

The Nourishment of Azazel

. . . after God cast Uzza and Azael down from their holy place, they went astray after the womenfolk and seduced the world also. It may seem strange that being angels they were able to abide upon the earth. The truth is, however, that when they were cast down the celestial light which used to sustain them left them and they were changed to another grade through the influence of the air of this world. Similarly the manna which came down for the Israelites in the wilderness originated in the celestial dew from the most recondite spot, and at first its light would radiate to all worlds and the “field of apples,” and the heavenly angels drew sustenance from it, but when it approached the earth it became materialized through the influence of the air of this world and lost its brightness, becoming only like “coriander seed.”

—Zohar III.208a

Introduction

A large portion of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is devoted to Abraham’s celestial journey to the divine throne room. During this ascent, God assists the seer, appointing the great angel Yahoel to be the patriarch’s companion on this dangerous trip into the upper realm. Yahoel’s tasks include not simply guiding the patriarch to the divine abode but also preparing the visionary for his entrance into his new heavenly habitat. Consequently, en route to the divine presence, Abraham undergoes a series of initiations and transformations that reshape his ontology into an eschatological state suitable for the upper realm. One of the

most striking stages in his metamorphosis comes from *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:4 in which Yahoel tells Abraham about his future endowment with the angelic garment stripped from the former heavenly dweller, namely, the fallen angel Azazel.¹ This promise of the new celestial attire anticipates Abraham's transition to the state of a newly born heavenly citizen. Further, along the way, the seer learns how to abstain from earthly provisions and become nourished in a new, celestial way. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 11:1–2 relates the following tradition:

And we went, the two of us alone together, forty days and nights. And I ate no bread and drank no water, because [my] food was to see the angel who was with me, and his speech with me was my drink.²

This passage, which recounts the patriarch's initiatory fast, is preceded by *Apocalypse of Abraham* 9:7 in which the Deity himself orders the seer to abstain from food and drink for forty days and nights.³ During this exercise in self-denial, the hero of the faith learns how to be sustained in a new celestial way, not through food and drink but through his visual and audial contemplation of the great angel and his words. Scholars have noted the uniqueness of this imagery of nourishment on the angelic being, arguing, for instance, that "this description of an angel providing the kind of nourishment otherwise attributed to the *Shechinah* is quite unique and without parallel."⁴

The motif of celestial provisions appears, again, later in chapter 13, when Abraham prepares his animal sacrifices according to the instructions of the Deity and Yahoel. While the patriarch waits for the evening offering, the "impure bird"—that is to say, the fallen angel Azazel—descends upon the seer's sacrifices. In the antagonist's speech, delivered at this point and only once, the subject of human sustenance in heaven is again mentioned. This time, however, the theme of heavenly provisions is overshadowed by ominous overtones. The demoted celestial creature specifically warns the visionary about the perils of his upcoming heavenly journey, specifically, the lack of human food "on the holy heights." Here again the theme of nourishment appears in the midst of an encounter with a celestial being—this time, however, an encounter with the antagonistic one. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:36 reads:

And an impure bird flew down on the carcasses, and I drove it away. And the impure bird spoke to me and said, “What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food of men. But these will all be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee! Since if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you.” And it came to pass when I saw the bird speaking I said to the angel, “What is this, my lord?” And he said, “This is iniquity, this is Azazel!”⁵

While this passage, as one found in chapter 11, deals with the subject of celestial provisions, one can easily detect an inversion. Here, a human person, rather than being nourished by the sight and speech of the celestial creature, can become, according to Azazel, “food” for heavenly creatures, doomed to be “consumed,” like the animal sacrifices, through fiery annihilation.⁶ The fallen angel, therefore, clearly disbelieving the possibility that a human being could survive in the upper regions, warns the seer of his catastrophic demise if he were to dare to cross into the heavenly realm.

It is clear that the passages about celestial nourishment, found in chapters 11 and 13, stand in a striking conceptual opposition. Such opposition, specifically between Yahoel and Azazel, depicted in the midst of traditions of human sustenance, is not limited to the passages found in these chapters. For example, later in the text, the Deity relates to Abraham the puzzling account in which the fallen angel nourishes Adam and Eve with grapes taken from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.⁷ Here, like the angelic protagonist of the story, the antagonist too is portrayed as a spiritual being who nourishes human beings. Yet while Yahoel’s sustenance of Abraham, by means of sight and hearing, leads the patriarch into a celestial state, reminiscent of the prelapsarian condition, Azazel’s feeding causes the corruption of the protoplasts, dooming them to exile from their elevated domicile in the Garden of Eden.

Such inverse patterns play a prominent role in the conceptual universe of the Slavonic apocalypse. This chapter will explore motifs of angelic and demonic nourishments found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, as well as their connections with the main theological currents of the text as a whole.

Roots of the Angelic Nourishment Motif

As previously mentioned, the theme of the seer's heavenly sustenance occurs in the context of Abraham's preparation for his visitation to the upper realm. It is important that the celestial nourishment through visual and audial contemplation coincides, in the text, with abstinence from normal human food. Such cessation appears to signal the seer's transition to a new ontological state as an angelic being.

Scholars have recognized the established Jewish tradition according to which the angels are not able to consume earthly food.⁸ One early testimony to this tradition is found in the *Book of Judges*. Judges 13:15–16, in particular, depicts the Angel of the Lord openly rejecting human food, asking, instead, for a burnt offering.⁹ In Judges 6:19–21 one finds a similar development when the angel first asks Gideon to prepare a meal but then, instead of eating it, annihilates the food with fire:

So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the oak and presented them. The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. (NRSV)

Such biblical witnesses bring to mind the interaction between Azazel and Abraham found in chapter 13 in which the fallen angel tells the patriarch about the absence of human food on the holy heights, and at the same time warns the patriarch that he himself can become the angelic food, burned together with his animal sacrifices.

Nonbiblical Jewish texts also contain the motif of the angels' abstinence from human food. A reference is found, for example, in the *Testament of Abraham* 4:9, in which the archangel Michael cannot be nourished by human food.¹⁰

Some Jewish texts, furthermore, argue that although the angels sometimes give the impression that they consume human food, in reality they do not. One early testimony to this belief is found in the *Book of Tobit*, in which the angel Raphael first partakes in a human meal but later tells the protagonist that his consumption of earthly food was just an illusion.¹¹ Similarly, Philo¹² and Josephus¹³ argue that the angelic beings only create an appearance of eating human food.¹⁴ Similar testimonies are found in pseudepigraphical¹⁵ and targumic sources.¹⁶

Elsewhere, in the Jewish pseudepigrapha, one finds the belief that humans who achieved a celestial state, akin to the angelic beings, are not able to consume human food. For instance, in *2 Enoch*, a Jewish apocalypse written in the first century CE, a gesture toward the angelic status of its hero is indicated by his refusal to participate in a human meal.¹⁷ Chapter 56 of this work depicts the return of the seventh antediluvian hero from his celestial trip. Upon his arrival, Enoch is asked by his son Methuselah to share food with close relatives. In response to this offer, the patriarch politely declines the invitation of his son, offering him the following reasons:

Listen, child! Since the time when the Lord anointed me with the ointment of his glory, food has not come into me, and earthly pleasure my soul does not remember, nor do I desire anything earthly.¹⁸

Here, Enoch does not reject just any kind of food but rather rejects specifically *earthly* food, hinting to his son that he has already been transformed into a celestial creature who is satiated in a different way. It is also noteworthy that, in *2 Enoch* 56, the theme of rejecting earthly food is set in parallel with the motif of Enoch's anointment with ointment of God's Glory. This striking parallelism between an inability to partake in a human meal and angelic anointing might provide a portentous clue indicating the ways in which angels are nourished in the heavenly realm. We should therefore take a closer look at the scene of Enoch's anointing in *2 Enoch* 22.

2 Enoch 22:9 portrays the archangel Michael disrobing Enoch and anointing him with delightful oil. The text says that the oil's appearance is "greater than the greatest light and its ointment is like sweet dew,

and the fragrance like myrrh; and it is like rays of the glittering sun.”¹⁹ The anointing with the oil effects the patriarch’s transformation from his garments of skin to the luminous garment of an immortal angelic being. It is noteworthy that here the ointment of glory, also identified in the text as the paradisaal dew, transforms the earthly being into a celestial creature who no longer enjoys earthly food.²⁰

Moreover, the paradisaal dew motif is noteworthy since it is present in another pseudepigraphical account of celestial nourishment attested in *Joseph and Aseneth* 16:14, in which the angels’ food is said to be made from the dew from the paradise of God:

. . . For this comb is (full of the) spirit of life. And the bees of the paradise of delight have made this from the dew of the roses of life that are in the paradise of God. And all the angels of God eat of it and all the chosen of God and all the sons of the Most High, because this is a comb of life, and everyone who eats of it will not die for ever (and) ever.²¹

Scholars have noted that the honeycomb that Pentephres’s daughter consumes from the angel’s hand is reminiscent of manna, the celestial provision once sent from heaven²² to the Israelites in the wilderness.²³ It is also noteworthy that in *Joseph and Aseneth* 15, as in *2 Enoch* 56, the motif of nourishment of the seer coincides with her anointing when the honeycomb is identified as “ointment of incorruptibility.”²⁴ Like Enoch’s, Aseneth’s anointing also grants immortality to the recipient.²⁵

The constellation of motifs found in *2 Enoch* and *Joseph and Aseneth* might provide an important insight into how the angels are actually “fed” in heaven. It is often assumed that they are nourished through the vision of the divine light. Yet it cannot be excluded that other traditions are also at play in various Jewish materials. It is possible, then, that the celestial creatures are, during their anointment with divine light, fed not only through their eyes but through the whole of their angelic bodies. *2 Enoch*’s account of the patriarch’s anointing gestures toward such a possibility. *2 Enoch* 22 clearly depicts the source of the patriarch’s metamorphosis as the light coming from the luminous divine form, designated in the text as the divine Face. From *2 Enoch*, one learns that the light proceeding from the divine Face causes dramatic changes in Enoch’s appearance. His body endures irreversible

transformations as it becomes covered with the divine light. In this account, the luminous body of a newly born celestial citizen is literally “nourished” by the luminosity of the divine form.²⁶ This anointing of angelic bodies from the splendor of the divine Presence, His *Shechinah*, can be viewed as an example of angelic sustenance. A later rabbinic tradition appears to affirm just such a nourishing function. Thus, from *Numbers Rabbah* 21:16, one learns the following:

. . . You can learn the answer by analogy with the ministering angels, of whom it says, His ministers are a flaming fire (Ps. CIV, 4). Whence do they derive their sustenance? R. Judan, citing R. Isaac, said: From the lustre of the *Shechinah* they derive their sustenance; as it says, In the light of the king’s countenance is life (Prov. 16:15).²⁷

Here, the fiery nature of the angels’ bodies is put in parallel with the splendor of the divine form. Similarly, *Pesikta of Rav Kahana* reads:

His ministers are a flaming fire. And how is their fire nourished? By the flame-like splendor of God’s presence, for it is written “In the light of the King’s countenance is life” (Prov. 16:15).²⁸

Here again the angels are satiated by the splendor of the Deity’s form which, as in *2 Enoch*, is depicted as the divine presence—that is to say, as the Face of God.

While the humans transported to the upper realm are taught how to be nourished in a new celestial way, the once-celestial creatures of heaven, exiled to the lower realm, are forced to survive on a different provision, namely, earthly food.²⁹ In this respect it is important that the formative biblical narrative of the Fall, found in Genesis 3, indicates a change in the mode of nourishment for both human beings and the serpent. For instance, in Genesis 3:17–18, the Deity tells Adam the following: “[I]n toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.”³⁰

The theme of Adam and Eve’s new means of sustenance, after the Fall, is also reflected in the *Primary Adam Books*, which depict a change in the mode of sustenance of the protoplasts, after their

eviction from the Garden of Eden.³¹ The *Primary Adam Books* mention the hunger experienced by Adam and Eve as they found themselves on earth. The cause of their hunger does not appear to be the absence of food on earth but, rather, the dining habits of the first humans, who were accustomed to different, celestial sustenance during their stay in Paradise. It is thus significant that the Armenian, Georgian, and Latin versions of the *Primary Adam Books* emphasize the difference between the two foods: the angelic food,³² which Adam and Eve ate in paradise, and the food that lies before them on the earth.³³ The key aspect of these versions of the *Primary Adam Books* is their common emphasis that *earthly* food is unsuitable for those who just came from the celestial realm. As the *Primary Adam Books* states, “[Adam and Eve] did not find food like the food by which they had been nourished in the Garden.” In particular, Eve’s discourse in the *Primary Adam Books* 4:2 emphasizes this difference between earthly and celestial food, referring to earthly food as nourishment for the beasts.³⁴

It is also noteworthy that, in the *Primary Adam Books*, one can find the motif of anointing with the oil of the Tree of Life—the arboreal symbol that stands in striking opposition to the infamous Tree of Corruption from which the protoplasts once tasted the forbidden fruit. Thus, the *Primary Adam Books* portray Eve and Seth traveling to paradise in order to bring the oil to the dying Adam. Here, as in *2 Enoch* and *Joseph and Aseneth*, the anointing which comes from the Tree of Life might be understood as an eschatological sustenance of the restored humanity. Yet, this provision is denied to Adam; the archangel Michael tells Eve and Seth that the oil will be used for the restoration of the original condition of humankind in eschatological time.

The Mosaic Background of Abraham’s Angelic Sustenance

Having provided a brief excursus on the early traditions of celestial nourishment, it will be fruitful now to return to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. More specifically, in this regard, a question remains: from which cluster of early Jewish traditions about heavenly food have our authors drawn their inspiration? For instance, recall that some of these traditions, especially those found in the *Testament of Abraham*, are directly associated with the patriarch and his close family by its emphasis on the biblical tale of Abraham’s table fellowship with the angels. Yet, although some aforementioned pseudepigraphical inter-

pretations of angelic nourishment are connected with Abraham's story, especially as reflected in Genesis 18:8, the tradition that lay behind the *Apocalypse of Abraham* appears to be drawing on a different set of conceptual currents, namely, the lore associated with the son of Amram, another prominent visionary of the Jewish tradition, who, like Abraham, had an encounter with the Deity on Mount Sinai.

The sustenance of Moses on Mount Sinai, as a theme, received unprecedented attention from later Jewish interpreters. One encounters a panoply of rabbinic witnesses that links the theme of heavenly nourishment to the figure of the great Israelite prophet. For example, *Exodus Rabbah* 47:7 communicates that, during his reception of the Torah from the Deity on Mount Sinai, Moses was satiated by a vision of the luminous divine form:

It was for the benefit of Moses that he fasted a hundred and twenty days, so that he might receive the Torah; and from whence did Moses receive nourishment? From the splendor of the *Shechinah*, for it says, Thou preservest them all (Neh. 9, 6).³⁵

Here, as in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the seer's feeding on the celestial form coincides with the abstinence from human food.³⁶ *Exodus Rabbah* 47:5 even compares Moses' celestial nourishment to the sustenance of the living creatures of the divine Throne, namely, the *Hayyot*:

. . . He did neither eat bread, nor drink water, that is, in this world; but in the World to Come he will eat of the bread of the Torah and drink of its waters. For this reason he did neither eat bread, etc. Whence did he derive his nourishment? From the lustre of God's presence. Lest this seem surprising, then remember that the *Hayyot* who bear the Divine Throne are also nourished from the splendor of the *Shechinah*.³⁷

In this passage, the angelic creatures holding the Deity's seat are said to be nurtured by the presence of the divine form situated on the Merkabah. *Exodus Rabbah* 47:5 thus points to a connection between the supernatural nourishment and the angelic state of the

great prophet. Furthermore, elsewhere, *Exodus Rabbah* 47:5 makes the conceptual link even more explicit by stating that the prophet's supernatural sustenance emulates the condition of the celestial citizens.³⁸

It has already been mentioned that, in early Jewish accounts, the angelic food often serves as an eschatological marker, which signals the seer's transition to the original prelapsarian condition of the protoplast. Rabbinic materials too have often interpreted the heavenly nourishment not only as the habitual means for sustenance of the angelic being³⁹ but also as the means of nourishment for the protological and eschatological humankind.⁴⁰ Thus, *b. Ber.* 17a reads:

A favorite saying of Rab was: [The future world is not like this world.] In the future world there is no eating nor drinking nor propagation nor business nor jealousy nor hatred nor competition, but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brightness of the divine presence, as it says, And they beheld God, and did eat and drink.⁴¹

It is possible that these midrashic testimonies do not represent merely a later rabbinic invention but Jewish lore with very ancient roots, possibly predating the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. The account of Abraham's unconventional nourishment found in the Slavonic apocalypse seems to point to these ancient roots of Moses' feeding on the *Shechinah*, since, in the Slavonic apocalypse, the theme of Abraham's sustenance on Yahoel is situated within a cluster of distinctive Mosaic motifs. Other studies have noted the "Mosaic" flavor of the celestial feeding in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, suggesting that the authors of the Slavonic apocalypse must draw on such traditions. David Halperin, for example, reflecting on the tradition of the heavenly provision found in *Apocalypse of Abraham*, suggested that, like Abraham,

Moses also discovered that the divine presence is itself nourishment enough. That is why Exodus 24:11 says that Moses and his companions beheld God, and ate and drank. This means, one rabbi explained, that the sight of God was food and drink to them; for Scripture also says, In the light of the King's face there is life. . . . We may assume that the author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* had such midrashim

in mind when he wrote that “my food was to see the angel who was with me, and his speech—that was my drink.”⁴²

It is also evident that the Mosaic tradition of celestial nourishment has a priority over the Abrahamic developments, as this motif is deeply rooted in early biblical and extrabiblical Mosaic testimonies. For instance, Exodus 24:11 testifies that Moses and his associates “beheld God, and they ate and drank.” Such nourishment did not involve conventional human sustenance, as Deuteronomy 9:9 and 9:18 state that the prophet did not eat bread or drink water. Moreover, the prophet’s forty-day ordeal, when he was sustained by the food of the angels, has been set in parallel by early Jewish interpreters to another account of the supernatural feeding, namely, the story of the Israelites’ forty years’ wandering in the Egyptian desert, during which the people of God were nourished on the food of angels—manna.⁴³ The LXX version of Psalm 77(78):25 makes this connection explicit, identifying the manna of the wilderness as the bread of angels.⁴⁴ Further, the *Wisdom of Solomon* 16:20 also attests to a similar tradition. In Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*, moreover, Moses himself tells the Israelites that they have eaten the bread of angels for forty years.⁴⁵ Later rabbinic sources also understand manna as the angels’ provision.⁴⁶

The tradition that Moses was fed through the *vision* of the divine form betrays very ancient conceptual roots. Already, in the formative Genesis account, the protoplasts’ feeding on the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil coincides with the motif of their eyes being opened.⁴⁷ Scholars have noted⁴⁸ that Philo, also, in his *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum*, is cognizant of the visual nature of Moses’ celestial nourishment, calling his vision the food of souls. *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum*, then, depicts Moses’ visionary experience in the following way:

What is the meaning of the words, “they appeared to God in the place and they ate and drank?” Having attained to the face of the father, they do not remain in any mortal place at all, for all such places are profane and polluted, but they send and make a migration to a holy and divine place, which is called by another name, logos. Being in this place, through the steward, they see the master in a lofty

and clear manner, envisioning God with the keen-sighted eyes of the mind. But this vision is the food of souls, and true partaking is the cause of a life of immortality. Wherefore, indeed, it is said, “they ate and drank.” For those who are indeed very hungry and thirsty did not fail to see God become clearly visible, but like those who, being famished, find an abundance of food, they satisfied their great desire.⁴⁹

Andrea Lieber has proposed that in this Philonic passage Moses’ encounter on Mount Sinai is spiritualized in such a way that “the vision of the divine presence satiates, like the sacrificial meal.”⁵⁰ Further, Lieber suggests that

Philo appears influenced by the tradition, witnessed also in rabbinic, patristic and pseudepigraphic literature, that there is no “eating” in heaven; angelic beings do not require food like humans, yet their “bodies” are nonetheless sustained by divine means.⁵¹

It appears that, like later rabbinic testimonies, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is drawing on this cluster of early Mosaic motifs. A panoply of distinctive Mosaic markers found in the Slavonic pseudepigraphon, including Abraham’s forty-day fast and his travel to the mountain Horeb point to such a possibility. Previous studies have convincingly demonstrated the paramount importance of Mosaic traditions for the authors of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a writing in which many details of the patriarch’s journey become patterned after the visionary portfolio of the son of Amram.⁵²

In this respect, it is noteworthy that these Mosaic motifs loom especially large in and around the verses that tell about Abraham’s celestial nourishment. In fact, the next verse that follows the theme of spiritual nourishment (*Apoc. Ab.* 11:3) tells about the seer and his angelic companion’s arrival to Horeb, the mountain where Moses received his revelation; it reads: “And I ate no bread and drank no water, because [my] food was to see the angel who was with me, and his speech with me was my drink. And we came to the glorious God’s mountain—Horeb.”⁵³

It is also noteworthy that, both in the Mosaic tradition and in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, one can find references to the themes of both eating *and* drinking. David Halperin suggests that the Mosaic trend might draw on the passage from Exodus 24:11 that states that Moses and his companions “beheld God, and ate and drank.”⁵⁴ Both Mosaic and Abrahamic passages make reference to the forty-day abstinence from human food during which the celestial nourishment occurs. Such parallels again point to the formative Mosaic blueprint that stands behind the traditions of celestial nourishment present in the Slavonic apocalypse.

Fiery Provisions

Later rabbinic testimonies about Moses’ angelic feeding often mention the luminous form of the Deity—the portentous source of substance on Mount Sinai. This feature is indicative of the importance of anthropomorphic tenets in the Mosaic narratives. In the Book of Exodus, the prophet’s encounter at Sinai became one of the crucial nexuses of the anthropomorphic ideologies in which one can find not only developed *Kavod* terminology but also the imagery of God’s countenance—the Deity’s *Panim* (another crucial tenet of the priestly anthropomorphic paradigm).

Yet, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in which the divine body traditions become challenged and reshaped by the rival audial paradigms, the motif of nourishment on the divine form received a novel polemical reformulation.⁵⁵ Scholars have suggested that one such polemical clash takes place in the story of Bar-Eshath, an infamous idol of Abraham’s father that perishes in flames, serving as fuel for Terah’s meal. In *Apocalypse of Abraham* 5:9–12, the young hero of the faith relates the following encounter:

And it came to pass, after I had put the splinters on the fire, in order to cook food for my father. . . . When I came back again I found Bar-Eshath fallen backwards, his feet enveloped in fire and terribly burned. Laughing greatly to myself, I said, “Bar-Eshath, you certainly are able to kindle fire and cook food!” And it came to pass, while I was speaking laughingly, that he was gradually burned up by

the fire and became ashes. And I brought the food to my father, [and] he ate.⁵⁶

I have argued elsewhere that Bar-Eshath's story reveals the polemics against the divine body traditions. Bar-Eshath's depiction attempts to deconstruct the familiar imagery of the anthropomorphic divine Form, which is often depicted in Jewish and Christian accounts with the feet/lower body enveloped in fire.⁵⁷ For our study, it is important that the account of the idol's fiery demise is connected with the motif of nourishment. Moreover, it seems to point to the fact that, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the reader encounters several traditions of "nourishment" on anthropomorphic forms, authentic as well as idolatrous.

Thus, while in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 5:14–17 the false divine representation, embodied by the idol Bar-Eshath, assists in the nourishment of the idolater Terah,⁵⁸ later in the text the true divine form represented by the Angel of the Tetragrammaton becomes the authentic source for the seer's provision.

The polemics against the divine body traditions in our apocalypse appear to be unfolded in the midst of a dialectical mix of demotion and exaltation. As one remembers, the anthropomorphic body of Terah's idol undergoes a fiery ordeal and perishes. As the apocalypse's story unfolds, Abraham too is drawn into an array of fiery tests laden with the possibility of catastrophic demise. Yet, unlike Bar-Eshath, Abraham endures and survives the test of the heavenly furnace. While the idol becomes the means of nourishment, the patriarch escapes such a destiny. This comparison of Bar-Eshath to Abraham is not farfetched. The aforementioned speech of Azazel, from chapter 13, clearly envisions such a connection. In it, the fallen angel warns the patriarch that he can, during his celestial journey, perish in the heavenly fire, becoming heavenly food.⁵⁹

In this respect, it is intriguing that later rabbinic testimonies about Moses' ordeal on Mount Sinai associate spiritual nourishment with the visionary's demise in heavenly fire by juxtaposing the story of the prophet's feeding on the splendor of the *Shechinah* with the story of the death of Nadab and Abihu—Aaron's sons who were said to have perished in the fire of the Holy of Holies. Thus, *Leviticus Rabbah* 20:10, a passage that deals with the mysterious death of the two sons of Aaron, describes the following tradition:

R. Joshua of Siknin in the name of R. Levi observed: Moses did not feed his eyes on the *Shechinah* and derived benefit from the *Shechinah*. . . . Nadab and Abihu, however, fed their eyes on the *Shechinah* and did not derive benefit therefrom, as may be inferred from the following: And Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord.⁶⁰

Exodus Rabbah 3:1 attests to a similar tradition:

R. Hoshaiia the Elder said: Moses did well in hiding his face, for God said to him: Since thou didst show me respect and hide thy face when I would show Myself to thee, I assure thee that thou wilt be near Me on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. Thou wilt not eat nor drink, but wilt feast on the splendor of the *Shechinah*, as it is said: and Moses knew not that the skin of his face sent forth beams (Ex. XXXIV, 29). But Nadab and Abihu uncovered their heads and fed their eyes on the lustre of the *Shechinah*, as it is said: And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand; and they beheld God, and did eat and drink (ib. XXIV, 11). Did they not receive [the penalty of death] for what they had done?⁶¹

These rabbinic passages again draw attention to the question of how the celestial citizens are fed on the luster of the divine form. We briefly explored this enigmatic praxis earlier in our study, during our analysis of *2 Enoch* 56, in which the angelic body of the seventh antediluvian hero was “nourished” by the splendor of the divine Face. It is possible that the rabbinic passages about the fiery demise of Nadab and Abihu, unfolded in the midst of the story of Moses’ supernatural feeding, might also be related to this practice of celestial nourishment. The corporealities of Aaron’s sons, however, unlike the transformed bodies of Moses and Enoch, were not able to sustain the terror of the divine light, being annihilated by its fatal splendor.

The rabbinic interpretation of the fiery demise of Nadab and Abihu also brings to mind both the Bar-Eshath episode, in which the idol perishes in the flames, and Abraham’s own trials in the Slavonic apocalypse, in which he is depicted as passing the dangerous fiery thresholds. In this respect, it is possible that the patriarch’s fiery trials

on his way to the divine presence themselves represent his supernatural nourishment. Jewish apocalyptic and mystical traditions often depict the angelic hosts bathing in the rivers of fire.⁶² For example, Daniel 7:10 describes a stream of fire flowing from the presence of the Deity. The imagery of the celestial rivers of fire is also found in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (Song 10, 4Q405 15ii–16 2).⁶³ Similarly, *Hekhalot Zutarti* (Synopse §390) reads:

One *hayyah* rises above the seraphim and descends upon the tabernacle of the youth whose name is Metatron, and speaks with a loud voice. A voice of sheer silence. . . . Suddenly the angels fall silent. The watchers and holy ones become quiet. They are silent, and are pushed into the river of fire.⁶⁴

Sefer Haqomah 155–164 also attests to this tradition:

And (the) angels who are with him come and encircle the Throne of Glory. They are on one side and the (celestial) creatures are on the other side, and the *Shechinah* is on the Throne of Glory in the center. And one creature goes up over the seraphim and descends on the tabernacle of the lad whose name is Metatron and says in a great voice, a thin voice of silence, “The Throne of Glory is glistening!” Immediately, the angels fall silent and the *irin* and the *qadushin* are still. *They hurry and hasten into the river of fire.*⁶⁵

In some rabbinic passages, the angels are bathing in the rivers of fire after their trips to the lower regions in order to purify themselves and restore their celestial form.⁶⁶ These enigmatic rituals of bathing in the fiery rivers streaming from the throne of the Deity seem to pertain to the daily nourishing routines of the celestial citizens.

Previous studies have often suggested that the symbolism of the divine furnace is mirrored in the dualistic framework of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, most notably in the imagery of the furnace of Azazel.⁶⁷ The fiery nature of the heavenly abode is mentioned multiple times in the text. Moreover, it is notable that Abraham’s journey into the heavenly realm is depicted as a movement into a realm of fire. Also, the realm of the antagonist is depicted with similar imagery. In Yahoel’s speech, for instance, found in chapter 14, which reveals the true loca-

tion of the chief antagonist, the arch-demon's abode is designated as the furnace of the earth. Azazel himself, moreover, is depicted as the "burning coal" or the "firebrand" of this infernal kiln.

This imagery of the furnace is explicitly brought to bear on the notion of nourishment in the Slavonic apocalypse in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:36.⁶⁸ Azazel's warning to the patriarch in this passage about becoming "food" for celestial beings perishing in the fire of the upper abode becomes paradoxically invoked later in the text when the Deity himself designates some human beings as the "food" for another, in this case demonic, furnace, namely, "the fire of hell." Thus, in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 31:3–5, we read:

Since I have destined them to be food for the fire of hell, and ceaseless soaring in the air of the underground depths, the contents of a worm's belly. For those who do justice, who have chosen my will and clearly kept my commandments, will see them. And they will rejoice with joy at the destruction of the abandoned. And those who followed after the idols and after their murders will rot in the womb of the Evil One—the belly of Azazel, and they will be burned by the fire of Azazel's tongue.

Interestingly, this passage identifies the fiery tongue of Azazel with the fire of hell—that is to say, the very reality by which the sinners will be destroyed. In the aural conceptual framework of the Slavonic apocalypse in which the divine Voice is revealed in the midst of fire, Azazel's fiery manifestation also appears to be surrounded with distinctive aural connotations.

Transformation through Celestial Nourishment

Other studies have noted the distinctive soteriological dimension that accompanies the motif of spiritual nourishment.⁶⁹ Through their feeding on the luster of the *Shechinah*, exalted patriarchs and prophets have proleptically foreshadowed the eschatological condition of humankind, in which earthly creatures will be once again sustained like the angels, by the divine presence. It is important here that both in the Mosaic tradition and in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* celestial nourishment occurs during the ascetic practices of the visionaries, namely, during

their forty-day fasts. Thus, in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 9:7, the seer is commanded by God that he must “for forty days abstain from every food which issues from fire, and from the drinking of wine, and from anointing [yourself] with oil.”⁷⁰ As noted above, the patriarch’s abstinence from human food mimics the biblical fast of the son of Amram.

Similar motifs, in which the tradition of celestial nourishment unfolds in the midst of ascetic practices, are also found in another Jewish pseudepigraphical account, namely, *Joseph and Aseneth*. Like Moses and Abraham, the protagonist of the story, an Egyptian maiden, fasts and is then nourished by the angelic being.⁷¹

The celestial initiation stories of Abraham and Aseneth, as we see, are strikingly similar. As in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in *Joseph and Aseneth* we can find a paradoxical mix of visual and aural imagery in the portrayals of angelic food.⁷² Such a mixture is especially evident in the depiction of the chief angelic characters of each narrative, namely, the celestial agents responsible for initiations of the respective seers. Scholars have noted the “aural” characteristics of the figure of Yahoel, the central symbol of the audial ideology of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. In particular, the Slavonic pseudepigraphon defines him as the mediation of “my [God’s] ineffable name (*неизрекомаго имени моего*).”⁷³ Even apart from the explanation of the guide’s office, the peculiar designation “Yahoel” (Slav. *Иаоиль*) itself unequivocally denotes the angel as the embodiment of the divine Name. Thus Abraham is not merely sustained by seeing and hearing an angelic being but is nourished on the representation of the divine Name.

Similarly, as in the Abrahamic pseudepigraphon, *Joseph and Aseneth* depicts the human seer as being fed by the Angel of the Name. With respect to this, Ross Kraemer suggests that “the designation of the angelic double of Joseph . . . [is] probably closely associated, if not to be identified, with the Name-Bearing Angel.”⁷⁴ Yet, while both angelic entities might be connected with the aural *Shem* theology, the corporeal thrust of the visual paradigm is not entirely absent in either account, as both angelic “feeders” are portrayed as anthropomorphic embodiments of the divine Name.

The aural aspect of both accounts is manifested also in the fact that supernatural nourishment comes from the *mouths* of the angels. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the patriarch receives his unconventional provision from the mouth of Yahoel when the speech of the great angel serves as Abraham’s drink. The aural aspect of nourishment is also present in *Joseph and Aseneth*, specifically through Aseneth’s

repeated affirmations about the provenance of the honeycomb from the mouth of the celestial being.⁷⁵ *Joseph and Aseneth* 16:8–10, for instance, reads:

And the comb was big and white as snow and full of honey. And that honey was like dew from heaven and its exhalation like breath of life. And Aseneth wondered and said in herself, Did then this comb come out of the man's mouth, because its exhalation is like the breath of this man's mouth?⁷⁶

Also, *Joseph and Aseneth* 16:11 provides a similar affirmation of the aural source of the angelic food; it reads:

And Aseneth was afraid and said, "Lord, I did not have a honeycomb in my storeroom at any time, but you spoke and it came into being. Surely this came out of your mouth, because its exhalation is like breath of your mouth."⁷⁷

Other scholars suggest that the provenance of the angelic food in *Joseph and Aseneth* coming from the mouth of the celestial being has roots in the biblical manna traditions. Andrea Lieber observes:

[T]he association of the honeycomb with manna is explicit: it was like dew from heaven, white like snow, containing the breath of life. Indeed the honeycomb, like manna, is identified with the 'word' of the angel—the *anthropos* spoke and the comb came from his angelic mouth.⁷⁸

In the Book of Deuteronomy, the manna tradition has been reformulated in terms of the aural paradigm when the symbolism of heavenly nourishment was juxtaposed with imagery of the word coming from the Deity's mouth. Thus, in Deuteronomy 8:3, we find the following tradition:

He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (NRSV)⁷⁹

Given that the Book of Deuteronomy first initiated polemics against the visual anthropomorphic paradigm present in Ezekiel and

the Priestly Source, the fact that such a striking aural reformulation comes from this biblical text is not coincidental.⁸⁰

It appears that the peculiar transformations of the Egyptian maiden and the Jewish patriarch found in *Joseph and Aseneth* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, respectively, are profoundly affected by the aural *Shem* ideologies. In fact, one can understand the natures of both visionaries as literally reconstituted by their ingestion of the divine Name. It is not coincidental, moreover, that the transformation is executed aurally—that is to say, from the mouth of the angel of the Name to the mouth of an earthly creature. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the patriarch drinks the words coming forth from the mouth of Yahoel, and is fed by the sight of this hypostatic representation of the divine Name. In *Joseph and Aseneth*, similarly, the heavenly man, who bears some characteristics of the Angel of the Name, puts the angelic food that originated from his mouth into the mouth of the female seer.

Moreover, if, in both pseudepigraphs, the human seers are indeed transformed by means of their ingestions of the divine Name, such initiatory practices point to an important ancient trajectory. Other scholars have noted, for example, that Aseneth's partaking of the celestial food is reminiscent of certain ritual practices, through which cultic images are given life by placing the divine Name in their mouths.⁸¹ These rituals are rooted in ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian animation ceremonies of cultic statues known as the rite of the "washing of the mouth" (*mīs pī*) and the "opening of the mouth" (*pīt pī*).⁸² Some scholars have argued that these trends exercised a formative influence on some later Hermetic⁸³ traditions and Kabbalistic stories about the creation of the artificial humanoid.⁸⁴

Returning again to the pseudepigraphical accounts of Abraham and Aseneth, we see that the peculiar metamorphoses effected through the mouth of the celestial beings are replete with protological symbolism. These transformational accounts appear to replicate, here, the paradigmatic event of the creation of humankind when the spirit of life was blown from the mouth of the Deity into the mouth of the lifeless human body molded from the dust of earth.⁸⁵ Such protological connections are more distinctive in *Joseph and Aseneth*, in which the angelic food, the honeycomb, is compared with the spirit of life. Through the ingestion of the divine Name, then, the seers of both the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and *Joseph and Aseneth* become "new Protoplast," returning to the prelapsarian condition of humanity.⁸⁶ Such

“vivifications” of the seers bring to mind later Jewish Golem legends in which the lifeless body of the artificial humanoid is “vivified” when God’s name is inserted into his mouth.⁸⁷ The theme of vivification of human “idols” brings us again to the theme of idolatry, so prominent in both pseudepigraphical texts.

It has already been noted in our study that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the stand against the divine body tradition and reaffirmation of the aural paradigm often takes the form of polemics against idols. In this respect it is intriguing that in *Joseph and Aseneth*, as in the Slavonic apocalypse, the theme of celestial nourishment appears in the midst of a fight with idolatry. Interestingly, both protagonists are initially portrayed as idolaters. In the beginning of the Slavonic apocalypse, for instance, Abraham manufactures idols and participates in idolatrous worship. Similarly, Aseneth is portrayed as an idol worshiper at the beginning of the narrative. *Joseph and Aseneth* 8, in this regard, states that Aseneth’s lips were defiled because she “blesses with her mouth dead and dumb idols.”⁸⁸ Later, however, she, like Abraham, destroys her idols.⁸⁹

This peculiar fight against idolatry, furthermore, seems to betray some polemical developments that lay behind both texts. As noted above, both accounts are permeated with the dialectical mix of visual and aural imagery. Both heroes, for example, are not simply fed, like Moses, on the celestial form alone, but are also nourished by the divine Name. Scholars have noted that the imagery of the divine Name looms especially large in the longer version of *Joseph and Aseneth*.⁹⁰ It is important to our study that in Aseneth’s hymn of repentance (*Jos. Asen.* 11:17), the divine Name is mentioned in the context of the opening of the seer’s mouth.⁹¹ Ross Kraemer notes that “in the longer version, Aseneth blesses not only ‘the Lord, your God’ but also the name of angel.”⁹² Later, Pentephres’s daughter will ingest the heavenly food coming from the mouth of the Angel of the Name. Kraemer argues that “it is particularly in the longer text that the angelic figure is more closely aligned with the figure developed in other sources as the Name-Bearing Angel—the virtual double of God.”⁹³ In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, too, the patriarch will be nourished on the hypostatic Name of God.

A further important aural marker present in both texts is that both pseudepigraphons portray the seers’ involvement in the aural praxis of praise. The significance of the patriarch’s hymns to the overall concep-

tual framework of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* has been recognized in previous studies.⁹⁴ More specifically, in the Slavonic apocalypse, Abraham gains access to the highest heavenly realm through means of a hymn.⁹⁵ Scholars have noted that the patriarch's praise is reminiscent of later Hekhalot hymns.⁹⁶ Similar suggestions have been made concerning Aseneth's practices as well. Kraemer, for instance, argues:

Aseneth wishes not only to glorify the figure (of the angel), language that might be imported from Judges 13, but to sing hymns. . . . This perpetual glorification and singing of hymns is precisely the activity envisioned for the angels in heaven in so many hekhalot and mystical-visionary texts. Taken together with other passages, particularly in the longer version, it points to Aseneth's own desire not only to become like the angels in heaven but also to do so in accordance with a particular understanding of angelic identity and activity.⁹⁷

Interestingly, both in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and in *Joseph and Aseneth*, the chief angelic protagonists prevent the seers from worshipping them. Yahoel brings Abraham up from his knees, and, in *Joseph and Aseneth*, the angel refuses to accept the seer's worship.⁹⁸ These traditions again point to the subtle polemics against celestial corporeal representations in both the Slavonic apocalypse and *Joseph and Aseneth*.

The Nourishment of Azazel

The theme of food coming from a spiritual creature receives its further inverse appropriation in chapter 23 of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in which the seer beholds the fallen angel Azazel nourishing Adam and Eve. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 23:6–11 reads:

And they were standing under a tree of Eden, and the fruit of the tree was like the appearance of a bunch of grapes of vine. And behind the tree was standing, as it were, a serpent in form, but having hands and feet like a man, and wings on its shoulders: six on the right side and six on the left. And he was holding in his hands the grapes of the tree

and feeding the two whom I saw entwined with each other. And I said, “Who are these two entwined with each other, or who is this between them, or what is the fruit which they are eating, Mighty Eternal One?” And he said, “This is the reason of men, this is Adam, and this is their desire on earth, this is Eve. And he who is between them is the Impiety of their pursuits for destruction, Azazel himself.”⁹⁹

This depiction of the protological couple entwined with the demonic spiritual agent is laden with an array of transformational motifs. It is not coincidental that, like Abraham’s metamorphosis, the negative transformation of the protoplasts is also conveyed through the metaphor of sustenance. Yet the nature of sustenance is significantly different. Unlike the patriarch, who was nourished by the contemplation of the celestial being,¹⁰⁰ the protoplasts are in this case fed not through the vision or speech of the spiritual being but by “physical food,” in the form of grapes. This reliance on the conventional human provisions brings to mind the aforementioned cluster of motifs reflected in the *Primary Adam Books*, in which the protoplasts, after their expulsion from Paradise, transition to the “food of beasts.”¹⁰¹

Note here that the protoplasts’ eating habits inversely mirror the nourishing mode of the patriarch. While Abraham transitions to the celestial prelapsarian condition of humanity, renouncing conventional nourishment, Adam and Eve head in the opposite direction through consumption of earthly food. If the metaphors of nourishment indeed have this transformational significance in our text, one finds here a negative mirroring of the patriarch’s metamorphosis, an inverse dualistic strategy prominent in other parts of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* as well.

It is important to note that Azazel’s feeding of the protoplasts is a rare motif in Jewish lore. The appearance of such a depiction in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, then, is not likely simply coincidental. Rather, it is a meaningful portrayal that nicely corroborates other feeding episodes found throughout the text. As suggested, this depiction of the negative spiritual agent feeding the protological humans is posited in the text as the conceptual counterpart to the nourishment performed by another prominent spiritual agent of the story, namely, the angel Yahoel. Other scholars have noted the inverse symmetrical correspondences between Yahoel and Azazel. These figures are two

pivotal characters of the story who stand in striking opposition to each other, specifically in the central sacerdotal rite of the apocalypse—the Yom Kippur ceremony. During this ceremony, one spiritual agent represents the celestial high priest, while the other represents the celestial scapegoat.

Yet, while in some portions of the Slavonic apocalypse Azazel indeed is depicted as the proverbial scapegoat, the demoted creature stripped of his celestial “attire,” in the account of the protoplasts’ feeding, the depiction of Azazel hints at his former heavenly state by reference to his twelve wings upon his shoulders.

Furthermore, the antagonist’s stance near the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil also deserves our close attention. One can discern here a certain parallelism in the infamous tree and Azazel. Not surprisingly, then, the depiction of both entities utilizes similar symbolism. For instance, as the tree holds grapes on its branches, Azazel holds grapes in his hands. In view of such correspondences, it is possible to envision the antagonist as the arboreal symbol. Further, the motif that the demon is entwined with the protoplasts is reminiscent not only of the classic attributes of the serpent but also the entwined branches of the tree themselves. Thus the entwined Azazel can be understood as the tree, or branches, from which the humans are nourished by the forbidden fruit. We can see, then, the parallelism in the two symbols of corruption: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and Azazel, both entities laden with forbidden fruits. This portrayal of the antagonistic mediator as the paradisaical tree brings to mind other apocalyptic accounts in which the heavenly mediators, like an exalted Jacob or Christ, are portrayed as the paradisaical arboreal symbol—that is to say, the Tree of Life.

Feeding with the Whole Extent?

It is also intriguing that, in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 23, the motif of Azazel’s feeding coincides with the imagery of his being intertwined with the subjects of his nourishment. The peculiarity of his feeding brings to mind the aforementioned apocalyptic testimonies in which human seers are nourished by the whole extent of the Deity or its representation in the form of the Angel of the Name. Azazel, like the Angel of the Name, though in the inverse, provides nourishment not only through the mouths of the protoplasts but also through his physi-

cal presence, namely, the whole extent of his body. Interestingly, as in 2 *Enoch* 22, in which the luminous body of the seventh antediluvian hero “reflects” the shining form of the Deity, here, too, the intertwined bodies of the first humans mirror the serpentine form of their seducer.

Next let us consider the imagery of the protoplasts’ entwining with the fallen Azazel. Other scholars discern in such entwining a kind of erotic symbolism, arguing that it represents a sexual union reminiscent of a *ménage à trois*.¹⁰² Other Jewish accounts also closely link the motifs of nourishment and sexual union. For example, in *Joseph and Aseneth*, the erotic imagery of a kiss appears along with the symbolism of nourishment. Thus, in *Joseph and Aseneth* 8, Joseph, who is fed on the bread of life, refuses to kiss Aseneth, whose lips are defiled by the food of idols.¹⁰³ Later, after partaking of the angelic food offered by the heavenly counterpart of Joseph, Aseneth is kissed by his celestial guest. In *Joseph and Aseneth* 19:11, the erotic imagery of a kiss again coincides with the symbolism of nourishment:

And Joseph kissed Aseneth and gave her spirit of life, and he kissed her the second time and gave her spirit of wisdom, and he kissed her the third time and gave her spirit of truth.¹⁰⁴

The important detail of this passage from *Joseph and Aseneth*, which most clearly connects the motifs of nourishment and erotic encounter, is that Joseph’s kiss gives Aseneth the spirit of life. Joseph’s kiss evokes the description of the angelic food found in chapter 16,¹⁰⁵ in which Joseph’s heavenly counterpart, represented by the Angel of the Lord, gives the female visionary the honeycomb: “And the comb was big and white as snow and full of honey. And that honey was like dew from heaven and its exhalation like breath of life.”¹⁰⁶

In light of such parallels it appears that the link between nourishment and erotic imagery in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 23 is not coincidental, as it reveals an inverse appropriation of the familiar conceptual constellations found in Jewish apocalyptic accounts.

Feeding on Azazel

The presence of Azazel in the midst of the protoplasts points to another important transformational aspect of our text, namely, that the

demon's nature somehow becomes part of the protoplasts' nature. Such demonic in-dwelling represents an inverse type of the positive transformation of Abraham during his journey into the heavenly realm. As mentioned above, the tradition of the seer's nourishment on the Angel of the Name, reflected both in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and *Joseph and Aseneth*, is connected with the ritual of "vivification" of the protoplast (and Golem) by means of the divine Name. In the case of Abraham and Aseneth, the transformation brought by nourishment signals their return to the condition of the prelapsarian humanity. In his investigation of the vivification of Golem/Adam by the powers of the Tetragrammaton, Gershom Scholem notes another cluster of traditions in which the idols or antagonistic figures are brought to life by being vivified not by the divine Name but, inversely, by the devil's entrance.¹⁰⁷ Thus, for example, according to one legend, Samael speaks from the mouth of the Golden Calf.¹⁰⁸ A similar tradition is found in the *Primary Adam Books* in which the serpent becomes a lyre for Satan during his deception of the protoplasts. Satan's assumption of a serpentine form, moreover, might represent the "anti-paradigm" of transformation, namely, the antagonist's transition from an upper (angelic) to a lower (animal) form, which inversely mirrors the glorious metamorphosis of the apocalyptic visionary, who undergoes a transition from garments of skin to garments of light. The Armenian version of the *Primary Adam Books* describes just such a negative transformation of Satan.¹⁰⁹ The Adversary's animal manifestation is not merely a phantom—he inhabits the actual living creature. The serpent is possessed by Satan.¹¹⁰

In view of the aforementioned accounts, it is possible that two alternative traditions of sustenance depicted in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*—one angelic and the other demonic—stand in a conceptual opposition to each other. While Abraham (and Aseneth) became nourished on the Angel of the Name's presence, Adam and Eve are fed on Azazel's presence.¹¹¹

Conclusion

Our study demonstrates that the symbolism of nourishment found in the Slavonic apocalypse plays an important conceptual role in the dualistic framework of this enigmatic Jewish work. Such imagery helps

elucidate the transformations of the main characters of the apocalyptic narrative—the metamorphoses that shepherd them to their protological or eschatological conditions. In this respect, the theme of nourishment appears to serve as an important conceptual bridge that connects protological and eschatological events. It promises that the corruption of the first human pair, who ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden Eden, will be reversed, in the end, through a parallel act of sustenance that will return humankind to its original angelic state. Various eschatological meals, found both in Jewish and Christian accounts, from the Eucharist to rabbinic stories about the righteous feasting on the body of the Leviathan, point to the restorative significance of the final nourishments of the elected humans who will, in the *eschaton*, undo the consequences of the protological fall.

Another important aspect is that the accounts of nourishment, attested to in the Slavonic apocalypse, occur in the midst of polemics between aural and visual conceptual currents. Such polemics affect the depiction of both those who are fed and those who are feeding. Yet it is not always possible to clearly disentangle the respective conceptual streams. In this respect, interestingly, in the crucial nourishing episode of the apocalypse, which portrays Abraham's feeding on Yahoel, both visual *and* aural markers play a pivotal role. Here the human seer is sustained both on the vision of the form of the great angel *and* on the voice of the celestial creature. Such complex imagery found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* clearly points to the existence of a conceptual mixture in which features of the novel aural paradigm are unfolded in the midst of the visionary realities of the formative Mosaic traditions.

Thus the imagery of nourishment in the Slavonic apocalypse reveals a paradoxical mix of the *Kavod* and *Shem* conceptual developments in which the promulgation of the theology of the divine Name and its portentous role in the transformation of the seer is linked with the theophanic imagery of the visual paradigm. The influence of this polemical encounter between two important revelatory trends has had lasting consequences for later Jewish and Christian developments.

89. Ryszard Rubinkiewicz has argued that “. . . the author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* follows the tradition of *1 Enoch* 1–36. The chief of the fallen angels is Azazel, who rules the stars and most men. It is not difficult to find here the tradition of Genesis 6:1–4 developed according to the tradition of *1 Enoch*. Azazel is the head of the angels who plotted against the Lord and who impregnated the daughters of men. These angels are compared to the stars. Azazel revealed the secrets of heaven and is banished to the desert. Abraham, as Enoch, receives the power to drive away Satan. All these connections show that the author of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* drew upon the tradition of *1 Enoch*.” Rubinkiewicz, “Apocalypse of Abraham,” 1.685.

90. In this respect, Günter Stemberger notes that “. . . a more radical solution understands the Mishnaic descriptions as ideal forms of the cult, based exclusively on the biblical text and not at all reflecting the reality of the Second Temple period. . . .” Stemberger, “Yom Kippur in Mishnah Yoma,” 121.

The Nourishment of Azazel

1. “For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him [Abraham]. . . .” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 20.

2. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 19.

3. *Apoc. Ab.* 9:7: “But for forty days abstain from every food which issues from fire, and from the drinking of wine, and from anointing [yourself] with oil.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 17.

4. D. Goodman, “Do Angels Eat?” *JJS* 37.2 (1986) 160–175 at 164.

5. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 20.

6. The concept of humans as the “food” of fire will appear again in *Apoc. Ab.* 31:2–3, this time coming from the lips, not of Azazel, but of God: “And I shall burn with fire those who mocked them ruling over them in this age and I shall commit those who have covered me with mockery to the reproach of the coming age. Since I have destined them to be food for the fire of hell, and ceaseless soaring in the air of the underground depths, the contents of a worm’s belly.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 35.

7. *Apoc. Ab.* 23:7–8: “And behind the tree was standing, as it were, a serpent in form, but having hands and feet like a man, and wings on its shoulders: six on the right side and six on the left. And he was holding in his hands the grapes of the tree and feeding the two whom I saw entwined with each other.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 27.

8. See Goodman, “Do Angels Eat?” 160–175; H.J. Hodges, *Food as Synecdoche in John’s Gospel and Gnostic Texts* (Ph.D. diss.; University of Cal-

ifornia at Berkeley, 1995) 308–352; M. Leutzsch, “Essen Engel?: Über das Ernährungsverhalten himmlischer Wesen,” in *Essen und Trinken in der Bibel: Ein literarisches Festmahl für Rainer Kessler zum 65. Geburtstag* (eds. M. Geiger et al.; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009) 254–268; E. Kobel, *Dining with John: Communal Meals and Identity Formation in the Fourth Gospel and Its Historical and Cultural Context* (BIS, 109; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 308–312.

9. Judg 13:15–16 reads: “Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, ‘Allow us to detain you, and prepare a kid for you.’ The angel of the Lord said to Manoah, ‘If you detain me, I will not eat your food; but if you want to prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord’” (NRSV).

10. “And the Commander-in-chief said, ‘Lord, all the heavenly spirits are incorporeal, and they neither eat nor drink.’” E.P. Sanders, “Testament of Abraham,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 1.871–902 at 1.884.

11. Cf. Tob 12:19 “Although you were watching me, I really did not eat or drink anything—but what you saw was a vision” (NRSV).

12. See Philo, *De Abrahamo* 1:118 reads: “It is a marvel indeed that though they neither ate nor drank they gave the appearance of both eating and drinking.” Colson and Whitaker, *Philo*, 6.61. For a similar tradition, see also QG 4:9.

13. See Josephus’s *Ant.* 1:197 reads: “On their assenting, he ordered loaves of fine flour to be made forthwith and killed a calf and cooked it and brought it to them as they reclined under the oak; and they gave him to believe that they did eat.” Thackeray and Markus, *Josephus*, 4.97.

14. Kobel, *Dining with John*, 309.

15. Cf. *Testament of Abraham* 6:4–5: “Sarah said, ‘You must know, my lord, the three heavenly men who stayed as guests in our tent beside the oak of Mamre when you slaughtered the unblemished calf and set a table for them. After the meat had been eaten, the calf got up again and exultantly suckled its mother.’” Sanders, “Testament of Abraham,” 1.885.

16. Cf. *Targ. Onq.* to Genesis 18:5–8; 19:1; *Targ. Neof.* to Genesis 18:8; *Targ. Ps.-J.* to Genesis 18:8. See also *Gen. Rab.* 48:14; *Lev. Rab.* 34:8; *b. Baba Metzia* 86b–87a.

17. Regarding this, see Hodges, *Food as Synecdoche in John’s Gospel and Gnostic Texts*, 335–336, 339.

18. *2 Enoch* 56:2, the longer recension. Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 1.182.

19. Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 1.138.

20. Provenance of the oil/dew of resurrection in *2 Enoch* appears to be paradisaical since it is portrayed with the same symbolism as oil coming from the Tree of Life. Thus, *2 Enoch* 8:3–4 reports that “the tree [of life] is indescribable for pleasantness and fine fragrance, and more beautiful than any (other) created thing that exists. And from every direction it has an

appearance which is gold-looking and crimson, and with the form of fire.” Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 1.114. Concerning the paradisaical dew in 2 Enoch, see A. Orlov, “Resurrection of Adam’s Body: The Redeeming Role of Enoch-Metatron in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch,” *The Theophaneia School: Jewish Roots of Eastern Christian Mysticism* (Scrinium, III; eds. B. Lourié and A. Orlov; St. Petersburg: Byzantinorossica, 2007) 385–389; Hodges, *Food as Synecdoche in John’s Gospel and Gnostic Texts*, 336.

21. C. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 2.177–247 at 2.229. The parallelism between the dew and the manna is found also in 3 Bar. 8:9–11 (Greek version): “And I said, ‘Lord, what is this bird, and what is its name?’ And the angel told me, ‘His name is Phoenix.’ ‘And what does he eat?’ And he told me, ‘The manna of heaven and the dew of earth.’” H.E. Gaylord, “3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J.H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 1.653–679 at 1.671. Cf. also *Zohar* II.62b: “The holy tree was arranged with twelve boundaries on four sides of the world, fortified by seventy branches, all corresponding to the pattern above. At that moment, holy dew trickled from the Concealed Ancient One, filling the head of the Short-Tempered One, the place called Heaven. Some of that dew of supernal holy light flowed and descended below, and as it descended, it dispersed into frozen flakes congealing below, as is written: fine as frost on the ground (Exodus 16:4). All those scions of faith went out and gathered and blessed the supernal Name over it. That manna emitted a fragrance like all the spices of the Garden of Eden, since it had flowed through there in descending. Once they placed it in front of them, they tasted whatever taste they desired and blessed the supernal King.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 4.338.

22. Ps 78:23–5: “Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; he rained down on them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. Mortals ate of the bread of angels; he sent them food in abundance” (NRSV).

23. Regarding the identification of Aseneth’s honeycomb with manna, see V. Aptowitz, “Aseneth, the Wife of Joseph: A Haggadic Literary-Historical Study,” *HUCA* 1 (1924) 282–283; C. Burchard, *Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth: Überlieferung—Ortsbestimmung* (WUNT, 8; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1965) 130; M. Philonenko, “Initiation et mystère dans Joseph et Aséneth,” in *Initiation* (ed. C.J. Bleeker; SHR, 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965) 147–153 at 152–153; A. Lieber, “I Set a Table before You: The Jewish Eschatological Character of Aseneth’s Conversion Meal,” *JSP* 14 (2004) 63–77; R. Chesnutt, “Perceptions of Oil in Early Judaism and the Meal Formula in Joseph and Aseneth,” *JSP* 14 (2005) 113–132 at 117–118; A.E. Portier-Young, “Sweet Mercy Metropolis: Interpreting Aseneth’s Honeycomb,” *JSP* 14 (2005)

133–157. With respect to the connection between the manna and the dew, see Portier-Young, “Sweet Mercy Metropolis,” 142–143. Cf. also *Zohar* III.208a, in which the manna is identified both with the celestial dew and with the angelic food; it reads: “Similarly the manna which came down for the Israelites in the wilderness originated in the celestial dew from the most recondite spot, and at first its light would radiate to all worlds and the ‘field of apples,’ and the heavenly angels drew sustenance from it. . . .” Simon and Sperling, *The Zohar*, 5.311–312.

24. Thus, *Jos. Asen.* 15:5–6 reads: “Behold, from today, you will be renewed and formed anew and made alive again, and you will eat blessed bread of life, and drink a blessed cup of immortality, and anoint yourself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility.” Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.226. Cf. also *Jos. Asen.* 8:5: “It is not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God and eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality and anoint himself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility. . . .” Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.211–212.

25. Scholars have recognized the similarities in anointing between the two texts. Thus, Rivka Nir argues that “like Michael in 2 *Enoch*, who took Enoch, undressed him of his earthly attire, anointed him with delightful oil, and clothed him in a vesture of glory (22.4–9), so the man of God took Aseneth and disrobed her of her earthly clothing and commanded her to don garments of glory and instructed her to anoint herself with the ointment of purity.” R. Nir, *Joseph and Aseneth: A Christian Book* (HBM, 42; Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2012) 134–135.

26. The motif of nourishment by means of the splendor of the divine form is in *11QPs^a* XXII, line 4–5: “Generation after generation shall dwell in you, and generations of the devout (shall be) your splendour, those hungering for the day of your salvation and who rejoice in the abundance of your glory. . . . At your glorious breast they shall suckle . . .” García Martínez and E. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1177. Concerning this tradition, see C.C. Newman, *Paul’s Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (NovTSup, 69; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 131.

27. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 6.844.

28. *Pesikta of Rav Kahana*, Piska 6.1. For a similar tradition see also *Pesikta Rabbati*, Piska 16.2.

29. Such inverse nourishing patterns are present, also, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in which the first humans are fed by the grapes from the hands of Azazel.

30. Cf. also Gen 3:14: “The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life” (NRSV).

31. Regarding the hunger motif in the *Primary Adam Books*, see G. Anderson, “The Penitence Narrative in the Life of Adam and Eve,” *Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays* (eds. G. Anderson, M. Stone, J. Tromp; SVTP, 15; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 6ff.

32. Concerning the food of angels, see: Ps 78:23–25: “Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; he rained down on them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. Mortals ate of the bread of angels; he sent them food in abundance” (NRSV). Wis 16:20 reads: “Instead of these things you gave your people food of angels, and without their toil you supplied them from heaven with bread ready to eat, providing every pleasure and suited to every taste” (NRSV).

33. *Primary Adam Books* 3:1 reads: “They arose and went about upon the earth, and they did not find food like the food by which they had been nourished in [the Garden].” Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 3E.

34. Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 5E.

35. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 3.542. Regarding rabbinic traditions of Moses’ nourishment on the splendor of the *Shechinah*, see I. Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism: Studies in the History of Midrash* (SJ, 11; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982) 74–87. I am thankful to Prof. Moshe Idel for bringing my attention to Chernus’s study.

36. The visionary nourishment on the Deity’s fiery form is also reminiscent of the tradition found in 4 Ezra 14:37–48, in which the scribe is offered a fiery drink from the arms of the Deity. Cf. B.M. Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 1.554.

37. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 3.54–541. Cf. also *b. Ber.* 17a and *Pesikta Rabbati* 16.2.

38. “. . . if thou goest into a city, thou must act according to its customs. When Moses ascended on high, where there is no eating or drinking, he emulated the heavenly example.” Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 3.539.

39. Cf. *Gen. Rab.* 2:2: “R. Abbahu said: . . . ‘The celestial beings [sc. the angels] and the terrestrial ones [sc. man] were created at the same time: yet the celestial beings are fed by the radiance of the *Shechinah*, whereas the terrestrial beings, if they do not toil, do not eat. Strange it is indeed!’”; also, *Exod. Rab.* 32:4: “The angels are sustained only by the splendour of the *Shechinah*, as it says, And Thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worships Thee (Neh. 9, 6).” Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 1.15.

40. Cf. *Zohar* II.63a: “Rabbi El’azar taught, ‘From this manna the righteous are destined to eat in the world that is coming.’” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 4.342.

41. This idea of humankind's eschatological feeding is often juxtaposed, in the rabbinic materials, with imagery of Torah's study. Cf. *b. Babba Batra* 10a: "What is the meaning of the words, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness? R. Nahman b. Isaac said: This refers to the students of the Torah who banish sleep from their eyes in this world, and whom the Holy One, blessed be He, feasts with the resplendence of the Divine presence in the future world." Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Babba Batra*, 10a. Also, *b. Sotah* 49a: "R. Judah, son of R. Hiyya said: Any disciple of the Sages who occupies himself with Torah in poverty will have his prayer heard; as it is stated: For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; He will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear, He will answer thee, and it continues, And the Lord will give you bread in adversity and water in affliction. R. Abbahu said: They also satisfy him from the lustre of the *Shechinah*, as it is stated: Thine eyes shall see thy Teacher." Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Sotah*, 49a.

42. Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot*, 111

43. Concerning the manna traditions, see: R. Meyer, "Manna," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76) 4.462–66; P. Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (NovTSup, 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965); B. J. Malina, *The Palestinian Manna Tradition* (AGAJU, 7; Leiden: Brill, 1968); P. Maiberger, *Das Manna: Eine literarische, etymologische und naturkundliche Untersuchung* (2 vols; ÄAT, 6/1–2; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983); D. Merkur, *The Mystery of Manna: The Psychedelic Sacrament of the Bible* (Rochester: Park Street Press, 2000).

44. Cf. Goodman, "Do Angels Eat?" 161; Hodges, *Food as Synecdoche in John's Gospel and Gnostic Texts*, 308–309.

45. Pseudo-Philo, *Bibl. Ant.* 19:5 reads: "You know that you have eaten the bread of angels for forty years. And now behold I bless your tribes before my end comes. You know my toil that I have toiled for you from the time you went up from the land of Egypt." H. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, with Latin Text and English Translation* (2 vols.; AGAJU, 31; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 1.121.

46. Thus, *b. Yoma* 75b reads: "Our Rabbis taught: Man did eat the bread of the mighty, i.e., bread which ministering angels eat. This was the interpretation of R. Akiba." Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Yoma*, 75b.

47. See Gen 3:6–7: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves" (NRSV).

48. Lieber, "I Set a Table before You," 69–70.

49. R. Marcus, *Philo, Questions and Answers on Exodus* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press/Heinemann, 1949) 81–82.

50. Lieber, "I Set a Table before You," 70.

51. Lieber, "I Set a Table before You," 70.

52. For instance, Martha Himmelfarb observes that "the account in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* implicitly compares Abraham's ascent to Moses' experience at Sinai. Thus, for example, Abraham performs the sacrifice described in Genesis 15 at Mount Horeb (the name for Mount Sinai in some biblical sources) after forty days of fasting in the wilderness. The exegetical occasion for the association of Genesis 15 and Exodus 19–20 is the manifestation of the presence of God in smoke and fire in both passages." Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 62. Another scholar, Nancy Calvert, observes that "the similarity between Abraham's actions in chapter twelve and those of Moses are striking. He first travels to the mountain Horeb, known also in the Old Testament as Mt. Sinai, which is called 'God's mountain, glorious Horeb' in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 12:3. Like Moses when he receives the law, Abraham spends forty days and nights on the mountain. Abraham is said neither to eat bread nor to drink water because his food 'was to see angel who was with me, and his discourse with me was my drink.' *Apoc. Ab.* 12:1–2. Philo reflects a Jewish tradition of Moses' time on the mount, saying that Moses neglected all meat and drink for forty days, because he had more excellent food than that in the contemplations with which he was inspired from heaven (*De Vita Mosis* II.69). Because Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai are names for the same mountain, Abraham receives his revelation from God in the same place that Moses received God's commandments. Finally, as the Lord 'was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain' in the Exodus account, so the fire on top of Mt. Horeb burns the sacrifices over which Abraham and the angel ascend to heaven where God also appears as fire." Calvert, *Abraham Traditions in Middle Jewish Literature*, 274. Daniel Harlow also argues that "the patriarch's fasting 'for forty days and nights' marks one of several places in the apocalypse where the author models Abraham's experience on Moses's (Exod 34:28)." Harlow, "Idolatry and Alterity: Israel and the Nations in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*," 312. Cf. also Rubinkiewicz, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave*, 58–60.

53. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 19.

54. Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot*, 111

55. Concerning this, see A. Orlov, "'The Gods of My Father Terah': Abraham the Iconoclast and the Polemics with the Divine Body Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*," *JSP* 18.1 (2008) 33–53; idem, "Arboreal Metaphors and Polemics with the Divine Body Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*," *HTR* 102 (2009) 439–451.

56. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 13.

57. Cf. Ezek 1:27: “Upward from what appeared like the loins I saw something like gleaming amber, something that looked like fire enclosed all around; and downward from what looked like the loins I saw something that looked like fire, and there was a splendor all around” (NRSV); also, Ezek 8:2: “I looked, and there was a figure that looked like a human being; below what appeared to be its loins it was fire, and above the loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming amber” (NRSV). Cf. also Rev 1:15: “. . . his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters” (NRSV).

58. *Apoc. Ab.* 15:14–17 reads: “And I said to him, ‘Father Terah, do not bless your god Mar-Umath, do not praise him! Praise rather your god Bar-Eshath because, in his love for you he threw himself into the fire in order to cook your food.’ And he said to me, ‘And where is he now?’ ‘He has been reduced to ashes in the fury of the fire and become dust.’ And he said, ‘Great is the power of Bar-Eshath! I shall make another today, and tomorrow he will make my food!’” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 13.

59. “What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food of men. But these will all be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee!” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 20.

60. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 4.261–262.

61. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 3.59. Cf. also *Exod. Rab.* 45:5: “R. Hoshayah Rabba said: Moses showed great respect in hiding his face, but Nadab and Abihu uncovered their heads and allowed their eyes to feed on the *Shechinah*, as it says, And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand; and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.” Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 3.523.

62. On rivers of fire, see Davila, *Hekhalot Literature in Translation*, 79. On rivers of fire see also *b. Hag.* 14a; *Exod. Rab.* 15:6; *Lam. Rab.* 3:8; 3 *Enoch* 36:1–2; 40:1–4; *Zohar* I.201a; II.252b.

63. Cf. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 139–140.

64. Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 164.

65. M. Cohen, *The Shiʿur Qomah: Texts and Recensions* (TSAJ, 9; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985)162–164.

66. James Davila notes that “in *Seder Rabba di-Bereshit* §182 . . . angels ascend a ‘ladder of fire’ to the heavenly throne room after returning from earth and bathing in rivers of fire to purify themselves.” Davila, *Hekhalot Literature in Translation*, 101.

67. Orlov, *Dark Mirrors*, 18–19.

68. *Apoc. Ab.* 13:36: “And an impure bird flew down on the carcasses, and I drove it away. And the impure bird spoke to me and said, ‘What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor

is there upon them food of men. But these will all be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee! Since if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 20. This passage is overlaid with an array of transformational concerns. It is clear that the demon does not want Abraham to undergo his further transition to the celestial state since it will lead to the antagonist’s loss of celestial status—it is intriguing, also, that, right after Azazel’s warning, we have a tradition of transference of the celestial garment of the fallen angel to the patriarch. As Dan Harlow rightly notes, “[C]learly Azazel recognizes an adversary in Abraham, whose going without food already makes him resemble the angels.” Harlow, “Idolatry and Alterity: Israel and the Nations in the Apocalypse of Abraham,” 314. David Halperin also notes, “[I]f Azazel can persuade Abraham not to make his ascent, he will perhaps be able to keep his own privileged status.” Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot*, 111.

69. Cf. Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism*, 74–75.

70. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 17.

71. *Jos. Asen.* 10:2: “[S]he ate no bread and drank no water,” Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.215; *Jos. Asen.* 10:17: “And this way Aseneth did for seven days and she ate no bread and drank no water in those seven days of her humiliation.” Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.217. Cf. also *Jos. Asen.* 13:9; 18:3.

72. Scholars have noted that Aseneth’s hospitality to the visiting angel is reminiscent of Abraham’s hospitality in Genesis. As Andrea Lieber notes, “Aseneth offers to place a meal before the *anthropos*, in keeping with biblical traditions of hospitality associated with both Abraham in the Genesis narrative and Gideon in the book of Judges.” Lieber, “I Set a Table before You,” 68.

73. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 17; Rubinkiewicz, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham en vieux slave*, 128; Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham*, 58.

74. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 123. Cf. also E.M. Humphrey, *Joseph and Aseneth* (GAP, 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 69. The angel’s reluctance to reveal his name to Aseneth might also indicate his role as the angel of the Tetragrammaton.

75. Concerning this motif, Anthea Portier-Young notes, “[O]bserving that its breath is also like the breath of the mouth of her visitor, she infers that the honeycomb has emanated from his mouth, having come into being by his speech (16.9). The angel confirms her suspicion, smiling at her understanding; she now demonstrates knowledge of heavenly mysteries (16.12).” Portier-Young, “Sweet Mercy Metropolis,” 139.

76. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.228.

77. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.228.

78. Lieber, “I Set a Table before You,” 68.

79. See, also, Matt 3:4: “And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (NRSV).

80. Scholars have long noted a sharp opposition between the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic school, on the one hand, and early anthropomorphic developments, on the other. In fact, the Deuteronomistic school is widely thought to have initiated the polemic against the anthropomorphic and corporeal conceptions of the Deity, which were subsequently adopted by the prophets Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. Seeking to undermine ancient anthropomorphism, the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic school promulgated an anti-corporeal theology of the divine Name with its conception of the sanctuary or tabernacle as the exclusive dwelling abode of God’s Name. Regarding these developments, see M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 191–201; T.N.D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth. Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (ConBOT, 18; Lund: Wallin & Dalholm, 1982) 124.

81. M. Schneider, “Joseph and Aseneth and Early Jewish Mysticism,” *Kabbalah* 3 (1998) 303–344 [Hebrew]; *idem*, *Scattered Traditions of Jewish Mysticism: Studies in Ancient Jewish Mysticism in Light of Traditions from the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, Hellenistic Literature, Christian and Islamic Sources* (SSLJM, 31; Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2012) 11–79 [Hebrew]. Concerning Aseneth’s conversion and the tradition of opening the statue’s mouth with the divine Name, see also Philonenko, “Initiation et mystère dans Joseph et Aséneth,” 147–153; C. Burchard, “The Present State of Research on Joseph and Aseneth,” in *Religion, Literature, and Society in Ancient Israel, Formative Christianity and Judaism* (New Perspectives on Ancient Judaism, 2; eds. J. Neusner et al.; Lanham: University Press of America, 1987) 31–52; G. Bohak, “Asenath’s Honeycomb and Onias’ Temple: The Key to Joseph and Asenath,” in *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A* (ed. D. Assaf; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994) 163–170; G.Y. Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue and the Opening of the Mouth in Biblical Prophecy* (JSOTSS, 311; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 379.

82. Regarding ancient rituals of the washing of the mouth and the opening of the mouth of cultic statues, see P.J. Boden, *The Mesopotamian Washing of the Mouth (Mis Pi) Ritual* (Ph.D. diss. Johns Hopkins University, 1998); A. Berlejung, *Die Theologie der Bilder: Herstellung und Einweihung von Kultbildern in Mesopotamien und die alttestamentliche Bilderpolemik* (OBO, 162; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1998); *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M.B. Dick; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999); *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian Mis Pi Ritual: Transliteration, Translation, and*

Commentary (eds. C. Walker and M.B. Dick; SAALT, 1; Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2001); V.A. Hurowitz, "The Mesopotamian God Image, from Womb to Tomb," *JAOS* 123 (2003) 147–157; *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East* (ed. N.H. Walls; ASOR, 10; Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2005); V.A. Hurowitz, "What Goes In Is What Comes Out: Materials for Creating Cult Statues," in *Text, Artifact, and Image; Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* (eds. G.M. Beckman and T.J. Lewis; BJS, 346; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006) 3–23; G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008); M. S. Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); M.J. Lundberg, "The Mis-Pi Rituals and Incantations and Jeremiah 10:1–16," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen* (ed. J. Goldingay; London: T&T Clark, 2007) 210–227.

83. M. Idel, "Hermeticism and Judaism," in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe* (eds. I. Merkel and A. G. Debus; Washington, DC: Folger Library, 1988) 59–76; idem, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).

84. G. Scholem, "The Idea of the Golem," in *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (trans. R. Manheim, New York: Schocken, 1965) 159–165; E. L. Greenstein, "God's Golem: The Creation of the Human in Genesis 2," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (eds. H. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman; JSOTSS, 319; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 219–239. In later rabbinic testimonies, not only Golem, but also, some infamous biblical idols are brought to life through the placement of the divine Name in their mouths. One such story occurs in *Zohar* II.175a, in which the idol of King Nebuchadnezzar is vivified when a vessel of the Temple with the divine Name is put in its mouth: "King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold whose height was sixty cubits high and whose width was six cubits. Nebuchadnezzar said, 'The image that I saw had a head of gold and belly of silver. . . . I will make one all of gold, so that a lower coronet of gold will be upon its head.' It has been taught: On that day he gathered all peoples, nations, and tongues to worship that image, and he took one of the vessels of the Temple upon which was engraved the Holy Name and put it in the mouth of that image, and it began speaking grandly until Daniel came and approached the image, and said, 'I am the messenger of the supreme Lord. I decree upon you to leave here!' He invoked the Holy Name, and that vessel came out, and the image fell and broke. . . ." Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 5.520; *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 55 suggests that another infamous biblical idol—the Golden Calf—was created with the help of the divine Name; it reads: "They broke off their earrings which were in their own ears, and they gave (them) to Aaron, as it is

said, 'And all the people brake off the golden rings which were in their ears' (Ex. xxxii. 3). 'Which were in the ears of their wives' is not written here, but 'which were in their ears.' Aaron found among the earrings one plate of gold upon which the Holy Name was written, and engraved thereon was the figure of a calf, and that (plate) alone did he cast into the fiery furnace, as it is said, 'So they gave it me: and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.' It is not written here, 'And I cast them in,' but 'And I cast it in the fire, and there came out this calf.' The calf came out lowing, and the Israelites saw it, and they went astray after it." Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, 354–355. For in depth discussion of this tradition, see Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, 182; Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue*, 382.

85. With respect to these traditions, see C. L. Beckerleg, *The "Image of God" in Eden* (Ph.D. diss.; Harvard University, 2009).

86. In both texts, the spiritual feeding has salvific and eschatological significance. It returns a human seer to the protological condition when the protoplast was fed by the splendor of the *Shechinah*. As Ira Chernus rightly noted, this tradition of the protoplast's spiritual nourishment appears to be reflected also in *3 Enoch*. Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism*, 75–76. Thus, *3 Enoch* 5:3 tells that "the first man and his generation dwelt at the gate of the garden of Eden so that they might gaze at the bright image of the *Shechinah*." Alexander, "3 Enoch," 1.259. An early witness to such a tradition of the protoplast's feeding on the divine Glory might also be present in *2 Enoch*, in which the Deity orders the angel to open heavens so Adam will gain access to the vision of Glory.

87. Concerning these traditions, see Idel, *Golem*, 31, 91–92, 103, 139.

88. Cf. also 12:5: "My mouth is defiled from the sacrifices of the idols and from the tables of the gods of the Egyptians." Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth," 2.221

89. *Jos. Asen.* 10:12–13: "And Aseneth hurried and took all her gods that were in her chamber, the ones of gold and silver who were without number, and ground them to pieces/ and threw all the idols of the Egyptians through the window." Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth," 2.218. Cf. also *Jos. Asen.* 13:11: "Behold now, all the gods whom I once used to worship in ignorance: I have now recognized that they were dumb and dead idols, and I have caused them to be trampled underfoot by men, and the thieves snatched those that were of silver and gold." Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth," 2.223.

90. Ross Kraemer, for instance, observes: "Most obviously, the longer text contains two lengthy silent monologues (11.3–19) absent in the shorter version, whose motifs are also largely absent in the shorter text, including a great concern for the significance of the name of God. . . . The longer text thus displays considerably more interest in the name of God. . . . Interest in the divine name may point to the religious sensibilities of the redactors."

R. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and His Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 54–56.

91. “. . . how shall I open my mouth to the Most High, and how name his terrible holy name.” Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.219.

92. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 121.

93. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 127.

94. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 64; Rowland and Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God*, 83.

95. See A. Orlov, *Heavenly Priesthood in the Apocalypse of Abraham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 53–58.

96. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1954) 59–61; Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys*, 252–253.

97. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 122.

98. “The angel refuses to tell her his name and so prevents her from singing hymns, presumably to him, and from glorifying him.” Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 127.

99. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 27.

100. The theme of physical and spiritual nourishment plays an important role in the extrabiblical elaborations of Abraham’s story, in which he rejects the food of idols being then thrown into fire by Nimrod. In rabbinic literature his fiery ordeals are often tied to the Danielic tale about three Israelite youths, in which a motif of rejection of idolatrous food is juxtaposed, as in *Joseph and Aseneth*, with the alternative vision of the celestial being.

101. Although, here, Azazel, being in the form of the serpent, feeds Adam and Eve, according to some traditions, originally the proto-plasts were responsible for nourishment of the serpent. Thus, for example, the Georgian version of the *Primary Adam Books* 16:2a reads: “Then the serpent came and the Devil told the serpent, ‘I hear that you are wiser than all the animals and I have come to test your knowledge, for Adam gives food to all the animals, thus also to you.’” Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 49E. This motif points to the dynamics of exaltation and demotion that are dialectically manifest in an array of Jewish traditions of nourishment, in which the one who is fed and the one who is feeding are often situated in a hierarchical relationship. It is not coincidental that, both in *Apocalypse of Abraham* and *Joseph and Aseneth*, it is celestial beings (one who is demoted and the other in good standing) who are depicted as delivering nourishment to human beings. It depicts the creatures of the higher spiritual rank as ones who nourish the creatures of the lower realms. As Joel Hecker shows, in later Jewish mysticism, nourishment imagery is used as a metaphor signifying the flow of divine blessing from the upper worlds to the lower. See J. Hecker, *Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals: Eating and Embodiment in Medieval Kabbalah*

(Raphael Patai Series in Jewish Folklore and Anthropology; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005).

102. Daniel Harlow suggests that “the three of them appear in a *ménage à trois*, the man and woman entwined in an erotic embrace, the fallen angel in serpentine guise feeding them grapes.” Harlow, “Idolatry and Alterity: Israel and the Nations in the Apocalypse of Abraham,” 320.

103. See *Jos. Asen.* 8:5–6: “. . . It is not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God and eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality and anoint himself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility to kiss a strange woman who will bless with her mouth dead and dumb idols and eat from their table bread of strangulation and drink from their libation a cup of insidiousness and anoint herself with ointment of destruction.” Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.211–212. It is also intriguing that in *Joseph and Aseneth*, like in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the symbolism of angelic food is mirrored with the imagery of the food of corruption. Thus the formulae from Joseph’s address to Aseneth in the beginning of the pseudepigraphon, which speaks of idolatrous food, are mirrored later in the text in description of angelic nourishment and anointing offered by the angel to the seer.

104. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.233.

105. Scholars have noted that in *Joseph and Aseneth* the spirit “is transferred through heavenly food and Joseph’s kiss.” V. Rabens, *The Holy Spirit And Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life* (2nd rev. ed.; WUNT, 2.283; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2013) 11.

106. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” 2.228.

107. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, 182.

108. *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 55: “Rabbi Jehudah said: Sammael entered into it, and he was lowing to mislead Israel, as it is said, ‘The ox knoweth his owner.’” Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, 355.

109. “The serpent said, ‘In what way or how can we expel him from the Garden?’ Satan said to the serpent, ‘Be you, in your form, a lyre for me and I will pronounce speech through your mouth, so that we may be able to help.’ Then the two of them came to me and hung their feet around the wall of the Garden. When the angels ascended to the worship of the Lord, at that time Satan took on the form of an angel and began to praise God with angelic praises. I knelt down by the wall and attended to his praises. I looked and saw him in the likeness of an angel; when I looked again, I did not see him. Then he went and summoned the serpent and said to him, ‘Arise, come to me so that I may enter into you and speak through your mouth as much as I will need to say.’ At that time the serpent became a lyre for him, and he came again to the wall of the Garden. He cried out and said, ‘Oh, woman, you who are blind in this Garden of delight, arise come to me and I will say

some words to you.’” Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 50E–52E. The tradition of Satan’s metamorphosis into the living form of the serpent is also present in the Georgian version; it reads: “And the serpent told him, ‘How can we have them excluded?’ The devil replied and told the serpent, ‘Be a sheath for me and I will speak to the woman through your mouth a word by which we will trick (them).’ And the two of them came together and they allowed their heads to hang on the wall of the paradise at the time where the angels had ascended to bow down to God. Then the devil changed himself into the image of an angel; he praised the praises of the angels. And I was gazing in the direction of the enclosure to hear the praises. I stared and I saw him like an angel and at once he became invisible for he had gone forth to bring the serpent. And he told him, ‘Arise and come and I will be with you and I will speak through your mouth that which it is proper for you to say.’ He took on the form of the serpent (to go) close to the wall of paradise and the devil slipped inside the serpent and he allowed his head to hang on the wall of paradise. He cried out and said, ‘Shame on you, woman, you who are in the paradise of Delight (and) who are blind! Come to me and I will tell you a certain secret word.’” Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 50E–52E.

110. Pseudepigraphical and rabbinic accounts depict this process of “possession” of a living form as Satan’s “riding” of the serpent.

111. In this respect it is intriguing that in later Jewish mysticism the descent of Asael and Shemihazah from heaven is compared with the descent of the manna. The *Book of Zohar* III.208a reads: “The fact is, however, that after God cast Uzza and Azael down from their holy place, they went astray after the womenfolk and seduced the world also. It may seem strange that being angels they were able to abide upon the earth. The truth is, however, that when they were cast down the celestial light which used to sustain them left them and they were changed to another grade through the influence of the air of this world. Similarly the manna which came down for the Israelites in the wilderness originated in the celestial dew from the most recondite spot, and at first its light would radiate to all worlds and the ‘field of apples,’ and the heavenly angels drew sustenance from it, but when it approached the earth it became materialized through the influence of the air of this world and lost its brightness, becoming only like ‘coriander seed.’” Simon and Sperling, *The Zohar*, 5.311–312.

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1. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32–33.