Rabbinic Approaches to Anthropomorphism in the Bible

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Preface

This paper is intended to be an element of an overall study of the problem of speaking about God. In every age, from the writing of the Bible to today, thinkers have been concerned with purveying a clear, non-idiosyncratic way of communicating the reality and attributes of the deity. Even when we accept that to 'know' God is essentially a matter of faith, we constantly search for ways of talking about Him--what He does, what He can do, how He affects us--in language that any rational being could understand.

The focus of this study is the rabbinic period. The Rabbis, by creating and legislating a new Jewish society, had brought about fundamental elements of Jewish thought that persist to this day. Their concern with respect to God, was to interpret a text, which they accepted as revealed truth, and to incorporate within it the idea of a deity that no longer did--nor was expected to--personally manifest Himself in Israel's history. They were the first in Jewish thought to tackle the problem of talking about a God who, unlike in the days of the Bible, was truly invisible and abstract.

I have tried, in this paper, to be as consistent and clear about translations and citations as possible. Most translations of biblical verses were taken from the 1917 JPS rendering, with some help from the new JPS translation and my own editing of the verse. All translations of rabbinic passages are my own, though I sought aid from whatever existing translations I had available.

The citation of rabbinic material follows, with few excepttions, the standard method of citation found in secondary sources:

Talmud: Babylonian references are cited by folio page number and side, according to each tractate. Palestinian are by folio page and column (a through d) according to Seder.

Midrash Rabba: Citations are according to par'sha and paragraph. Song of Songs, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes Rabba are often broken down according to chapter and verse, then by paragraph. In this paper, this was done, as in my edition of Midrash Rabba (Rahm, Jerusalem, 1970), only with Song of Songs Rabba

M'khilta, P'sikta d'R. Kahana, P'sikta Rabati: Passages in these three collections are cited by page number. M'khilta and P'sikta Rabati are Friedmann editions, P'sikta d'Rav Kahana is Buber's.

Tanchuma: Citations are given by par'sha and paragraph number. In the Buber edition, by par'sha and page number.

Midrash Psalms passages are cited according to Psalm and paragraph number. Sifre (to both Numbers and Deuteronomy) is cited by paragraph according to Horovitz edition.

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To Deborah, though beset by the demands of her own research and writing, found time to aid, comfort, show interest and support me through the painful times of producing this work, this thesis and all future endeavors are dedicated.

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Introduction

When the Children of Israel realized that Moses had not yet returned from his stay on the top of the Mountain, they turned to Aaron and asked that he "make us a god who shall go before us, for that man, Moses, who brought us from the land of Egypt; we cannot tell what has happened to him." (Ex. 32:1) Aaron acceded to their wishes and a golden calf was formed. The people then exclaimed: "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you from the land of Egypt." (v. 4)

This incident is normally explained as an instance when the Israelites rejected the God of their fathers. Now separated from their leader, Moses, they reverted to idol worship. One can apply another interpretation. The story relates that the Israelites first referred to Moses as the one who brought them from Egypt, then they spoke of the calf as a god who did the same thing. The golden calf, therefore, is looked upon as the God of Moses! Their revolt was not one against the God of their fathers and one in favor of idol worship. It rather represented the basic need of the people to be able to concretely identify their God. It was the revolt against an invisible, non-corporeal deity who could not be expressed in terms simple enough for the people to understand Him.

Judaism's major contribution to human understanding is the single God who encompasses all the attributes and descriptions of individual deities, yet at the same time, resists definition by any of these attributes or descriptions. This God-idea is a remarkably complex one for any people to understand.

The Bible is the first source for receiving a description of God. It begins with the depiction of the Master of the Universe; the Creator of heaven and earth, and one able, if it be His will, to destroy it all. He is the Law-giver and ultimate Judge, dispenser of reward to the good and punishment to the evil. These qualities are general and universal; they do not necessarily require a physical description of the deity. The Bible also speaks, however, about a God who favors certain persons and manifests Himself personally before a people. To communicate this personal deity, the words that are used ascribe human emotions--anthropopathism--and human physical charicteristics--anthropomorphism--to God.

The Bible is not a reflective work. It does not examine the implications that arise from the concept of a deity that is both the personal guardian of a certain people, and the controller of all natural processes.[1] The Bible's handling of its description of God is not, however, garbled and undisciplined. Although there are

many anthropomorphisms and contradictory statements, the Bible undoubtedly imparts an understanding of a deity who is incorporeal and non-human, omnipresent and omnipotent, all-good and all-just. Furthermore, there are definite limitations to the use of anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms in the Bible. God is only male. The deity is never clearly referred to in feminine terms.[2] When a physical description is employed, it is virtually limited to certain parts of the body--the head, arm and hand--or to certain emotions--angry, in sorrow, triumphant, delighted. Poetic books might employ some flamboyent descriptions. One, for instance, is that of God "riding on the clouds." (See Isa. 19:1, Ps. 68:34) Many depictions, such as this one, are borrowed from contemporary Canaanite mythology, thus, were probably popular terms, not to be literally accepted. While the Bible is not a philosophically reflective work, it is nonetheless true that it consciously set limits to the range of discourse about God, or resorted only to popular metaphors.

In attempting to establish for one the proper idea of God, resort to anthropomorphic or anthropopathic references are necessary. Louis Ginzburg, paraphrasing E. Zeller, noted:

> ...every conception, concerning the Deity is, in its final application, dependent upon a posteriori evidence--that is, upon an inference from events and effects, or from things as they occur and exist, to their absolute ground or reason--and if any more precise specification or definition of the Absolute can be derived only from the conscious contents of soul-experience and world-knowledge, then the origins of the ascription of human characteristics to the Deity finds an easy explanation; for nothing means so much, nothing is so important, as our own faculties or sensation, as, for instance, our faculties of sensation, emotion, thought.[3]

Ginzburg and Zeller were emphasizing the paradoxical situation that comprehending a concept of an all-powerful, supramundane deity procedes from one's own consciousness of one's limited faculties which nonetheless can be conceived of as limitless. Whereas a person cannot think of one's own powers of sight, hearing, communication, anger, sorrow, etc., as extending over a great range, that person may yet recognize that these powers may have unlimited range when associated with a deity.

The Jewish--or biblical--idea of God, incorporates another dimension. Along with the concept of universal range and power, God is described as having personal concern for people and individuals. Arthur Marmorstein explained this aspect of God, the personal deity, as leading to anthropomorphic representation as well: "As long as people will crave after a personal deity, they cannot do otherwise than...ascribe to God certain human

attributes and speak of His qualities and function in human ways and manners."[4] Marmorsterin, like Zeller, did not find this use of human terms to be unnecessary or demeaning to the pure conception of God. He wrote: "Anthropomorphic and anthropopathic elements in a religion are...not to be looked upon as disadvantages. On the contrary, they endowed men with spiritual strength and opened higher ways of thought to religious enlightenment."[5]

Indeed, common to both Zeller's and Marmorstein's comments is the fact that God is a personal deity; that is, a deity that would actually manifest itself in the experiences of human beings. A non-personal God, one whose function is understood as creation, organization and operation of the universe, need not be humanized. This god is wholly abstract, for the only bridge between deity and human perception is thought--non-emotive and non-pictorial.

When people insist that God does involve Himself in their lives or in their history, then their perception of Him is necessarily affected by emotion and experience. The Israelites--before the episode of the golden calf--proclaimed Him to be a 'Man of war.' (Ex. 15:3), when they rejoiced over their escape from Pharaoh's army at the Sea. God had intervened in their

struggle to free themselves from Egyptian slavery, and, according to their collective perception, who else but a mighty warrior could defeat an army.

The Bible and its use of anthropomorphism was subjected to investigation by earlier non-rabbinic sources. In Greece, even before the Bible became known to them in translation, pre-Socratic philosophers had made clear their opposition to the anthropomorphization of deities in Greek myth. They sought to erase the popularly accepted human attributes of their gods through a process of reinterpreting these attributes to mean more general and abstract concepts, the process of allegory.

As the use of allegory developed, Jews living in Greek communities came to recognize the approach as one useful in their own conflict between faithful acceptance of the writings of their religion, and the perceived truth of Greek philosophy. Among the more influential expounders of the allegorical method by these Jews, was the second century (B.C.E.) philosopher, Aristobulus of Paneas.[6] Surely many Jews who had come to value the verities of Greek philosophy, in turn rejected Jewish teachings, or criticized the basic Jewish notion of One God, Lord of good and evil, Creator of the Universe and Guardian of Israel. Aristobulus chose not to abandon the

Bible. He argued instead that it need only be read properly in order to discover its rationally acceptable truths. The proper reading, of course, was the allegorization of all offensive--anthropomorphic--terms used to depict God. Aristobulus went further and claimed that sections had been translated into Greek before the appearance of the Septuagint (which was virtually completed in the third century), and that these had been available, and thus influenced, the thinking of Plato and Aristotle.

It would appear that given the anti-anthropomorphic atmosphere of Greek thought, translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek must have reflected that attitude. During the past century of biblical studies, this idea was so persuasive that the anti- or non-anthropomorphic nature of the Septuagint was taken as axiomatic.[7] If close investigation might reveal some anthropomorphisms being literally translated, then a conventional solution was to posit that the translator had distinguished between the Bible's own symbolic use of a term and the overtly anthropomorphic expression which had to be changed.[8] Of course, scholars who held to this axiom could point to a number of examples where an offending term had apparently been changed to something more acceptable.

Harry M. Orlinsky has pointedly disputed this con-

tion of philosophical awareness on the part of the Greek translators. Utilizing a methodology that calls for the examination of every instance of anthropomorphism in the Hebrew Bible, and how it is translated,[9] rather than investigating only those cases of deviation from the Hebrew, Orlinsky has shown that the overwhelming number of questionable terms were faithfully translated. He concluded that deviations were more a case of 'mere stylism, with theology and philosophy playing no direct role whatever in the matter.'[10] Anti-anthropomorphism, therefore, is not found in the Septuagint, but rather in how Greek Jews read the Bible.

The literary integrity of the Septuagint translators does not reduce the widespread concern on the part of Jewish Hellenists for anthropomorphism. Aristobulus, certainly working from a Septuagint text, did not seek to cover up the language of the Bible. He argued rather that there was a proper way of regarding the text--allegorization--so that the 'truth' would be revealed. Most Hellenists, however, applied this technique haphazardly. Moreover, many, like Aristobulus, were primarily Greek thinkers. Their interest in the Bible was to show that it really was a Greek text.

The first century (C.E.) thinker, Philo, further developed the work of his predecessors. He attempted

to apply allegory to the Bible in a systematic fashion, thereby bestowing greater importance to its message than other Greco-Jewish thinkers. Indeed, a major difference between Philo and other philosophers, was an added concern for Jewish thought as exhibited in the Bible. Though he was far more knowledgable of his Greek roots than his Jewish ones,[11] Philo wished to depict Judaism as standing on its own, albeit fully in consonance with philosophic principles. He therefore recognized both literal and allegorical interpretation of the Bible. The latter took precedent only when the former was not suitable for a divine concept.[12]

Philo primarily subjected Scripture to the constraints of philosophy. He wrote with regard to the creation of man: "...man was created after the image of God and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26)...Let no one represent the likeness as one to a bodily form; for neither is God human form, nor is the human body God-like. No, it is in respect of the Mind, the sovereign element of the soul, that the word 'image' is used; for after the pattern of a single Mind...the mind in each of those who successively came into being moulded."[13] Here is an orthodox Platonic description of God as First-form, a concept that is completely abstract, and therefore indicative of an impersonal, transcendent deity.

Yet, Philo understood that the Jewish idea of God embodies notions of morality--goodness and love. These qualities imply an emotional aspect to the deity which was unacceptable to Platonic thought. Philo realized that these moral qualities were essential to the Jewish God. To impart these notions, he posited that God be apprehended, not through philosophic inquiry, but by mystical elevation.[14]

The Jewish enclave in Alexandria, and other Greek cities were distant, both in miles and in spirit, from the centers of Jewish thought in Palestine. Philo and his use of allegory were hardly known to the Rabbis. The Septuagint was certainly of no interest. The Targum,[15] as an Aramaic adaptation and interpretation of parts of the Bible, however, is much more relevent to the area.

It is important to note the distinction between the Septuagint and the Targum. The Septuagint was a scholarly work. It was produced in order to provide Greek scholars the opportunity to examine this Hebrew work. As such, it was the aim of the translators, regardless of their philosophic inclinations, to provide as accurate rendering of the Hebrew Vorlage as they could.

The Targum, on the other hand, was not meant for

scholarly use. Palestinian scholars of the third century, C.E., knew Hebrew and did not need an Aramaic text. The Targum is then, in Sperber's terminology, an 'Institution.'[16] It served to provide for the less educated Jews, for whom Hebrew was no longer a spoken language, an official rendering of the Bible. For this reason, exactness of translation was not as important as accessibility to the biblical message.

The Targum does appear to be anti-anthropomorphic. Active verbs, when applied to God, are rendered as passive. In this way, the event becomes the subject of the verse, and God is only indirectly acknowledged. Parts of the body that are ascribed to God undergo a form of allegorization, and are rendered as the action which that part of the body is supposed to imply. Whenever a divine attribute seems to be weakened or questioned by a verse, the phrasing is changed in order to nullify this apprehension.[17]

It must be noted that the Targum is not completely anti-anthropomorphic. There are many instances where the targumist chose not to change the Bible's personification of God. This apparent ambivalence on the part of the Targum in its approach to de-humanizing the God of the Bible, leads one to the basic question about the attitude of the Rabbis in this area. What approach did

the Rabbis utilize in dealing with the anthropomorphisms in the Bible?

One may assume that the Rabbis did not have a unified approach to biblical anthropomorphism. The rabbinic literature--Mishna, Midrash and Talmud--is filled with arguments, alternate readings and independent opinions covering aspect of civil and ritual life. They were many different personalities of varying degrees of education, working at a number of different centers of study over a long period of time. There is no doubt that if one wishes to characterize the reaction to anthropomorphism on the part of the Rabbis, one must do so according to a range of possible methods for reading an anthropomorphic text. These methods may be grouped as follows.

The Bible presents its anthropomorphisms in a straight-forward and non-reflective manner. It is possible that the Rabbis could accept them in the same manner, either being unwilling or unable to discern the contradictions involved in a blanket literal reading of the Bible.

A fundamental, literal reading of questionable--anthropomorphic--verses may lead, however, to a violent reaction against the Bible. There was a body of thought, contemporary with the Rabbis, who argued that, due to the plain meaning of the text, the Bible was offensive or

contradictory. Rabbis, therefore, could have stepped back somewhat from the literal reading. They could employ qualifying words--'this is like' or 'God appeared as'--when dealing with the more direct description given in the text. There is, in this connection, a mystical approach, whereby the text is viewed as only the tiny visible segment of some larger mysterious truth. As Akiba asserted: "(God) is like us, as it were, but greater than everything; and that is His glory, which is hidden from us."[18] The Bible, as divine writ, is accepted according to its plain meaning, but there is acknowledgment that the text must mean more than it says.

Another approach to a questionable text is to reject or avoid the plain meaning. This method does not necessarily mean being anti-anthropomorphic. One may have a sense of one type of anthropomorphism being more offensive or bothersome than another. For example, one may not like to refer to God's body, but have no difficulty speaking about God's head. Also anthropopathisms might be substituted as a way of softening an anthropomorphism.[19]

A more critical approach, in terms of anthropomorphism, is to argue that a questionable term symbolizes some more general concept. Finally, the approach of allegory itself, is the method by which all questionable

verses are to be read according to universal and abstract notions, so that any implication of God's physical or human depiction is denied.

The Rabbis were not philosophers. They were not interested nor concerned with attacking a problem, such as anthropomorphism, from the standpoint of maintaining logical verities. They did not labor under any urge to unify strands of dogmatic concepts, such as God's incorporeality and immutabibility,[20] with other assertions that attested to His physical presence and changing demeanor. Moreover, they did not permit themselves to absorb very much influence from Greek philosophy. Philo, who strove to harmonize philosophic ideals with his fervant belief in the religion of his fathers, had virtually no affect on the mainstream of rabbinic Jewish thought.[21]

Although the Rabbis were not philosophers, they did have ideas implicit in their thinking which were abstract, and therefore tantamount to 'philosophy.' The Rabbis adhered carefully to the Bible, and as has been noted, the Bible itself limited its range of discourse about the deity. The Rabbis were equally concerned about the range of terms that could be utilized to describe their God.

In their studies of the biblical text, Rabbis did question physical depictions of God. An example is the

exclamation of the Israelites in their Song of the Sea: 'The Lord is a Man of war' (Ex. 15:3). In M'khilta 38a, the question is asked: Is it possible to say such a thing? (וכי אפשר לומר כן) The author is bothered by this verse because throughout the Bible, he could point to verses that clearly state that God is not a man. This Rabbi was obviously conscious of the problem engendered by the anthropomorphism.

Thus, the Rabbis were capable of critically examining the Bible and questioning the meaning or implication of some of its verses. The Bible presents the saga of a people coming to accept the power and rule of the God, יהוה, God of Israel and Creatorof the universe, after many revolts, with entreaties from their prophets and leaders, and with the intervention of God Himself. The Rabbis needed no convincing. They accepted the deity as an assumption of their own existence, and therefore, brought a different point of view to what were actually biblical proofs of God's existence--the anthropomorphic revelation of God in Scripture.

The problem of a rabbinic approach to anthropomorphism has been investigated by previous researchers. It is useful to briefly review their contentions.

Solomon Shechter wrote, in connection with God and the world: "(The Rabbis' God) is a personal God, and a

personal God will always be accommodated by fancy and imagined with some sort of local habitation...Loftiness and height have always and will always suggest sublimity and exhaltation and thus they could not choose a more suitable habitation for the deity than the heavens...Theology proper, or religion, is not entirely made up of those elements. It does not suppress them, but the happy inconsistency, it does not choose to abide by its logical consequences."[22]

This thought is concluded by: "The fact is that the Rabbis were a simple, naive people filled with a childlike scriptural faith, neither wanting nor bearing much analysis and interpretation."[23]

G.F. Moore echoed Shechter: "If (one) will then compare Philo's treatment of such narratives (containing anthropomorphisms) with the Targum's and the Midrash, (one) will discover how innocent the Palestinian masters were of an 'abstract' or 'transcendent'--or any other sort of philosophical--idea of God."[24]

Shechter and Moore represent an approach to rabbinic thought that states that the Rabbis did not engage in philosophical reflection--which is, of course, 'complex' and 'sophisticated'--thus, they must have held to 'simpler' and 'more primitive' notions. The Rabbis, however, were not nearly as simplistic as they have been

depicted. Certainly, they operated from the basic position of faith, which severely limited a critical or skeptical examination of a biblical verse. But they also recognized the pitfalls of uncritical faith and were disturbed by inconsistencies that arose from the depiction of God in a grossly physical way. They realized that some biblical assertions required careful and disciplined examination, lest they be taken too literally.[25]

Max Kadushin recognized that the rabbinic mind was not naive, but he also insisted that to infer philosophic notions in their thought was equally mistaken. He wrote: "The fact is that the Rabbis and the philosophers simply do not inhabit the same universe of discourse...To ascribe to the Rabbis any sort of stand on anthropomorphism is to do violence, therefore, to rabbinic thought."[26]

Kadushin noticed rabbinic concern for anthropomorphic statements such as God as a 'man of war.' He argued that the apprehension expressed was not a major consideration, for ultimately the questionable verse would be affirmed. He expressed the method by which the Rabbis dealt with a questionable verse in the following form: the text, concern over the verse based on contrasting statements in the Bible, then interpretation that affirms the meaning of the verse. Kadushin called the phrase that introduced concern for the verse a 'structural ster-

eotype.'[27] The purpose of the structural stereotype was not to question the anthropomorphic implication, but rather to affirm the Rabbis' belief in God's justice and mercy.

Where they were troubled by anthropomorphisms, Kadushin contended that the Rabbis were indicating their belief in the 'otherness' of God; that God, despite words to describe Him, was in no way human. More important to the rabbinic mind, however, were beliefs in God's personal concern for His people. A questionable verse was thus always affirmed as proof of God's justice and love.[28] Kadushin concluded that it in this fashion that the Rabbis actually avoided an inquiry into anthropomorphisms, as would be expected in philosophic discourse.

Kadushin's contention that the rabbinic process was in no way philosophic is a semantic argument. He has devised such terms as 'structural stereotype' and 'otherness' (a term, he admitted, not explicitly used in rabbinic literature[29]), and has called them non-philosophic. These terms do, however, show that the Rabbis were willing and able to critically examine the text, elicit certain abstract problems and teach generalized concepts as a result. What the Rabbis did not do was Greek philosophy, with a consistent abstract conceptualization of every verse. Their ideas, nonetheless show implicit philoso-

phic notions.

A methodology for analyzing concern of anthropomorphism on the part of the Rabbis, has been very difficult to develop. The key problem has been the existence of two vast bodies of literature that require investigation. The first is the Bible. If it can be maintained that Scripture made disciplined use of the range of discourse utilized to speak about God, it remains that hundreds of verses exist that are explicitly or implicitly anthropomorphic.

The second body is the rabbinic literature. Not only did the Rabbis perform exegesis on the questionable verses of the Bible, but they also found or raised questions of anthropomorphic usage from verses that would not normally be considered problematic. Thus, a truly thorough investigation of rabbinic concern for anthropopmorphism would require retrieval and analysis of all even remotely questionable verses and their rabbinic treatment. A life time task.

The intention of this paper, however, is to indicate--with duly noted variations and exceptions--the major approaches that the Rabbis utilized. In order to accomplish this relatively modest task, it was deemed proper to choose only a few gross examples of biblical anthro-

pomorphism, and investigate what the Rabbis' reactions were to these instances.

This method entails an important assumption. One's own determination of what is to be considered a gross anthropomorphism may not have been recognized so by other investigators, or by the Rabbis themselves. Involved in the present choice of a suitable verse was a subjective determination that the fashion in which the verse presented God in a human form was broader in scope or detail that other biblical verses. For example, while it is common to encounter descriptions of God's eye or mouth, reference to His back (Ex. 33:23) or hair (Daniel 7:9) appear to more astonishing and therefore, possibly of more interest to the Rabbis. This is admittedly a conjecture. Other investigators have different verses to examine,[30] yet it remains unclear which biblical assertions were truly the most bothersome or challenging to the Rabbis. They did react, however, to these instances of gross anthropomorphism to an extant that allows one to make some tentative conclusions.

Once a number of questionable verses have been assembled, the rabbinic material is gathered through the use of Hyman's Torah Hak'tuba v'Hamasora.[31] The investigation was limited to major midrashic collections and the two Talmuds. Avoided were the collections that, though

they claimed to contain rabbinic sources, put forward a particular point of view which would slant the material.

Werever possible, the author of the text was noted in order to determine whether timing (the date of the author) or location (the author's school) might have some bearing on the approach to the questionable verse. Once more, an assumption has been made about the veracity of the citation. While this textual problem may be mitigated somewhat by use of critical editions, one must aver that it is possible that mistaken conclusions can arise from too much use of cited authors. Instead, the primary interest in this paper will be the discernment of basic approaches to anthropomorphism, with only tentative statements about which Rabbi or school might have used which approach.

The first part of the investigation is a broad, surface study of rabbinic reaction to anthropomorphism. The second part is a deeper examination of a linguistic element of that reaction, the term, kib'yakhol. The Rabbis employed certain phrases and expressions when engaging in a discourse about God. Many of them were used frequently and appeared to take on a special meaning that differed from its plain meaning. In this regard, it is especially interesting, for kib'yakhol is cryptic in

meaning and can be defined only by its function.

To adequately analyze this term, one must find as many instances of it in the literature as possible. W. Bacher, in Erkai Midrash (Rabinowitz, trans.), listed over one hundred citations. Other examples have been found with the help of the Kossovski concordances on Mishna, Tanaitic midrash, Tosefta and Talmud, and through scanning some texts, such as Numbers Rabba , which were neglected by Bacher. Approximately 140 cases, with duplications excluded, were collected. This may not be an exhaustive listing, but probably does represent a high percentage of all citations.

The collected examples were examined according to the following questions: who used the term, with respect to which biblical verses, and for what purpose, that is, what divine attributes were affected. In this way, one might learn more about the meaning and use of kib'yakhol as one of a number of specific expressions that framed the rabbinic understanding of their own handling of anthropomorphisms.[32]

Having examined this material, an effort is then made to discover what methods were applied by the Rabbis--by some of the Rabbis, or implied in the investigations of Rabbis--to deal with anthropomorphisms in the Bible, and

what these methods indicate about their notion of God. The second line of inquiry has to do with the specific terminology associated with dealing with the problem. The term, kib'yakhol, is studied as one that often appears when the Rabbis made an anthropomorphically daring assertion about God, and thus, will further indicate the ways in which the Rabbis permitted themselves to speak about God.

II. Survey of Rabbinic Passages that Deal with Biblical Anthropomorphism

The organization of this chapter will be according to how the Rabbis treated the anthropomorphic implication of an examined verse; from acceptence of the implication through to clear rejection of the anthropomorphism. In this way, one can see the range of treatment for the same statements in the Bible.

Most of the verses examined can be broken down into two or more parts, of which only one would contain the anthropomorphism. It is not unusual to find passages in the rabbinic literature that referred only to non-anthropomorphic part or parts, and not deal with the anthropomorphism. In two verses examined, however, the relevant passages virtually avoided the anthropomorphic part of the verse. Deuteronomy 34:10, mentions that Moses had a face-to-face relation with God. Except for one passage to be mentioned below, the part of the verse that makes this claim was passed over by the Rabbis. Exodus 24:10, reads: 'they (Nadav and Abihu) saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet the like of paved work of sapphire...' All rabbinic interpretations examined accepted the notion of seeing God, which need not be understood literally or anthropomorphically, for no

human-like form or part is involved. They avoid, however, the reference to "His feet."

An argument from silence usually denotes acceptence. Thus, the Rabbis did not try to qualify or reinterpret the implications of either verse. In light of passages that are to given later in this chapter, however, it is not clear whether this silence means tacit agreement with the verse, or an ambivalence on the part of the Rabbis with respect to biblical anthropomorphism.

Before detailing instances that attest to rabbinic ambivalence, we should note that there are passages in which the Rabbis chose to deal with the anthropomorphism literally. As can be seen in the following cases, some of them definitely accept the anthropomorphic implication of the verse. Others simply do not deny this implication; or they qualify the anthropomorphism.

Genesis 6:6, contains a daring anthropopathism: "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on earth." All the passages examined with respect to this verse, accept the existence of divine emotion. In Genesis Rabba (27:4), two opinions as to the meaning of the verse are given.

R. Judah understood the verb נחם as cast in the Qal form, meaning 'to regret.' He therefore argued that

the verse implied that " regretfulness was before Me, that I had created him below; for had I created him above he would not rebel against Me."[33]

The idea that God would regret and admit to a mistake, possibly a more daring anthropopathism than the Bible intended, is mitigated in R. Nehemia's interpretation. He used the Ni'phal form of the verb, meaning to 'be comforted.' Thus, "I comfort Myself that I created him below, for had I created him above, just as he caused the lower beings to rebel against Me, so would he have done with the upper beings."[34] Although this interpretation is less daring than R. Judah's, there is attempt to avoid here the assertion of a divine emotion being depicted in very human terms.

The following passages utilize verses that attest to various aspects of God's appearance.

Genesis 1:26,27, read: 'God said, let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness...And God created man in His own image.' The plain implication of these verses is that God has a human-like form. There is no denial of this in the following passages:

Genesis Rabba (8:11), contains the opinion of a R. Tifdai in the name of R. Acha. The issue in this passage is, if human beings were created in God's form, then

what is the reason for the creation of male and female, as attested by the rest of verse 27. The answer here is that man is created with the qualities of both upper and lower beings. Like the lower beings, he has been made in order to procreate, but like the upper, he has been created in the image and form of God. There is no qualification placed on this assertion in the passage, thus, one may conclude that Tifdai and Acha were using the verse according to its plain meaning.[35]

A midrash in Deuteronomy Rabba (11:3), argues that Moses was greater than Adam, the first man, even though Adam was created in God's image. The reason is that after Adam sinned, he lost the quality of honor: 'Man (adam) does not abid in honor' (Ps. 49:13). Moses, on the other hand, maintained this quality to the end of his life: 'His eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated' (Deut. 34:7).[36] This distinction between Moses and Adam does not deny the basic contention of Adam's human form being like God's.

God's face (פנים) is referred to in a number of verses. Exodus 33:11, states that Moses spoke to God, face-to-face, and Deuteronomy 34:10, says that he knew God in the same manner. Exodus 33:20, on the other hand, contends that no one can see God's face and live. The following passages show that Rabbis did not dispute the

the reality of the divine countenance.

Sifre to Deuteronomy (end of V'zot B'rakha), resolves the contradiction between Exodus 33:20, and the other two verses: "When did He show him (His face)? At the point of death. From this we learn that one may see (God) at the point of death."[37]

Exodus Rabba (3:1), contains the opinion of R. Joshua of Sikhin for R. Levi. Even though Moses had covered his eyes when he came into the presence of God at the burning bush, "the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed him (His face). It was a reward for hiding his face at that time, thus, 'the Lord would speak to Moses face-to-face.'"[38] The implication of this passage is that God did have a face that He could show to Moses. The verse is not disputed.

Tanchuma (Ha'azinu 4), begins with I Chronicles 16:11. The first part of the verse says: 'Seek out the Lord.' The second part: 'Search for His face.' "This is to teach you that the Holy One, Blessed be He, may His name be blessed, is sometimes seen and is sometimes not... Thus, He revealed Himself to Moses, as it says, 'the Lord would speak to Moses face-to-face.' Then He disappeared from him, when (Moses) said to Him, 'Show me, please, Your glory' (Ex. 33:18)."[39] This passage is not as strong an acceptance of the divine countenance as those above. The point of this midrash relates to God's presence--

that sometimes He is there and sometimes not--rather than the specific reality of His face. There is no qualification, however, of the verse, and thus, one can conclude that the passage is not disputing its implication.

Numbers Rabba (14:20), begins with the statement of Deuteronomy 34:10, that no other prophet arose in Israel like Moses. The midrash deduces that this verse means that a comparable prophet did arise outside of Israel. This was Bil'am, son of B'or. Yet, there were distinctions between Moses and Bil'am. One quality that Moses had, that Bil'am lacked, was that he spoke to God, face-to-face. The verse (Exodus 33:11) is only used in passing, as one of a number of proof texts that mark a distinction between Moses and Bil'am.[40] Once more, however, there is no disputing its implication.

Exodus 17:6, reads: 'Behold, I stand before you there on the rock at Horeb.' This verse implies more than a divine presence. A human function, standing, is given. The following two passages do not deny this assertion.

Exodus Rabba (25:4), utilizes a verse in Isaiah (65:1): 'I was at hand to those who did not seek Me. I said, Here I am, Here I am.' The midrash concludes that this verse says 'Here I am' twice as a reminder of

two statements in Exodus: 'Behold, I will cause bread to rain from heaven' (16:4), and 'Behold, I stand before you there on the rock at Horeb.'[41] The lesson here is that God helped Israel, even as they were muttering against Him, as indicated by the first part of the verse in Isaiah. Nonetheless, the passage does not deny the implication of God standing at Horeb.

A more definitive acceptance of the divine act of standing is found in Bab. Baba M'tzia 86b. R. Judah (b. Ezekial) says for Rav: "Whatever Abraham did for the angels (in Genesis 18) by himself, so the Holy One, Blessed be He, did for His children (Israel) on His own; whatever Abraham did through an agent, so the Holy One, Blessed be He, did for His children through an agent." Thus, Judah equated the statement about Abraham, that 'he stood by them under a tree' (Gen. 18:8), with the verse about God standing at Horeb.[42] Not only is there no denial of the implication of the verse, but the verse is also supported through this parallel.

In Daniel 7:9, God is depicted as wearing clothes: 'His rainment (is) as white snow.' Midrash Psalms (93:1), attributed to R. Chanina, accepts this assertion literally. Psalm 93:1, states that 'the Lord is clothed in majesty.' Chanina concludes that "the Holy One, Blessed be He, be-

fits His clothes, and His clothes are befitting to Him... The Holy One, Blessed be He, is clothed in seven garments..." Chanina then listed verses that he interpreted as pertaining to divine dress. The last, seventh, is "in the days of the Messiah, as it says: 'His raiment is as white snow.'"[43] In this midrash, the concept of wearing apparel is accepted, then supported by the Bible.

An important consideration in the above passages is that while the Rabbis responsible for them did accept the anthropomorphism of the biblical verse, in many cases it appears that the only reason for doing so was that the assertion is found in the Bible. The verse states an anthropomorphism, so the Rabbis repeat it. Often, however, they do not develop or further support the assertion of the verse. In many cases given above, the verse is merely stated without qualification or denial, yet as part of a lesson that has very little to do with God's human-like quality. Moses and Adam, then Moses and Bil'am are compared; the midrash's intent in both cases is the comparison, not the assertion of an anthropomorphism, but the anthropomorphism is nonetheless given without any indication that it should be understood in some way that is different from its statement in Scripture.

From examining these passages, one gets the feeling that the Rabbis were not willing to confidently assert

the plain meaning of the more daring anthropomorphisms of the Bible. The verse is Scriptural, that is, revealed, and these Rabbis evidently preferred not to voice their objection to its meaning either. The following group of passages do show some questioning on the part of Rabbis to the plain meaning of a verse. The anthropomorphic claim is not denied, but there is a clear indication of ambivalence with respect to the claim.

The midrash in Genesis Rabba (8:11), that was described above as ascribed to R. Tifdai, also contains the opinion of other Rabbis,[44] that the 'higher' components of man's being are fourfold; that like the ministering angels, he stands (on two feet), speaks, has knowledge and can concentrate.[45] There is no mention here of being created according to God's form as implied in the verses (Gen. 1:26,27). Neither is there a denial of this implication. Verse 26, says 'our form, our likeness,' and the Rabbis have made this plural form refer to the angels. This leaves unstated the possibility that the angels have the form of both man and God--an assertion more plainly made by Tifdai.

In Genesis Rabba (8:9), R. Simlai has sought to resolve three phrases: 'our form' (v. 26), 'His likeness' (v.27) and 'men and women He created' (v. 27).

He concluded: "At first, Adam was created from the earth, Eve from Adam. After, 'in our form, according to our likeness,' there is no man without woman, no woman without man and nether without the Skekhina."[46] Simlai has maintained that each human being is created in the likeness of the first man and woman, yet somehow involved in that form is the Shekhina. There is an indication here that Adam's form was indeed that of the Shekhina, but this claim is certainly hidden, and Simlai did not elaborate on what he meant.

With respect to the verses that speak of God's face, the following two passages use language that qualifies the biblical claim.

Sifre to Deuteronomy (end of V'zot B'rakha, but independent from the passage given above), reads: "'that knew God face-to-face,' (Deut. 34:10). Why is this said? For did not Moses ask: 'Show me, please, Your glory' (Ex. 33:18)? He said to him: in this world you may not see that which appears to be like a face...but in the world-to-come, that which appears to be like a back (cf. Ex. 33:23)."[47] The midrash has avoided speaking directly about God's face or back by inserting the words, 'shenimshal k'' that is 'that which appears like...' While the passage has qualified the anthropomorphism, it

has not denied the possible reality of a divine face or back.

The same sort of qualification occurs in Exodus Rabba (23:15). R. Berekhia said: "...Moses, how vigorously did he beseech before the All-Present, until he saw the image...Even the heavenly beings who carry the Throne do not recognize the image, and when it came time to recite their song of praise, they would say, 'which is the place? We do not know whether it is here or elsewhere!' ...Yet, those who came up from the Sea, in unison spoke and pointed with a finger, 'This is my God, and I will glorify Him,' (Ex. 15:2)."[48] The word d'mut, image, is used here instead of anthropomorphic terms, but there is no denial of a real divine countenance.

Deuteronomy Rabba (2:37), refers to God's wearing apparel, as indicated in Daniel 7:9. Unlike the passage in Midrash Psalms (93:1, above), this midrash does not speak directly about God wearing clothing. Instead, it reads: "R. Berekhia said; there are ten places (in Scripture) where the Holy One, Blessed be He, called Israel a bride...And in response, Israel adorns the Holy One, Blessed be He, with ten apparels."[49] Berekhia pictured Israel 'dressing' God as a bridegroom as a result of it being called a bride. The divine apparel, according to Berekhia, is figurative and not necessarily real. Once

more, however, there is overt denial of the implications of the verse in Daniel and the other verses used.

Also stated in Daniel 7:9, is the clause: 'the hair of His head like pure wool.' No passage that quotes this clause refers to divine hair. They depict God instead, as appearing as an old man.

R. Chiya ba Abba, in P'sikta d'Rav Kahana 109b, said: "According to each activity and each circumstance, the Holy One, Blessed be He, would appear before Israel. At the Sea, He was like a warrior...At Sinai, like a scribe ...and in the days of Daniel, like an old man teaching Torah...And He also appeared to them like a young lad."[50] As in passages above (Ex. Rabba 23:15, and Sifre), the description of God that had been implied in the biblical text has been qualified. Thus, according to Chiya, this is the way that God appeared at various times in Israel's history, not that He actually is any of these.

A statement in Bab. Chagiga 14a, agrees with Chiya's comment. A verse in Song of Songs (5:11) is taken to mean that God has dark hair. When compared to the verse in Daniel, the Talmud concludes: "There is no problem. Here is during study, and here is during battle. As a master taught, one is not satisfied with sitting unless he is old, nor is one comfortable in battle unless he is

young."[51] Both passages speak of God's appearance. They do not speculate on whether what 'appeared' might reflect what is real.

A midrash in Tanchuma, Buber, ed. (Chaye Sara 58b), utilizes the verse in order to depict God as an old man, and then relate this manifestation of age to show approval toward Abraham: "'All the paths of the Lord are compassion and truth' (Ps. 25:10). Abraham arose and cleaved to the quality of compassion. Thus, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him; this quality is Mine and you have taken hold of it. I swear, that I shall make you appear like Me, for as it says, 'the hair of His head like pure wool.' Then what does it say: 'Then Abraham buried his wife, Sarah' (Gen. 23:19). He rose and attended to her. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: it is proper that you have adorned her. Thus, it is said: 'And Abraham was old' (Gen. 24:1)."[52] The implication in this passage is closer to an assertion that God has the form of an old man, than those above. In this midrash, God has made Abraham old so that he would appear like Him. There is, nevertheless, no claim that God is truly gray-haired, that His 'old age' is more than merely a metaphor for respect and honor.

Another passage having to do with this clause in Daniel 7:9, represents a greater distancing from the

plain meaning of God having hair. In Tanchuma (K'doshim 1), R. Pinchas, in the name of R. Chelkia, interpreted the word, n'ke to mean 'to purify' as for judgment: "What is meant by 'and the hair of His head like pure wool'--that the Holy One, Blessed be He, purifies Himself in order to judge the idolators, and provide for them, in this world, the reward for their little good deeds that they do; thus, they may be judged as guilty in the world-to-come."[53]

A sentence in Esther Rabba (1:6), seems to interpret the verse in the same way. In par'sha 1:5, a story is told that Ahasuerus was worthy of ruling only half of the world's 252 provinces. Due to one small gesture of kindness to the Jews, God extended his rule to one more--127 provinces. Thus, R. Levi, in the name of R. Samuel bar Nachmani, concluded: "The hair of His like pure wool; for there is no creature that can be compared to Him." The statement ends here, but its meaning seems to parallel that of the previous midrash, where a heathen is given a small reward for his small good deed in this world. Both passages avoid dealing with the verse's claim of divine hair. In choosing to treat the word 'pure,' they nevertheless avoid a denial of the implication of the verse.[54]

The verses that reflect human-like action on the

part of the deity are also subjected to an ambivalent interpretation by the Rabbis.

Isaiah 6:1, contains the prophet's claim to seeing the Lord sitting on His Throne. The existence of a heavenly Throne is not questioned, rather it is the assertion that the deity can be viewed in the human-like activity of sitting that is anthropomorphic.

In Agadat B'reshit (14:1), it is noted that Amos saw God standing (9:1), Moses saw Him as a warrior (Ex. 15:3), Daniel, as an old man (7:9), as well as Isaiah's claim. The passage concludes: "In all, no one prophecy is compared to another."[55] The midrash is stating a contention about the nature of prophecy. It therefore does not clearly assert whether what the prophets saw was a reflection of what is real about the depiction of God, or jsst an image.

It is also unclear in Tanchuma (Naso 11), whether Isaiah's claim is accepted: "Come and see, at the time that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses: Moses, see, that a Holy Temple has been built above...As it says, "And I saw God sitting on His Throne, etc." But for the sake of (Israel's) love, I leave that Temple, that had been constructed even before the creation, and I come down to dwell among you."[56] The verb is no longer 'to sit,' but rather 'to dwell,' not necessarily an

anthropomorphism.

All of the passages that have been listed above, refrain from denying the anthropomorphic claim of a biblical verse. If there exists some qualification--use of words such as 'image' or 'appear'--or a reinterpretation, the passage nevertheless permits one to maintain the plain meaning of the verse. One may conclude from these passages that some of the Rabbis were non-anthropomorphic with respect to their reading of anthropomorphic scriptural verses. They sought to balance what they took as being the fundamental truth of the text, with their own sense that the deity should not be described with certain terms.

The following group of passages indicate a more anti-anthropomorphic attitude on the part of the Rabbis toward these verses.

Genesis 3:8, reads: "And they heard the sound of the Lord, God, as He was walking in the garden." The verse is asserting that the deity is not merely present, but walking on earth.

In Genesis Rabba (19:7), Abba bar Kahana reinterpreted the verse: "It is not written 'he walks about' (m'halekh), rather 'he goes back and forth' (mit-halekh)--

that is, goes up and away."[57] In other passages,[58] it is explained that when Adam sinned, the essence of the Shekhina, which had been on earth, was removed and went to heaven. There is no denial that God Himself--or that part of Him called the Shekhina--was in the garden. Kahana, and others, have chosen to change the concept of the deity engaging in the human-like activity of walking--or horizontal movement--to one of God moving between earth and heaven. Evidently, this vertical movement, which could be related to many descents on the part of God to earth, as in the revelation at Sinai, was more acceptable.

Another midrash in Genesis Rabba (19:7), reads the verse in such a way as to avoid the anthropomorphism alltogether. R. Helfon (or Hilfi) opined that it was not God, but rather His voice that was moving in the garden. That a voice can move on its own among the trees is supported by a parallel instance of fire moving across an area.[59]

In Numbers Rabba (11:3), Shimon b. Yochai also changed the meaning of the verse. God did not walk; it was Adam who stood on his feet: "Before he sinned, he would hear the Spoken Voice while on his feet and could remain standing, but when he sinned and heard the voice, he went into hiding."[60]

Two passages in Genesis Rabba (19:8), express their

anti-anthropomorphism by choosing to read words in the verse differently. The first passage deals with the first word of the verse: "Do not read 'and they heard' (vayishm'u), rather 'they caused it to be heard' (vayashmi'u)." As a result of their sinning, Adam and Eve, "heard the voice of the trees that were saying: they are thieves that have stolen the knowledge of creation."[61] The verse is read to mean that charges were brought before God by beings in the garden. Thus, the anthropomorphic assertion disappears.

The second passage reinterprets the operative word of the anthropomorphism, mit-halekh. "R. Levi and R. Isaac. R. Levi said: Death had been in the garden. R. Isaac disagreed: (At that time) Death came to it (met halakh lo)."[62] The discussion of Levi and Isaac deals with the punishment that befell Adam and Eve on account of their sin. For disobeying God's command, they lost their immortality; in other words, were sentenced to death. In this passage, therefore, the claim of God walking in the garden is turned into a statement about the nature of their punishment. The anthropomorphism is removed.

Exodus 33:23, reads: 'I will then remove My palm and you shall see My back.' Passages that deal with this

verse reinterpret the claim of a divine back in order to remove this concept.

Exodus Rabba (45:6), interprets the verse as follows: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to (Moses), I show you the reward of the righteous that I will provide them in the end of days."[63] The midrash has reread 'my back' (achorai) as 'end of days' (ach'rit hayamin), thus, it no longer accepts the anthropomorphic assertion of the verse.

In Bab.B'rakhot 7a, R. Chana bar Bizna, for R. Shimon the Pious, taught: "'I will remove My palm and reveal My back.' This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed Moses where to place the knot of t'fillin."[64] The word, achorai, is no longer understood as the back of God's body, but as the back of a person's head, where the knot is placed when one puts on t'fillin. The anthropomorphism is clearly removed.

Isaiah's claim of seeing God sitting on His Throne (6:1), is denied in Bab. Yebamot 49b. The agada states that the king Menasseh condemned Isaiah for claiming things that contradicted the assertions made by Moses in the Torah. In opposistion to the prophet's claim of seeing God, is the statement that no one can see God and live (Ex. 33:20). A baraita concludes this agada: "All

the prophets saw through smokey glass, but Moses, our Rabbi, saw through a clear glass."[65] The verse in Exodus is therefore used to dispute the statement in Isaiah.

In these passages above, the Rabbis recognized the anthropomorphic implication of a verse as bothersome or objectionable to their own concept of deity, and thus, sought to reinterpret the verse in such a way that the anthropomorphism was removed. By treating the questionable verse in this fashion, the Rabbis avoid voicing their objection to its implication. They simply presented an alternate reading.

A more emphatic rejection of anthropomorphism is accomplished through claiming that the offensive word or term actually means something else. This was the method utilized by allegorists such as the ancient Greeks and Hellenized Jews.

Allegory, as used by the Greeks, however, entails a philosophic framework that is very different from that found in Jewish thought. The central object in Greek thinking was things, the physical elements of the universe. With respect to contemplation, things are passive and objective. Their basic forms and functions--their metaphysical nature--can be expressed in abstracts.

Although the Greek gods were human-like, they also represented, at least to the philosophers, the functioning of the universe, and therefore, could be transformed through allegory into abstract concepts.

The central object of rabbinic thought is the Jewish God, which cannot be equated with the inanimate things of the universe. When Philo tried to resolve the difference between Greek thought and God, he introduced to his allegorizations, the idea of coming to know God through mystic elevation. This action is not central in Judaism, for it entails an action by the human being alone as means to meet God. The God of biblical and rabbinic Judaism, on the other hand, is one who acts to meet man as well, by manifesting Himself in history.

This difference between the Greek and Jewish attitude toward allegory notwithstanding, there have been scholars who have maintained that, among the Rabbis, there existed a school of allegorists. In this regard, Arthur Marmorstein wrote:

> The conditions in Palestine differed not very much from those among the Greek-speaking Jews. Otherwise, one could not account for the many similarities of the questions raised in the one place as in the other...Next to the radicals at both ends, who defended the literality of the Scriptures out of piety and reverence, there were the Jewish Marcionites who adhered to the same principle out of hatred against the Bible and the Jewish teaching of God...Between these two groups stood the allegorists,

> who tried to avert the criticism and misinterpretation of the Bible, and through the Bible, of the Jewish doctrine of God.[66]

It was Marmorstein's contention that these Jewish rationalists stemmed from R. Ishmael's school. He gave an example of Ishmael's method of exegesis,[67] the Rabbi's treatment of Exodus 12:13, 'Then I will see the blood and pass by them.' The limitation on God implied in this verse is that He must first see the blood on the door of the Israelite's home in order to know which houses to pass. Ishmael therefore asked: "Is not everything known to Him?" This comment was supported by Daniel 2:22 and Psalms 139:12, that attest to God's omniscence. The solution that Ishmael gave was, according to Marmorstein, one that "would have caused joy to Philo, had he heard it."[68] It was: "Scripture says, 'I will see the blood,' but (implies) that because of your (Israel's) observance of this commandment, I will reveal Myself and have compassion upon you." The second part of the verse is given as proof: "'And I will pass by them.' Not 'passing by' (p'sicha), but 'having compassion' (chiyes)."[69]

Max Kadushin debated this theory. If some Rabbis were actually allegorists, he argued, then what was the object of their allegories? Kadushin also disputed the existence of this school as opposed to a literalist group, which was also posited by Marmorstein. He noted

that Marmorstein would sometimes bend the evidence in order to fit his theory.[70]

Research into the passages that deal with anthropomorphic verses, in this study, has yielded no evidence of a concerted effort to apply allegory to the Bible. There has been found instead, a number of passages that seek to reject an anthropomorphic assertion through the device of claiming that the verse must be taken metaphorically. Thus, one can say that the Rabbis would sometimes view certain words symbolically. This may be taken as allegory, but only in the broadest sense of the term, and in a fashion that does not nearly approach the work of the Hellenists--such as Philo--or the later medieval scholastic philosophers.

Marmorstein's contention that there were two basic methods of approach utilized by the Rabbis--literal and allegorical--may be disputed by the evidence already detailed. Among the verses studied, only a few passages can be said to have literally accepted the verse. Many more were ambivalent in their presentation. Moreover, as Kadushin said, there are even some instances of crossing over in Marmorstein's presentation.

For example, Marmorstein has depicted Akiba as a literalist.[71] When he opposed R. Pappis (or Pappus or Pap-

payus), he utilized a symbolic interpretation. In Song of Songs Rabba (1:9, par. 1), Pappis had exclaimed that God was an unchallenged Judge. As proof, he cited Job 23:13, 'He is at one with Himself, so can answer Him; what He desires, so shall He do.' Akiba answered this allegation--that it is possible for God to be capricious in His judgments--by interpreting Isaiah 6:1 (I saw the Lord, God, sitting on a Throne): "That is enough, Pappis! One may not challenge the judgment of He who Spoke and there was the World; but everything is according to the Truth and everything according to the Law."[72] In this manner, Akiba had explained that the Throne of God symbolized His justice.

This passage is an example of rabbinic metaphorical interpretation. The verse in Isaiah is no longer taken to depict the deity sitting on his throne, but rather as thedeity fairly dispensing justice. The following passages also reject the plain meaning of the verse in favor of a non-anthropomorphic interpretation.

Exodus 33:11, refers to God and Moses speaking face-to-face. Midrash Psalms (25:6), places this verse in its context of Moses being on the top of the mountain when the Israelites had turned to the golden calf: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: Two faces are boil-

ing over with anger. Go back now! He entered the camp, as it says: The Lord spoke to Moses face-to-face. If one does not understand the meaning of the verse, then read on: And he returned to the camp. Thus, one learns that he was released from his vow."[73] The midrash has clearly denied the implication of a divine face. Rather than a face, there is an indication of divine anger that leads to the release of a vow made by Moses.

Exodus Rabba (45:5), refers to portion of Exodus 33:20, 'no one can see My face.' It cautions: "Do not accept 'My face' literally, but rather as 'the security of the wicked.'" This interpretation is then supported by Deuteronomy 7:10, 'He repays His enemies to his (His) face, in order to destroy him.'[74]

In Bab. Sota 14a, R. Chama b. R. Chanina was disturbed by the injunction in Deuteronomy 13:5, 'You shall follow after the Lord, your God.' He asked: "Is it possible to walk behind the Shekhina? Does it not say 'the Lord is a consuming fire?' Rather follow the attributes of God."[75] This reinterpretation is also found in Tanchuma (Vayishlach 10): "I did not say this to you (referring to the verse in Deuteronomy). I meant (to follow) His ways of compassion, truth and charitable deeds." The proof text is Psalm 25:10, "All the paths

of the Lord are compassion and truth."[76]

A midrash in Tanchuma (P'kude 2), deals with Genesis 1:27, that God made man in His image. R. Jacob, in the name of R. Asi, was comparing each of the works of creation to the tabernacle that was erected in the wilderness. Thus, the work of the sixth day, man, is also compared: "God created man in His image, that is, with glory did He fashion him." The replacement of 'image' by 'glory' (kavod), is established by the verse that refers to the tabernacle, Psalm 26:8, "I love the place of Your house and the tabernacle of Your glory."[77] In that man is like the mishkan, his creation is 'the tabernacle of Your glory' which is how 'His image' is read.

R. Berekhia, in Lamentations Rabba (1:37), examined the verse, 'You stretch out Your right hand, the earth swallowed them' (Ex. 15:12). The land and the Sea were arguing over who should receive the dead Egyptians. Neither wished to accept them lest that one be cursed. They argued until God swore to the land that no curse would befall it. This is derived from the verse. "It is not 'right hand' but 'an oath.'" The proof text is Isaiah 62:8, "The Lord swore by His right hand."[78]

This last passage indicates how modest the Rabbis were in their attempt to give a metaphorical reading to biblical verses. To reinterpret God's right hand--or the act of stretching it forth--as the act of swearing an oath, is hardly the sort of thorough conceptualization that is associated with allegory. It would appear instead that the Rabbis who utilized symbols were merely voicing their opposition to the plain meaning of a particular verse. Some of the passages express their opposition quite directly, by using the expression, 'it is not...but rather.' They then support their contention with a verse that contains both the word they oppose and the term with which they wish to replace it. Thus, R. Berekhia used the verse in Isaiah that contains 'right hand' (which is found in the anthropomorphic text) and 'swear' (which Berekhia had maintained to be the meaning of 'right hand' in this verse). Exodus Rabba (45:5), in utilizing Deuteronomy 7:10, has taken the 'His face' in the verse, and has equated it with 'He repays,' signifying the temporal comfort that the wicked may have in this world.

The rabbinic use of symbolization is therefore, very weak. First, it is used only on a few occasions. Out of about 250 passages examined, no more than ten cases could be found. It can be expected that with further

research, others would turn up, but it is doubtful that the percentage would change. Second, in most of the cases examined, the Rabbis appeared to claim that their reinterpretation was not original, but well-grounded in the Bible by virtue of some other verse. Unlike the allegorists, who would assert that they were giving the proper reading of Scripture, based on philosophical notions, the Rabbis merely stated that they were reading the text according to its plain meaning elsewhere. Finally, the use of a metaphor is not always central to the lesson of the midrash. R. Jacob, for example, is not necessarily bothered by the biblical implication that God, in creating man, had a human form. His equating 'image' with 'honor' was simply to show how man was like the tabernacle.

One may conclude that although Rabbis were bothered by anthropomorphic assertions in the Bible, they preferred not to express their opposition so directly as to symbolize the offending term. They tried instead, to reread the verse so as to remove the anthropomorphism, or used terms that qualified the biblical assertion.

The rabbinic passages that deal with Exodus 15:6, "Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, Your right hand, crushes the enemy," indicate another approach to

anthropomorphism in the Bible. Today, one might recognize this verse in context, as the Israelites exultation of God's mighty power by which they were freed from the Egyptians. Targum Onkelos, which, as has been noted, would soften or remove anthropomorphisms on occasion, translated this verse literally: ימינך " אדירא

בחילא, ימינך " תברת סנאה

Rabbinic interpretation of this verse also maintained the anthropomorphism, but dealt with the verse in a very consistent manner. The following are the following are passages that deal with our verse:

In Bab. Avoda Zara 4a, R. Chanina (or Chananya) bar Papa compared three verses that contain the word, koach. They are Job 37:23, "The Almighty whom we cannot find, is excellent in power." Psalm 147:5, "Our Lord is great, His power is mighty." And Exodus 15:6. He resolved an apparent conflict in which the first two verses imply an invisible power, and the latter a tangible one, by saying: "There is no difficulty; here (the first two) is during judgment, and here (the third) is during war."[79]

A midrash in Song of Songs Rabba (1:9, par. 1), begins with a verse from I Kings (22:19), that angels were arranged on both the left and the right of the Throne. Based on the double use of the word, yamin (right hand),

that is found in our verse, the question is raised: "Is there a 'left hand' in heaven?" The answer that is given is yes; that the right side is given over to merit, the left to guilt.[80]

In Tanchuma (B'shalach 15), there is also an expressed concern for the double use of the term, yamin. It is explained here that the first 'right hand' is stretched forth in order to receive repentence. If repenters had come forward, the second 'right hand' need not have exacted judgment.[81]

R. Abahu, in Exodus Rabba (22:2), provided the parable of a man who protects his son from highwaymen with one arm, while he fights with the other. "Thus, Israel spoke to the Holy One, Blessed be He: Let there be peace upon both Your hands, that one saved us from the Sea, and the other drowns the Egyptians."[82]

Yalkut Shimoni (Part II, #455), compares our verse to Isaiah 40:10, "Behold the Lord, God, comes as a mighty One." "(He will come in this fashion) upon the idolators, but upon Israel, here is His reward and His acts are before Him."[83]

M'khilta 39a, examining our verse, notes that yamin is used twice and posits: "When Israel does the will of the All-present, they make the left hand like the right."[84]

Midrash Psalms (18:20), asks how did the feeble and

the goutridden mange to get out of the Sea before the Egyptian army went in. The answer given is that "the Holy One, Blessed be He, reached out with His (right) hand and moved them out of the Sea."[85]

Each of these passages appear to accept the reality of God's right arm, or two right arms. Each passage also, however, uses this term, as it appears to be used in the Bible, to denote God's power. In Avoda Zara , the right hand is God's might in battle, as opposed to His power in judgment. Song of Songs Rabba equates it with the power of grace or forgiveness. The passages, in noting its two-fold occurrence, refer to two of God's attributes, the Protector of Israel against its enemies, and Acceptor of repentence or good deeds. The consistency in which each midrash interprets this term in our verse, leads one to conclude that the term itself was employed as a symbol. More probable, though the limitations of this study have precluded the gathering of further evidence to bear out this contention, the Rabbis recognized that the Bible will make figurative use of some anthropomorphic words, such as 'right hand.' Thus, all they were doing was maintaining the concept that they had perceived as implicit in the text.

Conclusions to the Survey of Anthropomorphic Verses

The verse and passages examined in this survey do not permit any sweeping generalizations about the rabbinic attitude toward anthropomorphism in the Bible. The two models presented by Kadushin and Marmorstein, are not borne out. Kadushin had argued that the Rabbis, not being in any way philosophers, were not at all concerned about the anthropomorphic implication of a verse, but rather wished to impart a sense of God's otherness. It would appear, however, that there were Rabbis who were concerned about anthropomorphic implications, and sought, through midrashic techniques, to avoid them.

Marmorstein, on the other hand, described the concern for anthropomorphism on the part of the Rabbis as a school of thought that sought to allegorize the anthropomorphic claim of the verse.[86] This school existed in opposition to those who accepted biblical verses literally. This survey does not indicate the existence of two such schools. Although, some Rabbis have been seen to avoid the anthropomorphism of a verse and some to accept it, already one can note that R. Berekhia, R. Levi, Shimon b. Lakish, even Akiba, did both. It is probable that further investigation will reveal that more Rabbis would sometime accept and sometime avoid the anthropo-

morphism of a verse. Moreover, the sort of symbolization that the Rabbis employed can hardly be put on the level of allegory, as Philo and other Hellenists used it.

The survey does indicate a number of levels of reaction to the anthropomorphic claims of a verse. The rabbinic attitude toward Exodus 24:10--mention of God's feet--and Deuteronomy 34:10--God's face--goes virtually unmentioned in the rabbinic literature. On one level, therefore, the Rabbis were simply unconcerned and silent about an instance of anthropomorphism.

A second level is the recognition of an anthropomorphic claim. In a few cases, the claim of the verse is accepted without question; in more, there is some qualification or ambivalence about the assertion. At any rate, according to their interpretation, Rabbis permitted the conception of a divine countenance, of the deity being dressed, appearing young or old, and standing on earth. Even in cases of literal acceptance, one may derive philosophical implications from the passage. The assertion that God is sometimes present and sometimes not,[87] can be clearly associated with the Buberian notion of the ecclipse of God--though, in this passage, it might only arise as a method for resolving two contradictory verses. While the Rabbis could accept descriptions of God's appearance, these images of clothing or of age are

not described without a purpose. Each manifestation of God is clearly related to a divine concern. God is a young warrior at the Sea, for example, because He is the Protector of His people, and concerned with the fate of Israel.

A third level of reaction to an anthropomorphism was the attempt to reduce or soften the implication. A final type was the attempt to remove the implication altogether. For some Rabbis, the plain meaning of a verse was evidently unacceptable. It was improper to say that God has a back, or hair, or could be seen by mortals, and thus, the Bible must have meant something else by these assertions.

Among the verses chosen for this survey, there appears to be a sense on the part of the Rabbis that some anthropomorphic assertions are more objectionable than others. No passage accepted the claim of God's back, as presented in Exodus 33:23. Most passages avoided the idea of the deity walking in the Garden of Eden, and the description of God's hair. With respect to the latter, those passages that utilized this description, did so indirectly by asserting that God appeared old, but did not refer directly to His hair. The passages that dealt with verses referring to God's face were sometimes accepting, sometimes reinterpretive. The claim of a divine coun-

tenance, however, is much more common in the Bible than claims of a divine back and hair. As has been noted, the verses referring to the right hand of God are consistently interpreted to denote divine power and protection. The Rabbis, therefore, might be utilizing this term as a symbol, or recognizing the way the term is used figuratively in Scripture.

It is also evident that there was disagreement among the Rabbis with respect to their conceptions of God. Some were more willing to make anthropomorphic assertions about the deity than others. One passage, repeated a number of times in the literature, may serve as an example. In Bab. Chagiga 14b, it is noted that the verse in Daniel (7:9), refers to the thrones of God. R. Akiba first interpreted this plural casting as meaning two thrones, one for God and one for David (the Messiah). R. Jose the Galilean took this to mean that, in Akiba's opinion, God was sharing His place of glory with a mortal, and therefore responded: "Akiba, how long are you going to treat the Shekhina as profane!" He gave his own interpretation that there were two Thrones, one for dispensing judgment and one for charity. For Jose, Akiba's opinion was evidently too strong an anthropomorphic assertion.

The passage continues with a baraita that indicates

that Akiba acquiesced to his colleague, but R. Eliezer b. Azaria still disagreed: "Why are you bothering with the Hagadah? Quit your musings and return to 'Afflictions' and 'Tents' (two tractates of Mishna, with which Akiba was considered an expert)." Eliezer then interpreted the verse to mean one Throne and its footstool. (He based this on Isaiah 66:1)[88]

Clearly, Eliezer found Akiba yet to be venturing too far in the agada.[89] For him, it was improper to believe that God would need two Thrones in order to perform separate functions. He therefore reinterpreted the plural form of the biblical verse to mean just one Throne.

Among the passages gathered in this survey, no interpretation of a verse so conceptualizes an anthropomorphic claim as to deny the personal manifestation of God in Israel's history. While there definitely existed a sensitivity on the part of Rabbis to the force of an anthropomorphism in the Bible, there appears to be no attempt to depict a totally distant and abstract deity. A significant and fundamental difference between the rabbinic and Hellenistic conception of deity, is that the God of Israel is close, concerned with His people, and able to personally involve Himself in their history.

This conception necessarily leads to a tension, for God is also depicted as beyond human conception. "I am God, and not man," is proclaimed in Hosea (11:9); and what human attributes can describe Him? Given the acknowledged unlimited power and incomprehensibility of deity on one hand, and the depiction of a personal, concretized God on the other, one looks for indications of whether the Rabbis were able to combine or resolve the two conceptions. The following chapter, therefore, is concerned with one of a number of specialized rabbinic terms that serve to modify anthropomorphic claims about God. The term, kib'yakhol.

III. Kib'yakhol

The Use of the Term

Before speculating on its function and exact meaning, it is helpful to see why the term, kib'yakhol,[90] is important and interesting. As was mentioned in the introduction, kib'yakhol is one of a number of terms employed by the Rabbis when dealing with anthropomorphism or some daring statement about God. Each of these terms is evidence that the Rabbis recognized, and reacted to, the implications of anthropomorphic assertions.

Kib'yakhol is one of the more common terms utilized by Rabbis, over 140 instances are to be found in the rabbinic literature. It is also employed with respect to some of the most daring assertions to be made about God. In light of the information provided in the previous chapter, that attests to the ambivalence that Rabbis felt toward anthropomorphic statements in the Bible, it is now worthwhile to see how kib'yakhol is used in the presentation of a rabbinic notion of God.

The previous chapter dealt with passages of rabbinic literature that utilized an exegetical approach to anthropomorphic verses in the Bible. These passages did not evidence any particular form that was consistently used

in order to effect their approach to a verse. The passages that contain kib'yakhol, on the other hand, do have a rather consistent form.

An example of this form is in M'khilta 62b : "'Then you shall be My own treasure from among the peoples' (Ex. 19:6), kib'yakhol, I do not set down as rulers over you anyone other than Me. Thus it says: 'Behold, He that keeps Israel' (Ps. 121:4)."[91]

This midrash begins with a verse that leads to a speculation about God. Then, the speculation is supported by a second verse. This is the form for over eighty percent of the incidents of kib'yakhol investigated--a verse, a statement about God engendered by the verse and using the term, and a proof text. Those passages that do not strictly adhere to the form, remain close to it. Sometimes the generating verse is replaced by an agadic story, which had been developed from some verse or verses. One might also find the same text being used to both generate and prove the assertion employing kib'yakhol. In every single case, however, at least one verse--either generating or proof--is associated with the use of kib'yakhol.

One may conclude that the term was used carefully. The statement that was to be modified by kib'yakhol evidently could not stand on its own; a text from Scripture was required in order to substantiate the assertion.

The term is associated with daring claims about the deity, but an examination of the biblical verses used with respect to the term are not particularly daring. Only a few of the verses examined in the previous chapter are related to passages that use kib'yakhol. One does not find at all the references to God's face, back, hair or His walking on earth. By contrast, verses in this collection do refer to His manifestation on earth, or relate His anthropopathic qualities of anger and sorrow. Most of the verse, however, do not imply a major anthropomorphism.

Examples of generating verses are: 'And the Lord remembered Sarah' (Gen. 21:1). 'If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall pay double' (Ex. 22:3). 'And the Lord spoke unto Moses: get thee down, for thy people...have dealt corruptly' (Ex. 32:7). 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God' (Lev. 25:38). 'And it came to pass on the day that Moses had made an end of setting up the tabernacle' (No. 7:1). "A land which the Lord thy God careth for' (Deut. 11:12). 'Ask Me of the things that are to come' (Isa. 45:11). "And when they came unto the nations, whither they came, they profaned My holy name' (Ezek. 36:20). "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, said the Lord'

(Ps. 12:6). 'It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife' (Prov. 20:3). 'The eye also of the adulterer waits for the twilight, saying: No eye shall see me' (Job 24:15). 'She weeps sore in the night...She has none to comfort her' (Lam. 1:2).

Among proof texts, equally unarousing, are: 'And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah and said: Make ready quickly' (Gen 18:6). 'Moses said unto the people: Now I will go up unto the Lord, perhaps I shall make atonement for your sin' (Ex. 32:30). 'Let the Lord...set a man over the congregation' (Num. 27:16). 'Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear Me...that it might be well with them' (Deut. 5:26). 'And when the Lord raised them up judges...for it repented the Lord because of their groaning' (Jud. 2:27). "I was angry with My people' (Isa. 47:6). 'They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them' (Jer. 31:9). 'Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers' (Ps. 94:16). 'Thou are the Lord, even You alone...and the host of heaven worships You' (Neh. 9:6).

There are implications of anthropomorphism in these verse, but they need be read into the verse. The anthropomorphic thrust of the speculation about God, involving kib'yakhol, is more daring than that which can be found in the verse. One may conclude that the claims made by

the verses themselves were not a problem to the Rabbis, in the same way that verses in the previous chapter might have prompted Rabbis to equivocate or avoid the plain meaning. The anthropomorphic assertion is to found instead in their own statements--albeit, backed up in some way by biblical texts--and thus, the problem seems to be one of their own making. The Rabbis wished to make an assertion about God. This assertion of theirs, they felt required modification by the term, kib'yakhol. The nature and purpose of this sort of assertion will be examined later.

Selective Use

About 140 discrete cases of the use of kib'yakhol were examined in this study, which most probably represents virtually all the instances to be found in the sources used in this survey. When it is considered that such passages apparently hold to a careful form, one may conclude that the term's use was limited. Either it was utilized by only a certain segment of Rabbis, or there was an amount of selectivity in its use.

Wilhelm Bacher[92] argued that kib'yakhol in the rabbinic literature was primarily an expression used by Tanaim and Palestinian Amoraim. He found that the earliest expounder was R. Johanon b. Zakai, whose midrash is in M'khilta 91b.[93] The term is found over thirty times--

twenty eight distinct instances--in Tanaitic literature of M'khilta, Sifre and Tosefta . There is one mention of the term in Mishna, Sanhedrin 6:5, but the parallel mishnas of the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds do not contain it. Bacher, therefore, thinks that this might be a later addition.

Bacher's contention is borne out in the later Midrash and Talmud. About sixty percent of the passages refer to their author, and three more refer to an unnamed Tana or Tanaim. All the names are Palestinian, ranging from b. Zakai, a first generation Tana, to the last generation of Palestinian Amoraim (Azaria, Abin, Tanchuma, Nachman).

There are a number of names among the authors who used kib'yakhol, who are familiar as expounders of the passages examined earlier. They included: Akiba, Shimon b. Yochai, Judah, Shimon b. Lakish, Hoshaia, Acha, Chama b. Chanina, Isaac, Chiya bar Abba, Sh'muel b. Nachman, Abba bar Kahana, Berekhia, Joshua of Sikhnin and Yudan. These men represent both those who tended to soften or remove an anthropomorphism, and those who tended to accept them.[94] One's use of the term, therefore, was not limited by an exegetical outlook. A Rabbi who would normally avoid the anthropomorphic implication in a verse, would yet forward a strong anthropomorphic assertion modified by kib'yakhol.

Urbach has put forward the opinion that kib'yakhol is related to a daring assertion about the Shekhina. He pointed to the case of the mishna in Sanhedrin 6:5. It reads: "R. Meir said: At the time that a man sins grievously, the Shekhina, what would be her reaction? Kib'-yakhol, My head aches and my arms pain me."[95] Urbach noted that where kib'yakhol is not found in manuscripts of the Mishna, neither is the word, 'Shekhina.'[96]

While Urbach's observation is correct, it does not go very far in explaining the selective use of the term. The Talmuds do contain 'Shekhina' without the use of kib'-yakhol. Further, the passages that involve both the word, 'Shikhina,' and the term, kib'yakhol, are a very small percentage of the total. Including the mishna, there are to be found only six other cases that employ both terms.[97] Urbach's observation has provided us with a limited application of the term, one that cannot be extended to cover all uses.

The circumstances that must prevail in order to include the term would be very difficult to determine. Critical editions of M'khilta, and the Buber editions of Tanchuma and Midrash Psalms (also critical editions) indicate that the term is present in some manuscripts and missing in others. It is therefore not easily apparent to tell when an instance of the term's use is authentic.[98] Fur-

thermore, there can be found anthropomorphic assertions throughout the literature that appear to be as strong as those that contain kib'yakhol while not utilizing the term.[99]

One would have to conclude that kib'yakhol may not so much serve to type a certain anthropomorphic claim, as it would call to attention the nature of that claim. The term is not automatically used because an assertion reaches a certain level of daring. If the statement is controversial, however, then one may find kib'yakhol. The term is used only in relation to statements that imply a human quality to the deity.

The Meaning of Kib'yakhol

Marmorstein wrote a section in his Essays on Anthropomorphism, on the terminology of the Rabbis in dealing with anthropomorphic verses. He listed expressions, more than one word, that defined a question or assertion about a certain verse. Some of these expressions indicate the intention to take a verse literally. 'Words as they are written' (דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם) asks the reader to accept the plain meaning of the verse. 'If it were not written in Scripture, it would be impossible to say' (אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרו) clearly announces that the expounder wishes the verse to be taken literally; in some cases,

the author may even wish to add to the anthropomorphism.[100]

Other phrases express a more skeptical attitude, or serve to reinterpret the verse. They include: 'Is it possible to say so' (וכי אפשר לומר כן),[101] 'the words of Torah are in a human tongue' (דברה תורה כלשון בני-אדם), 'to make the ear hear what it can grasp' (משמיעין את האוזן מה שיכולה לשמוע).[102] Once more, as far as they are related to anthropomorphic texts, these phrases are clear in their intent to modify and soften the impact of a verse.

The one other expression that Marmorstein examined was <u>kib'yakhol</u>. It acts quite differently from the other expressions. First, it is grammatically difficult to understand. The root, יכל, appears to be in the form of the infinitive construct, which is unknown for this root. The combination of the particles, כ and ב is also unknown. The term, therefore, does not have a plain meaning.

A second difference from the expressions given above, is that the term does not directly modify the biblical verse.[103] It is rather applied to a statement of speculation that is derived from the verse.

Finally, the other expressions generally preface that statement that is going to be made about God, and immediately follow the biblical verse. <u>Kib'yakhol</u>, on the other hand, seems to act as an appositive that might be found in

any part of the statement. At the beginning-- "kib'yakhol the Holy One, Blessed be He regreted that He made man."[104] Between two clauses--"When the Temple was destroyed, kib'-yakhol, the Holy One, Blessed be He, reduced His entourage."[105] At the end--"A mortal king builds a palace and the building outlives him, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, outlives the world, kib'yakhol."[106] Unlike the other expressions, which are prefacing phrases that set the tone for the rabbinic statement that follows, kib'yakhol is best understood as an exclamation. It alerts the reader to the nature of the rabbinic statement. Indeed, as will be seen, it tends to oppose that statement.

Nowhere in the rabbinic literature is the term defined. Thus, there is a great deal of speculation and variation to its exact meaning. William Braude, for example, in his translation of Midrash Psalms,[107] uses many renderings: 'if one dare repeat this' (I, p. 154), 'in a manner of speaking' (I, p. 261), 'if one may speak thus of Him' (I, p. 203), 'if you may use a manner of speaking' (II, p. 14), 'if one is permitted to impute such words to God' (II, p.72, when God Himself is speaking). The most common rendering is 'as it were,' used by Braude in I, p. 481, and II, p.141.

Marmorstein reported a fanciful interpretation of the term made by the fifteenth century scholar, R. Joshua b.

Joseph of Tlemcen: "The Torah, which is written in twenty-two (כב) letters, can (יכול) say thus, but we human beings could not utter such a word."[108] An obvious reason for rejecting this interpretation is that Scripture is not making the assertion, but rather a human--a Rabbi.[109]

Rashi gave an opinion as to its meaning which might be the basis of Bacher's rendering.[110] Rashi commented on its use in Bab. Yoma 3b. The text discusses the difference between Yom Kippur and the other holy days. One reason is that on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest brings the sacrifice from out of his own stock rather than from the community's. This is supported by a reading of Exodus 9:2, 'Take from your own,' as opposed to Exodus 27:20, 'They will take,' R. Johanon concluded: "'Take from your own,' kib'yakhol I prefer that from you more than that from them."[111] Rashi commented: "...according to the difficult word, one would say that the Holy One, Blessed be He, is limited in Israel. Thus, kib'yakhol, which means, it is with reluctance such-and-such is said, as if it was impossible to say it."[112]

Bacher agreed with Rashi's explanation. He wrote: "It is a common expression for that place in which a bold statement (דבור אל) about God is apologetically given."[113] He then posed that the term was an abbreviation for: as

if it were said by one who is able, you can say this:

כ[אילו] ב[מי ש]יכול [אתה לומר כן]

Marmorstein, in giving his own opinion about the meaning of the term, did not mention Bacher's. He noted that the term is related to a verse or verses, from which a strong statement about God is derived. It is also found, he wrote, in combination with the phrase, 'if it were not in Scripture, it would be impossible to say.' He concluded that the term must be related but not identical to this phrase. Thus, he arrived at an imaginative solution, that its meaning was an acronym for: כי״ז גוזר ש׳ כח ואפשר לומר Combined with the phrase, one would have: 'If it were not in Scripture, it would be impossible to say, but implicit in the verse is a strong assertion, thus, one can say...'[114]

Urbach agreed with Bacher,[115] and it would seem that Marmorstein did force his solution. Already found in the term is the word, yakhol, 'to be able,' which is germane to the meaning of the term. There is no persuasive reason to break this up into separate words. While one cannot tell at this time, what exactly is the meaning of the term, Bacher's rendering gives the sense that the Rabbis, in employing the term, were aware that their statement about God was too strong and therefore required some sort of apology.[116]

This sense of apology is clear in the statement of R. Johanon b. Zakai, in M'khilta 91b. He explained why the stealthy thief (ganav) received a greater punishment than the bolder robber (gazlan), in the following manner: "The robber equates the servant with his master, but the thief gives greater honor to the servant that to the master; kib'yakhol the thief has made the eye of Above as if it was blind, and the ear of Above as if it was deaf."[117] The obvious implication of b. Zakai's statement is that the thief is trying to do his business when no one, including God, is watching or listening. This contradicts the notion of God's omniscience. But, that is the point; the thief is stupid or impudent in assuming such a thing. R. Zakai, wishing to communicate the culpability of the thief, presented an assertion that was impossible to say, then 'apologized' for it with kib'yakhol, lest anyone believe that such a thing--hiding from the All-knowing--could happen.

A number of other passages make use of the term in the same fashion, that is, they assert a notion about the deity which is to be understood as impossible. Among these passages are the following.

Pal. Ta'anit 68d, in the name of Shimon b. Lakish, and Bab. Sota 35a, in the name of Chanina bar Papa, refer to the unfavorable report to Moses by the ten spies who

had returned from searching out the land. In Sota: "A weighty thing did the spies speak at that time, 'for they are stronger than us' (Num. 13:31). Do not read 'than us' but 'than Him,' kib'yakhol even the master of the house cannot clean out the pots."[118]

In Tanchuma, Buber,ed. (vayar 53a), there is a rabbinic adage that one should not deceive or abuse another by 'asking for a price when having no intention of buying." They mean by this that one does not accept the penintent, then remind him of his sins, or receive a convert, then remind that person of the false gods of his father. The midrash concludes with God saying: "It would suffice for you to be like Me, kib'yakhol. I, when I created the world, did not seek to abuse those created."[119]

Bab. Sanhedrin 97b, examines Deuteronomy 32:36, that God will take command of His people 'when He sees their helplessness and neither the free nor the bonded are left.' The passage concludes: "Before they would give up all hope of redemption...kib'yakhol there is no supporter nor helper for Israel."[120]

P'sikta Rabati 136a, explains that when Israel went into exile, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, swore to Israel a complete oath, kib'yakhol, He would take a claim upon Himself; if I do not do according to My oath." God then makes His oath by lacing His hand behind Him (as implied

in Lamentations 2:3): "kib'yakhol, thus the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not return (His hand) to its place... He said to Israel: I would forget My right hand that is withdrawn behind Me, if I forget My oath to you."[121]

Another passage in Tanchuma, Buber, ed. (Tazria 17a), begins with the verse: 'There is none holy as the Lord, fore there is none beside You." (I Sam. 2:2): "What is meant by 'for there is none beside You' (ein b'latekha)? None other than like a mortal king who builds a palace and his building outlasts him, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, outlives this world, kib'yakhol."[122] The implication in this passage is that, in saying God outlives something, one is in effect asserting that He can yet die.

In each passage above, the statement modified by kib'yakhol is to be taken as impossible. Nothing can be hidden from God. No people or power can be stronger than Him. He cannot be compared with a mere human. He would never forget an oath. Nor could one entertain the notion of His death, or future non-existence. The function of kib'yakhol, in these passages, is therefore quite odd. One is able to say that which cannot be said, but is nonetheless a useful utterance. The message of each passage entails a concept of God that is basically the opposite of the assertion.

Why this roundabout assertion about God? In these

passages, the lesson being forwarded is not about God. It is rather being pointed at man, particularly at those who have misconceptions about the deity. Just as b. Zakai castigated the thief for being so foolish as to think he could fool God, the Rabbis warn against one who would deny, if for but a moment, the unchallenged power of God, or His will to protect and save His people, Israel.

In these instances, the Rabbis used a claim about the deity, modified by kib'yakhol, in order to warn against a failing in man. This usage of the term occurs in a number of the passages to be presented later.

Often, however, kib'yakhol is used to make an assertion about God that is to be accepted, even though it is acknowledged as being too strong. In order to see how the term operates in this fashion, it is easiest to begin with those passages that combine the term, and the phrase, 'if it were not in Scripture, it would be impossible to say.' As Marmorstein has pointed out, this expression preceded a statement that the author wished to have accepted. The following passages contain such assertions about God.

M'khilta 16a, on Exodus 12:41; "R. Akiba said: If it were not in Scripture, it would be impossible to say, kib'-yakhol, Israel said before the All-present, 'You have redeemed Yourself.' Thus, one finds that whenever Israel

is exiled, kib'yakhol, the Shekhina is exiled with them."[123]

Bab. Eruvim 22a, begins with Deuteronomy 7:10, referring to the speed with which God punishes those who hate Him. "Joshua b. Levi said: If it were not, etc., kib'yakhol, it would be like a man who places a burden on (God's) face, and expects Him to cast it off from Him."[124]

In Bab. Megila 21a, R. Abahu expounded on Deuteronomy 5:28, "Stand here by Me." "If it were not, etc., kib'yakhol, even the Holy One, Blessed be He, recites the prayers while standing."[125]

Bab. Baba Batra 10a; R. Johanon began with Proverbs 19:17, 'He that is gracious to the poor, lends to the Lord.' "If it were not, etc., kib'yakhol, 'the borrower is servant to the lender' (Prov. 22:7)."[126] The implication is that God becomes indentured to one who is kind to the poor.

Song of Songs Rabba (2:1, par. 3) gives a story. The nations of the world will stand witness before God against Israel and will claim that Israel's sins are equal to their own, yet it does not enter hell. God will reply: If this is true then each nation with their god will go down to gehinom : "R. Reuben said: If it were not, etc., kib'yakhol, 'For with fire will the Lord contend' (Isa. 66:16). 'The Lord judges' is not written here but 'the Lord is judged.'"[127] The idea is that God will accompany His people into hell as well, in order to be tested.

Each assertion about God in these passages has been presented as if it was plainly implied in certain biblical verses, and therefore, ought to be accepted. There are some common notions involved in them. The midrashim in M'khilta and in Song of Songs Rabba both express the idea of a God so personally concerned with Israel, that He would accompany them into exile or down into the nether world. The passages in the Talmud depict a deity who conforms to certain structures. God is mandated to punish quickly, to reward faithfully and to follow the established pattern for prayer.

These passages above have presented the notion of a God that is somehow limited. The function of kib'yakhol appears to be to remind us that this depiction is not the complete truth, but that we should nonetheless accept as partially true these concepts. Essentially, there are two concepts being presented here--that God loves His people, Israel, and that He disciplines Himself to follow His own pronouncements and commandments.

Statements that emphasize these two concepts exist in the rabbinic literature without qualification by such terms as kib'yakhol. With respect to God following His Torah, here is a brief list indicating this:[128]

God lays t'fillin in Bab. B'rakhot 6a.

He recites the prayers (B'rakhot 7a), and once acted

as a shaliach tzibur (Bab. Rosh Hashana 7b).

He studies Torah each day (B'rakhot 8a), studying with children (Bab. Avoda Zara 3b), and specifically the verses dealing with the red heifer (Numbers Rabba 19:7).

With respect to God's love for Israel, Marmorstein devoted a section of his essays to the passages in the rabbinic literature that express His love through His grief and mourning for the catastrophes that befell Israel.[129] Max Kadushin argued that expressions, such as 'if it were not in Scripture, it would be impossible to say,' are simply formulae utilized by the Rabbis to emphasize the concepts of divine love and justice.[130]

It has been argued in the introduction to this paper, that the emotional closeness of a deity to a collection of mortals tends to develop into statements and assertions that are anthropomorphic. The function of kib'-yakhol, when applied to claims of God's concern for Israel, thus becomes more subtle than the homiletic warnings listed earlier. Those homilies were concerned with saying something about man. These passages, and the passages that follow, wish to make a point about both God and man.

M'khilta 43b, deals with Exodus 15:17, 'the place which You have made.' "The Temple was the object of love before He who spoke and the world was. When the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the universe, He did so with a word

...When He came to the Temple, kib'yakhol, it was work for Him, as it says, 'the work of the Lord' (pa'alta YHVH read as p'ulat YHVH)"[131] Nothing can be work for an omnipotent being, but the idea of extra effort on God's part shows a special concern for His holy habitation, and by logical extension, for the Temple on earth.

Sifre to Deuteronomy (par. 326), begins with Deuteronomy 32:36, 'for the Lord will judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants.' "When the Holy One, Blessed be He, judges the nations, there is happiness before Him...but when the Holy One, Blessed be He, judges Israel, kib'yakhol, there is regret (or self-reproach) before Him."[132] The universal Judge can show no favoritism, but the God of Israel would grieve of His people's sins.

R. Judah b. R. Semon, in Deuteronomy Rabba (1:2), expounded on Proverbs 28:23, 'one that rebukes a man shall afterward find favor.' "What is the meaning of 'afterward'? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: kib'yakhol, Moses reproved Me behind Israel and reproved Israel behind Me."[133] God is certainly irreproachable, but for Israel's sake, He is reproved.

In Exodus Rabba (23:9), it is explained that the children who were thrown into the Nile by Pharaoh, yet sung their praises for God. How did they recognize Him?

Israelite women would go out into the fields to give birth, then would bid God to take care of the new-born for them. "R. Johanon said: At once, the Holy One, Blessed be He, would descend in His glory, kib'yakhol, and would cut their umbilical, wash and swaddle them."[134] The deity is not a nurse, yet this is how He manifested His concern for His people's plight.

Midrash Psalms (20:3): "The holy One, Blessed be He, said to the nations of the world: Come and make your case against My children, Israel...They replied: Master of the Universe, who will come forward to make Israel's claims? He answered: I will, kib'yakhol."[135] The deity is a judge and not an advocate, but He stands by His people.

These examples of this function of kib'yakhol, depict a human-like deity. God is present on earth, does labor, performs human actions, and has human feelings. Other passages would show God enslaved and exiled,[136] chained,[137] carrying the Ark of the Covenant,[138] feeling grief, weeping or mourning.[139] All of these human-like qualities,[140] however, are put in the context of God's relationship to Israel.

Kib'yakhol, therefore, becomes a device for examining this relationship with the fullest possible freedom of expression. The conventional divine attributes--omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and incorporeality--

are subsumed by the inclusion of the term, kib'yakhol. Its presence, as an apology for the strength of the anthropomorphic assertion, reminds one of the divine attributes while permitting the Rabbis to explore the relation of God and man in words which would otherwise be prohibited.

Kib'yakhol and the Relation between God and Israel

The freedom of expression afforded by the use of kib'yakhol allowed the Rabbis to pursue the relationship of God and Israel. They were able to speak about God's love for His people, His concern for their livelihood, His protection of them and His grief when they sin or when they are in sorrow, defeated or exiled. The Rabbis went even further than speculation about God's choice of action with respect to Israel. They developed a symbiotic relation in which the destinies of God and Israel appeared to be inextricably wound together.

This extraordinary bond is highlighted in the following passages:

In M'khilta 37b, "R. Shimon b. Elazar said: When Israel does the will of the All-present, then His Name is magnified in the world...At the time that it does not do His will, kib'yakhol, His Name is profaned in the world."[141]

M'khilta 39a: "'Your right hand...Your right hand' (Ex. 15:6). When Israel does the will of the All-present, they make the left as the right...but when Israel does not do His will, kib'yakhol, they make the right as the left...When they do His will, there is no sleep before Him...when they do not do His will, kib'yakhol, sleep is before Him."[142]

Lamentations Rabba (1:33), is based on verse 6: 'They have gone powerless before the pursuer.' "R. Azaria in the name of R. Judah b. R. Semon: When Israel does the will of the All-present, they add to the power of the might of Above...When they do not do the will of the All-present, kib'yakhol, they weaken the great power of Above." [143]

Two passages in Sifre to Deuteronomy, the first (par. 311) states: "Before Abraham our father came, kib'yakhol, the Holy One, Blessed be He, judged the world with harshness...But when Abraham our father came into the world, he merited the endurance of hardships as they were forthcoming."[144]

The second (par. 313) reads: "Before Abraham our father came into the world, kib'yakhol, the Holy One, Blessed be He, was only the king of the heavens...When Abraham our father came, He extended His rule over heaven and earth."[145]

Pal. Rosh Hashana 53b: on Rosh Hashana, God, acting according to the decrees of the Bet Din, bids His heavenly court to set up a bima (for the judgment of all souls). If the Bet Din decides on the basis of testimony that the new year begins the next day, then God calls for His entourage to strike the bima. "What is the reason? It is because the law for Israel is the norm for the God of Jacob, and what is not the law for Israel, kib'yakhol, is not the norm for the God of Jacob."[146]

In P'sikta d'R. Kahana 102b: "'You are My witnesses, the Lord spoke, I am El' (Isa. 43:12). Shimon b. Yochai taught: If you be My witnesses, the Lord spoke, I am El; If you are not My witnesses, kib'yakhol, I am not El."[147]

The passages above describe a concept in which God's power on earth is dependent upon Israel. Without the existence of the people, that is, before the advent of Abraham, God's rule was somehow limited, both in size and in that He could not exercise the quality of mercy. Yet, even with the existence of Israel, God requires a certain behavior on their part. Israel must do His will so that He may be glorified, powerful, omniscient, be God Himself. It is not God choosing to do this for Himself, but Israel, by its actions, permitting it of God. And by not doing His will, Israel yet has the power over God to somehow make Him profaned, not alert, weakened, no longer God.

God's own heavenly court is subjected to the decisions of Israel's Bet Din.

The relation of God to Israel, in that God is somehow limited by Israel's fortunes, is highlighted in more passages. The following show a limitation on the part of God. The introduction of kib'yakhol, thus, emphasizes the problem engendered by that limitation.

Lamentations Rabba (2:6): "R. Azaria for R. Judah b. R. Semon, said: When by (Israel's) sins, the enemies entered Jerusalem, took their warriors and tied their hands behind them, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: 'He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble,' (Ps. 91:15) have I written in the Torah. Now when My children are steeped in sorrow, I am yet at ease, kib'yakhol, 'He held back His right hand.'"[148] The midrash compares Israel's warriors who have their hands bound behind them, to God, who also somehow, cannot act, for His arm is behind Him.

In Tanchuma, Buber, ed., (Achare 34b): "'And Nadav and Abihu died before the Lord, when they offered strange fire before the Lord' (Num. 3:4). Why ('before the Lord') twice? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: They brought out the dead before Me, as it is written: 'Take your brothers (Nadav and Abihu) from before the Holy Place' (Lev. 10:4), kib'yakhol, when there is sorrow in Israel,

even He is with them."[149]

M'khilta 56a, expounds on Exodus 17:15, where, after the defeat of Amelek, Moses builds a commemorative altar and it 'Adonai Nisi' (the Lord is my banner). "This miracle (Nes) that the All-present did, He did for His own sake. Thus, you find that when Israel receives a miracle, kib'yakhol, the miracle is for Him...When there is trouble in Israel, it is as if (k'ilu) the trouble is for Him... And when there is joy in Israel, it is as if the joy is for Him."[150] Here, the term, k'ilu, takes the place of kib'yakhol, but all three clauses depict God receiving sorrow or comfort vicariously. The first clause, that God should create a miracle for His own sake, is certainly the most daring assertion of the three, and for this reason, might be the only one modified by kib'yakhol.

The three passages below do refer to God, but rather to Israel and the angels. These are the only passages found not to apply kib'yakhol to an assertion about God. It appears, however, that in light of their similar form and message, they may be considered as indirectly claiming something about the deity; that that which is usually associated with God alone, may also occasionally be generalized.

In Bab. Chagiga 13b, a discussion is carried on about how Isaiah (6:2) can refer to the angels having six wings,

but Ezekiel (1:6) refers to only four. "There is no difficulty here. One is when the Temple stood; and when there was no Temple, kib'yakhol, the wings of the heavenly creatures were reduced."[151] The loss of two wings on each angel may be interpreted as an indirect claim about God's loss of power.

Leviticus Rabba (31:6), compares two verses. 'Is there a number to His troops' (Job 25:3), and 'One thousand thousands ministered unto Him' (Daniel 7:10). "Thus, before the Temple was destroyed, the praise of the Holy One, Blessed be He, rose ceaselessly. Since the Temple has been destroyed, kib'yakhol, the Holy One, Blessed be He, reduced His entourage."[152]

Song of Songs Rabba (4:4, par. 6): "'Your neck is like David's tower' (Song.4:4). This is the Temple; but why is it likened to a neck? For all the time that the Temple was built and standing, the neck of Israel was stretched forth among the nations; but since the destruction of the Temple, kib'yakhol, Israel's neck is withdrawn."[153] Once more, this can be interpreted as an indirect assertion of the loss of some of God's power.

At the beginning of this chapter, it was noted that the assertions that employed, and were modified by kib'yakhol, were statements made by the Rabbis themselves.

The term has functioned as an apology; as a device by which Rabbis could impart that the claim they have made was not completely true. Yet, at the same time, with liberal interpretation of biblical texts, they nonetheless forwarded certain concepttions of God.

A number of the contentions that the Rabbis made have been listed above. It would be helpful, however, to summarize all the concepts found in our collection.

Only two statements, among the evidence collected, have been essentially claims of anthropomorphism, that is, God having human parts. They both refer to God's eye. (Sifre to Num., par. 84, and Tanchuma, Buber, B'reshit 13a) More often--about one-sixth of the total--God is depicted as engaging in a human-like act. He circumcized Abraham (Tan., Buber, Lech 40b), acted like a shepherd (Tan., Buber, B'shalach 31b), spied out and guarded the land (Sifre to Deut., par. 40). He literally stood up (Ex. Rabba 18:6) and sat down (Mid. Ps. 12:3). He is likened to an owner (Pal. B'rakhot 9d) and to a borrower (Lev. Rabba 34:2). He entered a sukah (Mid. Ps. 96:3), and a palace (Ex. Rabba 18:1), and went forth to greet Jacob (Num. Rabba 4:1).

Anthropopathic assertions are found in about one-tenth of the passages. They include God feeling pain (T. Sanhedrin 6:5), in mourning (Tan., Buber, Noach 15b),

crying out in anger (Tan., Buber, M'tzora 23b), and feeling regret or sorrow (Tan., Bub., B'reshit 12b).

Most of the passages do not deal with an anthropomorphic or anthropopathic claim, but rather with an assertion that is simply not in agreement with the normal perception of the deity. Thus, one finds claims of God going into exile (M'khilta 16a), being enslaved (Ibid.), or defeated (Tan., Buber, Achare 36a). He is depicted as being weak or unable to act (P'sik. Rabati 136a). He is humiliated (Tan., Buber, B'chukotai 55a), and subjected to reproach (Deut. Rabba 3:15). The notion of divine omnipresence is challenges with the claim of God descending to earth (Ex. Rabba 42:5), or removing His presence from the earth (Ex. Rabba 43:1).

The assertions about God that employ kib'yakhol, therefore, are not specifically anthropomorphic, but they are rather statements about a limited deity. In fully one-third of the passages in this collection, God is depicted as not omnipotent; in over one quarter of them, He is not omnipresent. Other passages challenge the concepts of perfect goodness and omniscience. Thus, with the modification by kib'yakhol, the Rabbis have presented this weak and limited deity as the God of Israel.

The term has served a two-fold function. On the one hand, it has permitted a daring and unconventional

portrait of God to be drawn. On the other, it calls attention to the Rabbis' own recognition that such a perception of deity is a problem. Why do the Rabbis forward self-confessed problematic statements? What is their purpose in developing, within a certain form and modified by a certain term, such inconsistencies with respect to the idea of God?

A possible answer would first require knowing what motivation was behind these daring assertions. All the passages in this collection are the works of the Palestinian Rabbis. The events that occurred in their lives included the unfathomable destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the eradication of any vestige of political self-determination with the defeat of the Bar Kokhba revolt, and an ongoing series of persecutions, deaths and misery. Throughout this period a key element to their survival as a people was their faith in God.

Yet, the questions about God and His concern for His people during these terrible times, would certainly arise and present an imposing problem. How could they be subjected to such suffering if it were not for their God, somehow also being subjected to the suffering and made helpless to act in their defense, at that moment. The assertions that the Rabbis put forward were therefore in the interest of showing that God had not abandoned Is-

rael. His relation to His people was, indeed, much closer. It was a relationship that approached partnership.

"In the time to come, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits the Messiah down on His right...and Abraham on His left. Abraham's face is paled; he says: My son's son is on the right while I am on the left! The Holy One, Blessed be He, comforts him by saying: Your son's son may be on My right, but I am on your right, kib'yakhol."[154] The Messiah sits to God's right as a functionary to His plans for the future of mankind. The Rabbis posit here that God is also on the right of Israel, thus to serve it.

The term, kib'yakhol, facilitates and enables the Rabbis to present such ideas. The passages in this chapter show how the term acts to allow Rabbis to make certain claims about God, yet point out at the same time, that they recognized that these assertions were inconsistent with conventional notions of God. The Rabbis also accepted and propogated the conventional idea of deity--unlimited and unchallengable. In the previous chapter, one could see how they tended to qualify or avoid biblical assertions that depicted a too human God.

The speculation that is presented here is that the basic intention of Rabbis was to forge a greater sense of faith on the part of the people in a God who truly loved, was concerned and ultimately will save Israel from

the miserable life and circumstances they now encountered. This must remain a speculation, for support for this contention requires a historical analysis that is outside the purview of this study. Yet, it remains unclear whether the Rabbis themselves attempted to resolve the problem between the two 'visions' of God they promulgated, beyond the simple addition of a term to their controversial statements.

It has been argued that the Rabbis were not philosophers, and therefore were not particularly bothered by such inconsistencies.[155] One can see, however, that they were able to be critical about the implications of a biblical verse, thus they would distinguish between the normal concept of an abstract deity and the attribution of concrete physical features, or other limitations, to God. Kib'yakhol is certainly an acknowledgment of this distinction.

Further study is required at this time before one can say whether or how the Rabbis sought to do any more about the distinction than acknowledge it. One may see some indications, however, that they might have done more than merely recognize the problem.

The fundamental notion of God on the part of the Rabbis is that of an unlimited, incorporeal deity. Kib'yakhol, for instance, always serves as a percaution when

a claim that deviates from this idea is made. Thus, statements that appear to contradict the basic notion may actually be understood in terms of it. That is, a statement that claims some limitation on the deity, ought not to be understood as a limitation at all, but rather as a peculiar element of the divine attributes.

Henry Slonimsky gave a midrash from Lamentations Rabba (Proem 24), that depicts the Holy One, Blessed be He, weeping over having removed the Shekhina from among Israel due to their sins. "Heaven forbid that I become a laughter unto the nations and mockery unto the peoples." The passage continues with God refusing the entreaty of the angel, Metatron, that he will weep in his master's stead. Slonimsky noted: "We have a God in tears here; we have the Prince of Angels trying to take the burden of grief upon himself, and the Godhead refusing to be robbed of the supreme prerogative of the heart to weep and suffer compassion."[156] It is not a limitation, then, but an example of God's attributes that He can choose to weep.

The same idea is suggested by a comment in M'khilta 68a, with respect to the verse: 'I, the Lord, am a jealous God' (Ex. 20:5). "I have power over jealousy, but jealousy does not rule Me; I have the power over sleep, but sleep does not rule Me."[157] In a similar passage in Genesis Rabba (49:8), Rabbi (Judah the Prince) added: "A

mortal, rage has mastery over him, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, masters rage."[158] In these homilies, Rabbis were presenting a conception of God as having control over element of His own aspect, even when that might appear to be ungodlike. The cases of kib'yakhol must be understood as uncommon presentations, but they are not necessarily exceptions.

If the idea indicated in these examples can be applied to the passages in this chapter, kib'yakhol then becomes a device by which the Rabbis could claim that for the sake of Israel, God made Himself limited. It is in this way--as in the passage where God personally took care of Israel's new-born in Egypt so that they would know whom to praise--that God comes to be recognized by Israel. Then they may realize the role they must play in fulfilling the hopes and goals of mankind.

The main purpose of the Rabbis, after all, was not to talk about or to God, but to address themselves to their own people; a people in sorrow and distress, who desperately needed the comfort that could come only from God. It is possibly with this intention in mind that the Rabbis, employing kib'yakhol, could transform the God for whom the gap between Him and the mortal is unbridgeable--the Master of the Universe, the All-present, the All-mighty, the One who spoke and the world was, the Holy One,

Blessed be He, the ineffable Name--into One who was within the emotional and perceptual access of man.

IV. Concluding Observations

The following observations are concluding; they are not conclusive. This paper may serve as a starting point for an ongoing inquiry of the rabbinic conception of, and communication about deity. As is true in mort preliminary studies, this has provoked more questions and has indicated new directions for research. What can be deduced from the material presented here, however, is given as an indication of what limits the Rabbis might have placed on themselves in the course of their own inquiry.

The first statement to be made is that the Rabbis accepted the Bible as unchallenged truth--God's own word as it was set in writing before them. This is not to say that they did not have independent ideas which, in a plain, uncritical reading of the text, would not be expressed. Indeed, most of the material collected in this study shows that the Rabbis were often not willing to let biblical assertions of an anthropomorphic God go unchallenged. The non-anthropomorphic conception of God on the part of the Rabbis, however, was essentially supported by certain interpretations of Scripture.

It is important to distinguish the rabbinic attitude toward anthropomorphism in the Bible, and the attitude of

contemporary Hellenistic philosophers, such as Philo. The philosophers' anti-anthropomorphism was the result of applying rational and abstract concepts in a consistent fashion to their interpretation of the Bible. The primary concern was the integrity of the philosophic notion. Certainly, as devoted Jews, the Hellenists also believed in the truth of the biblical text, but only as it related to what they deemed a rational conception of deity.

For the Rabbis, the primary concern with respect to deity, was not ideas, but what was written in the Bible. As a result of this concern, their critical attempts to avoid or qualify the anthropomorphic assertions of the text were relatively modest and not at all systematic. Thus, R. Berekhia, who is mentioned as the author of a number of passages in the survey, would utilize different approaches to deal with the implications of different verses.

Among the passages collected, three basic approaches were found that tended to avoid the plain meaning of an anthropomorphic verse. The first was to employ qualifying terms when dealing with the problematic text. The terms--'image,' 'vision' or 'appearence'--moved the meaning of the verse from a statement about God's actual form, to one of how mortals saw Him.

The second approach involved the utilization of mid-

rashic techniques for interpretation of a verse. The techniques--primarily, the understanding of the verse according to a different syntactical structure, or the 'hearing' of problematic words according to a new vocalization--served to remove the problem of anthropomorphism from the reading of the verse.

Both of these approaches essentially by-pass the problem. Neither explicitly deny a biblical verse's plain meaning (p'shat) with respect to the anthropomorphic nature of God. By the first approach, Rabbis would turn the verse into a discussion of the content of revelation--what the people could see at a certain time or event--and therefore, were able to avoid commenting about what God actually was. The second approach permitted the same freedom of silence, this time by making the verse a point of departure for discussion of an essentially non-anthropomorphic subject. It is apparent that Rabbis, in utilizing either approach, were permitting the possibility of maintaining the p'shat.

The third approach did involve a conscious denial of plain meaning. The Rabbis here would treat problematic words in a verse metaphorically, thus directing the reader not to accept the text literally. Yet, one cannot say that the Rabbis were conclusively applying their own concepts to the interpretation of the text. When a

Rabbi would claim that the anthropomorphism in a verse was actually a symbol for something else, he would show proof for this contention in the Bible itself. Often, he would point to a verse that, at least according to his own reading of it, connected the anthropomorphism to his symbol.

It would appear from the evidence gathered, that with respect to anthropomorphism in the Bible, the Rabbis had a two-fold aim. They wished to emphasize that God was non-human and incorporeal. Yet, they also wished to maintain their devotion to the truth of the Bible. Thus, in their treatment of problematic verses, they tended to view the Bible as multi-vocal, and then elicited from it that interpretation which would best suit their own ideas of deity, while avoiding an explicit denial of its plain meaning.

One problem that has arisen from the study of material in this survey, has been those passages that apparently accept the anthropomorphic assertion of a particular verse. Most of the passages examined here showed at least some ambivalence toward such implications in the text. Yet, there were cases in which the verse and its anthropomorphism was not questioned. Were there Rabbis who saw little problem in the plain meaning of the text--even though it might contradict other verses--or, is there

some other way of understanding their acceptence? That is, what conception of God did Rabbis have when they quoted a problematic verse without question?

Marmorstein and others[159] have posited that there did exist a 'school' of interpretation of the Bible that involved literal acceptence of the text. Marmorstein noted that these 'literalists' included men who had knowledge of Greek language and culture, and that their steadfast adherence to the plain meaning of a text represented a reaction to this foreign philosophy.[160] This claim of literalist, and allegorical, methods of interpretation can no longer be fully accepted. Kadushin had already argued correctly that Marmorstein's presentation had included the forcing of rabbinic material to fit his contention. The Rabbis were not so consistent in their approaches to anthropomorphism in the Bible. One need not conclude, however, that they were lacking in certain basic principles with regard to anthropomorphism, that they would accept in one and avoid in another.

The passages that deal with Exodus 15:6, concerning the 'right hand' (yamin) of God, consistently connected this anthropomorphism to the divine attribute of power. This relationship of yamin and 'power' seems to be true for both the biblical narrative and the rabbinic passages. The Rabbis have evidently employed the biblical term--as

it appeared in this verse--as a way of expressing the idea of God protecting His people by overcoming their enemies.

Although more study is required in this area, one can see an indication that the Rabbis recognized that the Bible itself made use of some words figuratively. Thus, they too would utilize the word, and employ it equivocally. Yamin would not mean a human-like appendage of God, but rather a concept of power and protection.

The passages in this survey that apparently transcribe anthropomorphic verses without criticism, might therefore be understood in terms of an equivocal treatment of the text. The passages that refer to God's face, particularly in the expression, 'face-to-face,' might have been conceived by Rabbis as indicating a special relationship between God and Moses. (This seems especially true in the rabbinic treatment of the comparison between Bil'am and Moses;[161] where the face-to-face encounter with God on the part of Moses seems to represent a greater closeness with God than Bil'am's communication only through visions.) The Bible also seems to express this concept when it relates that God would speak to many people--Aaron, Miriam, the seventy elders--but 'face-to-face' with Moses alone.

The same can be said for the passages that describe God's raiment. Both the verse in Scripture that imply God's wearing apparel, and the rabbinic treatment of these

verses, seem to employ the term, livush (livushim), to indicate God's majesty and justness. The verse in Daniel (7:9), for example, is an eschatological vision, and thus, Rabbis have connected God's white garment, as expressed in this verse, to His forgiving Israel's sins in the final judgment.

It can be expected that further examination of biblical verses that speak of the divine arm, hand, and possibly, the divine heart, will also reflect rabbinic recognition of the figurative usage of these terms in the text. Thus, these anthropomorphic terms become symbols themselves and may be expressed in the midrashic literature without qualification.

The one other approach to anthropomorphism in the Bible, was to ignore it altogether. Exodus 24:10, had a reference to God's feet (raglav), yet this is not dealt with in the rabbinic literature. Before one can make a conclusion--whether the Rabbis, in their silence, had no explanation for the assertion, or some other reason--more verses for which there is no treatment of the problematic portion, will have to be found.

The passages collected in this survey show that a fundamental element of the Rabbis' approach to anthropomorphism in the Bible is their devotion to the truth of

Scripture. No claim was made--even the simple attempts at allegorization--without expressing one's reliance on the biblical text. Yet, within their self-imposed limitation of acceptence of the Bible as God's word, they appeared to be able to draw a rather consistent conception of a non-anthropomorphic deity.

The reliance upon Scripture, however, also allowed them to move in a different direction. If, on the one hand, the Rabbis established a deity that was thoroughly nonhuman-like, on the other, they posited a limited God who was given to do human actions. This contradictory conception was expressed in an agadic form that made use of a biblical verse, or verses, to support their claim; and the term, kib'yakhol, to modify that claim.

The difference in the two types of assertions investigated in this study--both devoutly supported by Scripture--is striking. The reasoning, however, appears to be clear. The passages in the survey were all exegetical interpretations of a problematic text. Within the limitations imposed, they represented rabbinic emphasis on a non-anthropomorphic God. The passages that employed kib'yakhol, were not at all exegetical. The biblical text or texts did not pose a problem to the Rabbis. The purpose of these passages, therefore, was homiletic, a way to emphasize God's close, personal and loving relationship with Israel.

In order to transmit the idea of this relationship to the people, in terms they could understand, the Rabbis resorted to bold assertions, inconsistent with their own concepts, but modified by a specialized term.

A few of the problems that have arisen from this study have already been mentioned. They include rabbinic recognition and treatment of figurative language in the Bible, and the absence of interpretation for certain anthropomorphic verses. Other problems are the authenticity of kib'yakhol, as it is found in some statements and is missing in parallel passages. Also, the methodological gap that exists between the passages of the survey and the passages that contain kib'yakhol. Further study, particularly into other rabbinic expressions when dealing with problematic verses or claims (mashal, k'ilu and kina are three terms that appeared at times within the kib'-yakhol passages), will hopefully uncover some information on whether, or how, the Rabbis resolved their exigetic and homiletic conceptions of God.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964) "The Basic Ideas of Biblical Religion", pp. 3 - 17.

2. R.J. Werblowsky, Prolegomenon to Marmorstein's The Old Rabbinic Doctorine of God (Ktav, 1968) p. XV.

3. L. Ginzburg in Jewish Encyclopedia, article on "Anthropomorphism/ Anthropopathism".

4. A. Marmorstein, op.cit., "Essays on Anthropomorphism", p. 1.

5. Ibid

6. Most information on Aristobulus has been gathered from article by Y. Guttmann in Encyclopedia Judaica. Also see B.Z. Wacholder, Eupolemus (H.U.C. Press, 1974).

7. H.M. Orlinsky, "Treatment of Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathism in the LXX of Isaiah", in Hebrew Union College Annual (H.U.C.A.), Vol. XXVII, 1956, p. 194. He refers, by way of example, to paper by C.T. Fritch, "The Anti-Anthropomorphism of the Greek Pentateuch".

8. Orlinsky, "Studies in the LXX of the Book of Job, Chap. III", H.U.C.A., Vol. XXX, 1959. He is referring to a contention by G. Gerlemann in Studies in the Septuagint.

9. This process is used only as far as the Hebrew Masoretic Text and supposed Vorlage of the Septuagint coincide.

10. Orlinsky, "Studies in the LXX of the Book of Job", op.cit., p. 194. See also, A. Soffer "Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathism in the LXX to Psalms", H.U.C.A., Vol. XXVIII, 1957. On p. 106, Soffer concludes: Although there may be an exegetical pattern in the LXX translation of Psalms, it would seem that anti-anthropomorphism ... usually played no part in that pattern. Indeed, the translator usually rendered the anthropomorphism... literally, and occasionally rendered some... even more literally than was necessary".

11. Hans Levy, Introduction to "Philo Selections", in Three Jewish Philosophers (Harper, 1965), p. 27.

12. Ibid. pp. 11-12.

13. Ibid. p. 54, selection from "On the Creation of the World".

14. To serve as an illustration; "... for nothing is better than to search for the true God, even if the discovery of Him eludes human capacity, since the very wish to learn, if earnestly entertained, produces untold joys and pleasures. We have the testimony of those who have not taken a mere sip of philosophy but have feasted abundantly on its reasonings and conclusions. For with them the reason soars away from the earth into the heights, travels through the upper air and accompanies the revolutions of the sun and the moon and the whole heaven and in its desire to see all that is there finds its powers of sight blurred, for so pure and vast is the radiance that pours therefrom that the soul's eye is dizzied by the flashing of the rays... Now second to the true vision stands conjecture and theorizing and all that can be brought into the category of reasonable probability... Though the clear vision of God as He really is is denied us, we ought not to relinquish the quest. For the very seeking, even without finding, is felicity in itself..." Ibid pp. 59-60, from selection on "The Special Laws".

15. There are, of course, many Targums, written at defferent times. Much of what is said here, however, can be applied to all Targums.

16. A. Sperber, The Bible in Aramaic Vol. IV b, (E.J. Brill, 1973) p. 2.

17. Ibid. p. 37. See also p. 197 ff. dealing specifically with Targum Onkelos.

18. G. Scholem, Major Trends in Mysticism, (Schocken, 1946), p. 66.

19. For the balance of this paper, only the term 'anthropomorphic' (etc.) shall be used. Anthropopathic statements have conventionally been considered as simple attempts to reduce the force of anthropomorphisms by indicating that physical human attributes might actually represent the more abstract notion of emotion. R.J. Zvi Werblowsky disputed this contention. He noted that: "even if thesemental and feeling qualities were pruned away by suitable allegorical exegesis, we are still left with a basic irreducible anthropomorphism: the conception of the Deity in

'personalistic' terms, i.e. in analogy to the only type of 'person' we know -- the human person." (Prolegomenon to Marmorstein, op.cit., p. XIV.) I think we are justified, therefore, in considering all the problematic statements as anthropomorphisms.

20. See Z. Weiss, Dor Dor v'Dorshav, Vol. 3. "Emunot v'Da-ot", p. 297 ff.

21. G.F. Moore, Judaism, Vol. I (Harvard U. Press, 1927), p. 357. Also Y. Guttman in Encyclopedia Judaica, article on Philo. He essentially agrees with Moore, but notes an affinity to Philonic ideas in R. Hoshaia's treatment of creation (Genesis Rabba 1:1), for example.

22. Solomon Shechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, (MacMillan, 1969) p. 30.

23. Ibid. p. 42.

24. Moore, op.cit., pp. 420-421.

25. See Weiss, op.cit., Vol. I p. 216. An example would be the concern on the part of rabbis with respect to study of first chapters of Ezekial.

26. M. Kadushin. The Rabbinic Mind, (J.T.S. Press, 1952), p. 280.

27. Ibid. p. 308.

28. Ibid. p. 311.

29. Ibid. p. 307.

30. Both Kadushin and Marmorstein chose to publish passages dealing with a few biblical verses that fit their own contentions about rabbinic concern for anthropomorphism. Neither men address themselves to the possibility that the bible itself might have been using particular assertions figuratively or rhetorically, rather than literally.

31. This source has been extremely helpful, but not exhaustive. Additional help in finding relevant texts were provided by Torah T'mima, Torah Sh'lema (Kasher, ed.), and Indices in

various Translations of Midrash. Also useful was Hyman's M'korot Yalkut Shimoni.

32. Other expressions and terms are:
כאילו, כנה (כנוי), משל. (למה הדבר דומה), אפשר לומר כן, אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרו.
Some of this will be mentioned in this study, but still require further investigation of their own meaning and function.

33. ר' יהודה אמר: תווהות היתה לפני. שבראתי אותו מלמטה שאילו בראתי אותו מלמעלה לא היה עורד בי.
Marmorstein, op.cit., p. 143. He looked upon R. Judah's treatment as allegorical, as opposed to Nachemia's treatment.

34. ר' נחמיה אמר: מתנחם אני שבראתי אותו מלמטה שאילו בראתי אותו מלמעלה, כשם שהמריד בי את התחתונים, כך היה ממריד בי את העליונים.
The argument is then repeated with R. Aibo and R. Levi.

35. ר' תנדאי בשם ר' אחא: העליונים נבראו בצלם ובדמות ואינם פרים ורבים... אמר הקב"ה, הריני בורא אותו בצלם ובדמות מן העליונים, פרה ורבה מן התחתונים.

36. The passage begins with Prov. 31:29
רבות בנות עשו חיל ואת עלית על-כולנה. מדבר במשה על שנתעלה יותר מן הכל. כיצד? אדם הראשון אמר למשה, אני גדול ממך שנבראתי בצלמו של הקב"ה... א'ל משה אני נתעליתי יותר ממך. אתה, כבוד שניתן לך ניטל ממך שנא' (תהילים מט:יג')... אבל אני זיו השניים שנתן לי הקב"ה עמי הוא, שנא' (דברים לד:ז').

37. Sifre to Deut. 34:10, par. 354, end. Horowitz, ed.
אימתי הראהו? סמוך למיתה. הא למדת שהמתים רואים.
In edition prepared by S. Koleditsky (Musad Harav Kuk, 1949)p.196.
This rendering - seeing ... הא למדת שסמוך למיתה רואים.
God's face at the point of death, rather than already dead - is borne out by Sifre to Numbers 12:16; par. 103:
"כי לא יראני האדם וחי" כשהוא חי אינו רואה, אבל רואה הוא בשעת מיתה.

38. אמר ר' יהושע דסכנין בשם ר' לוי: אעפ"כ הראה לו. בשרר "ויסתר פניו". "וידבר ה' עם משה פנים אל פנים".

This follows a passage attributed to R. Joshua b. Korcha wherein he argued with R. Hoshaia that Moses did wrong when he hid His face, for God was willing at that time to reveal His mysterious ways. When Moses later asked to see those ways later (Ex. 33:18), God refused his request. Marmorstein (op.cit) p. 54, contended that this showed b. Korcha's literal acceptence of the biblical assertion of a divine countenance. I am not so sure of this, as b. Korcha is only dealing with the verse that refers to God's glory (K'vodecha). It is Joshua of Sichnin that relates this to God's Face. (In Bab. B'rakhot 7a, instead of Joshua of Sichnin, it is attributed to R. Sh'muel b. Nachmani in the name of R. Jochanon).

39. דוד אמר: "דרשו ה' " (דבה"י א' סז:יא'). למה אמר "בקשו פניו" (שם)? ללמדך, שהקב"ה, יתברך שמו, פעמים נראה ופעמים אינו נראה... כיצד? נראה למשה, שנא' (שמות לג:יא') ... חזר ונעלם ממנו, כשנאמר לו, (שם שם יח')...

40. The passage begins:
"ולא - קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה". בישראל לא קם, אבל באומות העולם קם, כדי שלא יהיה פתחון פה לאומות העולם לומר: אילו היה לנו נביא כמשה, היינו עובדים להקב"ה. ואיזה נביא היה להם כמשה? זה בלעם בן בעור. אלה הפרש בין נבואתו של משה לנבואתו של בלעם בן בעור. ג' מידות היה ביד משה.
These were: Moses received his prophecy, standing up (Bil'am had to fall on its face); mouth-to-mouth (Bil'am only heard); and face-to-face (Bil'am received visions).

41. The Passage begins with an explanation to Ex 16:4, that the Israelites brought supplies from Egypt, but in 31 days the food stock was consumed. They complained about their fate instead of turning to God:
"הוי נדרשתי ללא שאלו נמצאתי ללא בקשוני" היה להם שכיון שכלתה העוטה יעמדו ויבקשו רחמים לפני, אלא עמדו ושפכו הרעומות כלפי מעלה. לפיכך אמר הכתוב "הנני הנני אל גוי לא קרא בשמי". מהו ב' פעמים אלא הנני על הבאר שנא' (שמות יז:ו')... והנני על הסן שנא' (שם סז:ד').

42. אמר ר' יהודה אמר רב: כל מה שעשה אברהם למלאכי השרת בעצמן עשה הקב"ה לבניו בעצמו, וכל מה שעשה אברהם ע"י שליח עשה הקב"ה לבניו ע"י שליח.

The parallels involved in the first part of the statement: Abraham ran to the herd (Gen. 18:7) = A wind forth from the Lord (as if He was running) No. 11:31). (Abraham) took butter and milk (Gen. 18:8) = Behold, I will rain bread from heaven (Ex. 16:4). (Abraham) stood under a tree (Gen. 18:8) = Behold, I will stand upon the rock (Ex. 17:6).

43. אמר ר' חנינא:... הקב"ה, הוא נאה ללבושו, ולבושו נאה לו... שבעה לבושין לבש הקב"ה.
P'sikta d'hav Kahana 149a, and P'sikta Rabati 163b (with some minor changes), claim that God wore seven garments from the time of the Creation, until the future day of the Messiah. With respect to the verse in Daniel, he wore this garment (white as snow) when He forgives Israel's sins.

44. These are: R. Joshua bar Nehemia in the name of R. Chanina bar Yitzchak, and the Rabbis (Rabanan) in the name of R. Elazar.

45. ברא בו ארבע בריות מלמעלה וד' מלמטה... עומד כמלאכי השרת, מדבר כמה"ש, יש בו דעת כמה"ש ורואה כמה"ש.

46. R. Simlai was responding to the charge of minim, found often in the agada, that there were more than one creator of heaven and earth. Once he had shown that the verb, bara, was singular, he concluded, for the sake of his own students who wanted a more detailed answer:
לשער אדם נברא מן האדמה, חוה נבראת מאדם. מכאן ואילך "בצלמנו כדמותנו". לא איש בלא אשה ולא אשה בלא איש ולא שניהם בלא שכינה.

47. למה נאמר? לפי שנאמר "הראני נא את-כבודך" אמר לו בעולם הזה אי אתה רואה שנמשל בפנים... אבל אתה רואה בעולם הבא שנמשל באחרים.

48. משה כמה נתחבט ונתחנן לפני המקום עד שראה את הדמות... אמר לו הקב"ה לא תוכל לראות פני ובסוף הראה לו בסימן... החיות הנושאות את הכסא אינן מכירות את הדמות ובשעה שמגיע זמנו לומר שירה הן אומרים באיזה מקום הוא. אין אנו יודעות אם כאן הוא אם במקום אחר הוא... ועולי הים כאחד ואחד מראה באצבעו ואומר זה אלי ואני הוא.

49. אמר ר' ברכיה בעשרה מקומות קרא הקב"ה לישראל כלה... וכנגדן ישראל מעטירים את הקב"ה בעשרה לבושין.
However, in P'sikta d'Rav Kahane 147b, the second part reads וכנגדן לבש הקב"ה עשרה לבושין.
This is less ambivalent.

50. אמר ר' חייא בר אבא, לפי כל עסק ועסק, וכן כל דבר ודבר נראה להם בים כגבור... בטינוי היה מלמד תורה לישראל ועומד כסופר, בימי דניאל כזקן... נראה להם בימי שלמה כבחור.
Also in Tanchuma, Buber, ed., Yitro 40a.

51. לא קשיא: כאן בישיבה, כאן במלחמה. דאמר מר: אין לך נאה בישיבה אלא זקן, אין לך נאה במלחמה אלא בחור.

52. "הוי כל ארחות ה' חסד ואמת." עמד אברהם ודיבק במדת חסד. א"ל הקב"ה, שלי היתה המדה הזאת, ואתה אחזתה בה. חייך, שאני עושה אותך כיוצא בי, מנין שנאמר (דניאל ז:ט')... מה כתיב למעלה מן הענין, "ואחרי כן קבר אברהם את שרה אשתו." עמד ונספל בה. א"ל הקב"ה ראוי אתה לעטרה, שנאמר "ואברהם זקן."

53. מהו "ושער ראשה כעמר נקא." שהקב"ה מנקה את עצמו מאומות העולם, ופורע להם שכר מצוות קלות שעשו בעולם הזה, כדי לדון אותן לחייבן בעולם הבא.
See also Tanchuma, Buber, K'dushim, 36b.

54. ר' לוי בשם ר' שמואל בר נחמן אמר, כתיב "ושער ראשה כעמר נקא." שאין לכל בריה אצלו כלום. פירוש מהרז"ו and יפה ענף
See the commentaries

55. The passage begins with Isa 1:1: "חזון ישעיהו"
Then Hosca 12:11: "ודברתי על-הנביאים ואנכי חזון הרביתי..." אמר הקב"ה: ודאי ודברתי על הנביאים, אלא חזון הרביתי, שכולם אין נבואתו של זה דומה לזה, והיאך עמוס ראה אותי עומד... ישעיה ראה אותי יושב... משה ראה אותי כגבור... דניאל ראה אותי כזקן.

56. The passage begins: ילמדנו רבינו, כמה דברים קדמו למעשה בראשית

They taught that there were seven, including the throne of glory. The passage then continues:

בוא וראה; בשעה שאמר הקב"ה למשה שיאמר לישראל שיעשו לו משכן, אמר הקב"ה למשה: משה הרי מקדשי בנוי למעלה שנא'... וכן ישעיה אומר "ושב על כסא." ובשביל שתבחכם אני מניח בית המקדש העליון... וארד ואשכון ביניכם.

57. אמר ר' אבא בר כהנה, מהלך אין כתיב אלא מתהלך, מקפץ ועולה. עיקר השכינה בתחתונים היתה, כיון שחטא אדם הראשון נסתלקה שכינה לרקיע הראשון.

58. See also P'sikta d'Rav Kahana 45a, and Tanchuma, P'kudei 6 (in the name of R. Shimon). Etz Yosef to the latter explains עיקר השכינה. Tanchuma, Naso 16, places agada in name of R. Sh'muel bar Nachman, who, in an argument (p'lugta) with Rav, wished to show that God had been on earth before the completion of the Taburnacle.

59. אמר ר' חלבון, שמענו שיש הילוך לקול שנא' "וישמעו את קול ה' וכו'" והילוך לאש שנא' "ותהלך אש ארצה" (שמות ט:כג)

Ramban's commentary to Gen. 3:8, refers to this explanation (he calls the author R. Chilfi), but disputes the contention that the antecedent of "walk" as "voice" and claims that it was indeed God who walked.

60. אמר ר' שמעון בן יוחאי ,... עד שלא חטא אדם הראשון היה שומע קול הדבור ועומד על רגליו ויכול לעמוד בו. משחטא, היה שומע קול הדבור ומתחבא.

61. אל תקריא וישמעו אלא וישמיעו. שמעו קולן של אילנית שהיו אומרים: הם גנבא דגנב דעתיה דברייה.

The midrash is anonymous, but the last part, the accusation of the trees, is attributed to R. Berekhia in Ben Rabba 15:7. The word ganav is an anagram of bagan, found in the verse. There is another explanation (davar acher) given:

שמעו קולן של מלאכים אומרים: ה' אלהים הולך לאותן שבגן.

62. ר' לוי ור' יצחק. ר' לוי אמר מת אותו בגן ר' יצחק אמר מת הלך לו.

63. אמר לו (למשה) הקב"ה: אני מראה לך מתן שכרן של צדיקים שאני עתיד ליתן להם באחרית הימים.

64. מלמד שהראה לו הקב"ה למשה קשר של תפילין.

65. The passage begins in the name of Rabba:
מידן דייניה (מנשה לישעיה) וקסליה.
In addition to verses already given, Menasseh charged Moses said: "(Who's God is so near) as The Lord our God whenever we call upon Him?" (Deut. 4:7) But Isaiah: "Seek the Lord while He may be found" (Isa. 55:6). Moses said: "The number of your days will I fulfill." (Ex. 23:26) But Isaiah: "I will add unto your days fifteen years." (II Kings 20:6). The passage continues:
מכל מקום קשו קראי אהדדי. "וארא את ה'." כדתניא: כל הנביאים נסתכלו באספקלריה שאינה מאירה, משה רבינו נסתכל באספקלריה המאירה.

66. Marmorstein, op.cit., p. 23

67. Ibid. pp. 29-35. He provided other examples, including: Ishmael's interpretation of Ex. 15:2 (This is my God, and will adorn Him), No. 18:8 (I behold God), Deut. 34:6 (the burial of Moses).

68. Ibid. p. 29.

69. M'khilta 8a.

70. Kadushin, op.cit., p. 278.

71. He noted this many times. The first statement to this effect, see Marmorstein, op.cit., p. 9.

72. א"ל ר' עקיבא: דיין שניתן! שלא להסיב על דברי מי שאמר והיה העולם לפי שהכל באמת והכל בדין שכן כתיב: "וארא את ה' וגו'."
See also M'khilta 33a and Marmorstein, op.cit., pp. 42ff. R. Akiba countered four of Pappis' Sermons.

73. אמר לו הקב"ה למשה, תרי אפין מרגזין רחמין; תזור בך, נכנס במחנה, שנא' "ודבר יהוה אל-משה פנים אל-פנים"...

(In Buber edition of Midrash T'hilim, the verse is misquoted as פנים בפנים . Braude (Midrash on Psalms, Vol. I, p.351) translated as "The Lord spoke unto Moses concerning face and face, thus alluding to the two angry visages.)
איני יודע מקרא זה מה הוא, כשהוא כתיב "ושב אל המחנה" (שם), מלמד שהתיר לו נדרו.
See also Deut. Rabba 3:15, and Ex. Rabba 45:2; "face" is related to "anger". God warns Moses that it is not proper for both to be angry at same time.

74. אין לשון פני האכור כאן אלא שלותן של רשעים כדכתיב "ומשלם לשונאיו אל פניו להאבידו."

75. אמר ר' חמא בר' חנינא: מאי דכתיב: "אחרי ה' אלהיכם תלכו." וכי אפשר לו לאדם להלך אחר שכינה? והלא כבר נאמר: "כי ה' אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא." אלא להלך אחר מדותיו של הקב"ה.

76. לא אמרתי לכם כך, אלא דרכיו: חסד ואמת וגמילות חסדים, דכתיב "כל ארחות ה' חסד ואמת."

77. The passage begins:
"אלה פקודי המשכן." זאת שהכתוב "ה' אהבתי מעון ביתך" (תהילים כו:ח')... אמר ר' יעקב בר' אחי למה הוא אומר "ומקום משכן כבודך" (שם)? בשביל שתקול כנגד בריאת עולם.
Comparisons are then made for each day of creation:
בששי נברא אדם שנאמר: "ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו" בכבוד יוצרו.

78. אמר ר' ברכיה: לפי שהיה הים זורק (המצרים) ליבשה. ויבשה זורק לים... עד שנשבע לה הקב"ה שאינו מעמידה בדין. הלא הוא דכתיב "נטית ימינך וכו'." ואין ימין אלא שבועה, שנא' "נשבע ה' בימינו."

79. רב חנינא בר פפא רמי, כתיב: "שדי לא מצאנוהו שגיא כח" וכתיב "גדול אדונינו ורב כח" וכתיב "ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח." לא קשיא: כאן בשעה הדין, כאן בשעה מלחמה.

80. וכי יש שמאל למעלה?... אלא אלו מימינים אלו משמאלים. אלו מכריעים לכף זכות ואלו מכריעין לכף חובה.
See also Tanchuma, Buber ed., Vayar 49a, where passage is attributed to Akiba.

81. ימינך ה׳ פרוסה לקבל שבים

The passage goes onto explain that God detained punishment in order to receive repenters. Thus, He first descended to look at the wicked of the dor hamabul and of S'dom, and brought about nine "light" plagues upon the Egyptians, before exacting punishment.

82. כך אמרו ישראל להקב"ה: יהי שלום על איתן שמי ידיך. אחת שהיתה מצלמת אותנו מן הים, ואחת שהיתה מנהרת המצרים.

83. "הנה ה׳ אלהים בחזק יבוא." על עובדי אלילים אבל לישראל, הנה שכרו אותו ופעולתו לפניו... וכן במצרים "ימינך ה׳ וכו׳."

83. See also Tanchuma, Buber, ed., Tissa 60b, The reference to Ex. 15:6, however, is omitted.

84. כשישראל עושין רצונו של מקום, הן עושין שמאל ימין.

The passage shall be repeated below as the second part contains kib'yakhol.

85. היה הקב"ה נותן ידו ושולח אותן מן הים. דכתיב "ישלח ממרום יקחני (ש"ב כב:יז)

In Midrash Psalms (attributed to R. Yudan), the passage is prefaced by kib'yakhol. In Ex. Rabba (22:2), in the name of R. Johanon, an earlier authority (first generation Amora as opposed to fourth generation for Yudan), there is no kib'yakhol.

86. Marmorstein, The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God: The Names and Attributes of God (K'tav Reprint, 1968) p. 7. He was referring to the דורשי רשימות . See also footnote #1 on this page.

87. Tanchuma, Ha'azinu, 4.

88. אמר לו ר׳ אלעזר בן עזריה: עקיבא. מה לך אצל הגדה? כלך מדברותיך אצל נגעים ואהלות!

See also Bab. Sanhedrin 38b and 67b, and Midrash Psalms 104:9. In the latter, the argument was between Akiba and Ishmael over the interpretation of Ps. 104:12 "Above them the inhabitants of the sky..." Akiba said these were angels, Ishmael claimed they were only birds.

89. Marmorstein; Essays on Anthropomorphism, pp. 134-135.

90. I will follow this spelling for the vocalization of כְּבְיָכוֹל throughout this chapter. The Even-Yehuda Dictionary, p. 2040 n., however, gives kab'yakhol כַּבְיָכוֹל as the modern pronunciation.

91. M'khilta 62b
"ואתם תהיו לי" (שמות יט:ו) כביכול אינני מעכיד ואינני משלים עליכם אחרים אלא אני. וכן הוא אומר "הנה לא ינום ולא יישן שומר ישראל" (תהילים קכא:ד).

92. W. Bacher Erkei Midrash, Rabinowitz, Trans. p. 50

93. See also Baba Kama 79b, and Tosefta to Baba Kama, 7:2

94. Among Rabbis who tended to avoid anthropomorphic implication: Berekhia, Chanina be Papa, Levi (b.Lakhma), Abba bar Kahana, Shimon (b. Yochai), Sh'muel b. Nachman. Among those who pursued a more literal interpretation: Akiba, Shimon b. L'achish, Judah (bar Ilai), Acha, Abahu, Hoshaia, Chiya bar Abba, Jochanon.

95. אמר ר' מאיר: בזמן שאדם מצטער שכינה מה הלשון אומרת? כביכול, קלני מראשי קלני מזרועי

96. E. Urbach, Chaz"al: Pirke Emunot v'Deot (Magnes, 1969) p. 50.

97. They are M'khilta 16a (2 times), Sifre to Numbers, par. 84, Pal. Sanhedrin 28b, Exodus Rabba 30:20, Tanchuma, Buber , ed., Naso 15a.

98. Kadushin, op.cit., p.311n., contains opinion of Saul Lieberman that it was a later insertion. He pointed to a comparison of Bab. Yoma 3b and Sifre to Deut., par. 72, where only the former contains the term. Lieberman's contention must be taken into account, even though he brought forth only a few examples. I am not willing to accept it fully at this time, for if it were indeed a later addition then one might expect that it was applied, at least once, to the statement of some Babylonian authority.

99. See Lamentations Rabba, Proem 24, and Bab. B'rakhot 59a (R. Katina).

100. Marmorstein, op.cit., pp. 109-113. For example, Bab. Rosh Hashana 17b, R. Jochanon took Ex. 34:6 "And the Lord Passed by before him, and proclaimed..." The verse already has an anthropomorphic implication, but Jochanon went farther and explained that God was acting as a Shaliach Tzibur, donning a talit and showing Moses the order of prayer.

101. Ibid., pp. 113-114. Almost equivalent to this exprassion is וכי העלה על דעתך לומר.

102. Ibid., pp. 118-126.

103. There are two exceptions. Exodus Rabba 42:5 and Midrash Psalms 10:5; Here Kib'yakhol apparently modifies a biblical verse. In Mid. Ps. :

"אמר נבל בלבו" (תהילים י:יא') מה הדין הזה משהו נותנין פטליון לפניו עוד אינו רואה מה נעשה. כך "אמר נבל וכו'" כמה דאת אמר "עביט אחר לו ולא יראה" (איוב כב:יד') כביכול "הסתיר פניו בל ראה לנצח." (תהילים שם)

104. Tanchuma, Buber, ed., Noah 15b.

105. Leviticus Rabba 31:6

106. Tanchuma, Buber, ed., Tazria 17a.

107. William G. Braude, The Midrash on Psalms (Yale University Press, 1959) 2 Vol.

108. Marmorstein, op.cit., p.126.

109. Ibid. See also Even-Yehuda Dictionary p. 2040 n., Elija Levita (Bochur), in Tishbi, argued that if R. Joshua was correct, the term would be more proper as בביכול or as כביכולה.

110. Urbach, op.cit., p. 50, n. 94.

111. רבי יונתן אומר: בין "קח לך" בין "ויקחו אליך." משל צבור ומה תלמוד לומר: קח לך, כביכול, משלך אני רוצה יותר משלהם.

112. לפי שדבר קשה הוא, לומר שהקב"ה קץ בישראל. אמר כביכול, כלומר על כרחינו יאמר כן כאילו אי אפשר לומר כן.

113. See Bacher Terminilogie p. 72. Standiger Ausdruck, mit welchem eine kühne Aeusserung über Gott, entschuldigund eingefurht wird.

114. Marmorstein, op.cit., p. 131.

115. Urbach, op.cit., p. 50 n. 94.

116. Other references to the meaning of the term, also connect it to the root יכל . Morris Jastrow, in Hebrew Aramaic English Dictionary (P. Shalom, 1967), p. 577, simply gives "as though it were possible, as it were. (Ref. to an allegorical or anthropomorphous expression with reference to the Lord)". Kossovsky, in Otzer L'shon Hatalmud, Vol. 16, p. 347, wrote כביכול: כינוי להקב"ה. מלה המחייבות כשמיחסים להקב"ה תכונה של אדם.
In the Even-Yehuda p. 2040, the definition is given: כמו בדבר שאפשר, כאילו היה אפשר מלה נהוגה בפרש כשמיחסים להאלהות דבר שאינו נאה אלא לבשר ודם.
None of the above speculate on the etymology. In footnote, however, to Even-Yehuda, the opinion of Levita in Tishbi is Given: כְּבָיְכוֹל: רוצה לומר התורה דברה כלפי מעלה "כמו ביכול". פירוש במי שיוכל לקבל המאמר ההוא.

117. ר' יוחנן בן זכאי אומר: הגזלן הסוה את העבד לקונו, והגנב חלק כבוד לעבד יותר מקונו, כביכול עשה הגנב את העין של מעלה כאילו אינה רואה ואת האוזן כאילו אינה שומעת.
Proof texts are from Ps. 94:7 and Isa. 29:15.

118. אמר ר' חנינא בר פפא: דבר גדול דברו מרגלים באותה שעה "כי חזק הוא ממנו." אל תקרי "ממנו" אלא "ממנו" כביכול, אפילו בעל הבית אינו יכול להוציא כליו.
In Pal. Ta'anit 68d, it presented: "כי חזק הוא ממנו" אמרו. כביכול, לא יכול להון.

119. אמר הקב"ה: דיין להיות שוה לי. כביכול. אני כשבראתי את עולמי לא בקשתי להונות לבריה.

The Midrash then explains that, for this reason, God did not disclose which type of tree was forbidden to Adam and Eve. Thus, one could not later place the blame on the tree.

120. "כי ידין ה' עמו... כי יראה אזלת יד ואפס עצור ועזוב." (דברים לב:לו). "אזלת יד" עד שיתייאשו מן הגאולה שנא' "אפס עצור ועזוב," כביכול אין סומך ועוזר לישראל.

121. באותה שעה נשבע הקב"ה לישראל שבועה שלימה, כביכול, הוציא על עצמו אם לא אעשה שבועתי.

122. "אין-קדוש כה' כי-אין בלתך." מהו "כי אין בלתך" אלא מלך בו"ד בונה פלטין ובנינו מבלה אותו, אבל הקב"ה מבלה את עולמו, כביכול, "כי אין בלתך."

123. ר' עקיבא אומר אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרו כביכול. אמרו ישראל לפני המקום: עצמך פדית, וכן אתה מוצא שבכל מקום ישאלו ישראל כביכול שכינה גלתה עמהם.
Assertion based on Ex. 12:41.

124. "ומשלם לשונאיו אל-פניו להאבידו." אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי: אלמלא מקרא כתוב א"א לאומרו כביכול, כאדם שנושא משוי על פניו ומבקש להשליכו ממנו: "ולא יאחר לשונאיו"(שם)

125. "ואתה פה עומד עמדי" (דב' ה:כח) אמר ר' אבהו, אלמלא מקרא כתוב א"א לאומרו כביכול, אף הקב"ה בעמידה.

126. "מלוה ה' חונן דל" (משלי יט:יז), אלמלא מקרא כתוב א"א לאומרו כביכול "עבד לוה לאיש מלוה" (שם כב:ז).

127. אמר ר' ראובן: אילו לא היה הדבר כתוב, א"א לאומרו כביכול: "כי באש ה' נשפט" (ישעיה סו:טז) "ה' שופט" אין כתיב כאן אלא "נשפט."

128. See Marmorstein, op.cit., pp. 62-68, He lists other passages that deal with God following His own commandments.

129. Ibid. pp. 68-76, "God's Grief and Share in Israel's Distress."

130. Kadushin, op.cit., p. 304.

131. "מכון לשבתך פעלת ה'" (שמות טו:יז) תביב ביח המקדש לפני מי שאמר והיה העולם, לא בראו אלא במאמר שנאמר: "בדבר ה' שמים נעשו." (תהילים לג:ו). כשבא לביח המקדש כביכול פעולת לפניו שנא': "פעלת ה'."

132. "כי ידין ה' עמו" (דברים לב:לו) כשהקב"ה דן את האומות, שמחה היא לפניו שנא' "כי ידין וכו'" וכשהקב"ה דן את ישראל כביכול תהות היא לפניו שנא' "על עבדיו יתנחם" (שם).

133. "מוכיח אדם אחרי חן ימצא" (משלי כח:כג) אמר ר' יהודה בר' סימון; מהו "אחרי." אמר הקב"ה, כביכול משה הוכיחני אחרי ישראל והוכיח לישראל אחרי. לישראל אמר: "אתם חטאתם" (שמות לב:ל) ולהקב"ה אמר: "ויחל משה את-פני ה'" (שם י"א).

134. אמר ר' יוחנן, מיד היה יורד הקב"ה בכבודו כביכול והותך טיבורן ומרחיצן וסבן.

Proof Texts are Ezekial 16:4,5,9,10.

135. "יענך ה' ביום צרה" (תהילים כ:ב) והקב"ה אומר לאומות העולם; בואו ודינו עם בני, בני ישראל, שנא' "קרבו ריבכם יאמר ה'" (ישעיה מא:כא) והן אומרים: רבש"ע מי יבוא בדין עם ישראל קוזמוסמוריסין, והוא אומר: אני כביכול שנא': נירא אלהים מקדשיך אל ישראל" (תהילים פט:ח)

136. See M'khilta 16a; Exodus Rabba 15:12 and 15:16; Song of Songs Rabba 4:8; Tanchuma, Buber, ed., BaMidbar 5a.

137. See Lamentations Rabba Proem 34; Tanchuma, Buber, ed., T'tzave 45a; P'sikta d'Rav Kahana 113b.

138. See Exodus Rabba 36:4; also Numbers Rabba 16:26; Tanchuma, Buber, ed., Achare 36a; and P'sikta d'Rav Kahana 15b make use of the verb נשא, in discribing God as carrying or bearing Israel through trouble or sins.

139. See Mishna Sanhedrin 6:5; Bab. Gitin 58a; Lamentations Rabba 1:1 and 1:56, Tanchuma Sh'mini, 1; Tanchuma, Buber, ed., B'reshit 12b; Noach, 15b; Midrash Psalms 86:7; P'sikta Rabat; 20a, 136b, and 187b; P'sikta d'Rav Kahana 171a.

140. In these passage, God also: Descends to earth: Exodus Rabba 29:7 and 42:5, Leviticus Rabba 30:13; Is sold for the sake of Torah; Exodus Rabba 33:1; Is reproved by Moses: Exodus Rabba 43:1, Deuteronomy Rabba 3:15, Tanchuma, Buber, ed., Pinchas 75b. Others are mentioned in the body of the paper.

141. ר' שמעון בן אלעזר אומר: כשישראל עושין רצונו של מקום אז מתגדל שמו בעולם שנא' "כי ה' אלהיכם הוא אלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת." (יהושע ב:יא) ובזמן שאינן עושין רצונו כביכול שמו מתחלל בעולם שנא' "ויבוא אל הגויים אשר באו שם ויחללו את שם קדשי." (יחזקאל לו:כ).

142. כשישראל עושין רצונו של מקום הן עושין שמאל ימין, שנא' "ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח וכו'" (שמות טו:ו) וכשאין עושין רצונו של מקום כביכול הן עושין ימין שמאל שנא' "השיב אחור ימינו" (איכה ב:ג). כשישראל עושין רצונו אין שינה לפניו שנא' "הנה לא-ינום ולא יישן" (תהילים קכא:ד) וכשאין עושין רצונו כביכול שינה לפניו שנא' "ויקץ כישן אדני." (שם עח:סה).

143. ר' עזריה בשם ר' יהודה בר' סימון אומר: בזמן שישראל עושים רצונו של מקום, מוסיפין כח גבורה של מעלה. כמד"א: "באלהים נעשה חיל" (תהילים ס:יד) ובזמן שאין ישראל עושים רצונו של מקום כביכול מחסירין כח גדול של מעלה, דכתיב: "צור ילדך תשי ותשכח אל מחוללך." (דב' לב:יח)

144. עד שלא בא אברהם אבינו כביכול היה הקב"ה דן את העולם במדת האכזריות. חטאו אנשי מבול, והפיצם כזיקים על פני המים... אבל משבא אברהם אבינו לעולם זכה לקבל יסורים והתחילו משמשים ובאים. כענין שנא' "ויהי רעב בארץ וירד אברהם מצרימה לגור שם." (בראשית יב:י)

145. עד שלא בא אברהם אבינו לעולם כביכול, לא היה הקב"ה מלך אלא על השמים בלבד שנא' "ה' אלהי השמים" (בראשית כד:ז) אבל משבא אברהם אבינו לעולם השליכו על השמים ועל הארץ. כענין שנא' "ואשביעך בה' אלהי השמים ואלהי הארץ" (שם. ג)

146. אמרו בית דין: היום ראש השנה. הקב"ה אומר למלאכי השרת, העמידו בימה... נמלכו ב"ד לטברה לטחר, הקב"ה אומר

למלאכי השרת, העבירו בימה... שנמלכו בני לעברה למחר, מה טעמה? כי חוק לישראל הוא משפט לאלהי יעקב. ואם אינו חוק לישראל כביכול אינו משפט לאלהי יעקב.

147. "אתה עדי, נאום ה' אני אל" (ישעיה מג:יב) חני ר' שמעון בן יוחאי: אם אתם עדי נאום ה' אני אל. ואם אין אתם עדי כביכול אין אני אל.

148. ר' עזריה בשם ר' יהודה בר' סימון אמר: כיון שגמרו עונות ונכנסו שונאים בירושלים, נשלו גבוריהם של ישראל, וכתפו ידיהן לאחוריהן, אמר הקב"ה: "עמו אנכי בצרה" (תהילים צא:טו) כתבתי בתורה, ועכשיו בני שחין בצרה ואני ברווח כביכול "השיב אחור ימינו" (איכה ב:ג).

149. ב' פעמים כתיב "לפני ה'": "וימה נדב ואביהוא לפני ה' בהקרבת אש זרה לפני ה'" (במדבר ג:ד) למה ב' פעמים? אמר הקב"ה הוציאו את המת כלפני, תכן כתיב: "קרבו שאו את אחיכם מאת פני הקדש" (ויקרא י:ד) כביכול כשישראל בצרה אף הוא עמהם.
Another proof text is Isa. 63:9.

150. From Ex. 17:15.
הנס הזה שעשה המקום בגינו עשאו: וכן אתה מוצא כל זמן שישראל בנס כביכול הנס לפניו שנא' "ה' נסי" (שם) צרה לישראל, כאילו צרה לפניו שנא' "בכל צרתה" (ישעיה סג:ט) שמחה לישראל כאילו שמחה לפניו שנא' "שמחתי בישועתך" (שם"א ב:א)

151. "שרפים עומדים ממעל לו שש כנפים" (ישעיה ו:ב) לאחד וכתיב אחד אומר: "ומתוכה דמות ארבע חיות" (יחזקאל א:ו) לא קשיא כאן: בזמן שבהמ"ק קיים כאן, בזמן שאין בהמ"ק קיים, כביכול שנתמעטו כנפי החיות.

152. רבנן אמרי: כתוב אחד אומר "היש מספר לגדודיו" (איוב כה:ג) וכתוב אחד אומר "אלף אלפיו ישמשוניה" (דניאל ז:י) אלא עד שלא חרב בהמ"ק היה קלוטו של הקב"ה עולם משלם; כיון שחרב בהמ"ק כביכול מיעט הקב"ה פמליה שלו, ואמר הקב"ה אינו בדין שיהא קלוטו עולה כמו שהיה עולה.

153. "כמגדל דוד צוארך" (שיר ד:ד) זה בהמ"ק. ולמה מדמהו כצואר? שכל זמן שהיה בהמ"ק בנוי וקיים, היה צוארן של ישראל פשוט בין אומות העולם, וכיון שחרב בהמ"ק, כביכול נכפף צוארן של ישראל, שה"ד: "ושברתי את גאון עוזכם" (ויקרא כו:יט).

154. Midrash Psalms 18:29:
ר' יודן בשם ר' חמא אומר: לעתיד לבוא הקב"ה מושיב למלך המשיח על ימינו שנא' "נאום ה' לאדני שב לימיני" (תהילים ק:א) ואברהם לשמאלו. ופניו של אברהם מתכרכמות, ואומר לו: בן בני יושב על הימין, ואני על השמאל. והקב"ה פייסו ואמר לו: בן בנך על ימיני ואני על ימינך כביכול: "אדני על ימינך" (שם. ה')

155. Shechter, op. cit., p. 42.

156. Henry Slonimsky, Essays, (H.U.C. Press, 1967), p. 11.

157. M'khilta to Exodus 20:5.

158. See also Midrash Psalms 94:1, in the name of R. Nathan.

159. Marmorstein, op. cit., p. 7n.

160. Ibid., p. 155.

161. Numbers Rabba 14:20.

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