disappears in *Yisrael Qadoshim*. Instead, Haman becomes not only the exemplar of gentile wisdom, but also of unclean desires.

However, the chronological confluency of Persia/Haman, Mordecai/Men of the Great Assembly, and the establishment of the Oral Torah, seems to have provided the background for at least one late attempt on R. Zadok's part to associate Persia and wisdom.

In one of his Purim talks, R. Zadok notes that the book of Esther makes a point of the transference of Haman's estate ("house") to Esther (Esther 8:1, 7).⁴³ He suggests that the importance of this act parallels that of the despoilation of the Egyptians at the Exodus (Exodus 12: 36), which he interprets as a transference of holy sparks to Written Torah as a preparation for the Sinaitic revelation.⁴⁴

Babylonia plays an important role in R. Zadok's historiography because it is the site of both the founding and completion of the Oral Torah as crystallized in the Bavli (see below). Thus, R. Zadok emphasizes that the beginning of the era of Torah⁴⁵ corresponds to the time of the *dor ha-palagah* of Babylon in Genesis 11 or the Generation of the Flood.⁴⁶ Because of this its importance as a source of gentile wisdom as represented by astrology and occult knowledge is eclipsed; Egypt becomes for R. Zadok the exemplar *par excellence* of these sciences.⁴⁷ The importance of the Oral Torah to R. Zadok's history makes Babylon's identity as a potential venue for the flowering of Torah more important than the role it played in bibli-

⁴¹ Since Haman is "the Agagite," and thus descended from Amalek and ultimately Esau, one consequence of this displacement is that it serves to maintain the Four Monarchy scheme, since Esau is identified as Rome in Rabbinic literature. However, as noted above, the Four Monarchic scheme was displaced by a two-era one, and R. Zadok does not develop the potentialities of the former.

⁴² See e.g., p. 150a.

⁴³ *Peri Zaddiq* II (Purim n. 2), p. 190b.

⁴⁴ See below, p. 166.

⁴⁵ In terms of the division of the six thousand years of the world's existence into eras of confusion (*tohu*), Torah and messianic times; see Sanh 97a.

⁴⁶ See *Zohar*, III, 216b, *Peri Zaddiq* I, pp. 56b–57a [*Qedushat Shabbat*], IV, p. 43; see also *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, pp. 107b and especially 112a and 116b, and compare *Peri Zaddiq* I, pp. 26b–27a and 21b–22a.

⁴⁷ See *Peri Zaddiq* II, p. 24b, which has both Egypt and Babylon as places of sorcery, with Babylon in particular the place of "magicians (*qarṭannim*), interpreters of dreams and announcers of future tidings." It should be remembered that the terminology need not be R. Zadok's, since he did not record this table talk. See *Or Zaru'a la-Zaddiq*, pp. 19b–20a, where Egypt again plays the major role as regards sorcery.

cal and rabbinic sources as a source of occult knowledge.⁴⁸ It should be emphasized, however, that this is a matter of degree; R. Zadok does associate Babylon with sorcery, but its stronger association is with Torah.

As in the case of Persia,⁴⁹ R. Zadok's conception of the exact roles played by Babylon in his epistemological history of humanity seem to have changed over time. Indeed, it may be said that the history becomes less epistemological and more moral and spiritual.⁵⁰ Moreover, R. Zadok's description of Babylon became less restricted; Babylon becomes the place of Torah in all eras; consequently, its role as one of the Four Monarchies becomes less and less significant. Babylon is the place which from the dawn of history was destined to be a place of Torah and giving of the Torah, whether *in potentia* or *in actu*.

Thus, in *Qedushat Shabbat*,⁵¹ Nimrod, Abraham's opponent and counterpart, who is nevertheless influenced by the light the patriarch brings to the world, is credited with the idea of building the city of Babylon and the tower of Babel as the unholy counterpart of Jerusalem and its temple *mi-zad ha-sitra 'ahara dugmat Yerushalayim u-l'eit ha-Miqdash*). Here Abraham's counterpart is Nimrod, and the Generation of the Dispersion plays the role of Babylon as avatar of the Generation of the Wilderness. Significantly, the Sinaitic revelation could have taken place at that time; moreover, the settlers themselves were drawn to Babylon because they sensed that was the proper place for the Oral Torah.

In *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*⁵² R. Zadok brackets the Generation of the Flood with the *dor ha-palagah* not only as counterparts of the Tabernacle and Temple, respectively, but as avatars of the Sinaitic revelation, Written and Oral, to both: the Generation of the Flood was offered the Written Torah, while the Generation of the Dispersion was offered the Oral Torah.

In *Peri Zaddiq*, however, the Generation of the Dispersion falls out of his scheme; instead, the Generation of the Flood is offered first the Written Torah and by implication the Oral one), and, upon its refusal, is offered the Oral Torah directly. This omission may be due to the change

⁴⁸ The Talmud's assignment (in Qid 49b) of nine kab's-worth of sorcery (*keṭubim*) to Egypt (out of the ten which "descended" to the world), while attributing pride and poverty (and poverty of Torah) — but not sorcery — to Babylon may have influenced R. Zadok's downgrading of Babylon in this regard. However, this source is clearly alluded to in *Peri Zaddiq*, p. 195b, though the printed editions do not have the reference. This poverty of Torah, despite its role as a source in Torah manifests itself in the acerbity of Talmudic debate there as contrasted with that in the land of Israel. For R. Zadok, as for the Bavli itself, there was no true poverty of Torah in Babylon.

⁴⁹ See my discussion above of the exact roles of Babylonia and Persia among the Four Monarchies.

⁵⁰ Alan Brill will take up this theme in his dissertation.

⁵¹ Composed approximately at the time of *Taqqanat ha-Sharin*, in R. Zadok's mid-thirties or later.

⁵² Composed in the period between *Taqqanat ha-Sharin* and *Yisrael Qadoshim*.

of venue, if it is not the result of the auditor/transcriber's error: R. Zaddok has become rebbe and now addresses an audience of his hasidim, for whom he simplifies his scheme. The nature of Babylon as a place of Torah from primeval times remains unchanged, however.

This characteristic continues throughout history until its culmination in the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud, which, as I noted elsewhere, represents the essence of the application of human intellect to Torah — “‘He sat me down in darkness’ — this refers to the Talmud of Babylon.”⁵³ Thus, for example, Ezekiel marches into Babylonian exile without despair, because he senses that Babylon has the potential to be a place of Torah.

When [the Israelites] went into exile in bitter spirits, Ezekiel went with joy because he felt the greater holiness which the Holy One, blessed be He, would bestow on Israel in Babylon.⁵⁴

From here on of course R. Zadok's sources provided him with a continuous history of Oral Torah in Babylon, from the removal of the “craftsmen and smiths”⁵⁵ — sages of the Oral Torah⁵⁶ — from Jerusalem, to the work of the Men of the Great Assembly in establishing the Oral Torah on a firm basis,⁵⁷ to the role of the Babylonian, Hillel, in renewing it in Eretz Israel,⁵⁸ and to the climax of its redaction — Babylonia.⁵⁹ The role of the Babylonian venue for these activities cannot be disregarded. Babylon is the antithesis (“the back”⁶⁰) of Jerusalem as the Tower of Babel was the antithesis of the Temple;⁶¹ Jericho has a connection with Babylon in that both are referred to as “city of palms.”⁶² Abraham came from Babylon, and it was to their ancient homeland that the Israelites were first exiled.⁶³

On the Israelite side, the earliest of these relationships may be dated, as noted above, to the patriarch Abraham's time, counterposing him to Nimrod; the second may be located in Egypt,⁶⁴ specifically the Egypt of

⁵³ Lam 3:6, Sanh 24a; see “History,” pp. 11–12.

⁵⁴ *Peri Zaddiq* V, Sukkot, n. 18, p. 123b. It is a place of Torah for the reason given above, but also because Ezekiel received his Vision of the Divine Chariot there.

⁵⁵ II Kings 24:14.

⁵⁶ *Seder 'Olam Rabbah*, ch. 25, Tanhuma Noah 3; see “History,” pp. 16–18.

⁵⁷ See “History,” pp. 12–18.

⁵⁸ See *Taqqanat ha-Shavin*, p. 23a–b, based in part on bSuk 20a.

⁵⁹ *Resisei Laylah*, p. 165a.

⁶⁰ *ahora'im*.

⁶¹ *Peri Zaddiq* I [*Qedusbat Shabbat*], pp. 56b–57a, *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 112a.

⁶² *Dorer Zeddek*, p. 145b and *Peri Zaddiq* V, p. 257a; my thanks to Rabbi Abba Zvi Naiman for the latter reference.

⁶³ bPes 87b, cited in *Peri Zaddiq* I [*Qedusbat Shabbat*], p. 56b.

⁶⁴ R. Zadok explicitly distinguishes between the sojourn in Egypt and the subjugation of Israel under the Four Monarchies; the former was “enslavement” as opposed to “exile.” Nonetheless, since Media does not appear as an active component of the four, Egypt is often mentioned in this connection, as the passages examined below will show.

the Israelite enslavement and Exodus, the third to the time of Solomon, who was, according to Rashi (see below), an ancestor of Nebuchadnezzar through the Queen of Sheba, and the fourth, which became a byword for secular knowledge *par excellence*, is associated with Aristotle. The latter is termed “Greek wisdom,” and is associated with Edom-Rome.⁶⁵

Thus, each surge of general human creativity corresponds to a similar one in Jewish history. Each era had its exemplars of insight and erudition. This did not occur by happenstance, but is a product of the operation of one of the basic principles by which universal balance, that of *zeh le'umat zeh*, parallel or symmetrical structure. If the world is divided between Israel and the Nations, there will be an exact,⁶⁶ though usually antithetical, symmetry in the historical enfolding of their fates. If Jacob is granted the greater portion in the World to Come, Esau must get his in this world.

This symmetry is not always antithetical, and is not limited to matters of chronology. As regards the subject of our concern, each historical era has its own characteristic method of acquiring knowledge, and that method is shared by both Torah and secular knowledge. This is most clearly evidence in the last two eras, which represent an intersection of the principle of symmetry with another important antinomy: the antithesis between prophecy and the more labored, more uncertain acquisition of knowledge, primarily by means of the human intellect.⁶⁷ The other eras are less developed, and seem to have no distinctive epistemologies of their own, though R. Zadok regularly refers to Abraham's intuitive knowledge (“ha-kelayot yo'azot”).⁶⁸ Egyptian wisdom is characterized not by its epistemology as by its thrust: it is devoted to magic and sorcery. If the quintessential representative of Torah is the sage, of Greek wisdom the philosopher, that of Egyptian wisdom is clearly the sorcerer, the *harmum*. There is nonetheless validity in this, according to R. Zadok, and the Nations' wisdom includes

⁶⁵ See *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 179a–b where R. Zadok states this explicitly: “*nithabberu Yovan re-Edom yahad*,” his source may be Lev R 13:5 (ed. Margulies, p. 283), which sees Greece as Rome's precursor in maritime commerce, architecture and language. See section V, for the historical and theological implications of this identification.

⁶⁶ R. Zadok occasionally emphasizes this by adding the adjective *mekhuvvan* or *mammash* to his discussion of these matters; see the passage cited below from *Or Zaru'a la-Zaddiq* and n. 35. The importance of this principle in determining the contours of R. Zadok's overall scheme can scarcely be overestimated.

⁶⁷ See “History,” pp. 11–15. This antinomy was a staple of some medieval Jewish philosophers; see for example Yehudah ha-Levi's *Kuzari* I: 67, IV: 15, V: 22.

⁶⁸ *Peri Zaddiq* II, Va-eyra n. 3, p. 19a–b; see too *ibid.*, I, Bereshit n. 1, pp. 1b–2a, III Pesah nn. 30–31, p. 65, IV, Rosh Hodesh Tammuz, n. 1, p. 115b. Abraham's counterpart (by the principle of *zeh le'umat zeh*) is not clear. His nemesis is clearly Nimrod, who according to the Midrash, “knew his Creator.”

matters of ethical conduct as well.⁶⁰ Indeed, Abraham is supposed to have gained insight from Egyptian wisdom.⁶¹

The prophecy which accompanies the “covenant between the pieces” (*berit bein ha-betarim*) states that “after [their enslavement, the Israelites] will go out with great wealth” (Gen 15: 14); this R. Zadok interprets as referring not to gold and silver, but to “whatever holiness they will extract from there, for Egypt was the place of the Torah’s exile, for this-worldly [wisdom] was then resident in Egypt, and Israel extracted the holy sparks from it as a preparation for the Sinaitic revelation.”⁶² This interpretation is derived from an exegesis of Exod. 12:36, which describes the fulfillment of the prophecy. The Israelites are described as having “stripped (*va-yenazze’elu*) the Egyptians.”⁶³

A persistent theme in R. Zadok’s work, based on sources both rabbinic⁶⁴ and kabbalistic,⁶⁵ is that one purpose of exile is to redeem the holy sparks that are to be found in gentile wisdom.⁶⁶

Many *divrei Torah* are created (*mitbaddeshim*) in various ways (*be-’ofanim shonim*) by means of being intermingled (*bit’arvut*) among the Nations, and in this way comes the absorption of the sparks from them

This is because

it is known that the Torah of this world is apprehended through the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (in the *Tiqqunim* [56?]). Many words of Torah were handed over to outside forces, and [these] must be taken back from them, just as there are in the Written Torah many sections [ascribed] to the Nations — words of Laban, Esau, Pharaoh, and others, the section of Balaam and Balak, and so on. These are words of Torah that were handed over to wherever they were handed (*le-maqom she-nimseru*) after Adam’s sin, and even though they were reincorporated within the Written Torah at the Sinaitic revelation, when the Torah was given in its full dimensions . . . , nevertheless, as concerns the unfolding of the Oral Torah, more still needs to be extracted from these outside forces, that is, [these parts of Torah] were given over as a result of the sins of each Jew

⁶⁰ This is stated explicitly in *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 124a, but it underlies his discussion in *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 68.

⁶¹ *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq* n. 249, p. 129. This theme recurs in respect to Solomon as well; see below. The theme appears already in the Zohar, see Elliot Wolfson, “Left Contained in the Right: A Study in Zoharic Hermeneutics,” *AJS Review* 11 (1986), pp. 27–52, esp. 33–40. See also *idem.*, “Light Through Darkness: The Ideal of Human Perfection in the Zohar,” *HTR* 81 (1988), pp. 73–95.

⁶² *Peri Zaddiq* III (Pesah n. 39), pp. 71b–72a, *Peri Zaddiq* II (Purim n. 2), p. 190b.

⁶³ R. Zadok’s source appears to be R. Jonathan Eibeschutz’ *Ahavat Yehonatan*, Warsaw, 5735, repr. Brooklyn, NY, 1974, Lekh Lekha, p. 6a.

⁶⁴ See bPes 87b, where the purpose of Israel’s exile is to gather proselytes.

⁶⁵ As noted above (n. 70), it appears in the Zohar; also, see *Eẓ Ḥayyim* 7:49. On the relations between purity and impurity in the system of Lurianic Kabbalah, see Y. Tishby, *Torat ha-Ra’*, pp. 79–90.

⁶⁶ See for example his remarks in *Peri Zaddiq* I, Ḥayyei Sarah n. 5, p. 63b, III, Pesah n. 32, p. 66b; *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, pp. 68–69, and see below.

⁶⁷ *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 69b.

[Now,] the Written Torah constitutes God’s thought regarding Creation — for this reason it [functions as] the model (*defus*) of Ma’aseh Bereshit, as we find in Genesis Rabbah 1 The Nations too are part of Creation and they contain letters of Torah as well from which issues the spark which gives them life, for without it they would have no reality at all.

R. Zadok goes on to explain that while there is wisdom among the gentiles, Torah can be created only by Jews, and so no one should think that the secrets of the Torah can be identified with Greek wisdom, as Maimonides did. The Torah in the holy sparks which are to be found among the Nations must be extracted and converted to Torah by Jews.⁶⁷

III

Both the early Babylonian and Egyptian eras are pre-Sinaitic. The giving of the Torah at Sinai ushers in a new era in many ways. It represents an overwhelmingly significant surge in the sine curve of human access to knowledge. The era of prophecy begins and immediately reaches its culmination with the prophecy of Moses; equal to him, as the Midrash emphasizes, was the Aramean seer Balaam.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 68a; see *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, pp. 79–81, *Seder ha-Zekhnut*, pp. 58b–59a, *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq*, pp. 129b–130a, and see section I. On the Torah of the Tree of Knowledge, as set forth in the *Tiqqunei Zohar* and *Ra’yah Meḥanna*, see Y. Tishby, *Mithvat ha-Zohar*, II, pp. 387–391, p. Lachtower and Y. Tishby, *Mithvat ha-Zohar* I, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1971, pp. 222–223.

Elsewhere R. Zadok specifies in greater detail the process by which the statements of biblical figures from among the Nations become words of Torah. In *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 130a–b, he suggests that such a process requires that these figures utter their words with full concentration and belief — even when they contain heresy, as in Pharaoh’s challenge to Moses, “Who is God that I should heed Him” (Exod. 5: 2).

⁶⁹ So too in *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 150a.

Another issue should be mentioned here. Since the existence of the Nations depends on their possession of holy sparks of wisdom, how could Egyptian culture continue to survive after the Israelites had “stripped” its nuggets of true wisdom from the Egyptians? R. Zadok’s answer is that in truth, since all the Nations’ “roots” are in evil, their existence is dependent on Israel and the benefit which Israel derives from them; as proof he points to the famous aggadah regarding Roman building activities in A.Z. 2b. On Judgement Day the Romans will claim that all their public activities were undertaken with the intent of allowing Israel to live in peace and pursue its Torah studies. According to R. Zadok, this claim is not hypocritical, but represents their ultimate realization that this indeed was the case; see *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 68a.

Elsewhere, he suggests another reason. Egypt’s continued existence, as well as that of other nations, is also guaranteed by those souls which will ultimately become proselytes, a process that will continue until that final “clarification” (*berur*) or *tiqqun* at the eschaton (see *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 118a–b).

⁷⁰ For the continued existence of gentile wisdom after Sinai see n. 83.

⁷¹ Num R 14: 20; in *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 109b, R. Zadok refers to Tanna deBe Elyahu R (ch. 28), where Balaam’s partial superiority over Moses is mooted.

Israel receives the Torah through Moses, and the Nations receive “external”⁸¹ or “apocryphal books” of wisdom through his equal in prophecy, but opposite in quality, Balaam. Moreover, Israel itself is now restricted in that its exclusive focus and primary means of acquiring knowledge must be through Torah. However, for reasons I have examined elsewhere,⁸¹ God’s original intention, which was that the human intellect should provide the mode of acquisition with Torah as its focus, did not materialize, on the whole, and prophecy became dominant.

Since Moses represents the totality of Israel’s souls,⁸² and thus its wisdom, so too Balaam, by the operation of the principle of symmetrical development, represents the “root” of all gentile (“external”) wisdom. The counterpart to the Torah, which is coextensive with Israel’s knowledge, are the “outside” or “apocryphal books,” which contain “the wisdom of the Nations.”⁸³ The logic of symmetrical structure requires this, though there is no authoritative source for such an hypothesis.

Despite his prophetic gifts, however, Balaam’s insight into the world’s workings in practical terms is no better than that of the Nations as a whole.⁸⁴ That is, though he could in truth claim for himself the title of “the one who knows God’s intentions,” such knowledge was external;⁸⁵ thus, despite knowing that God wished to bless Israel, he still attempted to curse them. In this respect he is no different from Amalek, the counterpart and enemy of the Sinaitic Israel; Amalek and the Nations as a whole have no true understanding of the universe and God’s role in it.

⁸¹ “External” refers to the “outer” or lowest part of a matter; as it happens, the phrase *sefarim hitsoniyim* is taken from mSanh 10: 1, where it refers to apocryphal books. Such is the power of the principle of symmetry that R. Zadok asserts this with no midrashic, talmudic, kabbalistic, secular or logical proof.

On rare occasions R. Zadok will look to experience for proof; see *Sefer ha-Zikhronot*, pp. 50–51, or even general historical works (*dirrei mesapperei qadmoniyot*) as in *Or Zaru’a la-Zaddiq*, p. 19b. Otherwise, his most frequent argument, when faced with a lack of talmudic, midrashic or kabbalistic sources, is an argument from probability, usually prefixed with the expression *mistama*. I hope to deal with this matter on another occasion, D.v.

As noted, such is the power of the principle of symmetry that R. Zadok asserts Balaam’s origination of these books with no midrashic, talmudic, kabbalistic, secular or logical proof! In *Or Zaru’a la-Zaddiq*, an early work, he adduces a different “chain of tradition” of gentile wisdom; see below.

⁸² “History,” pp. 9–10.

⁸³ R. Zadok interprets Ar 17a, “the leader [of the generation] corresponds [in his personal qualities] to [those of] his generation” as implying this.

Thus, the Sinaitic revelation did not effect the Nations’ mode of acquisition of knowledge, though it did provide them with an accumulation of knowledge in the form of “outside books.” However, given the fact that in the end, Israel’s mode of acquisition of knowledge remained that of prophecy rather than human intellection,⁸⁶ this is not surprising; indeed, the principle of symmetry requires it.

Thus the next great expansion of human knowledge takes place under Solomon, whom Scripture terms “the wisest of all men.”⁸⁷ Again, the principle of symmetrical development requires a gentile counterpart for Solomon, and R. Zadok can do no better than propose the Queen of Sheba, who “presumably (*mistama*) was exemplary in [her knowledge of]

⁸⁴ R. Zadok distinguishes between gentile wisdom *per se* and the holy sparks it may contain.

In *Taqqanat ha-Shavin* R. Zadok identifies the Nations with the Written Torah, inasmuch as the words of gentiles are contained therein, and Tanhumah Noah refers to the translation of the Torah as a way for the gentiles to elum, as the Church did, that they are the true Israel. This is all because “they have some connection (*shayyakhu*) to the Written Torah” (p. 68b), though, as he notes, this was true *before* Sinai. This connection was broken with the Sinaitic revelation, and now their words cannot be converted into “words of Torah,” as they were before Sinai. However, the Nations have no connection with the Oral Torah, either, and their wisdom cannot be converted into Torah in any direct fashion. The basis of their existence inheres primarily in their usefulness, unacknowledged as it is, to Israel (*Taqqanat ha-Shavin*, p. 68a). With but one exception (see below), R. Zadok consistently denies the possibility of gentile connection with the Oral Torah; see *Yisrael Qadoshim*, p. 43a, *Reshit Laylah*, pp. 36b, 83a, 161b, *Poqed Agarim*, pp. 13a, 19a, 53b, *Liqquti Ma’amarim*, p. 150b.

The one exception is Esau. In *Reshit Laylah*, p. 129a, he suggests that Esau’s wisdom can be associated (again he uses the word *shayyakhu*) with the hiddenness and uncertainty of the more human Oral Torah. The reason for this may be found a page earlier, where R. Zadok emphasizes the descent of R. Akiva, one of the founders of the Oral Torah, from Esau. It is this connection which distinguishes Edomite wisdom.

In this light, the comparison of gentile wisdom to Oral Torah in *Liqquti Ma’amarim*, p. 85a, goes no further than a *similarity* (*duqmat*) restricted to one point: both issue from the hearts of men, but gentile wisdom is essentially false.

In all of this R. Zadok distinguishes between gentile wisdom as formal, institutionalized learning and those sparks of true wisdom that may be found among the gentiles. It may be for this reason that he so often emphasizes the role of close proximity and/or sexual contact with gentiles as the medium of transmission; see *Taqqanat ha-Shavin*, pp. 37a, 38a, 48a–b, 63b–64a, *Zidqei ha-Zaddiq*, pp. 137a–183a. The role of physical contact is to be found among gentiles as well; see his comment regarding the transferral of authority from a king to his courtiers because of their closeness (*meqarvim*) to him.

⁸⁵ *Dirrei Soferim*, p. 12b.

⁸⁶ See *Dirrei Soferim*, p. 12b. “All his knowledge was from the lips outward, and once he uttered [his words of wisdom, i.e., the blessings] against his will, nothing was left with him.”

⁸⁷ This is discussed in detail in “History,” pp. 9–15.

⁸⁸ I Ki 5: 10–14. Naturally, this implies a corresponding flowering of Oral Torah, at least within the limits of an essentially prophetic era. As to the former, see *Reshit Laylah*, p. 127b; for the latter see *Dover Zedek*, p. 172a, 105b: Solomon wished to harness his unconscious drives to the service of Torah as well, and, according to 166b, succeeded in doing so.

The image of Solomon as a proto-hasidic *zaddiq* who attempted to raise this world to the level of holiness of the upper worlds apparently fascinated R. Zadok; see his long analysis of this (mostly) failed attempt in *Dover Zedek*, pp. 109–112, 165–174.

wisdom (*nufleget be-hokhmah*) among the Nations, viz., those outer sciences (*hokhmot hiztoniyot*).⁸⁸ His proof is indirect; since she came to test Solomon's wisdom, she herself must have been in a position to judge. Note that he has no source for this supposition but the operation of the great principle which drives human development.⁸⁹

In any case, the meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba represented the acme of the latter's interest in "foreign women," which R. Zadok equates, utilizing Maimonides' well-known metaphor, with "foreign wisdom."⁹⁰

This is why King Solomon, may he rest in peace, sinned with foreign women, who are called "harlots," for he occupied himself with the wisdom of all the sons of the East and the Egyptians as well; for this reason he suffered *midah ke-neged midah*, [as our Sages] noted⁹¹ that he [ultimately] engendered Nebuchadnezzar — [the one] who destroyed the Holy Temple — by her.⁹²

Thus, by his interest in foreign wisdom, Solomon was the ultimate cause of the destruction of the Temple he himself had built — rather than, as R. Zadok adds — bringing the Davidic messiah (or perhaps playing that role himself!)⁹³ and thus ensuring that his Temple would stand forever.

He once again caused confusion⁹⁴ between external wisdom — which represents the generality of the souls of the Nations who are as apes to men as compared to the souls of Israel⁹⁵ — he confused them⁹⁶ with the wisdom of Israel. Since it is said of him that "he was wiser than [all the sons of the East], etc."⁹⁷ [Thus,] presumably (*mistama*)⁹⁸ he had some connection with them, for one cannot justly compare two things that have no connection with each other.

This connection prevented the completion of the matter of the messiah, which had been intended [to take place upon completion of the Temple], whose desired purpose was to clarify perfectly God's sovereignty over the world.⁹⁹

⁸⁸ *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 83a, see *Dover Zeddek*, p. 109a–b where R. Zadok traces the bizarre spiritual triangle of the Queen of Sheba, Balaam and Solomon. Since Balaam is Moses' counterpart, it is little wonder that Solomon is compared to Moses; see R.H. 21b and *Mabsheret Hareg*, p. 23a.

⁸⁹ Elsewhere (*Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 109a, see below), R. Zadok speaks of Hiram of Tyre as Solomon's counterpart in wisdom, but this point is not developed. It is the Queen of Sheba who plays an active role in R. Zadok's historiography.

The Queen of Sheba is a distinct exception to R. Zadok's view of women as inherently incapable of assimilating 'wisdom' (as opposed to 'understanding'), and it may be that he could not consider her Solomon's counterpart. Counterpart or not, she was certainly a collaborator.

⁹⁰ Here he refers to Rashi on I Kg 1: 10 and *Shelab*, *Asarah Ma'amarot*, but, though Solomon is referred to several times in the latter, and the Queen of Sheba at least once (*Ma'amar Shelishi u-Revi*, ed. Jerusalem, 5735, 36a), I have been unable to locate the latter reference. Apparently, the editor confused the *'Asarah Ma'amarot* of R. Azariah de Fano with that of the Shelah; the correct reference is in de Fano, Part V, chapters 23–24; my thanks to Allan Brill for this suggestion.

⁹¹ Explanatory matter has been placed between brackets.

⁹² *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 83a; see *Dover Zeddek*, p. 105a–b. Ultimately, however, Nebuchadnezzar will be shown to be shorn of evil, see *Dover Zeddek*, p. 173a–b.

⁹³ See *ibid.*, p. 82b.

⁹⁴ *hehezir le'arben*. "Confusion" has overtones of illegitimate mixing as well, a kind of spiritual miscegenation; as we shall see, spiritual and biological miscegenation are combined in R. Zadok's thought.

The essential difference between the wisdom of Israel and the Nations inheres in Israel's recognition of God's sovereignty over the universe,¹⁰⁰ while the Nations believe in the rule of Nature, a nature independent of God.¹⁰¹ By attempting to combine the two, Solomon undermined the purpose of the Temple, which was to usher in the messianic age, when the sin of Adam would be rectified. From a kabbalistic perspective, Adam's sin was that of illegitimate mixing of good and evil; the purpose of Torah and mitzvot is to separate them.

It was for this reason, according to R. Zadok, that the Sages considered placing Solomon in the company of those kings who have no portion in the World to Come.¹⁰² And it is for this reason that Balaam eventually took his place in the roster of those who have no share in the world to come. Nevertheless, R. Zadok, in a remarkable passage in *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq*,¹⁰³ suggests that to some extent the development of Torah Shebe'al Peh in Solomon's time was aided by gentile wisdom, "on temporary loan to the Israelites in order thereby to set Divine Wisdom in their hearts." Ultimately, it was returned to them, and Israel has no further need of it.

¹⁰⁰ It is important to note that though one of his sources, Ibadat's *Tanna*, stresses that the Nations originate in one of the three totally evil *kelipot* and are *'aredei 'avadah zarah*, "idolators" (see *Iggrot ha-Qodesh* 25, p. 278), R. Zadok assigns them to *kelipat angub* (*Zidqat ha-Zaddiq*, n. 245, p. 124a), and stresses that they are not truly idolators, but merely hold to the customs of their ancestors (*mitshag aratthem bi-ydehem*, Hul 13b, see *Poqed 'Ajarim*, p. 51b, quoted below, section IV). Elsewhere however, R. Zadok assigns Persia (in *Zidqat ha-Zaddiq*, p. 156a), Esau/Edom/Amalek and Greece (see *Peri Zaddiq* 1, p. 139a–b), and Midian (*Tiqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 46b) to other *kelipot*.

This is not the only issue on which R. Zadok takes issue with the *Tanna*; see *Tiqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 135a–b, where he rejects the latter's extreme position regarding non-eternal emissions.

¹⁰¹ I.e., he confused and mixed the Nations, who embody their own wisdom, with the physical and spiritual body of Israel, by taking foreign women and studying foreign wisdom. R. Zadok often points to this pair of evil inclinations to which humans are heir. The one is lust for physical pleasure (*yigra' de-arayot*), and the other is the desire for idolatry (*yigra' de-'avadah zarah*); see *Sibat Mal'akhei ha-Sharim*, p. 75a, and "History," p. 15. It is the desire for idolatry which affects man's spiritual faculties.

¹⁰² I Ki 5: 11–14.

¹⁰³ See n. 78.

¹⁰⁴ *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 83b.

¹⁰⁵ Or perhaps even more, their ultimate recognition that "all is God;" see *Sefer ha-Zikkaron*, p. 58a. Even though many Jews never reach this realization, they have the *potential* to do so, something which is closed to gentiles; see Mendel Peikarz, "ha-Nequdah ha-Penit' 'ezel Admorei Gur ve-Aleksandr ke-Babu'ah le-Kosher Histaglutam le-Tnarat ha-'Itim," in Y. Dan and Y. Haeker, *Melqaram ha-Kabbalah, be-Filosofiya Yehudit ure-Sajrat ha-Misar rebe-Ilgud Migashim le-Yehayah Tisbe: bi-Melo' lo Shv'im re-Hamesh Shanim*, Jerusalem: Magnes, 1986, pp. 617–660, as well as the corresponding chapter in his *Hasidut Polin: Megamat Ra'ayonot beim Shetei ha-Milhamot bri-Cezemet Ta' Sh-Ta-Sha'ab* (*ha-Sho'ab*), Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1990, pp. 122–156.

¹⁰⁶ It must be stressed that this wisdom is not always intellectual or conscious, but is part of the essence of their being. A Jew, no matter how far he strays, can be recalled to this understanding; a gentile, unless his soul was at Sinai and he ultimately converts to Judaism, lacks the capability of accepting this truth.

¹⁰⁷ Sanh 104b.

¹⁰⁸ Pp. 129b–130a.

In this analysis, the exact nature of “external wisdom” is undefined, beyond the general statement that “external wisdom is the exact contrary”¹¹⁴ of [Israel’s wisdom in that] it is the knowledge of creation in Nature (*hokhmat ha-beri’ah ha-tava*), as though it was stamped so without the attention of a Supernal Overseer.” The sources and methods of such a “science” remain unspecified. However, R. Zadok does take on this question in other places, and provides an answer which not only conforms with the principle of symmetrical development, but also, as he explicitly affirms, conforms with the historical accounts of gentile historians.¹¹⁵

IV

R. Zadok takes up this theme in connection with his discussion of the rise of Greek wisdom, specifically in regard to the work of Aristotle.

It is a matter of amazement¹¹⁶ that Aristotle, the chief of the gentile sages in regard to “external wisdom”¹¹⁷ — which is invalid (*pasul*) and [only valid] as perfumers and butchers for the true wisdom — also lived in the time of Simon the Righteous, [who], as is known, was the first¹¹⁸ of the sages of truth, the sages of the Mishnah and the Oral Torah. For God made each parallel to the other (*zev le’umat zev*). But all the sages of the Nations before him, all their wisdom was in magic [italics mine], as [our Sages] explain, that [these arts] weaken the Heavenly Court.¹¹⁹ The Greek sages began to establish (*leyasseh*) the knowledge of Nature and to contemplate the nature of each thing, but they ascribed all to natural processes. The wisdom of the sages of Israel, however, is to recognize with true wisdom that God orders (*maubiq*) Creation and governs the angels who are the spiritual powers of nature.¹²⁰

In a parallel passage in *Poqed ‘Aqarim* (see below) R. Zadok connects this with the birth of heresy and Epicurianism and the cessation of prophecy — and also the major development of Oral Torah. Moreover, along with the end of the inclination to idolatry among Jews with the work of the Men of the Great Assembly came the end of true idolatry among the Nations. In any case, the systematic and logical investigation of nature and natural processes begins with Aristotle. In its insistence on the autonomy of nature, Greek wisdom is one with its predecessors. In its methods it breaks new ground.

¹¹⁴ *bepekeb zev mamush*; note once again that the two wisdoms are counterparts, symmetrical but opposed.

¹¹⁵ See below, p. 174.

¹¹⁶ Note that in a parallel passage in *Poqed ‘Aqarim*, p. 51a, he does not consider this “a matter of amazement.” It may be that the latter was composed after *Sibat Mal’akhei ha-Sharet*. This symmetrical development is also mentioned in *Liqqutei Ma‘amarim*, pp. 150b–151a, and *Peri Zaddiq* I, p. 140a.

¹¹⁷ The parallel passage in *Poqed ‘Aqarim* has: “the chief of the sages of Greece.”

¹¹⁸ As the last of the Men of the Great Assembly (Avot 1: 2), he was the first of the Tannaim.

¹¹⁹ Hul 7b.

¹²⁰ *Sibat Mal’akhei ha-Sharet*, p. 77a.

This is not fortuitous. R. Zadok emphasizes (“matter of amazement”) the contemporaneity of Simon the Righteous and Aristotle. Greek wisdom and the wisdom of the Oral Torah, both of which are in large measure products of the human intellect, begin at the same time, and develop symmetrically. In the wake of the “slaughter of the inclination to idolatry,”¹²¹ and the consequent victory of the Sages’ intellectual understanding of the role of God in governing the universe (as opposed to that of the Prophets, which was by means of prophetic inspiration), and in concert with the Greek sages’ understanding of natural law, both idolatry and magic, declined. In the past, magic and sorcery had predominated in Babylon, which worshiped the forces of Nature as gods; it is for this reason that the names of the angels have their origin there.¹²² But there is a decisive change in the relation of the Nations to idolatry with the slaughter of that inclination by the Men of the Great Assembly.

When the Men of the Great Assembly did away with the inclination to idolatry, the attraction of idolatry among the Nations also ceased; thus, it is stated (Hul 13b) that gentiles outside of the land of Israel are not [true] idolators, but merely uphold the customs of their ancestors.” . . . This occurred at the time of the cessation of prophecy in Israel, [when] this power [of attraction to idolatry] ceased among the gentiles. [What remains] is their rootedness in physical desires [and pleasures] and their connection (*dibhuq*) to idolatry [is merely an excuse to indulge in them].¹²³

This point is made perhaps even more forcefully in *Resisei Laylah*.

God’s governance of all the worlds and even the Nations’ development follows [the principle of] *zev le’umat zev*, according to the regime of Torah in Israel. The proliferation of magicians and sorcerers among them was at a time of Divine revelation and prophecy in Israel, and when [these] were removed and the [era of] the Oral Torah began, Greek wisdom, which is human wisdom [i.e., a product of human intellect, as opposed to magic and sorcery] began.

R. Zadok makes the connection even clearer in his reference to Greece in *Peri Zaddiq*. It is significant that it was the flowering of the Oral Torah, which in R. Zadok’s thought constitutes a watershed in Jewish history, that fueled this great surge of gentile creativity as well.

¹²¹ Yom 69b, see *Divrei Soferim*, p. 41b.

¹²² *Sibat Mal’akhei ha-Sharet*, pp. 75–77.

¹²³ Here follows a discussion of the difference between gentiles living in the land of Israel and those outside. Those in the Land cannot be upholding their idolatrous ancestral customs, according to R. Zadok, since their ancestors would have had to accept the seven Noabide commandments in order to be permitted to reside there; thus, the idolators in the Land may have borrowed such customs from their brothers overseas.

It should be noted that in *Tanya* II: 25 (p. 278) the Nations are specifically termed idolators (*o. edei avodab zarab*); see n. 94.

¹²⁴ *Poqed ‘Aqarim*, p. 51b.

¹²⁵ *Resisei Laylah*, p. 161b.

The essential flowering of the Oral Torah was in the days of Hashmonaim [in accordance with] the principle of symmetry (*zoh le'umat zoh*); alongside the growth of words of Torah came a growth of Greek wisdom, which is the contrary of the wisdom of the Oral Torah, [in the time] of Aristotle, the head of the sages of the Greeks. Because of their wisdom they became arrogant and ridiculed earlier faiths (*emunot qadmonot*) — even idolatry and magic. Indeed, they wished to nullify the Holy Torah and words of prophecy, saying that if there was any reality to prophecy in this world — that God, may He be blessed, speaks with mortals — they too would have achieved [this state]. Since they could not apprehend words of Torah with their knowledge they would not believe in words of Torah, saying that there is no wisdom in the world but what they apprehend.¹¹⁶

Thus, just as the inauguration of the era of Oral Torah marked the end of prophecy, so too did the growth of Greek wisdom mark the end of true idolatry and magical practices.¹¹⁷

Finally, in his commentary to the beginning of Exodus, he traces the relations between the pre-Hellenic wisdom traditions of the ancients.

... As is known from the reports of the chroniclers of antiquities (*mesapperei qadmoniyot*), the beginning of wisdoms was in Egypt [devised by] the ancient Egyptians sages, and after that (at the time of the Babylonian exile and somewhat earlier) in the land of the Chaldeans and from there to Greece (in the days of Simon the Righteous and the Oral Torah. . . .). And in that nation in which wisdom increased is where wisdom spread — the increase of wisdom that God, may He be blessed, created and gave to man. However, these [wisdoms] turned [into a stumbling block]¹¹⁸ because of their evil nature.

[Nevertheless,] they became great sages in wordly sciences, and also in knowledge of magic. For the nature of wisdom among the Nations corresponds to that which God, may He be blessed, gives at a certain time (*bi-’et bi-’ga’*) to influence this world, [in particular] the Jews, [who] apprehend these matters in their true light. This is known as ‘Torah’

According to the plethora of the light of wisdom which issues from God, may He be blessed, at that time and in that generation (all in careful measure, as is known), so too is that matter of wisdom among the Nations at that time, and so too the words of Torah which come from the sages of Israel at that time — all [corresponds] exactly.

That is the reason that wisdom changed from [the time of] the Egyptians to [that of] Greece, corresponding to the change from Written Torah¹¹⁹ to [the logic of] Oral Torah, for [these] wisdoms correspond exactly.

[Furthermore,] these sciences have changed among the Nations from the time of the sages of the Talmud to our [own] time, and so in every generation; these matters are profound and complex (*arukhim*), [and] this is not the place [to go into detail].¹²⁰

V

Enough has been said to indicate that the Nations’ concern with Nature is

not illegitimate in and of itself; indeed, the essence of Torah learning is concern with these matters as well (see below). The difference is one of motive and method. The motive should be to examine God’s governance of the universe and the dependence of nature on His will. The method — for Israel — is kabbalistic; for the Nations, philosophical.

Ma’aseh Bereshit is the recognition of how all creatures are God’s creation, for His praise (*qiblah*) — that is implicit in Prov 25:2 “[For the honor of the Lord, investigate the matter].” It is a mitzvah [incumbent] on everyone (*’al kol ’ebad*) to investigate this and to consider these matters as far as he is able (*u-lebitbonnen ’ad meqom she-yato maga’an*), [but] like the mitzvah of “Ask,”¹²¹ which no longer applies to everyone, but rather as laid down: th. . . one does not expound Ma’aseh Bereshit to two, [referring] to public discussion . . . which can lead to heresy. [Nevertheless,] this consideration is a great need as regards Torah, which is in general concerned with this attainment.¹²²

Gentile wisdom also has a certain degree of truth value. All true wordly wisdom has its origin in Written Torah, and it is for that reason that the Talmud in various places¹²³ seeks the Scriptural origin for particular folk sayings. “All human wisdom, as long as it is true, is hinted in the Torah, though in hidden form.”¹²⁴

Greek wisdom as a product of the human intellect shares a number of characteristics with the Oral Torah. As products of human intellection, they are both subject to doubt and revision. However, since God has not abandoned the process of revelation in Israel, but merely transferred it from prophet to sage, while continuing to guide the thought processes of the sage, the Oral Torah will ultimately prove true. Purely human approaches to the understanding of the universe have no such guarantee or guarantor, and may be subject to total error. As R. Zadok remarks regarding Aristotelian notions of science (physics and metaphysics), in criticizing Maimonides for enshrining them in *Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah*, “for they are not matters that are necessary for most believers in the Torah and all the more so since many of his words are not true, according to the opinion of their sages today.”¹²⁵ Nevertheless, he does accord them a certain validity; in a late statement, he apparently noted that “in Greek wisdom there is yet a slight spark of goodness (*niẓẓoz mu’at meba-’or*), such that the Rambam and others of the sages of Israel [could] extract [tru

¹¹⁶ *Peri Zaddiq* 1, p. 140a.

¹¹⁷ See also *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 179a.

¹¹⁸ Literally, “to evil” (*le-tu’a*).

¹¹⁹ And therefore prophecy; see above and see “History,” p. 15.

¹²⁰ *Or Zarua la-Zaddiq*, pp. 19b–20a. Despite his final disclaimer, I have not found in R. Zadok’s published writings a more detailed general summary of the history of gentile wisdom which sets out the development more clearly.

¹²¹ See Deut 4: 32, which R. Zadok takes to refer to the study of Ma’aseh Bereshit; see *Sefer ha-Zikbrout*, p. 58a.

¹²² mHag 2:1.

¹²³ *Sefer ha-Zikbrout*, pp. 58b–59a.

¹²⁴ See, aside from the aforementioned Tan 9a, see bBava Qamma 92a–93a, or the use of these sayings in Ber 31a, Shab 145b, Erub 3a, etc.

¹²⁵ *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 81b (top); see n. 83 however.

¹²⁶ *Sefer ha-Zikbrout*, p. 58b.

knowledge].”¹²⁷ This is part of a process that will reach its culmination in messianic times.

Gentile wisdom has no reality but in this world (and from which Israel absorbs the good which is relevant to Torah wisdom), [yet] there will come a day, as Scripture states, “I will destroy wisdom from Edom” [Obad 8], and therefore [gentile wisdom] has no [ultimate] relevance to the true Torah which exists forever . . . The outer wisdoms will develop until the absorption of the good [by Israel] is completed, and then all their wisdom will be cease to exist.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, gentile wisdom receives its impetus from the Torah as well. R. Zadok’s use of the term “wisdom of the Nations” is both broader and narrower than we might expect. It is narrower in that R. Zadok never loses sight of the moral dimension of the most abstruse of sciences; all knowledge is for one purpose only: to increase one’s recognition that the entire universe and all that occurs therein stems from God’s activity. It is in this sense that gentile wisdom is “external” (*hitzoniy*); it separates the Creator from His creation and assigns an independent existence to Nature.¹²⁹

It is also broader in that it contains not only science, but all conscious phenomena, including purely cultural ones. In a remarkable passage, R. Zadok explains just how far the influence of Israel’s innovations in Torah extends:

All types of wisdom which the sages of the Nations innovate proceeds from the wisdom of Israel (*hokhmat Yisrael*). When one of Israel gains a new insight in knowledge of Torah (*hokhmat ha-Torah*), which is the wisdom of God, this knowledge spreads throughout all the worlds, [including] the material world as well. In [it] some matter of worldly knowledge, corresponding [to the original insight] into God’s Torah and into His service, may He be blessed, is innovated, and the sages of the Nations of that generation are able to absorb it and to produce an innovation, which the onlooker perceives as their own.

I heard¹³⁰ that the statement [of our Sages] (in Yeb 63b), may their memory be blessed, is in agreement with my words: ‘Even a ship going from Gallia to Spain is blessed only by [the merit of] Israel.’ So too a certain holy man once stated that the various changes of style in clothing which are introduced day by day are produced by some Torah insight regarding the service of God of a Jewish soul. This matter is clear to me.¹³¹

¹²⁷ *Peri Zaddiq* V, p. 16a.

¹²⁸ *Resisei Laylah*, p. 128a.

¹²⁹ See *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 79a, 150b, 179b, for example. The theme recurs over and over in all his discussions of gentile wisdom.

¹³⁰ *shama’i*, i.e., in Izbica; this is R. Zadok’s term for traditions he received from his master. In his later writings he uses the term *qibbali*, “I received.”

¹³¹ *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 191a.

This is as it should be. If the question of how a Jew should dress is a matter of the Torah’s concern, so too should gentile dress be a matter of gentile wisdom, and since all wisdom comes from God, mediated through the Torah which is exclusively¹³² Israel’s — the Oral Torah — innovations in one lead to innovations in the other — *zeh le’umat zeh*.

VI

I began this survey with the observation that the Lurianic idea of sparks of holiness or light from the original Breaking of the Vessels is interpreted by R. Zadok as the exile of fragments of true wisdom among the Nations. These essential truths serve to vivify gentile wisdom, but as shards of Truth their proper place is the Torah, the repository of all that is true. Thus, at various times in history, these true insights have served to fructify the development of Torah as well. At an elementary level, R. Zadok points out that the Written Torah itself contains many statements made by gentiles which have been transmuted into Torah. The sanctity of Torah suffices to transform even Pharaoh’s challenge “Who is God that I should be mindful of him?”¹³³ into Torah. And *parashat Bilaam* — the prophecy of an anti-Israelite prophet for the Nations — is certainly worthy of note in this connection.

Beyond that, however, there is a reciprocal relationship between Oral Torah and gentile wisdom, and the Nations contributed, at crucial stages to the development of the Oral Torah. In a remarkable passage in *Zidqa ha-Zaddiq*,¹³⁴ R. Zadok suggests that the development of the Oral Torah in Solomon’s time was aided by gentile wisdom, “on temporary loan to the Israelites in order thereby to set Divine Wisdom in their hearts.” Ultimately, however, he notes that this wisdom was returned to the gentiles, and Jews have no further need of it.¹³⁵

This process of “borrowing” from gentile wisdom had earlier antecedents; in one of his talks on Pesah, R. Zadok explains that the prophecy that “after that they will go out with great wealth” (Gen 15: 14 in the “covenant between the pieces” (*berit bein ha-betarim*) refers not to

¹³² See *Liqqutei Ma’amarim*, p. 150b.

¹³³ Exod. 5: 2; see *Tagganat ha-Shovin*, p. 68a.

¹³⁴ Pp. 129b–130a.

¹³⁵ This may account for the continued existence of Egypt even after it had been emptied of its holy sparks at the Exodus. However, the appearance of the term “*va-yenagzeli*” (Exod. 12: 36) in regard to Egypt would make that transaction unique in biblical times. See Norman Lamm’s recent published *Torah Umadda: The Encounter of Religious Learning and Worldly Knowledge in the Jewish Tradition*, pp. 155–159.

gold and silver, but to “whatever holiness they will extract from there, for Egypt was the place of the Torah’s exile, for this-worldly [wisdom] was then resident in Egypt, and Israel extracted the holy sparks from it as a preparation for the Sinaitic revelation.”¹³⁶ And even earlier, in the time of the Patriarchs, Abraham in Egypt also benefited from Egyptian wisdom.¹³⁷

This process is not of only historical interest. As noted above, a persistent theme in R. Zadok’s work, based on both rabbinic and kabbalistic sources is that one purpose of exile is to redeem the holy sparks that are to be found in gentile wisdom.¹³⁸

... It seems to me that the root of all the souls of the Israelites are included within the compilation of the Mishnah, and so too are included in it all the words of Torah which will be absorbed (*veqaletu*) by means of the exiles among the Nations of the World. In this way the Ingathering of the Exiles [will be effected], for all the exiles to the four corners of the earth were for this purpose (*zorekib*) [of re-absorbing the lost sparks]. For through sin were many holy sparks absorbed (*nigletu*) — by the domination of one man by another for an evil end (*shelilat ‘adam hu-‘adam ve-sifo le-ra’*) — [which will be rectified] when “he disgorges what he has swallowed”¹³⁹ at the Ingathering of the Exiles. Then “all the peoples will be burnings of lime”¹⁴⁰ and “will seize the corner of a Jew’s garment,”¹⁴¹ and will become unwilling converts (*gerim gerotim*), and explained in [various] verses and the words of our Sages — for the holy spark draws with it all their vitality, as [occurred] at the death of the firstborn in Egypt by means of the revelation of God’s Presence. And many words of Torah are created (*mit’haddeshim*) in various ways (*he-‘ofanim shonim*) by means of [our] being intermingled (*halit’arruf*) among the Nations, and in this way comes the absorption of the sparks from them. . . .¹⁴²

He goes on to explain that while there is wisdom among the gentiles, Torah can be created only by Jews, and so no one should think that the secrets of the Torah can be identified with Greek wisdom, as Maimonides did. The Torah in the holy sparks which are to be found among the Nations must be extracted and converted to Torah by Jews.¹⁴³

More than that, however, this temporary loan, while repaid, will ultimately be taken up again. R. Zadok points out, as noted above, that all

¹³⁶ *Peri Zaddiq* II, Purim n. 2, p. 190b, III, Pesah n. 39, pp. 71b–72a.

¹³⁷ *Zidqat bi-Zaddiq* n. 249, p. 129. This interpretation of Abraham’s descent to Egypt is also in part adumbrated in the Zohar; see Wolfson, “Left Contained in the Right,” p. 34 and n. 35.

¹³⁸ See above, pp. 25–26.

¹³⁹ Jer 51: 44. R. Zadok uses the same expression in his discussion of the absorption of proselytes in *Liqqutei Ma‘amarim*, p. 118a–b. Note that the absorption of these proselytes is for R. Menahem Nahum (see n. 142) one of the conditions upon which the Nations’ continued existence depends. This theme is at best muted in R. Zadok’s works, where it is primarily the benefit of gentile activities to Israel which allows them to retain their vitality. R. Zadok’s emphasis on *hidushhei Torah* as the means for absorbing the holy sparks (while denying both gentiles and proselytes a real connection to the Oral Torah, see *Mahshevet Harnitz*, p. 166a), as contrasted to R. Menahem Nahum’s more person-to-person approach, which allows for the very presence of God among the Nations, something R. Zadok denies altogether in the *Mahshevet Harnitz* passage just mentioned. I hope to discuss this matter more fully elsewhere, D.v.

¹⁴⁰ Is 33: 12.

¹⁴¹ Zech 8: 23, with the inadvertent substitution of *re-yu‘hazu* for *re-behezqu*.

true worldly wisdom has its origin in Written Torah, and it is for that reason that the Talmud in various places¹⁴⁴ seeks the Scriptural origin for particular folk sayings. “All human wisdom, as long as it is true, is hinted in the Torah, though in hidden form.”¹⁴⁵ The job of accessing it to Torah, however, is specifically the job of *hakhmei Yisrael*, and by that R. Zadok means “true *talmidei hakhanim*.”¹⁴⁶

I turn now to the question of the content of this human wisdom, and its place in the scheme of Torah learning. In a sense, we have already defined it as being true wisdom of whatever type. Truth in this context refers to the ultimate aim of all knowledge, and that is knowledge of God and His ways of governing the universe. As we know, and as R. Zadok mentions innumerable times, Abraham learned to recognize God’s governance through contemplation of this worldly phenomena.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 69b. It is interesting to contrast this theme as handled in R. Menahem Nahum of Tchernobil’s *Me‘or ‘Ezayim* (Jerusalem, 5746, based on the first ed., Slavita, 1798), p. 55a = Brooklyn, 5744 (based on an edition of 5643 [1823]), p. 56b.

It is known that through the sin of Adam and his generation, that after him the holy sparks and souls fell among the peoples; through those holy sparks the Nations carry on [their activities] (*mitma-bagim*), and their vitality (*hayutani*) is by means of this, for all vitality is from supernal holiness In truth, this is the secret of the exile of the Shekhinah, and from this comes the souls of the proselytes from the gentiles who convert, for whoever has a soul from [this] holiness will convert on his own (*meqayer et ‘azmo*), and therefore Israel was scattered among the gentiles in order to cull (or: clarify, *levareh*) the sparks from them through knowledge and the Torah which was given to Israel, that they shall believe through this (*hu-‘zib*) that His kingdom rules all (Ps 103: 19). Through Israel’s commerce with them (*hit’asequt Yisrael ‘imabon be-masa’ u-mattan*) and the talks one has with them (*reba-dilburim she-medabberim ‘imabon*) in which the holy sparks are clothed, he draws them near to their root as long as he believes in this and draws them near to him that they should be included in him [= in his soul], and draws himself up with them. [Of course,] one requires knowledge and a pure and true service (*‘avadah tamah va-amiit*). It is to this that the Messiah looks forward, that we will cull (or: clarify, *levareh*) the sparks, and then will be process of clarification be completed

Note that R. Menahem Nahum sees the process taking place with a context of everyday relations between Jews and gentiles, while R. Zadok stresses its Torah aspect. As noted above (p. 166), R. Zadok writes (*Taqqanat ha-Sharim*, p. 68a),

Many words of Torah were handed over to outside forces, and [these] must be taken back from them, just as there are in the Written Torah many sections [ascribed] to the Nations — words of Laban, Esau, Pharaoh, and others, the section of Bilaam and Balak, and so on. These are words of Torah that were handed over to wherever they were handed after Adam’s sin, and even though they were reincorporated within the Written Torah at the Sinaitic revelation, when the Torah was given in its full dimensions nevertheless, as concerns the enfolding of the Oral Torah more still needs to be extracted from these outside forces, that is, [these parts of Torah] were given over as a result of the sins of each Jew

¹⁴³ Does this reflect a basic ambivalence in regard to these matters? See nn. 40, 151.

¹⁴⁴ See n. 83.

¹⁴⁵ *Liqqutei Ma‘amarim*, p. 81b (top).

¹⁴⁶ *Zidqat bi-Zaddiq* n. 249, p. 129b–130a.

¹⁴⁷ *Peri Zaddiq* I, *Bereshit* n. 1; see n. 3 for more references.

This applies on the individual and collective level. As to the latter, the very function of our exiles are to enable us to absorb (*liqlot*) that lasting wisdom (“the sparks of holiness, viz., the Oral Torah”) of our gentile neighbors which is helpful for Torah — thus, “true.”¹⁴⁸ On the individual level, R. Zadok often refers to R. Simhah Bunim of Przysucha’s explanation of the Divine Name Sh-D-Y — He declared that the world He created is sufficient to recognize His Presence.¹⁴⁹ The world testifies to its Creator, the book of creation can be understood not only through the Torah, which is its official commentary, but by our own experiences, so long as they are related to that recognition of God’s providence, just as Abraham did.

This is illustrated with an explanation of Rabbi’s advice that “whoever sees a woman suspected of adultery (*soṭah*) in her degradation will separate himself (by means of a Nazirite vow) from wine.”¹⁵⁰ Why should a bystander take this prohibition upon himself? After all, he is not involved with a married woman. The answer R. Zadok gives, quoting R. Simhah Bunim, is simple: because the bystander happened to be there, and was shown *soṭah be-qilqulah*, this must hold a particular lesson for *him* — otherwise circumstances would not have been arranged for him to witness the woman’s degradation. Our everyday experience holds lessons in Torah for all of us, and these lessons become part of Torah. To the extent that that experience involves gentiles,¹⁵¹ they too contribute to this process.

VII

In other discussions of the subject R. Zadok isolates other characteristics

¹⁴⁸ See *Peri Zaddiq* I, p. 63b; see too *Resisei Laylah*, p. 128a; see n. 21.

¹⁴⁹ A similar theme is sounded at the beginning of *Qol Simhah*, but not with the exegesis of the name Sh-D-Y which R. Zadok quotes; see however R. Simhah Bunim of Przysucha, *Qol Simhah ha-Shalem reha-Metuggan*, Jerusalem, 5746, Hayyei Sarah, pp. 7 and 27, respectively.

¹⁵⁰ bSot 2a.

¹⁵¹ But not gentile wisdom, against whose study R. Zadok repeatedly warns; see *Sefer ha-Zikbronot*, *passim*, and n. 83. A particular telling comment appears in *Dover Zeddeq*, p. 166b:

As is known, all those who occupy themselves with natural sciences are absolute heretics, for it is impossible [to study these disciplines] unless one denies [*raq she-yikhsor*] the true sciences [*hokhmot ha’emet*, viz., Kabbalah] of God, may He be blessed, and to believe that the world follows its own course [*olam ke-minhago noheg*, see A.Z. 55a] according to Nature and the laws of this world, and it is impossible for the heart to contain both together and to mediate between them; for this reason, those who read “outside” books have no portion in the world to come.

However, R. Zadok’s views on this matter were apparently ambivalent, for elsewhere he writes: A Jewish soul who sins in this is called only “one who reads apocryphal books,” for [their] origin is in Truth — the Torah of truth, which is the origin of all Jewish souls, and the error he makes is only by happenstance, and [the sin] cleaves to him only in small measure (*Liqqutei Mo’amarim*, p. 84a).

of gentile wisdom without specifying which nation exemplifies them most closely. We may thus assume that these characteristics either serve as the common denominator of all forms of gentile wisdom, or that they refer particularly to the highest form of such wisdom, that of Greece and Rome.¹⁵² The most important of these is connected with the immoral separation of science from ethics, and the separation of both from God. This has epistemological implications. Because all knowledge has its origin in God, the ultimate unity, true knowledge is monistic. Israel has this understanding as the ground of its being, even though it lacks intellectual understanding of it; the Nations have no understanding of it at all.¹⁵³

[Despite the halakhic strictures regarding the minutae of copying the Written Torah,] the Torah was written clearly in seventy languages,¹⁵⁴ for inasmuch as it [is permitted to be written] it is accessible to all humanity,¹⁵⁵ and there is wisdom among the Nations to apprehend the recognition of God[’s existence], as all the ancient philosophers of Greece and Arabia did of their own cogitations. Nevertheless, their hearts were not changed a wit by this knowledge, and the Holy One, blessed be He, did not dwell in their hearts at all. [It is only] in the hearts of Israel, to whom the Oral Torah is handed over.¹⁵⁶

This accessibility of true knowledge to the Nations extends still further.

Maimonides’ [equation of] the Work of Creation and the Vision of the Chariot [with Aristotelian sciences] is firmly established,¹⁵⁷ and the objection which is recorded in *Sefer ‘Avodat ha-Qodesh*,¹⁵⁸ and others, is not valid. [That is, if Maimonides’ identification is true], then the sages of the Nations, such as Aristotle and his like, were as conversant with the Work of Creation and the Vision of the Chariot as the prophets of Israel. It is [thus] true that there is [true] wisdom among the Nations, but it is not felt in the heart and is not [accepted as] Torah to direct [their] hearts.

The Work of Creation and the Vision of the Chariot, the secrets of the activities of created beings [as set forth] in all sorts of theoretical sciences (*sefer pe’ulat ha-nirra im be-khad minen hokhmot limmudiyah*) of the Jews are exactly (*hu’ azman atan*) those divine, natural, and theoretical sciences of the Nations. . . .

¹⁵² He makes this clear in his reference to Greece in *Liqqutei Mo’amarim*, p. 179a. It is significant that it was the flowering of the Oral Torah, which in R. Zadok’s thought constitutes a watershed in Jewish history, fueled this great surge of gentile creativity as well.

¹⁵³ See Peikaz, n. 98.

¹⁵⁴ bSot 36a.

¹⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 113a–b: “Wisdom which is revealed in written form may be explained well even to the Nations, for they too know this . . . Only the understanding of the heart is impossible to reveal altogether in written form; only in speech may it be unveiled, and even that is limited, for it is not perceived in speech as in the heart, where it has an effect, as it is said, “words which issue from the heart penetrate the heart.”

¹⁵⁶ *Liqqutei Mo’amarim*, p. 105a.

¹⁵⁷ R. Zadok seems explicitly to deny such an equation in *Sefer ha-Zikbronot*, p. 58b, but this may refer to the details of such sciences, rather than the equation itself. Still, it is clear that he was of two minds in the matter, as witness his denial (in *Dover Zeddeq*, p. 166b) that study of natural science can be carried out without heresy and assimilation to gentile mores. Alan Brill has suggested that one way of resolving these contradictions is to see each as appropriate to the level of the individual, a matter which will be taken up in his forthcoming dissertation (conversation, Aug 28, 1991).

¹⁵⁸ IV:1; see Roland Goetschel, *Meir ibn Cabbay: Le Discours de la Kabbale Espagnole*, Louvain Peeters, 1981, pp. 59–65.

As I heard,¹⁵⁷ the elders of the school of Athens of the Greek sages, who were close to his time and were [therefore] symmetrically related (*zeh le'umat zeh*) [to him], knew all the wisdom of R. Simon b. Yohai in *Sefer ha-Zohar*, and the ten sephiroth themselves, which were known to logicians as the ten sayings,¹⁵⁸ except that they clothed them in a different, 'external' metaphor, and [their discussions] do not constitute words of Torah.

So too King Hiram of Tyre knew all the wisdom of King Solomon, for he was his counterpart (*zeh le'umat zeh*), and Balaam knew all the wisdom of our teacher Moses, [at least] externally. . . .¹⁵⁹

R. Zadok goes still further, though by now it should occasion no surprise that R. Zadok expresses similar opinions on the accessibility of current kabbalistic literature to gentiles.

Sefer Yesirah and other kabbalistic works have been translated into foreign languages, and though [the Nations] can understand what is written, the difference between Israel [and the Nations inheres in the fact that the world was created for Israel]¹⁶² and Israel was thus created] by thought which comprehends absolute unity [and] which [in turn] does not recognize any division. This matter is the knowledge recoded in *Sefer Yesirah*, and is impossible for the Nations [to comprehend it], for their life-force does not originate in the thought of God, may He be blessed, [and therefore they] are unable to comprehend absolute unity. Thus, they do not [truly] comprehend [this] written version of *Sefer Yesirah*,¹⁶³ which [alludes] to the knowledge [inherent] in thought; rather, they consider it nonsensical and unworthy of serious consideration (*divrei battalim u-devarim shel mah be-kabbala*).¹⁶⁴

This inability, which is inherent in their very being, is thus connected with their refusal to recognize God's hand in all things and their (erroneous) comprehension of nature as a thing apart from God, and their separation of the ethical from science, or, as we might say, their counterpositioning of science and religion.

Practical consequences flow from this inability. The Talmud records the creation of a *golem* and a calf by use of *Sefer Yesirah*,¹⁶⁵ R. Zadok asserts that gentile sages will never be able to accomplish similar feats. Thus, while Israel creates by means of thought, kabbalistically, the Nations must resort

¹⁵⁷ Technical term for something learned at Izbica.

¹⁵⁸ The syntax is a bit awkward here, and perhaps requires a slight emendation. The text reads *bayad sefirot bem 'atzman hayu ha-yedu'im le-ha'alei bigyan*, the translation assumes a slight emendation of *hayu to she-hayu*. This connection is made by some medieval Jewish philosophers; see for example, Y. Albo, *Sefer ha-Iggarim*, XI: 2; see Goetschel, *Meir ibn Gabbay*, pp. 142–144. *Higyan* here would then refer, as it does in the halakhic literature of the Sephardic Rishonim, to philosophy (see M. Breuer, "Minc'u Bencikhem min ha-Higayon," in Y.D. Gilat and E. Stern, eds., *Mikhtam le-David: Sefer Zikרון ha-Rav David Osh*, Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan, 1977, pp. 242–264).

¹⁵⁹ *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 109a.

¹⁶⁰ The doctrine is based on a statement in Gen R 1: 4, but R. Zadok gives it a kabbalistic twist; see *ibid.* pp. 113a and 114a, and see n. 83.

¹⁶¹ As opposed to the thought which stands behind it.

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p. 113a.

¹⁶³ Sanh 65b. On the creation of a *golem* see G. Scholem, "The Idea of the Golem," in *idem*, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, N.Y.: Schocken, 1965, pp. 158–204, and see the more recent treatment in M. Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical traditions On the Artificial Anthropoid*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1990.

to technology to accomplish these ends. But since the world was created by means of thought, Israel's creations, expressed as *hiddushei Torah*, innovations in Torah, are the fuel which drives the engine of technological and cultural progress.

In the end, therefore, to the extent that their creations mirror their inability truly to comprehend the world, which stems from the very ground of their being, they too — but for those who do reach this level of understanding (see following) — will pass away.

These [Nations] do not know or recognize that their very being (*biyatum re-shit'anu*) is from God, may He be blessed, and so [in return] measure (*midah keneged midah*) He does not bestow [blessing] upon them [directly].¹⁶⁶ Their life-force, strength and wisdom is termed "external," from [the merely] outward,¹⁶⁷ and not from an inwardness which [reflects] the Will of God.¹⁶⁸

Since in R. Zadok's system, epistemology and ontology are closely related, if not coterminous, a serious flaw in epistemology can imperil the existence of those who have that flaw. We shall now briefly examine the consequences to gentiles of this flaw in gentile wisdom.

VIII

The failure of the gentiles to acknowledge God's hand in all things is not a moral failing as much as an ontological one, one which originates with their creation (see above). Such ontological distinctions lead to moral failings, however, which in turn imperil their existence in messianic times and their place in the World to Come.

In the light of all the foregoing, the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek assumes particular importance. Symmetrical development does not at all imply peaceful coexistence; indeed, the rivalry between Israel and the Nations is all the greater because the latter refuse to acknowledge that all is from God. Thus, the midrashic response to the Christian claim of being the "true Israel" was to assert that access to Written Torah was not sufficient to achieve credibility as "God's children."¹⁶⁹

God's response to the gentile claim of being the true Israel, is, in rabbinic sources, the counterclaim that the true Israel is the one which has the key to a true understanding of Torah, God's mystery, and this is the

¹⁶⁶ As explained above, God's blessings proceed through Israel and its Torah insights.

¹⁶⁷ Recall that Balaam's wisdom was merely "from the lips outward."

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹⁶⁹ See *yPeah* 2: 1 (13a), *Exod R* 47: 1, *Tanh Ki Tissa*; this response was later adapted to the Muslim challenge that the Jews had falsified the Torah, see *Num R* 14: 10.

Oral Torah. The strategy is thus to shift the ground of debate from Written to Oral Torah. Thus, according to R. Zadok, the translation of the Torah into Greek, which opened the way for such a claim to be made, is properly coordinated with the real development of Oral Torah. We now may understand why it is so important for him to identify Rome with Greece. Rome represents the Christian church, while Greece represents gentile wisdom and the translation of the Torah into Greek. In R. Zadok's thought, the two are conflated.¹⁷⁰ His comment regarding Edomite wisdom as consisting primarily of matters of ethics and practice¹⁷¹ (*nimusim u-ma'asim*) must also be seen in this context; "Edomite" here clearly refers to the Christian church.¹⁷²

Thus, the nexus between gentile wisdom and gentile religious claims lies at the heart of the matter, as it must for R. Zadok. The Christian claim is another manifestation of this "world of falsehood," as is gentile wisdom at its root, namely, in its refusal to acknowledge the divine origin of all wisdom.

And so too:

[Since] gentile wisdom has no reality but in this world (and which Israel absorbs from them the good which is relevant to Torah wisdom), there will come a day, as Scripture states, [when] "I shall destroy wisdom from Edom" (Obad 8), and therefore [gentile wisdom] has no [ultimate] relevance to the true Torah which exists forever . . . The external sciences (*yokhmot hitzoniyyot*) will develop until the absorption of the good [by Israel] is completed, and then all their wisdom will cease to exist.¹⁷³

As suggested above (see nn. 78 and 83), gentile wisdom and gentiles must be distinguished.

¹⁷⁰ My dear friend Rabbi Jay Miller has observed in conversation that this blurring of the distinction between Greece and Rome is already implicit in the midrashic sources noted above.

In one place (*Paged 'Aqarim*, p. 19a), R. Zadok emphasizes that possession of Oral Torah is the primary distinction between Israel and the Nations. The importance of this statement lies in its general character. The existence of an Oral Torah is not merely a stratagem on God's part to ensure Israel's legitimacy ("Who are My sons?"), as the midrash has it, but relates to the essential character of each party to the lawsuit. The Oral Torah is quintessentially Israel's.

¹⁷¹ Whether *ma'asim* refers to "[religious] actions," as a fulfillment of ethical imperatives (*nimusim*), or whether it refers to practical affairs, as might be attributed to the Romans, the essential identification with Rome and the Catholic church is clear. On this typology, see S. Krauss, "Die Hebraeischen Benennungen der Modernen Voelker, in *Jewish Studies in Memory of George A. Kohut*, N.Y.: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1935, pp. 379–412, esp. pp. 380–383 and p. 383 n. 13.

¹⁷² See section IV above.

¹⁷³ *Resisei Laylah*, p. 128a; see *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 207a.

[The order and characteristics of] all the Nations were set out from the Six Days of Creation, [including] the Four Monarchies! . . . for in every one of them there is a root of good [which opens their way] to the World to Come — these are the pious of the Nations . . .

R. Zadok makes it clear, however, that this refers only to the pious among the Nations, who may make their way to the future world. The Nations themselves, whose hold on existence is through Israel,¹⁷⁴ will at best see the messianic age, but given the contingent nature of their existence, will, but for the pious and proselytes¹⁷⁵ among them, pass away at the final *tiqqun*.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, then, the fate of the Nations and their wisdom is alike: whatever is good in either will be absorbed by Israel; the rest will cease to exist.

Nevertheless, though in *Taqqanat ha-Sharim*¹⁷⁷ he denied non-Jews any relationship to Torah, Oral or Written, in *Peri Zaddik*,¹⁷⁸ which represents the latest stratum of his teaching, and the public part, he reverses himself. In discussing the famous Zoharic passage which asserts allegorical and mystical levels to the Pentateuchal narratives,¹⁷⁹ R. Zadok enumerates three levels of Biblical interpretation: that of the "body," that of the "soul," and that of the inner soul, the "soul of the soul." The last he identifies with the secrets of the Torah which will be revealed in Messianic times,¹⁸⁰ but which now are available to kabbalists. The second are garden variety secrets of the Torah. Of the first, however, the "body" of Torah, he writes:

The matter is as follows. There are substantive areas of Torah (*gufei Torah*, lit., "bodies of Torah"), which comprise the halakhot which [guide us] in our behavior, and this is "the body." Regarding this [the Zohar] states: "this body is clothed in garments which are the narratives [of the Torah]," etc.¹⁸¹ For even narratives contain substantive matters of Torah (*gufei Torah*) — teachings of the ways

¹⁷⁴ Which, it must be remembered, determine not only the course of Jewish history, but the advance of human knowledge.

¹⁷⁵ *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 101a. In future times the pious among the gentiles will be Israel's servants (Is 61: 5), since they have not reached the full recognition of God's place in the world and become proselytes; see *ibid.*, p. 200b, *Resisei Laylah*, p. 62b, *Qedushat Shabbat*, p. 61b.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, *Mahshevet Harug*, p. 87b, 99b, *Paged 'Aqarim*, p. 4b, *Resisei Laylah*, p. 62.

¹⁷⁷ Excluding those of the messianic or pre-messianic age, when their motives for conversion will be suspect; see *Mahshevet Harug*, 88a, based in part on A. Z. 3b.

¹⁷⁸ *Mahshevet Harug*, p. 88a, *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 207a; see also *Zidkat ha-Zaddiq*, p. 124; see *Zohar I*, 181b, II, 10a, 17a, 141a, III, 72b.

¹⁷⁹ Pp. 67b–68a; see n. 43.

¹⁸⁰ IV, p. 89b; see immediately below.

¹⁸¹ *Zohar I*: 163a; see I. Tishby, *Mishvat ha-Zohar*, vol. 2, pp. 363–375, esp. 338, and the literature cited therein, most notably G. Scholem, "The Meaning of the Torah in Jewish Mysticism," in *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, pp. 32–86.

¹⁸² On this subject see Y. Liebes, "ha-Mashi'ah shel ha-Zohar: li-Dmuto ha-Meshihit shel R. Shim'on Bar Yohay," in *ha-Ra'ayon ha-Meshihi be-Yisrael*, Jerusalem: National Academy of Sciences, 1982, pp. 87–236.

¹⁸³ III: 152a.

of the world (*limmadim halikbot 'olam*),¹⁹¹ as is stated in Sanhedrin (99a) [regarding the verse] "Lotan's sister was Timna,"¹⁹² [which the Rabbis interpret as meaning that] Timna was a princess [who did not feel worthy of marrying into Abraham's family and thus became a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz.] [From this union issued] Amalek,¹⁹³ who persecuted Israel. Why? Because [the Patriarchs] did not wish to keep her away. We thus learn that the Patriarchs were not required to keep her away [even though] Amalek issued from her. Moreover, we learn [from this] that her intentions were not for the sake of Heaven — [when she said] "Better that I be a maidservant to this nation [than a princess in my father's house]," for if they had been truly [*be'omeq*] for the sake of Heaven, [the evil] Amalek would not have descended from her. This then is a teaching [derived] even from these narratives, and this is called *gufei Torah*. *This the Nations are not denied* (to nishlalu) *for the pious of the Nations of the World are included within the category of the pious of the Nations when they fulfill the seven Noahide commandments as a command of God, may He be blessed*¹⁹⁴ [italics mine — Y.E.]¹⁹⁵

He makes this still more explicit in his discussion of what is permitted to a prospective proselyte.

It is altogether permissible (*shafir dami*) to lay the Written Torah before them [even though] they will not understand it [according to] its proper interpretation [through] the Oral Torah. They will merely see what is written, and this is not forbidden even when they are gentiles.¹⁹⁶

Indeed, it is one of the Messiah's functions to teach them Torah in times to come.¹⁹⁷

When we compare these statements in his later works to the absolute denial of any "relevance" (*shayyakbut*) of the Nations to even the Written Torah, we must posit either a change in opinion between R. Zadok's middle works (*Taqqanat ha-Shavin*) and those of his latest ones (*Yisrael Qadoshim* and *Peri Zaddiq*¹⁹⁸), or a *lapsus calami* in *Taqqanat ha-Shavin*, p. 68a. Final resolution of this question awaits a more careful study of the relationship of *Peri Zaddiq* and other late works to R. Zadok's earlier ones, a study which cannot be attempted here, though preliminary work indicates that, in general, R. Zadok was remarkably consistent through his long life. Nevertheless, the differing opinions he expressed in this regard may once again mirror his own ambivalent feelings toward "outside wisdoms;" see the texts quoted in n. 151.

Thus, while the principle of symmetry ensures that gentile wisdom and

Torah wisdom will flourish simultaneously, gentile wisdom actually had its heyday *before* the Sinaitic revelation, that is, before the Torah superseded all previous wisdoms. With the Torah's final victory and completion in messianic times,¹⁹² there will be no room for independent secular sciences; all knowledge will be subsumed under Torah. Indeed, the Oral Torah itself will now be intimately connected, and immediately derived, from the Written One.¹⁹³ Prophecy and intellect will at long last be reconciled.¹⁹⁴

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As in the past, the staff of Mendel Gottesman Library of Yeshiva University has been of willing and inestimable help.

¹⁹¹ Again, as noted several times above, the ways of the Torah determine the "natural" order of the world. Thus, *halakbot* and *halikbot* are intimately related.

¹⁹² Gen. 36: 12.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Based on Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Melakhim 8: 11.

¹⁹⁵ *Peri Zaddik* IV, p. 89b (Behaalotekha, n. 10).

¹⁹⁶ *Yisrael Qadoshim*, p. 44a.

¹⁹⁷ *Taqqanat ha-Shavin*, p. 41b. This is presumably a prelude to possible conversion; see p. 62.

¹⁹⁸ It must always be remembered that most of *Peri Zaddiq* was recorded by others from his table talks. However, the discussion in *Yisrael Qadoshim* confirms the assertion in *Peri Zaddiq Behaalotekha* cited above.

¹⁹² R. Zadok usually identifies this age with the messianic one; see next note. However, since the coming of the Messiah is not identical with the final Redemption, which completes the abolition of evil and reign of holiness, it is not clear whether valid gentile wisdom will be subsumed entirely into Torah with the messianic advent or later. R. Zadok envisages a two-stage process *in à vis* the Nations (*Taqqanat ha-Shavin*, p. 16a). In messianic times there will be many proselytes, and those gentiles who do not proselytize will serve Israel (citing Zech. 8: 23; see Shab 52b); with the final Redemption, evil will cease to exist, and with it — the Nations. Whether there is a symmetrical complement to this process in the ingathering of the sparks is not clear.

¹⁹³ See for example *Liqqutei Ma'amarim*, p. 77a, *Peri Zaddiq* V, p. 60a.

¹⁹⁴ On the ultimate resolution of "these and those are the words of the Living God," as a result of humankind's intellectual limitations, see *Peri Zaddiq*, pp. 148–150.