

PERUSH SHEL MEOR HAQODESH:
THE METAMORPHOSES OF ZOHARIC HOMILIES IN R. MOSES DE LEÓN'S
HITHERTO UNKNOWN COMMENTARY ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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Edited here for the first time is an anonymous kabbalistic commentary on the Ten Commandments, whose author is identified in this study as R. Moses de León. The commentary is introduced by a theosophical controversy with earlier trends in medieval Kabbalah, which referred to the divine commandments as corresponding to (and in parallel with) the *Ten Sefirot*. De León's own theory on the Decalogue is based on a different comprehension of the divine *Sefirot*, and it is formulated with fully Hebrew literal parallels to a number of Aramaic passages preserved in the *Zohar*.

The commentary, entitled *Sod 'Aseret haDibbrot* (=the Secret of the Ten Commandments) belongs to a group of unsigned theosophical texts on liturgy, rituals, and scriptures composed by de León at a late stage of his literary activity. These texts include peculiar references to allegedly ancient sources – often called 'The Ancients', 'The Sages', etc., to whom the author attributes all of his innovative views. In addition to this sort of attribution, however, the author of *Sod 'Aseret haDibbrot* refers to a book of his own, called *Sefer Etz-haHayyim* (=The Book of the Tree of Life), which is no longer extant. Interestingly, de León's short quotation from this book matches a fragment from another untitled commentary attributed to him in the past.

The main contribution of this article is in shedding light on de León's affinity with certain textual units in the *Zohar*, revealing the relationship between these texts and his later writings.