



The ספר הזוהר
ZOHAR

PRITZKER EDITION

V
Exodus

Translation and Commentary by

DANIEL C. MATT

ספר הזוהר

The ספר הזוהר
Z O H A R
Pritzker Edition
VOLUME FIVE

Translation and Commentary by
Daniel C. Matt

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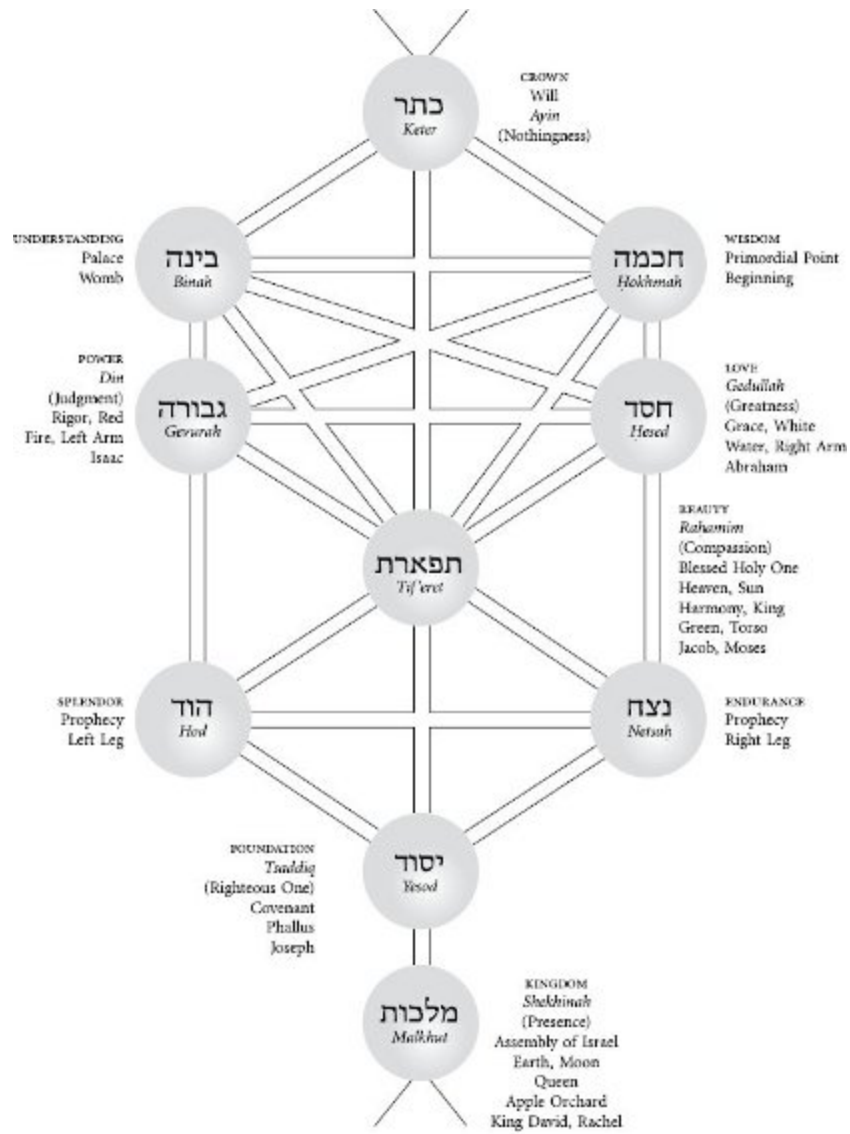
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The Ten Sefirot

Preface

This volume opens in the middle of Exodus immediately following the revelation at Mount Sinai. The first chapter features a famous narrative about Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yose, and an old donkey-driver they encounter while journeying on the road. This old man seems like a complete ignoramus, who pesters those around him with nonsensical riddles, but he turns out to be a sage in disguise, conveying mysteries about the journey of the soul, especially reincarnation.

The wise donkey-driver discovers these secrets by decoding the biblical laws of slavery in the Torah portion *Mishpatim*. As he probes and penetrates the verses of *Mishpatim*, the old man plunges into profound depths of meaning and finds himself struggling to comprehend and expound: “Oh, old man, old man! What have you gotten yourself into! You have entered the great sea—you must row and escape from there!” Later, he expresses ambivalence about revealing the precious secrets he has retrieved. “Now what should I do? If I speak—this hidden mystery must not be revealed. If I do not speak, these worthy ones will be left orphaned of this mystery.”¹

In the midst of their adventure, the old man entralls the rabbis with a lyrical, troubadour-like parable about Torah, which he depicts as a beautiful maiden hidden in her palace. A devotee lovingly circles the palace and catches a glimpse of Torah as she peeks from her window. Gradually she reveals more of herself, and their intimacy grows.²

The entire splendid narrative became known as *Sava de-Mishpatim*—Old Man of (Torah portion) *Mishpatim*—and it forms an independent composition, distinct in both style and content from the bulk of the *Zohar*. Its account of the theory of *gilgul* (reincarnation or transmigration of the soul) represents the first extensive treatment of the subject in Jewish literature. Here, based on earlier kabbalistic tradition, the old man links *gilgul* with the biblical law of levirate marriage (*yibbum*). At times, his interpretive acrobatics become so complex that they seem to parody the notoriously difficult Talmudic tractate *Yevamot*, which is devoted to *yibbum*.³

The rest of this volume focuses mostly on the Dwelling (or *mishkan*), the portable sanctuary built by Moses and the Israelites in the Sinai Desert. For the authors of the *Zohar*, the *mishkan* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the feminine presence of God who “dwells” on earth. The construction of the *mishkan* is intended to ensure Her intimacy with the people, and especially with Moses; thus She becomes known as *Kallat Moshe*, Bride of Moses.⁴

The authors are inspired by the colorful, sensuous array of raw materials listed for the Dwelling: *gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen and goat hair; reddened ram skins, tanned-leather skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense; carnelian stones and stones for setting* (Exodus 25:3-7). Each of these elements symbolizes an aspect of divine being, all reflected in *Shekhinah*. Since Her Dwelling was the center of worship, the *Zohar* explores the theme of prayer and expounds not only biblical verses but also the text of various prayers, especially from the Sabbath liturgy. The individual words and even letters of such prayers correspond to spiritual potencies, which are stimulated and activated only by heartfelt human utterance. (One of these Zoharic passages would eventually

be introduced into the Sephardic liturgy for Sabbath eve, where it became known by its opening word, *Ke-Gavna*.⁵)

The volume concludes with *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (the Book of Concealment), a brief, enigmatic, and poetic composition that includes a veiled description of God's body. Its six Aramaic pages convey the basic principles of Kabbalah in a highly condensed form, focusing on emanation, the delicate balance between male and female, and the process by which divine breath animates all.

Readers are advised to venture slowly into the Book of Concealment, which is both dense and cryptic. As the author concludes, "Until here, sealed and crowned is concealment of the King. Happy is one who has emerged, knowing its paths and ways!"⁶ The rich language requires such extensive interpretation that any commentary threatens to overwhelm the text. To enable readers to encounter the Book of Concealment on its own, unencumbered by numerous notes, I have first presented the translation alone, followed by the same text with commentary.⁷

The unique styles of both *Sava de-Mishpatim* and *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* remind us that the *Zohar* is not really a book, but rather a compilation of books—a body of literature comprising over twenty discrete sections written in a circle (or circles) of authors over many years, then gradually revised, edited, and compiled into what became known as the *Zohar*. In a genuine sense, the *Zohar* only became a book when it was printed in Italy in the sixteenth century.⁸

Professor Ronit Meroz of Tel Aviv University, whose work has dramatically advanced the study of the manuscripts of the *Zohar*, has generously shared with me the data that she has collected relating to hundreds of these manuscripts, along with her analysis. Her research has provided me with a panoramic perspective of the manuscripts, helping me to determine their reliability. She

has also provided me with her list of manuscripts for each *parashah*. For all this, I thank her deeply.

The critical Aramaic text of the *Zohar* that underlies this translation can be found on the website of Stanford University Press.⁹

D.C.M.

¹. See below, [pp. 29, 46](#).

². See below, [pp. 33–36](#).

³. On levirate marriage and reincarnation, see below, [p. 38](#) and [n. 108](#).

⁴. See below, [pp. 291–92](#).

⁵. See below, [pp. 251–52](#). *Ke-gavna* means “Just as [they unite].”

⁶. See below, [p. 586](#).

⁷. The plain text of the Book of Concealment begins on [p. 535](#). The text with commentary begins on [p. 545](#).

⁸. See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 85–138; Meroz’s studies listed in the Bibliography; Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi’a*, 43–139; Abrams, “The Invention of the *Zohar* as a Book”; Wolfson, “The Anonymous Chapters of the Elderly Master of Secrets.”

⁹. The site is www.sup.org/zohar. For my methodology in constructing this text, see the website and Volume 1, Translator’s Introduction, xv–xviii.

THE ZOHAR

פרשת משפטים

Parashat Mishpatim

“LAWS” (EXODUS 21:1–24:18)

סבא דמשפטים SAVA DE-MISHPATIM
*Old Man of Mishpatim*¹

One night Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose encountered each other at the Tower of Tyre. They lodged there, delighting in each other.²

Rabbi Yose said, “How happy I am to see the face of *Shekhinah*!³ For just now, the whole way, I was pestered by a certain old man, a donkey-driver, who kept asking me [95a] the whole way:⁴

“Who is a serpent that flies in the air, moving in separation, while an ant lies comfortably between its teeth? Beginning in union, it ends in separation.

“Who is an eagle that nests in a tree that never was—its young plundered, though not by created creatures? Ascending, they descend; descending, they ascend. Two who are one, and one who is three.

“Who is a beautiful maiden without eyes, her body hidden and revealed? She emerges in the morning and is concealed by day, adorning herself with adornments that are not.”⁵

“All this he asked on the way, and I was annoyed. Now I can relax! If we had been together, we would have engaged in words of Torah instead of other words, of waste.”⁶

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “That old donkey-driver, do you know anything about him?”

He replied, “I know that his words have no substance. For if he knew anything, he would have opened with Torah, and the way would not have been empty.”⁷

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “That donkey-driver, is he here? For sometimes in those empty ones, you may discover bells of gold!”⁸

He replied, “Here he is, getting fodder ready for his donkey.”⁹

They called him, and he came over to them. He said, “Now two are three, and three are like one!”¹⁰

Rabbi Yose said, “Didn’t I tell you that all his words are empty and inane?”

He sat down before them, and said, “Rabbis, I have become a donkey-driver—yet only a short time ago; previously I wasn’t one. But I have a son, and I put him in school; I want him to engage in Torah. When I find one of the rabbis traveling on the road, I goad his donkey behind. Today I thought I would hear new words of Torah—but I haven’t heard anything!”¹¹

Rabbi Yose said, “Of all the words I heard you say, I was astonished by only one. Either you said it out of foolishness, or they are empty words.”

The old man said, “And which one is that?”

He replied, “A beautiful maiden...”¹²

The old man opened, “*YHVH is with me, I do not fear. What can a human do to me? YHVH is with me, helping me....It is better to take refuge in YHVH [than to trust in a human]* (Psalms 118:6-8). How fine, lovely, precious, and sublime are words of Torah! Yet should I speak in the presence of those from whose mouths, until now, I have not heard a single word? But I should speak—for there is no shame at all in uttering words of Torah in the presence of anyone!”¹³

The old man enwrapped himself.¹⁴ He opened, saying, “*If the daughter of a priest is married to an alien man, she shall not eat of the sacred donations* (Leviticus 22:12). This

verse is joined to another verse: *If the daughter of a priest becomes a widow or divorced, having no seed, and she returns to her father's house as in her youth, of her father's bread she may eat, but no alien shall eat of it* (ibid., 13).¹⁵ These verses may be read literally, but words of Torah are sealed. How many words of wisdom are concealed in every single word of Torah! The pathways are known; for Torah does not consist of dreamy words, transmitted to whoever interprets them and conducted by the mouth—nevertheless, requiring appropriate treatment. Now, if this is so with dreams, how much more do words of Torah—delights of the Holy King—need to be followed according to the way of truth!¹⁶

*“If the daughter of a priest—supernal soul, daughter of our father Abraham, first of converts, who draws the soul from a supernal place.*¹⁷ What is the difference between the verse that reads *the daughter of a priestly man* (Leviticus 21:9) and the verse that reads *the daughter of a priest*, where *man* is not mentioned? Well, there is a priest who is called *a priestly man*, and not a genuine priest. Similarly, there is a priest, a prefect, a high priest, and a priest that is not high. *A priest*, unspecified, is greater and nobler than *a priestly man*. And so, there is *nishmeta*, [95b] *ruah*, and *nefesh*.¹⁸

*“If the daughter of a priest is married to an alien man—holy soul, drawn from a supernal place, entering the recess of the Tree of Life. When the breath of the supernal priest blows and infuses this tree, those souls fly from there and enter a certain treasure-house.*¹⁹ Woe to the world, for humans do not know to be careful: they draw a flow along with the evil impulse, along with *an alien man*, and this *daughter of a priest* flies downward and finds a structure of *an alien man*! Since it is the will of her master, she enters there and is subjugated, and cannot prevail and is not perfected in this world. When she leaves it, *she shall not*

eat of the sacred donations as do other souls, who have been perfected in this world.²⁰

“There is something more in this verse: *If the daughter of a priest is married to an alien man*—wretched is the holy soul *if she is married to an alien man*, drawn upon a converted proselyte, flying to him from the Garden of Eden by a concealed path, to a structure built from impure foreskin! This one belongs *to an alien man*.²¹

“Furthermore—and this is the highest mystery of all—on the pillar erected for scales, amid the blowing air, there is one scale on this side and another scale on that side: on this side scale of righteousness, on that side scale of deceit. The scales never subside, and souls ascend, entering and returning. Some souls are tormented when *adam* dominates *adam*, as is written: *a time when* הָאָדָם (*ha-adam*), *a human, dominates adam, a human, to his harm* (Ecclesiastes 8:9)—surely!²² But this soul that belongs to the side of *an alien man* and is tormented by him—this is *to his harm*: to the harm of that *alien man*; while as for her, *she shall not eat of the sacred donations* until the blessed Holy One does what He does for her. The verse comes and says, *If the daughter of a priest is married to an alien man*—so it is!²³

“Here is the mystery of how souls are tormented. Now, this world is conducted entirely by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. When inhabitants of the world conduct themselves according to the good side, the scales begin tipping to this side; and when they conduct themselves according to the evil side, they tip to that side. All souls found in the scales at that time, he torments and snatches—but *to his harm*, for those souls overpower all that they find of the evil side, destroying everything. The symbol of this is the holy Ark, seized by the Philistines, who took control of it—to their own harm. Similarly, these souls are tormented by the Other Side—*to his harm*.²⁴

“What becomes of those souls? We have seen in books of the ancients that from them issue the pious of the

nations of the world and bastard scholars who take precedence over an ignorant, renowned high priest, even though he enters within, within.”²⁵

This old man wept for a moment. The Companions were astonished and said nothing.

The old man opened, saying, “*If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master, who designated her for himself, he shall let her be redeemed; to an outsider [he shall have no power to sell her since he has betrayed her]* (Exodus 21:8). This passage was spoken concerning this mystery. *If a man sells his daughter as a slave-girl, she shall not go free as the male slaves go free. If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master...* (ibid., 7-8).²⁶ Master of the Universe, who would not fear You, for You rule over all kings of the world, as is said: *Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For it befits You, since among all the wise of the nations and among all their kingdoms, there is none like You* (Jeremiah 10:7)? How many in the world blunder in this verse! They all recite it, but this verse is articulated inaccurately in their mouths. For is the blessed Holy One *King of the nations*? Is He not King of Israel? Thus He is called, for it is written: *When the Most High allotted the nations, [when He dispersed humankind, He set the boundaries of peoples according to the number of the Children of Israel]*, and it is written: *For YHVH’s share is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance* (Deuteronomy 32:8-9). So He is called King of Israel. Now, if you say that He is called *King of the nations*, this would be praising them for having the blessed Holy One rule over them—as opposed to what has been stated, that they were handed over to His attendants and appointees.²⁷

“Furthermore, the end of the verse, as is written: *since among all the wise of the nations and among all their kingdoms, there is none like You* (Jeremiah 10:7). All this constitutes praise to the other nations, and it is a wonder

that with this verse they do not ascend to the height of [96a] the clouds! But the blessed Holy One has blinded their eyes, and they do not know Him at all; for look at what we say, that they are all nothing, nought, and emptiness, as is written: *All the nations are as nothing before Him; less than nought and emptiness are they reckoned by Him* (Isaiah 40:17). Yet this verse transforms them into a great, exalted, and precious essence!"²⁸

Rabbi Hiyya said, "But look at what is written: *Elohim reigns over the nations...* (Psalms 47:9)!"

He replied, "I see that you have been behind their wall and have emerged with this verse to support them. I should reply first to what I asked, but since I find you in the way, I will remove you from there, and thence proceed to remove everything."²⁹

"Come and see: All names and appellations of the blessed Holy One ramify in their ways, all clothed in one another, branching into ways and paths—except for the unique name, choicest of all, which He bestowed upon the unique people, choicest of all nations, namely, יוד הֵא וָאֵו הֵא (yod he vav he), as is written: *For YHVH's share is His people* (Deuteronomy 32:9), and similarly: *You, cleaving to YHVH* (ibid. 4:4)—to this very name more than any other name."³⁰

"One name among His other names expands and branches in various ways and paths; it is called אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*). He bestowed this name and it was distributed to those below in this world; this name was apportioned to attendants and appointees who guide the other nations, as is said: *Elohim came to Balaam at night* (Numbers 22:20), *Elohim came to Abimelech in a night-dream* (Genesis 20:3). Thus every appointee and every attendant bestowed by the blessed Holy One upon other nations is included in this name; and even idolatry is called by this name. This name rules over nations; this name is not the one that rules over Israel—which is unique for the unique people, for the Holy People."³¹

“Now, you might say, ‘Let us establish the verse as follows: *Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?* (Jeremiah 10:7)—this is the name that rules over nations: *Elohim*, in whom fear and judgment inhere.’ Not so; it does not refer to this! For if so, even idolatry would be included in this category.³² However, now that the wall behind which you were leaning has been torn down, the verse stands firmly established, with a little contemplation. *Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?* Now, if you say that *King of the nations* refers to the blessed Holy One—not so! Rather, ‘Who is the *king of the nations* that does not fear You and does not tremble before You? Which *king of the nations would not fear You?* Similarly, הללויה (Haleluyah), *Praise Yah! Praise, O servants of YHVH, praise the name of YHVH!* (Psalms 113:1). Whoever hears this does not know what it means, since it says *Praise Yah* and also *Praise, O servants of YHVH*. It should have been written: *O servants of YHVH, praise the name of YHVH*. Here too, it should have been written: *Who is the king of the nations that would not fear You?* Yet all has been spoken perfectly.³³

“*Since among all the wise of the nations and among all their kingdoms* (Jeremiah 10:7)—what word spreads among them in their wisdom? *There is none like You* (ibid.). They all acknowledge this; when they see in their wisdom Your deeds and Your power, this word spreads among them and they say, ‘*There is none like You.*’ *Among all the wise of the nations and among all their kingdoms*, they say, ‘*There is none like You,*’ and it spreads among them.”³⁴

The Companions rejoiced and wept and said nothing. He too wept, as before.³⁵

He opened, saying, “*Sarah said to Abraham, ‘Drive out this slave-girl and her son, for this slave-girl’s son shall not inherit with my son, with Isaac!’* (Genesis 21:10). The Companions have educed that Sarah sought to rid the house of idolatry, and therefore it is written: *Whatever*

Sarah says to you, listen to her voice (ibid., 12).³⁶ Here is written *If a man sells his daughter* (Exodus 21:7)—this is the soul in revolving migrations of evil deeds of the world. לַאֲמָה (Le-amah), *To a slave-girl*—that Other Side, in the rotation of the turning scales, and she is tormented. In delivering her from there—surely, *she shall not go free as the male slaves go free* (ibid.).³⁷

“All those tormented souls, who are they? Here is a mystery. These are souls of little babies, suckling from their mothers’ potent breasts. And the blessed Holy One sees that if they endure in the world their odor will stink and they will turn sour like vinegar. He plucks them small, while they still yield fragrance. What does He do? He leaves them to be tormented at the hands of this *slave-girl*—Lilith; for as soon [96b] as one is delivered into her power, she delights over that baby, torments and removes him from the world while he is suckling at his mother’s breast.³⁸

“Now, if you say that those are souls that might generate goodness for the world—not so, for it is written: *If she is evil in the eyes of her master* (Exodus 21:8); for that man will turn sour by her if he endures with her. This one is tormented, while another is not. Of these is written *I saw all the tormented ones...* (Ecclesiastes 4:1)—corresponding to *If she is evil in the eyes of her master*.³⁹

“*Who designated her לָהּ (lo), for him* (Exodus 21:8)—spelled לָהּ (lo), with an א (alef). Now, if you say that the blessed Holy One destined her for the Other Side from the day she came to be—לָהּ (lo), *no*. Now, through the rotation of the scales, לָהּ (lo), *for him, he has designated her*—which was not so previously.⁴⁰

“*He shall let her be redeemed* (Exodus 21:8). What does this mean? The blessed Holy One redeems her now as she wafts fragrance before she turns sour, raising her to the highest heights into His academy.⁴¹

“Now, you might say, ‘Since she was tormented by that Other Side, He gives her, as they said, to the pious of other nations and to bastards.’ Well, the verse comes and demonstrates: *To an outsider he shall have no power to sell her—surely!—since he has betrayed her* (Exodus 21:8), tormenting her with the torment of rotation of the scales. Rather, to Israel, surely, and not to another. And when she emerges from the scales, *she shall not go free as the male slaves go free* (Exodus 21:7)—but rather crowned with a diadem raised high on her head.⁴²

“Now, if you say that that side placed her within the baby—not so! Rather, she snatches her and delights in her; and she flies from her hand and enters that place. She visits that baby—delighting in him, laughing at him, and lusting for that flesh. Until afterward the blessed Holy One takes his soul, and she, the body. Afterward, all is in the power of the blessed Holy One.⁴³

“Come and see: *She shall not go free as the male slaves go free* (Exodus 21:7)—what does this mean? Well, when she leaves the scales and that side rejoices, the blessed Holy One designates her and seals her with a signet ring of His precious garments. What is that? The holy name אֱלֹהָ (Eloah). This is the garment of the King, which He spreads over her. Then she is protected, delivered to no one but Israel. This is: *As in the days when Eloah protected me* (Job 29:2). Concerning this mystery, here is written *To an outsider he shall have no power to sell her* בְּבִגְדוֹ בָהּ (be-vigdo vah), *with his garment upon her* (Exodus 21:8)—while the King’s precious garment is on her. Since *his garment is upon her, to an outsider he shall have no power to sell her*.⁴⁴

“What power does that side have over her? Come and see: All inhabitants of the world are in the power of the Holy King, regarding the time when He wishes to pluck them from the world. But this one has no time; so she delights in them and toys with them.⁴⁵

“An admonition to a human in this world is contained within these verses. How much sublime goodness is found in all those words of Torah, all in the way of truth, perceived by the wise who know truth! When the blessed Holy One wished to create the world, an impulse arose in His will and He fashioned all the souls destined to be placed in human beings afterward. All of them were fashioned in His presence in the very form they would eventually assume, and He saw every single one. Some of them are destined to putrefy their ways in the world. When her time comes, the blessed Holy One summons that soul and says to her, ‘Go into such and such a place, into such and such a body.’

“She replies to Him, ‘Master of the Universe, I am satisfied with the world in which I dwell, and I will not go to another world, where they will subjugate me and I will be soiled among them.’

“The blessed Holy One says, ‘From the day you were created, for this were you created: to be in that world.’

“Once the soul sees this, she descends unwillingly and enters there.⁴⁶

“Torah, who offers advice to the whole world, sees this, and she warns the inhabitants of the world, saying, ‘Look how compassionately your Lord treats you! A precious pearl that He had, He has sold to you for nothing, that you might have dominion over it in this world.’⁴⁷

“*If a man sells—the blessed Holy One. His daughter as a slave-girl—the holy soul, to be a slave-girl subjugated among you [97a] in this world. Please, when the time comes to depart from this world, let her not go out as the male slaves go out—let her not depart soiled by sins, let her not depart defiled. Let her go out free, clear, clean, so that her Master may delight in her, take pride in her, and grant her a fine reward among the radiancies of the Garden of Eden, as is said: He will satisfy your soul with radiancies*

(Isaiah 58:11)—surely, when she departs fittingly clear and clean.⁴⁸

“However, *If she is evil in the eyes of her master*—soiled by the defilement of sins, not appearing before Him properly—then woe to that body, deprived of that soul forever! For when souls ascend clear and leave this world clean, every single soul enters the book of the King’s treasure-house, each in her own name, and He proclaims, ‘This is the soul of so-and-so. Let her be designated for the body that she left.’ Then it is written: לו (Lo), *To him, he has designated her* (Exodus 21:8)—with a ו (vav). But if she departs *evil in the eyes of her master* (ibid.), defiled by transgressions and by the filth of sins, then: לא יעדָהּ (Lo ye’adah), *he has not designated her*—with an א (alef)—and that body is deprived of her, and she is not designated for it, except for one whose Master delights in her by virtue of bodily repentance. Then, *he shall let her be redeemed* (ibid.), as is written: *He redeemed his soul from going into the pit* (Job 33:28). *He shall let her be redeemed*—by the man, who is advised to redeem her and turn back in repentance. In two aspects the blessed Holy One teaches: *He shall let her be redeemed*—through repentance. After he has turned in repentance, He redeems her from the way to Hell.⁴⁹

“לַעַם נֹכְרִי” (Le-am nokhri), *To a foreign people, he shall have no power to sell her* (Exodus 21:8). Who is a *foreign people*? Wretched is she—for when she departs from the world, and a person has strayed from the path with her, she seeks to ascend amidst holy camps, because holy camps are stationed on the way to the Garden of Eden and foreign camps are stationed on the way to Hell. If the soul is worthy, numerous holy camps stand ready to join her and usher her into the Garden of Eden. If she is unworthy, numerous foreign camps stand ready on the way to Hell—and those are camps of angels of destruction, poised to wreak vengeance upon her. The verse comes and

demonstrates: *To a foreign people he shall have no power to sell her*—these are angels of destruction. בגדו בה (Be-vigdo vah), *with his garment upon her* (ibid.)—she is protected; the blessed Holy One fashions a protection so that *a foreign people* will not dominate her, with that protective spread upon her.⁵⁰

“If for his son he designates her (Exodus 21:9). Come and see how careful a person should be not to pervert his ways in this world! For if one is worthy in this world and preserves her fittingly, this is a person in whom the blessed Holy One delights, in whom He takes pride among His celestial Family, saying, ‘See the holy son I have in that world! This is how he acts; these are his deeds.’ This soul departs from this world pure, clean, and clear; the blessed Holy One illumines her with innumerable lights, proclaiming every day: ‘This is the soul of so-and-so, My son!’ As is written: *If for his son he designates her.*⁵¹

“According to the manner of daughters he shall do for her (Exodus 21:9). What is *the manner of daughters*? Here is a mystery for the wise. Within a mighty rock, a hidden heaven, there is a certain palace called the Palace of Love. There, those hidden treasures and all kisses of the King’s love, and those souls beloved of the King enter there. As soon as the King enters that palace—where *Jacob kissed Rachel* (Genesis 29:11)—He finds that soul, kisses her, embraces her, takes her up with Him, delights in her. This is: *According to the manner of daughters he shall do for her*—as a father does to his beloved daughter: kissing her, embracing her, giving her presents.⁵²

“He shall do for her—corresponding to what is written: *what You will do for one who awaits You* (Isaiah 64:3). This daughter has perfected action in this world; so He perfects another act in the world that is coming, as is written: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You will do for one who*

awaits You. And here is written [97b] *he shall do for her.* Until here.”⁵³

That old man prostrated himself and offered a prayer. He wept as before,⁵⁴ and said, “*If another woman he takes for him...* (Exodus 21:10). *If another woman*—now, will the blessed Holy One restore another soul to the righteous in this world, and not the soul who fulfilled in this world the will of her Lord? If so, there is no assurance for the righteous at all! What is the meaning of *If another woman he takes for him?*”⁵⁵

He opened, saying, “*The dust will return* על הארץ (*al ha-arets*), *to the earth, as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it* (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This verse has been established in relation to the destruction of the Temple. *The dust will return al ha-arets, over the land, as it was*—here pertains what is written: *The Canaanite was then* בארץ (*ba-arets*), *in the land* (Genesis 12:6). *As it was, surely!*⁵⁶

“*And the spirit will return to God who gave it.* What is *and the spirit?* *Shekhinah*, who is Holy Spirit—when She saw those ten journeys that She made, yet they did not want to turn back to the blessed Holy One in repentance, and the Other Side took control of the Holy Land, as they have established.”⁵⁷

“Come and see: The spirit of a virtuous person is adorned with an image in the Garden of Eden below; and on every Sabbath, festival, and new moon, they are crowned and stripped, ascending above. Just as the blessed Holy One deals with that holy soul above, so He deals with this spirit ascending before Him, saying, ‘This is the spirit of the body of so-and-so.’ The blessed Holy One crowns her with many crowns, delighting in her.”⁵⁸

“Now, you might say that on account of this spirit, the blessed Holy One leaves what He is doing for the soul. Not so! Rather, *he shall not diminish her food, clothing, or conjugal rights* (Exodus 21:10)—those three are supernal

names, which *no eye has seen, O God, but You* (Isaiah 64:3), all in the World that is Coming, drawn from there.⁵⁹

“One, שָׂרָה (*she'erah*), *her food* (Exodus 21:10)—sparkling flow, illumining concealedly; food sustaining all, called יְהוָה (*YHVH*) with vowels of אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*).⁶⁰ שָׂרָה (*She'erah*), *her food*, with letters inverted: אֲשֶׁר הֵ (*asher he*), and this is מֵאֲשֶׁר (*Me-asher*), *From Asher, rich is his bread* (Genesis 49:20), and this is *she'erah*.⁶¹

“*Her clothing* (Exodus, *ibid.*)—another radiant flow, protecting her constantly; spreading of the royal garment that He spreads over her: אֱלֹהִים (*Eloah*), God. This is בְּגִדוֹ בָהּ (*be-vigdo vah*), *with his garment upon her* (*ibid.* 21:8)—continuously, never removed from her; this is *her clothing*.⁶²

“*Or her conjugal rights* (Exodus 21:10). What is that? Flow of the World that is Coming, containing all: יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (*YHVH Tseva'ot*), shining with all the supernal hidden lights of the Tree of Life, in which *conjugal rights* are concealed, whence they issue, all in delight and desire of the World that is Coming.⁶³

“These *he shall not diminish*, when she is fittingly worthy. When she is not, these three are withheld from her, for He does not fashion a crown for her from even one of them. What is written? *If he does not do these three for her*—since she does not deserve them—*she shall go out without compensation*—she shall leave His presence and be thrust outside. *With no כֶּסֶף* (*kasef*), *money* (Exodus 21:11)—with no כִּסּוּפָא (*kissufa*), desire, or pleasure at all.⁶⁴

“Until here, she upon whom all advice depends, admonishes, giving good advice to human beings. From here on, let us return to earlier matters, concerning that supernal protection spread over her by the blessed Holy One, so that she will not belong *to a foreign people*, for look, *his garment is upon her* (Exodus 21:8), and she is protected constantly!⁶⁵

“If for his son he designates her, according to the manner of daughters he shall do for her (Exodus 21:9).” That old man said, “Companions, when you reach the rock supporting the world, tell him to remember the snowy day when beans of fifty-two colors were sown, and afterward he had us recite this verse—and he will tell you.”⁶⁶

They said, “We beg of you, let he who began the matter speak!”

He replied, “I surely know that you are virtuous, and entitled to be beckoned with a hint of the wise. And regarding what I say, when you mention this sign to him, he will complete this.”⁶⁷

“Now it should be said: Who is called ‘בן (*ben*), son, of the blessed Holy One’? Whoever [98a] attains thirteen years and over is called ‘son of Assembly of Israel.’ And whoever is twenty years and over, rendering himself worthy in them, is called ‘son of the blessed Holy One’—surely, *You are sons of YHVH* (Deuteronomy 14:1).⁶⁸

“When David reached the age of thirteen, attaining the day of entering fourteen, of then is written *YHVH said to me, ‘You are My son; today I have begotten you’* (Psalms 2:7). Why? Because before this he was not His son and a supernal soul had not settled upon him, for he was in the years of foreskin. Therefore, *Today I have begotten you—today*, precisely! *I*—and not the Other Side, as was the case until now, I alone. At the age of twenty, what is written of Solomon? *I was son to my father* (Proverbs 4:3)—*to my father*, certainly!⁶⁹

*“If for his son he designates her (Exodus 21:9)—aged thirteen and over, for he has emerged from the dominion of the Other Side, which had befallen him.”*⁷⁰ What is written? *According to the manner of daughters he shall do for her* (ibid.). What is *the manner of daughters*? We have learned: Every single day the blessed Holy One sees that child under the power of foreskin, and he emerges from it and is conducted to school and breaks it, goes to the synagogue

and breaks it. What does the blessed Holy One do to that soul? He brings her into His chamber, gives her many presents and gifts, adorns her with supernal adornments—until the time when He brings her under the canopy, into that *son*, aged thirteen years and up.⁷¹

*“If another woman he takes for him (Exodus 21:10). Here is a mystery of mysteries, transmitted to the wise—but first, one matter must be mentioned. Come and see: On the Sabbath day, as Israel sanctifies the day in synagogue, souls issue from within the Tree of Life, and those souls waft into holy ones below, who repose with them throughout the Sabbath day. After Sabbath departs, all those souls ascend and are adorned with holy crowns. This one too the blessed Holy One provides for that person, and this is another soul; yet although this one is provided for him, the food of the first one, her clothing, and her conjugal rights he shall not diminish (ibid.), as has been said.”*⁷²

The old man wept as before, and said to himself, “Old man, old man! How you have toiled to grasp these holy words, and now you’ll say them in a single moment! Yet if you contemplate sparing these words and not saying them, look at what is written: *Do not withhold good from its possessors when your hand has the power to act (Proverbs 3:27)*! What is the meaning of *Do not withhold good from its possessors*? Well, the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel are here, for wherever words of Torah are spoken, the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel are there listening. Then that Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—when they go from there, having listened to those words, that side of Good is strengthened, ascending above; and the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel are adorned with that *good*, and these are the *possessors* of that *good*.⁷³

“Old man, old man! You are speaking these words, yet you do not know whether the blessed Holy One is here, and whether those who are standing here are worthy of these

words. Do not fear, old man! You have already joined many battles of fierce men and you had no fear, and now you are afraid? Speak your word, for surely here are the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel, and these ones here are worthy. Otherwise, I would not have encountered them, nor begun these matters. Speak your word, old man, speak without fear!"⁷⁴

He wept, and said, "*YHVH, my God, You are very great; You are clothed in splendor and majesty* (Psalms 104:1). *YHVH, my God*—beginning of faith, ascension of Thought of the World that is Coming, a single mystery, inseparable."⁷⁵

"*You are great*—beginning, first day of those ancient days, right side."⁷⁶

"*Very*—on that left side."⁷⁷

"*Splendor and majesty*—two shoots of willow."⁷⁸ Until here. When he arrived within the Tree of Life, the latter hid itself, so as not to be reckoned in the number, because of that *very*. What is *very*? Left, along with all branches below, among which is one bitter branch. Therefore, that Tree of Life hid itself, not wishing to be in this number, until [David] returned as before, offering praise in another manner, saying, *Wrapped in light as in a garment* (Psalms 104:2)—beginning [98b] of the first day.

"*Spreading the heavens* (ibid.)—here left is included, and he did not say *very*; left included in right, to be radiant in the entirety of *heavens*."⁷⁹

"*Setting the rafters of His lofts in the waters* (ibid., 3)—here that Tree emerged in joy, river issuing from Eden, and those two shoots of willow were rooted in its waters, in which they grow, as is written: *Setting the rafters of His lofts in the waters*. Who are *His rafters*? These willow shoots. This is: *spreading its roots by a stream* (Jeremiah 17:8), and the mystery of what is written: *a river whose streams gladden the city of God* (Psalms 46:5). Who are *its streams*? These, and so they are called: *His rafters, its roots, its streams*, all rooted in the waters of that river."⁸⁰

“Making the clouds His chariot (Psalms 104:3)—Michael and Gabriel, who are clouds.[81](#)

“Walking on the wings of the wind (ibid.)—to provide healing to the world, and this is Raphael. From here on, He makes His angels spirits... (Psalms 104:4).[82](#)

“Old man, old man! If you know all these, speak and do not fear! Speak your word, and let the words of your mouth shine!”[83](#)

The Companions rejoiced, and listened in delight to his holy words.

He said, “Oh, old man, old man! What have you gotten yourself into! You have entered the great sea—you must row and escape from there!”[84](#)

“If another woman he takes for him (Exodus 21:10). How many ancient revolutions here, never revealed until now, all of them fittingly true—for one should not deviate from the way of truth by even a hairbreadth![85](#) First, one should arousingly remark: souls of converts all fly from the Garden of Eden by a concealed path. Departing from this world—the souls that they gained from the Garden of Eden, where do they return?[86](#)

“We have learned: ‘Whoever first seizes the possessions of a convert is entitled to them.’ Those sacred, supernal souls that the blessed Holy One designates below, as we have said, all emerge at certain times, in order to delight in the Garden of Eden. Encountering those souls of converts, whichever one of these souls grasps them is entitled to them, and they clothe themselves in them and ascend. They all abide in this garment and descend to the Garden in this garment, since all those abiding in the Garden of Eden abide only in a garment.”[87](#)

“Now, you might say that because of this garment those souls are deprived of every delight they previously enjoyed. Well, it is written: *If another woman he takes for himself, he shall not diminish this one’s food, clothing, or conjugal*

rights (Exodus 21:10). In the Garden they abide in this garment that they were the first to seize and obtain; yet when they ascend, they strip themselves, for there they do not abide in garments.”⁸⁸

He wept as before, and said to himself, “Old man, old man! You surely should weep, surely shed tears over every single word! Look, it is revealed before the blessed Holy One and His holy *Shekhinah* that I am speaking with fervor, worshiping them, since they possess each word, by which they are adorned!”⁸⁹

“All those holy souls—descending to this world to alight upon their places, in which they appear to human beings—all descend clothed in those souls that we have mentioned. And thus they enter holy seed, abiding in this garment, to be subjugated by them in this world. When those garments absorb things of this world, those holy souls delight in the fragrance they scent from within these garments of theirs.”⁹⁰

“All concealed things that the blessed Holy One does He has placed within the holy Torah; all is found there. That concealed matter is revealed by Torah, and immediately clothed in another garment, hidden there and not revealed. The wise who are full of eyes—although that matter is concealed there in its garment—see it through the garment. And when that matter is revealed, before entering its garment, they cast an open eye upon it; although immediately concealed, it is not lost to their sight.”⁹¹

“In numerous places the blessed Holy One has cautioned concerning the stranger, so that the holy seed should be mindful of him. Afterward the concealed matter emerges from its sheath, [99a] and as soon as being revealed it returns to its sheath, clothing itself there. Once He cautioned concerning the stranger in all those places, the matter emerged from its sheath, declaring *You know the stranger’s soul* (Exodus 23:9). Immediately it entered its sheath, returning to its garment, hiding away, as is

written: *for you were strangers in the land of Egypt* (ibid.)—for Scripture supposes that because it clothed itself immediately, no one noticed it. Through this *stranger's soul*, the holy soul perceives things of this world, enjoying them.”⁹²

The old man opened, saying, “*Moses entered within the cloud and went up the mountain* (Exodus 24:18). What is this cloud? Well, the same of which is written *My bow I have set in the cloud* (Genesis 9:13). We have learned that the rainbow removed its garments and gave them to Moses. In that garment he ascended; from within it he saw what he saw, delighting in all. Until here.”⁹³

The Companions came and fell down before him, and weeping they said, “If we have come into the world just to hear these words from your mouth, it is enough for us!”⁹⁴

The old man said, “*If another woman he takes for him* (Exodus 21:10). Companions, not for this alone did I begin to speak, for an old man like me doesn't rattle or call with just a single word.⁹⁵ Inhabitants of the world are so confused in their minds! They do not see the path of truth in Torah. Torah calls to them every day, cooing, yet they do not want to turn their heads. Although I said that a word of Torah emerges from her sheath, is seen for a moment, then quickly hides away—certainly so, but when she reveals herself from her sheath and quickly hides, she does so only for those who know her and recognize her.⁹⁶

“This may be compared to a beloved maiden, beautiful in form and appearance, concealed secretly in her palace. She has a single lover unknown to anyone—except to her, concealedly. Out of the love that he feels for her, this lover passes by her gate constantly, lifting his eyes to every side. Knowing that her lover is constantly circling her gate, what does she do? She opens a little window in that secret palace where she is, reveals her face to her lover, and quickly withdraws, concealing herself. None of those near

the lover sees or notices, only the lover, and his inner being and heart and soul follow her. He knows that out of love for him she revealed herself for a moment to arouse him.⁹⁷

“So it is with a word of Torah: she reveals herself only to her lover. Torah knows that one who is wise of heart circles her gate every day. What does she do? She reveals her face to him from the palace and beckons him with a hint, then swiftly withdraws to her place, hiding away. None of those there knows or notices—he alone does, and his inner being and heart and soul follow her. Thus Torah reveals and conceals herself, approaching her lover lovingly to arouse love with him.

“Come and see! This is the way of Torah: At first, when she begins to reveal herself to a person, she beckons him momentarily with a hint. If he perceives, good; if not, she sends for him, calling him ‘simple’: ‘Tell that simple one to come closer, so I can talk with him.’ As is written: *Whoever is simple, let him turn here, he who lacks understanding* (Proverbs 9:4). As he approaches, she begins to speak with him from behind a curtain she has drawn, words suitable for him, until he reflects little by little. This is *derasha*.⁹⁸ Then, she converses with him from behind a delicate sheet, words of riddle, and this is *haggadah*.⁹⁹

“Once he has grown accustomed to her, she reveals herself to him face-to-face, and tells him all her hidden secrets and all the hidden ways, concealed in her heart since primordial days.¹⁰⁰ Then [99b] he is a complete man, husband of Torah, master of the house, for all her secrets she has revealed to him, concealing nothing.¹⁰¹

“She says to him, ‘Did you see the hinting word with which I beckoned you at first? These are the secrets! This is what it is!’¹⁰²

“Then he sees that one should not add to these words or diminish them. Then *peshat* of the verse, just like it is. One should not add or delete even a single letter. So human

beings must be alert, pursuing Torah to become her lover, as has been said.¹⁰³

“Come and see: *If another woman he takes for him* (Exodus 21:10). How great and supernal the cycles revolving in this verse! For all souls enter a cycle, and human beings do not know the ways of the blessed Holy One: how the scales stand, how humans are judged every day at all times, and how souls stand in judgment both before they enter this world and after leaving this world.¹⁰⁴

“How many revolutions, how many concealed actions does the blessed Holy One perform with souls! How many naked spirits roam that world, not entering the curtain of the King! How overturned by them is the world, overturned by countless sealed wonders! And human beings do not know or notice—and how souls whirl like a stone in a sling, as is said: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (1 Samuel 25:29).¹⁰⁵

“Since we have begun to reveal, now is the time to reveal that all נשמתין (*nishmatin*), souls, issue from a grand and mighty tree of that river issuing from Eden, and all רוּחִין (*ruh̄in*), spirits, issue from another, small tree. *Neshamah*, soul, from above; *ruah̄*, spirit, from below—joining as one, like male and female. When joining as one, they shine supernal radiance, and in the joining of the two of them, they are called נֵר (*ner*), lamp, *lamp of YHVH*. What is *ner*? *Neshamah, ruah̄*. By virtue of these two joining together as one, they are called *ner*, as is written: נשמת (*Nishmat*), *The neshamah of, a human is נֵר (ner), the lamp of, YHVH* (Proverbs 20:27). *Neshamah, ruah̄*—male and female, illumining as one. Without one another they do not shine, are not called *ner*; joining as one, all is called *ner*.¹⁰⁶ Then *neshamah* wraps herself in *ruah̄* to abide there above in the hidden palace, as is written: *for ruah̄ יַעֲטוֹף (ya’atof), envelops, before Me*. It is not written יִתְעַטֵּף (*yit’attef*), *is enveloped*, but rather *ya’atof, envelops*. Why so? Because of נשמות (*neshamot*), *souls, that I have made* (Isaiah

57:16). There, above, in the hidden garden, *neshamah* wraps and clothes herself in *ruah*, fittingly. For since only *ruah* appears or serves in that palace, *neshamah* does not come there but rather clothes herself in that *ruah* there. And when she descends into the Garden of Eden below, of this world, she clothes herself in that other *ruah* that I mentioned—the one issuing, deriving from there. In all of them she dwells in this world, en clothed in them.[107](#)

“A spirit leaving this world who has not grown or spread in this world undergoes rolling and finds no rest, comes revolving into the world like a stone in a sling, until it finds a redeemer to redeem it—by that very vessel that he used, to which he clung with his spirit and soul, and who was his mate, spirit with spirit—and that redeemer builds it as before.[108](#)

“The spirit that he left, adhering to that vessel, is not lost—for nothing in the world, be it ever so small, lacks a place in which to be hidden and absorbed; it is never lost. Consequently, the spirit that he left in that vessel is there, and this pursues the root and basis from which it issued. It brings it and builds it in its place, in the abode of the spirit of his mate who emerged with him, and it is built there as before. This is a new creature now in the world, a new spirit and a new body.[109](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘This spirit is the same as it was.’ This is so, but it is built only by virtue of the other spirit that he left in that vessel.[110](#) [100a]

“Here is a mystery of mysteries. In the Book of Enoch:[111](#) ‘This structure that is built, is built only by that spirit that he left there in that vessel. Beginning to be built, it attracts the spirit that roams naked, drawing it. There, two spirits that are one. Afterward this is spirit and that is soul, and the two of them are one. If he succeeds in increasing fittingly, the two become one, in which will be clothed another supernal soul. Just as other inhabitants of the world have a spirit—attained by those souls who were

first to seize them—and another spirit from above, and a holy soul clothes herself in them; so too, he himself has two spirits, in which a supernal soul will clothe herself.’[112](#)

“Look! This one has another body, constructed now anew. The first body, what becomes of it? Either one or the other is in vain. According to human understanding, it follows that the earlier one, who did not complete himself at first, vanishes, since he did not prove himself worthy. If so, it was for nothing that he engaged in the commandments of Torah, even if just one of them! And we know that even the emptiest in Israel are all as full of *mitsvot* as a pomegranate. This body, although not consummated by growing and increasing in the world, still kept other commandments of Torah, which he did not lose—and was that for nothing?[113](#)

“Companions, companions! Open your eyes, for I know that you think and perceive so: that all those bodies are marked in vain, lacking existence forever. Not so, and far be it from us to contemplate such things!”[114](#)

He opened, saying, “*Who can utter the mighty acts of YHVH or declare all His praise?* (Psalms 106:2). Who in the world can express the mighty acts that the blessed Holy One constantly performs in the world? That first body he left is not lost; it will have existence in the time to come, for it has suffered various sorts of punishment, and the blessed Holy One does not withhold the reward of creatures that He has created—except those who have abandoned faith in Him and never possessed anything good and did not bow at *Modim*. Those, the blessed Holy One turns into other creatures, so that the body will not be constructed in a human image and will never rise.[115](#) But these, not so! What does the blessed Holy One do? If that spirit attains perfection in this world in that other body, what does He do? The redeemer who redeems him—that spirit of his that he infused there, joining and mingling with the spirit that

was in the vessel, is not lost. So what does He do? For look, three spirits are there! One that was in the vessel and remained there; another, the one drawn there, that had been naked; and another, the one that the redeemer infused there, mingling with them. To have three spirits is impossible!¹¹⁶

“However, these are the supernal mighty acts that the blessed Holy One performs. The spirit that the redeemer infused there—in that the soul is clothed, instead of in the garment of converts. The naked spirit that returned there to be constructed will be a garment for the soul. And the spirit that existed previously, remaining in that vessel, flies away from there, and the blessed Holy One prepares a place for it in the clefts of the rock behind the back of the Garden of Eden, where it is hidden and reserved for the first body, which existed previously; with that spirit, it will rise. And this is ‘one who is two,’ which I mentioned.¹¹⁷

“Before that body rises, its punishment is severe. For since it did not succeed in increasing, it is brought down to *Adamah*, next to *Arqa*, where it is punished, and afterward raised to this *Tevel*. Now descending, now rising; rising and descending—having no tranquility except on Sabbaths, holidays, and new moons.¹¹⁸

“These sleep in אדמת עפר (*admat afar*), *ground of dust* [100b]—*admat*, *ground of*, from *Adamah*; *afar*, *dust*, from *Tevel*. Of these is written: *Many of those who sleep in admat afar, ground of dust, will awake, these to everlasting life, [those to shame and everlasting contempt]* (Daniel 12:2). If the naked spirit that returned as before attains perfection, happy is he! For the spirit that was hidden away in the rock will be restored to the first body. Of these is written: *these to everlasting life, those to shame [and everlasting contempt]*—all those who have not attained perfection.¹¹⁹

“These are the supernal mighty acts of the Holy King, and nothing is lost. Even a breath of the mouth has a place and location, and the blessed Holy One makes of it what He

wishes. Even a human word and even a voice—nothing at all is in vain; everything has a place and location.¹²⁰ This one who was just constructed emerges into the world as a new creature; he has no mate. For this one, no proclamation is made, because his mate has been lost to him: his former mate has become his mother, and his brother his father.¹²¹

“Old man, old man! What have you done? Silence would have been better for you! Old man, old man, I told you that you have set to the great sea without ropes and without a sail. What will you do? If you say that you will rise above—you cannot. If you say that you will descend below—look, the depth of the great abyss! What will you do?”

“Oh, old man, old man, you cannot turn back! In these times you have never been, yet normally you do not weaken in strength. Now, you know that no one else in this whole generation has ever entered in a boat this depth where you are. The son of Yoḥai¹²² knows how to guard his ways, and if he sets to the deep sea, he first considers how he will cross in one stretch and sail the sea, before he begins. But you, old man, did not consider at first. Now, old man, since you are there, do not neglect the whole way to sail to the right and to the left, to the length and to the breadth, to the depth and to the height. Do not fear! Old man, old man, strengthen yourself! How many powerful men have you broken in their prime, how many battles have you won!”

He wept, and said, “*O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze upon King Solomon...* (Song of Songs 3:11). This verse has been established, and so it is.¹²³ However, *Go out and gaze*—now, who can gaze at *King שלמה* (*Shelomo*), *Solomon*, the King who possesses *שלמא* (*shelama*), peace? For He is concealed from all powers of the heights above, in the place that *no eye has seen, O God, but You* (Isaiah 64:3). And yet you say, *O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze...?*

Further, look, of His glory they all ask, ‘Where is the place of His glory?’¹²⁴

“Well, the wording *O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze upon King Solomon* continues: *upon the crown, not and upon the crown*. Whoever sees that *crown* sees the beauty of the King who possesses peace.¹²⁵

“*With which his mother crowned him* (Song of Songs 3:11). We have already learned: He calls her ‘daughter,’ He calls her ‘sister,’ He calls her ‘mother.’ She is all of these; all are true. Whoever beholds and knows this, knows precious wisdom.¹²⁶

“Now what should I do? If I speak—this hidden mystery must not be revealed. If I do not speak, these worthy ones will be left orphaned of this mystery.”¹²⁷

He fell on his face, and said, “*Into Your hand I entrust my spirit; You redeem me, YHVH, God of truth* (Psalms 31:6). A vessel that was below, how has it come to be above? Her husband who was above, how has he been transformed into being below? His mate has become his mother! Wonder upon wonder! His brother, his father! If his original father would redeem him, fine; but that his brother would become his father—is this not astonishing? The world is surely upside-down: the above, below; the below, above!¹²⁸

“However, *Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons.... He knows what is in darkness, and light dwells with Him* (Daniel 2:20-22).¹²⁹ Come and see: One who dwells in light cannot look and see in the dark. But not so the blessed Holy One: [101a] *He knows what is in darkness, even though lights dwells with Him*. From within the light, He gazes at the darkness and knows all that is there.¹³⁰

“We should first introduce something said by the ancients in regard to those nighttime visions. For we have learned: ‘One who cohabits with his mother in a dream will attain בִּינָה (*binah*), understanding, as is written: *For you will*

call binah, understanding, 'Mother' (Proverbs 2:3). Here one should examine. If this is because She is mother, fine; then it should have been written as follows: 'One who sees his mother in a dream will attain understanding.' But why 'one who cohabits with' her?[131](#)

"Well, a supernal mystery! For he was transformed from below to above, ascending. At first, he was a son; once he rises above, the tree is overturned and he becomes part of the upper world, ruling over Her, attaining *Binah*.

"At first, when a man reaches thirteen years, what is written? *YHVH said to me, 'You are My son; today I have begotten you'* (Psalms 2:7). Then he is below Her. Once he ascends above Her, he is of the upper world, for he has scaled the rung of Joseph—he surely attains *Binah*.[132](#)

"Similarly, this vessel: At first he was on the rung of Joseph, possessing the lower tree at his will, ruling over it; for every female bears the image of the Female—the lower tree. Since he did not wish to occupy that rung of Joseph and did not endure to perform with it and increase in the world, generating offspring, he then descends below, and she becomes his mother. And that redeemer obtains the inheritance of Joseph, which he himself had previously inherited, and he descends.[133](#)

"Once he descends, there is fulfilled in him: *YHVH said to me, 'You are My son; today I have begotten you.'* The tree is turned upside-down! Whereas it had been below him, dominated by him, instead that tree dominates him, and he descends. Once he descends, the one inheriting the site of Joseph is called his father, and he really is his father! All is arranged fittingly. At first, he belonged to World of the Male, but he was uprooted from there and now belongs to World of the Female. Whereas he had ruled over her, now she rules over him, and he again belongs to World of the Female. Therefore he has no mate at all, and no proclamation is made for him regarding a female, for he has reverted to World of the Female.[134](#)

“And that first body, which he left—if inhabitants of the world only knew and considered the pain it suffers, when he is uprooted from World of the Male and reverts to World of the Female, then they would know that there is no pain in the world like that pain.¹³⁵ He has no mate since he does not occupy the realm of the Male. No proclamation is made regarding a female since he belongs to World of the Female. And if he does have a mate, by supplication he encounters a female who until now had no mate. Concerning this we have learned: ‘Perhaps another will anticipate him by supplication’—‘another,’ we have learned, and all is arranged.¹³⁶

“Of this is written: *If the daughter of a priest becomes a widow or divorced, having no seed, and she returns to her father’s house as in her youth* (Leviticus 22:13). *If the daughter of a priest*—we have already established the matter.¹³⁷

“A widow—of that first body.¹³⁸

“*Divorced*—for she does not enter the curtain of the King, since all those who do not occupy World of the Male have no share in it. He abandoned and uprooted himself from World of the Male—he has no share in it; so she is *divorced*.¹³⁹

“*Having no seed*—for look, if she had *seed*, she would not be uprooted from there and would not descend to World of the Female.¹⁴⁰

“*And she returns to her father’s house*. Who is *her father’s house*? World of the Female, as that world is called *her father’s house*. The vessel that was prepared for his use has been transformed; he descends below, and that vessel rises above.¹⁴¹

“*As in her youth*—as in the time of which is written *Today I have begotten you* (Psalms 2:7), literally! *He will return to the days of his youth* (Job 33:25)—as he was from the age of thirteen on.¹⁴²

“If she attains perfection, since *she returns to her father’s house, of her father’s bread she may eat* (Leviticus 22:13) [101b]—reveling in the delight of World of the Female, where one eats of the bread of the mighty descending from above.¹⁴³ But to gaze and enjoy as the rest of the righteous enjoy—she cannot, because she is a stranger there. Consequently she does not eat of the holy, but eats of the donation, which is given to World of the Female. Since it derives from World of the Female, it can be eaten only at night, as is written: *When the sun sets, he becomes clean, and after he may eat of the holy...* (Leviticus 22:7). Whereas *the holy* deriving from World of the Male can be eaten only by day.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, *Holy is Israel to YHVH, the first fruits of His harvest* (Jeremiah 2:3)—supernal beginning of the whole World of the Male is *holy*, and what ascends to *the holy* is Israel; hence, *holy is Israel*.¹⁴⁵

“When spirits come visiting, at those times that they visit the cemetery, these do not visit, since they have not attained the world of *the holy*, as is written: *No stranger shall eat of the holy* (Leviticus 22:10). And if that spirit does not attain perfection fittingly, having returned in transmigration, it does not even eat of the donation and is called *stranger* even to the lower world, not eating there. Until here, concerning this mystery.¹⁴⁶

“Old man, old man! Since you have started to sail the sea, go on as you wish in every direction! Now is the time to reveal. I have already said that when this redeemer cohabits with the vessel that I mentioned, he infuses his spirit there, adhering it to that vessel; and nothing is lost, not even a breath of the mouth. That is fittingly so. Old man, old man! If you speak and reveal, speak without fear!¹⁴⁷

“When other people of the world depart, we know that each one leaves his spirit in the wife he had, having infused

the spirit there. Well, what becomes of that spirit? And if she marries, what happens then, seeing that another man cohabits with her? For spirit to coexist with spirit is impossible. For look: this one now cohabiting with her infuses her with spirit, and that first one who has departed infused her with spirit. That first one had children, so the current one is not a redeemer. The spirit left by the first one in that vessel and the spirit infused in her by this one—surely the two of them cannot exist as one! If we say it is lost, that is impossible; so what becomes of it?[148](#)

“Similarly, if she does not marry: that spirit left by her husband, what becomes of it? If we say it is lost, not so! All this must now be revealed. Old man, let us see what you have done and what you have gotten yourself into! Rise, old man, and raise your sail! Arise, old man, and humble yourself before your Lord!”

He opened, saying, “*O YHVH, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes raised high...* (Psalms 131:1). King David said this because he was a supreme king, ruling over all kings east and west; yet his heart did not haughtily deviate from the way, and he constantly humbled his heart before his Lord. When he studied Torah, he grew mighty as a lion, with his eyes lowered to earth out of awe for his Lord. And when he walked among the people, he was not haughty at all.[149](#)

“Therefore it is written: *O YHVH, my heart is not haughty—even though I rule over other kings of the world. Nor my eyes raised high—when I stand before You, delving into Torah. I do not pursue matters too great [or too wondrous for me]—when I walk among the people.* If this is the case with King David, how much more so with other inhabitants of the world![150](#) As for me, how humble of heart and with what downcast eyes am I before the Holy King! Far be it from me to be haughty with holy words of Torah.”

He wept, his tears falling onto his beard. He said, “Old man, feeble in strength, how beautiful the tears on your

beard! As beautiful as the precious oil running down upon the beard of the fine old man Aaron. Speak your word, old man, [102a] for the Holy King is here![151](#)

“Other people who have departed from the world, leaving a spirit in the vessel that they used—if she marries and another comes and infuses another spirit in that vessel, what becomes of the first one, as has been said?[152](#)

“Come and see how exalted are the mighty acts performed by the Holy King! Who can recount them? When this second husband comes and infuses a spirit in that vessel, the first spirit denounces this inflowing spirit, and they cannot dwell calmly together. Therefore a woman does not settle fittingly with her second husband, because the first spirit pulsates within her, so she remembers him constantly and weeps or sighs over him, since his spirit rattles in her belly like a snake, denouncing the other, incoming spirit. For a long time, they assail one another. This one entering arouses the one who entered first; afterward, the first one leaves and goes away. Sometimes, this first one repels the second one, becoming his accuser, finally removing him from the world.[153](#)

“Concerning this we have learned that from two on, a man should not marry this woman, for the Angel of Death is empowered within her, and inhabitants of the world do not realize that once this spirit has prevailed and defeated that other, second spirit—from now on, no one else should mingle with it.[154](#)

“Companions, I know that at this point you should object: ‘If so, this second one does not die justly and is not judged above!’ Come and see: All accords with justice—whether one should overcome the other, or one not denounce the other. He who marries a widow is like one who sets to sea in fierce winds and hurricanes without ropes, not knowing whether he will cross safely or drown in the deep.[155](#)

“Now, if this one entering—the second spirit—prevails and defeats the first one, that first one leaves and goes away. Where does it go, and what does it become?

“Old man, old man, what have you done? You thought that you would speak a little, and you have emerged here!¹⁵⁶ Look, you have entered a place not entered by any other human since the day that Doeg and Ahithophel formulated these questions among the four hundred questions they asked about a tower flying in the air, and which no one answered until Solomon came and clarified them, each one perfectly!¹⁵⁷

“Old man, old man! A supernal mystery that was concealed you have come to reveal. What have you done? Old man, old man! At first, you should have watched your way and considered your start. But now is not the time to hide away! Restore your potency! The spirit that left, where did it go?”¹⁵⁸

He wept, and said, “Companions, all these tears that I weep are not on account of you! Rather, I fear the Master of the Universe, for I have revealed concealed paths without permission. But it is revealed before Him that I have not acted for my own glory nor for the glory of my father; rather, my desire is to serve Him. I have seen the glory of one of you in that world; and as for the other, I know he is the same—but it was not revealed to me, and now I see.¹⁵⁹

“We have learned: One man is thrust away in favor of another; in various ways they are thrust. That first spirit, thrust aside in favor of the second, where does it go? That spirit leaves and roams the world, unknown, and goes to that person’s grave. From there it roams the world and appears to people in a dream: they see in a dream an image of that person, revealing things to them according to its way. As the spirit from which it is drawn exists in that world, so this one roams, revealing here. So it goes, roaming the world, continually visiting that grave, until the

time when spirits visit the graves of bodies. Then this spirit joins its spirit, which clothes itself within it and goes its way. When it enters its place, it is stripped of it, and it finds a place [102b] in those palaces of the Garden of Eden or outside, according to the ways of every single one, and there it is hidden.¹⁶⁰

“When spirits visit this world, as the dead are bound to the living, they are bound only by that flow of spirit, in which another spirit is clothed.¹⁶¹

“Now, you might say, ‘If so, it is a benefit for the spirit, and this woman provides benefit to all.’ Not so! For if she had not married, and this spirit had not been thrust away in favor of that one, he would have derived a different benefit in another way and would not toil in the world as he does or be bound to the living of this world, roaming here and there.¹⁶²

“If so, the second coupling of this woman is not from above, and yet you say that one man is thrust away in favor of another!¹⁶³

“Well, I say that this second husband who married this woman—she is his genuine mate, and that first one was not her genuine mate. And this second one—she is his, and when his time arrives, that one is thrust away in favor of him. Certainly so! For look, that first spirit that was in this woman is thrust aside only because *he* is her mate—this second one.¹⁶⁴

“And all those second ones that are thrust away—the first ones were their mates, not these. Consequently, they cannot endure with them, and the second spirit is thrust aside in favor of the first spirit.¹⁶⁵

“Based upon this, for one who marries a widow we declare: *He does not know it will cost him his life* (Proverbs 7:23); *The net seems spread for nothing [in the eyes of every winged creature]* (ibid. 1:17)—it is not known if she is his true mate or not.¹⁶⁶

“A widow who does not marry—even if her mate arrives and she does not want to—the blessed Holy One does not compel her by law. He designates another woman for that man; and she is not judged for this in that world, even if she has no child, since a woman is not commanded to be fruitful and multiply.[167](#)

“This woman who does not remarry—that spirit that her husband left in her, what becomes of it? It dwells there for twelve months, and every night it emerges and visits the soul and returns to its place. After twelve months, when the punishment of that man is withdrawn—for during all those twelve months this spirit is overwhelmed by sadness—after twelve months, it leaves there and goes to stand at the gate of the Garden of Eden, and visits in this world the vessel that it left. When this woman departs from the world, that spirit emerges and clothes itself in her spirit, and she attains it for her husband, and the two of them shine fittingly in a single bond.[168](#)

“Since we have reached this place, now is the time to reveal. The hidden ways of the Master of the Universe are unknown to human beings, and they all follow the way of truth, as is said: *For the ways of YHVH are right; the righteous walk in them [while transgressors stumble in them]* (Hosea 14:10). Human beings do not know or consider how sublime are the deeds of the blessed Holy One and how strange! Inhabitants of the world do not know—and all of them accord with the way of truth, not deviating to the right or to the left.[169](#)

“These who transmigrate, banished by divorce from that world—who are those women who marry them in this world? For look, all human beings have a mate except this one.[170](#)

“See now how grand and sublime are His mighty deeds! We have learned: ‘For one who divorces his first wife, the altar sheds tears.’ Why? Well, I have already said

that all women of the world abide in the image of this altar, and consequently they inherit those seven blessings, all of which derive from Assembly of Israel. And if he [103a] divorces her, the supernal stone reverts to deficiency. Why? Because divorcements join one another.¹⁷¹

“This is the mystery of what is written: *and he writes her a document of divorce and puts it in her hand, and she leaves his house and goes and marries another man* (Deuteronomy 24:1-2). From what is indicated by *and goes and marries a man*, don’t we know that it is not the one who divorced her? Why *another*? Well, as has been said: ‘Another,’ we have learned; *another* is written; *another*, we call him—as is written: *From another soil it will sprout* (Job 8:19). Divorcements join as one, divorcement of that world and divorcement of this world. Whereas this woman had assumed a supernal image, now she is subjugated to a lower image.¹⁷²

“We call him אָחֵר (*aḥer*), *another*, and we call him אַחֲרֹן (*aḥaron*), *last*. How do we know that he is called *last*? As is written: *The last one will stand upon earth* (Job 19:25); and here is written *and the last man hates her ... or the last man dies* (Deuteronomy 24:3). *Last*—the verse should read *second*. Now, if you say that she should not marry even ten, one after the other—not so! Should she marry this husband and no other? Rather, this is *another* that we have mentioned—he is *aḥer*, *another*, and he is *aḥaron*, *last*. Now a stone rolls in a sling.¹⁷³

“*Another*—why is he called so? For look, the whole structure has collapsed and turned into dust; he is who he was, not *another*! Why do we call him *another*? *Last*, similarly: why is he called *last*? Is he really last? Look, if he rights himself, fine; but if not, he returns and transmigrates, transplanted as before! So why is he called *last*?¹⁷⁴

“But come and see what is written: *God saw all that He had made, and look, it was very good* (Genesis 1:31). *Good*

—we have learned—is the Angel of Good; *very* is the Angel of Death. For everything, the blessed Holy One prepares its rectification.¹⁷⁵

“Come and see: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10). This river never subsides from increasing, proliferating, and generating fruit; whereas *another god* is emasculated, never has desire, and does not increase or yield fruit—for if he did, he would obliterate the whole world. Therefore, a person who enables that side to increase in the world is called evil and never sees the face of *Shekhinah*, as is written: *Evil cannot abide with You* (Psalms 5:5).¹⁷⁶

“This person who revolves through transmigration has sinned and clung to *another god*, who does not yield fruit or increase in the world. Consequently, he is called *another*, and the name determines this; he is who he was, yet he is called *another*—*another*, surely!¹⁷⁷

“*Last*—from the first one on, we call him *last*, and so he is called. The second one is immediately called *last*, and the blessed Holy One calls him so: *last*, so that he will perfect himself and be last and not return as before. The third one, too. And so each time from the first one on; he must be called so: *last*—for if he were immediately called second, this would provide a pretext to return as before, and that structure would be destroyed.¹⁷⁸

“How do we know this? From the Second Temple, as is written: *The glory of this last house will be greater than the first* (Haggai 2:9). For from the first one on is called *last*, so as not to provide a pretext for that structure to fall and revert to what it was before. Similarly, we call this one *last*.¹⁷⁹

“Consequently it is written: *Her first husband, who sent her away, shall not be able to come back to take her [as his wife]* (Deuteronomy 24:4). *Shall not be able*—the verse should read *shall not take her; why shall not be able?* Well, since this woman has clung to *another*, descending to be

subjugated to a low rung, the blessed Holy One does not want him to regress from his rung and yield fruit and cling to that rung of hers.

“Come and see: If this woman does not marry—even if she whores with all the men of the world—if her husband wishes, he may return to her. But if she cleaves to *another*, this one *shall not be able to come back* to the former rung that he occupied in relation to her; *shall not be able*, surely, to ever return to that rung.¹⁸⁰

“*After she has been defiled* (Deuteronomy 24:4). We have learned that *she has been defiled* in his heart. If so, even if she goes far away and whores unmarried. However, once she clings to *another*, she accepts a share of that side, and her first husband, [103b] who is on the other, good side, must never partake of that and must never increase that place at all. Now, if *the last man* sends her away *or if the last man dies* (ibid., 3), she is forbidden to the first one; but she is permitted to other men—perhaps she will find a place as before, and *a last* will arise who will marry her.¹⁸¹

“Whoever has children from his first wife and brings this one into his house, conjoins that day with a harsh whirling sword, from two angles: first, because she has already thrust away two, and now he is the third; and further, a vessel that was dominated by *another*—how can he convey his spirit into her, joining and cleaving to her? Not that she is forbidden, but this surely is a bad partnership for him.¹⁸²

“Rabbi Levitas of Kefar Ono, used to laugh and scoff at such a woman when he saw someone marrying her. He would say, ‘It is written: *She will laugh at the last day* (Proverbs 31:25)—whoever conjoins with *a last man* will eventually become a laughing stock.’¹⁸³

“Now we should return and examine a certain great and lofty place that existed in the world, a stock and root of truth—namely, Obed, father of Jesse, father of David. For if

you say that he is *another*, how did a root of truth emerge from this place?[184](#)

“Well, Obed was perfected nobly; he restored the root of the inverted tree, thereby ascending, attaining perfection. Therefore he was called עובד (*oved*), Cultivator, a name earned by no one else in the world. He came and cultivated and dug the taproot of the tree; he left the bitter branches and was restored to the crown of the tree.[185](#)

“His son came, inheriting and enhancing it, and was embraced by branches of another, lofty tree. He joined tree to tree, and they intertwined. When David arrived, he found the trees entwined, embracing one another; so he inherited dominion over the land. Obed brought this about.”[186](#)

He wept and said, “Oh, old man, old man, didn’t I tell you that you have entered the great sea? Now you are in the midst of vast depths! Prepare to rise! Old man, old man, you brought this about—for if you had been silent in the beginning, it would have been fine; but now, you cannot, and there is no one to grasp your hand, just you alone. Rise, old man, ascend ascendantly![187](#)

“Obed was perfected and left the evil field of evil thistles. His son came and improved and hoed round the tree. Nevertheless—this is mystery of mysteries, and I do not know if I should tell it or not. Speak your word, old man, surely speak! By this, all other transmigrators are known.[188](#)

“Nevertheless, although the tree was enhanced, when David came he remained in the lower tree of the Female, and had to receive life from another. Now, if this was the case for one who was perfected and who restored all, how much more so for other transmigrators who cannot do so![189](#)

“In all aspects, transformed by transmigration: so it was with Perez, so it was with Boaz, so it was with Obed. Through all, the tree emerged from the side of evil, later joining the side of good. At first, *Er, firstborn of Judah, was*

evil (Genesis 38:7); similarly, Mahlon, but not as much. But by these, evil was consumed and good eventually emerged—the one of whom is written *goodly to look on, and YHVH is with him* (1 Samuel 16:12, 18). Here, the lower tree stood firm, and *God reigned over nations* (Psalms 47:9).[190](#)

“In the beginning of all, from another essential foundation, rungs took root: Reuben, Simeon, Levi. And Judah, what is written of him? *‘This time I will praise YHVH’... and she ceased bearing children* (Genesis 29:35).[191](#) In the Book of Enoch: *And she ceased bearing children*—corresponding to: *Sing, O barren one, who has borne no child* (Isaiah 54:1). For when Judah was born, the Female emerged joined to the Male, though She was not set perfectly, face-to-face, and was incapable of bearing. Once the blessed Holy One sawed Her and arranged Her, She became capable of conceiving and bearing.[192](#)

“And in the Book of Enoch: *And she ceased bearing children*—this refers not to Leah, but rather to Rachel, the one weeping [104a] over her children, the one rooted in Judah: יהודה (*Yehudah*). *And she ceased bearing children*—for she had not been arranged.[193](#)

“At first, a supernal image. ראובן (*Re’uven*), Reuben—אור בן (*or ben*), light, son; *God said, ‘Let there be light!’* (Genesis 1:3): right, *light*.[194](#)

“שמעון (*Shim’on*), Simeon—left, along with that dross of gold: שם עון (*sham avon*), ‘there, iniquity.’[195](#)

“לוי (*Levi*), Levi—convergence of all, converging from two sides.[196](#)

“יהודה (*Yehudah*), Judah—Female cleaving to Male: יהו (*yod, he, vav*), Male; דה (*dalet, he*), Female, who was with Him. דה (*Dalet, he*)—why this with that? Simply because through evil clinging to Her, She is ד (*dalet*), poor, and needs to return through transmigration—so that the evil will be consumed and waste away in the dust—and then sprout on the side of good and emerge from poverty to wealth, and then ה (*he*). Therefore, יהו (*yod, he, vav*), דה (*dalet, he*).[197](#)

“Come out, old man! Come out of the depths! Have no fear! Numerous boats await you when you sail the sea, for rest.”

He wept as before, and said, “Master of the Universe! Perhaps the celestial camps will say that I am an old man crying like a baby!¹⁹⁸ It is revealed before You that I am acting for Your glory, I have not acted for mine. Look, at first I should have been careful not to enter the great sea; yet since I am in it, I should sail in every direction and emerge.¹⁹⁹

“יהודה אתה” (*Yehudah attah*), *Judah, you* (Genesis 49:8)—corresponding to what we say: ‘Blessed are You’: He is ‘Blessed,’ and She is ‘You.’ Jacob did not say *you* to any one of them except the necessary site; this is *you*.²⁰⁰

“This name *will your brothers acclaim* (Genesis, *ibid.*)—all of them acclaim you for this name; surely, *you, will your brothers acclaim*. By this name, the Other Side is removed and overwhelmed; for when he is named and mentioned, the Other Side emerges with Her, and once *you* is uttered, She gains dominion and grandeur, and the Other Side is subdued and not seen there. Surely, by this name She is designated and purified of the Other Side; this is Her ascending dominion, and crushing disaster for the Other Side. Once *your brothers acclaim you*—for this name, *you*—then *your hand on your enemies’ nape* (*ibid.*): immediately, they are subdued before you, as determined by this name.²⁰¹

“I know, Companions, I know that you ascribe this name to another lofty place, as is written: *You are a priest forever* (Psalms 110:4), on the supernal right. This is fine; for since those above and those below acknowledge Rabbi Shim’on, and he has attained all, whatever he says is so, and fine. However, when you reach him, tell him and remind him of the snowy day when we sowed beans of all those colors. For look, *You are a priest*—here Cup of Blessing is joined to the right, with no separation at all!

Thus, *You are a priest forever*—here joined to the right fittingly.²⁰²

“Therefore, יהודה אתה (*Yehudah attah*), *Judah, you*—this *you, will your brothers acclaim*. It is not written *Judah, whom your brothers will acclaim*—and nothing more—rather, for the name *you*. *You*—this place, and no other, needs this name.²⁰³

“Judah, first father and second father, never replaced. Consequently, Perez was empowered potently—more so than anyone else in the world—and therefore the formation of David is reckoned first from Perez and not from Boaz, who underwent change.²⁰⁴

“Companions, if you look closely, no words in obscurity do I speak, although they are obscure.

“Hence, he gained this name called *you*—rising to his vigor the first time and the second time, never changing. Judah’s children and his seed acknowledged and said *For You are our father* (Isaiah 63:16)—which is never so for other transmitters. Other transmitters have two fathers and two mothers for the structure. These mysteries lie in the depths of the sea, in the heart of the abyss. Who can draw them out? Arise, old man, steel yourself potently; draw pearls out of the depths!²⁰⁵

“Boaz appears to have undergone change when he engendered Obed, since Obed changed. Not so! Ibzan is Boaz; he is the first father, who did not change. Now, if you say that he is he—surely when he aroused for this act, he was within him. Who? The one powerful as a lion, as the king of beasts, was within him, so that no [104b] change would occur in David. The matter reverted to the original root, so that all would issue from one father and one chain; all is one, and there was no change in the cycle of David’s seed. Thus *you*, from beginning to end, with no change at all. Now, old man, you have emerged from the depths of the heart of the sea!²⁰⁶

“Judah, you (Genesis 49:8), surely, from beginning to end! It is not fitting for any of the other sons except him alone to be called *you*. Happy is the share of David, who was so refined and elevated beyond other roots of human beings on earth!

“Will your brothers acclaim (ibid.). The verse should read *will all inhabitants of the world acclaim*. Why *your brothers*? Well, it is customary among all inhabitants of the world that they perform levirate marriage for transmigration only from the aspect of brothers: a brother designated to marry. Yet here all of *your brothers will acknowledge to you* that the chain of kingship will not develop from them, but only from *you*—*you* from beginning to end. You performed, and from you issued the whole chain and stem of the lion. Your children are lion cubs, who have not been transferred to the variation of *your brothers*—not transformed into a lamb, an ox, a kid, or any other image. Rather, a lion began to construct and a lion completed the structure; your entire chain is lion cubs. For if transmigration had come from the side of *your brothers*, all images would have transformed, mingling with one another. This is: *your brothers will acknowledge to you*—that none of them was involved in the transmigration of the chain of your son. Your hand rises erect, for in you there was no other admixture from them.²⁰⁷

“This corresponds to: From the prey, O my son, you mount (Genesis 49:9)—for there was no prey for another on your table.²⁰⁸

“He crouches (ibid.)—at the death of Er.

“Lies down (ibid.)—at the death of Onan.

“Afterward, he grew mighty as a lion (ibid.), to raise up Perez; *as the king of beasts* (ibid.), to raise up Zerah.²⁰⁹

“Who will raise him? (ibid.)—as is written: וְלֹא יָסַף (ve-lo yasaf), *And he did not continue, to know her any longer* (Genesis 38:26), which is translated as: *And he did not cease. Who will raise him*—who will say, “This woman is

forbidden'? Who will say, 'Because she has completed her ways, she no longer needs you. Seeing that this widow has completed her ways, it is fitting to withdraw from her'? But, *who will raise him?* Surely, from then on, she is his; for look, he has removed the one rattling in her belly![210](#)

"A hidden mystery, old man! Why a man's brother? Or, why Judah, who was his father? Well, that one rattling in her belly sees that the one who had been protecting him is denouncing him from every direction—he has to leave! Once he leaves, he invites another—that other spirit—and they come to enter as before, until he is constructed as before, through the power of the intense denunciation that he launches against his brother. From then on, this woman is permitted to him.[211](#)

"Happy is the share of Judah! At first he was *a whelp*; afterward, *a lion*—growing mighty and expanding in strength, so afterward, *a lion*—and he culminated *as the king of beasts*. Not so with all those other inhabitants of the world; thus, *Judah*, as we have said.[212](#)

"Reuben, Simeon, Levi—three, as we have mentioned. Judah joined them, and all is fitting.[213](#)

"Issachar, Zebulun—two thighs, the place where true prophets suckle. Of the right thigh is written: *Of the children of Issachar, those who had understanding of the times* (1 Chronicles 12:33). And it is written: *Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out* (Deuteronomy 33:18); and in the great measure is written: *Zebulun will dwell by the shore of seas, and he by a haven of ships*. Why? Because ירבתו (*yarkhato*), *his flank, upon Sidon* (Genesis 49:13)—the measure of his ירך (*yarekh*), thigh, extends to *Sidon*.[214](#)

"Benjamin remained above, between the thighs. For look, Joseph was an image on earth, performing in this world, and with him Moses performed: *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him* (Exodus 13:19)! Benjamin ascended—Benjamin, Righteous One of the World![215](#)

“From the knees and below: Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. Left knee—Dan, until the joint of the foot. Joint of the foot—Naphtali. Consequently, *Naphtali, a hind let loose* (Genesis 49:21)—light-footed.

“Right knee—Gad: *he will raid their heel* (Genesis 49:19), until the joint of the heel. Asher, joint of the right heel: *dipping in oil his foot* (Deuteronomy 33:24), and similarly: *Iron and bronze your shoes...* (ibid., 25).²¹⁶

“All these are supernal images, the image above. Because they were real creatures in this world, *Shekhinah* was arrayed in them—[105a] in these twelve joints, twelve extensions spreading from the real Israel, as is written: *All these are the tribes of Israel, twelve* (Genesis 49:28), for the extensions of Israel are called אלה (elleh), *these*, so that the name מי (mi), *Who*, will spread, perfecting the structure, enfolding Israel in the name אלהים (Elohim). *Elleh, these*, is totality of Israel; *mi, Who*, joins with *elleh, these*, and the structure is established: one name truly.²¹⁷

“As the Chieftain of Esau said to Jacob, as is written: *for שרית (sarita), you have become prince, with Elohim* (Genesis 32:29), above, in primordial array, in the primordial structure. *All these* (ibid. 49:28)—surely, the primordial structure. Consequently, Israel will never be annihilated. And if—perish the thought!—they were annihilated, this name would not exist, as is written: *They will wipe out our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?* (Joshua 7:9). *Great name*—primordial structure, primordial name: *Elohim*.²¹⁸

“Now that Israel are in exile, the entire structure, as it were, has collapsed. But in the time to come, when the blessed Holy One will redeem His children, *mi, Who*, and *elleh, these*—which were separated in exile—will join as one, the name will be perfectly established, and the world will be fragrantly firm, as is written: *מי אלה (Mi elleh), Who (are) these, that fly like a cloud, like doves to their cotes?* (Isaiah 60:8). Since this is one name, it is not written מי ואלה (Mi ve-

elleh), *Who and these*, but rather *Mi elleh*, *Who these*—one name, indivisible. For in exile, *mi*, *Who*, has withdrawn above—Mother, as it were, away from children, and the children have fallen. And the name that was complete—that supernal, primordial, grand name—has fallen. For this we pray and sanctify in synagogue, that this name may be restored as it was: ‘May His great name be enhanced and sanctified!’ Who is ‘His name’? That ‘great’ one, first of all. For it has no structure without us: *Mi*, *Who*, is never built up without *elleh*, *these*. So, at that time, *Mi elleh*, *Who (are) these, that fly like a cloud?* The whole world will see that the supernal name has been restored to perfection. And if this great name of His is perfected and rebuilt, then the people of Israel rule over all, and all other names recover their perfection, since they all depend on ‘His great name,’ first structure of all.²¹⁹

“This mystery is: When He created worlds, this name was built as first structure of all, as is written: *Lift your eyes on high and see: Mi*, *Who*, *created elleh*, *these* (Isaiah 40:26)—creating the name in perfection. And when He *created elleh*, He created it with all the forces it deserved, so that His name would be fittingly arrayed, as is written: *who brings forth their array by number* (ibid).²²⁰

“What is *במספר* (*be-mispar*), *by number*? Well, the blessed Holy One has a son who shines from one end of the world to the other. He is a great and mighty tree, whose head reaches heaven and at whose end spread roots, embedded in holy earth. His name is *mispar*, *number*, and He hovers in the upper heaven, with five expanses suspended from Him, extending to this *mispar*, all of whom bear this name by virtue of Him, as is written: *The heavens* *מספרים* (*mesapperim*), *declare, the glory of God* (Psalms 19:2)—by virtue of this *mispar*, all those *heavens* attain this name. Thus, *who brings forth their array be-mispar, by number*; for were it not for this *mispar*, no forces or generations would exist in the worlds.²²¹

“Of this is written *Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered, the seed of Israel?* (Numbers 23:10). There are two who counted the flock, by whose hand they were numbered, for the evil eye had no power over them. *Who has counted the dust of Jacob*—here is one who made a count. *Or numbered the seed of Israel*—here is the other enumerator. Over both of these, the evil eye had no power. For look, *Who has counted the dust*—those holy rungs, smooth stones from which water issues for the worlds. Therefore, *your seed shall be like the dust of the earth* (Genesis 28:14). Just as the world is blessed by virtue of the dust, so too, *all the nations of the earth will be blessed through your seed* (Genesis 22:18)—*like the dust of the earth, truly!*²²²

“*U-mispar, Or numbered* (Numbers 23:10)—the second enumerator, who counted רבוע (*rova*), *reclining*: all those females, pearly feet of the bed on which Israel lay.²²³

“From then [105b] on, He counts all, since He has a good eye, as is written: *He counts מספר (mispar), the number of, the stars* (Psalms 147:4). *Who counts the stars? Mispar, Number, counts the stars*—by Him they are all reckoned.²²⁴

“In the time to come, *Flocks will again pass under the hands of one who counts* (Jeremiah 33:13). We do not know who it is; but since at that time all will be united, inseparable, it will be all—all will be one enumerator.²²⁵

“Rise, old man, arouse! Grow mighty in your strength, and sail the sea!”

He opened, saying, “*Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered the seed of Israel?* (Numbers 23:10). When the blessed Holy One arouses to revive the dead, these who returned in transmigration—two bodies with one spirit, two fathers, two mothers—how many cycles revolve for this! Although this has been mentioned and it is so, yet *Who has counted the dust of Jacob*, and He will restore everything and nothing will be lost and all will rise. Surely it has been

said: *Many of those who sleep in עפר אדמת (admat afar), ground of dust, will awake (Daniel 12:2). Admat afar, Ground of dust—these, as explained.*[226](#)

“In the Book of Enoch: When the Companions gazed at those letters suspended in the air within, namely, ד, פ, מ, ת, ר, ע, א (alef, ayin, dalet; pe, mem, tav, resh)—corresponding to: *I praise the dead, who have already died (Ecclesiastes 4:2)—עפר אדמת (admat afar), ground of dust, those letters.*[227](#) A voice aroused, informing as follows: In the second structure, *afar, dust; first one, admat, ground. Second one, perfected, is essence; first one, compared with it, is refuse.*[228](#)

“*Admat afar, Ground of dust—all of them will awake: these, who have been perfected, להי עולם (le-hayyei olam), to everlasting life. Who is olam, world? The world below, for they did not merit being in the world above. And those, who were unworthy, to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2). What is to shame? Well, the Other Side will be eliminated from the world, and the blessed Holy One will leave those imbued by that side for all inhabitants of the world to be astonished.*[229](#)

“Who caused all this? The one who did not want to increase in the world and did not want to uphold the holy covenant. He thus caused all that he caused and all these transigrations that I have mentioned until here. Until here, old man!”[230](#)

He was silent for a moment. The Companions were amazed; they did not know if it was day or night, if they were standing there or not.[231](#)

The old man opened, saying, “*If you buy a Hebrew slave, six years he shall serve and in the seventh he shall go free, with no payment (Exodus 21:2). This verse proves all that has been said. Every male bears the image of World of the Male, and every female bears the image of World of the Female. As long as he is a servant of the blessed Holy One, he cleaves to Him and to those six primordial years. If he*

uproots himself from His service, the blessed Holy One uproots him from those six years of World of the Male and he is handed over to someone from six sides. He serves him for six years and is uprooted from six years; afterward he descends from there and is delivered to World of the Female. Since he did not want to abide in World of the Male, he descends and abides in the Female. The Female, who is *seventh*, comes and takes him; from now on, he belongs to World of the Female.²³²

“If he does not want to abide in Her and in his redemption, he descends below and clings below, attached to the Other Side. From here on, he is uprooted from World of the Male and from World of the Female—joined to those slaves of the Other Side. Now that it is so, he needs a blemish, to be branded with a mark of blemish, for every blemish belongs to the Other Side. And from Jubilee on, he transmigrates again, returning to the world as before, cleaving to that World of the Female, no further. If he proves worthy, he generates offspring in the world, all in the mystery that is written: *Maidens behind her, her companions, are brought to you* (Psalms 45:15). Happy is he when he is perfected, attaining this!²³³

“If he does not prove worthy even in the transmigration of Jubilee, then he is as if he were not. He returned, yet his days were not fulfilled by marrying in the world and generating offspring. What is written? *If he came by himself, he shall go out by himself* (Exodus 21:3): if he enters that world alone without [106a] offspring—having refused to strive for this, leaving this world alone with no descendant—then he whirls like a stone in a sling, until that place of the mighty rock. He enters there, and immediately the spirit of that lone one blows—abandoned by his female, moving alone like a serpent joining no other on the path—blowing on him and he quickly leaves that place of the rock, alone, and goes roaming through the world until a redeemer is found to restore him. This corresponds to: *If he*

came by himself, he shall go out by himself—this one who refused to marry, to have offspring.^{[234](#)}

“However, *if he was husband to a wife* (Exodus 21:3), having married and endeavored with his wife but unsuccessfully, such a man is not banished like the other: he does not enter alone and does not leave alone. Rather, *if he was husband to a wife*, the blessed Holy One does not withhold the reward of any creature, even if they failed. What is written? *His wife shall go out with him* (ibid.)—both of them transmigrate, succeeding in joining as one, as before. This man does not marry a divorcée, but rather the one with whom he endeavored at first and failed. Now they will succeed together, if they refine their deeds. Thus, *his wife shall go out with him*.^{[235](#)}

“*If his master gives him a wife [and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself]* (Exodus 21:4). Now Scripture returns to other matters: to the one who goes out alone, without any female at all, and that place called Seventh will redeem him. That Seventh is called *his master*, Master of the whole earth. If this Master of his feels compassion for him and restores him to this world all alone as he was, and gives him a wife—one for whom the altar sheds tears—and they join as one, *and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s*, as has been said.^{[236](#)}

“For if he returns and mends the site that he damaged in his life, he is accepted by the Holy King, who receives him and then establishes him perfectly. This one is called *ba’al teshuvah*, master of returning, for he inherits the dwelling-place of that flowing, gushing river, and refines who he was before. Once he has been refined and has turned in repentance, he attains perfection; for there is nothing in the world, and no entrance in the world, that cannot be breached by one who turns in repentance.^{[237](#)}

“What is *he shall go out by himself* (Exodus 21:4)? This has already been explained, but it contains something further. *He shall go out* בגפו (*ve-gappo*), *by himself*—as is said: על גפי (*al gappei*), *on the summit of, the heights of the city* (Proverbs 9:3). Just as there, elevation and ascension; so here, elevation and ascension: the place where *ba’alei teshuvah*, masters of returning, ascend—and even the completely righteous cannot stand there. Therefore, once he has returned in *teshuvah*, the blessed Holy One accepts him immediately.²³⁸

[109a]²³⁹ “*If his master* (Exodus 21:4)—Master of the earth.²⁴⁰

“*Gives him a wife* (ibid.)—from here we learn that it is not in one’s power to take a wife; rather, all is *to be weighed on scales* (Psalms 62:10). *Gives him a wife*—for it does not lie in his power. And who is she? One who is not his and was not intended for him. Who is she? One who was designated for another, yet this man anticipates him by supplication and marries her. This one, whom he did not deserve, is given to him. The blessed Holy One sees from afar and foresees that this woman is ready to generate offspring in the world. This man anticipates by supplication, and she is given to him; and he generates fruit and sows seed in a garden not his. Therefore, *the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself* (Exodus 21:4). O poor unfortunate one! How he exerted himself in vain, toiling and striving to bring forth fruit in a garden not his and emerging empty-handed!²⁴¹

“Old man, old man! In times such as these, wouldn’t you push the gate open with your feet—like someone lying on the ground powerless, incapacitated by great weakness, yet pushing with his feet? Strengthen yourself, old man! Do not fear!²⁴²

“This poor unfortunate one who exerted himself in vain—say why! If because he sowed in another garden, not his,

fine. If so, the blessed Holy One gave him that garden in which to sow, for he in fact did not take it.[243](#)

“But come and see: All things done by the blessed Holy One are entirely just, and no thing is in vain. This one to whom the blessed Holy One gave a wife—in whom he generated fruit and verdure—is not like other transmigrators. One who strives in this world to expand the tree is unlike one who does not want to strive, who uproots, casting down leaves of the tree and diminishing its fruit.[244](#)

“He to whom *his master* gave a wife, so as to generate fruit, endeavored at first to expand the tree but was unable. He does not possess great worthiness; for if he were fittingly worthy, he would not have returned in transmigration like a stone in a sling. For look at what is written: *I will give them, in My house and within My walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters* (Isaiah 56:5)! Now that he is not worthy, the blessed Holy One sees that he tried but was unable.[245](#)

“Whereas this one, *his master gives him a wife*, as we have said. Since the blessed Holy One has compassion on him and gives her to him out of mercy, He collects what is His first, drawing as much as he diminished from the spring. Consequently, *the wife and her children shall be her master’s* (Exodus 21:4), and afterward he will return and strive for himself to fill his deficiency. Until here, mystery of the verse.[246](#)

“Old man, you said that he endeavored in vain, yet you did not notice that in what you are saying, you yourself are proceeding in vain! For look at the following verse, which destroys the entire structure that you have built until now, and you think that you are sailing the sea however you wish! What is it? As is written: *If the slave says, yes, says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go free’* (Exodus 21:5).[247](#)

“Woe, old man, what will you do? You thought that no one would pursue you; but look, this verse has emerged from behind a wall like a doe in the field, leaping after you—thirteen leaps it leapt behind you and overtook you! What will you do, old man? Now you must gather your strength, for until today you have been a mighty warrior.[248](#)

“Old man, remember the snowy day when we sowed beans and there were many mighty warriors [109b] confronting you, and you alone defeated thirteen of them, each of whom would kill a lion before breakfast. If you defeated those thirteen, how much more so these thirteen, consisting only of words![249](#)

“*Says, yes, says* (Exodus 21:5), it is written. Well, the way of the blessed Holy One is to execute judgment fully. When the time arrives for this woman to find a mate, what does He do? He kills this one, and that mate marries her, and he departs this world alone, single.[250](#)

“*If the slave says, yes, says*—the Companions have established it according to the simple meaning of the verse: *If [the slave] says*—at the beginning of the six years. *Yes, says*—at the end of six years, before the seventh has commenced; for if he speaks even a day into the seventh, his words are void. Why? It is written: *the slave*—while he is still a *slave*, in the sixth year. If he spoke at the beginning of six and did not speak at the end of six, it counts for nothing. Therefore, twice: *says, yes, says*.[251](#)

“Here, while he is still with this woman, he increases prayer and supplication daily before the Holy King. Just as beginning was by supplication, so is end by supplication. This is *says, yes, says*—*says*, at first, when he anticipated by supplication; *yes, says*, at the end, accepted with mercy.[252](#)

“*I love my master* (Exodus 21:5): by virtue of this and of expressing love for the blessed Holy One through abundant prayer—mending his actions and saying, *I love my master, my wife, and my children*—the blessed Holy One accepts

him, through that repentance and abundance of prayer. What does He do? Whereas he was going to return in transmigration and endure punishment in this world for what he did, he does not return. What does He do? He brings him to the Court of the Heavenly Academy, which judges him and delivers him to the house of lashes. The blessed Holy One marks him, indicating that he is being delivered there, blemishing him to be under the dominion of foreskin until a certain time, after which He redeems him.²⁵³

“If when he is branded with a blemish, Jubilee arrives—even if there is just one day until Jubilee, it is considered as if the entire Jubilee had elapsed. Such is his punishment, no more; Jubilee comes and he is redeemed, conducted through the curtain. Until here.”²⁵⁴

The old man closed his eyes for a moment.

He opened, saying, “*Hear, O mountains, the grievance of YHVH, and you firm ones, foundations of the earth! For YHVH has a grievance against His people...* (Micah 6:2). Old man, old man! Until now you were in the depths of the sea, and now you have leapt into mighty mountains to wage battle with them. Yet surely even now you are in the fierce sea; but while roaming the depths of the sea, you encountered those mighty mountains within the sea. Now you must wage battle against the depths of the sea and against these mountains!”²⁵⁵

“Weary one, who put you into this? You were tranquil, yet you sought all this. You did it, so endure! Now you cannot turn back. Gather your strength, old man; gird your sword! Do not fear to smash those mountains so they do not overwhelm you. Say to them, ‘Towering mountains, mighty mountains, how formidable you are!’

“Two verses are written. One is: *Arise, contend with the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice* (Micah 6:1). The other is: *Hear, O mountains, the grievance of YHVH* (ibid., 2). Well, there are mountains, and then there are

mountains! There are mountains towering above, above; of these is written *Hear, O mountains, the grievance of YHVH*. And there are lower mountains, beneath those; of these is written *Arise, contend with the mountains*, for the pursuer of quarrels is near them. So, there are mountains, and then there are mountains!²⁵⁶

“Now, you might say, old man, ‘Look, it is written: *and let the hills hear* (Micah 6:1)—these *hills*, all those below—and now you make them *mountains!*’ Well, so it is: compared to towering mountains, they are *hills*; when they are by themselves, they are called *mountains*.²⁵⁷

“Come and see what is written: *and you firm ones, foundations of the earth* (Micah 6:2). Since it is written *Hear, O mountains* (ibid.), [110a] who are *mountains* and who are *firm ones*? Well, *mountains* and *firm ones* are all one, but these are three lofty ones above, over their heads, and those are three below them, and all are one. *Mountains* above, and of them David said *I raise my eyes to the mountains* (Psalms 121:1); these are three primary ones. *And you firm ones*—these are three later ones, below them: two supports of the house and one joy of the house. These are called *foundations of the earth*; they are *firm ones* and so they are called.²⁵⁸

“Old man, you know that if one waging battle is not alert, he will not triumph. He must strike with his hand and be on guard with his thoughts: what the other is thinking, he should think. The weak hand constantly poised for that thought, and the right for everything—for thought and for striking.²⁵⁹

“Just now you said, ‘והאיתנים (Ve-ha-eitanim), *you firm ones*, are firm ones below, and *mountains* are above.’ On guard, old man! For look, another thought is confronting you—as is written: משכיל לאיתן (Maskil le-Eitan), *A maskil for Ethan, the Ezrahite* (Psalms 89:1), and this is Abraham the Elder, who is called *Eitan*, Ethan. And if Abraham is *Eitan*, then Isaac and

Jacob are *eitanim*, *firm ones*. Rise, old man, for you know that this thought is striking your thought!²⁶⁰

“He took up his theme and said, ‘אֵיתָן (*Eitan*), *Enduring, is your dwelling, and set in the cliff your nest*’ (Numbers 24:21). *Eitan, Enduring*, is the morning of Abraham, corresponding to *The morning dawned* (Genesis 44:3)—the pillar upon which the whole world stands, inheriting its light from Abraham, called River issuing from Eden.²⁶¹

“Old man, old man! Look, another thought is confronting you, and you do not know how to be alert in waging battle! Old man, where is your strength? Surely, *the battle is not won by the mighty* (Ecclesiastes 9:11). לֵאֵיתָן מִשְׁכִּיל (*Maskil le-Eitan*), *A maskil for Ethan, the Ezrahite* (Psalms 89:1). It is written *maskil*—this is the river issuing from Eden, who is David’s interpreter, informing him of those concealed, supernal matters. If *maskil* is the river issuing from Eden, *Ethan the Ezrahite* is Abraham, above!²⁶²

“Surely, I know! And though I am an old man, I am striking at this thought. *Ethan the Ezrahite* includes two rungs. *Morning dawned—dawned* is Abraham; *morning* is the river. Similarly, *Ethan the Ezrahite—Ezrahite* is Abraham; *Ethan*, as has been said, is that river issuing.²⁶³

“Now, old man, rise, stand in your chariot! For now you will fall and not be able to rise. Here comes King Solomon with his troops, chariots, warriors, and cavaliers, coming toward you. Leave the field so he will not find you there!²⁶⁴ *All the men of Israel gathered before King Solomon at the Feast, in the month of Ethanim* (1 Kings 8:2)—the month in which the *eitanim, firm ones*, were born. And who are they? The patriarchs; they are the firm ones of the world. This month is תִּשְׁרֵי (*tishrei*), Tishrei, in which the alphabet is reversed, from below to above.²⁶⁵

“Further, based on your words, it is fitting that you leave the field. If it were written מִשְׁכִּיל אֵיתָן (*Maskil Eitan*), *A maskil of Ethan, the Ezrahite*, then as you said. But now that it is written מִשְׁכִּיל לֵאֵיתָן (*Maskil le-Eitan*), *A maskil for Ethan, the*

Ezrahite, your battle is worthless. Leave the field against your will; do not show yourself there!²⁶⁶

“O poor unfortunate one! How will you escape? If they will defeat you like this and you flee from the field, all inhabitants of the world will pursue you, and you will not dare to face anyone! Here I swear that I will not leave the field! Here I will encounter King Solomon face-to-face, and all the men of Israel—warriors, cavaliers, and his chariots.²⁶⁷ The blessed Holy One will help you, old man, for you are weary. Arise, old man; brace yourself! Until today you were the mightiest of men!”

He opened, saying, “משכיל לאיתן (*Maskil le-Eitan*), *A maskil for Ethan, the Ezrahite*. If it were written משכיל לדוד (*Maskil le-David*), *A maskil for David*, then as you said. However, *A maskil for Ethan*. There is *maskil*, and then there is *maskil*! There is *maskil* above, and there is *maskil* below. *A maskil for Ethan*—when that river rises in desire, all limbs rejoice, joining with Him. He [110b] ascends, ascending to the supernal brain, which is satisfied with Him and rejoices in Him. Then, *maskil le-Eitan*—enlightening Him, disseminating to Him, through Abraham His beloved, all that is needed. That supernal brain *maskil le-Eitan, enlightens Ethan*. And when King David is arrayed in desire toward Him, He *maskil le-David, enlightens David*, just as the supernal brain enlightened Him. So there is *maskil*, and then there is *maskil*!²⁶⁸

“*In the month of Ethanim* (1 Kings 8:2)—for in this month, the *eitanim, firm ones*, were born. The structure below resembles that above, so in it were born *mountains and firm ones—mountains*, concealed; *firm ones*, thighs strong as copper, with that firm one between them.²⁶⁹

“Rise, old man! Strike on all sides! When Moses ascended to receive the Torah, the blessed Holy One transmitted to him seventy keys of Torah. When He reached fifty-nine, there was one key hidden and concealed, which

He did not give to him. He pleaded before Him. He replied, 'Moses, all upper and lower keys depend upon this key.'²⁷⁰

"He said before Him, 'Master of the Universe, what is its name?'

"He replied, '*Eitan*, Firm one, and all those *eitanim*, *firm ones*, depend upon it and are sustained by it.' And outside the body, for Written Torah informs and enlightens it. It is the essence and key of Written Torah. And when Oral Torah is arrayed toward it, it becomes key of all, Her key. Then, *maskil le-David*, *enlightening David*.²⁷¹

"Since Oral Torah inherits, letters are reversed; so it is called תשרי (*tishrei*), Tishrei. It is תש"ר (*tav, shin, resh*), but since it is the mystery of the Holy Name, the blessed Holy One sealed within it a letter of His name: י (*yod*). With the altar He sealed within it ה (*he*)—הרשת (*ha-reshet*), *the mesh, extending to the middle of the altar* (Exodus 27:5). Deborah came and sealed within it ו (*vav*), namely, ותשר (*va-tashar*), *Then sang, Deborah* (Judges 5:1). In this place, sealing of the Holy Name that He sealed within Her.²⁷²

"When that key opens Oral Torah, we must perceive it, and this is תניא (*tanya*), It has been taught; איתן (*Eitan*), *Enduring, is your dwelling* (Numbers 24:21); *baraita*, external teaching, outside of the body. איתנים (*Eitanim*), *Firm ones*, are תנאים (*tanna'im*), teachers—pillars, supports, outside of the body.²⁷³

"Now something should be revealed: When these relate to Written Torah, they are called *eitanim*, *firm ones*; relating to Oral Torah, they are called *tanna'im*, teachers. *Eitan*, *Firm*, relating to Written Torah; *tanya*, it has been taught, relating to Oral Torah—all fittingly.²⁷⁴

"Companions, look, I am on the field! King Solomon with his mighty warriors will come and find an old man, feeble in strength, mighty, a warrior, victor of battles! I know that he is coming, standing behind a rock in the field, and he is watching me and how my strength endures in the

field. Alone he watches, for he is a man of peace, master of peace, and he goes away.²⁷⁵

“Now, old man, your strength adorns you, and you stand alone in the field! Return to your place and cast off your weapons, like one leaving the battle-ground.²⁷⁶

“*Hear, O mountains, the grievance of YHVH, and you firm ones, foundations of the earth!* (Micah 6:2). *Hear, O mountains*—as we have said. *And you firm ones, foundations of the earth—foundations of the earth*, indeed, for by them it is nourished, receiving daily, so they are *foundations of the earth*.²⁷⁷

“*For YHVH has a grievance against His people* (ibid.). Who can endure the grievance of the blessed Holy One? Certainly not Israel! Therefore he says to these, *Hear, O mountains*—this is one quarrel. *Arise, contend with the mountains* (ibid., 1)—a second quarrel, which the blessed Holy One quarrels with them. All those disputes with Israel and all those reprimands are entirely like a father toward his son, as they have established.²⁷⁸

“Concerning Jacob, when He sought to quarrel with him, what is written? *For YHVH has a grievance against Jacob* (Hosea 12:3). What is the grievance? As is written: *In the womb he seized his brother by the heel* (ibid., 4). For this matter came reprimand and all those grievances. Is this not a weighty matter: *In the womb he seized his brother by the heel, and in his strength he strove with God?* This is no small matter, what he did in the womb. Now, is there deception in the womb? Surely, he practiced deception in the womb; but Jacob thrust away his brother Esau entirely so that he would have no share at all. And Esau complained only [111a] about one that is two, as is written: *He deceived me* זֶה (zeh), *this, two times* (Genesis 27:36). The verse should read אֵלֶּה (elleh), *these, two times*; why zeh, this? Well, one comparable to two, one emerging as two. And what is that? בְּכֹרָתִי (Bekhorati), *my birthright*—

letters reversed, becoming ברכתי (*birkhati*), *my blessing*. *Zeh, this, two times*—one comparable to two.²⁷⁹

“Esau did not know what he did to him in the womb, but his appointed prince knew, and at this sound the blessed Holy One shook the heavens and their array. For his prince did not demand *blessing* and *birthright* nor say anything about this; he could have demanded *blessing* but did not. However, brotherhood he surely did demand—*Do not hide yourself from your own flesh and blood* (Isaiah 58:7), yet Jacob did not want to give him anything to eat before he took his birthright from him. What birthright did he take from him? The birthright above and below; בכרה (*bekhorah*), birthright, lacking ו (vav).²⁸⁰

“So, *he seized his brother by the heel* (Hosea 12:4), precisely—deceiving him, casting him behind. What is ‘behind’? He made him emerge first into this world. Jacob said to Esau, ‘You take this world first, and I will follow.’²⁸¹

“Come and see what is written: *Afterward his brother came out, his hand gripping Esau’s heel* (Genesis 25:26). Now, do you imagine that his hand was grasping the other’s foot? Not so. Rather, what did his hand grasp? The one who was a *heel*. And who is that? Esau. For Esau was called *heel* from the moment that [Jacob] deceived his brother; yet since the day that the world was created, the blessed Holy One called him *heel*, as is written: *He will strike you at the head, and you will strike him at the heel* (Genesis 3:15)—you, called *heel*, *will strike him* first, and finally he will strike your head right off you. Who is that? Samael, head of the serpent, who strikes in this world.²⁸²

“So, *in the womb he seized his brother by the heel*—making him a heel—and Esau acquired this world first. This is the mystery of what is written: *These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Children of Israel* (Genesis 36:31). And this is the mystery spoken by King Solomon: *An inheritance gained hastily in the beginning—its end will not be blessed*

(Proverbs 20:21)—at the end of the world. So, *in the womb he seized his brother by the heel...*[283](#)

“What is: *In his strength he strove with God* (Hosea 12:4)? So they have said: ‘With his might and power.’ Fine; but not so, clarity of the word. Jacob is supernal image and holy body. For since the day that Adam existed, there has not been a body like the body of Jacob, and the beauty of Adam was the genuine beauty possessed by Jacob, and the image [111b] of Jacob was the genuine image of Adam.[284](#)

“As for Adam, when the serpent appeared and he was seduced, the serpent overcame him. Why? Because Adam had no power, since until now the one who was his power had not been born. And who is the power of Adam? Seth, who was in the genuine image of Adam, as is written: *He engendered in his likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth* (Genesis 5:3). What is *in his likeness, after his image*? That he was circumcised.[285](#)

[110b] “What is the voice of a woman that can be joined by the voice of a serpent, like a dog with a bitch?[286](#)

“[111a] Come and see: The voice of a serpent cannot join or cling to the voice of any woman in the world; but there are two women with whom the voice of a serpent can join. One is she who does not duly guard her menstrual impurity and her days of cleansing, or who immerses one day early. And the other is a woman who delays carnal knowledge with her husband to inflict suffering upon him—unless he does not mind or care about this. But these two women—as they hasten, so they tarry with the voice of the serpent until voice cleaves to voice. As she delays, to bring suffering upon her husband, so the voice of the serpent hastens to fuse with this woman’s voice. These are two women with whose voices the serpent’s voice joins, like a dog with a bitch.[287](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘What do we care if voice joins voice or not?’ Woe that inhabitants of the world perish like

this, unaware! Regarding this voice of a woman, joining and blending with the voice of a serpent: When the wicked, evil one comes out of the vessel and roams the world, she encounters these two voices—the serpent’s voice and the woman’s voice—and the woman is inflamed by them, and they by her. Once she is inflamed, they conceive; a spirit takes shape with her until it flies into this woman’s womb. And when this woman gives birth, that wicked one comes and assigns the spirit—an evil bond, voice of the serpent rattling inside her—and it laughs at the baby until that wicked one comes, like a woman entrusting her son to another woman, who babbles to him and giggles at him babyishly until his mother arrives. This is how that spirit acts, and often it becomes an agent of the wicked one and kills him, as is written: *On the side of their tormentors, power* (Ecclesiastes 4:1)—not [111b] as you say, but rather the *power* of that spirit. So twice it is written: *with no one to comfort them* (ibid.)—once from wicked Lilith and once from that spirit.^{[288](#)}

“Old man, now you have friends, and you are speaking like someone who sees no one waging war. Look, they are all at peace with you! From now on, I will not remove my weapons, so that my name will be remembered.^{[289](#)}

“That crouching sin lies by the opening like a dog. When the last sound given by the woman comes forth, he leaps from the opening, is removed from there, and follows it. Why? Because the blessed Holy One sends one of His keys, and as the voice flies off, the key comes. The serpent follows the voice issuing into the world and moves to the hill of the belly, rattling until the time when she is cleansed from the filth of the serpent’s bites. The blessed Holy One spins revolutions, generating actions fittingly.^{[290](#)}

“All this because that belly was thrust away. Yet surely he was thrust from that belly and has no share, and he is thrust from the belly below of other women of the world. For although pain is inflicted, he is not empowered to

dominate it. Which belly is he given to dominate? The belly of the straying wife, as is written: *Her belly will swell* (Numbers 5:27), for this is the belly upon which he wreaks vengeance as he wishes; this belly is his, given to him so that he not be utterly thrust away.²⁹¹

“Now, my beloved friends, listen! I have not seen you, and I have spoken to you.²⁹² *All words are tiresome* (Ecclesiastes 1:8), no human can speak—even words of Torah are tiresome! As is written: *Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him*, and it is written: *He saw that he could not prevail against him and he touched the socket of his thigh* (Genesis 32:25–26). That thigh he gained from Jacob, and that thigh remained in weakness—until Samuel arrived. What is ‘in weakness’? That it did not conduct prophecy. When Samuel arrived, he took that thigh and lifted it from that place, snatching it from him. Since that time it has been withheld from him, and he has no share in holiness at all.²⁹³

“The blessed Holy One did not rob or reject him totally, through Samuel taking his thigh; rather, he provided him one portion. What is that? He gave him that thigh of the straying wife, in exchange for the thigh that he confiscated from him, and the belly of the straying wife, in exchange for the belly that he confiscated from him. Thus both of them the blessed Holy One gave him, so that it would be a place of holiness.²⁹⁴

“ולנפיל ירך (Ve-lanpil yarekh), *and to sag the thigh* (Numbers 5:22). What is this? The verse should read ונפלה ירכה (ve-nafelah yerekhah), *and her thigh will sag, or and her thigh will be broken*. But like someone throwing a bone to a dog, saying, ‘Take this for your portion.’²⁹⁵

“The only thing that tormented him was that they stole a thigh from him, because he struggled and wearied for that and won it, and they took it away from him. So the blessed Holy One casts him this bone of a straying wife, and with this he is satiated and delighted.²⁹⁶

“All his chariots and company constantly seek the thigh, pursuing it with yearning. Consequently, weariness of the knees of scholars derives from this, since their entire longing is for the thigh, especially the scholar’s thigh. Every thing returns to its place, and the blessed Holy One does not omit anything necessary at all; He wants only His people and share, His portion and inheritance, to approach holiness. As the blessed Holy One does above, so Israel does below. And we have learned as follows: An Israelite is forbidden to teach Torah to a Gentile, as is written: *He tells His words to Jacob... He has not done so for any other nation...* (Psalms 147:19-20). Consequently, Jacob thrust him away and Samuel thrust him away, so that he would have no share [112a] in holiness. All nursing of hatred of Israel is based on this.[297](#)

“This can be compared to a dog who snatched a pure bird from the market. He carried it, but before he could mangle it, a person came and grabbed it from him. Afterward, he gave him a single, scraped useless bone. Similarly with the Prince of Esau: they took him from that belly and snatched that thigh from him. Afterward, they gave him one bone—that belly and thigh of the straying wife, nothing else; this is the bone they provided him as his portion and share.[298](#)

“Thus all judgments of the blessed Holy One are true, all on the straight path, yet human beings do not know or consider Him. She strays from her husband, as is written: *who forsakes the companion of her youth* (Proverbs 2:17); so too the woman corresponding to her on earth.[299](#)

“Come and see: When someone finds a friend like himself, acting like him in the world, he loves him and cleaves to him and treats him kindly. But not so with the Other Side. Once he finds someone who abandons the side of holiness of the blessed Holy One, and acts like him and cleaves to him, he seeks to destroy him and remove him from the world. This woman acted like her, cleaving to her;

see what she does to her: *Her belly will swell and her thigh sag* (Numbers 5:27).³⁰⁰ Not so with the blessed Holy One. One who abandons the Other Side and cleaves to the blessed Holy One—He loves him and bestows upon him all the kindness in the world.

“Now, old man, prepare yourself! For look, the serpent is moving, trying to incite you, but it is unable!”

He opened, “*What profit does a person have for all his toil at which he toils under the sun?* (Ecclesiastes 1:3). Now, did Solomon come to teach only this? If he had said *for his toil at which he toils*, then fine, for there remains toil that is profitable. But since it is written *for all his toil*, that encompasses everything: nothing remains profitable!³⁰¹

“However, Solomon did not utter this statement regarding every person. Rather, there is a person in the world who engages constantly in evil and causing harm, never engaging in good for even one moment. Therefore it is written עמלו (*amalo*), *his toil*, and not יגיעו (*yegi'o*), *his labor*. *Amalo, his toil*—as is said: *Amalo, His mischief, recoils on his head* (Psalms 7:17). *Yegi'o, his labor*—as is said: *You shall eat of יגיע (yegi'a), the labor of, your hands...* (ibid. 128:2), and similarly: *Yegi'a, The labor of, my hands God has seen* (Genesis 31:42). But *amalo, his toil*, corresponds to עמל (*amal*), *mischief, and vexation* (Psalms 10:14).³⁰²

“He strives for evil, and so it is *under the sun*. Of this one is written: *He has no offspring or progeny among his people...* (Job 18:19). The blessed Holy One does not want him to generate offspring, for if he did, he would obliterate the world. Therefore it is written: *What profit does a person have for all his toil?* Anyone who does not strive to generate offspring clings to this evil side, entering under his wings.³⁰³

“Ruth said, *Spread the wing of your garment over your servant* (Ruth 3:9)—in order to marry him, to generate offspring. And the blessed Holy One spreads wings over a person for him to be fruitful in the world. One who refuses

to generate offspring *comes* בגפו (*be-gappo*), *into its wing* (Exodus 21:3)—into the wing of that Evil One who goes childless, like a serpent moving alone.³⁰⁴

[108b]³⁰⁵ “*If he comes* בגפו (*be-gappo*), *by himself* (Exodus 21:3). What is *be-gappo*? We have learned: ‘According to its translation: by himself.’ This is fine, but look at what we have learned: ‘The whole world stands on one גפא (*gappa*), wing, of Leviathan.’ This mystery pertains when it exists as male and female; for male and female the blessed Holy One created them, and wherever they moved, the world trembled. If the blessed Holy One had not castrated the male and cooled the female, they would have obliterated the world. Consequently, they do not generate offspring; and whoever does not generate offspring בגפו יבא (*be-gappo yavo*), *comes into its wing*—entering beneath that wing which does not generate offspring. Accordingly, בגפו יצא (*be-gappo yetse*), *he will go out in its wing*—thrust there, never entering the curtain, rejected and banished from that world. *Be-gappo yetse, He will go out in its wing—he will go out in its wing, surely!*³⁰⁶

“Come and see what is written: ערירים (*Aririm*), *Childless, they will die* (Leviticus 20:20)—spelled ערירם (*aririm*), entirety of male and female: entering in mystery of male, he will leave in mystery of female; entering in one, leaving in the other. This is the place where he clings in that world; for the blessed Holy One does not want anyone who has emasculated himself in this world to appear before Him.³⁰⁷

“Come and see from a sacrifice, [109a] for a castrated animal was not offered before Him and was removed so as not to be offered. He commanded, saying, *In your land you shall not do it* (Leviticus 22:24). And so for all generations, it is forbidden to castrate creatures created in the world by the blessed Holy One, for all castration derives from the Other Side.³⁰⁸

“If he endeavored and married a woman, and did not generate offspring—not wanting to, even though having a

wife—or if she did not want to, and he enters that world childless, what is written? *If he was husband to a wife*—yet they disregarded the handiwork of their Lord—*his wife shall go out with him* (Exodus 21:3): he will enter *the wing* of the male; and she, of the female—*he comes into its wing, he will go out in its wing*, as has been said, all precisely arranged. [112a] All that is necessary has already been said.[309](#)

“The grievance brought by the blessed Holy One has already been discussed. The grievance of which is written *Arise, contend with the mountains* (Micah 6:1)—what is it? Well, these are mountains below. Why this grievance? Because in them dangles every sin committed by Israel against their Father in Heaven. How so? Israel knew the ministering of all the supernal angels in heaven, and they were not baffled by any name of any single one of them or any service they performed. In two respects they strayed after them. First, they knew how to draw their power—of the stars and constellations—to earth. And secondly, they knew how to conjure them for everything they needed. For this, the blessed Holy One sought to contend with them and bring judgment upon them. Since they are subject to contention and judgment, the entire chain collapses, for it is useless. Therefore *Arise, contend*.[310](#)

“*And let the hills hear your voice* (Micah 6:1). [112b] Who are *the hills*? Matriarchal maidservants, rungs called *maidens behind her, her companions* (Psalms 45:15). So, *let the hills hear your voice*.[311](#)

“Come and see! Return, old man, to earlier matters. Israel acted like this until they collaborated with lower rungs. The thigh that we have mentioned—Israel strengthened them greatly with that thigh. Mordecai showed the evil Haman that thigh of his, and over this he became enraged—something fittingly his, and with it he enraged him.[312](#)

“See, Companions, what is written: *Rebekah took the precious garments of Esau, her elder son, [which were with her in the house, and clothed Jacob, her younger son]* (Genesis 27:15). With these clothes of his, he stole, ousting him from everything, from his blessing and from the birthright. Consequently, the pretext found by his chariots is employed against the scholars, for they constantly rub scholars’ garments and their thighs. These two items belonged to the Other Side, and so, because they were stolen from him, he has a pretext only against scholars. Therefore, this wearing away of scholars’ garments results from their rubbing, and this weariness of the knees surely derives from them. It comes from what is theirs, and from theirs they draw a pretext; what was theirs they demand from scholars, who are totality of the dweller in tents. So there is no pretext or event without justice, and every thing returns to its place.[313](#)

“I returned and saw all the torments that were committed under the sun. Look, the tears of the tormented—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their tormentors, power—with no one to comfort them (Ecclesiastes 4:1). This verse I have intimated, and it has been mentioned. But *I returned*—what is this? From where did [Solomon] return?[314](#) If we say that after he spoke this word he returned once again and spoke another word—fine. However, *I returned and saw*—it has been taught as follows: Every day [Solomon] would rise early and turn his face toward the east and see what he saw. Then he turned toward the north and stood facing there, lowering his eyes and raising his head. Behold, a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud would come, and upon the pillar of cloud appeared a great, mighty eagle, its right wing over the pillar of fire and its left wing over the pillar of cloud. That eagle had two leaves in its mouth. The pillar of fire, the pillar of cloud, and that eagle upon them came and bowed before King

Solomon. The eagle approached, bent before him, and gave him those two leaves. King Solomon took them and smelled them and thereby perceived a sign. He said, 'This one is from *falling*, and that one from *eyes uncovered*.' As he held the two leaves, he realized through both of them that *falling* and *eyes uncovered* intended to reveal something.³¹⁵

"What did he do? He sealed his throne with a signet ring engraved with the Holy Name, and he took a ring engraved with the Holy Name, climbed to the roof, and rode on that eagle. The eagle took off, ascending to the highest clouds, and everywhere light dimmed. The wise among them would know and say, 'Look, Solomon is passing by!' but they did not know where he was going. The fools would say, 'It's a cloud that's moving and spreading darkness.'³¹⁶

"The eagle mounted with him, flying four hundred parasangs until the Mountains of Darkness, site of Tarmod in the desert mountains, and there it descended. He raised his head and saw the Mountains of Darkness, and he would know that he should enter there. He rode on the eagle as before, flying into the mountains to the location of an olive tree. He cried out mightily, *YHVH, Your hand is lifted up; they will not see. Let them see Your zeal for Your people and be ashamed; let the fire for Your adversaries consume them!* (Isaiah 26:11).³¹⁷

"He entered there until he approached that place, and he laid the ring in front of them and drew close. There he learned all that he wished of that alien wisdom that he wanted to know. Once they had told him all that he wished, he rode on that [113a] eagle and returned to his place. When he sat upon his throne, his mind was at ease and he would speak words of precious wisdom. At that moment he would say, '*I returned and saw—I returned*, really, from that journey; *I returned* from that wisdom, which has settled in

my heart and in my mind.’ Then, *and I saw all the tormented*.³¹⁸

“Are there so few in the world, that he said *all the tormented*? Rather, who are the *tormented*? These are babies in their mothers’ potent bosoms who are tormented from several directions: tormented in a supernal place above and tormented below. The Companions have aroused discussion of this and so it is, but there are so many!³¹⁹

“Rise, old man, arouse in your power! Old man, old man, utter your word! Do not fear! Among those tormented, there is one tormented for having tormented first, or for being third after another, as is written: *inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations* (Exodus 34:7).³²⁰

“How is he tormented? King Solomon cried out, *A man tormented by the blood of another will flee to a pit; let no one support him* (Proverbs 28:17). Since he is *tormented by the blood of another*, he or his son or his grandson will be tormented on the scale, as is written: *will flee to a pit*—fleeing from a holy place to that empty pit, and *no one* will *support him* in this world. Since he is *tormented by the blood of another*, he or his seed will be tormented by that Other Side.³²¹

“There is a tormented one among others tormented, as is said: *You shall not torment your fellow* (Leviticus 19:13). He transgressed and tormented, so he is tormented through his sons by that Other Side. Therefore he said *all the tormented*—Solomon said, ‘I comprehended all aspects called *tormented*, and why they are tormented.’³²²

“*That נעשו (na’asu), were made, under the sun* (Ecclesiastes 4:1). *That na’asu, were made*—the verse should read *that גרעו (gare’u), were withdrawn*. Why *that were made*? If ‘making’ is praiseworthy, then their making is surely above the sun!³²³

“But surely, *were made*. How were they made? Since they are tormented in spirit there, why do they come to this

world? Well, spirits are surely *made*—formed in this world. Once their body is completed and that spirit is formed in a pure, clean body unstained by sin in this world, then the body is tormented as the soul was tormented—and this is the body that he enjoys most of all. There are various kinds of other tormented spirits there, not *made* into bodies; but these are *the tormented that were made*.³²⁴

“There are others *that were made* by people troubling their Lord. Such as whom? One who עשיק (asheiq), violates, his neighbor’s wife, secretly or openly, and the child born of them is עשיק (ashiq), extorted, against the wish of their Lord and without the knowledge of the woman’s husband. Such acts are עשוקין (ashuqin), tormented, troubling the blessed Holy One to fashion a body and design a form. These are *the tormented that were made*—whose bodies *were made*, literally, unwillingly. Consequently, King Solomon said *I saw all the tormented*—I comprehended all types of *the tormented*, those *that were made* and formed.³²⁵

“As with these, so with those that were already *made* by foreskin, which raised them, maintaining and enlarging the body, forming it; and afterward, עשקין ליה (asheqin leih), it is confiscated, and seized—behold, עשוקים (ashuqim), *robbed, that were made*. Concerning all, Solomon stood and said, ‘I comprehended *all the tormented that were made*.

“*Look, the tears of the tormented* (Ecclesiastes 4:1)—all shed tears before the blessed Holy One, complaining. These shed tears because foreskin raised them and enabled them to reach the age of thirteen, and afterward עשקין לון (asheqin lon), they are confiscated, from foreskin and seized by the blessed Holy One—behold, עשוקין (ashuqin), *robbed, that were already made*.³²⁶

“If he commits a sin, he is killed. These have a valid claim and will one day declare, ‘Master of the Universe! A baby one day old who sins, is judgment pronounced upon him? I was one day old!’ For look, from that day the blessed Holy One calls him son, as is written: *YHVH said to me, ‘You*

are My son; today I [113b] have begotten you' (Psalms 2:7). 'Master of the Universe! A newborn one day old, is judgment executed upon him?' Behold, *the tears of those tormented—with no one to comfort them!*[327](#)

"There is another tormented one—the tormented one called a bastard. When he issues into the world, he is immediately separated from the community of the Holy People. That poor, wretched bastard sheds tears before the blessed Holy One and complains, 'Master of the Universe! If my parents sinned, what sin did I myself commit? Look, my actions are proper in Your sight!' *Look, the tears of the tormented—with no one to comfort them!* Similarly with all those *tormented*: they have a valid claim before the blessed Holy One and *no one to comfort them*, no one to respond to the pain in their heart.[328](#)

"As for his saying *Look, the tears of the tormented*, this refers to those who die in their mother's potent bosom. These induce the shedding of tears among all inhabitants of the world, for no tears issue from the heart like these. All inhabitants of the world are stunned, and say, 'The judgments of the blessed Holy One are true, following a true path. These poor babies who have not sinned, why did they die? Where is the justice performed by the Master of the Universe? If due to the sins of their parents they depart from the world, why?' Surely, *with no one to comfort them!*[329](#)

"Further, *Look, the tears of the tormented*—those tears of theirs in that world, protecting the living. For we have learned: There is a place prepared for them in that world, where even the completely righteous cannot stand. The blessed Holy One loves them and cleaves to them, and the Supernal Academy is established by them. Of them is written: *From the mouth of babes and sucklings You have founded strength* (Psalms 8:3). What do they accomplish there, and why do they ascend there? *On account of Your foes, to put an end to enemy and avenger* (ibid.). And

similarly, there is another place for masters of repentance.³³⁰

[106a]³³¹ “We have learned: Nothing in the world withstands *teshuvah*, and the blessed Holy One accepts everyone.³³² If one turns in repentance, awaiting him is the path of life; and whatever damage he has caused, all is restored, returning to perfection. For even of something sworn by the blessed Holy One, read as follows: *YHVH of Hosts has decided, and Who will annul it* (Isaiah 14:27)—this is a hidden mystery.³³³

“Furthermore, when the blessed Holy One swears an oath, He does so only on the contingency that they do not engage in repentance—for no decree withstands repentance, and the blessed Holy One forgives everything when they repent completely, as is written: *As I live—declares YHVH—if Coniah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were [a signet on My right hand, even from there I would tear you off]...Inscribe this man childless...* (Jeremiah 22:24, 30); yet after he turned in repentance, it is written: *And the sons of Jeconiah: Assir his son...* (1 Chronicles 3:17). From here we know that *teshuvah* breaks many weapons and many iron chains, and nothing can withstand it.³³⁴

“Therefore it is written: *They will go out and stare at the corpses of the people who transgress against Me* (Isaiah 66:24). It is not written *who transgressed against Me*, but rather *who transgress*—for they do not want to repent and to regret what they have done. But as soon as they regret, the blessed Holy One accepts them.³³⁵

“Consequently, even if this person sinned against Him and damaged a place that he should not, and returned to Him, He accepts him and has compassion upon him.³³⁶ For the blessed Holy One [106b] is full of compassion, filled with compassion for all His creatures, as is said: *His compassion is over all His creatures* (Psalms 145:9), and

His compassion extends even to His beasts and His birds. If it extends to them, then it certainly reaches and rests upon human beings, who know and recognize their Lord. Of this, David said *Your compassion is great, O YHVH; as befits Your laws, grant me life* (Psalms 119:156).

“If it extends to the wicked, then all the more so to the righteous. But who needs healing? Those who are in pain. And who are those in pain? The wicked—they need healing and compassion; and the blessed Holy One has compassion upon them, so that they will not be forsaken by Him and He will not withdraw from them and they may return to Him.^{[337](#)}

“When the blessed Holy One draws them near, He does so with the right; and when He rejects, He does so with the left. And as He rejects, the right draws near—rejecting on this side, drawing near on that side—and the blessed Holy One does not remove His compassion from them.^{[338](#)}

“Come and see what is written: *He went backsliding in the way of his heart*, and it is written: *I have seen his ways and I will heal him; I will guide him and compensate him and his mourners with comfort* (Isaiah 57:17-18). *He went backsliding*: even though the wicked do what they do intentionally—following the way of their heart, and when others warn them they refuse to listen—when they repent and take the path of returning, healing awaits them.^{[339](#)}

“Now one should observe: Is the verse speaking of the living or is the verse speaking of the dead? For look, the beginning of the verse is unlike the end, and the end is unlike the beginning! The beginning of the verse indicates the living, while its end indicates the dead.^{[340](#)} However, the verse speaks of a time when the person is still alive, as follows: *He went backsliding in the way of his heart*—because the evil impulse within him is strong, strengthening within him; so he goes *backsliding* and has no desire to turn in repentance. The blessed Holy One sees his ways, traversing evil uselessly, and He says, ‘I must

grasp his hand,' as is written: *'I have seen his ways, proceeding in darkness; I wish to provide him with healing: And I will heal him'*—the blessed Holy One conveys into his heart the ways of repentance, the way of healing for his soul.

“ואנחהו (Ve-anḥehu), *I will guide him*. What does this mean? As is said: *Go, נחה (neḥeh), lead, the people* (Exodus 32:34). The blessed Holy One leads him on a straight path, like someone grasping another's hand and bringing him out of a dark place.

“And compensate him and his mourners with comfort. Look, it seems that he is dead! Yes, indeed! Because he is dead while remaining alive, for since he is wicked he is called dead.³⁴¹ What is: *And compensate him and his mourners with comfort?* Well, the blessed Holy One bestows goodness upon human beings, for once a person enters thirteen years and beyond, He appoints for him two guardian angels—who protect him, one on his right and one on his left. When a person walks on a straight path, they rejoice in him and are invigorated with him by joy. They proclaim before him, ‘Give honor to the image of the King!’ And when he walks on a path of crookedness, they mourn over him and pass away from him. When the blessed Holy One grasps him and leads him on a straight path, then is written: *And compensate him and his mourners with comfort.* First, *I will compensate him with נחומים (niḥumim), comfort,* because אתנחם (itneḥam), he regrets, what he did previously and what he has done now, and he turns in repentance. Similarly, *and his mourners*—those angels who were mourning for him when they disappeared. Now that they have returned, there will surely be *comfort* for all sides.³⁴² Now he is really alive—alive on all sides, for he grasps the Tree of Life. And, grasping the Tree of Life, he is called *ba'al teshuvah*, master of returning—for Assembly of Israel is also called *teshuvah*, returning, and he is called *ba'al teshuvah*. And the Ancient Ones said, ‘*Ba'al teshuvah*, husband of

teshuvah, precisely!’ Consequently, even the completely righteous cannot stand in the place of *ba’alei teshuvah*, masters of returning.³⁴³

“King David said, *Against You alone have I sinned, and what is evil in Your eyes I have done...* (Psalms 51:6). *Against You alone*—why *alone*? Well, because there are sins that a person commits against the blessed Holy One and against people, and there are sins that one commits against people and not against the blessed Holy One, and there are sins that one commits against the blessed Holy One alone and not against anyone else. King David sinned against the blessed Holy One and not against people.³⁴⁴

“Now, you might say, ‘But [107a] he committed that sin of Bathsheba! And we have learned: Whoever copulates with a married woman renders her forbidden to her husband. So he sinned against his fellow and against the blessed Holy One.’³⁴⁵ Not so! For that was permitted, and David took what was his, and she had a document of divorce from her husband before he went to war. For it was the custom throughout Israel that everyone who went to war would give a contingent document of divorce to his wife, and Uriah did so with Bathsheba. After the time had passed when she was permitted to anyone, David married her; everything that he did, he did with permission.

“Otherwise, if it had been forbidden, the blessed Holy One would not have left her with him. This corresponds to what is written: *David consoled Bathsheba his wife* (2 Samuel 12:24)—testimony that she is his wife and she was his wife, destined for him since the day that the world was created. Surely, David did not commit a sin with Bathsheba, as we have said.³⁴⁶

“What was the sin that he committed against the blessed Holy One alone and not against another? That he killed Uriah *by the sword of the Ammonites* (2 Samuel 12:9), instead of killing him when he said to him *my master Joab* (ibid. 11:11)—since David was his master, as proven

by Scripture, for it is written: *These are the names of the warriors of David* (ibid. 23:8), and not *of Joab*. Yet he did not kill him at that time, but rather *by the sword of the Ammonites*.³⁴⁷

“Scripture states that no fault was found in him, *except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite* (1 Kings 15:5)—*except* indicates exclusion: *in the matter of Uriah*, and not *for Uriah*. The blessed Holy One said, ‘*Him you have killed by the sword of the Ammonites* (2 Samuel 12:9),’ and every sword of the Ammonites was engraved with an image—the image of a dragon, crooked evil serpent, their idol. The blessed Holy One said, ‘You have empowered that abomination!’ For once *the sword of the Ammonites* prevailed against Uriah, how potently empowered was the crooked serpent!³⁴⁸

“Now, if you say that Uriah was not virtuous—not so! Although it is written of him *Uriah the Hittite*, this is simply because he dwelled there, just as is said: *Jephthah the Gileadite* (Judges 11:1), called so after his place.³⁴⁹

“Thus, *in the matter of Uriah the Hittite*, for the abomination of the Ammonites prevailed over the camp of God—which was the camp of David, the very image of above—and the moment a defect appeared in this camp, a defect appeared in another camp. Concerning this, David said *Against You alone have I sinned* (Psalms 51:6)—*alone*, not against anyone else. This was the sin he committed against Him, and this is *in the matter of Uriah*, and this is *by the sword of the Ammonites*.³⁵⁰

“It is written: *The eyes of YHVH משוטטות (meshotetot), are ranging, over the whole earth* (2 Chronicles 16:9), and it is written: *The eyes of YHVH משוטטים (meshotetim), are ranging, over the whole earth* (Zechariah 4:10)—these are male and those are female, and they are known. David said, *What is evil in Your eyes I have done* (Psalms 51:6). *In Your eyes*—the verse should read *before Your eyes*. Well, why *in Your eyes*? David said, ‘The place where I sinned was *in Your*

eyes! Because I knew that *Your eyes* were standing poised before me, yet I did consider them. So, where was the sin that I committed and perpetrated? *In Your eyes.*³⁵¹

“*So that You will be justified when You speak, You will be blameless when You judge* (Psalms, *ibid.*)—and I will have no pretext to speak in Your presence.’ Come and see: Every artisan when he speaks, speaks by his craft. David was the King’s jester, and even though he was distressed, since he found himself before the King he reverted to his jesting in order to amuse the King. He said, ‘Master of the Universe! I said, *Test me and try me* (Psalms 26:2), and You said that I could not endure Your test. Look, I have sinned *so that You will be justified when You speak* and Your word will be true! For if I hadn’t sinned, my word would be true and Your word in vain! Now that I have sinned, in order for Your word to be true, I have provided space for Your word to be justified. That is why I acted: *so that You will be justified when You speak, You will be blameless when You judge.*’ David reverted to his craft, and in his distress said words of jest to the King.³⁵²

“We have learned: That deed was not befitting of David, for he said, ‘*My heart חלל (ḥalal) within me* (Psalms 109:22)’—vowelized חלל (ḥalal), *was pierced, already pierced* [107b] *within me.* So it was; but David said, ‘In the heart are two chambers: in one, blood; in the other, air. The one filled with blood contains the abode of the evil impulse; yet my heart is not so, for it is empty, and I have provided no abode for bad blood, for the evil impulse to dwell there—the translation of נבוב (nevuv) (Exodus 27:8) is חליל (ḥalil), hollow. It is surely ḥalal, hollow, with no evil abode.’ Since it was so, the sin that David committed was not befitting of him—except to provide an opening to the wicked, who can say: ‘King David sinned and turned in repentance, and the blessed Holy One forgave him; all the more so, other human beings!’ Therefore he said, *Let me teach*

transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You (Psalms 51:15).[353](#)

“It is written: *David was going up the Slope of Olives, going up weeping, his head covered and walking barefoot* (2 Samuel 15:30). Why a covered head and barefoot? Well, because he was reprimanded—he accepted excommunication as punishment and the people kept away from him a distance of four cubits. Happy is the servant who serves his Master so, acknowledging his sin in order to repent![354](#)

“Come and see: What Shimei son of Gera did to him was worse than all the troubles that he endured until that day, yet he did not respond to him with a single word—as was appropriate, for thereby his sins were expiated. Now one should observe: Shimei was a sage, imbued with great wisdom. Why did he confront David and do what he did to him? Well, the matter derived from another place, entering his heart, and all for David’s benefit. For look, what Shimei did to him caused him to turn in complete repentance, shatter his heart, and shed heartfelt tears before the blessed Holy One! Consequently he said, *Because YHVH told him, ‘Curse David’* (2 Samuel 16:10). He knew that the matter had descended from another place.[355](#)

“Two commands he gave to his son Solomon: one concerning Joab and one concerning Shimei, among the other commands that he gave him. Concerning Joab, it is written: *You also know what Joab son of Zeruah did to me* (1 Kings 2:5). This was a concealed matter, which even Solomon should not have known; however, since others knew, it was revealed to Solomon. Therefore he said *You also know*—what is not fitting for you to know.[356](#)

“Concerning Shimei, it is written: *Here, with you is Shimei* (1 Kings 2:8). Why *Here, with you*? ‘He is always present with you.’ For he was his teacher; so he did not say about Joab, ‘Here, with you is Joab,’ but about this one, who was constantly with him, he said *Here, with you*.[357](#)

“The king summoned Shimei and said, ‘Build yourself a house in Jerusalem’ (1 Kings 2:36). Where is the wisdom of King Solomon in this? Well, he did everything in wisdom, considering every aspect. He was wise. Who? Shimei! Solomon said, ‘By him, I want Torah to spread; so he should not leave.’³⁵⁸

“In his wisdom, Solomon observed something else, as is written: *He came out, coming out and cursing* (2 Samuel 16:5). Why *He came out, coming out*—twice? *He came out cursing* would have sufficed. Well, he came out once from the house of study toward David, and he came out once from Jerusalem for his slaves, for which he died. Once, coming out toward the king; the second time, for slaves. All this, Solomon saw, perceiving that second departure through the Holy Spirit; and concerning this he said, *On the very day that you come out [and cross the Wadi Kidron, know for certain that you will die]* (1 Kings 2:37)—he knew that by coming out he would die.³⁵⁹

“And flinging dust (2 Samuel 16:13). What is this? Solomon said, ‘By my father, it was *dust*; by Shimei, water,’ as is written: *On the very day that you come out and cross the Wadi Kidron*. There, dust; here, water. Solomon considered them both, so that there would be dust and water as with a straying wife, for the one who perverted the way regarding his father.³⁶⁰

“It is written: *He cursed me with a sinister curse*, and it is written: *I swore to him by YHVH, ‘I will not put you to death with the sword’* (1 Kings 2:8). Now, was Shimei stupid? If he swore to him like this, couldn’t he say, ‘*With the sword*, no; but with a spear or an arrow, yes!’³⁶¹

“However, there are two matters here. One was spoken by a child, son of a great fish [108a] whose scales rise to the height of the clouds.³⁶² The oath of King David—when he wanted to swear, he drew his sword, upon which was incised the Engraved Name, and upon this he swore. So he did with Shimei, as is written: *I swore to him by YHVH, ‘I will*

not put you to death.' How was this oath given? *With the sword* he swore.[363](#)

"Solomon inferred something else: 'He uttered a curse against father with words; here are words for him!' With the Explicit Name he killed him, not *with the sword*. This is why Solomon acted so.[364](#)

"Now one should observe and say: Since David swore to him, why did he kill him? It seems that this oath was a pretext, since heart and mouth were not as one. But surely David did not kill him. And look, it is well known that all members of the body absorb everything, while the heart cannot absorb even a thread of a strand of hair! King David was the heart, and he absorbed what was unfit for him; therefore it is written: *You will know what to do* (1 Kings 2:9). Further, the tree caused him to bear a grudge and avenge like a serpent.[365](#)

"It is written: *For You do not desire that I should give sacrifice; ascent offering You do not greet with pleasure. The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit...* (Psalms 51:18-19). *For You do not desire [that I should give] sacrifice*—now, doesn't the blessed Holy One desire that an offering be brought to Him? Look, He ordained that sinners should bring an offering so their sins would be expiated! However, David was addressing *Elohim*, and an offering is not brought to the name *Elohim*, but rather to the name יוֹד הֵאָוֶה (yod, he, vav, he), *YHVH*. For an offering is not brought to severe Judgment, the attribute of Judgment, as is written: *When a person among you brings an offering to YHVH* (Leviticus 1:2)—to *YHVH*, and not to the name *Elohim*. *When you bring a grain offering to YHVH* (ibid. 2:1); *a thanksgiving sacrifice to YHVH* (ibid. 22:29); *a communion sacrifice to YHVH* (ibid., 21). Therefore, since King David addressed *Elohim*, it had to be written: *For You do not desire that I should give sacrifice; ascent offering You do not greet with pleasure*, because offerings are not brought to this name. Rather, *The*

sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit—sadness and a broken heart.[366](#)

“Consequently, whoever has a bad dream must display sadness, for he abides in the attribute of *Elohim* and the sacrifice of the attribute of Judgment demands sadness and *a broken spirit*. That sadness fulfills the dream, and Judgment has no power over him, since he has offered the fitting sacrifice to the attribute of Judgment.[367](#)

“*A broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not spurn* (Psalms 51:19). Why *You will not spurn*? This implies that there is a heart that He does spurn! Yes, namely a heart that is haughty with arrogance of spirit. Such a heart He spurns; but *A broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not spurn*.

“*Enhance Zion with Your favor, build the walls of Jerusalem* (Psalms 51:20). *Enhance with Your favor*—informing us as follows: Why *enhance*? It seems that she already has goodness, and now, *enhance* that goodness. Certainly so! For ever since the day that the blessed Holy One engaged in building the Temple above until now, that goodness of *favor* has not settled upon that edifice, and so it has not been completed. However, when *favor* above arouses, with goodness will He tend and kindle the lights of that edifice and that creation, so that even the angels above will be unable to gaze at the Temple or at the structure. Then the whole work will be completed.[368](#)

“*Build the walls of Jerusalem*. Now, since the day that the blessed Holy One engaged in building the Temple until now, has He not built them? If He has not built *the walls of Jerusalem*, then certainly not the Temple! However, all actions of the blessed Holy One differ from the actions of human beings. When human beings built the Temple, they first constructed the walls of the city and finally the Temple—walls of the city first to protect them, then building the Temple. Not so with the blessed Holy One; rather, He builds the Temple first, and finally, when He lowers it and sets it

in place, then He will *build the walls of Jerusalem*, the walls of the city. Thus, *Enhance Zion with Your favor*, first; and then, *build [108b] the walls of Jerusalem*.

“Here is a mystery. In all actions performed by the blessed Holy One, He begins with the external, and then the kernel within; yet here, not so. Come and see: In all those actions performed by the blessed Holy One, though He begins with the external, He begins with the kernel in thought, and in action with the external. For every shell derives from the Other Side, and kernel from kernel. The Other Side always precedes: growing, developing, protecting the fruit. Once it has grown, it is cast aside; *What the wicked will prepare, the righteous will wear* (Job 27:17)—that shell is thrown away and Righteous One of the world is blessed. [369](#)

“Here, however, with the building of the Temple, when the Evil Side is eliminated from the world, this is unnecessary, for kernel and shell are His. He begins with the kernel, as is written: *Enhance Zion with Your favor*, first; and then, *build the walls of Jerusalem*. That outside wall, the shell, is genuinely His, as is written: *I Myself—declares YHVH—will be a wall of fire around her* (Zechariah 2:9)—*I*, and not the Evil Side. [370](#)

“Israel is the kernel of the world; Israel arose in thought. Other nations, who are the shell, preceded, as is written: *These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Children of Israel* (Genesis 36:31). Yet the blessed Holy One intends to initiate the kernel without the shell, as is written: *Holy is Israel to YHVH, the first fruits of His harvest* (Jeremiah 2:3)—the kernel preceding the shell. Although the kernel will arise without a shell, who would dare extend his hand to eat of it? *All who eat of it will be held guilty; evil will befall them—declares YHVH* (ibid.). [371](#)

“In that time: *Then you will desire sacrifices of righteousness* (Psalms 51:21), for all will unite in a single

bond and the name of the blessed Holy One will be completely arrayed, and then the offering will be complete: to *YHVH Elohim*. For now, *Elohim* is not linked to the offering—since if it were, numerous *elohim* would perk up their ears to participate. But in that time, *For You are great and work wonders; You alone are Elohim* (Psalms 86:10)—there is no other *elohim*.^{[372](#)}

“And of that time is written: *See now that I, I am He, and no elohim is with Me* (Deuteronomy 32:39). *See now—See that I, I am He* would have sufficed; why *now*? Well, this never existed before, and at that time it will. The blessed Holy One says, ‘*See now* what you were unable to see previously!’^{[373](#)}

“*That I, I am He*—why twice? To express precisely that there is no *Elohim* but Him. For at various times *I* was said once and not more, and the Other Side was present; but now, *I, I am He, and no elohim is with Me*, having been totally eliminated—precisely, *I, I*.

“*I put to death and I bring to life* (Deuteronomy 32:39)—until now, death came from the Other Side; from now on, *I put to death and I bring to life*. From here we see that at that time, all those who have not tasted death will draw death from Him, and He will raise them. Why? Because none of that filth will remain in the world at all, and there will be a new world by the handiwork of the blessed Holy One.^{[374](#)}

[113b] “We have learned: ‘Ten things were created on the eve of Sabbath [at twilight]...the letters, the writing, and the tablets,’ as is written: *The tablets, made by Elohim they were, and the writing, written by Elohim it was, engraved upon the tablets* (Exodus 32:16). How does this indicate that it was Sabbath eve? Perhaps it was a thousand years later, or at the time when Israel stood at Mount Sinai. However, surely it was so, on the eve of Sabbath.^{[375](#)}

“Come and see: Throughout the whole account of Creation, the complete Name is not mentioned, only *Elohim*, *Elohim*, concerning all that was created. With all of them, the name *Elohim*, until the entire work was consummated on Sabbath eve. Once the entire work was consummated, He was called *YHVH Elohim* (Genesis 2:4), the complete Name. Although all was created with the name *Elohim*, everything created was not made consummate until the eve of Sabbath. At that moment all was made consummate—as is written: *His work that He had made; from all His work that He made* (ibid., 2)—and it was actualized. Consequently it is written: *The tablets, made by Elohim*—when the world was consummated by the name *Elohim*, actualized—and not later when it is written *YHVH Elohim*. Thereby the world was consummated, abiding enduringly.^{[376](#)}

“Come and see: In the moment of which is written *He smashed them at the bottom of the mountain* (Exodus 32:19), the Ocean overflowed, rising to flood. Moses saw the Ocean rising toward them, threatening to flood the world. Immediately, *He took the calf that they had made and burned it... and scattered it over the face of the water* (ibid., 20). Moses stood over the waters of the Ocean and said, ‘Waters, waters, what do you want?’^{[377](#)}

“They replied, ‘Was not the world established solely by Torah of the tablets? For the Torah betrayed by Israel—by making the Golden Calf—we intend to inundate the world.’^{[378](#)}

“Immediately, Moses said to them, ‘Look, all that they made is delivered to you! Those thousands of them who have fallen, is it not enough?’ Immediately, *he scattered it over the face of the water*. Yet the waters did not subside until he took some and made them drink, as is written: *and he made the Children of Israel drink* (Exodus 32:20). Immediately, the Ocean sank in its bed.^{[379](#)}

“For in that desert there was no water, as is written: *not a place of seed... and no water to drink* (Numbers 20:5).

Now, if you say, ‘Miriam’s well was journeying with them,’ Heaven forbid that Moses would cast this evil memento there, to drink afterward! Furthermore, they did not yet have it—only when they reached the Desert of Mattanah, as is written: *Well, dug by princes... from the desert מתנה (mattanah), a gift* (Numbers 21:18); from there they acquired the well. Here is written *over the face of the water* (Exodus 32:20), and there is written *over the face of the abyss* (Genesis 1:2).[380](#)

“חרות (*Ḥarut*), *Engraved, upon the tablets* (Exodus 32:16). What is *ḥarut, engraved*? They have established as follows: חירות (*ḥeirut*), freedom, from the Angel of Death, freedom from kingdoms, [114a] freedom from all. So it is. And what is *ḥarut, engraved*? Seal of the World that is Coming, wherein abides *ḥeirut*, freedom, encompassing every kind of freedom. Had they not been broken, all that subsequently came upon the world would not have come, and Israel would have borne the image of supernal angels above.[381](#)

“Concerning this, Scripture proclaims: *The tablets, made by Elohim...* (Exodus 32:16). Do not say that they came into existence after the world was consummated and the complete name was mentioned; rather, when it was consummated by the name *Elohim*, before Sabbath entered.[382](#)

“המה (*Hemmah*), *They were* (ibid.). What is *hemmah*? They were מה' ה' (*me-he he*), from two aspects: one actualized, and one of freedom above, impressed above, protecting all. Hence, המה (*hemmah*), *they were*.[383](#)

“*And the writing, written by Elohim it was* (ibid.)—black fire on white fire.[384](#)

“*Written by Elohim, הוא (hu), it was*—corresponding to what is written: *The Levite will serve hu, he* (Numbers 18:23).[385](#)

“(*Ḥarut*), *Engraved* (Exodus 32:16)—as has been said, for Jubilee proclaims חירות (*ḥeirut*), freedom, generating freedom for all the world.[386](#)

“Until here, Companions! From here on, you will know that the evil side has no power over you. I, Yeiva Sava, have stood before you to arouse these words.”[387](#)

They rose like one awaking from sleep and prostrated themselves before him, unable to speak. After a while they wept.

Rabbi Hiyya opened, saying, “*Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. For love is fierce as death, [jealousy cruel as Sheol; its sparks are sparks of fire, a blazing flame]* (Song of Songs 8:6). *Set me as a seal*—when Assembly of Israel cleaves to Her husband, She says, *Set me as a seal*. With a seal, once it adheres to a certain place, it leaves its image there. Even though that seal moves elsewhere—not remaining there, removed—it leaves its entire image there, remaining there. Similarly, She says, ‘Since I have cleaved to You, My entire image will be engraved in You; for even though I move here or there, You will find My image engraved in You, and You will remember Me.’[388](#)

“*As a seal upon your arm*—as is written: *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me* (Song of Songs 2:6). ‘Similarly, My image will be engraved there, so I will cleave to You forever and not be forgotten by You.’[389](#)

“*For love is fierce as death*—potently fierce, fierce as that place where death dwells. *Love*—that place called Eternal Love.[390](#)

“*Jealousy cruel as Sheol*—similarly, for these names stem from that side.[391](#)

“*Its sparks are sparks of fire*. Who are the sparks? Those gems and pearls born from that fire. שלֵהֶבֶת יָהּ (*Shalhevet Yah*), *a flame of Yah*—from that flame issuing from the supernal world, clinging to Assembly of Israel, all becoming a single unity.[392](#)

“As for us, love and sparks of flame of the heart follow you. May it be the will of the blessed Holy One that our

image be engraved in your heart as your image is engraved in ours!”

He kissed them and blessed them, and they went.

When they reached Rabbi Shim'on and told him all that happened, he was delighted and amazed. He said, “How fortunate you are to have attained all this! Here you were with a supernal lion, a mighty warrior compared with whom many warriors are nothing, and you did not recognize him right away. I wonder how you escaped being punished by him! The blessed Holy One must have wanted to save you.”[393](#)

He proclaimed for them: *“The path of the righteous is like gleaming light, shining ever brighter until full day. When you walk, your stride will be unrestrained; if you run, you will not stumble (Proverbs 4:18, 12). Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever—sprout of My planting, work of My hands, that I may be glorified (Isaiah 60:21).”*[394](#)

COMMENTARY ON MISHPATIM

[121a]¹ *People of holiness shall you be to Me: flesh in the field torn by beasts you shall not eat...* (Exodus 22:30).²

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*Wisdom, whence does she come, and where is the place of Understanding?*” (Job 28:20). Happy are Israel, for the blessed

Holy One desires to honor them above all other inhabitants of the world! At first He said to them, *As for you, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests* (Exodus 19:6). He did not withdraw immense love from them before calling them a *holy nation* (ibid.), which is greater. He did not withdraw love from them before calling them *For you are a holy people* (Deuteronomy 14:2). He did not withdraw love from them before calling them *people of holiness* (Exodus 22:30), which is greatest of all.³

“It is written: *Wisdom comes מֵאֵין (me-ayin), from nothingness.* Torah emerged from Wisdom, from a place called Holiness; and Wisdom emerged from a place called Holy of Holies.”⁴

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Jubilee is likewise called Holiness, as is written: *She is Jubilee; she shall be holiness for you* (Leviticus 25:12). And Israel is composed of them, as is written: *People of holiness shall you be to Me.*”⁵

“At first, *holy*, and now *holiness*. What is the difference between them?”

Rabbi Yose replied, “This is above, above; that one, not so, as is written: *Whoever is left in Zion, who remains in Jerusalem, will be called holy* (Isaiah 4:3)—in this place, one is called [121b] *holy*; above, above, *holiness.*”⁶

Rabbi Abba was walking on the way, accompanied by Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Ḥiyya. Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “What we learned about *People of holiness shall you be to Me* (Exodus 22:30)—how do we know this?”⁷

He replied, “Look, Rabbi Yose and all the Companions have spoken well, and it is so! How do we know? As is written: *Israel is holiness to YHVH, first fruits of His harvest* (Jeremiah 2:3)—*Israel is holiness, surely!* ראשית (*Reshit*), *first fruits of*—Wisdom is called *reshit*, as is written: *Reshit, The beginning of, wisdom is awe of YHVH* (Psalms 111:10). And because Israel is called *holiness*, in total perfection, it is written: *Flesh in the field torn by beasts you shall not eat* (Exodus 22:30); for Israel, who are perfect above all, do not suckle from the side of harsh Judgment.⁸

“*To the dog you shall fling it* (ibid.)—*to the dog, surely, who is fiercest judgment of all. Since fierce judgment spreads over it, injecting it with filth, it is forbidden to those called holiness; rather, to the dog you shall fling it—surely, the one who is impudent judgment, fiercest judgment of all, as is written: The dogs are fiercely ravenous* (Isaiah 56:11).⁹

“Come and see: When a carcass is mentioned in the Torah, Israel is referred to as *holy*, not *holiness*. Here is written *People of holiness shall you be to Me: flesh in the field torn by beasts you shall not eat*, and there, concerning a carcass, is written *You shall not eat any carcass. To the stranger within your gates you may give it and he may eat it... for you are a holy people* (Deuteronomy 14:21)—*holy*, not *holiness*. For it became an unfit carcass on account of Israel, since only Israel disqualified this. And there are many aspects of carcass, as we have established.”¹⁰

Rabbi Shim'on said, “Here is written *People of holiness shall you be ל' (li), to Me* (Exodus 22:30), and there is written *for you are a holy people ליהוה אלהיך (la-YHVH Elohekha), to YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:21). *To YHVH your God*—the verse should read *to Me*. However, there: above, above;

and here: *Shekhinah*. And it is written: *Whoever is left in Zion, who remains in Jerusalem, will be called holy* (Isaiah 4:3)—not *holiness*. Here, *holy*; above, *holiness*. It is written: *Israel is holiness to YHVH, first fruits of הַבּוֹאֲתָהּ (tevu'atoh), His harvest* (Jeremiah 2:3)—with a ה (he), as we have established. Therefore, *People of holiness shall you be to Me, precisely!*"¹¹

Rabbi Yitshak was sitting in the presence of Rabbi Shim'on. He said to him, "It is written: *Israel is holiness to YHVH...* (Jeremiah 2:3). As for the end of verse—*All who devour him will be held guilty*—what does this indicate?"¹²

Rabbi Shim'on replied, "You have spoken well! *All who devour him will be held guilty* corresponds to what is written: *If a man eats of holiness inadvertently*, and similarly: *No stranger shall eat of holiness* (Leviticus 22:14, 10). Since Israel is called *holiness*, it is written *All who devour him will be held guilty.*"¹³

Rabbi Yitshak came and kissed his hands, and said, "If I have sat here just to hear this word, it is enough for me!"¹⁴

He said to him, "Master, we have learned that *holiness* is higher than *holy*. If so, look at what is written: *Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts* (Isaiah 6:3), and this is perfection of all!"¹⁵

He replied, "Come and see: When they join as one, they all become one house, and this house is called *holiness*, totality of all those *holys*. Thus, *holiness* is totality encompassing all; and when the people of Israel embrace complete faith, they are called *holiness*, totality of all, as is written: *Israel is holiness to YHVH*. Therefore, *People of holiness shall you be to Me...* (Exodus 22:30)." ¹⁶

A legionnaire asked Rabbi Abba, "Is it not written: *Flesh in the field טרפה (terefah), torn by beasts, you shall not eat* (Exodus 22:30)? If so, why is it written טרף (Teref) *He has given to those who revere Him* (Psalms 111:5)? The verse

should read *Teref He has given to the dogs! Why He has given to those who revere Him?*"¹⁷

He replied, "Be precise! Is it written: *Terefah, What is torn by beasts, He has given to those who revere Him?* Rather, *teref, food*. And if you say that *teref* is the same as *terefah—He has given to those who revere Him*, precisely! For He has given this matter requiring vigilance only to those who revere His name and revere Him. Consequently, He has not given this to you, since He knows that you do not revere Him nor keep His commandments. Since this matter is a stringency of Torah, demanding vigilance—*He has given to those who revere Him*, precisely, not to others. All stringencies of Torah the blessed Holy One has given only to those fearing sin and revering His commandments, not to you!"¹⁸

Rabbi El'azar taught, "It is written: *Men of holiness [shall you be to Me]* (Exodus 22:30). Why *men*, and then *holiness*? Well, *men of holiness*, surely! For we have learned: Israel gained freedom solely from the aspect of Jubilee. After emerging into freedom, this Jubilee gathered them under its wings and they were called its men, its children. Of Jubilee is written: *She is Jubilee; she shall be holiness for you* (Leviticus 25:12)—*holiness*, surely; *for you*, surely! Therefore, *Men of holiness—men of holiness*, really; My men, really!"¹⁹

"The blessed Holy One said this, [122a] so Israel became worthy of being called brothers of the blessed Holy One, as is written: *For the sake of my brothers and friends, I say, 'Peace be within you'* (Psalms 122:8). Afterward they were called *holiness*, really, as is written: [Israel is] *holiness to YHVH* (Jeremiah 2:3)—*holiness*, and not *men of holiness*. Consequently, *all who devour him will be held guilty* (ibid.), and similarly: *No stranger shall eat of holiness; If a man eats of holiness inadvertently* (Leviticus 22:10, 14)." ²⁰

It has been taught: The people of Israel are called *holiness*, and since they are *holiness*, one is forbidden to call his fellow a shameful name or to invent a nickname for him. The punishment for this is severe, all the more for other words.²¹

It has been taught: It is written, *Keep your tongue from evil...* (Psalms 34:14). What does מרע (*me-ra*), *from evil*, mean? That because of evil speech, מרעין (*mar'in*), disease, descends to the world.²²

Rabbi Yose said, “Whoever calls his fellow something he is not, or insults him, will be punished for something he did not do. For Rabbi Ḥiyya said in the name of Rabbi Ḥizkiyah, ‘Whoever calls his fellow wicked is cast down into Hell and struck on his jaws—except for those who are impudent toward Torah, whom one is permitted to call wicked.’”²³

A certain man cursed his fellow. Rabbi Yeisa passed by and said to him, “You have acted like the wicked!” [The man] brought him before Rabbi Yehudah. [Rabbi Yeisa] said to him, “I didn’t say ‘wicked,’ but ‘like the wicked,’ exhibiting behavior like the wicked; but I didn’t say that he was wicked!”

Rabbi Yehudah came and put the case before Rabbi El’azar, who said, “Surely, he is not guilty! How do we know? As is written: *YHVH was like an enemy* (Lamentations 2:5)—*like an enemy*, and not *an enemy*. For otherwise, not a stump of Israel would have remained in the world. Similarly, *She has become like a widow* (ibid. 1:1)—and not *a widow; like a widow*, [like a woman] whose husband has journeyed across the ocean and she waits for him.”²⁴

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “From here it is proven—the essence of all—as is written: *upon the image of the throne, an image like the appearance of a human* (Ezekiel 1:26)—*like the appearance of a human, and not the appearance of a human.*”²⁵

Rabbi Yitshak said, "It is written: *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men* (Song of Songs 2:3)—*like an apple, and not an apple; like an apple*, variegated in its colors, and in colors unified."²⁶

Rabbi Yehudah said, "If I have come here just to hear these words, it is enough for me!"²⁷

It has been taught: It is written, *The feeblest among them will be like David* (Zechariah 12:8)—*like David*, and not *David*. *Like David*, who said, *In my poverty I have prepared for the House of my God...* (1 Chronicles 22:14), and similarly: *For I am poor and needy* (Psalms 86:1)—he was king over kings, yet he called himself so!²⁸

Rabbi Abba said, "Happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One did not call them *like holiness*, but *holiness*, actually, as is written: *Israel is holiness to YHVH*; and therefore, *all who devour him will be held guilty...* (Jeremiah 2:3)."

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, "Why did the blessed Holy One see fit to give laws to Israel after the Ten Commandments? Well, we have learned as follows: From the side of *Gevurah*, Torah was given to Israel. Consequently, He sought to bestow peace among them, so that Torah would be protected on all sides. For Rabbi Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yitshak, 'The world is established only upon Justice, without which it would not endure. Therefore, the world was created by Justice.'²⁹

It has been taught: It is written, *Render judgment in the morning* (Jeremiah 21:12). Only *in the morning*, and not all day? Rabbi Abba said, "No. Rather, *in the morning*, before the judges eat or drink; for whoever renders judgment after eating and drinking—it is not a true judgment, as is written: *You shall not eat over the blood* (Leviticus 19:26). What is meant by *over the blood*? A warning to judges that they not eat until they render

judgment; for whoever renders judgment after eating and drinking is considered guilty of shedding his fellow's blood, for he has given his actual blood to another. This applies to monetary matters; how much more so in capital cases!"³⁰

It has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said, "Whoever falsifies judgment falsifies the adornments of the King. What are the adornments of the King? That which has been mentioned, as is written: *acting with love, justice, and righteousness on earth*, and further: *for in these I delight—declares YHVH* (Jeremiah 9:23). All depend on one another."³¹

Rabbi Yose said, "These are the adornments of the Throne, as is written: *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne* (Psalms 89:15), and similarly: *In love will a throne be established* (Isaiah 16:5)."³² [122b]

"It has been taught in the Secret of Secrets:³³ Head of the King is arrayed in *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. From this head hang hairs, strands upon strands, all a flow intermingling above and below: masters of qualities, masters of balance, masters of trumpeting, masters of compassion, meanings of Torah, secrets of Torah, purities, impurities—all called hairs of the king, that is, a flow drawn from the Holy King, all descending from the Concealed Holy Ancient One.³⁴

"Forehead of the King—calling the wicked to account. When they are called to account for their deeds and when their sins are exposed, then it is called Forehead of the King, that is, *Gevurah* strengthened in its judgments, extending on all sides. This differs from the forehead of the Holy Ancient One, called Favor.³⁵

"Eyes of the King—supervising all, supervising above and below; all those masters of supervision are called so. In the eyes colors join, and all those masters of supervision are named for those colors, each one accordingly, all named for the colors of the eye. As the supervision of the King appears, so colors arouse.³⁶

“Eyebrows is the name of the place that conveys supervision to all those colors, masters of supervision. These eyebrows, downward, are eyebrows of supervision from that flowing, gushing river—a place drawing from that river, to bathe in the whiteness of the Ancient One, from the milk flowing from Mother. For when *Gevurah* extends and eyes flash in red, the Holy Ancient One shines its whiteness and kindles Mother, who is filled with milk and suckles all, and all the eyes bathe in that mother’s milk, flowing forth constantly, as is written: *bathing in milk* (Song of Songs 5:12)—in Mother’s milk, flowing constantly, ceaselessly.³⁷

“Nose of the King—enhancement of the countenance. When *gevuran*, powers, extend and unite as one, they are the nose of the King, and those powers are linked with one *Gevurah*, from which they issue. When judgments arouse on their side, they are sweetened only by the smoke of the altar, and then is written: *YHVH smelled the pleasing aroma* (Genesis 8:21). The nose of the Ancient One is different, not requiring this, since the nose of the Ancient One is called entirely ארך אפים (*erekh appayim*), long-nosed, long-suffering, and that radiance of concealed Wisdom is called His חוטמא (*hutma*), nose. This corresponds to praise, as is written: *For My praise אהטם (ehetom), I refrain, for you* (Isaiah 48:9), and for this King David aroused: *A praise of David* (Psalms 145:1).³⁸

“Ears of the King: when favor prevails and Mother suckles and radiance of the Ancient One shines, radiance of two brains arouses, along with radiance of Father and Mother—all those called brains of the King—flashing as one. When flashing as one, they are called ears of *YHVH*, for the prayers of Israel are received. Then, arousal for good and evil, and by this arousal winged beings rouse, who convey the voice of the world. All these are called ears of *YHVH*.³⁹

“Face of the King: radiance of Father and Mother and their expansion—illuminating, circling, glowing in this head

of the King. Then, testimony is offered by them concerning the King.⁴⁰

“Beard of the King—glory of all. From the head begin supernal *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. Radiance of Father and Mother disperses: radiance of Father into three lights, and of Mother into two, making five. *Hesed* and *Gevurah* are like one light, making six. Afterward, *Hesed* is crowned, glowing with two shining lights, making eight; and *Gevurah* is illumined with one, making nine. When all those lights join as one, they are called beard of the King. Then is written: *YHVH will go forth like a mighty one; like a warrior He will stir up zeal. He will shout—yes, roar—overpowering His enemies* (Isaiah 42:13).⁴¹

“Lips of the King—thus it is taught: When radiance of Father is kindled, it shines in three lights. From one light supernal *Hesed* shines; from one light glows a radiance called brain of the King; and one light remains suspended until radiance of Mother is illumined, which when illumined shines in five lights. How is it illumined? By one path, hidden and concealed, [123a] to which Father clings—as is written: *a path unknown to a bird of prey...* (Job 28:7)—as male clings to female, and She conceives and bears, generating five lights, and from those five lights fifty gates of many lights are engraved. They are fifty, called forty-nine; corresponding to them, forty-nine pure facets and forty-nine impure facets in Torah. One remains, this one illumined by all, and when it unites with Father’s suspended one, settling in the King, they are called lips of the King, and consequently He articulates words of truth.⁴²

“The mouth depends on them, opening of the mouth. What is the mouth? Well, *Da’at* is concealed in the body of the King—called extension of *Tif’eret*, embracing all colors, as is written: *ובדעת (Uv-da’at), By knowledge, rooms are filled* (Proverbs 24:4). This *Da’at* was concealed in Mother, filling all chambers and porticos, and when the radiance within arouses and issues, then it is called mouth of *YHVH*. And

when the lips, two lights of Father and Mother, meet that radiance of *Da'at*, they join as one, and words are articulated in truth, in *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), *Tevunah* (Understanding), and *Da'at* (Knowledge). Then all words of the blessed Holy One are articulated with these. These three shine, penetrating within, within, crowned in one. Joined in one crown, they are then called *His palate is sweets* (Song of Songs 5:16), and they are palate of the King, called sweets of the King. Of this is written *Taste and see that YHVH is good...* (Psalms 34:9).⁴³

“On this palate depend all those rulers, authorities of the King, as is written: *by the breath of His mouth all their array* (Psalms 33:6). In this palate is perfection of all, and so letters in this place display perfection.

“א (*Alef*), ה (*het*), ה (*he*), ו (*ayin*). א (*Alef*)—radiance of the Holy Ancient One, Concealed of all concealed.⁴⁴

“ה (*Het*)—radiance of חכמתא (*Hokhmeta*), Wisdom, not to be found or grasped, as is written: *No human knows its worth; [it cannot be found in the land of the living]* (Job 28:13).⁴⁵

“ה (*He*)—radiance of Mother, shining, flowing, gushing, watering all, suckling children, until that anointing saturates and fills the Righteous One, and He bonds with lower Female, who is blessed by Him, and they do not separate from one another, white from within red, as is written: *mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense* (Song of Songs 4:6).⁴⁶

“ו (*Ayin*)—radiance of seventy branches, nourished from this breath issuing from the mouth. Similarly, seventy names of the blessed Holy One, corresponding on earth to *All the souls of the house of Jacob were seventy* (Genesis 46:27); for Jacob is a tree on earth and they are seventy branches.⁴⁷

“From these letters shine four others. From א (*alef*) shines ג (*gimel*), which is fine reward for the righteous, called גמול (*gemul*), recompense. Of this is written *Then you will delight upon YHVH* (Isaiah 58:14).⁴⁸

“From ן (*het*) shines ך (*yod*), which is *Hokhmah*. All is concealed within *yod*, which is enclosed on all sides; so it is not to be found, as is written: *It cannot be found in the land of the living* (Job 28:13).⁴⁹

“From ן (*he*) shines כ (*kaf*), which is radiance and anointing oil poured out from Mother to the place called horn and *horn of Jubilee* (Joshua 6:5). This is Kingdom of David, and consequently Davidic anointing is performed only with the mystery of *kaf*.⁵⁰

“ק (*Qof*)—just as ל (*ayin*) is seventy, so *qof* is one hundred, which is perfection, and so it is. Therefore, in this palate, total perfection, total tranquility. Whoever knows this mystery and is careful with it, happy is his share!⁵¹

“Body of the King—extension of *Tif'eret*, in which colors converge.

“Arms of the King—radiance of *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, thus right and left.⁵²

“His innards, enhanced with *Da'at*—entering the head, spreading deep within the body.⁵³

“Thighs, joined with two lights—two real lights! Thighs and two kidneys all depend on one place, where all anointing and all oil of the body gathers, and from there all that anointing is emitted to a place called *Yesod olam*, Foundation of the world—foundation of the place called world. Who are they? *Netsah* and *Hod*. Therefore, *YHVH Tseva'ot*, *YHVH* of Hosts, is His name. Blessed be He, blessed be His name forever and ever!⁵⁴

“All these arrays come to join in one, until this *Yesod* absorbs all anointing and pours it into Female, who is blessed by Him. When is She blessed [123b] by Him? When judgments are arranged below. And when judgments are arranged below, they are arranged above, and all the adornments of the King—the Holy Name—are in joyous perfection, and all becomes one. Then He dwells among them, as is written: *God presides in the divine assembly, in*

the midst of the judges He renders judgment (Psalms 82:1).⁵⁵

“And when judgments are not arranged below, so too, as it were, above, since the entire array is distorted. For Mother withdraws from children, and children do not suckle, since *Yesod* does not pour into Female, and all judgments arouse and the mighty serpent prevails. Adornments of the King are removed, as it were, due to Judgment. For since this Female is not blessed and Righteous One does not receive and the mighty serpent prevails—woe to the world that suckles from them!”⁵⁶

Rabbi El’azar said, “My father revealed all these adornments so that he would not enter shamefully into the world that is coming. Why should they be revealed now?”⁵⁷

Rabbi Abba replied, “What I recorded from the Holy Lamp I told the Companions, for they know these matters—and this must be known, as is written: *You shall know that I am YHVH* (Exodus 10:2), and similarly: *They shall know that I am YHVH* (ibid. 29:46), so that these words may be embedded in our hearts. From here on, words are sealed within us. Happy is our share in this world and in the world that is coming, for until now the Holy Lamp has been crowned within us!”⁵⁸

“Come and see: I saw in a dream, and I asked him, ‘(Yod)—we have learned from our Master that it is *Hokhmah*, and this is certainly so. ה (He)—why is it *Binah*?’⁵⁹

“He replied, ‘Come and see what is written: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10). Who is the *river* that *issues from Eden*? *Binah*. Hence, ה (he) is the *river*, and י (yod) is enclosed within Her. *Yod* expands this river on all sides, and She generates a son beneath Her, who is ו (vav)—like this: ה (he). Then She bears this son and places Him before Her; thus, ו ה (he, vav), for *vav* sits before Her to be suckled. Therefore we have learned in our Mishnah: “ה (He) was ד (dalet). Once Male joined with Her,

She conceived a son and was called *he*. Afterward, She gave birth to that son, and He stood before Her.” Of this is written *A river issues from Eden—issuing from Him, surely—to water the garden, to suckle Him.*⁶⁰

“I grasped him and kissed his hands. In this delight I awoke, weeping and laughing, and for three days I did not eat anything. First, out of joy; and second, because I was not worthy of seeing him again. Nevertheless, I am bound to him constantly; for when a tradition becomes clear to me, I see his image rising before me. Happy are the righteous in this world and in the world that is coming! It is written: *Surely the righteous will acclaim Your name, the upright will dwell in Your presence* (Psalms 140:14).”⁶¹

In all that I have said to you, תשמרו (tishameru), you shall be on guard, and the name of other gods you shall not mention nor shall it be heard on your lips (Exodus 23:13). Why *tishameru, you shall be guarded?* The verse should read תשמורו (*tishmoru*), *you shall guard*. However, *tishameru, you shall be guarded*, precisely! What is *that I have said to you?* This means “with which I have threatened you concerning My service.” *Tishameru, you shall be guarded*, so that no harm will befall you; *you shall be guarded* by My guarding and protection alone. *And the name of other gods you shall not mention*, as we have established.⁶²

Alternatively, *and the name of other gods you shall not mention*—that is to say, “Do not bring it about that you fall among the nations in another land, fulfilling the verse: *and there you will worship other gods...* (Deuteronomy 28:36).”⁶³

Alternatively, *In all that I have said to you, you shall be on guard*. Rabbi Yehudah opened, “Hear, O My people, that I may admonish you; Israel, if you would but hear Me. There shall be among you no foreign god, and you shall not bow to an alien god. I am YHVH your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will

fill it (Psalms 81:9-11). These verses David uttered with the Holy Spirit, and they should be contemplated. *Hear, O My people, that I may admonish you; Israel, if you would but hear Me.* In numerous places Torah cautions the human being, in numerous places the blessed Holy One admonishes him—and all for his benefit, so that he will observe the commands of Torah, for whoever [124a] observes the ways of Torah and engages in Torah is like one engaged in the Holy Name. For we have learned: The entire Torah is the name of the blessed Holy One, and one who engages in it is like one engaged in the Holy Name, since the whole Torah is one Holy Name, a sublime name, a name encompassing all names. And one who deletes a single letter from it is considered to have caused a defect in the Holy Name. It has been taught: *And the name of other gods you shall not mention*—by adding to the Torah or diminishing it.”⁶⁴

Rabbi Hiyya said, “*And the name of other gods*—one who is occupied with other books not from the aspect of Torah. *Nor shall it be heard on your lips*—for it is forbidden to even mention them or learn reason from them, all the more so concerning Torah.”⁶⁵

Rabbi Yehudah taught as follows: “Why is it written *and the name of other gods*, and adjacently, *The Festival of matsot you shall keep* (Exodus 23:15)? Well, one who does not keep this is like one who does not keep the faith of the blessed Holy One. Why? Because this matter is linked with Him.”⁶⁶

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Similarly with all other holidays and festivals, for they are all linked with the Holy Name. Therefore we have learned: Why is it written *three times a year* (Exodus 23:17)? Because upon them faith depends.”⁶⁷

All your males shall appear (ibid.). Why *all your males*? Rabbi El’azar said, “*All your genuine males*, for they receive blessing from the spring of the stream. From here

we learn: Every circumcised Israelite must appear before the Holy King so as to receive blessing from the spring of the stream, as is written: *according to the blessing of YHVH your God that He has given you* (Deuteronomy 16:17), and it is written: *in the presence of the Lord YHVH* (Exodus 23:17), as we have established, for from there blessing pours and blessing is received. Happy is the share of Israel above all other nations!"[68](#)

Once, Israelites were going up to celebrate the festival and Gentiles intermingled with them, and that year there was no blessing in the world. They came and asked Rav Hamnuna Sava. He said to them, "Did you see any sign of this beforehand?"[69](#)

They replied, "We did see a sign, for when we returned from there, all the roads were blocked by water, clouds, and darkness, so that none of those who had gone up there could proceed. Furthermore, when we entered to be seen, the face of heaven darkened."[70](#)

He trembled and gazed. He said to them, "Surely, either there are among you some who are uncircumcised or Gentiles went up with you. For at that time only Israelites who have been circumcised are blessed. The blessed Holy One looks at this holy sign and blesses them."[71](#)

The following year, they went up and those Gentiles intermingling with them went up too. As they were eating sacrifices and rejoicing, they saw those Gentiles tugging at the pleats of their fumigated togas in the corner. They watched them—everyone was blessing, while they were not. They went and reported the incident to the court. [The judges] came and asked them, "That portion of yours that you were eating, from which sacrifice was it?" They were unable to answer. Upon investigation, they were found to be Gentiles and were put to death. [The Israelites] said, "Blessed is the Compassionate One who has saved His people, for surely blessing dwells only with Israel, holy

seed, children of faith, children of truth!” That year, blessing permeated the world. They exclaimed, *The righteous alone will acclaim Your name, [the upright will dwell in Your presence]* (Psalms 140:14).⁷²

Rabbi Hiyya said, “Through the merit of circumcised Israel, their enemies were subdued before them and dispossessed by them. Come and see what is written: *All your males shall appear* (Exodus 34:23), and afterward: *For I will dispossess nations before you, and I will widen your territory* (ibid., 24). For the blessed Holy One uproots inhabitants from their place and restores inhabitants to their place, and therefore, *All your males shall appear in the presence of the Lord YHVH.*”⁷³

Rabbi Yehudah said, “הַאֲדוֹן (Ha-Adon), *the Lord*—as is written: *For behold ha-Adon, the Lord, YHVH of Hosts, [lops the leafy boughs with terrifying power; those of lofty stature are cut down, the tall will be brought low.... A shoot will emerge from the stump of Jesse, a sprout will flower from his roots]* (Isaiah 10:33; 11:1). All is one: uprooting inhabitants and restoring inhabitants.”⁷⁴

Rabbi Yitshak said, “There is *Adon*, and then there is *Adon*, and all depends upon one!”⁷⁵

Rabbi Yehudah said, “אֲדוֹנֵי (Adonai), My Lord—א (alef), ד (dalet), נ (nun), י (yod)—the blessed Holy One is called, [124b] the one read as it is written. And who is that?”⁷⁶

Rabbi Yose said, “מְרֵאוֹת (Mar’ot), *Visions of, Elohim* (Ezekiel 1:1)—spelled מְרֵאָת (mar’at), *a vision of*. What is *mar’at*? Consummation of all, י (yod), ה (he), ו (vav), ה (he). Why *mar’at*? If א (alef), ד (dalet), נ (nun), י (yod), this is read as it is written, whereas this is not read as it is written. Consequently, it is read like this and written *mar’at Elohim.*”⁷⁷

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Sometimes the higher are called by the name of the lower, and sometimes the lower are called by the name of the higher. הַאֲדוֹן יְהוָה (Ha-Adon YHVH), *the Lord YHVH*—by a high name. These matters have been established—elucidated in many ways, and all is one.

Blessed is the Compassionate One, blessed is His name forever and ever!"⁷⁸

*Here, I am sending an angel before you... (Exodus 23:20).*⁷⁹

Rabbi Yitshak opened, "O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth...!" (Song of

Songs 1:2). Assembly of Israel said, 'O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!' Why O that he would kiss me? The verse should read *O that he would love me*. However, we have learned as follows: What are kisses? Cleaving of רוּחַ (*ruḥa*), spirit, to spirit. Therefore kissing is by mouth, for the mouth is the outlet and source of *ruḥa*, breath; so kisses are kissed with the mouth in love, and spirit clings to spirit, never parting from one another.⁸⁰

"Consequently, one whose soul departs by a kiss cleaves to another spirit, which never parts from him—this being called a kiss. So Assembly of Israel said, 'O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,' to join spirit to spirit, one not parting from the other.⁸¹

"For your love is better than wine (Song of Songs 1:2). Why any need here for wine, when it is written: *These also stagger from wine* (Isaiah 28:7), and similarly: *Wine and beer, do not drink, you and your sons* (Leviticus 10:9)? So why here wine?"⁸²

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "Than the wine of Torah."⁸³

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah said, "As is written: *Wine that gladdens the human heart* (Psalms 104:15). Thus, *For your love is better*, for joy of the heart; *than wine*, which delights one most of all."⁸⁴

Rabbi Yehudah said, "It is written: *Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted his voice and wept* (Genesis 29:11). Why did he weep? Well, through spirit joining with her, his heart could not bear it and he wept. Now, you might say, look at what is written: *and he kissed him, and they wept* (ibid. 33:4)! But we have learned: Why is וישקוהו (*va-yishaqehu*), *and he kissed*

him, dotted? Because, in fact, his spirit did not join with him at all. Of this is written *Excessive are kisses of an enemy* (Proverbs 27:6). What does this mean? Well, one who kisses lovingly joins spirit with spirit in loving union, while one who does not kiss lovingly is not in a state of union, but rather: *Excessive are kisses of an enemy*. What does *excessive* mean? Arrogance, for that kiss does not join his spirit, does not cleave at all. Therefore it is written: *O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—*cleaving of spirit to spirit.⁸⁵

“It has been taught: As long as the blessed Holy One accompanies Israel, spirit, as it were, cleaves to spirit. Of this is written *You, cleaving to YHVH* (Deuteronomy 4:4)—in all kinds of cleaving, not parting from one another. When it was said *Here, I am sending an angel before you* (Exodus 23:20), Moses knew that this was separation; he said, *If Your presence does not go, do not take us up from here!* (ibid. 33:15).”⁸⁶

Rabbi Abba said, “What is written before this? *The best of the first fruit of your soil you shall bring to the house of YHVH your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk* (Exodus 23:19). What does this indicate? Well, not to mingle a lower element with a higher one, lest the outside suckle from the inner. What is the difference between them? This outer one derives the side of impurity, while this inner one is on the holy side. Who is *its mother*? Assembly of Israel, called Mother. *In its mother’s milk*—that the undesirable one not suckle from this side. And here is written: *Here, I am sending an angel before you*. Moses said, ‘But I received a promise from You! Surely, *if Your presence does not go, do not take us up from here! How, then, will it be known [that I have found favor in Your eyes, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, that I and Your people may be distinguished from every people that is on the face of the earth]*? (ibid. 33:15–16).”⁸⁷

Rabbi El'azar said, "This statement was uttered by the blessed Holy One purely out of love for Israel and to be reconciled with them. This may be compared to a king who wanted to go with his son and not leave him. His son came [125a] but was afraid to ask the king to accompany him. Anticipating, the king said, 'Here, Legionnaire so-and-so will accompany you to protect you.' Afterward, he said, 'Watch yourself with him on the way, for he is not a perfect man.' His son replied, 'If so, either I stay here or you go with me, but I will not part from you.'

"Similarly with the blessed Holy One: first He said, *Here, I am sending an angel before you to guard you on the way* (Exodus 23:20). Afterward, He said, *Watch yourself with him...* (ibid., 21). At that moment, Moses said, *If Your presence does not go, [do not take us up from here!]* (ibid. 33:15)."⁸⁸

Rabbi Shim'on came and found them immersed in this. He said, "El'azar, my son, you have spoken well! But come and see: At this point Moses said nothing and did not reply to Him. Why? Because here there was no separation from Him. We have already established this matter for the Companions. Now, there are some who teach the opposite, though the ancients did not interpret it so. Yet upon contemplating words, all is fine, and all convey their meaning by a single element."⁸⁹

"When did Moses respond? When He said, *I will send an angel before you* (Exodus 33:2). Whereas [here] is written: *When My angel will go before you* (ibid. 23:23)—simply, without elaborating. Therefore it is written: *But if you truly heed his voice and do all that I speak—that I speak, precisely!*—and then, *I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes* (ibid., 22). All depends upon Him."⁹⁰

Rabbi Yehudah said, "If you say that both of them were an actual angel, Moses did not respond to them, since he did not see an opening. When did he respond? When it is

written: *If Your presence does not go, [do not take us up from here!]* (Exodus 33:15).⁹¹

Rabbi Shim'on said, "The sum of it all: Moses did not want an angel, for look at what is written: *Now, if I have found favor in Your eyes, may YHVH go in our midst* (Exodus 34:9)!"⁹²

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Concerning what is written: *You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk* (Exodus 23:19), which Rabbi Abba discussed, the verse should read *in the mother's milk*. Why *its mother's*? For if you say that Assembly of Israel is the *mother* of the impure side—not so! For I have heard Rabbi Shim'on say that Assembly of Israel, Holy Mother, is united with the share of Israel, as is written: *For YHVH's share is His people* (Deuteronomy 32:9)."⁹³

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Well spoken! Yet what Rabbi Abba said is fine—all is fine, this intertwined with the other. Come and see: Mother joins with them above, this side and that side, and there are two, one to the right and one to the left. Thus some are to the right and some to the left, all dependent upon this Mother, Holy Mother, linked with Her."⁹⁴

"When are they linked with Her? When this Mother suckles from the Other Side and the sanctuary is defiled and the mighty serpent begins to reveal himself. Then the *kid* sucks of *its mother's milk*, and judgments arouse. Therefore, Israel hasten to bring first fruits, and when they bring them they must speak, beginning with Laban, who sought by sorcery to dominate Jacob and the holy seed, yet they were not given into his hands and Israel was not delivered to this side. So it is written: *The best of the first fruit of your soil you shall bring to the house of YHVH your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk* (Exodus 23:19)—and that side will not suck of *its mother's milk*, since the sanctuary will not be defiled and judgments will not arouse."⁹⁵

“Therefore, all holy seed and anyone who derives from this side should not eat meat with milk, so as not to provide a place for the undesirable one. For the matter depends on action, an action below arousing above. Happy are Israel above all other nations, for their Lord proclaims of them: *You YHVH has chosen to be a treasured people to Him*, and it is written: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:2)—all is one word. And it is written: *You are children of YHVH your God* (ibid., 1).⁹⁶

“Come and see: When Israel’s deeds are unworthy, what is written? *My people—their tyrants are children, and women rule over them* (Isaiah 3:12)—precisely! We have established this matter in the mystery of the Book of King Solomon, and so we have found there.⁹⁷

“We have also found that if anyone eats this food combined together—either in the course of one hour or in a single meal—for forty days a helmeted kid appears in his skin to those above, an impure band [125b] approaches him, and he provokes judgments in the world, unholy judgments.⁹⁸

“If he engenders a son during those days, the latter is lent an undesirable soul from the Other Side, undesirably. It is written: *You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy...* (Leviticus 11:44). If one comes to defile himself, he is surely defiled. And it is written: ונטמתם (*ve-nitmetem*), *becoming impure, through them* (ibid., 43)—without an א (*alef*): totally obstructed impurity, which cannot be purified as can other types of impurity.⁹⁹

“Furthermore, he is terrified of dangerous beasts, for in their eyes he appears as a kid and he is vulnerable, being divested of the human image.”¹⁰⁰

Rabbi Yeisa permitted the eating of chicken with dairy cheese. Rabbi Shim’on said, “This is forbidden to you! One should not provide an opening for evil species. ‘Go, O Nazirite,’ one says, ‘around, around; do not approach the

vineyard!’ This is surely forbidden to you, since it entails the same stricture as cattle. What is written of one who permits this? *You gave the Nazirites wine to drink* (Amos 2:12)—permitting this is like permitting that. And it is written: *You shall not eat any abhorrent thing* (Deuteronomy 14:3)—*any* includes everything.”¹⁰¹

It has been taught: How did Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah prove worthy of being delivered from those trials? Only because they did not defile themselves with their food.¹⁰²

Rabbi El’azar said, “It is written: *Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself with the king’s provisions...* (Daniel 1:8). And it has been taught in the secrecy of our Mishnah: ‘The food of that wicked one was meat in milk and cheese with meat, aside from other foods; this was served on his table daily.’ Since Daniel refrained from this, when he was thrown into the lions’ den he was completely in the image of his Lord, his image not changing into any other, so the lions feared him and did him no harm. But when that wicked one was deprived of his kingdom and dwelled *with the beasts of the field* (Daniel 4:20), the image of his face was removed, and from that day on, his image never appeared human. To every animal that came, his image appeared as its own species and female, and they all mounted him. Many times the beasts of the field would have devoured him, were it not for this punishment decreed upon him; for it is written: *At kings he scoffs* (Habakkuk 1:10), so all scoffed at him that whole time.¹⁰³

“Come and see what is written: *At the end of ten days, they appeared better than all the youths who were eating the king’s provisions* (Daniel 1:15). *They appeared better*—because the image of their Lord was not removed from them, whereas from the others it was. What caused this? The fact that they had not defiled themselves with defiled food. Happy are Israel, of whom is written *People of holiness shall you be to Me* (Exodus 22:30)!”¹⁰⁴

*To Moses He said, "Go up to YHVH" (Exodus 24:1). To Moses He said—Who said? Shekhinah. Go up to YHVH—as is written: Moses went up to Elohim (Exodus 19:3).*¹⁰⁵

Why all this? To establish a covenant with them, for they were uncovered—unlike when they went out of Egypt, when they were circumcised but not uncovered. Here they were uncovered, having entered the enduring covenant, as is written: *There He set them statute and law, and there* נסֵהוּ (*nissahu*), *He raised them* (Exodus 15:25)—by this holy sign that was revealed in them. And here the covenant was sealed with them by Moses, as is written: *Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people...* (ibid. 24:8).¹⁰⁶

Rabbi Yitshak said, "Why is it written *and half the blood he dashed* על המזבח (*al ha-mizbeah*), *upon the altar* (Exodus 24:6)? It is not written במזבח (*ba-mizbeah*), *on the altar*, but rather על המזבח (*al ha-mizbeah*), *above the altar*, precisely!"¹⁰⁷

And you shall bow down from afar (Exodus 24:1). What is meant by *from afar*? As is said: *From afar, YHVH appeared to me* (Jeremiah 31:3), and it is written: *His sister stationed herself afar* (Exodus 2:4).¹⁰⁸

Rabbi Abba taught, "For the moon was waning. At that moment, Israel became worthy of a greater share of holiness and sealed a holy covenant with the blessed Holy One."¹⁰⁹

*To Moses He said, "Go up to YHVH" (Exodus 24:1). Why did Shekhinah tell him, "Go up"? So that "I and Israel will participate as one in perfection, through you," which was not so until now. What is written? Moses took half the blood... (ibid., 6), dividing it in two: half the blood he dashed upon the people and half the blood he dashed [126a] upon the altar (ibid.), as we have established; and it is written: Look, the blood of the covenant that YHVH has sealed with you (ibid., 8).*¹¹⁰

And he put it באגנות (*ba-agganot*), *in basins* (Exodus 24:6)—spelled deficiently: באגנת (*ba-agganot*), as is written: *Your*

navel is אגגן (aggan), the basin of, the moon. May it never lack blended wine! (Song of Songs 7:3).¹¹¹

Moses alone shall come near YHVH (Exodus 24:2). Happy is the share of Moses, for he alone attained what no other human attained! Israel now attained what they had not attained until that moment. At that moment, they were established in supernal, holy existence. At that moment, they became worthy of having the sanctuary in their midst, as is written: *Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them* (ibid. 25:8).¹¹²

They saw the God of Israel, and beneath His feet was like a fashioning of sapphire pavement... (Exodus 24:10).¹¹³

Rabbi Yehudah opened, *“This stature of yours resembles a palm* (Song of Songs 7:8). How beloved is Assembly of Israel before the

blessed Holy One, never parting from Him! Like a palm tree, where male never separates from female, one not rising without the other, so Assembly of Israel does not part from the blessed Holy One.¹¹⁴

“Come and see: When Nadab and Abihu saw, along with the seventy elders, what is written of them? *They saw the God of Israel*, for *Shekhinah* manifested Herself to them.”¹¹⁵

Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rabbi Yose, *“אֵת (Et), precisely! And this is from afar* (Exodus 24:1). *Et*, including what is within Her.”¹¹⁶

Rabbi Yitshak said, “But look at what is written: *She is הַחַיָּה (ha-hayyah), the living being, that I saw beneath the God of Israel by the river Kevar* (Ezekiel 10:20)! Who is this *hayyah?*”¹¹⁷

Rabbi Yose replied in the name of Rabbi Hiyya, “The small *hayyah*. Now, is there a small *hayyah*? Yes, a small *hayyah*, a supreme *hayyah*, and an extremely small *hayyah*. *They saw אֵת (et) the God of Israel—precisely, as we have said.*”¹¹⁸

And beneath His feet was like a fashioning of sapphire pavement (Exodus 24:10)—appearing like the precious stone with which the blessed Holy One intends to build the Temple, as is written: *I will lay your foundations with sapphires* (Isaiah 54:11).¹¹⁹

Yet against the nobles of the Children of Israel (Exodus 24:11)—Nadab and Abihu. *He did not send forth His hand* (ibid.)—deferring their judgment till later and they were not punished here.¹²⁰

Rabbi Yose said, “This statement is in praise of them, as is written: *and they ate and drank* (ibid.)—feasting their eyes on this radiance.”¹²¹

Rabbi Yehudah said, “They actually ate, nourishing themselves! Here they became worthy above—if only they had not later perverted their ways, as we have established.”¹²²

Rabbi El’azar said, “At that time, even Israel became worthy and *Shekhinah* was bound to them. This covenant and Torah all happened at once, and Israel never saw a moment like that ever again. In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will reveal Himself to His children and all will see His glory eye-to-eye, as is written: *For eye-to-eye they will see, as YHVH returns to Zion* (Isaiah 52:8), and similarly: *The glory of YHVH will be revealed, and all flesh will see together...* (ibid. 40:5).”¹²³

Parashat Terumah

“OFFERING” (EXODUS 25:1–27:19)

COMMENTARY ON TERUMAH

Rabbi Hiyya opened, “*For Yah has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel as His own treasure* (Psalms 135:4). How beloved are Israel to the blessed Holy One, who desires them and wants to cleave to them and be joined with them! He made them a unique nation in the world, as is written: *Who is like Your people Israel, a nation unique on earth?* (2 Samuel 7:23). And they desired Him and linked themselves with Him as is written: *For Jacob has chosen Yah for himself.* And it is written: [126b] *For YHVH’s share is His people* (Deuteronomy 32:9)—He entrusted other nations to princely rulers appointed over them, while for His own share He took Israel.”¹

Rabbi Shim’on opened, “*Who is this looking forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, awesome as bannered hosts?* (Song of Songs 6:10). מי זאת (*Mi zot*), *Who is this?*—mystery of two worlds joined as one, and this is world and world. *Mi, Who*, as we have established: a supernal rung above, a beginning susceptible to questioning, called *Mi, Who*, as is said: *Lift your eyes on high and see: Mi, Who, created these* (Isaiah 40:26). *Zot, This*: a lower rung below, lower world. Both of them, two worlds in a single bond, a single nexus, as one.”²

“הַנִּשְׁקָפָה (Ha-nishqafah), *Looking forth, like the dawn*—both joined as one.³

“*Like שַׁחַר (shahar), the dawn*—like blackness seeking to shine; later, illumined as the moon when the radiance of the sun strikes her; and later, like the sun, when the moon waxes full.⁴

“*Awesome*—mighty to protect all. For then She possesses perfection to perform valiantly, drawing power from the supernal world through Jacob the Perfect, who united them as one—joining them as one above, joining them as one below, whence issued twelve tribes after the pattern above.⁵

“Jacob, who was complete, infused love into two worlds, as we have established. Other humans who do so expose nakedness above and below, provoking enmity in two worlds, causing separation, as is written: *to become rivals* (Leviticus 18:18), for they become enemies of one another.⁶

“Now, you might say, ‘*Rachel was jealous of her sister* (Genesis 30:1)!’ Certainly so! For all the longing of the lower world is solely to resemble the upper world and to inherit Her position. Elsewhere, ‘the jealousy of סוֹפְרִים (soferim), scribes, increases wisdom,’ while here, the jealousy of *soferim*—for there is סֵפֶר (sefer), book, and *sefer*, book—and they increased the flow of supernal Wisdom to themselves.⁷

“Nevertheless, even Jacob did not harmonize them fittingly. Other inhabitants of the world provoke enmity and cause separation, exposing nakedness of all—nakedness above and below. Within this mystery is nakedness of Mother and Daughter, all in one mystery. מִי זֹאת (Mi zot), *Who, this*, are called Sisters, sharing sisterly love and a bond of delight; yet they are called Mother and Daughter. Whoever exposes their nakedness has no share in the world that is coming, has no share in faith.⁸

“Come and see: *For Jacob has chosen Yah for himself* (Psalms 135:4)—supernal mystery above. Once he was perfected and called *Israel*, then לסגולתו (*li-sgullato*), *to his own treasure* (ibid.)—obtaining everything on all sides, obtaining above and below, totally fulfilled.”⁹

Rabbi Shim'on said, “We have learned that when the blessed Holy One created the world, He carved engravings of mysteries of faith within radiancies in supernal mysteries. He engraved above, He engraved below, all in one mystery of engravings of the Holy Name, יהוה (YHVH), ruling through its letters above and below. Through this mystery worlds were consummated, the upper world and the lower world.¹⁰

“The upper world was consummated by mystery of the letter ך (yod)—primordial supernal point emerging from within the concealed and hidden, which is unknown, unsusceptible to knowing, and completely unknowable, mysterious ascension of *Ein Sof*. From this concealment shone a single radiance—subtle, concealed, comprising within itself the totality of all lights. That concealed radiance was struck by one who did not strike, illumined by one who did not illumine, and then it emitted one radiance—bliss in which to delight, radiance in which subtle concealed radiance may be secreted.¹¹

“As for that radiance, bliss for concealed bliss, within it were embroidered and fashioned six designs, known only to that subtle light upon entering to be hidden—bliss within bliss, radiance in radiance. This radiance issuing from subtle radiance is *fearsome, awesome, and extremely powerful* (Daniel 7:7). This expanded, becoming one world illumining all worlds—a concealed world, completely unknown, inhabited by sixty million dwellers, forces, supernal camps. Once it had generated them—completed as one—then [127a] a single union; they are mystery of the letter ך (vav), joined with that concealed world. Then is written: *For Jacob has chosen יה (Yah) for himself* (Psalms

135:4)—when ו (vav) issues fully formed from within ה' (yod, he). *Israel* לסגולתו (li-sgullato), *as His own treasure*—other inhabitants of the world have not been granted permission to ascend so, but rather *li-sgullato, to His treasure*, a place that receives and gathers all; this is a rung below. From within this, they obtain above through secrecy of aspiration, but not openly, as did Jacob, as is written: *Have them take Me [by] raising* (Exodus 25:2).¹²

Have them take Me an offering (Exodus 25:2).¹³

Rabbi Yehudah opened, "מה (Mah), *How, abundant Your goodness that You have hidden for those in awe of You, that You have wrought for those who shelter in You before the eyes of humankind!* (Psalms 31:20). This verse has been established and discussed, but this mystery has been established by the Holy Lamp among supernal mysteries. High rung, mystery of the upper world, is called מי (mi), Who; low rung, mystery of the lower world, is called מה (mah), What. And we have learned: 'Do not read the word as מה (mah), *what*, but rather מאה (me'ah), *one hundred*,' since all high rungs, consummated, are here.¹⁴

"Further, why is it called *mah*, What? Well, although the supernal flow is conveyed, it is not revealed until completed here—end of all rungs, end of the entire flow, standing revealed. Yet although revealed more than all, it is susceptible to questioning: *Mah*, What? What have you seen? What do you know? As is said: *For you saw no image* (Deuteronomy 4:15). Therefore, *mah*, What?¹⁵

"*Abundant Your goodness*—Foundation of the World, who is called *abundant goodness*, as is said: *abundant goodness for the House of Israel* (Isaiah 63:7), for this is *abundant goodness*. Primordial light is called simply *good*, while here male and female merge as one.¹⁶

*“That You have hidden—*for this is concealed as the primordial light was concealed and hidden.¹⁷

*“That You have wrought—*for here is artistry of all, artistry of the whole world, artistry of souls and spirits. By this mystery the blessed Holy One fashioned the design of the entire world, and this is the mystery of *In the beginning God created heaven and earth* (Genesis 1:1). By this mystery the Dwelling was formed and constructed, being in the image of the world above and in the image of the world below, as is written: *Have them take* לִי תְרוּמָה (*li terumah*), *Me an offering—*two rungs that are one, joined as one.”¹⁸

Have them take Me an offering
(Exodus 25:2).

Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi El'azar, Rabbi Abba, and Rabbi Yose were sitting one day beneath

some trees on the plain by the Sea of Ginnosar. Rabbi Shim'on said, “How nice is the shade of these trees covering us! We must adorn this place with words of Torah.”¹⁹

Rabbi Shim'on opened, saying, “*King Solomon made himself a pavilion from the trees of Lebanon* (Song of Songs 3:9). This verse we have already established and it has been discussed; but *pavilion* is the palace below, resembling the upper palace. The blessed Holy One called it Garden of Eden, which He planted for pleasure, and His desire is to delight therein in those souls of the righteous who all exist there, enrolled within. Those souls, having no body in this world, all ascend and are crowned there, and have places from which to gaze, to revel in the sublime joy called Delightfulness of YHVH. There they are filled by all the desirable rivers of pure balsam.²⁰

“אפרסמון (*Afarsemon*), balsam, is the upper palace, concealed, hidden. אפריון (*Appiryon*), *pavilion*, is the palace below, which has no ס (*samekh*), until אסתמיק (*istemikh*), it is

supported, by the upper palace. Therefore the letter ס (*samekh*) is closed on all sides; similarly, closed ם (*mem*).²¹

“What is the difference between them? Well, when enclosed and hidden within itself, within a supernal point above, She assumes the form of the letter ס (*samekh*), enclosed within and hidden, ascending above. And when She returns and sits רביעא (*revi'a*), crouching, over children below to suckle them, She assumes the form of the letter ם (*mem*), רביעא (*revi'a*), quadrilateral, enclosed in four directions of the world.²²

“So She is [127b] אפרסמון (*afarsemon*), balsam, and this one אפריון (*appiryon*), *pavilion*. Instead of the two letters ס (*samekh*) and ם (*mem*) stands י (*yod*) in mystery of the covenant—ready to receive all, mystery of those one hundred blessings, sixty and forty. Sixty corresponding to six aspects issuing from the letter *samekh*, forty corresponding to four directions of the world, all totaling one hundred; and the letter *yod* fulfills the mystery of one hundred, corresponding to the pattern above. Thus, this is אפרסמון (*afarsemon*), balsam, and that אפריון (*appiryon*), *pavilion*.²³

“Those rivers issue from this balsam, and supernal souls having no body in this world suckle from the radiance emitted from those rivers of pure balsam, reveling in this sublime joy. Souls ascending, having a body in this world, ascend and suckle from the radiance of this *pavilion*, giving and receiving—giving the fragrance of those worthy deeds in which they engaged in this world, and receiving of the fragrance remaining in the Garden, as is said: *like the fragrance of a field blessed by YHVH* (Genesis 27:27)—the fragrance remaining in that field. They all exist in that Garden, these delighting above, those delighting below.²⁴

“*King Solomon made himself*—for himself. Now, you might say: ‘Look, souls of the righteous delight within, and yet you say *made himself*?’ Certainly so! Because this *pavilion* and all those souls of the righteous all exist for the delight of the blessed Holy One.²⁵

“*King שלמה (Shelomo), Solomon—the King who possesses שלמה (shelama), peace, namely the supernal King, as they have established. The king, anonymous—King Messiah. This is World of the Male, that is World of the Female.*[26](#)

“*From the trees of Lebanon—planted trees, uprooted by the blessed Holy One and transplanted elsewhere. These are called cedars of Lebanon, as is said: cedars of Lebanon that He planted (Psalms 104:16). This pavilion was built and decorated with them alone.*[27](#)

“*From the trees of Lebanon—six days of Creation, every single day arranging in this pavilion a fitting arrangement.*[28](#)

“*First arrangement: Primordial light that was hidden away emanated from the right side and was conveyed from the right side, entering this pavilion by means of one Foundation and performing its conjugal role within. Afterward this pavilion produced one image resembling this light, and this is the mystery of what is written: ‘Let there be light!’ And there was light (Genesis 1:3). Since it says Let there be light!, why And there was light? Well, that light generated another light befitting it, and this is the first day of those trees of Lebanon.*[29](#)

“*Second arrangement: Division of waters emanated from the left side by a flow of mighty fire and was conveyed from the left side, entering this pavilion and performing its role within, dividing between waters on the right side and those waters on the left. Afterward that pavilion produced one image resembling it, and this is the mystery of what is written: [God made the firmament and it divided] the waters beneath the firmament from the waters above the firmament, and it was so (Genesis 1:7). This is the second day of those trees of Lebanon.*[30](#)

“*Third arrangement: A certain third day emanated from the left side and the right side, making peace in the world. From there, fruit was conveyed to all, and this performed its conjugal role in the pavilion, generating each species*

after its kind, species for many kinds, each fittingly—all vegetation, plants, and trees, with various powers. Its image remained there, and that *pavilion* generated a species exactly like it. This is the third day, comprising two sides, of those *trees of Lebanon*.³¹

“Fourth arrangement: Radiance of the sun emanated and shone, illumining this *pavilion* within its darkness, entering to shine yet not performing its role until the fifth day, when the *pavilion* emitted the conjugal radiance that entered it on the fourth day and the *pavilion* produced an actual likeness of that radiance. This is one of those *trees of Lebanon*.³²

“Fifth arrangement: A streaming swarming of waters emanated [128a] and performed the role of emitting that radiance of the arrangement of the fourth day. Performing its conjugal role in this *pavilion*, it generated species according to their kinds, fittingly, in their exact likeness. This day performed more fully than all other days, yet all remained suspended until the sixth day, when this *pavilion* brought forth all that was hidden within it, as is written: *Let the earth bring forth living beings of each kind* (Genesis 1:24). This is the fifth day of those *trees of Lebanon*.³³

“Sixth arrangement: This is the day that perfected the entire *pavilion*. Without this day, it has neither perfection nor power. When this arrived, the *pavilion* was arrayed with many spirits, many souls, many beautiful maidens, those worthy to sit in the palace of the King. He too was arrayed in the beauty of all the other, preceding days, and He arrayed them in single desire, in passion, in joy, perfection of above and below.³⁴

“Then this *pavilion* was sanctified with supernal holiness and adorned with its crowns, finally rising ascendantly in a crown of tranquility and given a sublime name, a holy name: Sabbath, tranquility of all, desire of all, cleaving of above and below as one. Then is written: *King*

Solomon made himself a pavilion from the trees of Lebanon."[35](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, "One who attains this *pavilion* attains all. He is worthy of sitting in the comfort of the shade of the blessed Holy One, as is written: *In his shade I delighted to sit* (Song of Songs 2:3). Now that we are sitting in this shade of comfort, we should observe that we are actually sitting in the shade of the blessed Holy One within that *pavilion*! We should adorn this place with supernal crowns, until the trees of the *pavilion* are swayed to cover us with further shade."[36](#)

Rabbi Shim'on opened first, saying, "*Have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering* (Exodus 25:2). *Have them take Me*—one who wishes to engage in a *mitsvah* and to become engaged with the blessed Holy One must not engage emptily, with nothing; rather, a person should engage fittingly, according to his strength. We have established this matter in various places. How fitting for one to procure that engagement with the blessed Holy One, as is said: *Each according to the gift of his hand* (Deuteronomy 16:17)![37](#)

"Now, you might say, 'Look at what is written: *Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost!* (Isaiah 55:1), for this is free, engaging without money—and it is an engagement with the blessed Holy One!' However, anyone wishing to engage in Torah attains her; anyone wishing to become engaged with the blessed Holy One, to know Him, attains this without any fee at all. Whereas an engagement that assumes action must not be acquired for nothing, emptily, since by that action one does not succeed at all in drawing down upon himself the Holy Spirit except at full cost.[38](#)

"In the Book of Sorcery, taught to King Solomon by Ashmedai: Whoever wants to remove from himself an impure spirit or to subdue an alien spirit must pay the full

price for the act that he seeks to perform—whatever is demanded of him, whether a little or a lot. For the impure spirit is always available for free, emptily, and is sold without payment—compelling people to have it settle upon them, seducing them with many enticements to let it dwell with them, luring them in many ways to place its dwelling among them.³⁹

“But the Holy Spirit is not so. Rather, with full payment, by intense effort, by refining oneself, by purifying one’s dwelling, by desire of one’s heart and soul—oh that one can then attain it, that it will dwell with him! Even so, one must follow the straight path, not deviating right or left; otherwise, it immediately departs from him, distancing itself from him, and he cannot attain as before.⁴⁰

“Therefore it is written: ויקחו (Ve-yiqhu), *Have them purchase, Me an offering.*⁴¹

“*From every man*—from one who is called *man*, who overpowers his impulse, for whoever overpowers his impulse is called *man*.⁴²

“*Whose heart impels him*. What does this mean? [128b] That the blessed Holy One delights in him, as is said: *To You he said, ‘My heart’* (Psalms 27:8); *rock of my heart* (ibid. 73:26); *good-hearted* (Proverbs 15:15); *He gladdened his heart* (Ruth 3:7)—all referring to the blessed Holy One. Here, too, *whose heart impels him*—from him *you shall take My offering*, for there it is found and nowhere else.⁴³

“How do we know that the blessed Holy One delights in him and places His dwelling in him? When we see that this person desires, in joyous aspiration of the heart, to pursue and strive for Him with heart, soul, and will, surely there, we know, dwells *Shekhinah*. Then we should procure that person by paying in full, to associate with him or to learn from him. Concerning this the ancients said, ‘Procure for yourself a companion.’ With full payment one should procure him, so as to be worthy of *Shekhinah*. This is how far one should pursue a virtuous person and procure him.⁴⁴

“That virtuous one should pursue a sinner and procure him with full payment, in order to remove the filth from him, subdue the Other Side, and form his soul, so that it will be considered as though he created him. This is praise by which the glory of the blessed Holy One is exalted more than by any other praise, an ascension greater than all! Why? Because he overturns the Other Side and elevates the glory of the blessed Holy One. Concerning this it is said of Aaron: *Many he turned from iniquity* (Malachi 2:6), and: *My covenant was with him* (ibid., 5).⁴⁵

“Come and see: Whoever grasps the hand of a sinner, turning to him, inducing him to abandon his evil ways, is elevated in three elevations, beyond what anyone else attains. He overturns the Other Side and causes the glory of the blessed Holy One to be exalted and the world to be sustained vitally above and below. Of this person is written: *My covenant was with him: life and peace* (Malachi 2:5). He is worthy of seeing his children’s children; he attains this world and the world that is coming. All masters of judgment cannot punish him in this world or in the world that is coming. He enters twelve gates, with no one hindering him. Of this one is written *Mighty in the land his seed will be... Wealth and riches in his home, and his righteousness stands forever. Light dawns in darkness for the upright* (Psalms 112:2-4).⁴⁶

“In the upper chamber are three modes of color, flashing in one flame—that flame darting from the side of the south, which is right. Those colors diverge in three directions: one ascending above, one descending below, one appearing and hidden when the sun shines.⁴⁷

“One color, the one ascending, emerges, and that color is the color of white, whiter than any other. It enters that flame and is tinged yet not tinged, and it rests above on top of that chamber. When the people of Israel enter the synagogue and offer their prayers, as they reach ‘who has redeemed Israel’ and join Redemption to Prayer, this color

ascends the head of the chamber and becomes an enduring crown. A proclamation issues: 'Happy are you, Holy People, who perform goodness before the blessed Holy One!' This is the secret of *I have done what is good in Your eyes* (2 Kings 20:3), for he joined Redemption to Prayer. For when that color ascends the head of this chamber, Righteous One arouses to unite where it must, in affection, love, joy, passion. All limbs join in one desire, these with those, above with below; all lamps shine and glow, all converging as one in this Righteous One who is called Good, as is said: *Say of the righteous one that he is good* (Isaiah 3:10). This one unites them all in a single bond. Then all is in a whisper above and below; with kisses of desire the event abides in love within the chamber.⁴⁸

"As they reach 'Grant peace,' the river issuing from Eden performs its conjugal role in this chamber. Then all must leave the presence of the King, and no human nor anyone else may be found there nor make requests. [129a] Rather, one must fall on the face. Why? Because that moment is the moment of conjugal union, and every human should be embarrassed in the presence of his Lord, covering his face in great shame, and should merge his soul in that union of souls, for the chamber is enveloped above and below by souls and spirits.⁴⁹

"Then another color, descending below, settles in the depths of this chamber. A herald comes forth and proclaims: 'Beings above and below, bear witness! Who is it that forms souls and purifies sinners—he who wears the crown of royalty, who is worthy now of entering the presence of the King and Queen? For the King is asking for him.'⁵⁰

"Then appear two witnesses from among those eyes of *YHVH* roaming the whole earth, and they stand behind the curtain and testify: 'Behold, we attest that so-and-so son of so-and-so'—happy is his share, for on account of him his father will be remembered for good—'formed souls below,

souls of sinners from the Other Side.’ Then the blessed Holy One is glorified in complete joy.⁵¹

“At that moment, a certain official appears who is treasurer of images of the righteous in the mystery of conjugal union, mysteriously named Yehodi’am, in a crown of the wielded Holy Name. The blessed Holy One signals, and the official brings the image of that person who transformed the souls of sinners and places it before the King and *Matronita*. And I call heaven and earth to witness that at that moment this image is given—for there is no righteous person in this world whose image is not engraved above under the power of that official—seventy keys of all the treasures of his Lord are delivered into its hand. Then the King blesses that image with all the blessings that He bestowed upon Abraham when he transformed the souls of sinners. The blessed Holy One signals to four supernal camps, who grasp that image and journey with it, and it enters seventy hidden worlds attained by no other human, but rather hidden for those who transform souls of sinners. If people only knew how much benefit and merit [sinners] bring upon the righteous, who become worthy through them, they would run after them, pursuing them as one pursues life.⁵²

“A poor person renders people worthy of much goodness and many supernal treasures, but this does not compare to one who becomes worthy through sinners. What is the difference between them? Well, one who strives after a poor person restores his soul and enables him to survive, and through him becomes worthy of much goodness in that world. One who strives after sinners accomplishes more. He succeeds in subduing the Other Side—*other gods*—who no longer rules and is divested of his dominion. He succeeds in elevating the blessed Holy One upon His Throne of Glory. He forms for that sinner another soul. Happy is his share!⁵³

“Another color, visible and invisible. When the people of Israel reach the *Qedushah* of the Section, this concealed color emerges, for by reciting this *Qedushah* they surpass the supernal angels, whose companions they are. This color shines visibly while the people of Israel sanctify, for they conclude before the supernal angels can notice and punish them from above and denounce them.⁵⁴

“Then a proclamation issues: ‘Beings above and below, listen! Who is haughty of spirit with words of Torah? Who is he, all of whose words are intended to glorify himself by words of Torah?’ For surely we have learned that one should be humble in this world with words of Torah, since pride of Torah belongs only in the world that is coming.⁵⁵

“With this *Qedushah* we must be careful, concealing it among us, so that we may be sanctified in holiness in the beginning and in the end, more than by those sanctifications that the supernal angels recite with us. There is a *Qedushah* that we recite in praise, praising the supernal angels, and because of this praise they allow us to enter the upper gates. Therefore we recite this *Qedushah* [129b] in the holy language, and they allow us lovingly to enter the gates above because we praise them in their arrangement. Thereby we obtain greater holiness, entering supernal gates.⁵⁶

“Now, you might say, ‘This is deception!’ Not so! Rather, the supernal angels are holier than us, absorbing greater holiness, and if we did not obtain and draw upon ourselves these sanctifications, we could not be companions with them and the glory of the blessed Holy One would not be consummated above and below simultaneously. We therefore strive to be their companions, so that the glory of the blessed Holy One will be exalted above and below simultaneously.⁵⁷

“The *Qedushah* at the end is in Aramaic translation, as we have established, and this can be recited even by an individual—those words in translation—but words of the

holy language in *Qedushah* may be recited only in the presence of ten, because *Shekhinah* unites with the holy language, and every *Qedushah* accompanied by *Shekhinah* may be uttered only in the presence of ten, as is written: *I will be sanctified in the midst of the Children of Israel* (Leviticus 22:32)—*the Children of Israel* actually embody the holy language, not other nations who possess another language.⁵⁸

“Now, you might say, ‘What about the sanctification of the *Qaddish*, which is in Aramaic translation—why isn’t that recited individually? Come and see: This *Qedushah* is not like other *Qedushot*, which we triple. Rather, this *Qedushah* ascends on all sides above and below, in all aspects of Faith, smashing locks and seals of iron and evil shells, so that the glory of the blessed Holy One will be exalted above all. We must recite it in the language of the Other Side, and respond with mighty power: ‘Amen! May His great Name be blessed,’ so that the power of the Other Side will be broken and the glory of the blessed Holy One be exalted above all. And when, by this *Qedushah*, the power of the Other Side is broken, the blessed Holy One ascends in glory and remembers His children and remembers His Name. Since the blessed Holy One is exalted in His glory by this *Qedushah*, it must be uttered only in the presence of ten.⁵⁹

“By this language, the Other Side is subdued against his will, his power broken and the glory of the blessed Holy One exalted. It smashes locks, seals, mighty chains, and evil shells, and the blessed Holy One remembers His Name and His children. Happy are the Holy People, to whom the blessed Holy One gave the holy Torah, by which to attain the world that is coming!”

Rabbi Shim’on said to the Companions, “You are worthy of the world that is coming! Since we have begun words of the crown of supernal Kingdom, I myself will speak on your behalf, and the blessed Holy One will grant

you a reward in that world. The breath of your mouths will ascend above as if you yourselves are arousing these words.”[60](#)

He opened, saying, “*This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze* (Exodus 25:3). This verse pertains to the upper side and to the lower side—to the upper side, on the side of holiness; to the lower side, on the Other Side.

“Come and see: When the blessed Holy One created the world, He began to create from the side of silver, which is the right, because that silver derived from above. Yet in making the Dwelling, which resembles it, He began from the left side, and afterward from the right, since the Dwelling derived from the left.[61](#)

“*This is the offering...* It is written: *Evening, morning, and noon [I commune and murmur, and He hears my voice]* (Psalms 55:18). This verse has been established and discussed, but here is time of times of daily prayer, and the Companions have aroused the meaning of these three times. *Evening* is a speculum that does not shine; *morning* is a speculum that shines; *noon* is not the place called darkness, but rather a place situated between this and that—though the time of *minḥah* is the place called darkness, linked with *evening*, one standing with the other.[62](#)

“As for the word *noon*, conveying the power of the sun, Scripture employs a euphemism. This is customary: a black person [130a] may be called white, employing a euphemism; and sometimes white is called black, as is written: *for he had taken an Ethiopian wife* (Numbers 12:1); *Are you not like the Ethiopians to Me?* (Amos 9:7).[63](#)

“*Evening* is the evening prayer. Because this *evening* is intermingled with the Other Side, who darkens its light and rules the night, they have made it optional and without a set time. Sacrificial portions and fat are consumed at this time, nourishing numerous ravaging bands of dazzling demons who emerge to dominate the night.[64](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘If so, have we not learned that all those masters of the Other Side, of impure spirit, do not prevail in the Holy Land? Yet by this, Israel arouses them, and it is forbidden to arouse them to loom over the Holy Land!’⁶⁵

“Well, at night that smoke ascends, not ascending like any other offering, whose smoke rose in a straight path; here, that smoke ascended to a certain hollow of the north, site of all haunts of evil spirits. Once that smoke ascended, twisting toward that side, they were all nourished and entered their places, not emerging to dominate the world.⁶⁶

“One official stands on that side above the hollow of the north, over all those ravaging bands of demons, and his name is Sangirya. When that smoke twists its way, rising, this official along with six hundred million other camps all station themselves to receive it and be nourished by it. They stand in that hollow and enter a certain opening called קרי (*qeri*), Mishap, and this is the mystery of what is written: *If you walk with Me qeri, contrarily.... I Myself will walk with you* בחמת קרי (*ba-ḥamat qeri*), *in wrathful contrariness* (Leviticus 26:21, 28)—in that wrath issuing from the opening of *qeri*. These are those who roam by night, and when souls emerge to ascend, to appear above, these emerge and denounce them, preventing them from ascending—except for those holy pious ones, who pierce the heavens and atmosphere, and ascend.⁶⁷

“These ravaging bands of dazzling demons emerge and disseminate falsehood to humans, appearing to them in other forms, titillating them until they emit semen and are called masters of mishap, because those who issue from the opening of Mishap incite them.⁶⁸

“When sacrificial portions and fat are consumed, that smoke satiates and sustains them; according to their honor, so is their nourishment, fittingly. Thereby, they do not emerge and roam the Holy Land.

“ערב (Erev), *Evening*, as is said: ערב רב (Erev rav), *A mixed multitude, also went up with them* (Exodus 12:38), for all those ravaging bands of demons מתערבי (mit'arevei), intermingle, with the dominion of the night. Consequently, they did not make the evening prayer obligatory, since no one can arrange it like Jacob, who purified the Dwelling and arrayed it fittingly.⁶⁹

“Yet although it is optional, this prayer is intended to protect us from terror in the night, from many aspects of fear, from the fear of Hell; for at that time the wicked in Hell are harassed twice as much as during the day. Therefore Israel hastens to pray *Yet He is compassionate* (Psalms 78:38), for fear of Hell. But on Sabbath, when there is no judgment in Hell, nor any other judgment, one is forbidden to arouse it, lest one indicate that Sabbath is not empowered to eliminate judgment from the world.⁷⁰

“Fear of accusation of souls as they seek to ascend, to appear before their Lord—therefore we hasten to pray: ‘who guards His people Israel forever. Amen.’⁷¹

“Fear of many demons and denouncers who prevail at night, empowered to harm anyone leaving his home—therefore we hasten to pray: ‘Guard our going out and our coming in.’⁷²

“Even so, out of fear of all this, we entrust bodies, spirits, and souls to the supernal Kingdom, in whose hands is dominion over all. Consequently, evening prayer is recited every single night; now that sacrifices and altars no longer exist, we perform all these rites based on this mystery.⁷³

“At midnight, when the north wind arouses, it strikes all those haunts of evil spirits, smashes one mighty rock, enters, sweeping above and below, and all those [130b] ravaging bands of dazzling demons enter their places, their power broken, no longer dominant. Then the blessed Holy One enters to delight with the righteous in the Garden of Eden, as has been explained.⁷⁴

“When morning comes, the light of the lamp ruling the night is hidden away before the light of the day. Then *morning* prevails and dominion of *evening* disappears. This *morning* is the *morning* of primordial light; this *morning* consummates goodness for all worlds, nourishing those above and those below. This waters the Garden; this is the protection of the whole world.⁷⁵

“Here is a mystery for fathomers: One who wishes to set out on a journey should rise before dawn and gaze momentarily toward the east and he will see an apparition of letters striking the sky, one ascending, another descending. These are the sparkling of the letters with which heaven and earth were created.⁷⁶

“If, by the mystery of those letters, he knows the mystery of the Holy Name of Forty-two Letters and invokes them fittingly with fervor, he will see in the glow of foredawn in the sky six *yods*, three to the right side and three to the left, and three *vavs* ascending and descending, sparkling in the sky—these are the letters of the priestly blessing. Then he should recite his prayer and set out on his way; surely, *Shekhinah* is with him, preceding. Happy is his share!⁷⁷

“When this *morning* comes, one column is thrust in the south within the expanse of firmament above the Garden, aside from the column set in the middle of the Garden. This column shines with the radiance of three colors woven in purple. On that column is one branch, upon which three birds stand, arousing chirping praise.⁷⁸

“One opens, declaring, *Hallelujah! Praise, O servants of YHVH, praise the name of YHVH!* (Psalms 113:1). The second opens, declaring, *May the name of YHVH be blessed from now until eternity* (ibid., 2). The third opens, declaring, *From the rising of the sun to its setting, praised is the name of YHVH* (ibid., 3). Then a herald soon proclaims, ‘Arouse, holy ones of the Highest, who praise their Lord! Prepare yourselves with praise of the day!’ Then day

separates from night. Happy is the share of one who rises from the midst of praise of Torah in which he engaged at night! That is the time for morning prayer.⁷⁹

“It is written: *The watchman said, ‘Morning came, and also night. If you would inquire, inquire. Return, come!’* (Isaiah 21:12). This verse has been established as referring to the exile of Israel, who sit among the children of Seir. Israel says to the blessed Holy One, *‘Watchman, what of the night?’* (ibid., 11). What will become of us in this exile, which is like the darkness of night?’⁸⁰

“What is written? *The watchman said*—the blessed Holy One. *‘Morning came*—I already shone upon you and brought you forth for My service so that you would attain eternal life. But since you have forsaken My Torah, *and also night*—I have cast you into exile as before.⁸¹

“*‘If you would inquire, inquire*—as is said: *Search in the Book of YHVH and read* (Isaiah 34:16); there you will find what your exile and redemption depend upon. When you inquire of her, she will respond, proclaiming before you, שׁוּבוּ (*Shuvu*), *Return, come!*—return in complete *teshuvah*, then immediately *come* and draw close to Me.’⁸²

“In the mystery of this verse is written: מַשָּׂא (*Massa*), *An utterance concerning, Dumah* (Isaiah 21:11). In six paths, prophecy is conveyed to prophets: in vision, in appearance, in sight, in revelation, in word, in utterance. Five of these all resemble looking from behind a wall at a radiant light, or seeing the light of the sun through glass. But *massa*, a *burdensome utterance*—when this light arrives through great effort, troubling him, unrevealable, as is said: *to lay massa, the burden of, this entire people upon me* (Numbers 11:11). Therefore, *massa*. And here, מַשָּׂא דוּמָה (*Massa dumah*), *A burdensome utterance of silence*—immense effort, unrevealable; a whispered prophecy, abiding in whisper.⁸³

“*One calls to me from Seir* (Isaiah 21:11). Here it is not revealed who said *One calls to me from Seir*, whether the blessed Holy One or the faithful prophet. But this prophecy

surely abides in whisper within the mystery of supernal faith, and from within concealed mystery the faithful prophet said that the voice of mystery of faith was calling to him: *One calls to me from Seir*, [131a] as is said: *From Seir He shone upon them* (Deuteronomy 33:2). For so it is with the mystery of faith: rungs from within rungs, these more inner than those, shell within shell, kernel within kernel. This we have established, as is written: *Here, a stormy wind coming from the north*—one rung. *A great cloud*—another rung. *And flashing fire*—a third rung. *And a radiance surrounding it*—a fourth rung. Afterward, *and from within it, like the color of amber*; and afterward, *From within it, an image of four living beings* (Ezekiel 1:4-5)—rungs within rungs.⁸⁴

“Here, too, when the blessed Holy One revealed Himself, He did so only from within these rungs. *From Sinai He came*—a very concealed rung. Afterward, He had to reveal Himself, and it says *and from Seir He shone*—another rung, more revealed, a shell spread over the kernel. Afterward, *He radiated from Mount Paran*—another rung. Afterward, *and appeared from myriads of holiness* (Deuteronomy 33:2)—praise of all. For although He revealed Himself from all these rungs, from the place that is essence of all He began to be revealed. From which place? *From myriads of holiness*—those supernal rungs, above, above.⁸⁵

“Here, too, *One calls to me from Seir*—from the rung that we have mentioned, joined above.⁸⁶

“*Watchman, what מלילה (mi-lailah), of the night? Watchman, what מליל (mi-leil), of the night?* (Isaiah 21:11). שומר (Shomer), *watchman*—Metatron, of whom is written וְשׁוֹמֵר (ve-shomer), *And he who guards, his master will be honored* (Proverbs 27:18). This is the one who rules by night.⁸⁷

“*לילה (Lailah), night; ליל (leil), night*—what is the difference between them? Well, all is one; but in this part the Other Side rules, while in that part he does not rule at all. *Leil,*

night, needs guarding, as is written: *It is ליל (leil), a night of guarding* (Exodus 12:42), and so it lacks the letter ה (*he*); this is from when night enters until it is split. From midnight on, *lailah* rules, with a *he*, as is written: *It happened in the middle of הלילה (ha-lailah), the night* (ibid., 29); הלילה הזה (ha-lailah ha-zeh), *this night* (ibid., 42); and *lailah, night, will shine like the day* (Psalms 139:12). Therefore, *Watchman, what מלילה (mi-lailah), of the night? Watchman, what מליל (mi-leil), of the night?*⁸⁸

“*The watchman אמר (amar), said* (Isaiah 21:12). I found in the Book of Adam: What is the difference between ויאמר (va-yomer), *and he said*, and אמר (amar), *he said*? *Va-yomer, and he said*, is above, while *amar, he said*, is below. *To Moses, amar, He said* (Exodus 24:1). *Who said? The watchman said*—Metatron.⁸⁹

“*Morning comes*—morning prayer, dominion of day, the one who rules over night. Now, if you say that He comes alone, and male is separated from female, look at what is written: *and also night* (Isaiah 21:12), the two of them as one, never parting from one another! This voice proclaims these words: *Morning comes, and also night*—both of them awaiting you.⁹⁰

“From here on *If תבעין בעיו (tiv'ayun be'ayu), you would inquire, inquire* (Isaiah 21:12)—if תבעון בעותכון (tiv'un be'utekhon), you would present your supplication, in prayer before the Holy King. *Inquire*—pray and supplicate and return to your Lord.

“*Come!* (ibid.)—like one who is ready to receive his children and have compassion upon them. So too the blessed Holy One, *morning and also night*, calls out: *Come!* Happy are the Holy People, whose Lord seeks them and calls to them, drawing them near!⁹¹

“Then the Holy People should unite in the synagogue. Whoever arrives earliest unites with *Shekhinah* in a single bond. Come and see: The first one appearing in the synagogue, happy is his share, for he stands on the rung of

Righteous One together with *Shekhinah*! This is the mystery of *Those who seek me early will find me* (Proverbs 8:17). This one attains a high ascension.⁹²

“Now, you might say, ‘But we have learned: “When the blessed Holy One comes to a synagogue and does not find ten there, He instantly turns angry.” Yet you say that the one who comes early unites with *Shekhinah* and stands on the rung of Righteous One!’⁹³

“Well, this may be compared to a king who ordered all the inhabitants of a city to appear before him on a certain day at a certain place. While those inhabitants were preparing themselves, one came early to that place. Meanwhile, the king came and found that person who had arrived early. He said to him, ‘So-and-so, where are the inhabitants of the city?’ He replied, ‘My Lord, I have preceded them, but they are coming, according to the royal command.’ This pleased the king, and he sat there with him, conversing with him, and he became the king’s beloved. Meanwhile, [131b] all the people arrived, and the king was appeased and sent them in peace. But if the inhabitants had not arrived—if one had not come early to speak before the king, indicating that they all were coming, the king would have instantly turned very angry.

“Here, too, since one appears early in the synagogue, and *Shekhinah* comes and finds him, it is considered as if all of them appeared, for this one is waiting for them there. Immediately, She joins with him, and they sit in one coupling. She knows him intimately and sets him on the rung of Righteous One. But if no one arrives early, appearing there, what is written? *Why have I come, when there is no man?* (Isaiah 50:2). It is not written *there are not ten*, but rather *there is no וְאִישׁ (ish), man—a man to unite with Me, to be with Me, as is said: ish, husband, of Elohim* (Deuteronomy 33:1), to occupy the rung of Righteous One.⁹⁴

“Furthermore, She knows him well, and if one day he does not come, She inquires about him, as we have established, for it is written: *Who among you reveres YHVH, heeding the voice of His servant?* (Isaiah 50:10). In relation to this, we have already aroused what is written: *One calls to me from Seir* (Isaiah 21:11), for there is rung after rung, within rung. That *watchman* calls mightily every single day, and this is *heeding the voice of His servant*—*His servant* is Metatron. Therefore, happy is one who hastens to the synagogue, ascending to that high rung that we have mentioned.⁹⁵

“When morning comes and the congregation assembles in synagogue, they should be immersed in songs and praises. As we have established, this arrangement is intended to arouse love above and below, to restore perfection and stimulate joy. For this, Levites engage in those songs and praises, to arouse love and joy above.⁹⁶

“Whoever talks in the synagogue, woe to him, for he manifests division! Woe to him, for he diminishes faith! Woe to him, for he has no share in the God of Israel, since he demonstrates that there is no God, that He is not present there, so he has no share in Him! He disdains supernal restoration above.⁹⁷

“For when Israel arranges in synagogue the sequence of songs, praises, and prayer, three camps of supernal angels assemble. One camp consists of those holy angels who praise the blessed Holy One by day—for there are certain ones who praise the blessed Holy One by night, and others who praise Him with songs and praises together with Israel by day.

“The second camp consists of supernal angels who appear at every single *Qedushah* recited by Israel below. Under their dominion are all those aroused in all the heavens by Israel’s prayer.⁹⁸

“The third camp consists of those supernal maidens arrayed around *Matronita*, adorning Her to bring Her before

the King. These are the highest camps of all.⁹⁹

“All of these are arrayed by the arrangement of Israel, who array from below with those songs and praises and with the prayer that they offer. Once these three camps are ready, the people of Israel open and sing before their Lord, and that first camp, appointed to praise their Lord by day, appears above them and sings with them in unison those praises of King David. We have established these matters.¹⁰⁰

“When Israel concludes those praises of David, then the praise of the Song at the Sea, as we have established. Now, you might ask, ‘Why is this praise arranged last, after the praises of David? Look, Written Torah precedes Oral Torah and precedes the Prophets and precedes the Writings; and since it precedes, it should be recited first!’

“However, since Assembly of Israel is arrayed only by Written Torah, it must be recited so, at the beginning of Her arrayal. This praise is superior to all other praises of the world, and She is not arrayed by any of them as She is [132a] by this one. Therefore, it adjoins the prayer recited seated, as we have established.¹⁰¹

“At the moment that the Song at the Sea is recited, Assembly of Israel is adorned with the crown with which the blessed Holy One will one day crown King Messiah. That crown is incised and engraved with holy names, as when She was crowned on the day that Israel crossed the Sea and the blessed Holy One drowned all the camps of Pharaoh and his cavaliers. Therefore one should infuse this song with fervor, and everyone who attains that in this world is entitled to see King Messiah adorned in that crown and girded in his weapons, and to sing this song there. We have established these matters.¹⁰²

“As soon as one reaches *Yishtabah*, the blessed Holy One takes that crown and places it before Him, and Assembly of Israel begins to adorn Herself to approach the supernal King. One should encompass Her with thirteen supernal

qualities with which She is blessed, and these are thirteen supernal spices, as is said: *Nard and saffron, cane and cinnamon, [with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the finest spices]* (Song of Songs 4:14). Here are ‘song and praise, hymn and melody, power and dominion, victory, grandeur and might, renown and glory, holiness’—twelve. Then, joining Her with them and saying ‘ומלכות (*u-malkhut*), and sovereignty,’ for She is blessed by them.¹⁰³

“Therefore, as She is encompassed by them, one should focus his will and heart on this and not speak at all, so as not to interrupt them. If he does interrupt, from under the wings of the cherubim issues a flame, crying out mightily: ‘So-and-so who cut off the glorification of the blessed Holy One, may he be destroyed and cut off, so that he does not behold the glory of the Holy King!’—as is said: *He will not see the glory of YHVH* (Isaiah 26:10), for these thirteen are *the glory of YHVH*.¹⁰⁴

“From here on, ‘God of thanksgiving...’: supernal King who possesses peace—for all these praises are offered to Assembly of Israel when She is praised by Her camps below—as is said: *The Song of Songs, which is לשלמה* (*li-Shlomo*), *Solomon’s* (Song of Songs 1:1), the King who possesses שלמא (*shelama*), peace.¹⁰⁵

“From there on, ‘who forms light and creates darkness, who makes peace.’ I have aroused the meaning of this, as have the Companions: these are the array of the upper world. אל ברוך (*El barukh*), Blessed God—array of the lower world, from those twenty-two small letters. For there are large letters and small letters: small letters from the lower world, large letters from that World that is Coming.¹⁰⁶

“In all respects they are large. They are large on their own when appearing individually. They are large—for when not expanding greatly, each and every letter appears in a fitting chariot, as in the praise of Sabbath, since these are the letters of ‘אל (*El*), God, Master of all works; ברוך (*Barukh*), blessed, and praised by the mouth of every soul.’ These

letters appear in five words each, which are fifty gates of the World that is Coming.¹⁰⁷

“Two other letters at the end—*ת ש* (*shin, tav*)—appear in six words each, which are six aspects of the World that is Coming, emerging from there, namely: ‘*שבה* (*Shevah*), Praise, they render to Him, all hosts on high; *תפארת* (*Tif’eret*), Glory, and grandeur, by Seraphim, Ophanim, and holy beings.’¹⁰⁸

“These two letters, in six each; the first two letters, in five each. All the other letters in the middle, all in four each, for they are mystery of the upper chariot.

“Those first letters and those at the end are consummation of twenty-two letters, since they contain twenty-two words, corresponding to twenty-two supernal letters. Eighteen other letters remain, ascending in their chariots to four each, to seventy-two words, constituting the mystery of the holy, engraved Explicit Name of Seventy-two Letters, in which the blessed Holy One is adorned. With this Name He adorns Assembly of Israel, who ascends mysteriously to be adorned with them in the mission of Her Lord.¹⁰⁹

“Your mnemonic for these letters adorned in this supernal praise: first and last ascending in their crowns are *ש"ת ב"א* (*alef, tav; bet, shin*)—*א* (*alef*) in five, *ת* (*tav*) in six, *ב* (*bet*) in five, *ש* (*shin*) in six. Thus, the mystery of *alef, tav; bet, shin* is [132b] totality of twenty-two letters, which form the crown of thirty-two paths.

“Your mnemonic for those other letters ascending in their chariots: *ג"ר* (*gimel, resh*), beginning with *gimel*, ending with *resh*, all of them mystery of the holy chariot. *ש"ת ב"א* (*alef, tav; bet, shin*), mystery of the Holy Name; *ג"ר*, mystery of the holy chariot amounting to seventy-two, composing a Holy Name to crown Assembly of Israel from the upper chariot.¹¹⁰

“Therefore that name encompasses mystery of the patriarchs—right, left, and middle—and She is adorned with them, becoming a Holy Name. Not a supernal Name

like those supernal Names of the upper world, linked above, above, although this name is supernal; but its mystery is King David, crowned with the patriarchs.¹¹¹

“Name of Forty-two Letters—its mystery is the patriarchs crowned with the upper world, and the upper world with what is above. Therefore it ascends and does not descend, adorned in supernal Thought. Happy is the share of one who knows it and is careful with it!¹¹²

“Name of Seventy-two: David, crowned with the patriarchs, and its mystery ascends and descends. Similarly, מַצַּפּוּץ (*mem, tsadi, pe, tsadi*), Name of Thirteen Qualities of Compassion—twelve, mystery of the holy chariot, issuing from one resting upon them. Therefore it ascends and descends; they all ascend and descend, except for the one that ascends and does not descend. So Name of Seventy-two ascends and descends, ascending on this side and descending on that side. Name of Thirteen Qualities ascends on this side and descends on that side, descending to draw goodness below. Thus, ג"ר ד"ק ה"ץ ו"פ ז"ע ח"ס ט"ן י"ם ב"ל, א"ת ב"ש (alef, tav; bet, shin; gimel, resh; dalet, qof; he, tsadi; vav, pe; zayin, ayin; het, samekh; tet, nun; yod, mem; kaf, lamed)—first letters ascending in numerical value, last letters descending, to draw goodness from above below.¹¹³

“Name of Forty-two adorns the upper chariot; Name of Seventy-two adorns the lower chariot. Happy is the share of one who strives to know his Lord! Happy is he in this world and in the world that is coming!¹¹⁴

“Therefore the praise of Sabbath, which She offers to the King who possesses peace, praising Him with the Name of Seventy-two and with twenty-two words, mystery of twenty-two letters, so that She will be adorned thereby to ascend in this praise. Thus, *El Adon* (God, Master) is praise of the World that is Coming, and soaring of the upper chariot, adorned to ascend above, and soaring of Assembly of Israel, adorned to ascend into the upper chariot.¹¹⁵

“א"ת ב"ש (Alef, tav; bet, shin) ascend and descend, as has been said. א"ל ב"ם (Alef, lamed; bet, mem) ascend and do not descend. Your mnemonic is: this is Sabbath alone, and that is Sabbath and Yom Kippur, a mystery ascending above, above until all is adorned in *Ein Sof*.[116](#)

“אל ברוך (El barukh), Blessed God—arrangement of small letters and array of Assembly of Israel every day in prayer. Since they are small letters, there is no space between them. They are adornment of the maidens who accompany *Matronita* to the supernal King.[117](#)

“This *Qedushah* enacted by supernal angels is not recited individually. As we have established, any *Qedushah* in the holy language must not be recited by an individual. Aramaic translation is always recited individually and not publicly; an individual is surely its enhancement, not the public. Your mnemonic for this mystery is: ‘Two for Scripture, and one for translation.’ ‘Two’ implies many, for surely *Qedushah* in the holy language must not be recited individually. *Qedushah* in translation must not be recited publicly, but rather always individually. ‘One for translation,’ we have learned, not two and not more. Aramaic translation is intended to limit, necessarily so; the holy language is intended to extend, necessarily so—for ‘we increase in holiness, and do not decrease,’ while in translation we decrease and do not increase. ‘One,’ we have learned, not more; we do not increase at all.[118](#)

“By this *Qedushah*, *Shekhinah* is sanctified, along with all Her chariots, to be arrayed before the supernal King. Since it is *Qedushah* of the lower world, it is recited seated and not standing. [133a] Another *Qedushah*, in the repetition of prayer, is *Qedushah* of the upper world, and is consequently recited standing, to draw it down. All words of the upper world are recited standing and not seated.[119](#)

“By all these *Qedushot*, Israel is sanctified below. Thus Israel becomes sanctified by *Qedushah* of the lower chariot while seated, and by *Qedushah* of the upper chariot while

standing. Another *Qedushah* is additional sanctification and consequently follows the prayer; since it supplements other *Qedushot*, it follows. And since every single person should draw upon himself some of that surplus, a translated *Qedushah* was arranged for each individual.[120](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘But it includes *Qedushah* in the holy language!’ Well, that is for the congregation, so that they all may be sanctified together by that additional *Qedushah*. Since the individual is not permitted to recite it in the holy language, sanctifying himself individually, it was prepared in Aramaic translation to be recited individually, so that every single one may be sanctified by that surplus, drawing upon himself extra holiness. Happy is the share of Israel, who are sanctified by supernal *Qedushot*, for they cleave above, as is written: *You, cleaving to YHVH your God!* (Deuteronomy 4:4).[121](#)

“It is written: *Behold, I know that this is a holy man of God, passing our way regularly. Let us make a small walled upper chamber and place a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp there for him, so that whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there* (2 Kings 4:9-10). In this passage we have a slight allusion. *Behold, I know*—a person’s aspiration, set within him.[122](#)

“*That this is a holy man of God*—upper world, sitting upon His Throne of Glory, all holiness issuing from Him, sanctifying all worlds.[123](#)

“*Passing our way regularly*—with the holiness by which He sanctifies all worlds above, He sanctifies us in this world; for there is no holiness above without holiness below, as is written: *I will be sanctified in the midst of the Children of Israel* (Leviticus 22:32).[124](#)

“Since it is so, *let us make a small walled upper chamber*—a perfect arrangement for *Shekhinah*, who is a *walled upper chamber*, as is said: *Hezekiah turned his face*

to the wall (2 Kings 20:2).¹²⁵ *Small*—because She is small, as is said: *a small city* (Ecclesiastes 9:14).¹²⁶

“*And place there for him*—in this arrangement that we are preparing with our songs, praises, and prayer, all arranged for His comfort.¹²⁷

“*A bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp*—all four of these inhere in *Shekhinah*, who is all. And all these are arrayed for the upper world, in the arrangement that we compose. In the arrangement of evening prayer and its adornment is *a bed*. In the arrangement of those sacrifices and ascent offerings that we compose in the morning, along with those songs and praises, is *a table*. In that arrangement recited seated and the adornment of reciting *Shema*, in that unification that we perfect, is *a chair*. In that arrangement of prayer recited standing, and in the *Qedushot* and additional *Qedushah* and blessings that we arrange, is *a lamp*.¹²⁸

“Happy is the person who sets his aspiration on this, to bring perfection to his Lord every day, to prepare this array for Him!¹²⁹ Then, surely, the blessed Holy One will be his daily guest. Happy is he in this world, and happy is he in the world that is coming! For these four are the adornment of *Shekhinah*, in which She is arrayed for Her Husband; in these four adornments She is arrayed in Her beautiful appearance by the Holy People daily.

“*A bed* was given to Jacob to prepare, and therefore Jacob instituted evening prayer.¹³⁰

“*A table* was arranged by King David through those songs and praises that He composed, as is said: *You set out a table before me* (Psalms 23:5).¹³¹

“*A chair* was prepared by Abraham through binding goodness and perfection of souls to all inhabitants of the world. *A chair* is perfected only by the love of Abraham, as is said: *In love will a chair be established* (Isaiah 16:5).¹³²

“*A lamp* [133b] was prepared by Isaac, who sanctified the Name of the blessed Holy One before the eyes of the

whole world and illumined the radiance of the supernal lamp by that sanctification.¹³³

“Therefore the Holy People should constantly utter praise of their Lord, setting their aspiration to arrange for the upper world—who is master of the house, *husband of Elohim* (Deuteronomy 33:1)—*a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp*, so that there is perfection every day, above and below.¹³⁴

“When Israel enacts the unification of the mystery of ישראל שמע (*Shema Yisra’el*), *Hear O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4) with perfect intention, one radiance issues from secrecy of the upper world, and that radiance strikes a spark of darkness and scatters into seventy lights, and those seventy flash into seventy branches of the Tree of Life.¹³⁵

“Then that Tree wafts fragrances and aromas, and all the trees of the Garden of Eden waft fragrances and praise their Lord, for then *Matronita* is adorned to enter the canopy with Her Husband. All those supernal limbs unite in one desire, in one aspiration, to be one with no separation. Then Her Husband is arrayed for Her, to bring Her to the canopy in single union, to unite with *Matronita*.¹³⁶

“Therefore we arouse Her, saying ישראל שמע (*Shema Yisra’el*), *Hear, O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—Adorn Yourself! Behold, Your Husband is near You in His array, ready to meet You.¹³⁷

“*YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (ibid.)—in one unification, in one aspiration, without separation; for all those limbs become one, entering into one desire. As soon as Israel says *one*, arousing six aspects, all those six become one. This mystery is ם (vav), one extension alone, with no other attachment, expanded by all, one.¹³⁸

“At that moment, *Matronita* prepares and adorns Herself, and Her attendants escort Her to Her Husband in hushed whisper, saying ‘Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!’ This is whispered, for so must

She be brought to Her Husband. Happy are the people who know this and compose the supernal arrangement of faith![139](#)

“As Husband and Wife unite as one, a proclamation issues from the south: ‘Present yourselves, hosts and camps, who manifest love to your Lord!’ Then one celestial officer arouses—Boel, master of camps—in whose hand are four keys that he has obtained from the four corners of the world. One key is engraved with the letter ך (yod), one key is engraved with the letter ה (he), and one key is engraved with the letter ם (vav). Another key, engraved with the letter ה (he), he places beneath the Tree of Life. Those three keys, engraved with these three letters, become one. As soon as they become one, that other key ascends, stands, and joins with the other, totality of three. All those camps and hosts bring these two keys into the Garden, and they all enact unification, corresponding to the pattern below.[140](#)

“יהוה (YHVH)—inscription of the letter ך (yod), supernal head of the Holy Name. אלהינו (Eloheinu), *our God*—mysterious inscription of the supernal letter ה (he), second letter in the Holy Name. יהוה (YHVH)—a flow conducted below by mysterious inscription of the letter ם (vav), for those two letters are drawn here, and it is one. All these three are one in one unity.[141](#)

“Once all this has been unified as one, and all remains in mystery of the letter ם (vav) complete, from the source of the spring and the innermost chamber, and He inherits from Father and Mother, then they bring *Matronita* to Him. For now He is complete with all sublime goodness and can sustain Her, providing Her with nourishment and satisfaction fittingly. All those limbs of His are all one; then they bring Her to Him in a whisper. Why in a whisper? So that a stranger will not mingle in this joy, as is said: *In his joy no stranger will share* (Proverbs 14:10).[142](#)

“Once He unites above in six aspects, She too unites below in six other aspects, so that there will be [134a]

oneness above and oneness below, as is said: *YHVH will be one and His name one* (Zechariah 14:9). One above in six aspects, as is written: שמע ישראל יהוה יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד (*Shema Yisra'el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH ehad*), *Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—six words corresponding to six aspects. One below in six aspects: שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד ברוך (*Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed*), Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!—six other aspects in six words. *YHVH one, above; and His name one, below.*[143](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Look, אחד (*ehad*), *one*, is written above, whereas below *one* is not written!’ Well, ועד (*va-ed*), and ever, is אחד (*ehad*), *one*, in an interchange of letters. Letters of the male do not interchange, whereas letters of the female do, and in this the male is more praiseworthy than the female. To prevent the evil eye from dominating, we interchange letters, not saying *ehad, one*, openly. But in the time to come, when that evil eye will be eliminated and no longer prevail over Her, She will be called *one* openly. For now, when that Other Side clings to Her, She is not *one*—though we unify Her in a whisper, in the mystery of other letters, saying *va-ed*, and ever. However, in the time to come, when that side will separate from Her and be eliminated from the world, She will surely be called *ehad, one*, for She will have no other clinging association, as is said: *On that day YHVH will be one and His name one*—openly, explicitly, not by whispering, not in secret.[144](#)

“Therefore we unify Her, drawing Her away from the Other Side, like someone calling another to testify on his behalf; for She is our witness, whereas the Other Side is not.[145](#) Consequently, She separates from that side. Once She comes, we escort Her to the canopy to be with the supernal King, with full aspiration and heartfelt intention; so She is *one*.

“When She comes with Her maidens, seeking to separate from the Other Side, She comes only as one

invited to gaze upon the glory of the King and nothing more; and thus it is proclaimed, that they should prepare themselves to behold the glory of the King. Then the Other Side, who has no wish to look, separates from Her. As is said: *O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze upon King Solomon* (Song of Songs 3:11)—go out to see!¹⁴⁶

“Once She comes, all Her attendants bring Her to the canopy to be with the King, in a whisper, in secret. For were it not so, that Other Side would not separate from Her and would mingle in Her joy. But in the time to come, when that Other Side will separate from Her, *on that day YHVH will be one and His name one.*¹⁴⁷

“As soon as She enters the canopy and is with the King, we arouse the joy of right and left, as is said: *You shall love YHVH your God...* (Deuteronomy 6:5); *It shall be, if you indeed [heed My commands]...* (ibid. 11:13)—without the slightest fear, since the Other Side will not approach there and is powerless.¹⁴⁸

“Whenever one wishes to bring the Bride to the King for the joy of conjugal union, it must be in a whisper, in secret, so that no trace of the evil side may appear in Her footsteps or cling to Her, nor the slightest hint of a blemish appear in Her children. Similarly, Jacob said to his sons, ‘Heaven forbid, perhaps a blemish has occurred in my bed!’ Then they replied, ‘Just as there is only *one* in your heart, [so there is only *one* in our heart]. We have no attachment to the Other Side at all, for it was removed from your bed. We abide in single unity, not deriving from the Other Side at all, neither in desire nor in thought. Rather, we abide in unity in our desire and thought.’

“Once he knew that the Other Side did not cling there at all, the Wife came before Her Husband in a whisper, in secret unification of six aspects. He opened, saying, ‘ועד ויום
ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד (Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed),
Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!’ For She was in the mystery of *one* with Her maidens,

with no intermingling at all nor any association with the Other Side.[149](#)

“Come and see: At that moment Jacob and his sons bore a supernal image below together with *Shekhinah*. Jacob assumed the mystery of six aspects of the upper world in one mystery, while his sons were in the image of six aspects of the lower world. He wished to reveal to them that קץ (*qets*), end, as we have established, for there is *qets*, and then there is *qets!* There is קץ הימין (*qets ha-yamin*), *end of the right* (Daniel 12:13), and קץ הימים (*qets ha-yamim*), *end of days*. *Qets ha-yamin, End of the right*, is mystery of Kingdom of Heaven. *Qets* [134b] *ha-yamim, End of days*, is the wicked kingdom, mystery of the Other Side, called קץ כל בשר (*qets kol basar*), *end of all flesh* (Genesis 6:13), as we have established.[150](#)

“Once he saw that *Shekhinah* had withdrawn from him..., they said, ‘Just as there is only *one* in your heart—since you bear the mystery of the upper world, which is one—so too with us, for we bear the mystery of the lower world, which is one.’ Therefore, two hearts are mentioned: mystery of the upper world, heart of Jacob, and mystery of the lower world, heart of his sons. Then he brought Her in with a whisper.[151](#)

“Just as they were unified—mystery of the upper world in *one*, and mystery of the lower world in *one*—so too must we unify the upper world in *one* and the lower world in the mystery of *one*, this in six aspects and that in six aspects. Accordingly, six words here in the mystery of six aspects, and six words there in the mystery of six aspects; *YHVH is one and His name one*. Happy is the heritage and share of one who sets his aspiration upon this, in this world and in the world that is coming![152](#)

“Rav Hamnuna Sava has spoken of the arousal of unification, and this is fine. We have established the mystery of lucidity of the matter, and these words are

destined to be aroused before the Ancient of Days without any shame at all.”[153](#)

He opened, saying, “*Have them take Me an offering* (Exodus 25:2). Here is unification in one entirety, above and below. It is not written *Have them take an offering*, but rather *Have them take Me an offering*—above and below, in one entirety, totally inseparable.[154](#)

“*From every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering* (Exodus 25:2). This verse should read as follows: *Every man whose heart impels him shall take My offering*. Why *from every man*? Well, there is a mystery here for those master fathomers.[155](#) Happy are the righteous who know to how to focus the aspiration of their hearts on the Holy King, and whose hearts’ intention is not at all directed to this world and its vain desires; rather, they know and strive to direct their will and cleave above, drawing the will of their Lord to them from above to below.

“Where do they obtain the will of their Lord, drawing it to them? From a certain supernal holy place, whence issue all holy desires. And who is that? כל איש (*Kol ish*), *every man*—Righteous One, called *kol*, as is said: *The abundance of earth is בכל* (*ba-kol*), *in all* (Ecclesiastes 5:8); *Therefore כל כל פקודי* (*kol piqqudei khol*), *by all Your inclusive precepts, [I walked straight]* (Psalms 119:128). *Man*—as is said: *a righteous man* (Genesis 6:9). This is *kol ish, every man*—master of the house, whose desire is constantly for *Matronita*, like a man who loves his wife. Incessantly *his heart impels him*—He loves Her, and *his heart*, His *Matronita*, is impelled to cleave to Him.[156](#)

“Yet although their love for one another is so intense that they never separate, from that *kol ish, every man*—master of the house, Husband of *Matronita*—from Him, *you shall take My offering*. According to the way of the world, if someone [135a] wants to take a man’s wife from him, the man becomes angry and will not let go of her. But the

blessed Holy One is not so: even though all Her love is focused on Him, and His love on Her, from Him they take Her, to have Her dwell among them. From that supernal place where all the love of the Wife and Her Husband abides, from there *you shall take My offering*. Happy is the share of Israel and their righteous ones who have attained this!¹⁵⁷

“This is the offering that you shall take from them (Exodus 25:3). Now, you might say, ‘If so, the verse should read *that you shall take from Him*. Why מאתם (*me-ittam*), *from them?*’ From these two names.¹⁵⁸

“Further, Rav Yeisa Sava said, ‘מאתם (*Me-ittam*), *from them*—מאת *(me-et mem)*, from the letter *mem*, who is mystery of the upper world, dwelling place of this Righteous One, who is adorned with the letter *mem*, whence He draws life to sustain all worlds. All is one entity.¹⁵⁹

“A mystery has been granted to the wise; happy is their share! For although they take Her, they can do so only with Her Husband’s permission and according to His will, performing for Him a ritual of love. So with His love, you *shall take My offering*. All this, by those services of prayer and the arrangement arrayed by Israel every day.¹⁶⁰

“From them (Exodus 25:3)—from the totality of six supernal aspects, and all is one.¹⁶¹

“From them—from those holidays and Sabbaths, and all is one mystery.¹⁶²

“Gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen... (Exodus 25:3-4). *Gold*—on the mysterious day of Rosh Hashanah, day of *gold*, when that side prevails, as is said: *From the north comes gold* (Job 37:22).¹⁶³

“Silver—Yom Kippur, when Israel’s sins whiten like snow, as is said: *If your sins are like crimson, they will become white as snow* (Isaiah 1:18); and it is written: *For on this day atonement will be effected for you, to purify you* (Leviticus 16:30).¹⁶⁴

“*And bronze*—days of Festival sacrifices, for those chariots of other nations, called mystery of mountains of bronze. Consequently, they diminish progressively each day.[165](#)

“*Blue*—*Pesah*, dominion of mystery of faith, mystery of blue light. Because She is blue, She did not rule until after annihilating and passing, as is said: *YHVH will pass through to strike Egypt* (Exodus 12:23). Therefore all colors in a dream bode well, except blue.[166](#)

“*Purple*—*Shavu'ot*, mystery of purple; for Written Torah was given then, comprised of all sides, right and left, as is said: *From His right hand, a fiery law for them* (Deuteronomy 33:2). This is purple.[167](#)

“*And crimson*—the Fifteenth of Av, when the daughters of Israel go out in fine wool dresses, as is said: *those reared in crimson* (Lamentations 4:5).[168](#)

“Until here, six holidays. From here on, mystery of Ten Days of *Teshuvah*: *linen and goat hair; reddened ram skins, tanned-leather skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil [and for the aromatic incense]; carnelian stones and stones for setting* (Exodus 25:4-7)—until here nine, corresponding to nine days, and Yom Kippur completes ten.[169](#)

“From all these we take *the offering of YHVH*, every single time, so that She will settle upon us. On Rosh Hashanah we take *the offering of YHVH*—She is the mystery of Rosh Hashanah, deriving from the side of *gold*.[170](#)

“From Yom Kippur we take Her—She is Yom Kippur, for daughter inherits mother.[171](#)

“From *Sukkot* we take Her, as is written: *On the eighth day you shall have a convocation* (Numbers 29:35)—this is *the offering of YHVH*.[172](#)

“From *Pesah*—She is *Pesah*, and we have established the mystery of the blue light.[173](#)

“From *Shavu'ot* we take Her, as is written: *Elohim spoke all these words, saying* (Exodus 20:1); from Written Torah we

take Oral Torah.[174](#)

“The Fifteenth of Av stands joyously over the daughters of Israel. All other days adorn Her. Therefore it is written: *that you shall take from them* (Exodus 25:3).[175](#)

“Just as they unite above, so She unites below in the mystery of *one*, to be with them above, one corresponding to one. The blessed Holy One, one above, does not sit upon His Throne of Glory until She becomes, by mystery of *one*, like Him, to be one with one.[176](#)

“Mystery of Sabbath: She is Sabbath—united in mystery [135b] of *one*, so that mystery of *one* may settle upon Her.[177](#)

“Prayer for the entrance of Sabbath, for the Holy Throne is united in mystery of *one*, arrayed for the supernal Holy King to rest upon Her. When Sabbath enters She unites and separates from the Other Side, all judgments removed from Her. She remains unified in holy radiance, adorned with many crowns for the Holy King. All powers of wrath and masters of judgment all flee; no other power reigns in all the worlds. Her face shines with supernal radiance, and She is adorned below by the Holy People, all of whom are adorned with new souls.[178](#)

“Then, beginning of prayer, blessing Her with joy and beaming faces, saying, ‘Bless \aleph (*et*) *YHVH*, who is blessed!’—*et YHVH*, precisely, to open by addressing Her with blessing.[179](#)

“The Holy People are forbidden to begin addressing Her with a verse of judgment, such as *Yet He is compassionate...* (Psalms 78:38), for She has already separated from mystery of the Other Side and all masters of judgment have withdrawn and disappeared from Her. Whoever arouses this below stimulates a similar arousal above, and the Holy Throne cannot be adorned with the crown of holiness. For whenever those masters of judgment are aroused below—those who had been removed and had all gone to hide away in the dusty chasm of the great abyss

—they all return to occupy their places, and the holy place who seeks tranquility is oppressed by them.[180](#)

“Do not say that only this is so; rather, no arousal above arouses until Israel arouses below, as they have established, for it is written: *at the covering, for our festival day* (Psalms 81:4). It is not written *for a festival day*, but rather *for our festival day*. Therefore the Holy People—adorned with holy crowns of souls in order to arouse tranquility—are forbidden to arouse judgment. Rather, all of them in aspiration and great love should arouse blessings above and below as one.[181](#)

“Bless \aleph (*et*) *YHVH*—*et*, precisely, as we have said, Sabbath of the entrance of Sabbath.[182](#)

“Blessed be *YHVH*, who is blessed’—gushing of blessings from the source of life to the place from which all saturation streams, saturating all. Since He is a source, in mystery of sign of the covenant, we call Him ‘who is blessed’—spring of the well. Once they reach there, surely the well is filled, for its waters never cease.[183](#)

“Consequently, we do not say, ‘Blessed be \aleph (*et*) *YHVH*, who is blessed,’ but rather, ‘Blessed be *YHVH*,’ for if the flow from the upper source did not reach there, the well would not be filled at all. So, ‘who is blessed.’ Why is He ‘who is blessed’? Because He fills and saturates ‘forever and ever,’ who is Sabbath of the entrance of Sabbath. We drive blessings into the place called ‘who is blessed’; once they reach there, all of them are ‘forever and ever.’ This is ‘Blessed be *YHVH*, who is blessed.’ Until here reach blessings from the upper world, all of them ‘forever and ever’—to be blessed, saturated, fittingly full, filled from all sides.[184](#)

“Blessed—upper source from which all blessings flow. When the moon waxes full, we call her this in relation to those below, but ‘Blessed’ is the upper source, as we have said.

“*YHVH*—center of all supernal aspects.

“Who is blessed—peace of the house, spring of the well, filling and saturating all.

“Forever and ever—lower world, who needs to be blessed. The anointing oil of ‘Blessed be *YHVH* who is blessed’ is all ‘forever and ever.’[185](#)

“Who is blessed—as is said: *A fruitful son* (Genesis 49:22).[186](#)

“Therefore this blessing must be recited by the entire people; and as Sabbath enters, in fervor and joy they should open with this beginning, so that this Sabbath entering by night may be blessed fittingly by the Holy People.[187](#)

“In this blessing, as Israel begins to bless, a voice traverses all the heavens that are sanctified by the holiness of the entrance of Sabbath: ‘Happy are you, Holy People, for you bless and sanctify below so that many supernal holy camps may be blessed and sanctified above! [136a] Happy are you in this world, and happy are you in the world that is coming!’

“Israel does not utter this blessing until they are adorned with crowns of holy souls, as we have said. Happy is the people so endowed in this world![188](#)

“On this night, conjugal union of the wise by these holy souls adorning them. Although we have already established this, all is one. Wherever you find the wise engaged in this matter, whether in one aspect or sometimes in another, it is all one, and we have already established these matters. But now—when they are all adorned with new, additional holy souls and spirits—is the time of their conjugal union, for the flow to that union is a flow of holiness of supernal tranquility, and holy children will issue fittingly.[189](#)

“This mystery has been granted to the wise. At the moment when night is split, on this night, the blessed Holy One seeks to enter the Garden of Eden. This mystery is that on weekdays the blessed Holy One enters the Garden below, to delight with the righteous abiding there, while on

Sabbath, on Sabbath eve, the blessed Holy One, in the mystery of the upper source, enters the Garden above. For on weekdays all souls of the righteous abide in the Garden on earth, and when the day is sanctified as Sabbath enters, all those camps of holy angels appointed over the Garden below elevate these souls dwelling in the Garden below to the firmament above the Garden, where a holy chariot circling the royal Throne of Glory awaits, and all those souls are raised to the Garden above. As these spirits ascend, other holy spirits descend, to adorn the Holy People—these ascending, those descending.¹⁹⁰

“Now, you might say, ‘But then during Sabbath the Garden on earth sits empty, without souls of the righteous!’ Not so! Rather, souls go and souls come; souls ascend and souls descend. Souls go from the Garden and souls come into the Garden. All those souls of the righteous who cleanse themselves during the weekdays and have not yet entered the Garden—at the moment when these leave, those enter, and the place is never empty, like the place of the Bread of the Presence on the day it was taken away.¹⁹¹

“Now, you might ask, ‘When they return on the weekdays, how do the places in the Garden expand in length, width, and height, imperceptibly?’ Like the mystery of ארץ הצבי (*erets ha-tsevi*), the Splendid Land, which expanded in all directions imperceptibly; like *tsevi*, a gazelle: as much as it grows, its skin grows in every direction, unperceived. And there are some souls who, having ascended, never again descend.¹⁹²

“Souls ascend, and souls descend to adorn the Holy People. As Sabbath enters, there is cycling of souls: these going and those coming, these ascending and those descending. Who sees the countless holy chariots flying here and there—all in joy and delight, with these souls, to crown the Holy People, to crown many of the righteous in the Garden of Eden below? Until the moment when a herald stands and proclaims, ‘Sanctified! Sanctified!’ Then,

calm and tranquility of all. The wicked in Hell are all calmed and granted rest, and all souls are adorned in their places, these above and those below. Happy is the people possessing this share![193](#)

“At midnight of Sabbath eve, as the wise arouse for their conjugal union, that supernal spirit with which they were adorned when the day was sanctified—while they are sleeping in their beds and their other souls seek to ascend to gaze upon the glory of the King, the spirit that descended as Sabbath entered takes that soul and they ascend, and the other soul is bathed in spices of the Garden of Eden, and sees there what she sees. And when it descends to dwell in its place at midnight, that soul returns to her place.[194](#)

“The wise should [136b] recite a verse of arousal for that supernal holy spirit of the Sabbath crown, such as: *The spirit of YHVH Elohim is upon me, for YHVH has anointed me; He has sent me to gladden the humble, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim release to captives, liberation to the imprisoned* (Isaiah 61:1); *When these moved those moved, and when these halted those halted, and when these rose off the ground the wheels rose alongside them—for the spirit of the living being was in the wheels* (Ezekiel 1:21); *Wherever the spirit would go they went—wherever the spirit would go—and the wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living being was in the wheels* (ibid., 20). For they are adorned with that spirit in arousing for the joy of conjugal union, and the flow of that supernal Sabbath spirit will infuse that conjugal enjoinderment.¹⁹⁵

“When Rav Hamnuna Sava used to emerge from the river before the entrance of Sabbath, he would sit for a moment, and raise his eyes and rejoice, saying that he was sitting to see the joy of supernal angels, these ascending and those descending. Whenever Sabbath enters, one dwells in the world of souls. Happy is one who knows the mysteries of his Lord!¹⁹⁶

“As day lightens on Sabbath morning, an ascent of joy wafts through all worlds in tranquility and bliss. Then, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and His handiwork the sky proclaims* (Psalms 19:2). Who are שמים (*shamayim*), *heavens*? The *heavens* in which the supernal שמה (*shema*), Name, appears, in which the Holy Name is traced.¹⁹⁷

“What is מספרים (*mesapperim*), *declare*? If you say, ‘Like someone telling ספור (*sippur*), a story’—not so! Rather, shining and sparkling in the shimmer of supernal light, attaining the Name composed of radiance of sublime perfection. What is *sippur*? Sparkling in radiant perfection of the supernal ספר (*sefer*), book. Consequently, they attain the perfect Name, shining in perfect radiance, sparkling

perfectly. They sparkle and shine by themselves from the radiant scintillation of the supernal book, shining and sparkling to every single *glory* adjoining them, because from them—from that ספירו (*sefiru*), sapphirine radiance, and glow—every single ring shines, sparkling shimmeringly. For on this day *the heavens* are adorned, attaining the Holy Name, more than on other days.¹⁹⁸

“*And His handiwork*—that supernal dew glistening from all concealed facets, which is *His handiwork* and His array, enhanced on this day more than on all other days.¹⁹⁹

“*The sky* מגיד (*maggid*), *proclaims*. What is *maggid*? Draws ונגיד (*ve-nageid*), and flows, below from the head of the King, filled from all sides. That *sky*, spring of the well, is the river issuing from Eden, and this is who flows, drawing down the flow of supernal dew, glistening and sparkling from all facets. This *sky* אנגיד (*angid*), conducts, it in a current of love and desire, to saturate the entrance of Sabbath with joy. As He draws and conveys that crystalline dew, all flows, filled and complete with holy letters on all those holy paths. Once all converges in Him, a path forms within Him to water and bless below.²⁰⁰

“*Day to day pours forth utterance* (Psalms 19:3). *Day to day*—day to day and ring to ring. Now Scripture describes in detail how *the heavens* מספרים (*mesapperim*), *declare*—arraying this *glory* in ספירו (*sefiru*), sapphirine radiance, and supernal scintillation—and how that *sky* draws and channels the flow of supernal dew. So it says: *Day to day pours forth utterance*. *Day to day*—day to day and rung to rung hasten to merge with one another, to be illumined by each other, from the sapphirine radiance that *the heavens* shine and sparkle to this *glory*.²⁰¹

“*יביע* (*yabbi'a*), *Pours forth*—as is said: ‘*מבע* (*mabba*), swiftly, done,’ hastening to be illumined by one another, to sparkle from each other, from that sapphirine radiance and scintillation.²⁰²

“אמר (Omer), *Utterance*—totality of letters and paths issuing from Father and Mother, and the head emerging from them, firstborn Son. א (Alef)—אבא (abba), Father, ascending and descending. Look, מ (mem) joins Him: אמ (em), Mother! ר (Resh)—רשא (reisha), head, firstborn. When all of them combine: אמר (omer), *utterance*—radiance of Father, Mother, and firstborn Son, illumining one another in a single bond, reigning on Sabbath day. So all are included with each other in order to be one, and therefore אמר (omer), *utterance*—supernal dominion—hastens to each other, so that all will be one.²⁰³

“When all this is drawn and flows to that *sky*, He waters and illumines below, generating offspring in the image of those [137a] *heavens*, who shine upon that *glory*. This corresponds to what is written: *Night to night displays knowledge* (Psalms 19:3)—Her cohort of chariots, one to another, forming the body of the Throne. They are all called nights, as is said: *Even in the nights my innards admonish me* (ibid. 16:7). Upper chariot is called days—*day to day*. Lower chariot is called nights—*night to night*.²⁰⁴

“*Displays knowledge* (Psalms 19:3). יחווה (Yeḥavveh), *Displays*—יחיה (yeḥayyeh), enlivens, enlivening the offspring of those *heavens*. And if you say that yeḥavveh, *displays*, is not equivalent to yeḥayyeh, enlivens, come and see what is written: *The human named his wife חוה (Ḥavvah), Eve, for she was the mother of all חי (ḥai), living* (Genesis 3:20). חוה (Ḥavvah), Eve, and חיה (Ḥayyah), living, amount to the same entity, and because ם (yod) withdrew and ן (vav) entered, this is fitting, for vav is surely life. Thus, Ḥavvah, Eve, and ḥayyah, living: drawing life from vav. Here, too, (yeḥavveh), *displays*; יחיה (yeḥayyeh), enlivens.²⁰⁵

“*Knowledge*—mystery of *heavens*. Just as *heavens* has six aspects, so She too has six aspects through the offspring that She enlivens corresponding to Him. Thus, *day to day*—included in the supernal rung אמר (omer),

utterance. Night to night—in mystery of the Male illumining Her, who is heavens, knowledge.[206](#)

“Because this *utterance* is a sublime mystery, unlike other utterances, Scripture testifies concerning it, saying: *There is no utterance and there are no words* (Psalms 19:4)—as with other utterances of the world. Rather, this *utterance* is a supreme mystery among supernal rungs, where no utterances or *words* exist—nor are they heard like other rungs of the mystery of faith, which are an audible voice, whereas these are forever inaudible; thus *their voice is unheard* (ibid.).[207](#)

“However, *Through all the earth their line extends* (Psalms 19:5). Although they are supernal secrecies, never known, their streaming flows and streams below; and because of that flow, we in this world have complete faith, and all inhabitants of the world discuss the mystery of faith of the blessed Holy One regarding those rungs—as if they were revealed, not hidden and concealed. Thus, *to the edge of the world, their words* (ibid.)—from the beginning of the world to its end, the wise of heart discuss those hidden rungs, although they are unknown.[208](#)

“How are they known? Because *The sun He set up as a tent for them* (Psalms 19:5)—because of the holy sun, who is a dwelling for those supernal holy rungs and a light absorbing all hidden lights along with their flow. Through Him, faith is revealed throughout the world.[209](#)

“Whoever grasps the sun is like one who grasps all those rungs, for the sun is *a tent* enveloping them, absorbing all, and He radiates all those colored lights below. So, *He is like a groom coming forth from his canopy* (Psalms 19:6)—in radiant scintillation of all concealed lights, all infusing Him with their fervor and splendor in desire and total delight, like a groom over whom all delight, eager to offer him presents and gifts. Thus, *He is like a groom coming forth from his canopy.*[210](#)

“Who is *his canopy*? Eden, and this is the mystery of *A river issues from Eden* (Genesis 2:10). Eden is a canopy covering all.[211](#)

“*Rejoicing like a mighty one* (Psalms 19:6). *Rejoicing*—from the side of primordial light, in which there is no Judgment at all. כגבור (*Ke-gibbor*), *Like a mighty one*—from the side of *Gevurah*. Yet although *Gevurah* is complete Judgment, it is written *ke-gibbor, like a mighty one*, not *gibbor, a mighty one*, for He sweetens Judgment with Love, absorbing all as one in desire and total delight.[212](#)

“All this, *to run his course* (Psalms 19:6), as is said: *Who makes a way through the sea* (Isaiah 43:16)—to saturate the moon and consummate her radiance on all sides, and to open a path in her to shine below.[213](#)

“*From the end of the heavens his going forth* (Psalms 19:7)—from the end of these upper *heavens* that we have mentioned He goes forth, for at the end of the body He brings forth, and in that place male is distinguished from female. This corresponds to what is written: *from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens* (Deuteronomy 4:32)—*the other end of the heavens* is the upper world; *from one end of the heavens* is His peace. Just as this absorbs all lights, containing them all, so too this absorbs all lights, containing them all, and He goes forth *from the end of the heavens*.[214](#)

“*And his circuit* (Psalms 19:7)—encircling all those holy aspects deserving [137b] to be illumined, saturated, sparkled by Him.

“*And nothing is hidden* (ibid.)—no one is covered from that radiance, for He illuminates all in one entirety, every single one fittingly.[215](#)

“When all are fulfilled and illumined by the sun, then the moon is adorned like supernal Mother, complete in fifty gates. This corresponds to what is written: *Torah of YHVH is perfect* (Psalms 19:8)—for She is complete on all sides in

mystery of five rungs, resembling supernal Mother, for those five are mystery of fifty.²¹⁶

“Therefore She comes in sentences of five words each, in order to be complete. תורת יהוה תמימה משיבת נפש (*Torat YHVH temimah meshivat nafesh*), *Torah of YHVH is perfect, restoring the soul* (Psalms 19:8)—five; עדות יהוה נאמנה מחכימת פתי (*Edut YHVH ne’emanah maḥkimat peti*), *The decree of YHVH is trustworthy, making the simple wise* (ibid.)—five; פקודי יהוה ישרים משמחי לב (*Piqqudei YHVH yesharim mesammeḥei lev*), *The precepts of YHVH are just, delighting the heart* (ibid., 9)—five; יהוה ברה מאירת עינים (*Mitsvat YHVH barah me’irat einayim*), *The command of YHVH is lucid, enlightening the eyes* (ibid.)—five; יהוה טהורה עומדת לעד (*Yir’at YHVH tehorah omedet la-ad*), *The awe of YHVH is pure, enduring forever* (ibid., 10)—five; משפטי יהוה אמת צדקו יחדיו (*Mishpetei YHVH emet tsadequ yaḥdav*), *The judgments of YHVH are true, altogether just* (ibid.)—five. All of them appear in five words each, composed on the pattern of supernal Mother.²¹⁷

“Therefore, YHVH, YHVH, six times—corresponding to six supernal aspects, mystery of the supernal Name. So the moon becomes full, fittingly complete in sublime arrangement. This happens on Sabbath day, when all is completed fittingly in the mystery of Sabbath above and below.²¹⁸

“Consequently, on this day radiance increases everywhere, as we have said. *The heavens* first receive from the source of life, and they illumine and adorn supernal *glory* from the mystery of supernal סֵפֶר (*sefer*), book, Father of all, and from the mystery of סֵפֶר (*sefar*), counting, supernal Mother, while He derives from the mystery of סִפּוּר (*sippur*), story. Hence, מספרים (*mesapperim*), *declare*, as we have said, in the mystery of these three names, which reign on Sabbath day over all other days.²¹⁹

“Therefore David uttered this praise through the Holy Spirit, for the radiance, scintillation, and dominion of Sabbath day over all other days by virtue of the mystery of

the supernal Name shining in radiance, sparkling in scintillation, completed in perfection above and below.[220](#)

“So, *Torah of YHVH is perfect* (Psalms 19:8)—Sabbath of Sabbath eve in one mystery, as we have said. The Companions ordained the opening praise of those praises of David with this mystery: *The heavens* (ibid., 2), for He receives first and illumines all the rest. Afterward, that river issuing from Eden, and this is the mystery of *Rejoice, O righteous, in YHVH!* (Psalms 33:1); for this river gathers and conveys all from the mystery of *the heavens* in supernal mystery and from the source of life, all fittingly on this day, and the sun prepares to shine fittingly on this day.[221](#)

“Afterward, the moon, who separates from the Other Side on this day to be illumined by the sun—this is: *For David, when he altered his sense before Abimelech, and he banished him and he went away* (Psalms 34:1). After separating from him, She united with the sun, so this praise is in twenty-two letters infused by the sun into the moon. This praise includes separation of the moon from the Other Side and praise of twenty-two letters in the radiance of the sun.[222](#)

“Afterward, union and ascension of *Matronita* with Her Husband, and this is: *A prayer of Moses, man of Elohim* (Psalms 90:1)—union and cleaving of Woman with Her Husband; spreading right and left arms to receive Her, to be as one in a single bond, to be one in one mystery.[223](#)

“All these *the heavens declare* (Psalms 19:2) and array. From here on, other praises of joy and complete desire; but these are supernal enhancement in the mystery of the Holy Name fittingly. These praises were ordained in the arrangement of Sabbath, for He ascends, adorned fittingly with His crowns, and they ascend in the mystery of the Holy Name to be one in the mystery of *the glory of God* that *the heavens declare* and luster, as we have said.[224](#)

“A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song (Psalms 98:1). We have already established this praise; but although we have aroused its meaning, the arousal aroused by the Companions is surely fine: [138a] when those milch cows conveyed the Ark, they aroused with this praise, as is said: The cows sang on the way (1 Samuel 6:12). What song did they sing? A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song, for He has done wonders (Psalms 98:1). This mystery corresponds to the pattern above: when those hayyot carry the Throne, raising it above, they utter this praise.[225](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Why is it written here new, since they constantly utter this praise?’ Well, it certainly is new, being called so because of the renewal of the moon, when illumined by the sun; then it is new, and this is a new song.[226](#)

“His right hand and His holy arm have won Him victory (Psalms 98:1)—arousal of right and left to receive Her. This praise they utter as they carry the Ark, ascending to Beth-shemesh, House of the Sun, just as the wagons went up to Beth-shemesh, all amounting to one mystery. And since ascension of the Throne, rising above, occurs on Sabbath, the arrangement of this praise is on Sabbath. All of these praises form an arrayal of Sabbath, for the unique nation of the world to praise Him.[227](#)

“A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day (Psalms 92:1). This praise was uttered by Adam when he was banished from the Garden of Eden and Sabbath came and defended him, as the Companions have established. This praise is offered by the lower world to the upper world—a day that is entirely Sabbath, the King who possesses peace. This is: A psalm, a song, with no mention of who uttered it, as we have established.[228](#)

“For the Sabbath day—supernal day, supernal Sabbath. This is Sabbath, and that is Sabbath. What is the difference between them? Well, Sabbath unspecified is Sabbath of

Sabbath eve; *the Sabbath day* is Sabbath above. This is day, and that is night. ושמרו בני ישראל (Ve-shameru venei yisra'el), *The Children of Israel shall keep, the Sabbath* (Exodus 31:16)—night, mystery of Female. זכור (Zakhor), *Remember, the Sabbath day* (ibid. 20:8)—day, mystery of דכורא (dekhura), Male. Therefore, *A psalm, a song to the Sabbath day*.²²⁹

“We have found in various places that the lower world does not attain a name, appearing anonymously as here, for example: *To Moses He said, ‘Go up to YHVH’* (Exodus 24:1); *He called to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1)—all with the name concealed, unattained, simply because a high rung appears, and in relation to the high rung She does not attain a name. The light of a lamp does not emerge during the day in sunlight, so She attains no name.²³⁰

“All these are praises of Sabbath, who transcends all other days.

“נשמת כל חי (Nishmat kol hai), The soul of all living. The Companions have aroused words of truth, but we should call attention to this soul who flies from Life of the Worlds. Since she belongs to Him from whom all blessings flow and in whom they inhere—who saturates and blesses below—this soul issuing from Him has permission to bless this place.

“Thus souls fly from that Living One as Sabbath enters. Those souls, who are actual blessings, bless this place called Name from below, while the place from which they emerge blesses Her above; so this Name receives blessings from below and from above, embraced on all sides.²³¹

“On weekdays She receives blessings from other souls who bless Her from below. On Sabbath day She receives blessings from those supernal souls who bless Her with forty-five words, equivalent to מה (Mah), What, as we have established in the mystery of Mah, What, and in the mystery of מי (Mi), Who—one being the upper world, and the other the lower world. Thus, from ‘If our mouth [were filled with

song]’ until ‘In the past,’ another praise amounts to fifty words. Although nothing there is susceptible to counting, the sum amounts to the mystery of ׀ (Mi), Who. From there, another praise amounts to the sum of one hundred words, consummation of all; and one chariot upon which it settles [138b]—consummation.²³²

“All this praise and all these words are limbs known numerically for the completion of Sabbath, to be fittingly consummated. Happy is the people who knows how to arrange perfectly the praise of its Lord! From here on, the arrangement of prayer as ordained.²³³

“It is written: *And You, YHVH, be not far. My strength, to my aid hasten!* (Psalms 22:20). King David said this when he was arraying and arranging the praise of his Lord, so as to unite the sun with the moon. While arraying and arranging His praises for unification, he said ואתה (Ve-attah), *And You, YHVH, be not far. Ve-attah, And You*—mystery of a single bond, inseparable.²³⁴

“*Be not far*—once She ascends to be adorned by Her Husband, all in the upper world, from there He seeks to rise to *Ein Sof*, so that all may be joined above, above. Therefore, *Be not far*—departing from us, abandoning us.²³⁵

“Consequently, during the arrangement of praise, Israel must seek to be included there and to cleave to them from below; for if this glory seeks to depart, Israel below grasp it, holding tight, not letting it move away from them. Therefore, prayer in a whisper, like someone speaking secretly with the king: as long as he is secretly with him, [the king] does not move away at all.²³⁶

“אילותי (Eyaluti), *My strength*—just as when איל (ayyal), a deer, or a gazelle runs far away, it soon returns to the place that it left, so with the blessed Holy One: even though He ascends above, above into *Ein Sof*, He soon returns to His place. Why? Because Israel below are linked with Him and

do not leave Him—to be forgotten by Him or separated distantly. Thus, *My deer, to my aid hasten!*²³⁷

“Consequently, we must link ourselves with the blessed Holy One, grasping Him like someone drawing down from above, so that no one will be abandoned by Him for even a moment. So, when joining Redemption to Prayer, one should grasp Him and speak with Him in a whisper, in secret, so that He will not distance Himself from us and we will not be abandoned by Him. Of this is written *You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!* (Deuteronomy 4:4). *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH* (Psalms 144:15).”²³⁸

At that moment Rabbi Shim'on rose, and the Companions also rose, and they walked on. Rabbi El'azar said to Rabbi Shim'on, his father, “Until now, we have been sitting in the shade of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. From now on, since we are walking, we must follow ways that guard this Tree.”²³⁹

He said to him, “You begin first to open the way!”

He opened, saying, “*Have them take Me an offering* (Exodus 25:2), as has been said. How is She *an offering*? In the mystery of *gold*, since from there She is originally nourished, for She is lower *Gevurah*, deriving from the side of *gold*. Yet although She derives from the side of *gold*, She remains essentially on the side of *silver*, which is the right.”²⁴⁰

“This is the mystery of the cup of blessing, which must be received by right and left but remains essentially in the right, with the left withdrawn and not clinging. For it is placed between right and left, and the left is held below with the right holding it above, as is said: *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me* (Song of Songs 2:6).”²⁴¹

“*Gold and silver* (Exodus 25:3)—as is said: *Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold* (Haggai 2:8), as has been

explained.²⁴²

“*And bronze* (Exodus 25:3)—a color resembling *gold*, since it is hued with the color of *gold* and the color of *silver*. Therefore, the bronze altar is small, *and David was the smallest* (1 Samuel 17:14). How is it small? As is said: *Because the bronze altar that was before YHVH was too small to hold the ascent offerings and the fat of the communion offerings...* (1 Kings 8:64). Yet although it is small, all is held within it.²⁴³

“Now, you might say, ‘Another altar is called small.’ Not so, for only this one is small, as is written: *the great light for dominion of day and the small light for dominion of night* (Genesis 1:16). This is *the small light*; *the great light* is the inner altar, which is the golden altar.²⁴⁴

“*Blue* (Exodus 25:4) [139a]—blue of tzitzit. *Blue* is the Throne, mystery of phylactery of the hand. *Blue* is the Throne from which capital cases are judged; for there is a throne from which civil cases are judged and a throne from which capital cases are judged. Consequently, all colors bode well in a dream except the color blue, since one realizes that his soul is being arraigned in judgment, and when the soul is judged, the body is sentenced to destruction—that dream needs great mercy.²⁴⁵

“*Blue* is the Throne, of which is written *a flashing fire and a radiance surrounding it* (Ezekiel 1:4)—because with it, windings are wound for tzitzit, and when it attains a *radiance* it turns green, the color of leeks. From that moment begins the time of reciting *Shema*, since the color blue changes from what it was. Therefore, it is forbidden to try capital cases at night, because the color blue rules at that time and permission is granted to snatch a soul without justice, since Justice does not rule at that time.²⁴⁶

“When morning arrives and the right above arouses, that light radiates and reaches this *blue*, which changes from what it was. Then another Throne reigns over it,

cleaving to it in holiness. From that moment on is the time for reciting *Shema*.²⁴⁷

“*Purple* (Exodus 25:4)—gathering of all, all colors as one.²⁴⁸

“*וּתּוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי* (*Ve-tola'at shani*), *And worm of crimson* (ibid.)—it is spelled שָׁנִי (*shani*) and spelled שָׁנִיִּם (*shanim*), as is written: *for all her household is clothed in shanim, crimson* (Proverbs 31:21). Well, this is the color called *shani, crimson*, absorbing all colors. It is all: *shani* and *shanim*. *Shanim*—when all are included within it as one. *Shani*—issuing from the supernal Throne that reigns over *blue* from the right side. This is the guardian of Israel, of whom is written *Michael, your prince* (Daniel 10:21).

“*Worm*—whose power lies in its mouth, like a worm uprooting all, decomposing all.²⁴⁹

“*Worm of crimson*—two colors as one, right and left, white and red.²⁵⁰

“*וְשֵׁשׁ* (*Ve-shesh*), *And linen* (Exodus 25:4)—linen in which שֵׁשׁ (*shit*), six, threads conjoin. This is the one of whom is written *His body was כְּתָרְשִׁישׁ* (*khetarshish*), *like topaz* (Daniel 10:6). In these two are included two others.²⁵¹

“*And goat hair* (Exodus 25:4)—lower powers outside protecting the inner ones. All is necessary; a place must be provided for all, since they derive from the side of gold.²⁵²

“*Reddened ram skins* (Exodus 25:5)—drawn from two sides, right and left, to cover another place.²⁵³

“*Skins of תְּחָשִׁים* (*tehashim*) (ibid.). There is one species that breeds within the Other Side, in desolation, not inhabited land; this is pure and called תְּחָשׁ (*tahash*).²⁵⁴

“In the Book of King Solomon are supernal mysteries concerning this bronze altar that we have mentioned, for it is described as *an altar of earth—An altar of earth shall you make for Me* (Exodus 20:21)—and this is a fitting mystery. נְחֹשֶׁת (*Nehoshet*), Bronze—when other mountains dominate and She needs to nourish them, She is tinged with this color to nourish them, and they are called mountains of

bronze. From those bronze mountains flows a certain spirit, from the midst of this altar, and as the altar ascends in another ascension, the letter נ (*nun*) withdraws—holy altar—and the spirit of these mountains of bronze remains. When that spirit attains its own existence, it is called תחש (*tahash*), since the letter נ (*nun*) has withdrawn from it. This separates into many other spirits, who are called similarly, and therefore that one nation was called *Tahash*, as is said: *and Tahash and Maacah* (Genesis 22:24), and they knew of this animal of the Dwelling that is named after them.²⁵⁵

“*And acacia wood* (Exodus 25:5)—those holy mysteries of the boards of the Dwelling, who are named for their mystery. It is written: *acacia wood*, עומדים (*omedim*), *upright* (ibid. 26:15), and similarly: *Seraphim omedim, were standing* (Isaiah 6:2). From here on, a stream of holy anointing oil to flow upon them.²⁵⁶

“*Carnelian stones and stones for setting* (Exodus 25:7)—holy stones, foundations of the Sanctuary in holy chariots. These are designated on their own for glory and praise in a precious garment—where the priest would gaze—and to evoke the twelve tribes. Therefore, twelve stones, as has been established.²⁵⁷

“There are thirteen types, apart from these precious stones, all amounting to twenty-five letters [139b] in the supernal mystery of union. Corresponding to these, Moses engraved and arranged twenty-five letters in the mystery of the verse of union, as is written: שמע ישראל יהוה יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד (*Shema Yisra'el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH ehad*), *Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—twenty-five letters engraved and inscribed in the mystery above.²⁵⁸

“Jacob sought to array below in the mystery of union, and he arranged twenty-four letters: שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד ברוך (*Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed*), Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever! He did not complete twenty-five letters because the Dwelling had not yet been set up. As soon as it was completed, the word

issuing from it was uttered with precisely twenty-five letters, showing that this corresponded to the pattern above, as is written: וידבר יהוה אליו מאהל מועד לאמר (Va-ydabber YHVH elav me-ohel mo'ed lemor), *And YHVH spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying* (Leviticus 1:1).²⁵⁹

“Therefore, twenty-five types, consummating the array of the Sanctuary, and we have established all these letters among those engraved letters that we learned from our Master.²⁶⁰

“Since the Dwelling was completed in these mysteries, it is called כה (koh), thus, in the union of consummation of the Dwelling, and therefore it is written: *Your devoted ones* יברכוכה (yevarekhukha), *will bless You* (Psalms 145:10)—mystery of completion of the entire Dwelling and its array. כ"ה (Kaf, he), corresponding to twenty-two letters and Torah, Prophets, and Writings, which are one totality, one mystery.²⁶¹

“When the people of Israel enact unification by this verse—in the mystery of twenty-five letters: אלהינו יהוה אחד (Shema Yisra'el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH ehad), *Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*; and שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד (Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed), *Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever*, which constitute twenty-four letters—focusing on each one of them, all those letters join as one and ascend to forty-nine gates, in the mystery of Jubilee. Then one must elevate ועד (va-ed), and ever—no further—upon which gates are opened, and the blessed Holy One considers that person as if he had fulfilled the complete Torah, which appears in forty-nine facets, completely.²⁶²

“Therefore, one should focus the will on twenty-five and twenty-four, elevating them by aspiration of the heart through the forty-nine gates that we have mentioned. Having focused on this, one should focus on the unification described by our Master—שמע ישראל (Shema Yisra'el), *Hear O Israel!...*, and ברוך שם (Barukh shem), *Blessed be the name...*,

are the entirety of the whole Torah. Happy is the share of one who focuses on them, for this is surely the entirety of Torah, above and below! This is mystery of the complete Human, male and female, and mystery of all faith.[263](#)

“A dispute between Shammai and Hillel concerning rising and lying down, as is written: *when you lie down and when you rise* (Deuteronomy 6:7). For Shammai holds that in the evening, when the Female is enveloped in Her dominion, one should recline and recite, corresponding to the Female; whereas in the morning, when the Male exercises sovereignty of the upper world, one should rise before the Male, as is required during the standing prayer and whenever the Male appears.

“The school of Hillel holds that if each of them were alone, it would be necessarily so. However, since we unite them as one, and they ascend as one in a bond of forty-nine facets, forty-nine gates, we must not separate them from one another, but rather perceive that all is one, inseparable. As one happens to be, so he should recite—since both of them are in a single bond, as is comfortable for them, and one should demonstrate this.[264](#)

“Therefore, the Male appears in six aspects of the verse *שמע ישראל* (*Shema Yisra'el*), *Hear O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4), namely six words, and the Female appears in six aspects in *ברוך שם* (*Barukh shem*), *Blessed be the name...*, namely six other words. In a single bond they rise, in mystery of forty-nine gates, and the law is always according to the school of Hillel.”[265](#)

Rabbi Shim'on raised his hands and blessed his son, Rabbi El'azar. He opened, saying, “*Who has aroused from the east, calling righteousness to follow Him? He delivers nations to him and makes him rule over kings. He turns them to dust with His sword, to windblown stubble with His bow* (Isaiah 41:2). This verse has been established and discussed, but it is a mystery of wisdom. מי (*Mi*), *Who*—mystery of the supernal world, for thence emerges the

beginning of revealing the mystery of faith, as we have established.²⁶⁶

“Furthermore, *Mi, Who*—Concealed of all concealed, unknown and completely unrevealed, revealed its glory, to be perceived, from the place called *east*; for thence is the beginning of the whole mystery of faith and revealing of light.²⁶⁷

“Afterward, צדק יקראהו לרגלו (*tsedeq yiqra’ehu le-raglo*), *righteousness calling Him at his feet*—for *righteousness* reveals supernal *Gevurah* and the reign of the blessed Holy One, and to this *righteousness* He has granted dominion over all the worlds, to conduct them and enhance them fittingly. Therefore, *He delivers nations to him and makes him rule over kings* [140a]—for all nations of the world are subject to the authority of this *righteousness*, as is said: *He judges the world with righteousness* (Psalms 9:9).²⁶⁸

“Furthermore, צדק יקראהו לרגלו (*tsedeq yiqra’ehu le-raglo*), *righteousness calling Him at His feet*—who calls whom? Well, *righteousness* calls constantly to a resplendent speculum, never subsiding, and *righteousness* stands constantly *le-raglo, at His feet*, never withdrawing from there, calling and not subsiding, as is written: *O God, do not be silent! Do not be mute or quiet, O God!* (Psalms 83:2). Now the blessed Holy One is illuminating the way for us, and Rabbi El’azar, my son, is calling a supernal light and not subsiding. Happy is the share of the righteous in this world and in the world that is coming!”²⁶⁹

Rabbi Abba opened a verse, saying, “A *psalm of David, when he was in the desert of Judea* (Psalms 63:1). What is the difference between all other psalms, which do not record where King David uttered them, and here, where it says: *when he was in the desert of Judea*? Well, this is not the only one, for similarly too: *when he altered his sense before Abimelech* (ibid. 34:1); *when the Ziphites came* (ibid. 54:2); and so with all of them—to show all inhabitants

of the world the worthiness of David, for even though he was in distress and being pursued, he strove to utter songs and praises to the blessed Holy One.²⁷⁰

“Although he spoke through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit did not settle upon him until he endeavored to have it settle. It is always so: a spirit from above does not settle until a person arouses it upon himself from below. Even though David was being pursued and in distress, he did not withhold songs and praises from his mouth, nor cease praising his Lord for everything.²⁷¹

“Now, you might say, ‘Look at what we have learned: “לדוד מזמור (Mizmor le-David), *A psalm of David*, or לדוד מזמור (Le-David mizmor), *Of David, a psalm*.” And here, the Holy Spirit settled upon him first, since it says *Mizmor le-David, A psalm of David*.’²⁷²

“Well, if he had not focused himself first, the Holy Spirit would not have settled upon him. *Mizmor, A psalm*, is the Holy Spirit. Why is She called so? Because She continually praises the supernal King, always praising and singing, never subsiding. When David appeared, She found a body fittingly prepared and She settled upon him, and he revealed in this world how to praise and sing to the King of all, so that this world would be perfected after the pattern above.²⁷³

“לדוד (Le-David), *Of David*—a man completely arrayed, a perfected man, a virtuous man. דוד (David), precisely, never changing.²⁷⁴

“*When he was in the desert of Judea*—this is in praise of David: even though he was in distress, being pursued.²⁷⁵

“What praise did he utter? A praise that is grand and splendid. And what is its worthiness? אלהים אלי אתה (Elohim eli attah), *God, You are my God; I will search for You* (Psalms 63:2). *Elohim*—unspecified. Since he said *Elohim, God*, why *eli, my God*? Well, that is his rung. Three rungs here: *Elohim, God; eli, my God; attah, You*. Yet although they are three, it is one rung, in the mystery of אלהים חיים (Elohim hayyim), Living

God. *Elohim, God*—above, *Elohim ḥayyim*, Living God. *Eli, My God*—end of heaven to end of heaven. *Attah, You*—his rung. Yet all is one, attaining one name.²⁷⁶

“אֲשַׁחֲרֶךָ (*Ashaḥareka*), *I will search for You*—if according to its literal meaning, fine; but *ashaḥareka*, I will enhance the light that shines בְּשַׁחֲרוּתָא (*be-shaḥaruta*), darkly. For the light abiding in darkness does not shine until enhanced below. And whoever enhances this שְׁחֹרָה (*sheḥorah*), black, light, although it is black, attains a white shining light, a resplendent speculum. Such a person attains the world that is coming.²⁷⁷

“This is the mystery of וּמְשַׁחֲרֵי (*U-mshaḥarai*), *Those who seek me, will find me* (Proverbs 8:17). *U-mshaḥarai*—who enhance the מְשַׁחֲרָא (*meshaḥara*), black, light.²⁷⁸

“יִמְצְאוּנִי (*Yimtsa'uneni*), *Will find me*—it is not written יִמְצְאוּנִי (*yimtsa'uni*), but rather יִמְצְאוּנִי (*yimtsa'uneni*), for he attains two lights: a black light and a white shining light, a speculum that does not shine and a speculum that shines. This is *yimtsa'uneni, will find me*.²⁷⁹

“Therefore, David said, אֲשַׁחֲרֶךָ (*Ashaḥareka*)—I will enhance the מְשַׁחֲרָא (*meshaḥara*), black, light, to be illumined by the white shining light.’

“*My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You* (Psalms 63:2)—like someone hungering to eat and thirsting to drink.

“*In a parched and weary land with no water* (ibid.)—for it is a desert, uninhabited, not a place of holiness, [140b] and thus a place *with no water*. ‘Just as I hunger and thirst for You in this place, so, in the sanctuary I will behold You (ibid., 3).’²⁸⁰

“As for us, just as we thirst for our Master, to drink in his words thirstily in this place, so we thirst to drink his words thirstily in the Temple, the place called *sanctuary!*”²⁸¹

Rabbi Shim'on said to Rabbi Abba, “Let him who began the word now speak!”

He opened, saying, “*Have them take Me an offering; from every man...* (Exodus 25:2). When the blessed Holy One showed Moses the making of the Dwelling, he found it difficult and could not comprehend it, as has been established. Now we should raise a difficulty: if this *offering* was given by the blessed Holy One to Moses alone, how could He give Her to another and say that *the Children of Israel* should *take this offering*? But surely He gave Her to Moses, not to anyone else.^{[282](#)}

“This may be compared to a king who was among his people, though the *matronita* was not with the king. As long as the *matronita* is not with the king, the people are not bolstered by him and cannot dwell securely. As soon as the *matronita* arrives, all the people rejoice and dwell securely.^{[283](#)}

“Similarly, at first, even though the blessed Holy One performed miracles and signs through Moses, the people were not bolstered. As soon as the blessed Holy One said, *Have them take Me an offering* (Exodus 25:2), *and I will place My dwelling in your midst* (Leviticus 26:11), they were all immediately bolstered and they rejoiced in the worship of the blessed Holy One, as is written: *It happened on the day* כלת משה (*kallot Mosheh*), *Moses consummated* (Numbers 7:1)—for כלת משה (*kallat Mosheh*), *the Bride of Moses*, descended to earth.^{[284](#)}

“Now, you might say, ‘Everywhere, ויהי (*va-yhi*), *it happened*, conveys nothing but suffering, and here is written *va-yhi, It happened, on the day!*’ Well, on the very day that *Shekhinah* descended to earth, the Accuser appeared by Her and dismal darkness obstructed Her to prevent Her from descending.^{[285](#)}

“We have learned: Fifteen million accusing angels appeared by Her, preventing Her descent. At the same time, an entire assemblage of supernal angels appeared before the blessed Holy One, and said, ‘Master of the Universe! All our splendor and all our radiance derive from

Shekhinah of Your Glory, and now She will descend to those below!’[286](#)

“At that moment, *Shekhinah* steeled Herself and broke through the dismal darkness, as one breaks hard chunks of ice, and She descended to earth. As soon as they all saw this, they began exclaiming, ‘*YHVH, our Master, how magnificent Your name in all the earth!*’ (Psalms 8:2)—*magnificent* indeed, for She broke many hard chunks and fierce forces, and descended to earth, ruling over all. Therefore it is written: וַיְהִי (Va-yhi), *It happened* (Numbers 7:1)—the pain suffered by many armies and camps on the day that כַּלַּת מֹשֶׁה (kallat Mosheh), *the Bride of Moses*, descended to earth.[287](#)

“Consequently, *Have them take Me an offering* (Exodus 25:2). It is not written *Have them take Me and an offering*, but rather *Have them take Me an offering*, showing that all is one, inseparable.[288](#)

“The making of the Dwelling resembled the pattern above, one corresponding to the other, so that *Shekhinah* would be embraced on all sides, above and below. Here in this world, its workmanship is like that of the body, to contain spirit within—namely *Shekhinah*, who is included above and below. She is Holy Spirit, continuously entering and drawn into the mystery of the body, so that kernel will dwell within shell, all fittingly.[289](#)

“This Holy Spirit becomes like a body so that another spirit may be contained within it—supernal, subtle, luminous. So is all embraced and contained, one in another, entering one another, until finally embraced within this world, the last external shell.[290](#)

“The hard shell is within the shell of this world—like a nut, whose outer shell is not hard but whose inner shell is. So too above: the hard shell is the other spirit ruling the body; within it is a thin shell, and within that the kernel.[291](#)

“In the Holy Land all is arranged differently, for the hard shell is broken there and has no dominion at all—the

hard shell is continually broken, opened on this side and that. That opening existed in the Holy Land as long as they performed the ritual [141a] properly. Once sins had their effect, they drew the opening together from one side to another, until the shell converged, all as one. As soon as the shell enclosed the kernel, that shell dominated them and expelled them from that place. Nevertheless, even though it expelled them, the shell cannot rule over that holy place, since it is not its domain.[292](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘If so, since the hard shell cannot rule over that holy place, why is it still a ruin, for surely destruction comes to the world only from the side of that hard shell?’ Well, certainly, when it was destroyed, it was destroyed only from that side, when it enclosed the kernel. Yet the blessed Holy One prevented the hard shell from ruling over that place, and once it had expelled Israel from there, that shell was reopened as before. Since the Holy People are not there, that opening is covered with a covering of a holy curtain, to protect that place, so that the hard shell will not enclose it, and [the covering] adheres on all sides.

“For sacred anointing to flow upon the land as before—impossible, for that thin covering adheres, preventing it from descending, since the Holy People are not there. Consequently, the ruins have not been rebuilt since the day they were destroyed.

“For that hard shell to rule—impossible, for that thin covering clasps the opening on all sides, preventing it from ruling there and enclosing the kernel.[293](#)

“That covering of a thin curtain derives from an extension of the holy curtain above, protecting that place. Therefore, when all those souls of other nations living in the land depart, it does not receive them but thrusts them out, and they go wandering, revolving in many convolutions until they leave the Holy Land entirely and circle to their side in their impurity. All those souls of Israel who depart

there ascend, and that thin covering receives them and they enter supernal holiness, for every species seeks its own kind.²⁹⁴

“Souls of Israel who depart outside the land, in the domain of that hard shell—each one goes circling and revolving until she returns to her place, entering the site suitable for her. Happy is the share of one whose soul departs in the holy domain, in that opening of the Holy Land!²⁹⁵

“If one whose soul departs in the Holy Land is buried on that same day, the impure spirit has no power over him at all. Therefore it is written of one who is hanged: *rather you shall surely bury him on that day... and you shall not defile your land* (Deuteronomy 21:23)—for at night permission is granted to roam. Yet although they are given permission, they do not enter the Holy Land unless they find a vessel there to enter.²⁹⁶

“Limbs and fat that are consumed at night to nourish other species—not that they enter the land, nor to draw them into the land, but rather so that the Other Side will not prevail in the land nor be drawn to enter there. Therefore, their smoke would ascend twistingly, turning outside, moving turbulently, feverishly, until it entered the hollow of the north, where lie the haunts of all the other sides. There the smoke entered, and they all were nourished there.

“Smoke of the day would ascend to its place on a straight path, nourishing who was nourished.

“From that opening were nourished all aspects of the hard shell, which lies outside the Holy Land, and by that dense smoke, as we have established.²⁹⁷

“Bodies of the righteous that were not lured in this world after the pleasures of that hard shell are not ruled by the spirit of impurity at all, for they did not collude with it at all in this world. Just as the body is drawn in this world

after that hard shell and its pleasures, delights, and lusciousness, so it is defiled after its soul departs.

“As for bodies of the righteous that enjoy no delights in this [141b] world except delights of *mitsvah* and meals of Sabbath, festivals, and holidays, that impure spirit cannot dominate them, for they have derived no delight from it at all. Since they obtained nothing from it, it has no power over them whatsoever. Happy is one who derives no pleasure from it at all![298](#)

“One whose soul departs outside the Holy Land and whose body has been defiled by the spirit of impurity—that spirit of impurity remains absorbed within him until he decomposes in the dust. And if that body, which is saturated by the impure spirit, is brought up to the Holy Land for burial, of it is written: *You came and defiled My land, and made My heritage an abomination* (Jeremiah 2:7). *My land*—over which the spirit of impurity has no power. With that body of yours, saturated by the spirit of impurity and being brought for burial in *My land*, you defile it, rendering it defiled—were it not that the blessed Holy One fashions a remedy for the land; for as soon as that body has decomposed, the blessed Holy One blows a spirit and dispels it, for He has compassion on His land.[299](#)

“As for Joseph, the spirit of impurity never dominated his body, even though his soul departed in a foreign domain. Why? Because during his life he was not seduced by the spirit of impurity. Even so, he did want his body to be brought up to the Holy Land for burial, but rather said, *You shall take up my bones* (Genesis 50:25)—not *my body*.[300](#)

“Jacob did not die, and his body endured intact permanently. He did not fear the Other Side, since his bed was complete through perfection of supernal light, through consummation of twelve tribes and seventy souls. Consequently, he did not fear the Other Side and it had no power over him.[301](#)

“Furthermore, he is the body of the supernal image, whose beauty embraces all sides, and all the limbs of Adam were joined to him. Therefore of him is written: *I will lie down with my fathers, and you will carry me from Egypt* (Genesis 47:30)—the whole body. Consequently, *the physicians embalmed Israel* (ibid. 50:2), so that his body would remain intact, and this was how it should have been.^{[302](#)}

“As for other inhabitants of the world, whose souls depart in the Holy Land, soul and body are saved from all.^{[303](#)}

“The soul of a human is called by three names: *nefesh*, *ruah*, *neshamah*. All are comprised within one another, while their power appears in three places. *Nefesh* appears in the grave while the body decomposes in the dust, and she revolves in this world to be present among the living and to perceive their suffering. When they are in need, she pleads for mercy.^{[304](#)}

“*Ruah* enters the earthly Garden, where she is formed into an image of the body of this world, in a certain garment that she dons there. She revels there in pleasures and delights of the radiance of the Garden; and on Sabbaths, new moons, and festivals, she ascends above, delighting there, and returns to her place. Of this is written *The ruah will return to Elohim who gave it* (Ecclesiastes 12:7) —*will return*, precisely, at these times that we have mentioned.^{[305](#)}

“*Neshamah* ascends immediately to her place, to the place from where she issued. Through her the lamp is kindled, shining above. This one never descends below; through this is encompassed the one who is encompassed from all sides, above and below. Until this ascends to be linked with her place, *ruah* is not crowned in the earthly Garden and *nefesh* does not settle in her place. As soon as this ascends, all of them attain tranquility.^{[306](#)}

“When inhabitants of the world are in need, when in their suffering they go to the cemetery, this *nefesh* arouses and she goes flying and arouses *ruah*, and that *ruah* arouses the patriarchs, and ascends and arouses *neshamah*. Then the blessed Holy One has compassion on the world, as we have established. Although these matters of the soul have been aroused in other aspects, they are all evenly balanced; this is lucidity of the matter, and all is one.[307](#)

“When *neshamah* is hindered from ascending to her place, *ruah* goes and stands by the entrance of the Garden of Eden; but the entrance is not opened for her, [142a] and she goes roaming about, unnoticed by anyone. *Nefesh* goes roaming through the world, sees the body breeding worms and enduring the punishment of the grave, and she mourns over it, as they have established, for it is written: *Surely his flesh feels pain for him and his soul mourns for him* (Job 14:22). All suffer punishment until *neshamah* is bound in her place; then all are bound in their places. For all these form a single bond, corresponding to the pattern above in the mystery of *nefesh*, *ruah*, and *neshamah*. All is one, one bond.[308](#)

“*Nefesh* has no light of her own at all. This is the one who shares in the mystery of a certain body, delighting and nourishing it with all that it needs, as is written: *She provides food for her house and a portion for her maidens* (Proverbs 31:15). *Her house* is that body, which She nourishes; *her maidens* are those limbs of the body, all of them.[309](#)

“*Ruah* is the one who rides on this *nefesh*, controlling Her, illumining Her with all that She needs, and *nefesh* is a throne for this *ruah*.[310](#)

“*Neshamah* is the one who generates this *ruha*, controlling Him, illumining Him with the light of life; and that *ruah* depends upon this *neshamah*, and is illumined by Her radiant light. That *nefesh* depends upon this *ruah*, and is illumined and nourished by Him, and all is one bond.[311](#)

“Until this supernal *neshamah* ascends into the flow of Ancient of Ancients, Concealed of all Concealed, and is filled by it, since it is ceaseless, this *ruah* does not enter the Garden of Eden, which is *nefesh*—eternally, *ruah* rests only in the Garden of Eden, and *neshamah* above—and this *nefesh* does not settle in Her place within the body below.³¹²

“Similarly, all below separates thus in a human, although they all form one bond. *Neshamah* ascends above into the flow of the well; *ruah* enters the Garden of Eden, corresponding to the supernal pattern; *nefesh* settles in the grave.³¹³

“Now, you might ask, ‘*Nefesh* above, settling within the body in the grave—where is the grave?’ Well, in that hard shell. Thus, *nefesh* correspondingly below, all corresponding to one another. So, three rungs diverge, being one bond and one mystery.³¹⁴

“As long as the bones exist in the grave, this *nefesh* remains there. A mystery here for those who know the way of truth, who fear sin. When *nishmeta* is adorned above in a holy crown and *ruah* stands in supernal radiance on Sabbaths, new moons, and festivals, then this *nefesh*—when *ruah* descends from supernal radiance to the dwelling of the Garden of Eden, shining and sparkling—rises within the grave and materializes in the image that she originally assumed in the body. All those bones in that image emit praise and glorify the blessed Holy One, as is written: *All my bones will say, ‘YHVH, who is like You?’* (Psalms 35:10)—it is not written *say*, but rather *will say*.³¹⁵

“If the eye were permitted to see, it would see—on the night that Sabbath departs and on the nights of new moons and festivals—the likeness of images above graves glorifying and praising the blessed Holy One. But the foolishness of humans hinders them, for they neither know nor consider the foundation of their existence in this world, nor do they care to be aware of the glory of the supernal King in this world, and certainly not to consider the glory of

that world and its foundation and how things are elucidated.[316](#)

“On the night of Rosh Hashanah, when the world is judged and thrones of Judgment stand for the supernal King to judge the world, every single *nefesh* flies and pleads for mercy for the living. On the night when this Day of Judgment departs, they go flying to hear and know the verdict that has been pronounced for the world. Sometimes, they inform the living in a vision, as is said: *In a dream, a vision of night, when deep sleep falls upon humans ...He then uncovers human ears*, וּבְמוֹסָרָם יִחַתּוּם (*uv-mosaram yahtom*), and seals their warning (Job 33:15-16). What is *mosaram*? *Nefesh*, who stands וְחַתִּים (*ve-hateim*), and seals, words for humans, so that they will accept מוֹסֵר (*musar*), reproof.[317](#)

“On the night when decrees issue from the royal palace, and that shadow is removed from those due to be withdrawn from this world, the *nefesh* that we have mentioned goes [142b] roaming. One authorized official, in engraved mystery of a signet ring in clear script—Yedomi’am, who is appointed over script of engraved splendor and within supernal visions—descends on that night, accompanied by many thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads, and they seize that shadow from every single one and raise it above.[318](#)

“The *nefesh* that we have mentioned goes roaming and sees that shadow and returns to her place among the graves, announcing to the rest of the dead: ‘So-and-so is coming to us! So-and-so is coming to us!’ If he is virtuous, they all rejoice; and if not, they all cry, ‘Woe!’

“When they raise that shadow, they raise it to the faithful servant, Metatron, who grasps that shadow and elevates it to its place, as is written: *like a servant yearning for the shadow* (Job 7:2)—precisely! [319](#)

“From that moment on, a place is prepared for that person’s *neshamah*, a place for *ruah* in the Garden of Eden,

and a place for *nefesh* to rest and find pleasure when it goes roaming.

“For there is a *nefesh* who has no rest, and there is a *nefesh* who is destroyed along with the body. The one who has no rest is the one of whom is written *The nefesh of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (1 Samuel 25:29); for this one goes wandering and whirling throughout the world, having no rest at all, day or night. This is the harshest punishment of all.[320](#)

“The one destroyed with the body is the one of whom is written *That nefesh shall be cut off from her people* (Leviticus 7:20). This one is not remembered at all.[321](#)

“And there is one not destroyed with the body, but cut off from another place—the one of whom is written *That nefesh shall be cut off from before Me* (Leviticus 22:3). What is *from before Me*? That the *ruah* does not settle upon her; and since he does not, she has no share at all in what lies above, and she knows nothing at all of matters of the world. This is a *nefesh* like an animal’s.[322](#)

“A *nefesh* who finds rest—when this one goes roaming, she encounters Yedomi’am and his officers, who grasp her and carry her through all the entrances of the Garden of Eden, showing her the glory of the righteous and the glory of her *ruah*. She cleaves to him in comfort within that garment, and then she knows about those matters of the world.[323](#)

“When that *ruah* ascends to be adorned in the supernal *neshamah* above, that *nefesh* binds herself to *ruah* and is illumined by him, as the moon is illumined by the sun. And *ruah* binds himself within that *neshamah*, and *neshamah* is bound within End of Thought, who is mystery of *nefesh* above. And that *nefesh* is bound within supernal *ruah*, and that *ruah* is bound within supernal *neshamah*, and that *neshamah* is bound within *Ein Sof*. Then, tranquility of all—bond of all above and below, all in one mystery and one manner.[324](#)

“Then, tranquility of *nefesh* below, of which is written *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life* אַתָּה (et), with, *YHVH your God* (1 Samuel 25:29)—in one manner and one mystery of that et, corresponding to one another.³²⁵

“When the moon—mystery of supernal *nefesh*—descends, illumined from all sides, She illumines all chariots and camps, forming them into one complete body shining with radiance, in supernal splendor.³²⁶ Similarly, this lower *nefesh* descends, illumined from all sides—from radiance of *neshamah* and radiance of *ruah*—and descending, she illumines all those chariots and camps, namely limbs and bones, forming them into a complete body shining radiantly. As is written: *He will satisfy* נִפְשְׁךָ (*nafshekha*), *your soul, with radiancies*—your *nefesh*, really! Afterward, *and invigorate your bones* (Isaiah 58:11)—forming them into a complete body shining with radiance, rising to praise and glorify the blessed Holy One, as has been said, for it is written: *All my bones will say, ‘YHVH, who is like You?’* (Psalms 35:10). This is tranquility of the *nefesh* from all sides. Happy are the righteous who revere their Lord in this world, attaining triple tranquility in the world that is coming!”³²⁷

Rabbi Shim’on came and blessed Rabbi Abba. He said, “Happy are you, my sons, and happy am I, that my eyes have seen this! So many [143a] supernal places are prepared for us, shining for us in the world that is coming!”

He opened, saying, “*Song of ascents. Those who trust in YHVH are like Mount Zion, never shaken, abiding forever* (Psalms 125:1). This verse has been established, but *song of ascents*—praise offered by those holy celestial rungs from the side of supernal powers, corresponding to the Levites below. Those *ascents* are rungs upon rungs, ministering in mystery of fifty years. This is *song of ascents*.³²⁸

“*Those who trust in YHVH*—for they trust in Him through deeds, as is said: *The righteous are as confident as a young lion* (Proverbs 28:1).³²⁹

“Now, you might say, ‘Look, the righteous do not rely on their deeds at all, but are constantly afraid—like Abraham, of whom is written *It happened as he was about to enter Egypt...* (Genesis 12:11); like Isaac, of whom is written *For he was afraid to say, “My wife”...* (ibid. 26:7); like Jacob, of whom is written *Jacob was very afraid and distressed* (ibid. 32:8)! Now, if these did not trust in their deeds, how much less the other righteous of the world! And yet you say, *The righteous are as confident as a young lion.*’[330](#)

“But surely it is written ככפיר (ki-khfir), *as a young lion*. Of all those names, it is only written כפיר (kefir), *young lion*—not אריה (aryeh), lion, or שחל (shahal) or שחץ (shahats), but rather kefir, which is the weakest and smallest of them all, not confident in its power even though it is strong. Similarly, the righteous trust in their deeds only *as a young lion*. Although realizing the potency of their deeds, they are only confident *as a young lion*, and no more.[331](#)

“Consequently, *Those who trust in YHVH*—not ככפיר (ki-khfir), *like a young lion*, nor כאריה (ke-aryeh), *like a lion*, nor like any of those names, but rather *are like Mount Zion*. As they have established: Just as Mount Zion is mighty and *never shaken*, so too at that time they will be *like Mount Zion*—unlike now, when they trust only *as a young lion*, who is afraid and not overpowering.[332](#)

“And you, my sons, holy ones of the Highest, your trust is *like Mount Zion*, surely! Happy are you in this world and in the world that is coming!”[333](#)

They walked on. When they reached the city, night darkened. Rabbi Shim’on said, “Just as this day has illumined us in this world, rendering us worthy of the world that is coming, so too the night illumines us, entitling us to the world that is coming, to adorn words of day and night in the presence of the Ancient of Days; for a day as perfect as this will not be found in all other generations. Happy is our share in this world and in the world that is coming!”[334](#)

Rabbi Shim'on entered his house with Rabbi El'azar, along with Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Yose. They sat until night split. At that moment, Rabbi Shim'on said to the Companions, "It is time to adorn the Holy Chariot above with our endeavor!"[335](#)

He said to Rabbi Yose, "You, whose words have not been heard among us this day—you shall be first to illumine the night. For now is a time of favor to illumine above and below!"

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, "*Song of Songs, which is Solomon's* (Song of Songs 1:1). This song was aroused by Solomon when the Temple was built and all worlds were consummated, above and below, in single perfection. Although the Companions differ on this, still this song was uttered solely in completeness, when the moon became full and the Temple was constructed according to the pattern above. When the Temple was built below, since the day that the world was created there has never been such joy before the blessed Holy One as on that day."[336](#)

"Moses fashioned the Dwelling in the desert to bring *Shekhinah* down to earth, and on that same day another Dwelling was erected along with it above, as they have established, for it is written: *The Dwelling was erected* (Exodus 40:17)—another Dwelling erected with it, namely the Dwelling of the Youth, Metatron, and nothing further."[337](#)

"When the First Temple was built, another First Temple was erected throughout all worlds, illumining all worlds. The world became fragrantly firm, and all supernal windows opened, radiating. There has never been such joy in all the worlds as on that day. Then those above and those below opened, uttering song, namely *Song of Songs*—song of those musicians who play for the blessed Holy One."[338](#)
[143b]

“King David uttered *A song of ascents* (Psalms 125:1). King Solomon opened with *Song of Songs*, a song of those musicians. What is the difference between them, for it seems that all is one? Well, surely all is one, but in the days of David all those musicians were not arranged in their places to play fittingly and the Temple had not been built. Consequently, they were not arranged above in their places; for just as there are watches arranged on earth, so too in heaven, standing corresponding to one another.[339](#)

“On the day that the Temple was erected, all were arranged in their places, and the lamp that did not shine began to shine, and song was intoned toward the supernal King, the King who possesses peace. This praise transcends all previous praises. On the day that this praise was revealed on earth, perfection pervaded all, so it is Holy of Holies.[340](#)

“In the Book of Adam was written: On the day that the Temple will be erected, the patriarchs will arouse song above and below. Consequently, we find ψ (*shin*) among the large letters. These are the ones who arouse—not that they play, but rather they arouse above, as it were, ψ (*shir*), a song, of those noble ψ (*sarim*), princes, appointed over all worlds.[341](#)

“We have learned: On that day, Jacob the Perfect arose and entered the Garden of Eden, joyously assuming his place. Then the Garden of Eden began to play, along with all those spices of the Garden. Who caused this song, and who uttered it? You must say Jacob; for if he had not entered the Garden of Eden, the Garden would not have uttered song.[342](#)

“This song is a song encompassing the whole Torah, a song aroused by those above and those below, a song resembling the world that is entirely Sabbath, a song by which the supernal Holy Name is adorned. So it is Holy of Holies.[343](#)

“Why are all its words in love and joy? Because Cup of Blessing is placed in the right hand; once placed in the right, all joy and love appear. So all its words are in love and joy.³⁴⁴

“When this right hand was withdrawn—as is said: *He has withdrawn His right hand* (Lamentations 2:3)—then Cup of Blessing was placed solely in the left. Once placed in the left, those above and those below began opening in lament over her. And what did they say? ‘איכה (*Eikhah*), *Alas!* (Lamentations 1:1)—אי כה (*Ei koh*), Where is *koh*? Where is Cup of Blessing? For the supernal place in which You dwelled has been withdrawn and withheld from You.’³⁴⁵

“Thus, שיר השירים (*Shir ha-Shirim*), Song of Songs, deriving from the right side—all its words are love and joy. איכה (*Eikhah*), Lamentations, lacking the right and imbued with the left—all its words are reproaches and laments.³⁴⁶

“Now, you might say, ‘But all joy, all delight, and all song derive from the left side! That is why Levites, from the left, play song.’ Well, all joy, appearing from the left side, appears only when the right joins it. When right arouses, joining it, then that joy from the right ameliorates anger. And when anger subsides and delight appears from the right side, then complete joy issues from that side.³⁴⁷

“But when the right does not appear, anger of the left swells—not subsiding, not ameliorating, not joyous. Then, איכה (*Eikhah*)—אי כה (*Ei koh*), Where is *koh*? Cup of Blessing, what will become of it? For it sits in the left, with anger swelling, not subsiding. Thus, reproaches and laments arouse.³⁴⁸

“However, שיר השירים (*Shir ha-Shirim*), Song of Songs—Cup of Blessing placed in the right, entrusted within it. Thus, all love and all delight appear. Consequently, all its words are in love and joy—as in no other song in the world. Therefore, this song aroused from the side of the patriarchs.³⁴⁹

“The day that this song was revealed was the same day that *Shekhinah* descended to earth, as is written: *The priests*

*could not stand and minister.... Why? For the Glory of YHVH filled the House of YHVH (1 Kings 8:11). On that very day this praise was revealed, [144a] and by the Holy Spirit Solomon uttered the praise of this song, which is totality of the whole Torah, totality of the whole work of Creation, totality of mystery of the patriarchs, totality of the exile in Egypt—and when Israel went out of Egypt, and the praise at the Sea—totality of the Ten Commandments and standing at Mount Sinai, and Israel’s wandering in the desert until they entered the Land and the Temple was built; totality of crowning the supernal Holy Name in love and joy, totality of Israel’s exile among the nations and their redemption, totality of revival of the dead, until the day that is *Sabbath to YHVH* (Leviticus 25:2). Whatever was, whatever is, and whatever will eventually be—after the seventh day, when it will be *Sabbath to YHVH*—is all in Song of Songs.[350](#)*

“Therefore we have learned: ‘Whoever recites a verse from Song of Songs in a banquet hall—Torah girds herself in sackcloth, ascends toward the blessed Holy One, and says to Him, “Your children have made a joke in the banquet hall!”’ Really, Torah ascends and says this—because one should cherish every single word of Song of Songs, lifting it as a crown upon his head.[351](#)

“Now, you might ask, ‘Why is it among the Writings?’ Certainly so, for it is a song of praise with which Assembly of Israel crowns Herself above. Therefore, no praise in the world ascends in favor to the blessed Holy One as does this praise.[352](#)

“We have learned as follows: ‘שִׁיר (*Shir*), *Song of*, one; הַשִּׁירִים (*ha-Shirim*), *Songs*, two, totaling three.’ This is mystery of Cup of Blessing being placed and held between right and left, all arousing the King who possesses peace. Thereby, rapture ascends in mystery of *Ein Sof*, higher and higher. Here is the Holy Chariot, for the patriarchs constitute the Chariot; King David joins them and they are four, mystery

of the holy supernal Chariot. Thus, four words in this first verse, mystery of the complete Chariot.[353](#)

“Further, this mystery: שִׁיר (Shir), *Song of*—mystery of King David, mystery of ascending in song. הַשִּׁירִים (Ha-shirim), *Songs*—the patriarchs, mystery of empowered princes, the Chariot fittingly complete. אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמֹה (Asher li-Shlomo), *Which is Solomon’s*—mystery of the one who rides upon this complete Chariot.[354](#)

“In this verse appears fullness of the mystery וְעַד הָעוֹלָם מִן הָעוֹלָם (min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam), *from world to world* (Psalms 106:48), mystery of all faith. All is a complete Chariot for the one who is unknown and unknowable, whom none can endure to know. Therefore this verse was uttered in four words, mystery of the Chariot complete on all sides. From here further, a mystery transmitted to the wise.[355](#)

“Song—within this lies an inner mystery. For we have learned: ‘One who sees grapes in a dream: if white, they are a good omen; if black—in season, good; if not in season, mercy is needed.’ Now, what difference does it make whether they are white or black? What difference does it make whether they are in season or not? Further, we have learned: ‘If he ate those black ones, he can be assured that he is destined for the world that is coming.’[356](#)

“Well, we have learned: ‘The tree with which Adam sinned was of grapes, as is written: *Their grapes are grapes of poison* (Deuteronomy 32:32)’—and these are black grapes. For there are grapes, and then there are grapes! White grapes are good, since they derive from the side of life; black grapes require mercy, since they derive from the side of death.[357](#)

“‘In season, good’—why? Because when white ones dominate, all is sweetened, since at that time all is required for perfection, and all is fine, all forming a unified array, black and white. But when white ones are not dominant and black ones appear, this indicates that he has been arraigned in judgment of death and is in need of mercy, for

he has seen the tree with which Adam sinned and brought death upon himself and upon the whole world.[358](#)

“Here one should contemplate, and if the Master were not here, I would not speak. We have learned that this world is patterned on the world above; and as for the world above, everything existing in this world, so it is above. If the serpent brought death upon Adam below, what about above? [144b] We might say, upon the Woman—that through the serpent light diminished, for the light of the moon diminishes at times, and at that time She dies—but then what about the Male? And we might say that the moon dies due to the advice of this serpent, by the diminishment of light; but we have learned that it was not because of the serpent—rather, the moon said before the blessed Holy One.... So it was not due to the serpent. And if you say that this applies to Her Husband—Heaven forbid any diminution above![359](#)

“However, all this constitutes secrets of Torah, and the serpent established diminution in all.

“Come and see—so we have learned: Everything that the blessed Holy One made, above and below, is all in the mystery of male and female. There are numerous rungs, differing from one another, and from rung to rung—mystery of אָדָם (*Adam*), Human. Those rungs that are of one kind, the blessed Holy One has formed into an image of one body, attaining the mystery of *Adam*.[360](#)

“We have learned: On the second day of Creation, Hell was created, and one body was formed in the mystery of *Adam*. Those limbs are officers, who approach the fire and die, and return as before. This is because they approached the serpent. That is Adam who was seduced in the abode of the serpent and so he died; the serpent brought death upon him since he approached.[361](#)

“Everywhere, *Adam* is male and female, but *Adam* who is supernal and holy rules over all; He provides food and life to all. Nevertheless, this mighty serpent withheld light from

all. When he defiles the Dwelling, the female of that *Adam*, as we have mentioned, dies, and the male dies, and they ascend as before. Thus, all corresponds to the pattern above.^{[362](#)}

“If he ate those grapes, he can be assured that he is destined for the world that is coming,’ because he has overwhelmed and destroyed that side, eliminating and crushing it, as is said: *It devoured and crushed* (Daniel 7:7). Since he has eliminated that hard shell, he approaches the world that is coming, and no one can hinder him. Consequently, in his dream he sees himself eating and crushing those black grapes.^{[363](#)}

“Similarly, there was no song in the house of David until those black grapes were eliminated and he dominated them; then Song of Songs was uttered, as has been said. Even in this place they are called grapes, as is said: *Like grapes in the desert [I found Israel]*... (Hosea 9:10), and these are white grapes.^{[364](#)}

“This song transcends all songs of the predecessors. All songs uttered by the predecessors ascended only among songs uttered by supernal angels. Although this has already been established, still it is written: *A song of ascents. To David* (Psalms 122:1). This mystery has been mentioned, but *A song of* המעלות (*ha-ma'alot*), *ascents*—a song uttered by supernal angels, who are *ma'alot*, levels, and rungs. Uttered to whom? *To David*—seeking food and nourishment from him.^{[365](#)}

“Further, *A song of* המעלות (*ha-ma'alot*), *ascents*—as is said: *Upon* עלמות (*alamot*), *a song* (Psalms 46:1); *Therefore, alamot, maidens, love you* (Song of Songs 1:3).

“*לדוד (Le-David), For David*—for supernal King David, who constantly praises the supernal King.^{[366](#)}

“As soon as King Solomon appeared, he uttered a song high above, uttered by sublime nobles of the world to the supernal King who possesses all peace. All who uttered song ascended in that song only to chant the song uttered

by supernal angels—except for King Solomon, who ascended in that song to what is uttered by supernal nobles, pillars of the world. All inhabitants of the world, in lower chariots; King Solomon, in upper chariots.[367](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Moses, who ascended to the rung of prophecy and love of the blessed Holy One, beyond all inhabitants of the world—was the song that he uttered in lower chariots, ascending no higher?’[368](#)

“Come and see: The song uttered by Moses ascended above and not below; but he did not utter song like King Solomon, and no human has ever ascended in song like Solomon. Moses ascended by his praise above—a praise extolling and thanking the supernal King who had saved Israel and performed miracles and mighty deeds in Egypt and at the Sea. But King David and his son Solomon uttered song [145a] in a different manner. David endeavored to array the maidens and adorn them along with *Matronita*, so that She and Her maidens would appear in beauty. Therefore he engaged in those songs and praises for them, arraying and adorning all those maidens and *Matronita*.

“As soon as Solomon appeared, he found *Matronita* adorned and Her maidens beautiful. He endeavored to bring Her to the Groom, and brought the Groom to the canopy along with *Matronita*, and conveyed words of love between them to join them as one, so that both would abide in one perfection, in perfect love. Thus, Solomon attained praise transcending all inhabitants of the world.[369](#)

“Moses wedded *Matronita* to this world below, to be in this world in complete coupling with those below. Solomon wedded *Matronita* in complete coupling above; he conducted the Groom to the canopy first and then brought them both into this world, inviting them joyously into the Temple that he built.[370](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘How could Moses bring *Matronita* alone into this world? This seems like separation!’ Come and see: The blessed Holy One wedded Her to Moses first,

and She became the Bride of Moses, as has been said. As soon as She joined with Moses, She descended to this world in a coupling of this world, and was established in this world as never before, and She never suffered separation.³⁷¹

“But there has never been anyone in the world, since the day that Adam was born, who could convey love and affection and conjugal words above—except King Solomon, who first arranged coupling above and then invited them as one into the house that he prepared for them. Happy are David and Solomon, his son, who arranged coupling above! Since the day that the blessed Holy One told the moon, ‘Go, diminish Yourself,’ She has never joined the sun in complete coupling, except when King Solomon appeared.³⁷²

“שיר השירים (Shir ha-Shirim), *Song of Songs*—here are five rungs, to cling to the World that is Coming. *Shir*, *Song of*, one; *ha-Shirim*, *Songs*, two, making three; אשר (*asher*), *which is*, four; לשלמה (*li-Shlomo*), *Solomon’s*, five. This is in the fifth, for the fiftieth day is mystery of Jubilee.³⁷³

“Come and see: Solomon could arrange coupling above only because coupling below existed previously. And what is that? Coupling of Moses. For without this coupling, the coupling above could not have been arranged. All is in supernal mystery for the wise of heart.³⁷⁴

“It is written: *He spoke three thousand* משל (*mashal*), *proverbs*, *and his song was a thousand and five* (1 Kings 5:12). This verse has been established by the Companions; but *He spoke three thousand proverbs*—surely, every single word that he uttered contained three thousand proverbs. For example, the book of Ecclesiastes, which abides in supernal mystery and is written in the form of *mashal*, an allegory, for it contains no verse without sublime wisdom, allegorically—even its smallest verse.³⁷⁵

“For when Rav Hamnuna Sava the First reached this verse: *Rejoice, young man, in your youth, and let your heart*

cheer you in your youthful days (Ecclesiastes 11:9), he would weep and say, ‘Surely, this verse is fitting, and is meant allegorically! Who can expound this allegory? If it bears some simple interpretation, then it contains only what we see with our eyes. And if it is wisdom, who can comprehend it?’[376](#)

“Immediately he went on to say, ‘It is written: *These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, seventeen years old...* (Genesis 37:2). This verse from Ecclesiastes is an allegory on the wisdom of this verse from the Torah—one is an allegory of the other.

“*Rejoice, young man, in your youth—and he was a lad* (Genesis 37:2).

“*And let your heart cheer you—was tending the flock with his brothers* (ibid.).

“*In your youthful days—with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives* (ibid.).

“*And know that for all these* (Ecclesiastes 11:9)—*And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father* (Genesis 37:2).

“*God will bring you to judgment* (Ecclesiastes, ibid.)—*These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph* (Genesis, ibid.); Joseph is included in Jacob. Mysteries of secrets of Torah—who can comprehend them?’[377](#)

“This allegory expands into three thousand allegories, all [145b] within this allegory. When Joseph is included in Jacob, three thousand appear in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for all of them are in this allegory in mystery of wisdom. Here, how many wandering donkey-drivers there are with loads of secrecy, within them shield-bearers—for secrets of wisdom are countless![378](#)

“ויהי שירו (*Va-yhi shiro*), *And his song was, a thousand and five* (1 Kings 5:12). As they have established: *Va-yhi shiro, And its song was*—the song of each proverb. All is one, whether one says *Va-yhi shiro, And his song was*, namely Solomon’s, or

Va-yhi shiro, And its song was, namely the proverb's. All is one, and he uttered all.[379](#)

“And his song was—Song of Songs. Now, is Song of Songs a thousand and five? Certainly so! Five is gates and entrances opening in the King who possesses peace. These are five hundred years of the Tree of Life, fifty years of Jubilee.[380](#)

“A *thousand*—the Tree of Life, Groom emerging from its side, who inherits all those *five* to bring to the Bride. A day of the blessed Holy One lasts a thousand years, and this is the river flowing forth from Eden—Joseph the Righteous, who is called Righteous after the moon, as the blessed Holy One stipulated with Her.[381](#)

“Thus, Song of Songs is Holy of Holies, and you cannot find a verse in Song of Songs that does not contain the mystery of *a thousand and five*, surely! Song of Songs, surely! This verse consists of five rungs, as has been said.[382](#)

“Now, you might ask, ‘Why isn’t *a thousand* mentioned here?’ Surely, that *thousand* was concealed and remains concealed until the Wife unites with Her Husband. Therefore, Solomon endeavored to bring that *thousand* to the Bride in the secrecy of the seal of supernal Wisdom.[383](#)

“As soon as he made Holy of Holies below, he hid, concealed, and inserted there mystery of Holy of Holies, performing concealment of complete conjugal union, above and below fittingly.[384](#)

“Holy of Holies is above, mystery of supernal Wisdom and Jubilee. Correspondingly, Bride and Groom inherit the heritage of Father and Mother, though the inheritance is reversed, in a different manner. Inheritance of Father is possessed by the Daughter in ascension of this name, and She is called similarly Holy, Wisdom. Inheritance of Mother is possessed by the Son, and He is called Holies, since He obtains all those supernal Holies and gathers them in, afterward giving and conveying them to the Bride.[385](#)

“Therefore he said *Song of Songs: Song* corresponding to Holy, *Songs* corresponding to Holies, so that all would be Holy of Holies, in one mystery appropriately.[386](#)

“Which is לשלמה (li-Shlomo), *Solomon’s* (Song of Songs 1:1)—as has been said: of the King who possesses שלמה (shelama), peace.[387](#)

“Now, if you say that this praise is His—do not say so! Praise pertains to a supernal place, ascending. But the mystery is as follows: When Male and Female are arrayed as one beneath the supernal King, then that King ascends above and is filled with all holiness and all blessings flowing down; He is filled and pours below. This is the desire of the supernal King: being filled with holiness and blessing, and pouring below.[388](#)

“This is prayer and supplication: that the supernal spring be perfected and filled. Once it is arranged fittingly, by its gaze and by the gaze of that perfection, the lower world and Her maidens are perfected. The lower world must be perfected only by the gaze of the upper world. The moon has no gaze of her own at all, except when the sun is perfected and shines; from the gaze of the sun and its perfection, the moon is perfected and shines.[389](#)

“What requires prayer and supplication is that the source of light be illumined and perfected. For once that place is perfected, by its gaze is perfected all below. Therefore, in offering praise, Solomon strove solely for the perfection of the King who possesses peace. Once He is perfected, by His gaze all is perfected. And if He is not perfected, the moon never attains perfection. Therefore, *which is Solomon’s*—that He be perfected and filled fittingly first, as has been said.[390](#) [146a]

“Mystery of mysteries for those who know Wisdom: When an impulse arose in the will of Secret of Secrets to form glory for Its glory, It blew a spirit from a supernal point extending from above to below, and placed Its array to settle in this world. Why? Because without an essential root of this world, there would be no vessel to pour to this world at all. And without pouring to this world, it would immediately perish, unable to exist for even one moment. But since its arrayal stems from this world, it is filled—from

one side to pour to this world, and from another side to pour to supernal angels. All are nourished by it as one.³⁹¹

“Perfection of arrayal of this spirit—spirits of the righteous in this world. This spirit was perfected while Enoch, Jared, and Mahalalel were in the world. As the wicked of the world increased, they removed that perfection from it. Afterward, Noah came and perfected it; the generation of Dispersion came, removing that perfection from it. Abraham came and perfected it; the people of Sodom came and removed it. Isaac came and perfected it; the Philistines and the wicked of that generation came and removed [perfection] from it. Jacob and his sons came—perfect bed—and perfected it; they left the Holy Land and went down to Egypt, and on account of them She lingered there. Since Israel reverted there to the actions of the Egyptians, that perfection was subdued and removed, until they went out of Egypt and came to make the Dwelling. The blessed Holy One said, ‘It is My desire to dwell among you, but I cannot until you restore that spirit of Mine so that it dwells in your midst,’ as is written: *Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them* (Exodus 25:8).³⁹²

“This is the mystery of what is written: *Have them take Me an offering* (Exodus 25:2). Moses said to the blessed Holy One, ‘Who can take Her and fashion Her?’³⁹³

“He replied, ‘Moses, not as you think! Rather, *from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering* (ibid.)—by their aspiration and spirit you shall all take Her and perfect Her.’³⁹⁴

“When Solomon came, he arrayed that spirit with perfection above. For ever since it was perfected below in the days of Moses, that perfection had never been removed from it until Solomon came. Once he came, he endeavored to perfect it above, beginning to enhance the gaze of the upper world, so that the lower world would be enhanced by

that gaze. This is: *which is Solomon's* (Song of Songs 1:1).[395](#)

"This is the offering (Exodus 25:3). As has been said, when the blessed Holy One revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, when Torah was given to Israel in ten utterances, each and every utterance generated a voice, and that voice branched into seventy voices, all shining and sparkling before the eyes of all Israel, who saw eye-to-eye the splendor of His Glory, as is written: *All the people were seeing* הקולות (*ha-qolot*), *the voices* (Exodus 20:15)—actually seeing![396](#)

"That voice warned every single Israelite, saying to him, 'Will you accept me upon yourselves with such-and-such commands of Torah?' They replied, 'Yes.' It returned, circling round his head, and warned him, saying, 'Will you accept me upon yourselves with such-and-such penalties of Torah?' Each one said, 'Yes.' Afterward, that voice returned and kissed him on the mouth, as is written: *O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!* (Song of Songs 1:2).[397](#)

"Then, all that Israel saw at that time they saw within one light absorbing all those other lights, and they yearned to gaze. The blessed Holy One said to them, 'The light that you have seen on Mount Sinai—absorbing all colored lights, and for which you yearn—you shall receive Her and take Her close to you!' Those colors that She absorbs are *gold, silver, and bronze...* (Exodus 25:3).[398](#)

"Alternatively, *O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!* What prompted King Solomon to convey words of love between the upper world and the lower world? And to begin conveying praise of love between them with *O that he would kiss me?*[399](#)

"Well, they have already established this, and so it is: There is no passionate cleaving of רוּחַ (*ruḥa*), spirit, [146b] to spirit except a kiss, and a kiss is by the mouth—spring of

ruḥa and its outlet. When they kiss one another, these spirits cling to each other, becoming one; thus, one love.⁴⁰⁰

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava the First, he said concerning this verse: A kiss of love expands in four *ruḥin*, and four *ruḥin* are as one, within mystery of faith. They ascend in four letters—letters upon which the Holy Name depends, upon which those above and below depend, upon which the praise of Song of Songs depends. Who is that? ה ה ב ה א (*alef, he, bet, he*). They are a supernal chariot; they are companionship, cleaving, consummation of all.

“These letters are four spirits—spirits of love and delight of all limbs of the body, with no sadness at all. There are four spirits in a kiss, each blending with its companion; and when one spirit blends with another, and the other blends with this, they become two and two as one. As they join in one cleaving, those four are complete, flowing into one another, intermingling. As they separate, from those four spirits is formed one fruit, one spirit composed of four spirits, and this ascends, splitting the heavens until it rises and settles by a certain palace called the Palace of Love, a palace upon which all love depends, and that spirit is similarly called Love. When this spirit ascends, it arouses that palace to unite above.⁴⁰¹

“Four letters correspond to four spirits, and they are אהבה (*ahavah*), love—their fruit *ahavah*. When they join with one another, one immediately arouses on this side, and the other on that side. א (*Alef*); immediately, ה (*he*) emerges, joining *alef*, clinging tight, and two other letters are formed: ב (*bet*), ה (*he*). Spirits blend with spirits in cleaving of love, and these letters fly from them with that ascending spirit, adorning it fittingly.⁴⁰²

“As that complete Love ascends, composed of all those four spirits, it encounters one supernal noble official, appointed over 1,390 firmaments, and appointed over the flow of thirteen rivers of pure balsam, flowing from the mystery of dew above. That flow is called *many waters*.

“As soon as it meets that master of camps, he confronts it, but cannot hinder it from crossing them, until it enters the Palace of Love. Concerning this, King Solomon said at the conclusion of his praise: *Many waters cannot quench love* (Song of Songs 8:7). *Many waters*—supernal waters flowing in supernal dew. *Nor rivers drown it* (ibid.)—those rivers of balsam, numbering thirteen.

“That official is an angel sent by *YHVH*, and he is master of camps, weaving crowns for his Lord—mystery of Akhtariel, fashioning crowns for his Lord with the name *YHVH Yah Tseva’ot*.⁴⁰³

“Once it enters the Palace of Love, love of supernal kisses arouses, as is written: *Jacob kissed Rachel* (Genesis 29:11), so that kisses of supernal love be fitting. Those kisses are the beginning of arousal of all love of cleaving and joining above, and therefore the beginning of praise of this song is *O that he would kiss me!* (Song of Songs 1:2).⁴⁰⁴

“Who is *he*? The one concealed in supernal concealment. Now, you might say, ‘Concealed of all concealed: kisses depend upon Him—and He kisses below?’⁴⁰⁵

“Come and see: Concealed of all concealed—there is no one who knows Him, and He reveals of Himself one tenuous radiance, sealed, not revealed except by one slender path extending from Him. This is a radiance illumining all, arousal of all supernal mysteries. It is concealed—sometimes concealed and sometimes revealed, although not revealed at all, and arousal of arising of kisses depends upon it. Because it is concealed, praise begins in a concealed way.⁴⁰⁶

“If they depend upon Him, what is Jacob seeking here, since kisses depend on Him? Well, certainly so! *O that he would kiss me*—the one concealed above. By what? [147a] By that supernal chariot, on which all colors depend and converge. This is Jacob—as one says: Clinging to the King

clingingly comes through His Son. Therefore it is written: *with the kisses of his mouth.*⁴⁰⁷

“*For your love is better* (Song of Songs 1:2)—referring back to the sun, who illumines the moon with the radiance of those supernal lamps, absorbing light from all of them and illuminating the moon. Those lamps joining it, from where do they shine? The verse goes on to say: מִיַּיִן (*mi-yayin*), *from wine*—from that preserved wine, from that wine that is joy of all joys. Who is that? The wine giving delight and life to all: Living God, wine giving life and joy to all.⁴⁰⁸

“Further, מִיַּיִן (*mi-yayin*), *from wine*—from that name called יְהוָה (*YHVH*). This is wine of joy of passionate love, from which all shine and delight.”⁴⁰⁹

The Companions came and kissed him on his head. Rabbi Shim'on wept, and said, “I know for sure that supernal Holy Spirit pulsates within you. Happy is the generation who sees this! For there will be no generation like this until the time when King Messiah comes, for Torah has been restored to her ancience. Happy are the righteous in this world and in the world that is coming!”⁴¹⁰

This is the offering that you shall take from them (Exodus 25:3).⁴¹¹

mystery of the verse as follows—and the verses are difficult. For if they pertain to mystery below, they contradict one another; and if to mystery above, they lack lucidity. *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering* (Exodus 25:2)—fine. *You shall take My offering* (ibid.)—difficult. *This is the offering that you shall take from them*—really difficult; everything, above and below as one!⁴¹²

Rabbi El'azar said, “We have established this verse and its mysteries have already been told, but I have learned the

“Well, the matter is as follows: *Have them take Me* תְּרוּמָה (*terumah*), *an offering*. Who? *The Children of Israel*.

From every man (Exodus 25:2)—supernal angels above, for upon them She is *terumah*—אֶרְמוּתָא (*armuta*), a raising, that they constantly raise to the supernal King, for they continually lift Her to Him. And when Israel are worthy, they take Her from them and bring Her down below, as is written: *from every man whose heart impels him*. Who are they? Those four who raise Her above and in whom that *heart* delights. That *terumah, raising*, stands erect above them; yet although She stands above them and is set upon them, *you shall take*—take Her from them to bring Her down below.⁴¹³

“How? At this time, by worthy deeds, by prayer and supplication, by fulfilling the commands of Torah. At that time, by those colors appearing below, corresponding to the pattern above, and by those other rites. Those colors draw that *armuta, raising*, below, and colors below overwhelm those colors above; these colors draw supernal colors, those entering these, these becoming bodies for those. Therefore it is written: *that you shall take from them*.⁴¹⁴

“*Gold* (Exodus 25:3)—included in Gabriel. *Gold* above is taken by Gabriel, and seven kinds of *gold* diverge from this below.⁴¹⁵

“*Silver* (ibid.)—above, included in Michael below, one settling upon the other.⁴¹⁶

“*And bronze* (ibid.)—above, emerging from *gold*, for *gold* and fire follow one mystery. Fire generates נחשת (*nehoshet*), *bronze*, and from this power and potency fiery נחשים (*nehashim*), serpents, scatter—issuing from fire. Consequently, *bronze* is red like fire, and is included in Uriel, one becoming a body for the other.⁴¹⁷

“*Blue* (Exodus 25:4)—dwelling in this and that, in *bronze* and *gold*. Being fortified on two sides, *blue* is powerful, and no one prevails against it for life; for it is the throne of Judgment, occupied by severe Judgment. This is בואל (*Bo'el*)—בו אל (*bo el*), in him is God, as is written: אל (*El*), *God, rages every day* (Psalms 7:12). When humanity

returns in complete repentance, his name turns into Raphael, for healing is prepared for them from that severe Judgment.[418](#) [147b]

“*Purple* (Exodus 25:4)—*gold* and *silver*, returning to combine as one: Michael and Gabriel, mingling and intertwining. Of this is written *He makes peace in His heights* (Job 25:2). Being intertwined, they become one body.[419](#)

“*And crimson* (Exodus 25:4)—above, included in Uriel, as before, to be held within *blue* and within *purple*.[420](#)

“*Linen* (ibid.)—above, included, as before, in mystery of Raphael, to be held by *silver* and *gold*.[421](#)

“Until here, mystery of seven pillars above, within seven pillars below, shell within shell for protection.[422](#)

“*And goat hair* (Exodus 25:4)—as we have established, for these seven are kernel of kernel, and this is shell of kernel.[423](#)

“*Reddened ram skins* (Exodus 25:5)—shield-bearing warriors, eyes flashing like flaming missiles, as is said: *his eyes like flaming torches* (Daniel 10:6). They are called firmaments outside within a shell.[424](#)

“תחשים (*Tehashim*), *Tanned-leather, skins* (Exodus, ibid.)—those within the holy side, joined yet not joined with holiness, as we have said. For Abraham engendered Tahash by another woman—and *Tahash and...* (Genesis 22:24); these are by the mother of Ishmael, brothers of Ishmael. Just as there is a rung in Esau, so there is a rung in Ishmael.[425](#)

“Ishmael’s mother gave birth to Tahash, and he came from the side of Abraham, for the primordial light scatters when it radiates lights in all directions. Once that primordial light became sweetly steady, the blessed Holy One treasured it away. For whom did He hide it? For the righteous. And who are they? Righteous One and Righteousness, so as to generate through that primordial light fruit for the world, fruit destined to come into the

world.⁴²⁶ For Abraham and Sarah formed souls and fruit, as is written: *and the souls they had made in Haran* (Genesis 12:5). Just as they made souls on the side of Holiness, so too they made souls on the Other Side. For without that arousal aroused by Abraham on the Other Side, there would be no converts in the world at all.⁴²⁷

“*And acacia wood* (Exodus 25:5)—as we have established, these are seraphim, as is said: *Seraphim were standing above it* (Isaiah 6:2). What is the meaning of *above it*? Above that shell.⁴²⁸

“Now, you might say, ‘This verse refers to the blessed Holy One.’ Well, as has been said: *I saw* אָרָא (et) *YHVH* (Isaiah 6:1)—*et*, precisely! Corresponding to what is written in this verse: *the hem of His robe filling et the Temple* (ibid.)—*et* precisely, to include that shell. Having uttered the mystery of that shell, Scripture proceeds: *Seraphim were standing above it*—above that shell.⁴²⁹

“*Oil for lighting* (Exodus 25:6)—supernal anointment coming from above. There are two oils, which are one: one above, called *oil of lighting* (ibid. 35:14), and one below, called *oil for lighting*. *Oil of lighting* is supreme, enduring surely, never ceasing, constantly filled with holy anointment, and all blessings and all lights and all lamps are all blessed and illumined from there. *Oil for lighting*—sometimes filled, sometimes not.⁴³⁰

“Further, we have learned: *God created the two great lights, the great light for dominion of day and the small light for dominion of night* (Genesis 1:16). Although the Companions have already established this, and so it is, still, *the two great lights*—*oil of lighting* and *oil for lighting*, upper world and lower world, one male and one female. Whenever male and female appear as one, they are both referred to in masculine language. Since the upper world is called *great*, the lower world accordingly—joining it in totality—is called *great*. As soon as one separates from the

other, each is referred to individually, appropriately: one is called *great*, and the other *small*.[431](#)

“Therefore the ancients said that one should rather be a tail to lions than a head to foxes. For when he stands among lions, all is designated by the category of lion—the tail of a lion is a lion, inseparably. Among foxes, even if one is [148a] the head, the head of a fox is a fox, inseparably, and is called fox.

“This mystery is this verse, for at first when they dwelled as one, they were called *the two great lights* (Genesis 1:16), even though this one was the tail to the one above. When this one separated from the one above, to become, as it were, a head to foxes, then it was called *small*.[432](#)

“By this mystery, *oil of lighting*—never ceasing, abiding in supernal ascension, to rule by day. *Oil for lighting*—interrupted, called *small*, and ruling by night.[433](#)

“There are five spices within the oil and incense. Although it is one, they are two, and all is one.[434](#)

“*Carnelian stones...* (Exodus 25:7)—all these are thirteen, adornment of the Dwelling.[435](#)

“We return to the original subject. *Gold* (Exodus 25:3)—as has been said, there are seven kinds of gold. Now, you might say, ‘*Gold*, which is Judgment; *silver*, ascending above it.’ Not so! For surely, *gold* is ascension beyond all—yet, *gold* in a concealed manner, and this is supernal gold, seventh of all those kinds of gold. This is gold shining, dazzling the eyes; when this emerges in the world, whoever grasps it hides it away. From there issue and flow all kinds of gold.[436](#)

“When is the one called *gold* called *gold*? When it is radiant, ascending in awesome glory; in supernal joy, delighting those below. When it is in Judgment, changing from that color to the color blue, black, and red, then it is in harsh Judgment. But *gold* is in joy, abiding in ascension of joyous awe, in arousal of joy.[437](#)

“*Silver* (Exodus 25:3)—below, mystery of the right arm, for the supernal head is gold, as is written: *You are the head of gold* (Daniel 2:38); *its breast and its arms of silver* (ibid., 32), below. When silver is perfected, it is included in gold, and this is the mystery of *apples of gold in settings of silver* (Proverbs 25:11). Thus silver turns into gold, and then its place is perfected. So there are seven kinds of gold.⁴³⁸

“*And bronze* (Exodus 25:3)—issuing from *gold*, changing into deficiency of the left arm.⁴³⁹

“*Blue* (Exodus 25:4)—left thigh.

“*And crimson* (ibid.)—right thigh, included in the left.⁴⁴⁰

“*וְשֵׁשׁ* (*Ve-shesh*), *And linen* (ibid.)—flowing, gushing river, absorbing all *שֵׁשׁ* (*shit*), six, sides. Similarly below, as has been established and mentioned.⁴⁴¹

“Look, here are seven of Jubilee, and they are seven of Sabbatical! Although they are six, they are thirteen—the seventh, who is above them as head, making thirteen. Head standing on the whole body below, head standing on all limbs of the body, is gold. What is the difference between them? Supernal gold is in sealed mystery, and its name is *זָהָב סָגוּר* (*zahav sagur*), *hidden gold* (1 Kings 6:20)—*sagur*, closed, and concealed from all. Therefore it is called *sagur*, for it is closed to the eye, which has no power over it.⁴⁴²

“Lower gold is more revealed, [277a] and its name is greenish gold. This mystery has been established by the Companions: ‘Esther was greenish,’ color of an *etrog*, and all is one. This gold is a head in concealment—although it is revealed, relative to supernal gold—until it is drawn and settles upon the head of Gabriel, as we have established. Thus all is in supernal mystery, and that mystery is drawn below, all in a single manner.”⁴⁴³

Rabbi Shim'on said, “Throughout this entire portion we find that the workmanship is entrusted to Moses—except in two

You shall make a purging cover of pure gold... (Exodus 25:17).[444](#)

of acacia wood (Exodus 25:10), *They shall make the ephod* (ibid. 28:6), and not *You shall make*. Why, concerning the ark, is it not written *You shall make*? Because the ark contains Moses inside, to be illumined by him, and others had to adorn and beautify it, so that it could appear before him.[445](#)

“As for the ephod, it was not his nor for his service, and Moses was not supposed to perform his brother’s ritual; for Moses is king, and Aaron the king’s best man.[446](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Look at what is written: *You shall clothe Aaron, you shall gird him, you shall set on him, you shall put on him* (Exodus 29:5–6)! All this is Moses’ ritual and Aaron’s glory!’ Well, it is surely Moses’ glory, for the blessed Holy One wanted Aaron’s ritual only through Moses, and Aaron could be sanctified only by Moses. In every respect, Aaron needed Moses, and all this is Moses’ glory.[447](#)

“*You shall make a purging cover* (Exodus 25:17). Come and see: In this portion is recorded the creation of heaven and earth and all their powers. For the blessed Holy One commanded the Dwelling to be fashioned on the pattern of the creation of heaven and earth, so that habitation below would resemble habitation above, joining each other like soul and body, all becoming one.[448](#)

“It is written: בראשית (*Be-reshit*), *In the beginning, God created heaven and earth* (Genesis 1:1). We have already established this, but here is mystery of the purging cover in supernal intimation: concatenation of Metatron, hidden treasure of the Dwelling, raising the holy offering above and below.[449](#)

cases. Concerning all of them it is written *You shall make*, while concerning the ark and the ephod it is written *They shall make an ark*

“ברא שֵׁת (Bara shit), *Created six*—supernal six; hidden, concealed cover, coming into being from mystery of supernal secrecy. A spread extends, concealment illumining in radiance. Concealed within this cover, מיטטרון (Mitatron), מטטרון (Metatron), linked below.[450](#)

“Through awe of walking in truth on earth, he found the radiance that Adam lost, a radiance concealed in the Garden of Eden. It rose above and did not settle in its place, not being complete on all sides—perfection below was lacking, lost through the sin of Adam. Descending below, it was concealed in the trees of the Garden, spreading there to all sides of the Garden, until Enoch son of Jared was born. When he was born, he was located near the Garden, and that radiance began to shine within him; he grew in holy anointment, and this sparkling radiance settled upon him. He entered the Garden of Eden and found there the Tree of Life and its boughs and fruit; he scented it and grew tranquil in the spirit of radiant life.[451](#)

“Messengers, heavenly angels, came and taught him supernal wisdom. They gave him a book that had been hidden in the Tree of Life, and learning from it, he came to know the ways of the blessed Holy One and devoted himself to Him, as is written: *Enoch walked with God* (Genesis 5:24), [277b] until that radiance was perfected within him. Once the radiance was perfected below, it sought to ascend to its place and to manifest that perfection in the mystery of Enoch.[452](#)

“One day he entered the Garden of Eden and was shown secrecies of the Garden. He left that book, and all that he saw, outside; it is concealed among the Companions. Afterward the radiance clothed itself within that garment to be revealed above, to be an embarrassment to all those who had antagonized their Lord, insisting that the human being should not be created in the world. As is written: *and he was no more, for God took him* (Genesis 5:24)—*and he was no more* in this world;

and he was no more as he was in this world. For God took him—in another image, in which he is constantly נער (na'ar), a youth. This mystery we have already established: חנוך לנוער (Ḥanokh la-na'ar), *Train the youth, according to his way*—to conduct all of the worlds. Even when he is old, he will not swerve from it (Proverbs 22:6)—for it is constantly inside him and he turns back into na'ar, youth. For Ḥanokh, Enoch, is interwoven in the image of the hidden world; he is within the Throne of his Lord, carrying out missions in the worlds. When the world is under Judgment, he emerges and is called Metatron, master over all supernal powers. The old man is a youth, entering from world to world, and wrath subsides.⁴⁵³

“This image extended in the spreading of the cover, and in that spread two images formed, one male and one female, standing as two youths in passionate love, clinging to one another. This mystery is: *In the beginning God created*—spread of concealed cover. *Heaven and earth*—two cherubim, standing in passionate cleaving. It is not written שמים וארץ (shamayim va-arets), but rather את (et)—to include two cherubim as one. This cover is spread within, in secrecy of the Temple, and these two stand on two sides.⁴⁵⁴

“בראשית (Be-reshit), *In the beginning*—ascending above, its mystery descending below. As that mystery of *be-reshit, in the beginning*, ascends above, above, not inscribed with a mark, afterward a mark emerges, from which is formed a supernal cover, inscribed with three marks in the mystery of יהוה אלהינו יהוה (YHVH Eloheinu YHVH), *YHVH our God YHVH*. From these three issue three others, and they are six, namely שית ברא (bara shit), created six.⁴⁵⁵

“This cover spread to the south and west, and generated two cherubim as one, male and female, who would be facing one another. South is ראש (rosh), head, priest at the head, and it is male. West is female, single daughter; ‘Abraham had a daughter,’ precisely! Thus in this

mystery, בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*: י בת ראש (*bat, rosh, yod*), daughter, head, *yod*—cover that is unknown until it spreads extensively, generating these two, like this: ה (*he*). So, בת ראש (*bat rosh*), daughter of head—daughter of Abraham. י (*yod*)—cover, to spread.[456](#)

“The cover turns from west to north, spreading extensively, and a male is revealed, joined to the side of the cover, and a female concealed below, becoming a well of the north. This is the mystery of בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*: א בת ראש (*bat esh*), daughter of fire; י (*yod*), cover; ר (*resh*), extensive spread, and it appears as one, not two, since female is subdued below.[457](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘ר (*resh*) is all one spread, above and below.’ So it is, for the name of one is inseparable from the other—all is *Elohim*.[458](#)

“The cover turns from west to east, spreading extensively in two directions, east and west. Once the cover stands in the east and west, joy appears and union fittingly, and this בת (*bat*), daughter, is adorned with a crown fittingly and abides in fullness. Then She is in His mystery: בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*, with no separation at all.[459](#)

“Corresponding to these three times, Israel ascends three times to celebrate its festivals. On *Pesah* the cover turns to the south and west, and then that daughter abides in Abraham, and She is בת ראש (*bat rosh*), daughter of head. There, *Hallel*, but not complete *Hallel*, for these two cherubim are not fittingly in perfection, and Ishmael emerges, accusing.[460](#)

“From the day of Rosh Hashanah until the day of *Sukkot*, the cover turns from north to west. Then that daughter is subdued and abides in Isaac, and not in joy—and She is א בת ראש (*bat esh*), daughter of fire. And they are not in perfection, so there is no *Hallel* at all, for Esau emerges, accusing.[461](#)

“On *Sukkot* this daughter ascends and is fulfilled by Isaac, and they join with one another. Then complete *Hallel* for the subsiding of wrath, and companionship prevails.[462](#)

“On *Shavu'ot* the cover turns to the east and west. Then, wholeness appears, and there is love and cleaving on all sides, joy of those above and below. Then, *Torah of YHVH is perfect, restoring the soul* (Psalms 19:8).[463](#)

“In these three times the cover turns in her directions fittingly. This cover spreads above, within that concealed point, in primordial radiance spreading; afterward spreading in perfection, settling on the primordial spread. As the wings of the cherubim shelter this cover, so that it is shielded and not exposed—כַּפּוֹרֶת (*kapporet*), *purging cover* (Exodus 25:17), spelled כְּפֹרֶת (*kapporet*). For when supernal radiance comes, those cherubim beat their wings, lifting them above, and they utter song out of the immensity of that radiant joy. Similarly below, and the cover turns. From those three and one, the cherubim were on the right and left. On the right one settles a spirit of above from that side; and the left one, which was in the west by turning of the cover, stands by him on the left, and a spirit of the female settles upon him, and they cling to one another in the love of male and female. And so it is [278a] on all sides, by turning of the cover, and eternally there are two, male and female; below in this world, two and no more.[464](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Above, since cleaving to the cover is unnecessary, how does the cover turn?’ Well, surely, through that turning, one cleaves to another, clinging to it constantly.[465](#)

“Like the cherubim—those above—they stand miraculously. We have established the mystery that is written: *spreading wings, sheltering with their wings* (Exodus 25:20)—it is not written *with wings spread, with sheltering wings*; rather, they stood miraculously. At certain times they would lift their wings and spread them above, every single day; afterward they would again shelter the cover. Thus, they stood miraculously.[466](#)

“Wherever supernal spirit comes and settles, surely in that place is reality and existence. A human being derives

from dust, and until a sparkling of spirit above settles upon him, he possesses no reality; as soon as it does, he has reality and exists vitally.[467](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘This alone.’ Well, come and see from Aaron’s staff, which was wood, with no reality at all. As soon as the blessed Holy One infused it with a bit of spirit, it existed vitally and became a real creature. Now, if wood, when infused with one bit of spirit by the blessed Holy One, existed vitally and possessed reality—which it does not normally do—then all the more so with the cherubim, who are in holiness and abide in holiness, corresponding to the pattern above.[468](#)

“Whenever Israel were virtuous, the cherubim cleaved together, face-to-face. As soon as they degenerated, they turned their faces away from one another. How did they know? Here pillars of the world have differed; but by sacrificial smoke, sacrifice on the altar, and the priest blessing the people—by these three they knew that the cherubim were turning their faces away from one another and that the blessed Holy One wanted His children to return.[469](#)

“Smoke of the sacrifice. When Israel were virtuous, the smoke rose straight above, in a wreath of straps; whether to the east or the west or all ends of the earth, it ascended straight. When it did not drift right or left, then favor prevailed above and below, and the blessed Holy One delighted in the deeds of Israel in abounding love.[470](#)

“By sacrifice on the altar. When Israel were worthy, in the fire on the altar appeared the image of a lion, consuming the sacrifice upon the altar. And when they were not worthy, they saw the image of a dog crouching on the altar.[471](#)

“The priest blessing the people. As he raised his hands, when Israel were worthy and deserving of blessing, his hands stood erect with no effort at all, flung up in joy and fervor—thus *Shekhinah* settled upon them and they rose by

themselves. Then the priest knew that Israel were deserving of blessing, and he blessed them with passion of the heart. And when his hands were heavy, and raised with great effort, and he could not lift them except by effort, then he knew that *Shekhinah* had not settled upon his hands and Israel were not deserving of blessing. For when *Shekhinah* would come to settle on his hands, all those fingers, in supernal image, would revel in joy to receive *Shekhinah* upon themselves and fly to be erected above—just as the cherubim of this world rejoiced, and all the more so above, to receive *Shekhinah* upon themselves.⁴⁷²

“This is the mystery of *Moses’ hands grew heavy...* (Exodus 17:12). Why? Because at that time Israel were not worthy and Moses’ hands grew heavy and he could not raise them—for it is written above: *for the quarrel of the Children of Israel, and for their testing YHVH, saying, ‘Is YHVH among us or not?’* (Exodus 17:7); and then, *Amalek came...* (ibid., 8), and Moses’ hands grew heavy and he could not raise them, until he accepted punishment, as is written: *so they took a stone and placed it beneath him.... When Moses would raise his hand, Israel prevailed; when he would let down his hand, Amalek prevailed* (ibid., 12, 11). Similarly, the tablets of stone, and similarly, the priest.⁴⁷³

“So the cherubim, when Israel were worthy, were face-to-face, clinging to one another; and when they were not worthy, they would turn their faces away from each other. By these mysteries, they knew if Israel were worthy or not.⁴⁷⁴

“כְּרוּבִים (Keruvim), Cherubim—רַבִּיָּן (ravyan), children, all abiding in one mystery, as is written: *When Israel was a youth, I loved him* (Hosea 11:1). Therefore, all abide in renewal of the moon: just as this is renewed, so with all. Because of Youth, they are youths; this is the mystery of a *wife of* נְעוּרִים (ne’urim), *youth* (Isaiah 54:6), standing upon two נְעָרִים (ne’arim), youths, in supernal renewal.⁴⁷⁵

“Cherubim—large face and small face. Certainly so! Hidden face above, unrevealed, on account of which is renewal of the moon and her fullness. Small face below, as we have established with the cover, abiding in one mystery above and below. אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ (*Et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets*), *Heaven and earth* (Genesis 1:1)—mystery of two cherubim, one male and one female, to be clinging to one another in love, as has been said: *et*, including above and below as one, so that mystery of cherubim be entirely one whole.⁴⁷⁶

“It is written: *Serve YHVH in joy* (Psalms 100:2)—joy of two כְּרוּבִים (*keruvim*), cherubim. For רַבִּיָּן (*ravyan*), children—whoever remains among them, his face turns back into that of a child and he delights with them. The mystery is: as soon as the one settling settles upon them, he turns back into a youth in total joy and desire. Although he comes in Judgment upon the world, once he settles upon them, he turns joyous—a youth bound with joy—and the world turns back to Compassion.⁴⁷⁷

“Whoever is angry, a child should be brought to him and immediately anger will subside and he will turn joyful and make himself like a child; then [278b] all is joyous! Based on the mystery of this secret, *Israel was a youth, I loved him* (Hosea 11:1)—there is no love or affection except for a child.⁴⁷⁸

“It is written: *Joshua son of Nun, a youth, would not depart* (Exodus 33:11)—he would stand within the Dwelling of Moses, since that tent was the tent of Moses, and when *Shekhinah* came, Joshua, *a youth*, was present there, and he immediately became joyous and enraptured. Joshua was entirely the face of the moon, in all its mysteries.⁴⁷⁹

“Once the Dwelling was constructed, Joshua did not have to be there; instead, the cherubim were there, in love with one another, face-to-face, like children in joy. As soon as She settled upon them, immediately all was in joy and Judgment was nowhere to be found. Thus, the blessed Holy

One wants the people of Israel to manifest action below, arousing Love and eliminating Judgment, so that it will not rule over them at all and they will be constantly with Him in joy. Happy are they in this world and in the world that is coming![480](#)

“It is written: *The youth Samuel was serving YHVH* (1 Samuel 3:1). Though it is written *youth*, it is also written: *and Samuel among those who call on His name* (Psalms 99:6), and we have learned: ‘Samuel was equivalent to Moses and Aaron.’ If he is equivalent to Moses and Aaron, then why is it written *youth*? They are many rungs removed, and he did not reach even the lowest rung of Moses, much less become equivalent to both of them![481](#)

“Rather, this verse is as follows: *Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among those who call on His name*—*Moses* is Faithful Prophet, superior to all other prophets. *Aaron among His priests*—a priest superior to all priests of the world; there was no high priest who attained as lofty a rung as Aaron. Aaron attained priesthood and prophecy—prophet and priest—unlike any other priest.[482](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘But Zechariah was priest and prophet!’ Well, that state of prophecy [148a] was temporary, as is written: *The spirit of God clothed Zechariah* (2 Chronicles 24:20).[483](#)

“And you might say, ‘But what about Jeremiah, of whom is written *Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you* (Jeremiah 1:3)? And there were others.’ Well, none of them attained prophecy as supreme as Aaron’s, for Aaron attained prophecy superior to all other priests’, and priesthood beyond them all.[484](#)

“Moses attained prophecy and served in supernal priesthood; Samuel attained them both. Just as Moses would call and the blessed Holy One would respond to him immediately, so of Samuel is written *Is it not wheat harvest today? I shall call upon YHVH and He will send thunder...* (1

Samuel 12:17). But he never ascended to a rung as high as Moses.[485](#)

“Just as Aaron served in priesthood before the blessed Holy One, so Samuel served before the blessed Holy One, but he did not attain supernal service like Aaron.

“The matter is thus: There are three who were faithful prophets and served in priesthood: one is Moses, one is Aaron, and one is Samuel. Now, you might say, ‘Samuel did not continue in priesthood; rather, it was another who served in priesthood. And who is that? [148b] Jeremiah.’ Not so! For look at what is written: *of the priests in Anathoth* (Jeremiah 1:1)—he was *of the priests*, but he did not serve! And Samuel served in the days of Eli, and Moses one time, all those seven days of installation.[486](#)

“Samuel attained *youth*, as is written: *The youth Samuel was serving* (1 Samuel 3:1), and because he stands on this rung, he is surely like Moses and Aaron. One who grasps this *youth* and attains him, attains those supernal rungs on which Moses and Aaron stood.[487](#)

“Cherubim are gold, as has been established, for they issue from the side of gold, and are not intermingled with either silver or another color. This is a greenish gold.[488](#)

“In the Dwelling the colors gold and silver intermingle, so that the mystery above may be in one. Further, bronze, to be with them, moving between them—all sides—so that perfection of all may be as one, as is written: *gold, silver, and bronze* (Exodus 25:3).[489](#)

“Alternatively, *gold, silver*—gold turning into silver, and silver to gold, all combined as one, in one place. Turning into three colors: when joy within Judgment is required, *gold*; when Compassion is required, *silver*; when severity of Judgment is required, *bronze*.[490](#)

“Thus, Moses contemplated the making of the serpent, as is written: *Moses made נחש נחשת (naḥash neḥoshet), a serpent of bronze* (Numbers 21:9). He knew the site of

smelting of gold in that *nehoshet, bronze*, since *nahash, serpent*, sounds similar to it, and he knew its place. For the blessed Holy One only told him, *Make you* שרף (*saraf*), *a fiery one* (ibid., 8), and he went and made *nahash nehoshet, a serpent of bronze*, as is written: *Moses made a serpent of bronze*. Why? Well, he knew the place, and the essence of the matter, for at first is written: *YHVH sent against the people* הנחשים השרפים (*ha-nehashim ha-serafim*), *the fiery serpents* (ibid., 6), and it is written: נחש שרף (*nahash saraf*), *fiery serpent* (Deuteronomy 8:15). Their essence is *nahash, serpent*, and since Moses knew the essence, root, and foundation of that place, he made *a serpent* and relied on it. Why? Because Israel had sinned with their tongue, as is written: *The people spoke against God and against Moses* (Numbers 21:5). Therefore, *YHVH sent against the people the fiery serpents*. Moses followed solely the essence and made *nahash nehoshet, a serpent of bronze*, in the manner required; for its place is *bronze*, and the blessed Holy One had not told him what to make it from, so Moses contemplated and made it from *bronze*, as required for its place. How do we know? As is written: *Moses made a serpent of bronze and set it on* הנס (*ha-nes*), *a standard* (Numbers 21:9). What does this mean: *on ha-nes, a standard?* On that insignia above.⁴⁹¹

“We have learned: Everywhere this serpent follows the mystery of *woman of valor*, and *woman of whoredom* seeks to adorn herself like Her but cannot. *Woman of valor*—Her insignia and mark are the letter ה (*he*), fittingly. *Woman of whoredom*—her insignia and mark are similar but not configured just so. Her letter is ק (*qof*), a letter configured like ה (*he*)—like קופא (*qofa*), an ape, compared with humans, imitating humans but not equipped to be like them.⁴⁹²

“Similarly, Moses fashioned that *serpent* according to its fitting insignia. It is constantly prepared to do evil; because of it, Adam sinned and was banished from the Garden of Eden, where his habitation resembled the habitation above.”⁴⁹³

God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light (Genesis 1:3).

Rabbi Yose said, "That light was treasured away, and it is reserved for the righteous in the world that is coming, as has been established, for it is written: *Light is sown for the righteous* (Psalms 97:11)—*לצדק* (*la-tsaddiq*), *for the righteous*, precisely, unspecified. That light never functioned in the world except for the first day; afterward it was hidden away and performed no more."[494](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, "If it were completely hidden, [149a] the world would not exist for even one moment! Rather, it was hidden and sown like a seed that generates offspring and fruit, and by which the world is sustained. There is not a day without something emerging from it into the world and sustaining all, and by this the blessed Holy One feeds the world. And everywhere that Torah is studied at night, one ray issues from that hidden light and is drawn upon those absorbed in her, as is written: *By day YHVH ordains His love, and in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9), as we have established.[495](#)

"On the day when the Dwelling was made, what is written? *Moses could not come into the Tent of Meeting, for the cloud had settled upon it* (Exodus 40:35). What is *the cloud*? It was one from the side of primordial light, issuing in the joy of the Bride as She entered the Dwelling below. Since the first day, it has not been revealed; but it certainly does perform in the world, renewing every day the act of Creation!"[496](#)

Blue (Exodus 25:4).[497](#)

Rabbi Yitshak was delving into Torah, and with him were Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Hizkiyah. Rabbi Yitshak said, "We have seen that the making of the Dwelling corresponds to the making of heaven and earth, yet the Companions have educated so little by their hints that no one can get a

mouthful, or reach his hand into his mouth and swallow!"[498](#)

Rabbi Yose said, "These matters—take them up to the Holy Lamp, for he prepares sweet dishes, as prepared by the Holy Ancient One, Concealed of all concealed, and he prepares dishes that leave no room for another to come and throw in salt. Further, one can eat and drink and fill his belly from all the delights of the world and still have some left over. In him is fulfilled *He set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of YHVH* (2 Kings 4:44)."[499](#)

He opened, saying, "*And YHVH gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him. There was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty* (1 Kings 5:26). This verse has been discussed in various places, but ויהיה (Va-YHVH), *And YHVH—concord above as one, He and His court.*[500](#)

"*Gave wisdom*—like someone giving a present or gift to a beloved friend.

"*As He had promised him*—perfection of wisdom in wealth, peace, and dominion, as is written: *as He had promised him.*[501](#)

"*There was peace between Hiram and Solomon.* Why? Because they knew between themselves the secrecy of words that they uttered, which other people could not contemplate or comprehend at all. Consequently, Hiram acknowledged all that Solomon said.[502](#)

"King Solomon reflected and saw that even in that generation, more perfect than all generations, it was not the will of the supernal King that so much wisdom should be revealed by him. Torah, originally sealed, was revealed; he opened doors. Yet even though he opened, they are closed, except for the wise who are worthy—and stammer in them, unable to open their mouths.[503](#)

"As for this generation, in which Rabbi Shim'on dwells, it is the wish of the blessed Holy One, for the sake of Rabbi

Shim'on, that concealed matters should be revealed by him. But I am astounded by scholars of the generation—how can they abandon, for even one moment, studying Torah while Rabbi Shim'on exists in the world? Nevertheless, in this generation, wisdom will not be forgotten from the world. Woe when he departs, and the wise diminish and wisdom is forgotten from the world!"[504](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, "Certainly so! For one day I was walking with him on the way and he opened his mouth with Torah, and I saw a column of cloud inserted from above to below and a radiance glowing within the column. I was terribly frightened, and I said, 'Happy is the person to whom such things happen in this world!'"[505](#)

"What is written of Moses? *All the people would see the column of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, and all the people would rise and bow down, each at the entrance of his tent* (Exodus 33:10). This was fitting for Moses, faithful prophet, supreme over all inhabitants of the world, and for that generation, who received the Torah at Mount Sinai and saw so many miracles and mighty acts in Egypt and at the Sea. But here in this generation, the supreme merit of Rabbi Shim'on causes miracles to be manifested through him."[506](#) [149b]

Blue (Exodus 25:4). Rabbi Yitshak said, "Blue is from that fish of the Sea of Ginnosar, which is in the share of Zebulun. This color was needed for the making of the Dwelling, so that this color could be manifested."[507](#)

He opened, saying, "*Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water* (Genesis 1:6). This *firmament* was created on the second day, for this act is from the left side; and on the second day, which is the left side, Hell was created, issuing from smelting of fire of the left. On that day emerged the color blue, which is the Throne of Judgment."[508](#)

“This day took water deriving from the right side, and that water from the right side was revealed only on the second day. On its own day, water was not revealed; rather, it was exchanged, for one was comprised in the other, and one perfumed with the other.[509](#)

“The light of the first day is the first radiance of all six lights. This light was on the side of fire, as is written: *The light of Israel will be fire* (Isaiah 10:17), and that light of Israel was from the right side, yet comprised within fire. The first of those six days is water, but it did not perform the action of water, rather the action of light, which is from the side of fire, which is the second day—to demonstrate that the blessed Holy One created the world only upon peace, and all followed the way of peace. Whatever the first day did, it did on the side of its companion. The second day, on the side of the first day, fashioned that artistry and performed; for each one performed the act of its companion to show that they had intermingled.[510](#)

“The third day was on the side of both of them and imbued with purple. Consequently it is written *that it was good, that it was good* (Genesis 1:10, 12) concerning the third day.[511](#)

“This blue on the second day was tinged with other colors: red and black. *Blue* (Exodus 25:4)—red comes to it from the second day itself, corresponding to the color of fire, and this is *Elohim*. It inherits the color gold, for all is one color. Blue emerges from that color red. When it descends, the red plunges deep into the place that is the sea and is dyed blue; that red enters the sea and its hue is diluted and turns blue, and this is *Elohim*, though not as harsh as the first one.[512](#)

“Black—this color emerges from the smelting of red, when it is weakened and melted below through the smelting of filth. It descends below, and from that filth issues a red, from intense filth, and out of intense filth it turns into black—all smelted from that primordial red. All

this was created on the second, and this is called *other gods*.⁵¹³

“This black is so dark that its color cannot be seen from within the darkness. The Holy Lamp said as follows: ‘This dark black color, where was it imbued? Well, when that red was smelted within blue and colors intermingled, a smelting of filth melted into the depths, out of which formed mire and mud, as is said: *Its waters cast up mire and mud* (Isaiah 57:20). From that clay of the depths emerged the darkness that is black—and not black but utterly dark, as is written: *and darkness over the face of the deep* (Genesis 1:2). Why is it called *darkness*? Because its color is dark and it darkens the faces of creatures.⁵¹⁴

“This is red and black, and therefore of the second day it is not written *that it was good*.⁵¹⁵

“Now, you might say, ‘But it is written: “*Look, it was very good* (Genesis 1:31)—this is the Angel of Death.” Yet here you say that on account of him it is not said *that it was good!*’⁵¹⁶

“Well, here is mystery of mysteries. For surely the Angel of Death is *very good*. Why so? Because all inhabitants of the world know that they will die and return to dust, and there are many who turn back to their Lord due to this fear, and fear to sin before Him. Many fear the King because the lash dangles in front of them. How good is that lash for people, making them fine and true, fittingly improved in their ways! Therefore, *Look, it was very good—very, indeed!* [150a]⁵¹⁷

“Mystery of mysteries that I learned from the Holy Lamp: *Look, it was good*—this is the Angel of Life. *Very*—this is the Angel of Death, who is more. Why? Well, when the blessed Holy One created the world, all was prepared before the arrival of Adam, who was king of this world. When Adam was created, He fashioned him perfectly for the true way, as is written: *God made* אָדָם (ha-adam), *the human being, upright, but they have sought many schemes*

(Ecclesiastes 7:29). He made him *upright*, but afterward he degenerated and was banished from the Garden of Eden.[518](#)

“The Garden of Eden is on earth, planted among those plants that the blessed Holy One planted, as is said: *YHVH Elohim planted a garden in Eden, to the east* (Genesis 2:8). He planted it with the complete Name, corresponding to the sublime pattern above, and all supernal images are embroidered and formed in this Garden of Eden below. There stand the cherubim—not carved by human carving in gold or another material, but rather all lights of above, carved and formed in embroidered form, artistry of the complete Name of the blessed Holy One. All are engraved there; all images and forms of this world are all formed there, carved and engraved there, all corresponding to this world.[519](#)

“This place is the abode of holy spirits, whether those who have come to this world or those who have not come to this world—and those about to come to this world. All those spirits are clothed in garments and bodies and faces similar to this world, and there they gaze upon the radiant glory of their Lord until they come to this world. When they emerge from there to come to this world, those spirits strip themselves of that body and garment, and clothe themselves in a body and garment of this world. They make their home in this world in the garment of this body, which is from a putrid drop.[520](#)

“When his time comes to go and depart from this world, he does not depart until that Angel of Death strips him of the garment of this body. Once that spirit has been stripped of that body by the hand of the Angel of Death, he goes and clothes himself in that other body in the Garden of Eden. The spirit has no joy except in that body there, and he rejoices over being stripped of the body of this world and being clothed in another, perfect garment, similar to this world. In it he dwells and moves and contemplates to

know supernal mysteries, which he could not know or contemplate in this world in this body.[521](#)

“When the soul clothes herself in the garment of that world, how great her bliss, how many her delights there! Who caused this body to be donned by the spirit? You must admit, the one who stripped it of these garments.[522](#)

“The blessed Holy One renders kindness to creatures and does not strip a person of these garments until He has prepared for him other garments, finer and more precious than these. Except for the wicked of the world who have not returned to their Lord in complete repentance, for naked they came into this world and naked they will return there. Such a soul moves in shame among the others, since she has no garments at all, and she is punished in earthly Hell by the fire above.[523](#)

“Some of them squeal and rise. Who are they? The wicked who intended *teshuvah* in their hearts, but died without being able to do it. These are punished there in Hell and afterward twitter and rise.[524](#)

“See how great is the compassion of the blessed Holy One for His creatures! For even if he is extremely wicked, and contemplates *teshuvah* but cannot do it and dies, he surely receives punishment for having left without *teshuvah*, but afterward that desire he felt to perform *teshuvah* does not depart from the presence of the supernal King, and the blessed Holy One prepares a place for that wicked one in the abode of Sheol, and there he chirps *teshuvah*. For that desire descends from before the blessed Holy One and breaks all the beams of the gates of the divisions of Hell and reaches the place where that wicked one lies. It knocks him, arousing in him that desire as before, and then that soul twitters [150b] and rises from the abode of Sheol.[525](#)

“There is no good intention that is lost in the presence of the Holy King. Therefore, happy is one who conceives good thoughts toward his Lord, for even if he cannot actualize them, the blessed Holy One esteems his intention

as if he had fulfilled it. This is for good; but a thought for evil, no—except for the thought of idolatry, as the Companions have established.[526](#)

“Those who have not considered *teshuvah* descend to Sheol and do not rise for generation after generation. Of them is written *As a cloud fades and vanishes, so whoever descends to Sheol rises no more* (Job 7:9). Of the former is written *YHVH deals death and grants life, brings down to Sheol and raises up* (1 Samuel 2:6).”[527](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “The judgment of the punishments of Hell, we have learned, is to chastise the wicked there. Why are they punished by the fire of Hell? Well, Hell is a fire burning day and night, just as the wicked are inflamed by the fire of evil impulse to transgress the words of Torah. By every single excitement with which they are enflamed by the evil impulse, so is Hell kindled.”[528](#)

“One time, the evil impulse disappeared from the world because it had been inserted in an iron signet ring in the hollow of the great abyss. All that time the fire of Hell was extinguished and did not burn at all. The evil impulse returned to its place, and the wicked of the world began to be inflamed by it, and the fire of Hell was rekindled. For Hell is only kindled by the intense heat of the evil impulse of the wicked; and by that heat, Hell burns day and night, never subsiding.”[529](#)

“Hell has seven entrances, and seven habitations are there. There are seven types of wicked people: evil, worthless, sinner, wicked, corrupter, scoffer, arrogant. Corresponding to all of them are the habitations of Hell, every single one fittingly; and according to the level at which he sinned, he is given a habitation in Hell.”[530](#)

“In every single habitation there is an angel appointed over that place under Dumah, and countless thousands and myriads with him who punish the wicked, each and every one as he deserves in the habitation where he is.”[531](#)

“The fire of Hell reaches below from the fire of Hell above. Reaching this Hell below, it burns with the arousal of heat of the wicked who inflame themselves by the evil impulse, and all those habitations blaze there.[532](#)

“There is a place in Hell and levels there called Boiling Excrement, where there is filth of souls—those who are cleansed of all the filth of this world. They are cleansed and ascend, and that filth remains there; and those evil rungs called Boiling Excrement are appointed over that filth, and the fire of Hell controls that remaining filth.[533](#)

“And there are those wicked who soil themselves by their sins constantly and are never cleansed and die without *teshuvah*—those who have sinned and incited others to sin and have always been stiff-necked, never broken before their Lord in this world. These are punished there in that filth, in that boiling excrement, never leaving there. Those who corrupt their ways upon earth and do not care about the honor of their Lord in this world—all these are punished there for generation after generation, never leaving there.[534](#)

“On Sabbaths, festivals, and holidays, that fire subsides and they are not punished; but they do not come out of there like other wicked ones who have rest. All those who desecrate Sabbaths and holidays—not caring at all about the honor of their Lord, so as to observe them, but rather desecrating them publicly—just as they did not observe Sabbaths and holidays in this world, so it is: they do not observe them in that world and they have no rest.”[535](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “Do not say so! Rather, they observe Sabbath there against their will.”[536](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “These are Gentiles, who have not been commanded and do not observe Sabbath in this world—there in Hell they observe it against their will.[537](#)

“Every Sabbath eve, heralds [151a] proceed through all those habitations of Hell: ‘Remove punishments of the wicked, for the Holy King is coming and the day is

sanctified and He protects all!’ Immediately, punishments disappear and the wicked have rest. As for all those who desecrate Sabbaths and holidays publicly, punishments are withdrawn from them, but the fire of Hell never subsides for them. All the wicked of Hell ask about them, ‘Why are these ones, who have no rest, different from all the other wicked here?’ The masters of judgment answer them, ‘These are sinners who denied the blessed Holy One and transgressed the whole Torah, because they did not observe Sabbath there; consequently, they never have rest.’⁵³⁸

“All the wicked emerge from their places and are permitted to go and look upon them. One angel named Santriel goes and exhumes their body and brings it into Hell before the eyes of the wicked, and they see it putrefying with worms and the soul having no rest in the fire of Hell. All those wicked there surround that body and proclaim: ‘This is so-and-so the wicked who did not care about the honor of his Lord, denying Him and denying the whole Torah! Woe is he! Better for him if he had never been created, so as not to suffer this punishment and this shame!’ As is written: *They will go out and stare at the corpses of the people who rebel against Me, for their worm will not die, nor their fire be quenched* (Isaiah 66:24). *For their worm will not die*—from the body. *Nor their fire be quenched*—from the soul. *And they will be דראון (dera’on), a horror, to all flesh* (ibid.)—*they will be די ראון (dai ra’on), enough seeing*, until all the wicked of Hell say, ‘די ראיה דא (Dai re’iyyah da), Enough of this sight!’”⁵³⁹

Rabbi Yose said, “Certainly so! For Sabbath is equivalent to the entire Torah, and Torah is fire; since they transgressed the fire of Torah, here is blazing fire of Hell, never subsiding from them!”⁵⁴⁰

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Afterward, when Sabbath departs, that angel comes and returns that body to its grave, and both of them are punished, each in its own aspect. All this

pertains while the body is still intact; once it wastes away, the body suffers none of these punishments, and of the blessed Holy One is written *He does not arouse all His rage* (Psalms 78:38).[541](#)

“All wicked of the world, while the body is still whole with all its limbs in the grave, are punished body and spirit, each with its fitting punishment. As soon as the body wastes away, the punishment of the spirit subsides. Whoever should leave, leaves; whoever should have rest, has rest; whoever should become smoking ash under the feet of the righteous—every single one as he deserves.[542](#)

“Therefore, how good it is, whether for the righteous or for the wicked, that the body should cling to the earth and decompose quickly in the dust and not prolong its existence, lest body and spirit be punished continually every day. For there is not a single righteous person in the world who escapes punishment in the grave, since that angel appointed over graves stands over the body and punishes it every single day. If this is so for the righteous, all the more so for the wicked![543](#)

“Thus, when the body has decomposed and wasted away in the dust, Judgment subsides entirely—except for the pious, pillars of the world, who deserve for their souls to ascend to the supernal place intended for them, and they are few in the world.[544](#)

“All those who die in the world, except for those who die in the Holy Land, all die by the hand of the Destroying Angel, who is the Angel of Death. All those who die in the Holy Land do not die by his hand, but rather by the hand of the Angel of Mercy who rules the land.”[545](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “If so, what is so praiseworthy about Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, of whom is written *by the mouth of YHVH* (Numbers 33:38; Deuteronomy 34:5)—meaning that these did not die by the hand of that Destroying Angel? For you say that everyone in the whole

world who dies in the land of Israel does not die by the hand of this one!"[546](#)

He replied, [151b] "Certainly so! Moses, Aaron, and Miriam are more praiseworthy than all inhabitants of the world outside the Holy Land. For Moses, Aaron, and Miriam died outside the Land, and all died by the hand of that Destroyer except for Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, who died solely by the hand of the blessed Holy One. However, those who die in the Holy Land do not die by the hand of that Destroyer, since the Land is not subject to foreign dominion, but rather to the dominion of the blessed Holy One alone."[547](#)

"Of this is written: *Your dead will live, my corpses will arise. Awake and shout for joy, O dwellers of the dust!* (Isaiah 26:19). *Your dead will live*—these dead of the Holy Land, who are His dead and not of another, since the Other Side has no power there at all; so it is written: *Your dead*.[548](#)

"גבלתי (*Nevelati*), *My corpses, will arise*—those dead who died in another, foreign land by the hand of that Destroyer. So they are called גבלה (*nevelah*), carrion: as carrion defiles by carrying, so those dead from outside the Land defile by contact; so they are *nevelah*.[549](#)

"Any slaughter rendered unfit by slaughtering derives from the Other Side, and as soon as it becomes unfit, the Other Side settles upon it, and since it is his and he settles upon it, it is called *nevelah*, carrion. This mystery is: גבל (*Naval*), *Nabal, is his name, and גבלה (nevalah), disgrace, is with him* (1 Samuel 25:25). So, wherever he dwells is called *nevelah*. This מנוול (*menuvval*), repulsive one, dwells only in an unfit place, so any unfit slaughtering is his and is named after him. Consequently, the dead who are outside of the Land—under alien dominion and upon whom the Other Side settles—are called *nevelah*.[550](#)

"*Awake and shout for joy, O dwellers of the dust!* (Isaiah 26:19). *Dwellers*—dwellers sleeping, not dead. And

who are they? The sleepers of Hebron, who are not dead but asleep. Therefore ‘gaspings’ is applied to them, like one who gasps yet has the endurance to be roused. So too, those four couples of Hebron are sleeping, not dead, and they all exist vitally—those bodies of theirs—and they know hidden secrets more than anyone else in the world. Their bodies are hidden there in the entrance of the Garden of Eden, and these are called *dwellers of the dust*.⁵⁵¹

“So all those whose souls depart in the Holy Land—such a soul does not depart by the hand of that Destroyer, who has no power there, but by the hand of the Angel of Mercy, in whose share lies the Holy Land.

“There is a place in civilization where that Destroyer has no power and has been given no authority, and all those who dwell there do not die until they leave the town. There is not one person dwelling there who does not die, and they all die like other people, but not in the town. Why is this? Because they cannot remain constantly in town; rather, some leave and some enter, and so they all die.⁵⁵²

“Why does that Destroying Angel have no power there? If you say that it is not in his domain, then what about the Holy Land, which is not under alien dominion and people still die? Why do they not die in *that* place? If you say because of holiness—there is no place in all of civilization as holy as the land of Israel! And if you say because of that man who built it—there have been many inhabitants of the world whose merit was greater than his.”⁵⁵³

Rabbi Yitshak said, “I have not heard, and I will not speak.”⁵⁵⁴

They came and asked Rabbi Shim’on. He said to them, “Certainly, the Angel of Death has no power over this place, and the blessed Holy One does not want anyone to ever die there. And if you say that previously in that place, before it was built, people did die—not so! Rather, since the day that

the world was created, that place has been primed for existence.[555](#)

“Here is a mystery of mysteries for those who contemplate the essence of wisdom. When the blessed Holy One created the world, He created it by the mystery of letters, and letters revolved and created the world by engravings of the Holy Name. Letters revolved and surrounded the world with their engravings. When they were revolving and the world was expanding and being created and the letters were circling to create, the blessed Holy One said, ‘Enough! Be completed with ם (*yod*).’ The letter ט (*tet*) remained in that place, [152a] suspended in the air. *Tet* is life, so it is a good sign for someone if he sees *tet* in a dream, and life is enhanced for him. Therefore, since it was suspended above that place, death has no dominion there.[556](#)

“When the blessed Holy One wanted to establish the world, He threw a stone into the waters, engraved in the mystery of seventy-two letters, and from there the stone began to move and found nowhere to be established other than the Holy Land. Water flowed after it until that stone reached the spot beneath the altar, where it sank, and there the whole world was established.[557](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘If it is so that life dwells in that place, then why wasn’t the Temple built there to give life to its inhabitants?’ Well, here in this place, existence endures because of one letter hovering over it. In the Temple all of the letters abide, and by them it alone was created, resembling the whole world.[558](#)

“Furthermore, the Holy Land gives life and atonement to her inhabitants in that world, while this place is not so, giving life to that place in this world and not for the world that is coming. The Temple is the opposite, for Israel has a share in that world and not in this world; so the Temple exists to atone for sins and render Israel worthy of the world that is coming.[559](#)

“Come and see: ט (Tet) is radiance of life everywhere, and therefore the verse כִּי טוֹב (ki tov), *that it was good*, inaugurates it, as is written: *God saw the light, ki tov, that it was good* (Genesis 1:4). From this letter the Angel of Destruction flees—do not say ‘flees,’ but rather, that he has been given no authority there.⁵⁶⁰

“This letter is different from the letter ק (qof). The letter qof does not settle at all anywhere in the world, and your mnemonic is: *May no slanderer be established on earth* (Psalms 140:12). The letter ט (tet) settles everywhere and is prepared to settle fittingly. Therefore, wherever the letter tet appears, there is no room there for the letter qof to settle. Consequently, in this place the Other Side has no power at all, and it gives life of this world to those dwelling under this letter—but he should not go outside; and once he does go outside, the Other Side is empowered to dominate him. As this letter dominates this place, so another letter dominates the place of Hell. And who is it? The letter qof.⁵⁶¹

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava: ‘... They are two letters, ט ן (het, tet), and so they were not written on the carnelian stones or the stones for setting, and these two were withheld from the tribes of Israel so that חטא׳ה (hata’ah), sin, would not be marked in them.’⁵⁶²

“At the site of the Temple, all letters of the alphabet hang in engraved mysteries of holy names, bound and embroidered on it. The whole world of above and below is delimited and engraved by the mystery of letters, and mysteries of supernal holiness are engraved upon them.⁵⁶³

“In the Dwelling, letters were engraved and formed fittingly. Bezalel knew how to combine the letters by which heaven and earth were created, and upon this wisdom the Dwelling was built by him, and he was selected from the whole world. As he was selected above, so the blessed Holy One wanted him to be selected below. Above is written *See, I have called by name Bezalel* (Exodus 31:2); below, *See,*

YHVH has called by name Bezalel (ibid. 35:30). His name in mystery above is called so: בצלאל (*Betsal'el*)—בצל אל (*be-tsel el*), in the shadow of God. And who is that? A Righteous One, who sits *be-tsel el*, in the shadow of God—the one called עליון אל (*El Elyon*), God Most High. He dwells like that *El*: that *El* absorbs six sides, that Righteous One absorbs them. So too, that *El* illumines above, this Righteous One illumines below; that *El* is totality of all those six sides, this Righteous One is totality of all those six sides.⁵⁶⁴

“*Son of* אורי (*Uri*), *Uri* (Exodus 31:2)—son of primordial אור (*or*), light, made by the blessed Holy One in the act of Creation.⁵⁶⁵

“*Son of* חור (*Hur*), *Hur* (ibid.)—son of total חירו (*heiru*), freedom.⁵⁶⁶

“Alternatively, *Son of Hur*—son of חוור (*hivvar*), white, of all colors. And this one was designated for the tribe of Judah, all fittingly.⁵⁶⁷

“All colors bode well in a dream, as has been said, except blue, since it is a throne for rendering the judgment of souls. This rung is one, but when it engages in capital cases, it is the color blue, as [152b] we have already established.⁵⁶⁸

“When a person sees this color, he is reminded to enact the commands of his Lord—as with the serpent: when they saw it, they felt the awe of the blessed Holy One and guarded themselves, and when that awe of the blessed Holy One came upon them, they were immediately healed. Who caused this? That serpent, that lash upon which they gazed. So too, blue: *You will see it and remember all of YHVH's commandments* (Numbers 15:39)—out of awe for Him. Consequently, *blue* (Exodus 25:4).”⁵⁶⁹

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Concerning what my Master has said: ‘Blue is the throne of Judgment, and when She assumes this color, She is a throne to adjudicate capital cases’—when is She compassionate?”⁵⁷⁰

He replied, “When the cherubim turn their faces toward one another and gaze face-to-face. Once those cherubim gaze face-to-face, all colors are enhanced and the color blue turns into another color, turning white-green like the color gold. So, by the changing of colors, She changes from Judgment to Compassion and from Compassion to Judgment—all by the changing of colors. As Israel arranges herself before the blessed Holy One, so all exists and is arranged. Therefore it is written: *Israel, in whom I glory* (Isaiah 49:3)—in those colors whose whole beauty is included in one another.”⁵⁷¹

You shall make a table of pure gold... (Exodus 25:23).⁵⁷²

God (Deuteronomy 8:10).⁵⁷³ How happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One delighted in them and drew them close to Him from all other nations! For the sake of Israel, He gives sustenance and satisfaction to the whole world; were it not for Israel, the blessed Holy One would not give sustenance to the world.⁵⁷⁴

“Now that Israel are in exile, all the more so do [the nations] receive sustenance—for one, two. When Israel dwelled in the Holy Land, they gave some of the remnants to the other nations, who were nourished only by remnants. Now that Israel are in exile, the situation is reversed.”⁵⁷⁵

“This may be compared to a king who prepared a meal for his household. As long as they fulfill his will, they eat together with the king, and the dogs are given a portion of bones to scrape. When the members of his household do not fulfill the will of their lord, he throws the whole meal to the dogs and leaves *them* the bones.

“Similarly, as long as Israel fulfill the will of their Lord, they eat right at the table of the King and the entire meal is prepared for them, and out of their joy they give bones,

Rabbi Hizkiyah opened,
“When you have eaten
and are satisfied, you
shall bless YHVH your

which are the remnants, to the other nations. But whenever Israel do not fulfill the will of their Lord, the meal goes right to the dogs and remnants are left for them. *So shall the Children of Israel eat their bread impure among the nations to which I will banish them* (Ezekiel 4:13), for they eat the remnants of Gentile abhorrence. Woe to the king's son who sits and waits at the servants' table—what is left over from the table he eats![576](#)

“King David said, *You set out a table before me in the face of my foes; You moisten my head with oil, my cup overflows* (Psalms 23:5). *You set out a table before me*—the King's meal.

“*In the face of my foes*—those dogs sitting in front of the table, waiting for their portion of bones, while he sits with the King at the table, delighting in the meal.[577](#)

“*You moisten my head with oil*—the main course, for all the oil and fat and the finest dish are given first to the intimate friend of the king; what is left over afterward is given to the dogs and those table servants.

“*My cup overflows*—the cup in front of the king's friend is always full, so that he doesn't have to ask. According to this mystery were Israel in relation to the other nations.”[578](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya was going to Rabbi Shim'on in Tiberias, and with him were Rabbi Ya'akov son of Idi and Rabbi Yeisa the Younger.[579](#) While they were going, Rabbi Yeisa said to Rabbi Ḥiyya, “It is surprising what is written: *But to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite show kindness, and let them be among those who eat at your table* (1 Kings 2:7). If so, all the faithful kindness was for them to eat at his table and nothing more, from his saying here: *and let them be among those who eat at your table!* Furthermore, it does not befit the honor of the king for another person to eat [153a] at his table; the king should be alone, with all his ministers around him, below him.”[580](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “I have heard nothing about this, and I will not speak.”[581](#)

He said to Rabbi Ya’akov, “Have you heard anything about this?”[582](#)

He replied, “You who suck every day from the honey of supernal oil have not heard—how much the less have I!”[583](#)

He said to Rabbi Yeisa, “And have you heard anything about this?”

He replied, “Even though I am a boy, and have come to you only recently, and was unworthy previously—I have heard!”

He opened, saying, “*Who gives food to all flesh, for His love is forever* (Psalms 136:25). What prompted David to mark the conclusion of the Great Hallel with this verse?[584](#) Well, there are three rulers above, through whom the blessed Holy One is known, and they are His precious mystery: the brain, the heart, and the liver. They act the opposite of this world. Above, the brain receives first, and then gives to the heart; the heart receives and gives to the liver, and then the liver gives a portion to all those sources below, every single one fittingly.

“Below, the liver receives first, and then brings all near the heart, and the heart receives. Once it has received and been invigorated, from the very vigor and delight that it received, it gives to the brain, stimulating it. Then, the liver resumes distributing to all sources of the body.[585](#)

“On a human fast day, one stimulates above in that very same manner, while on a day of satiation, not so. On a fast day a person offers food and drink to the supernal liver. What does he offer? His fat, his blood, and his will. The liver receives all willingly; once all is nearby, it takes and offers all to the heart, who reigns over it. Once the heart receives and is invigorated by this desire, it offers all to the brain, supreme ruler over the whole body. Then the liver resumes distributing portions to all those sources and limbs below.[586](#)

“At another time, when the brain receives first and then gives to the heart, and the heart gives to the liver, and the liver gives to all those sources below—then when it wishes to distribute nourishment to this world, first it gives to the heart, who is the king on earth, and the king’s table is stimulated first before all other inhabitants of the world. Happy is he who is counted among those at the king’s table, for he is recognized to be favored with that bounty from above! Consequently, the faithful kindness that David showed to the sons of Barzillai, as is written: *let them be among those who eat at your table.*⁵⁸⁷

“Now, you might say, ‘Someone other than the king eats at the king’s table!’ However, the king eats first, and then all the people—and those who eat along with the king, while he is eating, are the most beloved to him of all and are designated as members of the king’s table.⁵⁸⁸

“Now, you might say, ‘But look at what is written: *At the king’s table he would always eat* (2 Samuel 9:13)!’ Because all the food came from it, no other reckoning was made but *at the king’s table*, since his food and sustenance came from there. This is: *At the king’s table he would always eat.*”⁵⁸⁹

Rabbi Ḥiyya came and kissed him on the head, and said to him, “You are a boy, yet supernal wisdom dwells in your heart!”⁵⁹⁰

Meanwhile, they saw Rabbi Ḥizkiyah coming. Rabbi Ḥiyya said to him, “Surely in this fellowship the blessed Holy One will join us, for new words of Torah will be innovated here!”⁵⁹¹

They sat down to eat, and said, “Let each of us say words of Torah during this meal.”

Rabbi Yeisa said, “This is an improvised meal, but nevertheless it is called a meal. Furthermore, this is called a meal enjoyed by the blessed Holy One, and of this is written *This is the table that is before YHVH* (Ezekiel 41:22), for words of Torah will surround this place.”⁵⁹²

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, “*When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 8:10). Now, shouldn’t a person bless the blessed Holy One even before he eats to satiation and has filled his belly? If so, [153b] how can we establish *When you have eaten and are satisfied*, and then, *you shall bless*? Well, even if a person eats only as much as an olive, and his intention is upon it and he considers that food his essential food, it is called satisfaction, as is written: *Opening Your hand and satisfying the will of every living thing* (Psalms 145:16). It is not written *and satisfying the appetite of every living thing*, but rather *the will*—the will that he focused on that eating is called satisfaction. For even if there is nothing in front of a person except a little bit the size of an olive and nothing more—he has set the will of satisfaction upon it. Therefore, *and satisfying the will of every living thing*—it is written *will* and not *appetite*. Consequently, *you shall bless*—surely! A person is obligated to bless the blessed Holy One, in order to give joy above.”[593](#)

Rabbi Ḥizkiyah opened with this verse after him, saying, “*When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless YHVH your God*—from here we learn that a drunkard is permitted to recite Grace after Meals, which is not so with prayer. With prayer this is not so, for fine prayer is without eating. Why? Because prayer ascends above, above—a place where there is neither eating nor drinking. Concerning this we have learned: ‘In the world that is coming, there is neither eating nor drinking...,’ whereas in other rungs below, there is.”[594](#)

“In Grace after Meals appears another aspect, and that blessing is fine, situated in satisfaction. For Grace after Meals is in a place of eating and drinking, from which nourishment issues below, and therefore one must display before it satisfaction and joy. In the place of prayer, not so, for it ascends further, above, above; and therefore a drunkard should not offer prayer.”[595](#)

“In Grace after Meals, a drunkard is permitted to offer blessing, as implied by the verse: *When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless YHVH your God. When you have eaten—eating. And are satisfied—drinking, for satisfaction is with wine; being intoxicated with wine is satisfaction, and this is a drunkard.*[596](#)

“And it is written: *You shall bless אה (et)—et, precisely!* This implies that Grace after Meals requires satisfaction and joy.[597](#)

“*For the good land* (Deuteronomy 8:10). What is טובה (tovah), *good?* Satisfaction, as is said: *We were sated with food and we were טובים (tovim), well* (Jeremiah 44:17). Therefore, joy and satisfaction are required.”

Rabbi Yeisa opened, “*You shall make a table of acacia wood* (Exodus 25:23). This table stands in the Dwelling. Why? Because from it issues nourishment to the whole world. This table must not be empty for even one moment, but rather have food upon it, for blessing does not appear upon an empty place. Therefore, bread must be upon it constantly, so that supernal blessing will be constantly present, and from that table issue blessings and food to all other tables of the world, which are blessed through it.[598](#)

“Every person’s table must always remain before him when he blesses the blessed Holy One, so that blessing from above will settle upon it; and it should not appear empty, for blessings from above do not settle in an empty place, as is written: *What do you have in the house?* (2 Kings 4:2), as the Companions have established.[599](#)

“Of a table at which words of Torah have not been spoken, it is written: *Surely all tables are full of filthy vomit, without a space* (Isaiah 28:8), and it is forbidden to bless at such a table. Why? Because there is a table, and then there is a table! There is a table set before the blessed Holy One above, standing ready constantly to be arranged with words of Torah and absorb the letters of words of Torah; it gathers them in, embracing all of them within, and

by them it is perfected and delighted. Of this table is written *This is the table that is before YHVH* (Ezekiel 41:22) —*before YHVH, not from before YHVH.*[600](#)

“There is another table, which has no share in Torah and has no share in the holiness of Torah, and that table is called *filthy vomit*, and this is *without* [154a] מקום (*maqom*), *the Omnipresent*, for it has no share in the side of holiness at all. Therefore, a table at which words of Torah have not been spoken is a table of *filthy vomit*, a table of a false god. That table has no share in the mystery of the supernal God.[601](#)

“A table at which words of Torah have been spoken is taken by the blessed Holy One and made into His share. Furthermore, Surya, the appointed prince, takes all those words and places an image of that table before the blessed Holy One, and all those words of Torah spoken at it ascend upon that table and it is arranged before the Holy King, as implied by what is written: *This is the table that is before YHVH* (Ezekiel 41:22), arranged before the blessed Holy One.[602](#)

“A person’s table is capable of purifying him of all his sins. Happy is he who has these two things present on his table: words of Torah and a portion for the poor from that table! When the table is removed from before him, two supernal angels appear there, one on the right and one on the left. One says, ‘This is the table of the Holy King, which so-and-so has set before Him. Now his table will be set constantly with supernal blessings, and supernal anointing oil will settle upon it!’[603](#)

“And the other says, ‘This is the table of the Holy King, which so-and-so has set before Him. This is the table that will be blessed by those above and those below. This table will be set before the Ancient of Days in this world and in the world that is coming!’[604](#)

“Father, as the table was being removed from before him, used to cover it, and say, ‘Remove this table modestly,

so that it will not be embarrassed before the King's messengers.'[605](#)

"A person's table entitles him to the world that is coming, entitles him to nourishment of this world, entitles him to be regarded favorably before the Ancient of Days, entitles him to add power and greatness where it is needed. Happy is the share of that person in this world and in the world that is coming!"[606](#)

Rabbi Ya'akov said, "*So, whoever knew him from times gone by... [said,] 'Is Saul too among the prophets?'* (1 Samuel 10:11). Now, Saul was already the chosen of YHVH, as is written: *Have you seen whom YHVH has chosen?* (ibid., 24)—it is not written *whom YHVH chooses*, but rather *whom YHVH has chosen*, previously. So when he came and entered among the prophets and went into ecstasy among them, why were they surprised?[607](#)

"Well, when the blessed Holy One chose him, He selected him only for kingship and not for prophecy. For these two were never transmitted as one anywhere in the world except to Moses, supernal faithful one, who attained prophecy and kingship as one, and to no other person were both of these given as one.[608](#)

"Now, you might say, 'What about Samuel, who attained both of them: prophecy and kingship?' Well, prophecy he attained, as is written: *All Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was trustworthy as a prophet* (1 Samuel 3:20)—*as a prophet*, and not *as a king*. He was a prophet and a judge; for had he been a king, Israel would not have asked for a king. Rather, he was solely a faithful prophet, and he adjudicated for Israel, as is written: *and he judged Israel* (ibid. 7:16). So, when [Saul] was in prophetic ecstasy, they were astonished.[609](#)

"Now, you might say, 'Why did prophecy settle upon him, since he attained kingship?' Well, he did not attain both of them as one—and because the blessed Holy One gave him kingship and confirmed this for him before he

became king, and in order for kingship to settle upon a spirit of holy arousal, he was in prophetic arousal previously. But when he ascended to kingship, he had no prophecy—an arousal of discernment to judge truly came upon him, as is fitting for a king. As long as he was among those prophets, prophecy settled upon him; after separating from them, he had no prophecy.⁶¹⁰

“As for me, would that I were given arousal of holy spirit to be among faithful prophets, the disciples of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, before whom above and below tremble—all the more so, I, being among you!”⁶¹¹

He opened, saying, “*You shall make a table* (Exodus 25:23)—this is a table below so that the Bread of the Presence may be placed upon it. Which is superior to the other—the bread or the table? If you say that all [154b] is one, well, look, the table is set for that bread; the table is below and the bread is on it! However, the table is essential in its arrangement, to receive blessings from above and nourishment for the world. From the mystery of this table issues food to the world, as conveyed to it from above. And the bread is the fruit and food issuing from that table, demonstrating that from the table fruit, vegetation, and food emerge for the world.⁶¹²

“If the vineyard did not exist, grapes, which are the fruit, would not exist. If there were no tree, fruit would not exist in the world. Therefore, the table is the essence; the food issuing from it is that bread.

“The priests would gather the fruit of the table every Sabbath eve, to demonstrate that supernal nourishment issues from the table. Because of the nourishing bread that the priests would gather, every item of food that they ate and drank was blessed, so that the evil impulse could not attack them; for the evil impulse appears only because of food and drink, as is written: *Lest I eat and be satiated... and forget the name of my God*, for through food and drink the evil impulse grows in a person’s intestines.⁶¹³

“This bread, the food issuing from the table, blesses the food of the priests, so that the Accuser will not appear, preventing them from serving the blessed Holy One with a whole heart. The priests need this more than all of the people. Thus, the table is the essence; the fruit and food issuing from it is the bread.[614](#)

“This table must be arranged on the north side, as is written: *The table you shall place on the north side* (Exodus 26:35). Why? Because from there begins joy. The left always receives first from the right and then arouses toward the Female; afterward the right draws Her near and She cleaves to Him.[615](#)

“Water is from the right and it is joy. It immediately gives to the left, where that water cleaves, bringing joy. Then it is included in the right and arouses the Female with that joy. Your sign is: one who takes water in a vessel with his right hand; the first to pour water is the left—and not from left to right, since water is received from the right by the left. Therefore, water is found only on the left. Once it takes in water, there is arousal toward the Female by that water. Consequently, we have learned: ‘the power of rain,’ and therefore, *the table you shall place on the north side*, because from that side fruit appears more abundantly than from the other side, through arousal in its joy at first, as is said: *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me* (Song of Songs 2:6).[616](#)

“A person’s table should be in a state of bodily cleanliness, for he should approach to eat his food only in cleanliness. Therefore one should relieve himself first, before eating food of a pure table—of the food prepared for him there by the blessed Holy One—so that no *filthy vomit* will be offered on that table, deriving from the mystery of the Other Side, and the Other Side will receive no food at all from that table.[617](#)

“After a person has eaten and enjoyed himself, he should give part of the remnants to that side. What is that?

Fingerbowl water—that filth of the hands—for one must give that side the portion that he needs. Therefore, it is surely חובה (*hovah*), obligation—it is *hovah*, sin, and dwells in a place of *hovah*, and one is obligated to give him this portion. Consequently, one should not bless at all, for there is no blessing on that side.[618](#)

“Therefore, a person must not give the food on his table to that *filthy vomit*, especially in his intestines—and very especially because it is good for a person, for his bodily health and well-being. So, a table is to be eaten upon in purity, as has been said.[619](#)

“This table that stands in the Temple—so that on it food will appear and from it food will be brought forth. Therefore, for even [155a] one moment it must not stand empty. The other table is a table of emptiness, and it should not be given a place in the holy site. So, [the table of the Temple] should not remain for even a moment without food, and there must not be a deficient place, for blessing from above does not appear in a deficient place. This is the table before the blessed Holy One. A person’s table should not be empty, for there is no blessing in an empty place.[620](#)

“Loaves on the table of the blessed Holy One number twelve. We have already established the mystery of loaves, which is the mystery of faces, and therefore it is called הפנים לחם (*lehem ha-panim*), Bread of the Faces, for the food and sustenance of the world comes from those upper faces. Consequently, this bread is the innermost of all, in supernal mystery fittingly.[621](#)

“Bread of the Faces—food of those faces. Food and sustenance issuing to the world comes from them, and settles on that table, for this table receives food and sustenance from those faces above, and generates food and sustenance from those inner ones. And the food that She generates is that bread, as we have said. Hot it was offered, and hot it was removed from there, as has been established, for it is written: [*hot bread*] *on the day it is*

taken away (1 Samuel 21:7). Because of this table, a person should maintain the mysteries of his table in all the aspects that we have mentioned.”[622](#)

Rabbi El’azar opened, “*Always let your garments be white, and oil on your head not be lacking* (Ecclesiastes 9:8). This verse has been established and discussed, but come and see: The blessed Holy One created the human being in the mystery of wisdom, and fashioned him with great artistry, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life—to know and contemplate mysteries of wisdom, to know the glory of his Lord, as is said: *Everyone who is called by My name, whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made* (Isaiah 43:7)—*whom I created for My glory*, precisely![623](#)

“We have learned this mystery of *whom I created for My glory*, for this *glory* below, mystery of the holy Throne, is restored above only by the restoration of the inhabitants of the world, when they are virtuous and devout, knowing how to effect restoration, as is written: *whom I created for My glory*—for the sake of *My glory*, to restore it with powerful pillars, to decorate it with ornaments and adornments from below, so that *My glory* may be exalted by the glory of the righteous on earth. Therefore, *whom I created*, corresponding to the upper glory, which includes the following enhancements.[624](#)

“Creation is on the left. Consequently, since the human is on earth and has to restore *My glory*, I have fashioned in him the enhancements of the upper glory, for he also contains creation, and so, *whom I created*.

“In that upper glory there is formation, and so, *whom I formed*. This refinement I have placed in the human so that he will correspond on earth to that upper glory. In that upper glory there is making, and so of the human is written *and made*—so that he may resemble that upper glory, restoring and blessing the lower glory.[625](#)

“How do we know that the upper glory contains these three? As is written: *Forming light and creating darkness, making peace* (Isaiah 45:7). *Forming light*—formation. *And creating darkness*—creation. *Making peace*—making. This is upper glory, which restores and blesses lower glory, supplying all its needs.⁶²⁶

“Similarly, the human on earth corresponds to that upper glory, so as to restore this glory, completed on all sides. Upper glory, containing these three; the human below, containing these three—for that glory to be completed from above and from below, to be perfect on all sides.⁶²⁷

“Happy is the person who succeeds through his deeds to be like this! Of this is written *Always let your garments be white, and oil on your head not be lacking* (Ecclesiastes 9:8). Just as that holy anointing oil is not withheld from upper glory, from the mystery of the World that is Coming, so too, with the person whose deeds are constantly whitening: that [155b] holy anointing oil will never be withheld from him.⁶²⁸

“How does a person become worthy of delighting in that supernal bliss? By his table—as when he delights, at his table, the souls of the poor, as is written: *If you satisfy the afflicted soul* (Isaiah 58:10). What is written? *Then you will delight* [from] *above YHVH...* (ibid., 14)—for so too, the blessed Holy One saturates him with all those delights of supernal holy anointing oil, flowing continuously to the upper glory.”⁶²⁹

Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Ḥiyya were traveling on the road and a certain donkey-driver was goading behind them.⁶³⁰ Rabbi Yose said to Rabbi Ḥiyya, “We should engage and endeavor in words of Torah, for the blessed Holy One goes before us, so it is time for us to adorn Him on this way.”⁶³¹

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, “*It is time to act for YHVH—they have violated Your Torah* (Psalms 119:126). This verse

has been discussed and established by the Companions, but *It is time to act for YHVH*—whenever Torah is fulfilled in the world and people engage in it, the blessed Holy One, as it were, rejoices in His handiwork and in all worlds, and heaven and earth endure vitally. Furthermore, the blessed Holy One gathers His whole celestial family and says to them, ‘See the Holy People that I have on earth, through whom My Torah is crowned! See the work of My hands, of whom you said, *What is a human that You are mindful of him...?* (ibid. 8:5).’ When they see the joy of their Lord in His people, they open in song: *Who is like Your people Israel, a nation unique on earth?* (2 Samuel 7:23).⁶³²

“However, when Israel neglects Torah, power is weakened, as it were; and then, *It is time to act for YHVH*—those inhabitants of the world, the righteous who remain, must gird their loins and perform worthy deeds for the blessed Holy One, so that He may be strengthened by the righteous among His forces, camps, and legions. Why? Because *they have violated Your Torah*, and inhabitants of the world do not engage in it fittingly.”⁶³³

That driver who was goading the donkeys behind said to them, “Please, to one question I need to know the answer!”

Rabbi Yose said, “Surely, the way is paved before us! Ask your question.”

He said, “This verse—if it were written *One should act* or *Let us act*, then I would say likewise. But why *It is time*? Further, *to act for YHVH*—it should read *before YHVH*. Why *for YHVH?*”

Rabbi Yose said, “In many ways the path is paved before us! One, we were two; and look, we are three, and *Shekhinah* is included with us! Another, I thought that you were only a withered tree, but you are verdant like an olive tree. Another, you have asked well; and since you have begun speaking, continue!”⁶³⁴

He opened, saying, “*It is time to act for YHVH—they have violated Your Torah.* עַתָּה (Et), *It is time, to act for YHVH—there is a time, and then there is a time! A time to love, and a time to hate* (Ecclesiastes 3:8). There is a *time* above, for that *time* is mystery of faith, and this is called a *time of favor*. This is the one whom a person must love constantly, as is said: *You shall love* תֵּאָדָר (et) YHVH (Deuteronomy 6:5). So, a *time to love*—this is the one whom a person must love.

“There is another *time*, who is mystery of *other gods*, whom a person must hate and after whom his heart should not be drawn. So, a *time to hate*. Therefore, regarding Aaron it is written: *Speak to Aaron your brother, that he not come at just any time into the holy place* (Leviticus 16:2).[635](#)

“Here, when Israel engages in Torah, that *time* of faith is arrayed in Her adornments and bedecked to perfection. But when Israel neglects Torah, that *time*, as it were, is unadorned, imperfect, and unilluminated—as is written: *It is time to act for YHVH.* What is לַעֲשׂוֹת (la’asot), *to act*? As is said: *that God had created la’asot, to make* (Genesis 2:3). What is *la’asot, to make*? That the bodies of demons remained, for the day had been sanctified and they had not been made and they remained *la’asot, to be made*—spirits with no body. Here, too, *It is a time la’asot, to actualize*—She is left unadorned and incomplete. Why? Because *they have violated Your Torah*—because Israel below has neglected words of Torah; for thus that *time* exists, either ascending or descending on account of Israel.”[636](#)

Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Ḥiyya came [156a] and kissed him on the head. Rabbi Yose said, “Surely, it is beneath you to be driving the donkeys behind us! Happy is this way on which we were privileged to hear this! Happy is the generation in which Rabbi Shim’on dwells, for even in the mountains wisdom may be found!”[637](#)

Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Ḥiyya dismounted, and the three of them walked on the way.[638](#)

That donkey-driver opened, saying, “*As for me, may my prayer to You, O YHVH, come at a time of favor...*” (Psalms 69:14). We have learned: ‘When is a *time of favor*? When the congregation prays.’ This is fine and certainly so, for then the congregation prepares and arranges the enhancement of this *time*, and then is a *time of favor* and one must make a request, as is written: *God, in Your abundant love, answer me with Your true deliverance* (ibid.)—for then one must make a request.⁶³⁹

“*As for me, may my prayer to You*—here is mystery of single unification. וָאֲנִי (*Va-ani*), *As for me*—King David, a place called Redemption. *My prayer*—Prayer, and here it is joined to Redemption, for it is one. When one joins Redemption to Prayer, then is a *time of favor*. So too, a *time of favor* is a totality as one: a *time*, one; *favor*, one—combined with each other and becoming one. King David sought to unify in this verse a single unification.⁶⁴⁰

“Now, you might say, ‘Why was this verse designated for *minḥah* of Sabbath?’ Well, it appears appropriately on Sabbath in that *minḥah* prayer, and not in the weekday prayer; for surely *minḥah* of Sabbath is unlike that of the weekdays, since during the week at the time of *minḥah*, Judgment looms over the world and it is not a *time of favor*, but on Sabbath—when all anger is eliminated and all merges as one—even though Judgment arouses, there is sweetness. So there should be a verse of unification, to unify all rungs; for when there is unification, Judgment joins and blends with Compassion and all is sweetened, and then is written a *time of favor*. A *time of favor*—all merging as one; Judgment is sweetened at that time, and there is total joy.⁶⁴¹

“Moses departed from the world at the time of *minḥah* on Sabbath, at a *time of favor*. At that moment, there was favor above and sorrow below. Therefore, gates are locked on Sabbath from the time of *minḥah* onward. Which gates are locked? Gates of the houses of study—to recall Moses,

Faithful Servant, on account of whom Torah ceased at that time. Moses' house of study ceased to function at that time; all the more so, others. Who would imagine that the gates of his house of study were locked, while all others would not be locked? The Torah of Moses mourned for him at that time; who would not mourn? Therefore, gates of houses of study are locked, and everyone should justify the blessed Holy One by way of praise, namely *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains* (Psalms 36:7).[642](#)

“There are three who departed the world at this time, all of whom are included in Moses. One is Moses, supernal faithful one; another, Joseph the Righteous; another, King David. Consequently, three justifications of judgment here. One is for Joseph the Righteous, first of all of these: *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains*—Joseph, who alone *is like the mighty mountains*, like all those towering mountains. One is Moses, Faithful Prophet, corresponding to what is written: *Your righteousness, O God, reaches the heights, as You have done great things* (Psalms 71:19), for he grasps all sides, right and left. One is King David, corresponding to what is written: *Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your Torah is truth* (ibid. 119:142)—King David.[643](#)

“Thus all was withdrawn at this time, Written Torah and Oral Torah; and so at this time, gates of Torah were locked, and gates of all the world are locked at this time. At the moment when Joseph the Pious died, sources and springs dried up, and all the tribes fell into exile. Those above opened, chanting, *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains...* At the moment when Moses died, the sun darkened at noon and Written Torah was locked up—that light of the resplendent speculum. At the moment when King David died, the moon withdrew her light [156b] and Oral Torah withdrew her light.[644](#)

“Ever since that time, dissension over the Mishnah has increased, the sages are in dispute, and all the mighty of

heart are in confusion. Therefore, the joy of Torah is absent at that time throughout all generations of the world. Now, if there was a need for restrictive fasts decreed by the rabbis—when so-and-so died, they decreed a fast; when such-and-such happened, they similarly decreed—then when the joy of Written Torah and Oral Torah was withdrawn so extremely at that time, it is all the more necessary to lock the gates of Torah at that time. Therefore, justifications of judgment, as has been said.”[645](#)

Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Ḥiyya rejoiced, and kissed him on the head as before. They said, “Happy is our share on this way!”

He opened again, saying, “*Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten rulers who are in the city* (Ecclesiastes 7:19). *Wisdom strengthens the wise man*—Moses. When he ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, all the heavens trembled, and all the supernal camps said before Him, ‘Master of the Universe! Is not all our goodness and joy contained in the Torah, and You wish to bring it down to earth?’ They gathered against Moses to set him on fire. Moses steeled himself..., as the Companions have established, that the blessed Holy One said to Moses...[646](#)

“However, *Wisdom strengthens the wise*—anyone who engages in Torah devotedly is strengthened by her in time of need, being provided with power and potency, being protected whenever necessary. That potency and power—from where does it surge? The verse resumes, saying, *מעשרה* (*me-asarah*), *from ten, rulers*—ten utterances written in the Torah, who are ten supernal rulers by whom a person is strengthened in this world and in the world that is coming. All mysteries of the world, all commandments, all wisdom above and below are all included in Torah. Happy is the share of one who engages in Torah, so as to be empowered potently in the world that is coming![647](#)

“*Ten rulers*: ten types of wisdom are included in Torah, in ten engraved names, interwoven in one name of twenty-

two engraved letters, mysteries of the world that is coming, in those radiancies that no eye is empowered to see—or even by contemplation to know or perceive that yearned delight that the blessed Holy One bestows upon the righteous in the world that is coming, as is said: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You will do for one who awaits You* (Isaiah 64:3).[648](#)

“A person’s table entitles him to eat at another table, delighting in that world, as is said: *for at the king’s table he would always eat* (2 Samuel 9:13). And King David used to say, *You will set out a table before me in the face of my foes* (Psalms 23:5)—arrangement of the table is in that world, for then comes the yearned delight enjoyed by the soul in the world that is coming.[649](#)

“Now, do souls have a table in that world? Yes, for they eat food and sustenance of delight in that world, just as supernal angels eat. And do holy angels eat? Yes; like them, Israel ate in the desert. That food is mystery of dew, flowing and drawn from mystery of the World that is Coming—food of radiance, holy anointing oil—and souls of the righteous are nourished from this in the Garden of Eden, enjoying themselves there. For souls of the righteous are clothed there in the lower Garden of Eden as in this world.[650](#)

“On Sabbaths and festivals they strip themselves and ascend to gaze upon the glory of their Lord and to revel in supernal delight fittingly, as is written: *From new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to bow down before Me* (Isaiah 66:23). Now, will *all flesh* come? It should not have been written so, but rather, *all spirits* or *all souls*. Why *all flesh*? However, the blessed Holy One formed the human being in this world on the pattern of supernal Glory above. That supernal Glory is spirit of spirit and soul of soul, [157a] until reaching a certain place below called Body; and into this enters one spirit of the source of life, called *all*, containing all goodness, all food and sustenance of that body. This is the

mystery of *The abundance of earth is in all* (Ecclesiastes 5:8). This *all* is everything, spirit for that body.

“Similarly, the human being in this world is a body, and the spirit ruling him resembles that spirit ruling the Body, called *all*, and this is called *all flesh*, and so it is written: *All flesh shall come to bow down before Me*. Of that delight is written *No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You]*.”⁶⁵¹

The Companions rejoiced on the way. When they reached a certain mountain, Rabbi Ḥiyya said to that donkey-driver, “What is your name?”

He replied, “Ḥanin.”

He said to him, “May the blessed Holy One יְהוָה (*yohnekha*), be gracious to you, and hear your voice when you need Him.”⁶⁵²

Rabbi Yose said, “Surely the sun is inclining, and here behind this mountain lies a village named after you, called Kefar Ḥanin. Let us spend the night there in honor of your name.”⁶⁵³

Arriving there, they entered their inn, and a table was prepared for them with many kinds of food. Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Surely this table resembles the world that is coming, and we should elevate this table and adorn it with words of Torah!”

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless YHVH your God for the good land that He has given you* (Deuteronomy 8:10). If so, how do we know that this applies outside the Land, since in that case it seems unnecessary? Well, when the blessed Holy One created the world, He divided the earth: habitation is on one side and desolation on the other. He divided habitation and centered the whole world around a single point. What is that? The Holy Land. The center of the Land and of the whole world is Jerusalem, and the center of Jerusalem is the Holy of Holies, where all goodness and nourishment for all habitation descend from above, and

there is not a single place in all of habitation that is not nourished from there.[654](#)

“He divided desolation, and there is no harsher desolation in the world than that desert whose fierce power was broken by Israel over forty years, as is said: *who leads you through the great and terrible desert—fiery serpents and scorpions, and thirst, where there is no water* (Deuteronomy 8:15). Over that desert rules the Other Side, and against his will, Israel traversed it and broke his power over forty years. If Israel had been found worthy during those forty years, that Other Side would have been eliminated from the world; but since they angered the blessed Holy One all those times, the Other Side was strengthened and they all fell there under his power.[655](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘What about Moses, who surpassed all inhabitants of the world—how did he fall there?’ Not so! For Moses the Faithful was not in his power—but rather, Mount Abarim. What is העברים (*ha-avarim*), Abarim? Dissension, for supernal rulers above disputed over it, and it was not handed over to any official or to the Other Side; and so it remained until Moses, Faithful Servant, came and controlled it. There he was buried, and none but the blessed Holy One attended to him, as is written: *He buried him in the valley* (Deuteronomy 34:6). *He buried him*—who? The one who is noted anonymously: *To Moses He said* (Exodus 24:1), and it is not written who it was; *He called to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1), and it is not written who it was. Here too: *He buried him*, and it is not written who it was. But surely this place is known to the Companions. Therefore, that mountain was ruled by no one but Moses; he is there. And in order that all other generations of the world may know that those who died in the desert will rise, He planted their shepherd among them, so that all of them will be aroused in revival in the world that is coming.[656](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘If that desert is the potency of the Other Side, how could the blessed Holy One command that the goat should be sent to another mountain? [157b] They should have sent it to that mountain in the desert where Israel journeyed.’ However, since Israel had journeyed there for forty years, his power was broken, whereas his power was strengthened in a place where no man had ever passed. That mountain [in the desert] was the dwelling place of Israel for forty years; but the destination of that goat is a towering mighty rock, and below the depth of that rock, where no human has entered, he rules utterly, eating his prey—so that he will be removed from Israel and no accuser will loom over their habitation.[657](#)

“The dominion of mystery of faith is in the central point of the whole world, in the Holy of Holies, and even though now it no longer exists, for its sake the whole world is nourished—food and sustenance to all, in every place of habitation. Thus, although Israel lives outside the Holy Land, due to the power and merit of the Land food and sustenance become available for the whole world. Therefore it is written: *You shall bless YHVH your God for the good land that He has given you—for the good land*, precisely, since for its sake there is food and sustenance in the world.[658](#)

“One who delights at his table and enjoys that food, should be mindful and concerned about the holiness of the Holy Land and the Temple of the King that has been destroyed. Because of the sadness he feels at his table, in the midst of that joy and feasting there, the blessed Holy One considers him to have rebuilt His house and to have rebuilt those ruins of the Temple. Happy is his share![659](#)

“The cup of blessing pertains only with three, because from the mystery of three patriarchs it is blessed, so a cup is required only with three. The cup of blessing should be given with the right and left hands, and received between

both of them, so that it will be placed between right and left. Afterward, it should be left in the right, since from there it is blessed.⁶⁶⁰

“Ten things have been said concerning the cup of blessing, and all are fitting, because perfection of the cup of blessing consists of ten, as the Companions have established. One must gaze upon the cup of blessing, since it is written: *The eyes of YHVH your God are perpetually upon her* (Deuteronomy 11:12), and it should not be forgotten by the eye, but rather gazed upon.⁶⁶¹

“The cup of blessing is blessed by the blessing that one offers over it to the blessed Holy One. Therefore it is a mystery of faith, and must be guarded with utmost care—like that which is vital to the king—since for its sake one’s table will be blessed.⁶⁶²

“While a person recites Grace after Meals, the table must not be empty, since no blessing appears upon an empty table, as has been established, for it is written: *Tell me, what do you have in the house?...* (2 Kings 4:2). Therefore, the table should not appear empty, for supernal blessings settle only upon a place that is complete. This is the mystery of *In the heart of all who are wise-hearted I have set wisdom* (Exodus 31:6), and similarly, *He gives wisdom to the wise* (Daniel 2:21). Upon this mystery is based the table of the Bread of the Presence, as is written: *You shall set on the table the Bread of the Presence, before Me continuously* (Exodus 25:30).⁶⁶³

[160b]⁶⁶⁴ *The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains...* (Exodus 26:1).⁶⁶⁵

times of delight and speak words of Torah!⁶⁶⁶

Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yose were traveling on the road. As they were going, Rabbi Yose said, “Let us commence

Rabbi Yose opened with words of the recitation of *Shema*, saying, “It is written: שְׁמַע (Shema), *Hear, O Israel! YHVH*

our God, YHVH is one (Deuteronomy 6:4). And it is written: *Hear, O Israel! This day you have become a people [to YHVH your God]* (ibid. 27:9). And it is written: *Hear, O Israel! You are today crossing the Jordan* (ibid. 9:1). Why all these *Hears* that Moses said? For *Hear, O Israel* of unification is fitting, and comes in order to be expounded; but these others, why?[667](#)

“Well, they come to be expounded. *Hear, O Israel* of unification—this surely comes to be expounded; here the unity of supernal Wisdom is intimated and seen. שמע (*Shema*), *Hear*—א (ayin) is one of the large letters. Why? Because it alludes to a single totality, including above and below as one, in single unification: אַ שֵׁמ (shem, ayin), name, seventy. Here this name is included with those seventy supernal names, from which this name is blessed and with which it is combined. They must be combined as one in single unification, focusing intention upon them; for surely, seventy names are mystery of the supernal chariot, and from this supernal chariot this name is blessed, enveloped by them.[668](#)

“Afterward, *Israel*, included in the whole. But we have learned: This is Israel the Elder, so that Israel may share in one totality—the place where all conjoins. So, שמע ישראל (*Shema Yisra'el*), *Hear, O Israel*—now the Wife cleaves to Her Husband and all becomes one totality; this is *Hear, O Israel* of unification. *Israel* unites three aspects: יהוה אלהינו יהוה (*YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*), *YHVH our God, YHVH*, so that all becomes one.[669](#)

“*Hear, O Israel* in all other verses is not of this kind, yet all of them come to be expounded and all cling to another place, to a lower rung. *Hear, O Israel! This day you have become a people* (Deuteronomy 27:9). *Hear, O Israel—fine.* But why *This day* נהיית (nihyeita), *you have become, a people?* The verse should read היית (hayita), *you became; why nihyeita, you have become?* Well, *people* always implies that their hearts have been broken to serve, as is said: נהייתי (Nihyeiti), *I grew faint, and languished [many days. Then I arose and attended to the king’s business]* (Daniel 8:27). And this is what is written: *Hear me, my brethren and my people!* (1 Chronicles 28:2). If *my brethren*, why *my people?* And if *my people*, why *my brethren?* Well, David said, ‘If [you serve] willingly, you are *my brethren*; and if not, you are *my people*—to break your hearts in order to serve me.’ Thus, *This day you have become a people*—you have broken your heart to serve the blessed Holy One.⁶⁷⁰

“*Hear, O Israel! You are today crossing [the Jordan]* (Deuteronomy 9:1)—all on the lower rung. What is the difference between them? Well, *Hear, O Israel* of unification—none of them resembles this one, for this is mystery of above and below, fittingly, always mystery of accepting upon themselves the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. For at that moment a person must be prepared to unify the name of the blessed Holy One and to accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. When he comes to accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, *Shekhinah* appears and settles upon his head, standing over him like a witness, testifying before the blessed Holy One that this one is unifying His name, and His name is unified above and below fittingly. Therefore, א (ayin) is one of the large letters, ד (dalet) is one of the large letters, to be עד (ed), a witness, before the Holy King, as has been established.⁶⁷¹

“יהוה אלהינו יהוה (YHVH Eloheinu YHVH), *YHVH our God, YHVH*—mystery of unification in three aspects, as the Holy Lamp

has established, arousing its meaning in many places, and we are not permitted to arouse it further.⁶⁷²

“*Shekhinah* comes and settles upon the head of a person who unifies the name [161a] of the blessed Holy One above and below fittingly, and She blesses him with seven blessings, proclaiming for him: *He said to me, ‘You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory’* (Isaiah 49:3).”⁶⁷³

Rabbi Hiyya opened after him, saying, “*You yourself were shown to know that YHVH is God in the heavens above and on the earth below, there is none else* (Deuteronomy 4:35). This verse should be contemplated. *You yourself were shown*—what does this mean: *You were shown*? Well, when Israel came out of Egypt, they knew nothing of the mystery of faith of the blessed Holy One, because they had all been worshiping idols in an alien land in exile and had forgotten the whole essence of faith that they originally possessed, which all those twelve tribes had inherited from their father Jacob.

“When Moses came, he taught them that there is a supreme God in the world, as has been established. Afterward, they saw all those miracles and mighty deeds by the sea, and all those miracles and mighty deeds that He performed for them in Egypt. Then they saw many mighty deeds with the manna and the water, and learned the way of the blessed Holy One, until they came to this moment.

“Moses said to them, ‘Until now, you had to be taught as one teaches a child. From now on—*You yourself were shown*, and you have learned by now—*to know*: to know, contemplate, and enter the mystery of faith. What is that? *That YHVH is Elohim.*”⁶⁷⁴

“Now, if you say, ‘This is a small matter to know,’ look at what is written: *Know today and take to your heart that YHVH is Elohim* (Deuteronomy 4:39)! And if you say, ‘This is a small matter,’ look at what is written: *in the heavens above and on the earth below, there is none else* (ibid.)! Upon this depends the whole mystery of faith—to know mystery of all

mysteries from this, to know secret mystery of all secrecies. יהוה אלהים (YHVH Elohim), complete Name, and all is one.⁶⁷⁵

*“You yourself were shown to know—here is mystery of mysteries for those fathomers of qualities.”*⁶⁷⁶

“Happy are those, all those who engage in Torah! For when the blessed Holy One created the world, He gazed into Torah and created the world; by Torah the world was created, as they have established, for it is written: *I was beside Him as אָמוֹן (amon), a nursling* (Proverbs 8:30). Do not read אָמוֹן (amon), *nursling*, but rather אֹמָן (umman), *artisan*.

“Now, was Torah an artisan? Yes. This may be compared to a king who wishes to build palaces. If he does not appoint an artisan, he cannot build the palaces. Once the palaces are built, the king’s name alone is esteemed: ‘These are palaces built by the king! The king conceived those palaces!’

“Similarly, the blessed Holy One wished to create the world, and He gazed upon the artisan. Although the artisan built the palaces, the King’s name alone is esteemed. Surely the King built the palaces! Torah exclaims, ‘*I was beside Him as an artisan!* By me, the blessed Holy One created the world!’⁶⁷⁷

“Now, did the blessed Holy One create the world by her? Well, before the world was created, Torah preceded the world by two thousand years. And when the blessed Holy One wished to create the world, He gazed upon Torah, upon every single word, and formed correspondingly the artistry of the world; for all things and actions of all worlds are in Torah. Therefore, the blessed Holy One gazed upon her and created the world. Not that Torah created the world, but rather the blessed Holy One, by gazing into Torah, created the world. So we find that the blessed Holy One is an artisan, and Torah, corresponding to Him and beside Him, is an artisan. It is not written *I was an artisan*,

but rather *beside Him*—since the blessed Holy One gazed upon Her, she was *beside Him* as an artisan.^{[678](#)}

“Now, you might say, ‘Who can be an artisan beside Him?’ Well, the gaze of the blessed Holy One was in this manner. In Torah is written: *In the beginning God created heaven and earth* (Genesis 1:1)—He gazed at this and created *heaven*. In her is written: *God said, ‘Let there be light!’* (ibid., 3)—He gazed at this statement and created *light*. And so with every single word written in Torah: the blessed Holy One gazed and formed that thing. Therefore it is written: *beside Him*. In this manner was the whole world created.

“Once the world was created, not a single thing was firmly established until an impulse arose in the Will to create the human being, who would engage in Torah and for whose sake the world would endure. Now, [161b] whoever gazes upon Torah and engages in her, as it were, sustains the world. The blessed Holy One gazed into Torah and created the world; a human gazes into Torah and sustains the world. Thus, the making and sustenance of the whole world is Torah. Therefore, happy is the person who engages in Torah, for he sustains the world!^{[679](#)}

“When an impulse arose in the Will of the blessed Holy One to create a human being, his image and existence stood before Him as he would be in this world. And even today, all inhabitants of the world, before they come to this world, all stand in their images as they exist in this world, in a single treasure-house, where all souls of the world are clothed in their images.^{[680](#)}

“As they are about to descend to this world, the blessed Holy One calls upon one official whom He has appointed over all souls destined to descend to this world, and says to him, ‘Go, bring Me the spirit of so-and-so.’ At that moment the soul comes, clothed in the image of this world, and the official presents her before the Holy King.

“The blessed Holy One speaks to her and adjures her that when she descends to this world she will engage in Torah in order to know Him and to know the mystery of faith. For whoever exists in this world and does not strive to know the blessed Holy One—better for him if he had never been created. Therefore, she is presented before the Holy King, so that she will attain knowledge in this world and devote herself to the blessed Holy One in the mystery of faith. As is written: *You yourself were shown to know* (Deuteronomy 4:35)—you were shown by that official to the blessed Holy One; *to know*: to know and contemplate in this world the mystery of faith, for that is why the blessed Holy One brought the human being into this world.⁶⁸¹

“What is to be known? *That YHVH is Elohim* (ibid.). This is totality of the whole mystery of faith, totality of above and below, totality of the whole Torah. In this mystery lies totality of the whole mystery of faith, certainly so! Totality of the whole Torah—mystery of Written Torah and mystery of Oral Torah, and all is one. Totality of mystery of faith, for it is the complete Name; this is the mystery of faith. And who is it? *YHVH is one and His name one* (Zechariah 14:9). *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—one unification. ‘Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!’—another unification, so that His name may be one. This is mystery of *YHVH is Elohim*, when they are in one unity.⁶⁸²

“Now, you might say, ‘If so—that this corresponds to what is written: *YHVH is one and His name one*—that is not the same as *YHVH הוּא (hu), He is, Elohim*. For if it were written: *YHVH and His name are one*, I would say so; but rather it is written: *YHVH is one and His name one*, and so it should say similarly: *YHVH הוּא (hu), He is, Elohim hu, He is*, and then it would resemble *YHVH is one and His name one*.’⁶⁸³

“However, all is one; for when these two names unite, they become one, intermingling, all becoming a complete Name in single unity. Then, *YHVH is Elohim*, for then all

merges with one another, becoming one. Until each one unites on its own, they are not included in one another, becoming all one.[684](#)

“Totality of the whole Torah, certainly so! For Torah is Written Torah and Oral Torah—Written Torah corresponding to *YHVH*, Oral Torah to *Elohim*. Because Torah is mystery of the Holy Name, it is called so: Written Torah and Oral Torah, one general and one particular. The general requires the particular, and the particular requires the general; uniting with each other, all is one.[685](#)

“Thus, totality of Torah is totality of above and below, for this name is above and that name is below, one being mystery of the upper world, the other mystery of the lower world. Therefore it is written: *You yourself were shown to know that YHVH is [162a] Elohim*—this is totality of all, and this a person must know in this world.[686](#)

“Now, you might ask, ‘Where are the commandments of Torah here in this totality?’ Well, one is *Remember*, and one is *Observe*, and all commandments of Torah are included in these, in mystery of *Remember* and in mystery of *Observe*, and all is one.”[687](#)

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “Regarding what we have learned, that the evening prayer is obligatory, it is surely obligatory, for the recitation of the evening *Shema* is obligatory; the blessed Holy One is unified at night just as He is unified during the day, and the attribute of night is included in the day, and the attribute of day is included in the night, forming union. One who says that it is optional relies on the fact that sacrificial portions and fat are consumed during the night, as we have established.[688](#)

“It is written: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul...* (Deuteronomy 6:5). We have already established this verse, as have the Companions, but one should ask: If in this unification of *Hear, O Israel*, all is included—right and left—why is it written afterward: *You shall love; It shall be, if you indeed [heed My commands]*

(ibid. 11:13), since they were already included in the unification? Well, there, in general; here, in particular—and so it must be. We have already aroused the mystery of this unification.[689](#)

“The unification corresponds to tefillin of the head and tefillin of the arm. In tefillin of the head are four portions, as has been said, and here are three names. There, four portions, each and every one by itself; and here, three names. What is the difference between them? Well, those four portions have already stimulated discussion: one is a primordial, supernal point; one is mystery of the World that is Coming; one is right, and one is left. These are mystery of tefillin of the head. Here, in mystery of this unification, three names, corresponding to those four portions. First *YHVH* is supernal point, beginning of all. *Eloheinu, Our God*—mystery of the World that is Coming. Last *YHVH* entirety of right and left as one, in single totality. These are tefillin of the head, and this is the first unification.[690](#)

“Tefillin of the arm—totality of all these as one, and this is mystery of ‘Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!’ Here is entirety of tefillin of the head, included in tefillin of the arm.[691](#)

“This mystery is ‘Blessed’—mystery of supernal point, who is blessed, for all blessings flow from there. Now, if you say, ‘The World that is Coming is called Blessed’—not so! For supernal point is male; World that is Coming, female. He is Blessed, and She is Blessing; Blessed, male; Blessing, female. So, Blessed is supernal point. ‘Name’ is the World that is Coming, who is *great name*, as is said: *What will You do for Your great name?* (Joshua 7:9). ‘Glorious’ is supernal Glory, who is right and left. And all are included in this *tefillah* of the hand, who is ‘His kingdom,’ grasping all. In this Kingdom are contained all worlds, to be nourished and sustained with all that is needed.[692](#)

“This is unity of tefillin of the head and tefillin of the arm. Corresponding to the mystery of unification of tefillin

is unification of all, and this is clarification of the matter. I arranged this unification before the Holy Lamp, and he told me that unification is arranged in four ways and this is the clearest of them all. Certainly so! All of them are mystery of unification, but the arrangement of tefillin is supernal unification, fittingly.[693](#)

“Since right and left have been combined in mystery of one name in general, it is necessary afterward to express them in particular—but not by way of unification, for unification appears in the first verses, so that *YHVH is one* in tefillin of the head and *His name is one* in tefillin of the arm, all becoming one. Once unification has been all arranged in general, from the head of the supernal point, it is necessary afterward to arouse from the head of primordial light, which is head of all.[694](#)

“*You shall love* (Deuteronomy 6:5)—beginning of the right, to love the blessed Holy One with the love of His cleaving. Who is that? This right arouses love. If one loves the blessed Holy One, He arouses His right toward him and receives him [162b] in love. All things in the world depend only upon will. Spirit draws spirit, bringing spirit, and the mnemonic is: *If he sets his heart upon Him, he will gather in His spirit and soul* (Job 34:14).[695](#)

“When a person arouses love toward the blessed Holy One, arousal of the right is roused only in three ways, as is written: *with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might* (Deuteronomy 6:5)—look, three ways here! For you should not say, ‘Either one or the other’; rather all are necessary, since it is not written *or with all your soul or with all your might*—rather all are necessary: heart, soul, and wealth.[696](#) Then the blessed Holy One arouses His right hand toward him, extending it to him and receiving him. Of this is written *YHVH’s utterance to my lord: ‘Sit at My right hand’* (Psalms 110:1). We have already aroused the mystery of this verse, that King David was speaking about his rung, when linked to the right.[697](#)

“Thirteen commandments here on the right: *You shall love YHVH your God—*one. *With all your heart—*two. *With all your soul—*three. *And with all your might—*four. *You shall retell them incisively to your children—*five. *And speak of them—*six. *When you sit in your house—*seven. *And when you go on the way—*eight. *And when you lie down—*nine. *And when you rise—*ten. *You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand—*eleven. *And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes—*twelve. *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house—*thirteen.[698](#)

“These thirteen commandments depend on the right, and left is included in right, and so it should be. Whenever left arouses, right begins it first. Therefore, if they prove worthy, left is included in right; and if not, right is included in left, and left dominates. The mnemonic for this is *if* at the beginning, as in: *If by My laws you walk* (Leviticus 26:3). Everywhere left arouses in love in mystery of right, and afterward its Judgment intensifies, and so it should be everywhere. The Companions have already aroused the meaning of these matters.”[699](#)

Rabbi Hiyya came and kissed him.

He opened, saying, “*The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains* (Exodus 26:1). Here is mystery of unification, for perfection of the Dwelling consists of numerous rungs, and of it is written *The Dwelling will be one* (ibid., 6), to demonstrate that all members of the body are mystery of one body.[700](#)

“In a human being are numerous members, higher and lower—some internal, within; others visible externally—yet all are called one body, one person in a single bond. So too, the Dwelling: all those members correspond to the pattern above, and when all joins as one, then is written: *The Dwelling will be one.*[701](#)

“Commandments of Torah are all members and limbs in mystery above. When they all join as one, then all amount to one mystery. In the mystery of the Dwelling, consisting

of limbs and members, all amount to mystery of אָדָם (*adam*), the human—resembling commandments of Torah; for commandments of Torah are all in mystery of *adam*, male and female, because when they join together, they are one mystery of *adam*. One who omits even a single commandment of Torah diminishes, as it were, the image of faith, for all those members and limbs form the image of *adam*. Thus, all attains mystery of unification. And since Israel is *one nation*, it is written: *You—My flock, flock of My pasture—are adam, human* (Ezekiel 34:31), and it is written: *Who is like Your people Israel, one nation on earth?* (2 Samuel 7:23).⁷⁰²

Rabbi Yitshak was in the presence of Rabbi El'azar, and said to him, "Surely, the love that a person feels for the blessed Holy One is aroused only from the heart, for the heart is arousal, arousing love toward Him, and the Compassionate One desires the heart. If so, why is it written: *with all your heart* and afterward *and with all your soul* (Deuteronomy 6:5), implying that there are two types: one, the heart; and another, the soul? If the heart is the essence, why need the soul?"⁷⁰³

He replied, "Surely, heart and soul are two, uniting into one. For heart, soul, and wealth all unite with one another, and heart is unification of all. This corresponds to what has been said: *with all לבבך (levavekha), your heart*—with two hearts, namely two impulses: one, the good impulse; the other, the evil impulse. Each one of these two is called heart: one [163a] is called good heart; the other, evil heart. Therefore, *levavekha*, namely two: the good impulse and the evil impulse.⁷⁰⁴

"וּבְלֵב נַפְשְׁךָ (Uv-khol nafshekha), *With all your soul*—the verse should read *with your soul*; what is *with all your soul*? Why *with all*? Well, to include *nefesh, ruah, and neshamah*; this is *with all your soul*—whatever this *soul* holds.⁷⁰⁵

*“And with all your wealth—similarly, there are various kinds of wealth, all different from one another, and so it is written: *and with all*. Love for the blessed Holy One entails offering Him all this—loving Him with every single one.”*[706](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘How can a person love the blessed Holy One with the evil impulse? For look, the evil impulse is hostile, preventing a person from serving the blessed Holy One! How can he love Him with it?’ Well, this is a greater service of the blessed Holy One, when the evil impulse is overturned by the love that one feels for the blessed Holy One. For when the evil impulse is overturned and broken by a person, this is true love of the blessed Holy One, since he knows how to draw that evil impulse to His service.”[707](#)

“Here is a mystery for masters of qualities.”[708](#) Everything that the blessed Holy One has made, above and below, is all intended to manifest His glory, and all is for His service. Now, who has ever seen a servant denouncing his master, opposing everything that his master wishes? It is the will of the blessed Holy One that humans should serve Him constantly, walking in the path of truth, thereby becoming worthy of many benefits. Since this is His will, how can an evil servant come and oppose, by his Master’s will—luring people to an evil path, distancing them from the good path, and causing them to disobey the will of their Lord?[709](#)

“But actually, he is doing the will of his Master! This may be compared to a king who had an only son, whom he loved exceedingly. He commanded him, in love, not to approach an evil woman, for whoever approached her would be unworthy of entering the king’s palace. The son consented to do his father’s will in love.

“In the king’s abode, outside, was a harlot, comely in appearance and beautiful in form. Some days later, the king said, ‘I want to see my son’s devotion to me.’ He called for

that harlot and said to her, 'Go and seduce my son,' to see his son's devotion to him.

"That harlot, what could she do? She went after his son and began embracing him, kissing him, seducing him with all kinds of enticements. If that son is worthy and obeys his father's command, he rebukes her, pays no heed to her, and thrusts her away from him. Then the father rejoices in his son and brings him into his palace, giving him gifts and presents and great honor. Who caused all this honor for that son? You must admit, that harlot![710](#)

"And that harlot, does she deserve praise for this or not? Surely she does, from every aspect. First, because she carried out the king's command; and second, because she brought upon the son all this honor, all this goodness, all this love of the king toward him. Therefore, it is written: *and look, it was very good* (Genesis 1:31). *And look, it was good*—this is the Angel of Life; *very* is the Angel of Death, who is surely *very good* for whoever heeds his Lord's command.[711](#)

"Come and see: Were it not for this accuser, the righteous would not inherit those supernal treasures reserved for them in the world that is coming. Happy are they who have encountered this accuser, and happy are they who have not encountered him! Happy are they who have encountered him, for through him they inherit all that goodness, all that bliss, all those delights of the world that is coming, of which is written *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You will do for one who awaits You* (Isaiah 64:3).

"Happy are they who have not encountered him, for through him they inherit Hell and are banished from the land of the living—the wicked who do not heed their Lord and are drawn after him. Therefore, the righteous should be grateful to him, for through him they inherit all that goodness, bliss, and delight in the world that is coming.[712](#)

"What is the benefit for this accuser when the wicked obey him? [163b] Well, even though he has no benefit, he

fulfills the command of his Master. Furthermore, he is strengthened because of this; since he is evil, he becomes stronger when perpetrating evil. A wicked person is strengthened only after he has killed someone. Once he has killed people, he is emboldened, empowered potently, and feels pleasure. Similarly, that accuser grows in power only after he has lured people, accused them, and killed them. Then he is pleased, strengthened, and potently empowered.⁷¹³

“Just as the side of life is strengthened when people are good and walk on the straight path, so too this accuser is strengthened and empowered when the wicked heed him and are dominated by him—may the Compassionate One save us!⁷¹⁴

“Happy are they who are worthy of defeating him and overturning him, earning the world that is coming because of him! One should be strengthened by the blessed Holy One constantly. Of this is said *Happy is the human whose strength is in You—highways in their heart* (Psalms 84:6). Happy are they in this world, and happy are they in the world that is coming!”

Rabbi Yose, Rabbi Yehudah, and Rabbi Ḥiyya were traveling on the road, and Rabbi El’azar met them. As soon as they saw him, they all dismounted from their donkeys. Rabbi El’azar said, “Surely, I have seen the face of *Shekhinah*! For when one sees the righteous or virtuous of the generation and meets them, they are surely the face of *Shekhinah*.

“Why are they called the face of *Shekhinah*? Because *Shekhinah* is hidden within them: She is in concealment and they are revealed, for those close to *Shekhinah* are called Her face. And who are they? Those with whom She adorns Herself to appear before the supernal King. Now, since you are here, surely *Shekhinah* is arrayed upon you, and you are Her face.”⁷¹⁵

He opened, saying, “*Please, take my blessing that has been brought to you* (Genesis 33:11). When Jacob saw Samael the Accuser on that night, he saw him in the form of Esau and did not recognize him until morning rose. As soon as morning rose and he looked upon him, he saw him with a face concealed and revealed. Gazing at that image like the image of Esau, he immediately perceived that it was the Prince of Esau; he seized him. What is written? *Let me go, for dawn is breaking!* (ibid. 32:27), and the Companions have educed: because his time had arrived to offer song and praise to the blessed Holy One; therefore, *for dawn is breaking.*[716](#)

“Here one should contemplate, for surely his dominion is only at night in the darkness, and this is the mystery of *terror in the nights* (Song of Songs 3:8), namely the fear of Hell. As for its saying *in the nights*—he and his female. Therefore, he rules only by night.

“This is why it says *He said, ‘Let me go, for dawn is breaking!’* Why *for dawn is breaking?* Because when morning comes and the dominion of darkness of night is eliminated, then he and his legions enter the hollow of the great abyss in the North, until night enters and dogs are untied, ruling and roaming the night until morning comes. This is why he said urgently *‘for dawn is breaking!’*—because he does not rule by day.[717](#)

“Similarly, the exile of Israel, which resembles night and is called night. Edom, the wicked kingdom, rules over Israel until morning comes—when the blessed Holy One will illumine them and [Edom’s] dominion will be eliminated.[718](#)

“Therefore, *for dawn is breaking!* He was pressured by [Jacob’s] hold and his power weakened, for night had passed. So Jacob held him tight and saw that his image was like that of Esau, though not so clearly. And then he confirmed the blessings.[719](#)

“What is written previously? *For truly I have seen your face as one sees the face of Elohim, and you received me favorably* (Genesis 33:10). For he saw in that face the identical image in which Samael appeared to him, because any realm to which a person is linked is revealed in his face.^{[720](#)}

“As for you, *Shekhinah* is with you, and your faces are like Her face. Happy are you!”^{[721](#)}

He said, “If we were going on the same way, I would sit with you; but now that you are heading your way and I am heading mine, I will part from you with a word [164a] of Torah.”

He opened, saying, “*A song of ascents. לשלמה (Li-Shlomo), Of Solomon. Unless YHVH builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless YHVH watches over the city, the watchman looks out in vain* (Psalms 127:1). Now, did King Solomon utter this praise when he built the Temple? Not so, for King David uttered it for King Solomon, when Nathan came to him and told him about Solomon. Afterward King David showed his son Solomon an image of the Temple, and when David saw this image of the Temple with all its array, he uttered a song for Solomon: *Unless YHVH builds the house...*^{[722](#)}

“Alternatively, *A song of ascents. לשלמה (Li-Shlomo), For Solomon*—for the King who possesses שלמה (*shelama*), peace. What song is this? A song and praise above all other songs, for this transcends them all.^{[723](#)}

“*Unless YHVH builds the house*—King David saw all those seven pillars upon which this house stands, for they stand row by row to build this house. Above them all stands the Master of the house, who moves over them, giving them power and strength, to every single one fittingly. Thus, if this King who possesses peace, who is Master of the house, does not build this house, *its builders labor in vain*—those pillars standing above this house.^{[724](#)}

“Unless YHVH watches over the city—the King who possesses peace. The watchman looks out in vain—one pillar upon which the world is established. And who is that? Righteous One, for He guards this city.”[725](#)

“As for the Dwelling made by Moses, Joshua stood constantly, guarding it; for this could be guarded only by one called a youth, as is written: *Joshua son of Nun, a youth, would not depart from within the Tent* (Exodus 33:11). Afterward this Dwelling was guarded only by means of a youth, as is written: *The youth Samuel was serving* (1 Samuel 3:1)—he was guarding there, because guarding of the Dwelling is only by a youth.”[726](#)

“However, the Temple was not so, for its guarding is only by the blessed Holy One, as is written: *Unless YHVH watches over the city, the watchman looks out in vain. Who is the watchman?* The one guarding the Dwelling, who is called so: Youth, Metatron.”[727](#)

“But as for you, holy ones of the Highest, you are not guarded as the Dwelling is guarded; rather, your guarding consists in the blessed Holy One Himself, as is written: *YHVH will guard your going and your coming, now and forever* (Psalms 121:8). For whenever the righteous are traveling on the road, the blessed Holy One guards them constantly, as is written: *YHVH will guard you from all evil, He will guard your soul. YHVH will guard your going and your coming, now and forever* (ibid., 7-8).”

They followed him and escorted him for three miles, and returned to their way. Of him is written *For His angels He will command for you, to guard you on all your ways. On their palms [they will lift you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone]* (Psalms 91:11-12); *Your father and mother will rejoice; she who bore you will exult* (Proverbs 23:25).[728](#)

Rabbi Yehudah opened, *“In a multitude of people is the glory of a king, and in the lack of people is the ruin of a*

The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains... (Exodus 26:1).⁷²⁹

YHVH your God (Deuteronomy 7:6). They are a people who amount to many thousands and many myriads; and when they are great in number this is the glory of the blessed Holy One, for those above and those below praise the name of the supernal King, praising Him because of this holy people, as is written: *They will say, 'Only a wise and understanding people is this great nation'* (ibid. 4:6).⁷³⁰

“Now, you might say, ‘But look at what is written: *For you are the fewest of all the peoples* (Deuteronomy 7:7)!’ Well, surely, *of all the peoples*, precisely! But they are more numerous than any one people, for there is no nation in the whole world as great and numerous as Israel. Now, you might say, ‘What about the Ishmaelites? What about the Edomites? They are so numerous!’ They certainly are, but all those other nations intermingle: this nation has children by that nation, and these have children by another nation, and those by another. Consequently, there is no nation in the whole world as great and numerous as Israel, a nation selected and unique—these with those, with no other intermingling at all—as is written: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God, and you YHVH has chosen [to be a treasured people to Him of all the peoples on the face of the earth]* (ibid. 14:2). Thus, *In a multitude of people is the glory of a king*—the glory of the supernal King, the blessed Holy One.⁷³¹

“Furthermore, when [164b] the blessed Holy One comes to the synagogue, which is a small sanctuary, and all the people come as one, praying, offering thanks, and praising the blessed Holy One, this is the glory of the King—of the anonymous King, Holy King Messiah, who is adorned in perfect beauty to ascend above.⁷³²

prince (Proverbs 14:28). *In a multitude of people*—Israel, of whom is written *For you are a holy people to*

“*And in the lack of people [is the ruin of a prince]* (Proverbs 14:28)—when He comes early to the synagogue and the people do not come to pray and praise the blessed Holy One, then all the dominion above and all those supernal princes and camps are detached from the loftiness of adornments of that King in which they were arrayed.

“Why so? Because at the moment that the people of Israel below arrange their prayers and requests, praising the supernal King, all those heavenly camps arrange praise and are arrayed in that holy adornment. For supernal camps are all companions of Israel below, praising the blessed Holy One as one, so that exaltation of the supernal King may be enacted above and below as one. But when they are ready to be companions with Israel, and the people of Israel below do not come to arrange prayers and requests and to praise their Lord, then all those holy camps—supernal dominion—are scattered from their array. For they do not rise ascendantly and cannot praise their Lord fittingly, since the praise of the blessed Holy One must be in unison above and below, those above and those below simultaneously. Therefore, *the ruin of a prince*—not *the ruin of a king*.⁷³³

“Even if only ten accumulate in the synagogue, with those ten appear supernal camps, to be companions with them. Why? Because all adornments of that King are tenfold, so ten are enough if there are no more.⁷³⁴

“Come and see: *The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains...* (Exodus 26:1)—*ten*, for perfect arrayal of the Dwelling is by ten, to be fitting. *Ten*—why עשר (*eser*), *ten*, and not עשרה (*asarah*), *ten*? Well, *eser*, *ten*, always implies without *Shekhinah*, who is not included in the number. For example, *standing upon* שני עשר (*shenei asar*), *twelve, oxen* (1 Kings 7:25)—*Shekhinah* is not included in the number, since She stands above, as is written: *with the sea set upon them above* (ibid.). In these places alluding to mystery above,

where ה (he) is missing, *Shekhinah* lies beyond that number, for She is not included.⁷³⁵

“The Other Side is given a greater number, yet diminished in count. For example, עשרה] עשתי [(*ashtei [esreh]*), *eleven* (Exodus 26:7), as has been established. Wherever letters are added, as here, it implies deficiency. For example, ה אמינון (*Ha-Aminon*), *Has Aminon, your brother [been with you]?* (2 Samuel 13:20), for אמנון (*Amnon*), *Amnon*, would have sufficed. But on the side of Holiness, a letter is subtracted and it is an addition.”⁷³⁶

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, “*Wrapped in light as in a garment, spreading the heavens like a curtain* (Psalms 104:2). This verse has been established, for when the blessed Holy One created the world, He enwrapped Himself in that primordial light, and with it created the heavens.”⁷³⁷

“Come and see: Light and dark were as one, light on the right, darkness on the left. What did the blessed Holy One do? He combined them and from them created the heavens. What is שמים (*shamayim*), heavens? אש (*Esh*), fire, and מים (*mayim*), water. They were joined as one, and from them He created *shamayim*, heavens, making peace between them.”⁷³⁸

“When they were combined as one, He stretched them *like a curtain*, stretching them and making them into a letter ו (vav), and this is called *a curtain*.

“*Curtains* (Exodus 26:1)—for look, from this letter spread a radiance, becoming *curtains!*”⁷³⁹

“Seven expanses are stretched, concealed in a supernal treasury, as has been established, with one expanse lying above them. That expanse has no color, has no revealed place to be contemplated, though it is susceptible to discernment. This expanse is concealed and illumines all of them, impelling them on their journeys, every single one fittingly.”⁷⁴⁰

“From this expanse and beyond, no one can know or perceive, and one should shut his mouth, neither speaking

nor contemplating in discernment. Whoever contemplates recoils, for no one can know.⁷⁴¹

“There are *ten curtains*, which are ten expanses. And who are they? The curtains of the Dwelling, which are ten and are susceptible to knowing by the wise of heart. Whoever knows them contemplates great wisdom and mysteries of the universe, and can contemplate [165a] above—the place that every single one grasps, except for those two standing on the right and left, concealed with *Shekhinah*.”⁷⁴²

Rabbi Yose said, “There are nine expanses, and *Shekhinah* is the tenth. For if you say that since it is written עֶשֶׂר (*eser*), *ten*, this means besides *Shekhinah*, then *Shekhinah* is the eleventh, poised above the ten. Rather, they are surely nine, and these are the nine days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and Yom Kippur is the tenth.”⁷⁴³

“Similarly, the Dwelling consists of *ten curtains*. *Ten curtains*: ten expanses—mystery of mysteries, transmitted only to those who know wisdom, and all is among mysteries of the Holy Lamp, who has revealed the mystery of every single expanse and those ministers who serve in each one.”⁷⁴⁴

“There are seven expanses above; there are seven expanses below, corresponding to those above. There are seven expanses containing stars and planets, to conduct the world on its path, as necessary. In all of them, the seventh is most worthy, except for the eighth, who directs them all and presides over all.”⁷⁴⁵

“It is written: *Exalt Him who rides the clouds, by His name Yah, and exult before Him* (Psalms 68:5). This verse has been discussed, but *Exalt Him who rides the clouds*—who is *He who rides the clouds*, and who is עֲרֵבוֹת (*aravot*), *clouds*? Well, *aravot* is the seventh expanse. Why is it called *aravot*? Because it is composed of fire and water as one, from the side of the south and from the side of the north, מְעֹרָב (*me'orav*), blended, of two sides.”⁷⁴⁶

“Now, you might say, ‘If so, what about the two ערבות (*aravot*), willow stems, that are joined with the *lulav*, of which we have learned: *Aravot*, as is written: *Exalt Him who rides the aravot*? If so, who would place thighs in the trunk of the body, or the trunk in the thighs? For one generates fruit, and the other does not!’⁷⁴⁷

“Well, surely all is mystery of *aravot* of the *lulav*. Those *aravot* of the *lulav*—one is fire and one is water; all of them partake of this mystery, and that seventh one is fire and water combined as one, in one mystery. Since *aravot* is totality of all those other six, it is mystery of the supernal Chariot, and the blessed Holy One delights in this expanse more than all expanses, and His desire is constantly to array this expanse in supernal beauty. Thus, *Exalt* the one who *rides the aravot*. Who is that? The hidden, concealed expanse standing over the living beings, for He *rides the aravot*.⁷⁴⁸

“*And exult לפניו (lefanav)*, before *Him*—it is not written מלפניו (*mi-lefanav*), *from before Him*, but rather *lefanav, before Him*, for there is no one who can know anything about Him. But, *lefanav, before Him*—one who comes before this expanse must enter in joy, with no sadness at all, for this expanse prevents any sadness or anger from dwelling there, since there all is joy.⁷⁴⁹

“Therefore, the high priest who stands before Him would enter the Sanctuary only in joy, manifesting joy, for the place is determinative. Of this is written *Serve YHVH in joy, come before Him with singing* (Psalms 100:2), for one should not display sadness.⁷⁵⁰

“Now, you might say, ‘If so, one who is suffering and in distress, who cannot gladden his heart, and out of his distress has to plead for compassion before the supernal King—if so, he should not offer prayer at all and should not enter in sadness at all, since he cannot gladden his heart and enter before Him in joy. What remedy does this person have?’

“Well, surely we have learned: ‘All gates have been locked and closed, yet the gates of tears have not been closed or locked,’ and tears come only out of suffering and sadness. All those appointed over those gates smash the beams and locks, and those tears enter and that prayer enters before the Holy King.⁷⁵¹

“Then that place is distressed by the sadness and distress of that person, as is said: *In all their distress He was distressed* (Isaiah 63:9). The desire of the upper world toward this place is like that of a male who constantly desires his female—like a king toward his *matronita*: if he finds her in sadness, then whatever she wishes is placed in her hands. That person’s prayer does not return empty, and the blessed Holy One has mercy [165b] on him. Happy is the share of the person who sheds tears before the blessed Holy One in his prayer!⁷⁵²

“Similarly on Sabbath: one who sits fasting on Sabbath manifests sadness from his distress, whereas on Sabbath that supernal expanse prevails—manifested in joy, consisting in joy, conveying joy to all. As for this one sitting in sadness, since [that expanse] prevails, it delivers him from the punishment decreed upon him, as has been said.⁷⁵³

“*Exalt* (Psalms 68:5)—give honor and exaltation to the one who rides *the aravot*, who is joy and brings joy to all, the expanse above the living beings.⁷⁵⁴

“*By His name Yah* (ibid.)—surely, for in that place this name is included.⁷⁵⁵

“*And exult before Him* (ibid.)—for one should not manifest sadness before Him, as has been said.”⁷⁵⁶

Rabbi El’azar said, “This verse should read as follows: *Exalt Him who rides על ערבות (al aravot), upon aravot. Why בערבות (ba-aravot), in aravot?* [Furthermore,] ביה שמו (be-Yah shemo), *by His name Yah*—the verse should read ביה הוא (Be-Yah hu), *He is in Yah. Why by His name Yah?*⁷⁵⁷

“Well, this verse refers to Concealed of all Concealed, Ancient of all Ancients, the one not revealed or known at all, who rides *aravot*. Now, you might say that since He comes and rides in them, although He is concealed, in this place He is capable of being revealed. However, *Exalt Him who rides ba-aravot, in aravot*—who is Ancient of all Ancients, Concealed of all Concealed, unknown. And how does He ride *in aravot*? בִּיה (Be-Yah), *by Yah*, primordial mystery issuing before Him. This is His Name—of that Concealed One who is unknown; His Name is *Yah*. Not that it is He, but it is He by means of that curtain that is spread and issues before Him. However, this curtain is His Name, and this is His chariot, and He is not known at all.[758](#)

“This is His Great Name—because there is a name not as great as this, although containing additional letters. This is His Great Name, and therefore with this Name we utter Amen, which derives from it. With this, Amen goes constantly; with the other Name, not so.[759](#)

“Amen. May His Great Name be blessed.’ For when this Name is arrayed, all is complete and all worlds rejoice. In this Name are included those above and those below. In this Name are included 613 commandments of Torah, totality of all mysteries above and below, entirety of World of the Male above and entirety of World of the Female below.[760](#)

“All those commandments are members and limbs, manifesting mystery of faith. One who does not consider and contemplate mysteries of commandments of Torah cannot know or glimpse how members are arranged in supernal mystery. Members of the body are all arranged according to the mystery of commandments of Torah. And although some members are grand and eminent, all of them, small and great—if one of them is removed, even the smallest, that person is called defective. How much worse if one omits even a single commandment of Torah, for he inflicts a defect where there must be none![761](#)

“Come and see what is written: *YHVH Elohim took the human and placed him in the Garden of Eden to till it and tend it* (Genesis 2:15)—these are offerings, and all is one. But this is the mystery of commandments of Torah—to *till it*: 248 upper members; *and tend it*: 365 lower members. These upper ones pertain to *Remember*, and these lower ones pertain to *Observe*, and all is one. Happy is he who succeeds in fulfilling them!⁷⁶²

“Commandments of Torah enable a person to fulfill his spirit and soul in this world and in the world that is coming. Torah entitles a person to inherit two worlds: this world and the world that is coming. Whoever engages in Torah engages in life: life in this world and life in the world that is coming. He is saved from all evil punishments, which are powerless against him. If this is so for engaging, how much more so for one who performs action!”⁷⁶³

Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Abba were staying at an inn, and they rose at midnight [166a] to engage in Torah. The innkeeper’s daughter rose and lit a lamp for them, and then she stood behind them to listen to words of Torah.⁷⁶⁴

Rabbi Abba opened, saying, “*For a mitzvah is a lamp and Torah is light, and reproofs of discipline are the way to life* (Proverbs 6:23). *For a mitzvah is a lamp*—whoever engages in this world in those commandments of Torah has a lamp arranged before him by every single commandment, to illumine him in that world.⁷⁶⁵

“*And Torah is light*—one who is occupied with Torah attains the light by which the lamp is lit. For a lamp without light is nothing; light without a lamp, similarly, cannot shine; so each needs the other completely. Action is needed to prepare the lamp, and studying Torah is needed to light the lamp. Happy is he who engages in them—in light and in lamp!⁷⁶⁶

“*And reproofs of discipline are the way to life*—the way to life, by which to enter the world that is coming, consists

of those *reproofs* that a person receives in order to remove himself from the evil path and follow the good path.

“Further, *the way of life*—those *reproofs of discipline* that the blessed Holy One brings upon a person to purify him from his sins. Happy is he who accepts them with a willing heart!⁷⁶⁷

“Alternatively, *For a lamp is a mitzvah*—priming the lamp, the sparkling lamp of David, who is *a lamp*; arraying Oral Torah, who should be adorned constantly, and She shines only by Written Torah, for Oral Torah has radiance only through Written Torah, who is beaming *light*.”⁷⁶⁸

He looked behind him and saw the innkeeper’s daughter. He said, “*For a lamp is a mitzvah*. What is *a lamp*? *A lamp* that is *a mitzvah* attained by women, namely the Sabbath lamp. For although women do not attain Torah, men attain Torah and illumine this lamp that women prepare by this *mitzvah*. Women, by preparing this *lamp*; men, by Torah, illumining this *lamp*—adorning the *mitzvah* that is incumbent upon women.”⁷⁶⁹

That woman heard and wept. Meanwhile, her father, who was there, rose and joined them and saw his daughter standing behind them weeping. Her father asked her why, and Rabbi Abba told him what had happened. He too, the woman’s father, began to weep.

Rabbi Abba said to him, “Perhaps your son-in-law, your daughter’s husband, has not attained Torah.”⁷⁷⁰

He replied, “Indeed! And for this we weep, my daughter and I, constantly. Because I saw him one day jumping off a roof to hear Kaddish with the congregation, a wish arose within me to marry my daughter to him. The congregation came out of the synagogue and I gave him my daughter; for I said that this leap to hear *Qaddish* shows that he is a great man of Torah, even though he was only a youth and I didn’t know him before. And now, he doesn’t even know Grace after Meals, and I can’t study with him

among the scholars, so that he might learn how to recite *Shema* or Grace after Meals.”[771](#)

He said to him, “Exchange him for another. Or perhaps he will have a son who will be a great man.”[772](#)

Meanwhile, he rose, and leaped over them and sat before them. Rabbi Abba gazed at him, and said, “Surely I see in this youth that the light of Torah will emanate to the world from him or from a son that he will raise.”[773](#)

That youth laughed. He said, “My masters, let me say a word before you.”

He opened, saying, “*I am young in days, and you are aged; therefore I was fearful and dared not declare my own opinion* (Job 32:6). Pillars of the world have aroused the meaning of this verse. However, Elihu, of whom is written *from the family of Ram* (ibid., 2), and they have educed that he derived from the seed of Abraham—fine, but Elihu was a priest and from the seed of Ezekiel: here is written *son of Barachel the Buzite* (ibid.), and there is written *to Ezekiel son of Buzi the priest* (Ezekiel 1:3).[774](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Since it is written בוזי (*Buzi*), *Buzite*, he was בוז (*buz*), *of contemptible, family* (Job 31:34).’ Not so! The verse goes on to say: *from the family of רם (ram)*—highest of all. Then why is he called *Buzi*? Because מבזי (*mevazzei*), he abases, himself before one [166b] who is greater than him. Therefore he attained the lofty name *Buzi*, the one who is called אדם (*Adam*), perfection of all, such as no other human was called, as is written: *You, son of Adam* (Ezekiel 2:6). Since he attained this name, he was called *Ram*, highest of all.[775](#)

“So he said, *I am young לימים (le-yamim), in days* (Job 32:6). The verse should read מימים (*mi-yamim*), *of days*; why *le-yamim, to days*? Well, he said, ‘*I am young, and I have diminished myself le-yamim, to days*’—toward someone who has many days. Why? Because *I thought, ‘Days should speak’* (ibid., 7), and therefore, ‘*I am young, and I have diminished myself toward days.*’[776](#)

“And you are aged—I saw that you were aged—therefore I was fearful and dared not declare my own opinion. I thought, ‘Days should speak, and abundant years should declare wisdom’—surely! But truly it is the spirit in a human and the breath of Shaddai that gives them understanding (Job 32:6–8).

“And so, since I am a youth, I set my intention not to speak Torah until today; but now that you are here, it is fitting to open in Torah before you!”⁷⁷⁷

He opened, saying, *“For a mitzvah is a lamp and Torah is light, and reproofs of discipline are the way to life (Proverbs 6:23). For a mitzvah is a lamp—Mishnah, as is said: the Torah and the mitzvah (Exodus 24:12); the Torah is Written Torah, and the mitzvah is Mishnah, which is a lamp, a lamp ready to be kindled.*⁷⁷⁸

*“A lamp—why is She called a lamp? When She receives, between two arms, 248 supernal members, and She opens Her two arms toward them, then those two arms are included with them and She is called נֵר (ner), lamp.*⁷⁷⁹

*“And Torah is light—illumining that lamp, which is kindled by it from the side of primordial light, which is the right. For Torah was given from the right side, primordial light, as is written: from His right hand, a fiery law for them (Deuteronomy 33:2)—given from the right side, although the left was included in it, for thus is perfection of all.*⁷⁸⁰

“This light is absorbed by 207 worlds, which are hidden away on the side of that light, and it spreads through all of them. Beneath the supernal concealed Throne dwell those worlds on that right side. There are 310: 207 on the right side and 103 on the left side, totaling 310. These are the ones that the blessed Holy One constantly prepares, and from these spread countless precious treasures, all stored away for delighting the righteous in the world that is coming. Of these is written *So I may endow those who love Me with v*” (yesh), *substance, and fill their treasuries*

(Proverbs 8:21). Of these is written *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You will do for one who awaits You* (Isaiah 64:3).[781](#)

“ו” (*Yesh*), *substance*—310 worlds treasured away beneath the World that is Coming. אור (*Or*), light, primordial light, is named after those 207 on the right side, because even light of the left is called light, but primordial light is destined to generate offspring in the world that is coming. Now, you might say, ‘In the world that is coming, and no more!’ But even every single day, because if not for this light, the world could not exist, as is written: *I declare, ‘The world is built by love’* (Psalms 89:3).[782](#)

“This light was sown by the blessed Holy One in the garden of His delight, and He arranged it in rows by the hand of the Righteous One, who is the gardener of the Garden. He took this light and sowed it as seed of truth, arranging it row by row in the Garden, and it sprouted and grew and yielded fruit, by which the world is nourished, as is written: *Light is sown for the righteous...* (Psalms 97:11).[783](#)

“It is written: *as a garden makes its sowings spring up* (Isaiah 61:11). What are *its sowings*? The sowings of primordial light, which is constantly sown. Now it bears and yields fruit, and now it is sown as in the beginning. Before the world can eat this fruit, this sowing bears and gives fruit, not subsiding. So the worlds are nourished by the supply of that gardener called Righteous One, and He never subsides or ceases, except in time of exile.[784](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Of the time of exile is written *Waters vanish from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dry* (Job 14:11). How can it generate offspring?’ Well, it is written *sown—continually sown*. From the day that the *river* ceased, that gardener has not entered the Garden; [167a] yet that light that is continually sown yields fruit, and is sown of itself as in the beginning, never subsiding—like a garden generating offspring, some of that sowing

falling on its own, right in its place, generating offspring as before.[785](#)

“Now, you might say that such offspring and fruit are the same as when the gardener was there. Not so! But this sowing is never withheld.[786](#)

“Similarly, *and Torah is light* (Proverbs 6:23)—Torah too is constantly sown in the world, generating offspring and fruit, never subsiding, and by its fruit the world is nourished.[787](#)

“*And reproofs of discipline are the way to life* (ibid.)—there are two ways: one, a way of life; the other, its opposite. What is the sign of the way of life? *Reproofs of discipline*, for when the blessed Holy One seeks to guard this way of life, He sets on it the one who strikes and administers *reproofs* and *discipline* to inhabitants of the world. Who is that? The one of whom is written *the flame of the whirling sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life* (Genesis 3:24). Thus, *the way to life* is *reproofs of discipline*, and one who receives *reproofs* is surely being aroused to walk in that way of life, inhabited by *reproofs of discipline*.[788](#)

“The beginning of this verse does not match its end, nor its end its beginning! However, everything in this verse is mystery of faith. *For a mitzvah is a lamp* (Proverbs 6:23)—mystery of *Observe*. *And Torah is light*—mystery of *Remember*. *And reproofs of discipline are the way to life*—decrees and punishments of Torah. All is mystery of faith, each one requiring the other so that mystery of all may be fitting.[789](#)

“Concerning the mystery of this *light*, which kindles and illumines this *lamp*, it is written of Aaron: *When you light up the lamps...* (Numbers 8:2), for he comes from the side of this *light*.[790](#)

“Of this *light* is written ‘*Let there be light!*’ *And there was light* (Genesis 1:3). Since it says *Let there be light!* why is it written *And there was light?* It would have

sufficed to say *And it was so*. Well, *Let there be light!*—primordial light, which is the right. *And there was light!*—for right generated left, and from mystery of right issued left. So, *And there was light!*—left.⁷⁹¹

“From here we see that the first וַיְהִי (*va-yhi*), *and there was*, in the Torah was on the left side, and therefore it is not a sign of blessing. Why? Because by it emerged the one who darkens the faces of the world. The mnemonic is that when the mystery of Esau and his actions was revealed, it was by this: וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו (*Va-yhi Esav*), *Esau became, a skilled hunter* (Genesis 25:27)—to entice inhabitants of the world not to walk on the straight path.⁷⁹²

“*God saw the light, that it was good* (Genesis 1:4)—the pillar standing in the middle, embracing this side and that side. When there was perfection of three sides, it is written: *that it was good*, which was not so with those other ones, for there was no perfection until the third *light*, completing all sides. Once this third one appeared, it mediated the conflict of right and left, as is written: *and God separated the light from the darkness* (ibid.).⁷⁹³

“Since there were five rungs branching and drawn from this primordial light, *light* is written five times, and all of them were from the right side, included in it. When they were included in the left side, they were included in mystery of water conveyed from the right, and therefore *water* is written five times. And when they were completed by mystery of the middle, *expanse* is written five times. So, these three—*light, water, expanse*—correspond to these three rungs, in which all five rungs are included, and therefore each of them is written five times, each and every one.⁷⁹⁴

“Here is mystery of mysteries: By these three, mystery of image of *Adam* was figured and graven in its engraving. For they were *light* at first, then *water*, then spreading within it *an expanse*—graving of engravings of the image of *Adam*.⁷⁹⁵

“Similar to engraving the form of the image of a human as he is engendered, for when a human is engendered—at first, seed, which is *light*, for that seed is radiance of all members of the body, so it is *light*; and that *light* is called *sown*, as is written: *Light is sown for the righteous* (Psalms 97:11), real seed! Then that seed, which is *light*, spreads and becomes [167b] *water*; in its moisture it is further engraved, expanding within that *water*—expansion of the body in all directions.

“Once the form of the image of the body was fashioned and engraved, that expansion congealed, and this is *an expanse in the midst of the waters* (Genesis 1:6). After it congealed, it is written: *God called the expanse Heaven* (ibid., 8), for the moisture of the body within that water congealed.⁷⁹⁶

“Once the body was purified and thoroughly cleansed, the moisture that flowed and remained became refuse, formed by smelting, and that is evil, muddy waters, from which refuse formed—Accuser of the whole world, male and female. Afterward, when those muddy waters flowed down and spilled out on the left side, they issued to harass the world. Happy is he who is saved from them!⁷⁹⁷

“As soon as the Accuser emerged, it is written: *Let there be* מארות (*me'orot*), *lights* (Genesis 1:14)—deficient—and diphtheria was transmitted to children and light of the moon waned. Afterward, *They shall be* למאורות (*li-m'orot*), *for lights* (ibid., 15)—in fullness, both of them as one. In whom? In that *expanse of heaven* (ibid.); for when it ascended and joined that *expanse of heaven*, then *they shall be* למאורות (*li-m'orot*), *for lights*—complete lights, both as one, with no defect at all.”⁷⁹⁸

The youth began to laugh and rejoice. He said to them, “As for what I said—that here mystery of *Adam* was purified by light, which is seed, and then transformed into water, and from that water spread an expanse, image of *Adam*, as I educated—granted, when this happens within a woman’s

womb, since seed takes form only in the womb of a female, expanding into the image of *Adam*. But here, if these five rungs are the image of *Adam*, in what place were they formed, this image expanding in that water?

“If you say, ‘They were in the Female, namely the World that is Coming,’ not so! For no form or image was fashioned until letters emerged, and afterward they materialized. Furthermore, the World that is Coming was the Artisan, as is written: *Elohim said, ‘Let there be light!... Let there be an expanse’* (Genesis 1:3, 6)—He was the Artisan![799](#)

“And if you say, ‘In the lower Female,’ not so! For She did not yet exist, and when this image of *Adam* emerged, His Female emerged with him; so the image of *Adam* was not formed in Her. If so, in what place was this seed fashioned and engraved, becoming an engraving of the image of *Adam*?
[800](#)

“Well, this mystery of Primordial Adam was formed and engraved without a Female. The second was engraved and formed from the potency and seed of this one within a Female.

“Primordial Adam—engraving of form and image of the body was not within a Female and was entirely without form. He was formed and engraved below the World that is Coming, without Female or Male. Those letters materialized in a measure, and by them mystery of *Adam* was formed and engraved. The letters were arranged in a straight path, as they began to be engraved and formed from mystery of primordial light, and this light was sown within Him, within the measure. When it reached the measure, it became water intermingled with water; *an expanse* spread, form of *Adam*, fitting image.[801](#)

“After the Female was adorned for Him, and they turned face-to-face, this image of *Adam* entered in desire to the Female, and there His likeness was engraved and formed. Of Him is written *He engendered in his likeness, according to his image* (Genesis 5:3)—formed within the

Female, unlike that first one, who was formed within Him by measuring within a measure, as has been said.⁸⁰²

“Similarly, below. Below, what is written? *Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore* קַיִן (*Qayin*), Cain (Genesis 4:1)—ק (*qof*) began to bear in her womb by the power and support of Adam after she had already received filth from this *qof*. Therefore it is not written here *he engendered*, but rather *he knew, and she conceived and bore*, and refuse issued within the female.⁸⁰³

“*She continued bearing* [—his brother, Abel] (Genesis 4:2)—here is not written *he engendered*, even though he derived from the side of the Male; yet the Accuser weakened and broke his strength, since by the letter *qof* [168a] letters had begun to give birth.⁸⁰⁴

“As soon as refuse was purged, letters began to give birth from the mystery of טָוֵשׁ (*shin, tav*), perfection of male and female in accord as one. Then it is written: *He engendered in his likeness, and he called* [his name Seth] (Genesis 5:3), and it is not written *and she called*. *He called*—he and not she; he called his name שֵׁט (*Shet*), *Seth*, perfection of male and female as one, for they were in one accord.⁸⁰⁵

“Letters revolved further, giving birth again: א (*alef*) of אָדָם (*Adam*), Adam, and those letters of the place that concludes his name. Which is that? נ (*Nun*), and afterward ו (*vav*)—not ה (*he*), for it had already been conceived in הֶבֶל (*Hevel*), Abel; so he took another letter, following: *vav*. And he concluded with the beginning of שֵׁט (*Shet*), *Seth*—שׁ (*shin*)—and was called שֵׁנוֹשׁ (*Enosh*), *Enosh*.⁸⁰⁶

“What is the difference between this name and the name Adam? Well, Enosh was not powerful himself, but rather restoration of the earlier ones. *What is שֵׁנוֹשׁ (*enosh*), a human, that You are mindful of him?* (Psalms 8:5). And it is written: [What is *enosh*, a human, that You exalt him and set Your mind upon him,] *that You inspect him each morning* [and examine him every moment]? (Job 7:17–18). Of this is

written *YHVH delights in crushing him by disease* (Isaiah 53:10)—breaking of the body and power of the soul were bequeathed by Seth to Enosh, a heritage that he rightly received and that he too bequeathed to his sons.⁸⁰⁷

“Letters revolved further to straighten crookedness, giving birth again: קינן (*Qeinan*), Kenan—mending of קין (*Qayin*), Cain, instead of whom he was established, letters turning to sweeten the world from the crookedness that existed.⁸⁰⁸

“מהללאל (*Mahalal’el*), Mahalalel—מ (*mem*), last of the letters of אדם (*Adam*), Adam. לה (*He, lamed*)—perfection of letters of הבל (*Hevel*), Abel. Since he was not wicked like Cain, the letters of his name were not changed except for one: instead of ו (*vet*), there was א (*alef*), for further enhancement.⁸⁰⁹

“By this point the world became fragrantly firm, and crookedness was straightened beginning with Enosh—except for the sin of Adam, which was not sweetened until Israel stood at Mount Sinai; but the crookedness of Cain and Abel was straightened and sweetened. Yet the world was in pain until Noah came, as is written: *This one will console us for our work and for the pain of our hands [from the soil that YHVH cursed]* (Genesis 5:29). By this point, lamp and light were perfected as one.⁸¹⁰

“Now, Sirs, I am from Babylon, the son of Rav Safra, though I was not privileged to know my father, and I was banished here. Fearing that the inhabitants of this land are lions of Torah, I resolved not to say words of Torah in the presence of anyone for two months—and today they are completed. Happy is my share that you appeared here!”⁸¹¹

Rabbi Yose raised his voice and wept. They all rose and kissed him on the head. Rabbi Yose said, “Happy is our share that we have been privileged on this way to hear words of the Ancient of Days from your mouth, words that we never attained until now!”⁸¹²

They all sat down. He said to them, “Sirs, since I saw the suffering of this my father-in-law and his daughter—

who were distressed and pained in their souls over my not knowing Grace after Meals—I told them that until I knew it, I would not unite with my wife, as is the way of the whole world. Even though I could have joined with her conjugally without sin, I did not want to go against their wishes, since I could not say anything for two months.”[813](#)

Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Abba and his father-in-law and the daughter rejoiced, weeping for joy. Rabbi Yose said, “We beg of you, since you have begun, illumine the day for us! Happy is our share on this way!”[814](#)

He opened with Grace after Meals, saying, “*You shall eat before YHVH your God...* (Deuteronomy 14:23), and it is written: *You shall rejoice before YHVH your God* (ibid. 27:7). These verses were fulfilled when Israel appeared before the blessed Holy One in the Temple; how are they fulfilled now? Who can eat *before YHVH* and rejoice *before YHVH*?[815](#)

“Well, certainly so! At first, when a person sits at his table to eat, he offers a blessing over bread: המוציא (*ha-motsi*), who brings forth. Why *ha-motsi* and not מוציא (*motsi*), for look at what is written: בורא (*bore*), *who creates, the heavens* (Isaiah 42:5), not הבורא (*ha-bore*); and עושה (*oseh*), *who makes, the earth* (Jeremiah 10:12), not העושה (*ha-oseh*) *the earth*. Why here, *ha-motsi*?

“Well, from all things pertaining to mystery of the upper concealed world, ה (*he*) is concealed, to show that they derive from the hidden, concealed world. [168b] And all things pertaining to the world that is more revealed are written with *he*, as is written: המוציא (*ha-motsi*), *who brings forth, their array by number* (Isaiah 40:26); הקורא (*ha-qore*), *who summons, the waters of the sea* (Amos 5:8)—all from mystery of the lower world. If a Name is written, it appears with *he*, for example, האל הגדול (*ha-El ha-gadol*), *the great God* (Jeremiah 32:18). And here, in a concealed manner from mystery of the lower world, as soon as a person offers a blessing, *Shekhinah* appears before him.[816](#)

“As for the wording *You shall eat before YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:23), here is included speaking words of Torah; for so it should be, since the blessed Holy One stands before him, as is written: *This is the table that is before YHVH* (Ezekiel 41:22)—corresponding to what is written here: *You shall eat before YHVH your God.*[817](#)

“Since a person is standing before his Lord, he should be generous to the poor, being generous to them just as He provides him with food. And one who eats in the presence of the Holy King must not appear as a glutton at his table, for gluttony is of the Other Side. This is the mystery of *Let me gulp down* (Genesis 25:30)—gluttonously, as it should be with the Other Side—and it is written: *The belly of the wicked will be in want* (Proverbs 13:25). Therefore it is written: *You shall eat before YHVH*—not before the Other Side.[818](#)

“And one should not engage in idle talk—although in requirements of the meal, fine—but rather in words of Torah; for when words of Torah are spoken at the table, that person empowers his Lord.[819](#)

“*You shall rejoice before YHVH* (Deuteronomy 27:7)—with the cup of blessing. When a person blesses over the cup of blessing, he should rejoice, manifesting joy and no sadness at all. As soon as he takes the cup of blessing, the blessed Holy One stands over him, and he should wrap his head in joy and offer a blessing over the cup, in a session of three: ‘Let us bless Him of whose bounty we have eaten and by whose goodness we live.’ This requires aspiration above toward the Ancient of Ancients, so it is in a concealed way.[820](#)

“‘And by whose goodness’—not ‘from whose goodness.’ ‘And by whose goodness’—supernal Right. ‘And from whose goodness’—another rung, coming from the right side, a rung below. For by that goodness the world is built, and by it, nourished.[821](#)

“Why is it called goodness, and why is it called *Hesed*, kindness? It is goodness when containing all within itself and not spreading to descend below; kindness, when descending below and bestowing goodness upon all creatures, righteous and wicked regardless. Even though it is one rung. How do we know? As is written: *Surely goodness and חסד (hesed), kindness, will pursue me* (Psalms 23:6). If *goodness*, why *kindness*; and if *kindness*, why *goodness*? One would have been enough. However, *goodness* contains all within itself, not spreading; *kindness* descends and spreads below, nourishing all, righteous and wicked as one.

“Here, since it says, ‘and by whose goodness we live,’ it goes on to say, ‘who nourishes the whole world with kindness, *who gives food to all flesh, for His kindness is forever* (Psalms 136:25).’ Therefore, ‘who nourishes all’—righteous, wicked, all.[822](#)

“This is called Blessing of the Right. Left is not included in Grace after Meals, and therefore the left should not assist the right. For as soon as one has offered Blessing of the Right, he should join Land of the Living to the Right, to be nourished from there and to sustain and feed all. Therefore, the second is Blessing of the Land. One must mention in it covenant and Torah: ‘for Your covenant that You have sealed in our flesh, and for Your Torah that You have taught us,’ showing that by that goodness, covenant and Torah are nourished, these being the perfection of this goodness. From here we learn that women are exempt from Grace after Meals—from enabling others to fulfill their obligation—since they possess neither Torah nor covenant.[823](#)

“One should conclude: ‘for the land and for the food’—cleaving as one in *Hesed*, kindness. ‘For the land’—Land of the Living. ‘And for the food’—*Hesed*. Merging with one another in single cleaving.[824](#)

“Spreading of goodness is הודאה (*hoda’ah*), Thanksgiving, which is called *Hesed*, and so it consists of ‘We thank you’ for such-and-such miracles and signs performed from the side of goodness.[825](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Look at what is written: *delights in Your right hand* נצח (*netsah*), *for eternity* (Psalms 16:11)—so it is on the right side!’ Not so! Rather, every single one indicates the place from which it emerged.[826](#)

“And if you say, ‘*Netsah* is on the right,’ look at what is written: נעימות (*ne’imot*), *delights*, and it is written: נעים (*ne’im*), *sweet, singer of Israel* (2 Samuel 23:1)! This is left, [169a] and every left is included in mystery of right; but *hoda’ah*, Thanksgiving, indicates the right, showing that it emerged from there, and this is spreading of goodness, spreading into Land of the Living.[827](#)

“Why is there no left here? Because the Other Side has no share in Israel’s food, and if the left aroused, the Other Side would arouse with it. He already sold his birthright and share to their father Jacob—yet we give that accuser his share with the filth of fingerbowl water; and if there is no filth, then a portion of that food touched by the hands. So he has no share with us, and since he has no share with us and has already obtained his share, we must not arouse the left at all, so that the Accuser not arouse and obtain two shares, one below and one above, like a firstborn, for he already sold his birthright to Jacob. His share is below and he has nothing above; Israel obtains above and Esau obtains below. Therefore, left is not included at all in Grace after Meals.[828](#)

“Once this Land of the Living is blessed from the right side and receives nourishment, we seek compassion for all: ‘Have compassion, *YHVH* our God, upon Israel...’—may we ourselves and the Temple benefit from that nourishment and sustenance of Land of the Living, and through that compassion may the Temple be rebuilt below.[829](#)

“On Sabbath—so that Judgment may not appear, and *Netsah* and *hoda'ah* may be in the class of *hasadim*, acts of love—one says, ‘May it be Your pleasure to strengthen us,’ so that both of them will be *faithful* חסדי דוד (*hasdei david*), *acts of love for David* (Isaiah 55:3). Therefore, ‘may there be no sorrow, grief, [or sighing on our day of rest],’ for ‘May it be your pleasure’ and *Modim*, ‘[We] thank,’ are *hasdei david*.⁸³⁰

“‘Grant peace,’ which we say in the Prayer, in the blessing ‘He who makes peace in His heights, may He in His compassion make peace for us.’ ‘Who is good and does good,’ for all comes from the right side, and nothing from the left side.⁸³¹

“One who recites Grace after Meals receives blessings first of all and is blessed with the entirety of Grace, thereby attaining long life. Concerning one who takes the cup of blessing and blesses, it is written: *I raise the cup of salvations* (Psalms 116:13). Who are *salvations*? These are the right, who saves from all accusers in the world, as is written: *My own right hand brought me salvation*, and similarly: *Save with Your right hand and answer me* (Psalms 60:7).”⁸³²

Meanwhile, day was dawning. They all rose and kissed him. Rabbi Yose said, “Surely, this day is a wedding celebration, and we will not leave here until a feast is made for all the people of the town, for this is a wedding celebration in which the blessed Holy One delights!”

They took his wife and offered her many blessings, and had her father prepare another house for rejoicing. They gathered all the townspeople for the rejoicing and called her Bride, and they rejoiced with them the whole day, and he rejoiced with them in words of Torah.

He opened at the table, saying, “*You shall make the planks for the Dwelling of acacia wood, upright* (Exodus 26:15). Here is written עומדים (*omedim*), *upright*, and there is written *Seraphim omedim, were standing* (Isaiah 6:2). Just as there seraphim, so too here seraphim. These stand in the

array of the Bride, surrounding the canopy, so that supernal Spirit may dwell within that canopy—as with the bride below, who requires a canopy for her arrayal, covered with beautiful decorations in honor of the other bride, who comes to dwell there in the joy of the bride below. In honor of that supernal Bride, one should make a canopy of beauty with all lovely decorations, inviting the supernal Bride to that canopy.[833](#)

“Similarly, at every covenantal circumcision below, one should prepare another chair beautifully for the Master of the Covenant of Zeal, who appears there.[834](#)

“Here, too, every canopy should be covered with beautiful decorations in honor of the bride—unidentified, for one corresponds to the other. One ascends in seven blessings, and the other ascends in seven blessings. And once she ascends in seven blessings, she is called bride. Therefore it is forbidden to join conjugally with her until she has been encompassed by those seven blessings, corresponding to the supernal pattern.[835](#)

“Those seven blessings the Bride inherits from supernal Spirit, [169b] the place from where all blessings flow.

“There are six blessings by which the Bride is blessed, yet you say there are seven! Well, the seventh is the one sustaining all.[836](#)

“Most blessings are over wine, which is the aspect delighting all—over the wine preserved in its grapes constantly. Therefore the first of those seven blessings is mystery of wine. Wine produces fruit both above and below; the vine receives all and brings forth fruit for the world. Arousal of joy is by the left, as is written: *His left hand beneath my head*, and afterward: *his right embracing me* (Song of Songs 2:6). And the Tree of Life generates fruit and verdure by this arousal. This is the first blessing of the bride.[837](#)

“The second: ‘who [has created] all [for His glory]’—mystery of Holy Covenant, joy of union, who absorbs all

blessings to generate fruit in that vine. For first that fruit descends from above by way of limbs and flows to Holy Covenant, to be conveyed to that vine. This is from the right side, for fruit is found only on the right; the left arouses and the right generates.^{[838](#)}

“Afterward, left is embraced by right, and right by left, becoming mystery of *Adam*. Thus, the third is ‘creator of הָאָדָם (*ha-adam*), the human’—Jacob, surely, is the middle pillar; he was the image of Adam.^{[839](#)}

“The fourth is one pillar of the right thigh. The fifth: ‘May she greatly rejoice’—essence of the house, in delight ‘at the gathering’ of Her children from the four corners of the world. This is mystery of the other thigh, which joins with the left thigh to go gathering in all directions, and the loving gathering of children is to bring them between the knees. In those two, within whom dwell the prophets, is joy of the essence of the house. Why? Because two willow stems do not yield verdure or fruit; yet gathering children to them is their fruit and verdure, and the gathering of Her children to Her is aroused only by the prophets.^{[840](#)}

“The sixth: ‘companions and lovers’—a place where desire, joy, and companionship are found; pillar of the whole world, called Righteous. Righteous and Righteousness are ‘companions and lovers,’ not withdrawing from one another. Until here, six blessings by which the bride is blessed.^{[841](#)}

“The seventh sustains all, and from this seventh all are surely blessed—totality of ten utterances, for this encompasses above and below. Therefore, included in this are ten types of joy: ‘jubilation and happiness, groom and bride, love, companionship, rejoicing, exultation, peace, and fellowship,’ so that the bride may be perfection of all. Happy are Israel, who have attained below as above! Of them is written *Who is like Your people Israel, a nation unique on earth?* (2 Samuel 7:23).”^{[842](#)}

They all rejoiced that whole day in words of Torah, and the inhabitants of the town appointed him as their head. On the next day, Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Hiyya rose and blessed them and went on their way.⁸⁴³

As they approached Rabbi Shim'on, he raised his eyes and saw them. He said to them, "I have been gazing upon you this day, and I saw that for two days and one night you were in the Dwelling of that Youth, Metatron, and that Youth was teaching supernal mysteries in the joy of Torah. Happy is your share, my children!"⁸⁴⁴

They arranged all those words before him and told him the story. He replied, "Happy are you, and happy is my share, for I remember one day when his father, Rav Safra, was traveling with me on the way, and when he parted from me I blessed him that he would have a son, a lion of Torah, but I did not bless him that he would be privileged to see him! Happy is your share, my children! Of you is written *All your children will be taught by YHVH, and great will be the peace of your children* (Isaiah 54:13).⁸⁴⁵

"Alternatively, *All your children will be taught by YHVH*. Now, are all the children of Israel actually taught by the blessed Holy One? Yes, for when those children are studying Torah, *Shekhinah* comes and gives them strength and power to study. If not for the help of the blessed Holy One, those children could not endure it."⁸⁴⁶

One day Rabbi Shim'on was at the gate of Lydda together with Rabbi Hiyya, and he encountered a certain child. Rabbi Shim'on said, "Surely, the blessed Holy One will now arouse in the world, within a few days, a great whirling of kings of the earth against one another. [170a] Surely, while they are attacking each other, Israel will have relief."

That child said, "Already today this arousal has begun, for look how much blood is being spilled this day in the world!"

Rabbi Hiyya said, "How does this child know?"

Rabbi Shim'on replied, "Sometimes prophecy falls into the mouths of children, and they prophesy more than a prophet."⁸⁴⁷

That child said, "Is it any wonder that children have the power of prophecy? Look, there is an explicit verse! From where do we know this? As is written: *All your children will be pupils of YHVH* (Isaiah 54:13)—they are surely *pupils of YHVH* and prophecy issues from them, which is not so in all the world but for Israel alone, of whom is written *All your children will be pupils of YHVH*, so from them issues prophecy."⁸⁴⁸

Rabbi Shim'on came and kissed him, and said, "In all my days, I have never heard this until now!"

This is the command of the blessed Holy One to Moses: *You shall make the planks for the Dwelling of acacia wood, עומדים (omedim), upright* (Exodus 26:15)—all corresponding to the supernal pattern.

Rabbi Yitshak opened, "*Seraphim עומדים (omedim), were standing, above Him. [Each one had] six wings...* (Isaiah 6:2). The making of the Dwelling with those *planks* corresponds to those *seraphim*; in this place these *omedim, were standing*, and these were *omedim, upright*."⁸⁴⁹

"Now, you might say, 'But all the host of heaven stand, as is said: *I will let you move about among these standing here* (Zechariah 3:7), for all supernal camps have no joints and all of them stand upright.' Well, surely they all stand, and sometimes these are called *seraphim* and sometimes they attain another name, but they all stand. And this verse has been established, as is said: *with all the host of heaven standing by Him...* (1 Kings 22:19)."⁸⁵⁰

"It is written: מזמור לדוד (*Mizmor le-David*), *A psalm of David. YHVH is my shepherd, I shall not lack* (Psalms 23:1). The difference between *Mizmor le-David, A psalm of David*, and מזמור לדוד (*Le-David mizmor*), *Of David, a psalm*, has already been

discussed. Here, *Shekhinah* came first and settled upon him.[851](#)

“*YHVH is my shepherd*. Now, why did *Shekhinah* precede? Look, David should have been the one to precede, since he was seeking nourishment from the blessed Holy One!

“Well, surely *Shekhinah* came first, for this is how it should be concerning nourishment, since She fervently desires all inhabitants of the world to pray for food. For when the blessed Holy One wishes to bring nourishment down to the world, She precedes, and by Her, food descends to all worlds. Therefore, She anticipated this matter of nourishment and settled upon David.[852](#)

“*YHVH is my shepherd*—like a shepherd leading his flock to a place of vegetation and grass, so that nothing will be lacking. So too, the blessed Holy One is my shepherd, nourishing me with whatever I need.

“Alternatively, *YHVH is my shepherd*—we have learned that providing a person’s nourishment is as difficult for the blessed Holy One as splitting the Red Sea. Here are two aspects, both of them true.[853](#)

“One, for all actions of the blessed Holy One are according to justice, and the whole world is based on justice and truth. Every single day constantly, He judges the whole world justly—the righteous, the wicked, and all inhabitants of the world—as is said: *For YHVH is just, loving justice* (Psalms 11:7). And when He judges humanity and sees how wicked people are and how much they sin before Him, it is difficult in His eyes to continually give them nourishment, since He has to feed the wicked and those who sin. Yet He deals with them beyond the line of strict justice, feeding and sustaining them according to supernal *Hesed* that is drawn and flows upon all worlds. By this He nourishes and sustains all—the righteous, the pious, and all inhabitants of the world; all animals, beasts of the field, and birds of the wilderness, ‘from the horns of buffalo to the eggs of lice.’ Nothing is left in the world that He does not

feed, and He sustains all—even though, due to the actions of inhabitants of the world, it is as difficult for Him as splitting the Red Sea.⁸⁵⁴

“But was splitting the Red Sea difficult for Him? Look at what is written: *He rebukes the sea and dries it up* (Nahum 1:4); *He who summons the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the face of the earth* (Amos 5:8)! Now, as soon as His will arises, [170b] all is as nothing before Him; yet you say that splitting the Red Sea was difficult for Him?⁸⁵⁵

“Well, when Israel approached the sea and the blessed Holy One was about to split the Red Sea for them, Rahab, the prince appointed over Egypt, came and demanded justice from the blessed Holy One. He said before Him, ‘Master of the Universe! Why do You want to execute judgment upon the Egyptians and to split the sea for Israel? Look, they are all guilty before You, and all Your ways follow justice and truth! These worship idols and those worship idols; these commit sexual immorality and those commit sexual immorality; these shed blood and those shed blood.’⁸⁵⁶

“At that moment, it was difficult for Him to trespass the way of justice. Look, Israel was heading for the sea, as is written: *YHVH said to Moses, ‘Why are you crying out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel and have them journey forward!’* (Exodus 14:15), yet it was difficult for Him to violate justice and split the sea for them. And if the blessed Holy One had not considered the merit of Abraham, who rose early in the morning to fulfill the will of his Lord—as is written: *Abraham rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3)—they would all have perished in the sea, because all that night the blessed Holy One was sitting in judgment over Israel.⁸⁵⁷

“For we have learned: Why is it written: *One did not draw near the other all night* (Exodus 14:20)? This teaches that supernal angels came that night to offer praise before

the blessed Holy One. He said to them, ‘My handiwork is drowning in the sea, and you offer praise before Me?’ Immediately, *one did not draw near the other all night*.⁸⁵⁸

“What is written? *It happened in the morning watch* (Exodus 14:24)—the blessed Holy One gazed upon the merit of Abraham, who rose early in the morning to fulfill the will of his Lord, as is written: *Abraham rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3). Then the sea turned back and the waters fled before Israel, as is written: *The sea returned, toward morning*, לאִיתָנוּ (*le-eitano*), *to its powerful flow* (Exodus 14:27), and we have learned: *le-eitano*—לִתְנָאוּ (*li-tna’o*), to its condition, to the condition that the blessed Holy One had stipulated with it when He created the world. *Le-eitano*—here is written *le-eitano*, and there is written: *A maskil* לאִיתָן (*le-Eitan*), *for Ethan, the Ezrahite* (Psalms 89:1). So, *toward morning*—at the very time that Abraham rose early to fulfill the will of his Lord, the sea was split here *and He panicked the camp of Egypt* (Exodus 14:27). Therefore, splitting the sea was difficult for Him.⁸⁵⁹

“Similarly, couplings are as difficult before the blessed Holy One as splitting the Red Sea. Just as splitting the Red Sea killed those on that side and saved these on this side, so too of couplings is written *He leads out captives* בְּכוֹשָׁרוֹת (*ba-kosharot*), *in jubilation* (Psalms 68:7), and we have learned: *בְּכִי וּשְׂשִׁירוֹת* (*bekhi ve-shirot*), weeping and singing—one dies and He gives his wife to another, who is wicked and yet ends up with a fine wife. This is not just! But it is entirely concealed mysteries and all is just, and what the Companions have educed is certainly so.⁸⁶⁰

“As for what they have educed: ‘before,’ rather than ‘from before’—‘before’ refers to the one who stands ‘before’ the blessed Holy One, serving before Him. Therefore they did not say that couplings are difficult ‘for’ the blessed Holy One, or that providing a person’s nourishment is difficult ‘for’ the blessed Holy One, but rather ‘before,’ and for this one all these are difficult, since

they are not under His authority, although He acts; but even though He acts, He acts under another's authority.[861](#)

"It is written: *That soul shall be cut off from before Me* (Leviticus 22:3). What is *from before Me*? Well, this is the World that is Coming, the one where all life exists. Alternatively, this is a supernal channel, a river whose waters never cease. All is one; this is who conveys all delights of the World that is Coming, and from those supernal delights she will be cut off—the realm of *delightfulness of YHVH*, and this is *from before Me*.[862](#)

"Now, you might say, 'If so, look at what is written: *Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from before YHVH*, and: *For the men knew that he was fleeing from before YHVH* (Jonah 1:3, 10). And we have learned: Why did he go and flee? Who can possibly flee from the blessed Holy One? Well, he fled to escape the Holy Land, since *Shekhinah* does not dwell outside the land of Israel, and in order that *Shekhinah* would not settle upon him, he fled the land. For *Shekhinah* corresponds to what is written: *Your wife is like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your house* (Psalms 128:3). *A fruitful vine—Shekhinah*. Just as *Shekhinah* was concealed within the Holy of Holies, [171a] so a modest woman does not venture outside the entrance of her house. Therefore Jonah fled outside the Holy Land; yet here is written *from before* and not *before!*'[863](#)

"Well, certainly so: *from before!* Because prophecy does not come from *Shekhinah* but rather *from before*—those two rungs of prophets that settle upon *Shekhinah*. On account of that place he was afraid to be in the Holy Land, and so, *from before*, and *that he was fleeing from before YHVH*, and not *before*, since he knew that prophecy comes only *from before*.[864](#)

"Therefore, couplings are difficult and providing nourishment is difficult 'before.' So King David attributed his food above, since above [the flow] never ceases, whereas here it does, because nourishment does not

depend on this, but rather above. It is therefore written: *I shall not lack* (Psalms 23:1)—my food will never cease, since that river issuing from Eden never ceases. That is why *Shekhinah* preceded for this.⁸⁶⁵

“Come and see: When this place receives nourishment from above, all those who sanctify their Lord arouse and raise their wings as *Shekhinah* approaches with that food, so as not to gaze upon Her. Those three camps in ascension: one proclaims, *Holy!* These call to the second camp, and the first ones and the second ones raise their wings, and these second ones say, *Holy!* These call to the third camp, and all three camps raise their wings in unison and all say, *Holy is YHVH of Hosts! The whole earth is full of His glory!* (Isaiah 6:3).⁸⁶⁶

“So all are linked with one another, as is said: *each linked with her sister; so shall you do for all the planks of the Dwelling* (Exodus 26:17). The *planks* stand constantly erect, just as those are *standing* (Isaiah 6:2)—not bending, since they have no joints—standing constantly without sitting. So of the *planks* is written *standing* (Exodus 26:15).

“What is written? *Two tenons for the one plank* (Exodus 26:17). So too, every single one of them includes two aspects: his own and fellow’s—and so too with his fellow. Thus, linked with one another.⁸⁶⁷

“Similarly, of Torah is written *Her profit is better than profit of silver; her yield, better than gold* (Proverbs 3:14). This one teaches that one, and that one teaches this one—they become linked with one another. This one obtains his own and his fellow’s, that one obtains his own and his fellow’s, and they are linked with one another.⁸⁶⁸

“It is written: *In meadows of grass He lays me down, by waters of tranquility He guides me* (Psalms 23:2). *Meadows of grass*—supernal sources, from which all nourishment and sustenance comes. These נַאוֹת (*na’ot*), *meadows*, are called *ne’ot, habitations of, Jacob* (Lamentations 2:2). *Ne’ot, Meadows of, grass*—for there are meadows outside called

ne'ot, pastures of, wilderness (Jeremiah 9:9); so, meadows of grass.⁸⁶⁹

“Now, you might say, ‘Look at what is written: *Let the earth sprout grass* (Genesis 1:11)—this is below!’ Well, *grass* issues from those *meadows*, born and growing from them; so, *In meadows of grass He lays me down*.⁸⁷⁰

“*By waters of tranquility* (Psalms 23:2)—waters of rest, flowing from that river issuing from Eden, and those waters are called *waters of tranquility*.⁸⁷¹

“*He restores my soul* (Psalms 23:3)—soul of David. And David sought only to perfect that rung of his fittingly.⁸⁷²

“In this *tranquility*, the righteous are destined to rest in the world that is coming, as is written: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy your soul with radiancies and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail* (Isaiah 58:11).”⁸⁷³

You shall make fifty bronze clasps... (Exodus 26:11).⁸⁷⁴

Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba were sitting one evening, as night dusked, in a

garden canopy by the Sea of Tiberias. Just then, they saw two stars moving from different directions, collide with one another, and vanish.⁸⁷⁵

Rabbi Abba said, “How great are the works of the blessed Holy One in the heavens above and on the earth below! Who can comprehend these two stars, emerging from different directions, colliding, and disappearing?”

Rabbi El'azar replied, “But didn't we just see them? We gazed at them, and we have gazed upon many other acts [171b] that the blessed Holy One performs continually.”

He opened, saying, “*Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding is beyond number* (Psalms 147:5). *Great, mighty*, and supreme is the blessed Holy One. Now, didn't we know that the blessed Holy One is

great and mighty in power? What kind of praise does David offer here?

“Well, everywhere he says *Great is YHVH*, while here he says *Great is our Lord*. Why? There, where he says *Great is YHVH and highly praised* (Psalms 145:3), he is speaking of a high rung; while here, where it is written *Great is our Lord*, he is speaking of a low rung, who is Lord of the whole earth.^{[876](#)}

“What is written before this verse? *He counts the number of the stars, to all of them gives names* (Psalms 147:4). If all inhabitants of the world since the day Adam was created would gather together to count the stars, they would not be able to, as is said: *Count the stars, if you can count them* (Genesis 15:5). But of the blessed Holy One, what is written? *He counts the number of the stars, to all of them gives names*. Why? Because it is written: *Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding is beyond number*.^{[877](#)}

“Come and see! It is written: *The one who brings forth their array by number and calls them each by name: because of His great might and vast power, not one is missing* (Isaiah 40:26). The blessed Holy One brings forth by name all those powers, camps, and stars, every single one, and not even one is missing. Throughout the stars and planets of the heavens, all have been appointed as leaders and officers to serve the world, every single one fittingly. You cannot find a tiny blade of grass in the whole world that is not controlled by a star or planet in heaven. And over that star is a prince who serves before the blessed Holy One, every single one fittingly.^{[878](#)}

“All stars in the heavens officiate over this world, and all are appointed to attend to every single thing of this world. No plant or tree or grass of the field can sprout or grow except by vision of the stars standing above them, appearing above them face-to-face, every single one fittingly.

“Most of the companies of stars and planets emerge in the beginning of the night, during the first two and three-quarter hours; from then on emerge only a few. And none of those stars serves in vain or appears in vain.

“There are stars that serve all night, in order to sprout and raise all those things over which they have been appointed. There are stars that serve until midnight, sprouting and raising from the beginning of the night until that moment all those things over which they have been appointed. And there are stars that serve only a little of the night, for as soon as [the star] appears by that herb or grass, it immediately fulfills its function and is no longer needed that night. Surely they do not stand without purpose; as soon as they have fulfilled their function, they appear no longer in this world and enter their places.[879](#)

“In the Book of Supernal Wisdom of the children of the East, they speak of all those comets that shoot a scepter through the sky. They say that there are herbs on earth of a kind called ‘elixirs of life,’ and there are precious stones in the earth, and beaten gold formed in towering mountains, with a little water covering it—not covering but flowing over it. Ruling over all these are those comets, through which they increase. Their perfection and growth depend entirely on the vision and gleam of the scepter shot by that star through the sky. Then all these things are perfected and flourish.[880](#)

“There are illnesses among people, such as jaundice and poisoning, whose cure depends solely on a mirror of polished steel, sparkling to the eyes, and the one who is ill must gaze upon it. This is ineffective unless the mirror is moved from side to side, like a comet’s scepter casting a lightning-flash at his face, and by that shot of lightning dazzling his eyes he is cured. So too, all those ruled by these stars have no fitting enhancement and growth except by extension of the comet’s scepter, whereby they are

perfected fittingly in appearance, [172a] color, and power.⁸⁸¹

“This is fine, for it is similarly indicated in the Book of King Solomon, regarding the science of precious stones, that if they lack the sparkling gleam and flash of certain stars, they never form perfectly. All has been arranged by the blessed Holy One for the perfection of the world—as is written: *to shine upon the earth* (Genesis 1:17)—for whatever is needed to enhance this world.⁸⁸²

“It is written: *You shall make fifty bronze clasps* (Exodus 26:11), and it is written: *You shall make fifty golden clasps* (ibid., 6). We have learned: Whoever has never seen those clasps in the Dwelling has not seen the radiance of the stars in the sky, for so they seemed in appearance and color to whoever gazed upon them.⁸⁸³

“There are stars in the sky that emerge from the firmament where all stars are attached. In that firmament are one hundred window openings, some on the east and some on the south, and in every single window one star. When the sun traverses those windows and openings in the firmament, it sparkles, and these stars emerge to sparkle from that sparkling of the sun and are tinged with the color bronze, and some, yellow like the color of gold; so some are red and some yellow. There are fifty in these fifty windows, and fifty in those other windows. The ones on the east are yellow, the ones on the south are red; by them the completion of the Dwelling is clasped.⁸⁸⁴

“Stars in the night mingle with all those stars emerging from that firmament, and they sparkle and flash and rule this world, some over bronze, some over yellowish gold, which form perfectly by their power.⁸⁸⁵

“These stars rule for twenty-five and a half points of the night, which are minutes of an hour. The ones that increase bronze are red, flashing and sparkling. When they emit a sparkle three times to the east, or five or seven, kings of the nations will rise against that side, and all riches and

gold will disappear from there. One, two, four, or six sparkles, one after another—awe and fear will fall upon that side. If a sparkle strikes and subsides, strikes and subsides, wars will threaten but not break out, for then there is arousal above before the blessed Holy One against those princes of the world who rule over the other nations. And similarly on the other side.”[886](#)

He opened, saying, “*Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons* (Daniel 2:20-21). All is in His control, and He has delivered His holy people from the power and dominion of stars and planets, for these are false gods, and not like these is the share of Jacob, for look: *He is the Former of all* (Jeremiah 10:16)![887](#)

“There is a firmament above all these firmaments, hidden and concealed, and the seal of the signet ring of the Dwelling reigns over this firmament. This is called the Firmament of the Chamber of the Dwelling, and here are all those windows, on this side and on that, and it holds all the arrangements of the Dwelling. There are six windows greater than all the others, and one concealed, ruling over them.[888](#)

“One window is called Window of Radiance, and through it emerges one star called by the wise יָד (yad), Hand. This is smelting, melting down into the dominion of Judah—not that he has a share in it, for the tribes of Israel have no share or inheritance in them; but rather the tribe of Judah rules over this, not it over him.[889](#)

“When the children of Judah strayed from the blessed Holy One, they went inquiring after this window and this star, saying that this conquers other nations, for of it is written *your hand on your enemies’ nape* (Genesis 49:8). They followed it, serving and worshiping it, and of this is written *The children of Judah did what was evil in the eyes of YHVH* (1 Kings 14:22).[890](#)

“When this star comes out, it extends like a hand with five fingers, shining and sparkling in that window. [172b] Sorcerers and magicians fear this place, for when this rules, all sorcery and witchcraft are nullified and fail in their hands.[891](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Since this firmament is concealed, how do they know?’ Well, they have an outward sign, so they know that this star is ruling, and they fear it constantly and that sorcery and witchcraft fails in their hands. So sometimes these succeed and sometimes not, and therefore they are decreasing in the world, since they do not know the essence when they see their failure. Thus the ancients knew, gazing at the outward sign that they recognized.[892](#)

“The second window is called Window of the Nail, for it resembles a nail, and through it emerges one star called by the wise Viper, since this reigns in a dominion of harsh judgment. It has a head and tail like a viper lying in wait to kill.

“From that window emerge six billion spirits who rule over the nails of humans, when they are thrown away openly. With these, all those who know perform witchcraft and sorcery. At the time when this star reigns, all those who throw away nail-parings or perform witchcraft bring death upon the whole world, and those performing witchcraft succeed.[893](#)

“The third window is called Breastpiece, and through it emerges one star called Gleam of the Lamps. This is a sparkle sparkling and presiding over every spirit, bearing tranquility and deliverance—no accusation at all. When it rules, total tranquility and radiance prevail in the world; satisfaction, ease, and totality prevail in the world.[894](#)

“The fourth window is a window called Goblet, and through it emerges one star called by the wise Cluster of Henna, for so it comes out: like a cluster, sparkling sparkles like berries of henna. By this, arousal of Compassion is

roused in the world, drawing near and showing compassion; numerous offspring abound in the world. Inhabitants of the world are not annoyed when they need one another; peace and joy arouse in the world.⁸⁹⁵

“The fifth window is a window called Well, because the star emerging through it enters and emerges, drawing like a bucket, never subsiding. This the wise of heart cannot truly fathom, since it does not remain stationary and never subsides; so they push themselves to examine this place and reach a conclusion.⁸⁹⁶

“The sixth window is a window called Gleam, and through it emerges one star called Gizron, because when this rules, the world is subject to Judgment, to many גזרין (*gizrin*), decrees, many punishments, and every single day new decrees are enacted against the world—before these conclude, others are enacted anew. This one does not often prevail in the world; but close to the days of Messiah, this window with this star will rule over the world. Consequently, evil beasts will dominate the world and new evil species will emerge one after another, and Israel’s enemies will be in distress. But when they are oppressed in darkness, the blessed Holy One will illumine for them the radiance of day, *and holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom* (Daniel 7:18).⁸⁹⁷

“Then the seventh window will open to the whole world, and its star will shine for forty days when King Messiah is revealed, and all nations of the world will gather around him. Then this verse will be fulfilled: *The root of Jesse, standing as a banner for the peoples—nations will seek him and his abode will be glorious* (Isaiah 11:10).”⁸⁹⁸

He opened, saying, “*But none says, ‘Where is God, my Maker, who gives songs in the night?’* (Job 35:10). This verse has been established and discussed; but עושׂי (*osai*), *my Makers*—the verse should read עוֹשִׂי (*osi*), *my Maker*; why *osai, my Makers*? Well, the name אֱלֹהִים (*Eloah*), *God*, is an

inclusive name, indicating Him and His court. This is a complete name, comprising male and female: ׀ ׀—לֵא (El—vav he), and therefore, *osai, my Makers*.[899](#)

“*Who gives songs in the night*—for this is the one who constantly praises the King who possesses peace, like a lamp that never subsides, so that it may receive light, supernal joy, from abundance of [173a] joy. So, *who gives songs in the night*.[900](#)

“All those stars shining in the sky praise and glorify the blessed Holy One as long as they are visible there, for all supernal angels praise and glorify during each watch, in the three divisions of night.[901](#)

“During the night various aspects disperse. In the beginning of the night, as evening dusks and darkens, all those evil spirits and evil species scatter, roaming throughout the world, and the Other Side sets out, and they demand the ways of the house of the King from all those holy aspects.[902](#)

“As soon as the Other Side arouses, all inhabitants of the world taste the flavor of death, one-sixtieth of death, and it dominates them. Then, since impurity has departed above and descended to rule below, three camps separate to praise the blessed Holy One in three aspects of the night, as has been educed. While they are praising the blessed Holy One, the Other Side goes roaming below in all directions of the world; and until the Other Side is removed from there, they cannot unite with their Lord.[903](#)

“A mystery for the wise: Supernal angels and Israel below all repulse the Other Side. When supernal angels wish to unite with their Lord, they cannot do so until they thrust it out. What do they do? Six hundred thousand holy angels descend and cast sleep upon all inhabitants of the world. When it descends—for they thrust it outside and give it the whole world through that sleep—it rules over them and they become defiled through it, except for the land of Israel alone, where it does not rule. As soon as it

separates from them, they enter the presence of their Lord, glorifying and praising Him.[904](#)

“Similarly, Israel below cannot unite with their Lord until they thrust that Other Side away from them and give it a portion with which it occupies itself. Afterward, they approach their Lord, and there is no accuser above or below.[905](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Granted, below; but above, what accusation exists there?’ Well, above because it is an impure spirit and they are holy spirits, and until they expel the impure spirit from their midst, they cannot approach their Lord, for holiness never mingles with impurity. Similarly with Israel below. Both sides, those above and those below, when they wish to approach the Holy King, thrust it out.[906](#)

“Therefore, as night enters and supernal angels array themselves in row upon row to approach their Lord, they thrust that side out first, and then enter holiness. So, as night enters, all evil spirits, evil species, and impure spirits are thrust out, and ministers of the King enter the realm of holiness.

“This may be compared to a king who had precious stones in a carved chest in his castle.[907](#) That king was wise: In order to prevent anyone who wished from approaching that chest of precious stones and pearls, in his wisdom he took a powerful serpent and wound it round the chest. Whoever tried to stretch out his hand toward the chest—the serpent sprang upon him and killed him.

“The king had an intimate friend. The king said to him, ‘Whenever you wish to enter and use the chest, do such-and-such to the serpent, and you can open the chest and use my hidden treasures.’

“Similarly, the blessed Holy One wound a serpent around holiness. When holy angels come to enter the realm of holiness, the serpent is there and they fear being defiled by it.[908](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘Look, they are all fire, and fire is not susceptible to defilement!’ Come and see! It is written: *He makes His angels spirits, His ministers flaming fire* (Psalms 104:4). *He makes His angels spirits*—angels standing outside. *His ministers flaming fire*—angels standing inside. It is a spirit of impurity, and they are spirit. Spirits do not enter one another; a spirit of impurity and a spirit of holiness do not [173b] intermingle. Therefore those called ‘spirit’ cannot enter within because of that spirit of impurity; whereas those within are fire, and that fire repels the impurity so that it cannot enter within. Thus, all thrust it out so that it will not mingle with them. So, supernal angels praise the blessed Holy One after they have thrust out impurity.[909](#)

“There are three watches in the night. Corresponding to them are three camps that divide, as has been said. So, this master of them all is the lamp of David, never subsiding, but constantly praising and glorifying the supernal King, and of this is written *who gives songs in the night* (Job 35:10).[910](#)

“Alternatively, *But none says, ‘Where is God, עושי (osai), my Makers?’* (Job 35:10), as has been said, for a human being is comprised and formed of above and below. Just as the body derives from two sides, from male and female, so too, the spirit: spirit is composed of male and female. By this mystery, a human is perfected in his engravings, in body and in spirit. Since he is included in this mystery and in this act, as has been said, it is surely written: *God said, ‘Let us make a human’* (Genesis 1:26), as has been said.[911](#)

“Concerning the night, you say that in the beginning of the night all those evil species and evil spirits arouse in the world. How can this be? If so, we have learned that all these evil species emerge from the side of the north, and it has been said that when the north wind arouses at midnight, all those evil species and evil aspects are rounded up from the world and enter the hollow of the

great abyss. If so, then on the side of the south, which is right, why do those evil species roam in the beginning of the night, when the south wind prevails?[912](#)

“Well, surely, if not for the south, which restrains and repels that evil side, the world could not endure it and would be totally obliterated. But when that Other Side arouses, it arouses only on the side of the west wind, which prevails in the beginning of the night, gathering the world. Thus, the blessed Holy One prepares a remedy in advance for the world in this manner, as has been said. Happy are Israel in this world and in the world that is coming, for the blessed Holy One has chosen them from all nations of the world!”[913](#)

Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba entered the house. As the night split, they rose to study Torah.

Rabbi Abba said, “Surely now is a time of favor for the blessed Holy One, and we have often deduced this, that at the moment of midnight the blessed Holy One enters among the righteous in the Garden of Eden and delights with them. Happy is he who engages in Torah at that time!”[914](#)

Rabbi El’azar said, “As for the blessed Holy One’s delighting among the righteous in the Garden of Eden, how does He delight? Well, at the time when night splits, the blessed Holy One arouses love of the Left toward Assembly of Israel, for love derives only from the Left. Assembly of Israel has no gift or special object like those spirits of the righteous, whom the blessed Holy One sees adorned with many good deeds and worthy acts that they performed that day. By these the blessed Holy One is more pleased than by all sacrifices and offerings, for He smells that pleasing aroma produced by Israel.”[915](#)

“Then a radiance shines and all the trees of the Garden of Eden utter song, and the righteous are adorned there with the delights of the world that is coming. When a person wakes at that hour, he obtains his share with the

righteous who are in the Garden. One Name engraved with thirty-two letters is adorned there, within mysteries of the righteous.”[916](#)

He opened, saying, “*Hallelujah! I praise YHVH wholeheartedly...* (Psalms 111:1). This has been discussed and aroused by the Companions, and so it is, for this is praise transcending all other songs and praises uttered by David, among the ten praises that he offered, since it includes Name and praise in one, and is totality of the holy supernal Name.”[917](#)

“אודה (Odeh), *I praise, YHVH wholeheartedly.* Wherever King David uttered the mystery of the alphabet, [174a] it is mystery of engraved letters issuing in engravings of thirty-two paths. There are upper letters from mystery of the upper world, and there are other letters, which are small letters. Here is mystery of the alphabet from the lower world.”[918](#)

“*I praise YHVH בכל לבב (be-khol levav), wholeheartedly—*with the good impulse and the evil impulse, which dwells within him; for one should praise the blessed Holy One for everything, with the good impulse and the evil impulse. For from the side of the good impulse comes good to a person, and one should bless the blessed Holy One, ‘who is good and does good.’ On the side of the evil impulse comes accusation against a person, and one should praise the blessed Holy One with the good impulse and the evil impulse for all that comes to him, from this side or from the other.”[919](#)

“בסוד (Be-sod), *In the council of, the upright and the assembly* (Psalms 111:1). *Be-sod, In mystery, the upright—*in them lies the mystery of the blessed Holy One, for they know all His mysteries and are His mystery. So, *be-sod, in mystery, the upright.*”[920](#)

“*And the assembly* (Psalms 111:1)—Israel, when they gather in a group of ten to praise the blessed Holy One. Thus one should praise the blessed Holy One for good and

for evil, publicizing everything. For you might say, ‘But He knows! Why is it necessary to publicize?’ Well, by this the blessed Holy One is glorified in the world, by publicizing the miracle. Therefore of the blessed Holy One is written *I will be magnified and sanctified and made known* (Ezekiel 38:23).⁹²¹

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Why is it written: *Let every soul praise Yah* (Psalms 150:6)? Because of what has been taught: All souls come from this holy body and assume their place in human beings. From what place? From the place called *Yah*.”

Who is this place? Rabbi Yehudah said, “As is written: *How abundant are Your works, O YHVH! All of them You have made in wisdom* (ibid. 104:24). It has been taught: By this Wisdom, whose springs issue in thirty-two paths, all is consummated—everything above and below. It is called Holy Spirit, in which all spirits are consummated.”⁹²²

Rabbi Yitshak said, “On the day that Rabbi Shim’on explained this matter, his eyes streamed, and he said, ‘All treasures of the supernal Lord are transmitted by one key, and in radiant garments are revealed supernal engravings.’ But it has been taught as follows: Who can perceive and grasp what is hidden in this spring? For look, Moses did not reveal this mystery in his days, when he revealed deep mysteries to Israel, even though all was revealed by him—except at the moment when the blessed Holy One desired to raise him to the supernal holy Academy and to conceal him from humanity, as is written: *A hundred and twenty years old I am today* (Deuteronomy 31:2), precisely! For on that day his days were completed, to approach this place, as is written: *Behold, your days have drawn near to die* (ibid., 14)—*drawn near*, literally!⁹²³

“For it has been taught: Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘Moses did not die.’ Now, you might say, ‘But look at what is written: *Moses died there* (Deuteronomy 34:5)!’ Well, the righteous

are always referred to as dying, but what is death? From our perspective it is called so. For it has been taught: Rabbi Shim'on said that one who has attained perfection, upon whom holy faith depends, is independent of death and does not die. As with Jacob, who possessed perfect faith; for Rabbi Ya'akov said, *'No longer will your name be called Jacob, but Israel will be your name. And He called his name Israel* (Genesis 35:10). What is *Israel*? Perfection of all. And it is written: *As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—for I am with you! [I will save you from afar,] and your seed from the land of their captivity* (Jeremiah 46:28, 27)."[924](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, "From here: *For I am with you, precisely! Happy is his share, for His Lord spoke so to him! It is not written for you are with Me, but rather for I am with you, for His Lord came to join with him.*"[925](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Rabbi Abba has spoken well when he said, *'Jacob will return and be calm and secure, with no one frightening him* (Jeremiah 46:27)—*Jacob will return to be called by another name, as is written: No longer will your name be called Jacob, but Israel [will be your name]* (Genesis 35:10).' Alternatively, *Jacob will return to the place whence he was taken. And be calm—in this world. And secure—in the world that is coming. With no one frightening him—namely the Angel of Death. This implies that he possessed all.*"[926](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, "The Companions have established it, as is written: *and your seed from the land of their captivity* (Jeremiah 46:27)—just as his seed is alive, so he too is alive."[927](#) [174b]

The central bar in the middle of the planks, running from end to end (Exodus 26:28).[928](#)

Rabbi Yehudah opened, *"Happy are you, O land whose king is a son of noble birth and whose princes feast at the*

proper time! (Ecclesiastes 10:17). And it is written: *Woe to you, O land whose king is a boy and whose princes feast in the morning!* (ibid., 16). How have we established these verses?"[929](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Woe to the world, for they care nothing about the service of their Lord! For look, their Lord cares for them, benefiting them, and He has placed before them words of Torah, yet they do not care!

"For we have learned: There are three things that a person must do for his son: circumcision, redemption, and marrying him to a woman. And all this the blessed Holy One did for Israel. Circumcision, as is written: *Circumcise the Children of Israel again, a second time* (Joshua 5:2), and it is written: *At eight days old every male among you shall be circumcised...* (Genesis 17:12). Redemption, as is written: *He redeemed you from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt* (Deuteronomy 7:8). Marrying a woman, as is written: *Male and female He created them, and then, God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply'* (Genesis 1:27-28). Further, He carried them like an eagle who carries its young on its wings, as is written: *I bore you on eagles' wings...* (Exodus 19:4)." [930](#)

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, "All is fine, but the Torah that He carried around before Israel and taught to them is greatest of all! Come and see: A person has no praise in this world or in the world that is coming other than praise of Torah, of which is written *By me kings reign...* (Proverbs 8:15)." [931](#)

For we have learned:

When Rav Huna went up there he found the rabbis engaged in this verse: *I will deal with Bel in Babylon, and I will take what he has swallowed out of his mouth, and nations will no longer stream to him* (Jeremiah 51:44). They paid no regard to Rav Huna because they did not recognize him from before. As he entered the house of study he found the rabbis saying, "This verse calls for contemplation! If the false god of Nebuchadnezzar was named Bel, then look what is written of him: *Finally there came before me Daniel—whose name is Belteshazzar after the name of my god* (Daniel

4:5)! And also, what is the meaning of *I will take what he has swallowed out of his mouth?*"[932](#)

Rav Huna stood up among the sustaining pillars and said, "If I were in own my place, I would expound this verse."[933](#)

They paid him no attention. He stood a second time and said the same thing. Rabbi Yudai son of Rav came and seated him in front of him, and said to him, "Speak, my son, speak! For of words of Torah is written *At the head of bustling streets she calls, in the gateways of the city she utters her words* (Proverbs 1:21)."[934](#)

He opened, saying, "We have learned as follows: In ancient days, before Jacob appeared, a person lived peacefully at home; when his time arrived, he died without illness. When Jacob appeared, he pleaded to the blessed Holy One, 'Master of the Universe! If it pleases You, let a person fall ill for one or two days, and then be gathered to his people, so that he may set his house in order and repent of his sins.'

"He replied, 'Fine, you be the paradigm for the world!'

"Come and see what is written: *It happened after these things that Joseph was told, 'Look, your father חולה (holeh), is ill'* (Genesis 48:1)—spelled חלה (*halah*), *became ill*, something that never happened before.[935](#)

"After he lay down to die, there was no one who became ill and did not die, until Hezekiah appeared. What is written of him? *In those days Hezekiah became deathly ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him and said, 'Thus says YHVH: Set your house in order, for you are going to die; you will not live.'* Come and see what is written: *And Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to YHVH* (Isaiah 38:1-2). He said to Him, 'If it pleases You, let people be healed of their illness and praise Your name, and realize and then turn in complete repentance, so that inhabitants of the world may be found worthy before You.'

"The blessed Holy One replied, 'That is fine! You will be the paradigm for the world.' And so it was, what never was before, as is written: *A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he was ill and recovered from his illness* (Isaiah 38:9).[936](#)

"It has been taught: That day the sun went backward ten degrees. And it has been taught: Merodach-baladan used to eat every day at the fourth hour, and then sleep until the ninth hour. On that day he slept, and when he awoke he saw the sun standing at the fourth hour. He said, 'What is this? In killing with a lance his centurions are conspiring!'

"They said [175a] to him, 'Why?'

"He replied, 'Because I slept for a whole day!'[937](#)

"They replied, 'Not so! Rather, the God of Hezekiah has performed two miracles this day: He healed Hezekiah of his illness and He turned back the sun to this time.'

"He said, 'Is there in the whole world a great God other than mine?'

"They replied, 'The God of Hezekiah.'

"He rose and wrote his letter: 'Peace to Hezekiah, king of Judah, and peace to his God, and peace to Jerusalem, the Holy City.' Afterward he reconsidered, rose from his throne, took three steps, and wrote

differently: 'Peace to the great God, peace to Hezekiah, and peace to Jerusalem, the Holy City.'

"The blessed Holy One said to him, 'You took three steps in My honor. By your life, from you shall arise three kings, august cosmocrats ruling the whole world!' The first of these was Nebuchadnezzar.⁹³⁸

"Come and see what Daniel said to him: '*You are the head of gold. After you will arise another kingdom, inferior to yours, and another—a third kingdom, [one of bronze, which will rule over all the earth]* (Daniel 2:38-39).' What is written? *King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold whose height was sixty cubits high and whose width was six cubits* (ibid. 3:1). 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.'⁹³⁹

"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, as is written: *I will take what he has swallowed out of his mouth, and nations will no longer stream to him* (Jeremiah 51:44)."⁹⁴⁰

Rabbi Yehudah rose and kissed him on the head, and said, "If I had not drawn you to the cluster here, we would never have discovered you!" From that day on, they revered him.⁹⁴¹

It has been taught: *Happy are you, O land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes feast at the proper time!* (Ecclesiastes 10:17). Rabbi Yose applied this verse to Moses when he brought Israel out of Egypt and liberated them. *And whose princes feast at the proper time*—as is written: *you shall eat it in haste. It is a passover offering to YHVH* (Exodus 12:11).⁹⁴²

Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai said, "Did I not say that the words of King Solomon are all within, within the holy Temple. What you have said is fine, and the verse comes in order to be expounded, but this verse is above in the holy Temple."⁹⁴³

"It has been taught: *Happy are you, O ארץ (erets), land, whose king is of noble birth and whose princes feast at the proper time!* What is *erets, land?* Unspecified *erets*. For it has been taught: What is the meaning of the verse *He has cast*

down from heaven to erets, earth, the beauty of Israel (Lamentations 2:1)? Well, this *earth* is among the crowns of the Holy King, of whom is written *on the day that YHVH Elohim made earth and heaven* (Genesis 2:4). Whatever nourishment this *earth* obtains comes from the place called *heaven*, and this earth is nourished only from the holy perfection called *heaven*.⁹⁴⁴

“On the day when the blessed Holy One sought to destroy His house below and the Holy Land, He first removed this Holy Land above and brought Her down from the rung from which She was imbibing, from holy *heaven*; and afterward He destroyed this one below, as is written: *He has cast down from heaven earth—first, and afterward, He did not remember His footstool on the day of His wrath* (Lamentations 2:1). For it has been taught that such are the ways of the blessed Holy One: When He wishes to judge the world, He first renders judgment above, and afterward it is established below, as is written: *I will punish the host of the heights on high and the kings of the earth upon the earth* (Isaiah 24:21).”⁹⁴⁵

Rabbi Shim'on said, “*Happy are you, O erets, land, whose king is of noble birth—*who nourishes You in abundance without fear of another. From that supernal Holy King all are nourished.”⁹⁴⁶

“*And whose princes feast at the proper time—as is said: Now be it said to Jacob and to Israel what God has performed* (Numbers 23:23).”⁹⁴⁷

“*Woe to you, O erets, land, whose king is a boy!* (Ecclesiastes 10:16)—as is written: *I will make boys their princes* (Isaiah 3:4). For woe to the earth when She imbibes from the Left.”⁹⁴⁸

“*And whose princes eat in the morning* (Ecclesiastes 10:16)—in that [175b] darkness before it dawns, before the one who reigns rules.”⁹⁴⁹

It has been taught: Rabbi Shim'on said, "*The central bar in the middle of the planks, running from end to end* (Exodus 26:28). *From end to end*—Jacob, the perfect holy one, as we have established: *Jacob was ish tam* (אִישׁ תָּמִים) (*ish tam*), *a complete man, dwelling in tents* (Genesis 25:27). It is not written *dwelling in a tent*, but rather *dwelling in tents*—two, for he grasps both one and the other. Similarly here is written *the central bar*, and it is *running from end to end*, for it grasps one and the other. For we have learned: What is meant by *ish tam*? According to its translation: שְׁלִים (*shelim*), complete—totally complete, complete on both sides, that of the Holy Ancient One and that of the Short-Tempered One; completing supernal *Hesed* and supernal *Gevurah*, consummating one and the other."[950](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, "I have seen that *Hokhmah* is totality of all, and supernal *Hesed* issues from *Hokhmah*, and *Gevurah*, which is severe Judgment, issues from *Binah*. Jacob completes both sides. The patriarchs are totality of all, and Jacob is totality of our patriarchs."[951](#)

"It has been taught: *Hokhmah* struck its paths and with a wind gathered the waters, which were gathered to one place, and fifty gates opened for *Binah*. From those paths emerged ten crowns with dazzling rays, and twenty-two paths remained. The wind struck those paths, and fifty gates opened for *Binah*, and twenty-two were engraved on the fifty gates of Jubilee, and they were adorned with seventy-two letters of the Holy Name. These opened sideways, and were adorned with twenty-two crowns of Compassion contained in the Ancient of Days, who illumines them, each one in its aspect."[952](#)

"Fifty engravings were adorned with forty-two holy letters by which heaven and earth were created, and eight gates were engraved with their engravings, which are eight letters of Compassion—as is written: יְהוָה יְהוָה (YHVH YHVH)! *A compassionate and gracious God* (Exodus 34:6)—emerging from the Ancient One to the Short-Tempered One and

uniting with these holy crowns, *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, supernal ones ascending.⁹⁵³

“Supernal *Hesed* emerged from this side, and Judgment of *Gevurah* from that side. The virtue of Jacob came and completed both of them, uniting them, for he is supernal perfection.”⁹⁵⁴

It has been taught: Rabbi Shim'on said, “Therefore he is called Israel; for it has been taught: Jacob is low, Israel supreme; Jacob is not complete, Israel completion of all. Similarly it has been taught: *Utterance of David son of Jesse* (2 Samuel 23:1)—David is not complete, for he is last; Jesse, supreme and completion. This corresponds to what we have learned: The people of Israel were not exiled from their land until they denied the blessed Holy One, as is written: *We have no share in David, no portion in Jesse's son—every man to his tent, O Israel!* (ibid. 20:1). What is meant by *every man* לְאֶהָלָיו (*le-ohalav*), *to his tent*? The place where idolatry dwells.”⁹⁵⁵

Rabbi Yehudah said, “When Wisdom began to engrave engravings in all those crowns, from which crown did it begin?”⁹⁵⁶

He replied, “With the one called *Binah*. In *Binah* all is contained, so in Her were opened fifty gates. Consequently, all was engraved by Wisdom, as is written: *All of them You have made in wisdom* (Psalms 104:24).⁹⁵⁷

“It has been taught: *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, gauged the heavens with a span, held in a measure the dust of the earth, and weighed mountains on a scale and hills in a balance?* (Isaiah 40:12). *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand. Who is the waters? Binah.*”

Rabbi El'azar taught thus: “This is *Hesed*.”

Rabbi Shim'on said to him, “All are evenly balanced.”⁹⁵⁸

“*Gauged the heavens with a span. Who is the heavens? Tif'eret*, as is written: *Tif'eret, Beauty of, Israel* (Lamentations 2:1).⁹⁵⁹

"Held in a measure the dust of the earth—Gevurah.[960](#)

"And weighed mountains on a scale—other crowns, called mountains of pure balsam.[961](#)

"And hills in a balance—other chariots below them.[962](#)

"Come and see: In the hollow of his hand. What is the hollow of his hand? Spirit of Hokhmeta, Wisdom, for we have learned as follows: A handful of clusters sunk in a vessel."[963](#)

"Gauged the heavens בזרת (ba-zeret), with a span. Who is zeret, a span? Fifty gates opening and scattering in all directions, as is written: וזריתי (ve-zeriti), I will spread, dung (Malachi 2:3).[964](#)

"Held בשליש (ba-shalish), in a measure. Who is shalish, a measure? Compassion, perfection of all."[965](#)

"And weighed [mountains] on a scale. Who is a scale?" Rabbi Shim'on said, "As is written: scales of equity, weights of equity (Leviticus 19:36)."[966](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said further, "We have established these matters in the measure [176a] of the Creator of all."[967](#)

Rabbi El'azar said, "This implies that Jacob issued from severe Judgment, for Isaac grasped severe Judgment as his share."[968](#)

Rabbi Shim'on replied, "That alone? Look, Isaac issued from *Hesed*, and so with all of them: Judgment issues from Compassion, and Compassion from Judgment! Abraham inherited a legacy of *Hesed*; Isaac issued in Judgment from within *Hesed*; Jacob issued in Compassion from within severe Judgment. So it is above: one from the other, absorbing one another, until all is recognized as one, all depending on one, all becoming one. Blessed be His Name forever and ever!"[969](#)

Rabbi El'azar said, "Clearly there is no perfection unless one is joined to the other and one embraces both of them, consummating all, like Jacob, corresponding to what is written: *running from end to end* (Exodus 26:28).[970](#)

“It has been taught: All this is designated only from our perspective, and from our perspective perceived to be so. For above, all is evenly balanced, not varying or variable, as is written: *I am YHVH—I have not varied* (Malachi 3:6).”[971](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “All those lamps shine from one, and upon one they depend. They are entirely one and must not be separated, and whoever separates them is as though he separated himself from eternal life.”[972](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “*I will make boys their princes, and babes shall rule them* (Isaiah 3:4)—as is written: *You shall make two cherubim of gold* (Exodus 25:18). It is written *Enthroned on the cherubim* (1 Samuel 4:4), and it is written *He mounted a cherub and flew* (2 Samuel 22:11). *Enthroned on the cherubim*—when He settles to dwell completely it is written *Enthroned on the cherubim. He mounted a cherub*—one, for the King is not seated on His throne. *Enthroned on the cherubim*—two.”[973](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “Woe to the world when one cherub turns his face from his fellow, for look at what is written: *their faces toward each other* (Exodus 25:20)—when there is peace in the world!”[974](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Look at what we have learned: *Your father’s nakedness and your mother’s nakedness you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:7)! Woe to one who exposes their nakedness! Similarly it is written of Jacob: *running from end to end* (Exodus 26:28). Happy is the share of Israel, by whose praise the blessed Holy One is glorified—corresponding to the pattern above, as is written: *Israel, in whom I glory* (Isaiah 49:3)!”[975](#)

It has been taught: Rabbi Yitshak said, “In ancient days a person would say to his fellow, ‘Tell me a word and take a mina of silver.’ Now a person says to his fellow, ‘Take a mina of silver and study Torah,’ and no one cares and no one inclines his ear—except for those few holy ones of the Highest, in whom the blessed Holy One glories, as is written: *Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the*

land forever—sprout of My planting, work of My hands, that I may be glorified (Isaiah 60:21).⁹⁷⁶

You shall set the purging cover upon the Ark from above... (Exodus 25:21).⁹⁷⁷

Rabbi Yitshak said, “וַיִּוֶן (Vavei), *Hooks of the columns and their bands, of silver* (Exodus 27:10). I have already

said: All those clasped by knots of supernal pillars are called *hooks of the columns*, and all those below are suspended from those וַיִּוֶן (*vavim*), hooks. Who are *vavim*? Six within six, united and watered by the spine standing above them. And in the Book of Concealment it is taught: ‘*Vavim* above, *vavim* below, all evenly balanced.’⁹⁷⁸

What is Concealment of the Book?

Rabbi Shim'on said, “There are five chapters contained in a great palace and filling the whole earth.”⁹⁷⁹

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If they are composed so, they are the most valuable of all!”

Rabbi Shim'on said, “So it is for one who enters and emerges; for one who does not enter and emerge, not so.”⁹⁸⁰

“This may be compared to a man who dwelled among the cliffs and knew nothing of those dwelling in the town. He sowed wheat, and ate the wheat in its natural form.”⁹⁸¹

“One day he went into town and was offered good bread. The man asked, ‘What’s this for?’

“They replied, ‘It’s bread, to eat!’

“He asked, ‘And what’s this made of?’⁹⁸²

“They replied, ‘Wheat.’

“Afterward they brought him cakes kneaded with oil. He tasted them and asked, ‘And what are these made of?’

“They replied, ‘Wheat.’

“Later they brought him royal pastry kneaded with honey and oil.’ He asked, ‘And what are these made of?’⁹⁸³

“They replied, ‘Wheat.’

“He said, ‘Surely I am king of all of these, since I eat the essence of all of these!’

“Because of [176b] that opinion, he knew nothing of the delights of the world, which were lost to him. So it is with one who grasps the principle but is unaware of all those delectable delights deriving, diverging from that principle.”[984](#)

SIFRA DI-TSNI'UTA ספרא דצניעותא

*The Book of Concealment**

Chapter One

It has been taught: The Book of Concealment, a book balanced on scales. For until there was a balance, they did not gaze face-to-face, and the primordial kings died and their weapons vanished and the earth was nullified. Until the head of Desire of all Desires arranged and bestowed garments of glory.

This balance hangs in a place that is not; weighed upon it were those who did not exist. The balance stands on its own, ungrasped and unseen. Upon it rose and upon it rise those who were not, and who were, and who will be.

Secrecy within secrecy was prepared and arranged in a single skull filled with crystalline dew. Membrane of air, purified and sealed; those strands of clean fleece hanging evenly. Will of Wills is revealed through prayer of those below. Open-eyed watching, never sleeping, ever vigilant; supervision below by supervision of radiance above, in whom are two holes of an armoire arousing breath for all.

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ (*Be-reshit bara Elohim et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets*), *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1). Six—*be-reshit, in the beginning*, above them. All of them are below, suspended from the seven of the skull until Glory of Glories.

The second *earth* is not included in the calculation, as has been said, and it emerged from that which was cursed, as is written: *from the soil that YHVH cursed* (Genesis 5:29).

היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים (*Hayetah tohu va-vohu ve-ḥoshekh al penei tehom ve-ruah Elohim meraḥefet al penei ha-mayim*), *Was waste and empty, with darkness over the face of the abyss and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters* (ibid. 1:2)—thirteen suspended from thirteen of Glory of Glories.

Six thousand years are suspended from the first six; seventh above them, fortified alone. All will be destroyed in twelve hours, as is written: *was waste and empty...* Thirteen, He will raise them in Compassion—renewing themselves as before—and all those six will rise, since it is written *created*, and afterward is written *was*, for it surely was! And in the end, *waste and empty, with darkness—YHVH alone will be exalted on that day* (Isaiah 2:11).

Gravings of engravings, like the appearance of a long serpent, extending here and there—tail in the head, head behind the shoulders, enraged and furious, guarded and hidden.

Once in a thousand short days, a plowshare is revealed in its smoking nodes, a fin in its share, its head smashed on the waters of the great sea, as is written: *You smashed the heads of תנינים (tanninim), sea serpents, on the waters* (Psalms 74:13). There were two, reverting to one—תנינים (tanninim), *sea serpents* (Genesis 1:21), spelled deficiently. *Heads*, as is said: *an image above the heads of the living being: a firmament* (Ezekiel 1:22).

God said, “*Let there be light!*” ויהי (va-yhi), *And there was [light]* (Genesis 1:3), corresponding to what is written: *For He spoke ויהי (va-yehi), and it came to be* (Psalms 33:9)—*He alone; va-yehi, and it came to be, alone*. Afterward they reverted to one: י ה ו (yod, he, vav, yod), ו ה י (yod, he, vav), ה י (yod he), י (yod). The final yod is *Shekhinah* below, just as ה (he) is found to be *Shekhinah*, and they were balanced on a single scale.

The living beings darting back and forth (Ezekiel 1:14)—as is written: *God saw the light, that it was good* (Genesis

1:4); *Say of the righteous one that he is good* (Isaiah 3:10). This one goes up on the scale, the first one on its own, and all reverts to one; sister and relative merge with one another in יָהוָה (yod, he), like two lovers embracing.

Six emerge from the branch of the root of the body, a tongue speaking grandly. This tongue is concealed between יָ (yod) and הָ (he), as is written: *This one will say, "I belong to YHVH"; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; yet another will write on his hand, "Belonging to YHVH," and adopt the name of Israel* (Isaiah 44:5)—really! *This one will say, "I belong to YHVH"*—sister, and all is uttered in יָהוָה (yod, he, vav).

All are included in the concealed tongue for Mother, for She opens Herself to He who issues from Her. Father sits at the head, Mother in the middle, covered from here and there. Woe to one who exposes their nakedness!

God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of heaven" (Genesis 1:14), *male ruling female*, as is written: *The Righteous One is the foundation of the world* (Proverbs 10:25). יָ (yod) illumines two, illumining and impregnating the Female.

יָהוָה (yod) is unified alone, ascending its rungs, higher and higher. The Female darkens and Mother is illumined, opened [177a] by Her gates. Comes a key comprised of six and covers Her opening, linking this one and that one. Woe to him who exposes the opening!

Chapter Two

The beard of faith is not mentioned for it is Glory of all. From the ears it emerges, circling the mouth; a white strand rising and falling, branching into thirteen gloriously.

Of that Glory is written *Through it no man passed, there no human dwelled* (Jeremiah 2:6). אָדָם (Adam), *human*, is outside; *Adam* is not included here—all the more so אָדָם

(*ish*), *man*. Into thirteen flows branch springs, four alone adjoined, nine watering the body.

Before opening of the ears, glory begins to be arrayed, descending in beauty to head of the lips, poised from this head to that head.

A path emerging below two holes of an armoire to eliminate sin, as is written: *His splendor is forgiving transgression* (Proverbs 19:11). Below the lips, hair circles to the other head. Another path emerges beneath it, covering an offering of spice to the head above. Two apples appear, illumining the spices.

Flowing fortune of all hangs down to the heart; upon it depend those above and those below. Those hanging do not part from one another. Short ones cover the throat of Glory; great ones are measured out in full measure.

Lips are free from all sides. Happy is one who is kissed by those kisses!

In that fortune of all flow thirteen anointings of pure balsam. All in this constellation is calm and concealed.

When the seventh arrives, these thirteen appear in the supernal world and thirteen gates of Compassion open. At that time, *Seek YHVH when He may be found* (Isaiah 55:6).

It is written: *God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed of its kind, trees bearing fruit..."* (Genesis 1:11). This accords with what is written: *You shall humble yourselves on the ninth of the month in the evening* (Leviticus 23:32).

י"א אלהים (YY Elohim), *You Yourself have begun to show Your servant Your greatness* (Deuteronomy 3:24). יוהו (Yod, he; vav, he)—complete in His facets. Here, in this swarming of the earth, incomplete; יהי (yehi), *Let there be*, is not written.

We read upper yod, lower yod—ויצטר (va-yiytser), *and He formed* (Genesis 2:7), upper yod, lower yod. יהי (Yehi), *Let there be*—upper and lower, ה (he) in between them. Totality of perfection, perfect but not in every aspect. This name is

uprooted from this place and planted in another; it is written: *YHVH Elohim planted [a garden in Eden]* (ibid., 8).

ה (He) between yod and yod of יהי (yehi), *Let there be—*breathing of the armoire of the Ancient One to the Short-Tempered One; without breath He cannot endure. He is consummated by ה (he)—upper he, lower he, as is written: אהא (Ahah), Ah, *YHVH Elohim!* (Jeremiah 1:6).

In a cluster of clusters, a bundle of balances, י ה ם (yod, he, vav). Upper yod, crowned with a vaporous wreath of the Ancient One, is a membrane purified and sealed. Upper he, crowned with breath of the holes of the armoire, emerging to enliven. Upper vav, Lamp of Adamantine Darkness, crowned in its aspects. Letters spread afterward and are included in the Short-Tempered One. Just as dwelling in the skull, they are found spreading through the whole body to adorn everything with clean fleece. When it is suspended, these letters are suspended. When it is revealed to the Short-Tempered One, these letters settle in Him, and He is named after them.

ם (Yod) of the Ancient One is concealed in its aspects, for the Name is not to be found. ה (He) is opened by another, penetrated by two holes, and found to be enhanced. י (Vav) is opened by another, as is written: *flowing to my lover smoothly* (Song of Songs 7:10)—by the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness, to cover the opening.

י (Vav) above, vav below; ה (he) above, he below. ם (Yod) above; no other joins with it or ascends with it, except by a hint intimated when two are revealed in Torah, uniting on one rung, one vibration, to be elucidated: ו י (vav, dalet), included in וי (yod). Woe when this departs, and those phantoms of ember manifest, hissing past, not lingering in place! *The living beings darting back and forth* (Ezekiel 1:14). *Flee to your place!* (Numbers 24:11). *If you soar as high as the eagle, from there I will bring you down* (Obadiah 1:4).

The earth sprouted (Genesis 1:12). [177b] When? When the Name is planted. Then air issues and a spark is readied.

One skull expanding on its sides; above it brimming dew, of two colors. Three cavities of inscribed letters are revealed in it.

Black as a raven, hanging over tortuous holes, so that neither right nor left can hear. Here is one path above, slender.

A forehead that does not shine, discord of the worlds—except when the Will gazes upon it.

Eyes of three colors—to tremble before them—bathed in shining milk. It is written: עֵינַיךְ (*Einekha*), *Your eyes, will see Jerusalem a tranquil abode* (Isaiah 33:20), and it is written: *Justice lodged in her* (ibid. 1:21). *A tranquil abode*—Ancient One, concealed; it is spelled עֵינַךְ (*einekha*), *your eye*.

The nose, by which the face of the Short-Tempered One is recognized—three flames burn in its nostrils.

A cavernous rung, to hear good and evil.

It is written: *I am* YHVH, הוּא (*hu*), *that, is My name* (Isaiah 42:8); *I put to death and I bring to life* (Deuteronomy 32:39); and it is written: *I will bear and I will carry* (Isaiah 46:4). *He made us*, וְאֵלֵינוּ (*ve-la-alef*), *and to the alef, we belong* (Psalms 100:3); *He is one, and who can turn Him back?* (Job 23:13). *He* designates one who is concealed and not found. *He*—one who is not visible to the eye. *He*—one who is not called by name.

אָ הָ (*He, alef*), הָ וָ (*he, vav*), *alef* including *vav*, *vav* including *alef* and not including. *He, vav* going to *alef*, *alef* going to ךְ (*yod*); *yod* going to *yod* that is concealed of all concealed, not joined by ךְ וָ (*vav, dalet*). Woe when ךְ (*yod*) does not illumine *vav, dalet*!

When ךְ (*yod*) withdraws from ךְ וָ (*vav, dalet*) through the sins of the world, nakedness of all appears. Of this is written *Your father's nakedness you shall not expose*. הָ ךְ (*Yod, he*)—woe when *yod* withdraws from *he*! Of this is written *and your mother's nakedness you shall not expose; she is*

your mother—you shall not expose her nakedness (Leviticus 18:7). She surely is *your mother!* *For you will call understanding “mother,” and give forth your voice to discernment* (Proverbs 2:3).

Chapter Three

Nine precious ones were conveyed to the beard. All that is hidden and not revealed is sublime and precious, treasured away by Scripture.

Strands upon strands, from before the opening of the ears to the head of the mouth, extending from this head to the other. Beneath two holes, a path filled, invisible. Cheeks covered on this side and that; in them appear apples red as a rose.

By one thread, black ones hang down to His chest. Lips, red as a rose, are free. Short ones descend the throat, covering the neck; long and short flow evenly.

By these the one who exists becomes mighty and strong. It is written: *From the straits I called to Yah* (Psalms 118:5). David said nine until *All the nations surrounded me* (ibid., 10) so as to surround and defend himself.

The earth sprouted vegetation, plants yielding seed of each kind, and trees bearing fruit that has its seed within it of each kind (Genesis 1:12). These nine were uprooted from a complete name and planted afterward in a complete name, as is written: *YHVH Elohim planted* (ibid. 2:8).

Enhancements of the beard are found to be thirteen—that of this higher one; as for the lower one, they are seen as nine. Twenty-two letters are engraved because of them. Concerning this, a dream in which one holds in his hand the beard of an eminent man—he is at peace with his Lord; enemies will be subdued beneath him. All the more so, the higher beard illumining the lower; for the higher is called *abounding in kindness* (Exodus 34:6), whereas in the Short-

Tempered One *kindness*, uncharacterized. When necessary, radiance shines and it is called *abounding in kindness*.

It is written: *God said, "Let the waters swarm with a swarm of נפש חיה (nefesh hayyah), living creatures"* (Genesis 1:20). ה' (Yah)—radiance of one spreading to the other, all swarming at once: good waters, evil waters. For He said, *Let [the waters] swarm*—intermingle: higher being, lower being; good being, [178a] evil being.

God said, "Let us make a human" (Genesis 1:26). It is not written אדם (ha-adam), *the human*, but rather אדם (adam), *a human*, indefinite—excluding the one above, who was made with a complete name. When this was completed, that was completed; male and female was completed, completing all. YHVH, aspect of the male; Elohim, aspect of the female.

The male extended and was arrayed with His enhancements, with the phallus, with the mouth of the phallus. Kings who were nullified were here established. Judgments of the male are harsh at the beginning, at the end calm. Of the female, the reverse.

ה' י (Vav, yod, he). Chidings of smoke sunk in His bosom, a small י (yod) appearing within Her. Whether judgments had been sweetened, the Ancient One inquired. The serpent copulated with the female, and a nest of filth was woven within Her, forming an evil abode, as is written: *She conceived and bore קינא (Qayin), Cain* (Genesis 4:1)—קינא (qinna), nest, of habitation of evil spirits, gales, and whirlwinds.

He invested this אדם (adam) with crowns, in general and particular, included in particular and general: thighs and arms, right and left. A hand branched to its sides. Male was arrayed with female: י ה' (Yod, he, vav)—yod, male; he, female; vav. It is written: *Male and female He created them and He called their name אדם (adam), humankind* (Genesis 5:2)—image and countenance like *adam* sitting on the throne, and

it is written: *upon the image of the throne, an image like the appearance of adam, a human* (Ezekiel 1:26).

Chapter Four

The Ancient One is hidden and sealed; the Short-Tempered One, revealed and not revealed. Revealed, written in His letters; concealed, sealed by letters unsettled in their places, for about Him above and below are unsettled.

Let the earth bring forth נפש חיה (nefesh hayyah), living beings, of each kind and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth (Genesis 1:24), corresponding to what is written: אדם (Adam), *Human, and beast You deliver, O YHVH* (Psalms 36:7). One is found in the category of the other, *beast in the category of adam, human. When adam, a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH, from beasts* (Leviticus 1:2)—because it is included in the category of *adam*.

When Adam below descended, [178b] he appeared in a supernal image: two spirits. Of two sides, right and left, is *adam* comprised—on the right, holy *neshamah*; on the left, *nefesh hayyah*.

Adam sinned, and the left spread and those without a body spread. When they cling to one another, they give birth like an animal birthing many from a single womb.

Twenty-two concealed letters, twenty-two revealed letters; concealed י (yod), revealed *yod*. Concealed and revealed, weighed on scales of matrices.

From י (yod) issue male and female: ו ו (vav, dalet). In this place *vav* is male, *dalet* female, because of וו (du), two. *Du*, male and female; *du*, two pillar capitals.

י (yod) alone is male, ה (he) female. *He* was ו (dalet); when she conceived, she brought forth ו (vav). *Yod* appears in its apparition, totality of ו ה י (yod, he, vav). Once she generated *vav*, who is male and female, afterward it settled, covering Mother.

The sons of God saw the daughters of humankind (Genesis 6:2)—corresponding to what is written: *two men secretly as spies* (Joshua 2:1). *Daughters of humankind*—as is written: *Then two women, prostitutes, came to the king* (1 Kings 3:16). Because of them is written *for they saw that the wisdom of God was within him* (ibid., 28). *Then [they] came*, and not previously.

In a castle of vaporous springs, two were embracing above; below they descended, inheriting dust. They lost the good share that they had possessed—crown of compassion—and were crowned with a pint of grapes.

YHVH said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me?”—to Me, precisely! “Speak to the Children of Israel and have them journey further” (Exodus 14:15)—*journey further, precisely!* Upon the flowing fortune it depended, for He sought to glorify His beard. *Do what is right in His eyes, and hearken to His commands and keep all His statutes—until here. For I am YHVH your healer* (ibid. 15:26)—for this one, precisely!

Chapter Five

הוי (Hoi), Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, seed of evildoers, destructive children! They have forsaken YHVH, spurned the Holy One of Israel, turned their backs (Isaiah 1:4). Seven rungs: *יוד (yod), הֵה (heh), וֵה (vav, he), הֵי (he, yod); וו (vav) generated ד (dalet), הֵה (heh), הֵי וֵה (he, vav, yod); הֵה (heh) generated וו (vav), דו (du) outside. Adam destroyed male and female, who are דו (du), two, as is written: destructive children.*

ברא (Be-reshit bara), In the beginning created (Genesis 1:1). *Be-reshit, in the beginning*, is an utterance; *bara, He created*, half an utterance. Father and son, concealed and revealed. Upper Eden, concealed and hidden; lower Eden, departing on its journeys, and *יהוה (YHVH Yah)* are revealed.

אלהים את (Elohim et), *God* (ibid.)—אדני אהיה (Adonai Ehyeh), right and left combined as one.

השמים ואת (Ha-shamayim ve-et), *The heavens and* (ibid.)—as is written: והתפארת והנצח (ve-ha-tif'eret ve-ha-netsah), *and the beauty and the victory* (1 Chronicles 29:11), combined as one.

הארץ (Ha-arets), *the earth* (Genesis 1:1), as is written: *How magnificent Your name, YHVH, in all the earth!* (Psalms 8:2). *All the earth is full of His glory!* (Isaiah 6:3).

Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters (Genesis 1:6), to divide *between the Holy and the Holy of Holies* (Exodus 26:33). The Ancient One to the Short-Tempered One—separated and cleaving, not really separate. A mouth speaking grandly, designated and crowned with small crowns, with five kinds of water, as is written: *Living water shall be put into it* (Numbers 19:17). *He is the living God and the eternal King* (Jeremiah 10:10). *I will walk before YHVH in the lands of the living* (Psalms 116:9). *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life* (1 Samuel 25:29). *The Tree of Life in the midst of the garden* (Genesis 2:9).

י ה (Yod, he), יוד ה א (yod, he), א ה י י (alef, he, yod, yod) *between waters and waters* (Genesis 1:6)—perfect waters and imperfect waters, perfect compassion and imperfect compassion.

YHVH said, *“My breath shall not abide in the human forever, for he too is flesh”* (Genesis 6:3). YHVH said—when He settled in the Short-Tempered One. From here, a saying in the name of its originator; for the concealed Ancient One said *My breath shall not abide in the adam* above, since through that breath exhaled from two holes of an armoire He emanates to those below.

Therefore it is written: *Let his days be a hundred and twenty years* (ibid.). יוד (Yod), perfect and imperfect. י (Yod) alone is one hundred; two letters, two times—a *hundred and twenty years*. Yod alone, when [179a] revealed in the

Short-Tempered One, extends into ten thousand years. From here is written: *You set Your palm upon me* (Psalms 139:5).

The Nephilim were on earth (Genesis 6:4)—corresponding to what is written: *From there it divides and becomes four riverheads* (ibid. 2:10). From the place where the garden divided were they called הנפילים (*ha-nefilim*), *the fallen ones*, as is written: *From there it divides*.

Were on earth in those days (Genesis 6:4)—and not at a later time—until Joshua came and *the sons of God* were guarded. Solomon came and *the daughters of humankind* were included, as is written: ותענוגות (*ve-ta'anugot*), *and the delights of*—not called תענוגים (*ta'anugim*)—בני האדם (*benei ha-adam*), *the sons of adam* (Ecclesiastes 2:8); for from here were cast other spirits, not included in supernal Wisdom, as is written: *YHVH gave Solomon wisdom* (1 Kings 5:26), and similarly: *He became wise from the whole adam* (ibid., 11), since these were not included in *adam*.

YHVH gave [Solomon] wisdom—upper ה (*he*). *He became wise*—for thereby he became wise below.

These are the heroes מעולם (*me-olam*), *of old* (Genesis 6:4)—עלמא (*alma*), world, above. אנשי השם (*Anshei ha-shem*), *Men of the name* (ibid.)—who conduct themselves by the Name. Which name? The Holy Name by which unholy ones below conduct themselves, doing so only by the Name. *Men of the name*—unidentified, not *men of YHVH*. Not intentionally obscured, rather of inferior status yet not inferior. *Men of the name*—unspecified, excluded from the category of *adam*.

It is written: *Adam does not abide in splendor* (Psalms 49:13). *Adam in splendor*—in the splendor of the King. *Does not abide*—without breath.

Thirteen kings of war with seven. Seven kings appeared on earth, victorious in war. Nine ascending rungs, running as they wish, with none to restrain them. Five kings stand in trepidation, unable to withstand four. Four kings go forth toward four, hanging from them like grapes in a cluster.

Bound with them are seven runners bearing witness, not tarrying in their places.

The sweetening tree sits within, nesting birds embraced by its branches. Beneath it shelters the living being who rules. This is a tree with twelve paths to follow, surrounded by seven supports on four corners, whirling in four directions.

The serpent racing in 370 leaps, leaping over mountains, bounding over hills, as is written: *leaping over mountains, bounding over hills* (Song of Songs 2:8). Its tail in its mouth, with its teeth piercing on two sides. As it moves, it is split into three spirits.

It is written: חנוך (Ḥanokh), *Enoch, walked with God* (Genesis 5:24), and it is written: חנוך לנוער (Ḥanokh la-na'ar), *Train the youth, according to his way* (Proverbs 22:6)—the well-known *youth*.

With האלהים (ha-Elohim), *God* (Genesis 5:24)—and not *with* YHVH.

And he was no more (ibid.)—with this name. *For* אלהים (Elohim), *God, took him* (ibid.)—to be called by His name.

Three courts are four; four courts above, four below, as is written: *You shall not commit perversion in justice—in measure, in weight, or in capacity* (Leviticus 19:35). Harsh judgment, judgment that is not harsh; balanced judgment, judgment that is not balanced; mild judgment, judgment not even this or that.

When האדם (ha-adam), *humankind, began to increase on the face of the earth* (Genesis 6:1). *Ha-adam, Humankind, began to increase*, corresponding to what is written: הוא בשגם (be-shaggam hu), *for he too is, flesh* (Genesis 6:3)—the *adam* above. And it is written: *on the face of* האדמה (ha-adamah), *the earth*.

Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone (Exodus 34:29)—corresponding to what is written: כתנות עור (kotnot or), *coats of skin* (Genesis 3:21). קרן (Qaran), *Shone*—as is written: *He took* קרן (qeren), *the horn of, oil* (1 Samuel

16:13). Anointing is performed only with the horn. *By Your name our horn is lifted* (Psalms 89:18). *There I will make a horn sprout for David* (ibid. 132:17). Namely, the tenth of the King, coming from Jubilee who is Mother, as is written: *when they make a long blast with the horn of Jubilee* (Joshua 6:5)—the horn crowned by Jubilee, the tenth by Mother.

Qeren, horn—acquiring קרן וריוח (*qeren ve-revah*), principal and profit, to restore His breath to Him. This horn is of Jubilee, and Jubilee is ה (*he*), and *he* is blowing of breath to all. And all return to their place, as is written: אהה (*Ahah*), *Ah, YHVH Elohim!* (Jeremiah 1:6). When *he* reverts to *he*, He is called *YHVH Elohim*, the complete Name, and it is written: *YHVH alone will be exalted on that day* (Isaiah 2:11).

Until here, sealed and crowned is concealment of the King. Happy is one who has emerged, knowing its paths and ways!

ספרא די-טסני'וּטא דצניעותא SIFRA DI-TSNI'UTA

*The Book of Concealment*¹

Chapter One

It has been taught: The Book of Concealment, a book balanced on scales.² For until there was a balance, they did not gaze face-to-face,³ and the primordial kings died and their weapons vanished and the earth was nullified. Until the head of Desire of all Desires arranged and bestowed garments of glory.⁴

This balance hangs in a place that is not; weighed upon it were those who did not exist. The balance stands on its own, ungrasped and unseen. Upon it rose and upon it rise those who were not, and who were, and who will be.⁵

Secrecy within secrecy was prepared and arranged in a single skull filled with crystalline dew. Membrane of air, purified and sealed; those strands of clean fleece hanging evenly.⁶ Will of Wills is revealed through prayer of those below. Open-eyed watching, never sleeping, ever vigilant; supervision below by supervision of radiance above,⁷ in whom are two holes of an armoire arousing breath for all.⁸

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ (*Be-reshit bara Elohim et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets*), *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1). Six—*be-reshit, in the beginning*, above them. All of them are below, suspended from the seven of the skull until Glory of Glories.⁹

The second *earth* is not included in the calculation, as has been said, and it emerged from that which was cursed, as is written: *from the soil that YHVH cursed* (Genesis 5:29).

היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים (*Hayetah tohu va-vohu ve-ḥoshekh al penei tehom ve-ruah Elohim meraḥefet al penei ha-mayim*), *Was waste and empty, with darkness over the face of the abyss and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters* (ibid. 1:2)—thirteen suspended from thirteen of Glory of Glories.¹⁰

Six thousand years are suspended from the first six; seventh above them, fortified alone.¹¹ All will be destroyed in twelve hours, as is written: *was waste and empty...* Thirteen, He will raise them in Compassion—renewing themselves as before—and all those six will rise, since it is written *created*, and afterward is written *was*, for it surely was! And in the end, *waste and empty, with darkness—YHVH alone will be exalted on that day* (Isaiah 2:11).¹²

Gravings of engravings, like the appearance of a long serpent, extending here and there—tail in the head, head behind the shoulders, enraged and furious, guarded and hidden.¹³

Once in a thousand short days, a plowshare is revealed in its smoking nodes, a fin in its share, its head smashed on the waters of the great sea, as is written: *You smashed the heads of תנינים (tanninim), sea serpents, on the waters* (Psalms 74:13).¹⁴ There were two, reverting to one—תנינים (tanninim), *sea serpents* (Genesis 1:21), spelled deficiently. *Heads*, as is said: *an image above the heads of the living being: a firmament* (Ezekiel 1:22).¹⁵

God said, “*Let there be light!*” ויהי (va-yhi), *And there was [light]* (Genesis 1:3), corresponding to what is written: *For He spoke ויהי (va-yehi), and it came to be* (Psalms 33:9)—*He alone; va-yehi, and it came to be, alone*. Afterward they reverted to one: י ה ו (yod, he, vav, yod), ו ה י (yod, he, vav), ה י (yod he), י (yod). The final yod is *Shekhinah* below, just as ה (he) is found to be *Shekhinah*, and they were balanced on a single scale.¹⁶

The living beings darting back and forth (Ezekiel 1:14)—as is written: *God saw the light, that it was good* (Genesis

1:4); *Say of the righteous one that he is good* (Isaiah 3:10). This one goes up on the scale, the first one on its own, and all reverts to one; sister and relative merge with one another in יָוָה (yod, he), like two lovers embracing.¹⁷

Six emerge from the branch of the root of the body, a tongue speaking grandly. This tongue is concealed between יָ (yod) and הָ (he), as is written: *This one will say, "I belong to YHVH"; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; yet another will write on his hand, "Belonging to YHVH," and adopt the name of Israel* (Isaiah 44:5)—really! *This one will say, "I belong to YHVH"*—sister, and all is uttered in יָוָה (yod, he, vav).¹⁸

All are included in the concealed tongue for Mother, for She opens Herself to He who issues from Her. Father sits at the head, Mother in the middle, covered from here and there. Woe to one who exposes their nakedness!¹⁹

God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of heaven" (Genesis 1:14), male ruling female, as is written: *The Righteous One is the foundation of the world* (Proverbs 10:25). יָ (yod) illumines two, illumining and impregnating the Female.²⁰

יָוָה (yod) is unified alone, ascending its rungs, higher and higher. The Female darkens and Mother is illumined, opened [177a] by Her gates. Comes a key comprised of six and covers Her opening, linking this one and that one. Woe to him who exposes the opening!²¹

Chapter Two

The beard of faith is not mentioned for it is Glory of all. From the ears it emerges, circling the mouth; a white strand rising and falling, branching into thirteen gloriously.²²

Of that Glory is written *Through it no man passed, there no human dwelled* (Jeremiah 2:6). אָדָם (Adam), human, is outside; Adam is not included here—all the more so אָדָם

(ish), man.²³ Into thirteen flows branch springs, four alone adjoined, nine watering the body.²⁴

Before opening of the ears, glory begins to be arrayed, descending in beauty to head of the lips, poised from this head to that head.²⁵

A path emerging below two holes of an armoire to eliminate sin, as is written: *His splendor is forgiving transgression* (Proverbs 19:11). Below the lips, hair circles to the other head. Another path emerges beneath it, covering an offering of spice to the head above. Two apples appear, illumining the spices.²⁶

Flowing fortune of all hangs down to the heart; upon it depend those above and those below. Those hanging do not part from one another. Short ones cover the throat of Glory; great ones are measured out in full measure.²⁷

Lips are free from all sides. Happy is one who is kissed by those kisses!²⁸

In that fortune of all flow thirteen anointings of pure balsam. All in this constellation is calm and concealed.²⁹

When the seventh arrives, these thirteen appear in the supernal world and thirteen gates of Compassion open. At that time, *Seek YHVH when He may be found* (Isaiah 55:6).³⁰

It is written: *God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed of its kind, trees bearing fruit..."* (Genesis 1:11). This accords with what is written: *You shall humble yourselves on the ninth of the month in the evening* (Leviticus 23:32).³¹

י"א אלהים (YY Elohim), *You Yourself have begun to show Your servant Your greatness* (Deuteronomy 3:24). יוהי (Yod, he; vav, he)—complete in His facets. Here, in this swarming of the earth, incomplete; יהי (yehi), *Let there be*, is not written.³²

We read upper yod, lower yod—ויצטר (va-yiytser), *and He formed* (Genesis 2:7), upper yod, lower yod. יהי (Yehi), *Let there be*—upper and lower, ה (he) in between them. Totality of perfection, perfect but not in every aspect. This name is

uprooted from this place and planted in another; it is written: *YHVH Elohim planted [a garden in Eden]* (ibid., 8).³³

ה (He) between yod and yod of יהי (yehi), *Let there be*—breathing of the armoire of the Ancient One to the Short-Tempered One; without breath He cannot endure. He is consummated by ה (he)—upper he, lower he, as is written: אהא (Ahah), Ah, *YHVH Elohim!* (Jeremiah 1:6).³⁴

In a cluster of clusters, a bundle of balances, י ה ם (yod, he, vav). Upper yod, crowned with a vaporous wreath of the Ancient One, is a membrane purified and sealed. Upper he, crowned with breath of the holes of the armoire, emerging to enliven. Upper vav, Lamp of Adamantine Darkness, crowned in its aspects.³⁵ Letters spread afterward and are included in the Short-Tempered One. Just as dwelling in the skull, they are found spreading through the whole body to adorn everything with clean fleece. When it is suspended, these letters are suspended. When it is revealed to the Short-Tempered One, these letters settle in Him, and He is named after them.³⁶

י (Yod) of the Ancient One is concealed in its aspects, for the Name is not to be found. ה (He) is opened by another, penetrated by two holes, and found to be enhanced. ו (Vav) is opened by another, as is written: *flowing to my lover smoothly* (Song of Songs 7:10)—by the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness, to cover the opening.³⁷

ו (Vav) above, vav below; ה (he) above, he below. י (Yod) above; no other joins with it or ascends with it, except by a hint intimated when two are revealed in Torah, uniting on one rung, one vibration, to be elucidated: ו י (vav, dalet), included in הי (yod). Woe when this departs, and those phantoms of ember manifest, hissing past, not lingering in place! *The living beings darting back and forth* (Ezekiel 1:14). *Flee to your place!* (Numbers 24:11). *If you soar as high as the eagle, from there I will bring you down* (Obadiah 1:4).³⁸

The earth sprouted (Genesis 1:12). [177b] When? When the Name is planted. Then air issues and a spark is readied.³⁹

One skull expanding on its sides; above it brimming dew, of two colors. Three cavities of inscribed letters are revealed in it.⁴⁰

Black as a raven, hanging over tortuous holes, so that neither right nor left can hear. Here is one path above, slender.⁴¹

A forehead that does not shine, discord of the worlds—except when the Will gazes upon it.⁴²

Eyes of three colors—to tremble before them—bathed in shining milk. It is written: עֵינַיךְ (*Einekha*), *Your eyes, will see Jerusalem a tranquil abode* (Isaiah 33:20), and it is written: *Justice lodged in her* (ibid. 1:21). *A tranquil abode*—Ancient One, concealed; it is spelled עֵינַךְ (*einekha*), *your eye*.⁴³

The nose, by which the face of the Short-Tempered One is recognized—three flames burn in its nostrils.⁴⁴

A cavernous rung, to hear good and evil.⁴⁵

It is written: *I am YHVH, הוּא (hu), that, is My name* (Isaiah 42:8); *I put to death and I bring to life* (Deuteronomy 32:39); and it is written: *I will bear and I will carry* (Isaiah 46:4). *He made us, וְלָא (ve-la-alef), and to the alef, we belong* (Psalms 100:3); *He is one, and who can turn Him back?* (Job 23:13). *He* designates one who is concealed and not found. *He*—one who is not visible to the eye. *He*—one who is not called by name.⁴⁶

אָ הָ (*He, alef*), הָ וָ (*he, vav*), *alef* including *vav*, *vav* including *alef* and not including. *He, vav* going to *alef*, *alef* going to ךְ (*yod*); *yod* going to *yod* that is concealed of all concealed, not joined by ךְ וָ (*vav, dalet*). Woe when ךְ (*yod*) does not illumine *vav, dalet*!⁴⁷

When ךְ (*yod*) withdraws from ךְ וָ (*vav, dalet*) through the sins of the world, nakedness of all appears. Of this is written *Your father's nakedness you shall not expose*. הָ ךְ

(*Yod, he*)—woe when *yod* withdraws from *he*! Of this is written *and your mother's nakedness you shall not expose; she is your mother—you shall not expose her nakedness* (Leviticus 18:7). She surely is *your mother! For you will call understanding "mother," and give forth your voice to discernment* (Proverbs 2:3).⁴⁸

Chapter Three

Nine precious ones were conveyed to the beard. All that is hidden and not revealed is sublime and precious, treasured away by Scripture.⁴⁹

Strands upon strands, from before the opening of the ears to the head of the mouth, extending from this head to the other. Beneath two holes, a path filled, invisible. Cheeks covered on this side and that; in them appear apples red as a rose.⁵⁰

By one thread, black ones hang down to His chest. Lips, red as a rose, are free. Short ones descend the throat, covering the neck; long and short flow evenly.⁵¹

By these the one who exists becomes mighty and strong. It is written: *From the straits I called to Yah* (Psalms 118:5). David said nine until *All the nations surrounded me* (ibid., 10) so as to surround and defend himself.⁵²

The earth sprouted vegetation, plants yielding seed of each kind, and trees bearing fruit that has its seed within it of each kind (Genesis 1:12). These nine were uprooted from a complete name and planted afterward in a complete name, as is written: *YHVH Elohim planted* (ibid. 2:8).⁵³

Enhancements of the beard are found to be thirteen—that of this higher one; as for the lower one, they are seen as nine. Twenty-two letters are engraved because of them. Concerning this, a dream in which one holds in his hand the beard of an eminent man—he is at peace with his Lord; enemies will be subdued beneath him. All the more so, the higher beard illumining the lower; for the higher is called

abounding in kindness (Exodus 34:6), whereas in the Short-Tempered One *kindness*, uncharacterized. When necessary, radiance shines and it is called *abounding in kindness*.⁵⁴

It is written: *God said, "Let the waters swarm with a swarm of נפש חיה (nefesh hayyah), living creatures"* (Genesis 1:20). יה (Yah)—radiance of one spreading to the other, all swarming at once: good waters, evil waters. For He said, *Let [the waters] swarm—intermingle: higher being, lower being; good being, [178a] evil being*.⁵⁵

God said, "Let us make a human" (Genesis 1:26). It is not written אדם (ha-adam), *the human*, but rather אדם (adam), *a human*, indefinite—excluding the one above, who was made with a complete name. When this was completed, that was completed; male and female was completed, completing all. YHVH, aspect of the male; Elohim, aspect of the female.⁵⁶

The male extended and was arrayed with His enhancements, with the phallus, with the mouth of the phallus. Kings who were nullified were here established. Judgments of the male are harsh at the beginning, at the end calm. Of the female, the reverse.⁵⁷

יהוה (Vav, yod, he). Chidings of smoke sunk in His bosom, a small יהוה (yod) appearing within Her. Whether judgments had been sweetened, the Ancient One inquired. The serpent copulated with the female, and a nest of filth was woven within Her, forming an evil abode, as is written: *She conceived and bore קינא (Qayin), Cain* (Genesis 4:1)—קינא (qinna), nest, of habitation of evil spirits, gales, and whirlwinds.⁵⁸

He invested this אדם (adam) with crowns, in general and particular, included in particular and general: thighs and arms, right and left. A hand branched to its sides. Male was arrayed with female: יהוה (Yod, he, vav)—yod, male; he, female; vav. It is written: *Male and female He created them and He called their name אדם (adam), humankind* (Genesis 5:2)—image and countenance like *adam* sitting on the throne, and

it is written: *upon the image of the throne, an image like the appearance of adam, a human* (Ezekiel 1:26).⁵⁹

Chapter Four

The Ancient One is hidden and sealed; the Short-Tempered One, revealed and not revealed. Revealed, written in His letters; concealed, sealed by letters unsettled in their places, for about Him above and below are unsettled.⁶⁰

Let the earth bring forth נפש חיה (nefesh hayyah), living beings, of each kind and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth (Genesis 1:24), corresponding to what is written: אדם (Adam), Human, and beast You deliver, O YHVH (Psalms 36:7). One is found in the category of the other, *beast* in the category of *adam, human*. *When adam, a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH, from beasts* (Leviticus 1:2)—because it is included in the category of *adam*.⁶¹

When Adam below descended, [178b] he appeared in a supernal image: two spirits. Of two sides, right and left, is *adam* comprised—on the right, holy *neshamah*; on the left, *nefesh hayyah*.⁶²

Adam sinned, and the left spread and those without a body spread. When they cling to one another, they give birth like an animal birthing many from a single womb.⁶³

Twenty-two concealed letters, twenty-two revealed letters; concealed י (yod), revealed *yod*. Concealed and revealed, weighed on scales of matrices.⁶⁴

From י (yod) issue male and female: ו ך (vav, dalet). In this place *vav* is male, *dalet* female, because of ך (du), two. *Du*, male and female; *du*, two pillar capitals.⁶⁵

י (yod) alone is male, ך (he) female. *He* was ך (dalet); when she conceived, she brought forth ו (vav). *Yod* appears in its apparition, totality of ך י (yod, he, vav). Once she generated *vav*, who is male and female, afterward it settled, covering Mother.⁶⁶

The sons of God saw the daughters of humankind (Genesis 6:2)—corresponding to what is written: *two men secretly as spies* (Joshua 2:1). *Daughters of humankind*—as is written: *Then two women, prostitutes, came to the king* (1 Kings 3:16). Because of them is written *for they saw that the wisdom of God was within him* (ibid., 28). *Then [they] came, and not previously.*⁶⁷

In a castle of vaporous springs, two were embracing above; below they descended, inheriting dust. They lost the good share that they had possessed—crown of compassion—and were crowned with a pint of grapes.⁶⁸

YHVH said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me?”—to Me, precisely! “Speak to the Children of Israel and have them journey further” (Exodus 14:15)—*journey further, precisely!* Upon the flowing fortune it depended, for He sought to glorify His beard. *Do what is right in His eyes, and hearken to His commands and keep all His statutes—until here. For I am YHVH your healer* (ibid. 15:26)—for this one, precisely!⁶⁹

Chapter Five

הוי (Hoi), Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, seed of evildoers, destructive children! They have forsaken YHVH, spurned the Holy One of Israel, turned their backs (Isaiah 1:4). Seven rungs: *יוד (yod), הה (heh), ו ה (vav, he), ה י (he, yod); וו (vav) generated ד (dalet), הה (heh), ה ו י (he, vav, yod); הה (heh) generated וו (vav), דו (du) outside. Adam destroyed male and female, who are דו (du), two, as is written: destructive children.*⁷⁰

ברא (Be-reshit bara), In the beginning created (Genesis 1:1). *Be-reshit, in the beginning,* is an utterance; *bara, He created,* half an utterance. Father and son, concealed and revealed. Upper Eden, concealed and hidden; lower Eden, departing on its journeys, and *יהוה יה (YHVH Yah)* are revealed.⁷¹

אלהים את (Elohim et), God (ibid.)—אדני אהיה (Adonai Ehyeh), right and left combined as one.⁷²

השמים ואת (Ha-shamayim ve-et), The heavens and (ibid.)—as is written: והתפארת והנצח (ve-ha-tif'eret ve-ha-netsah), and the beauty and the victory (1 Chronicles 29:11), combined as one.⁷³

הארץ (Ha-arets), the earth (Genesis 1:1), as is written: How magnificent Your name, YHVH, in all the earth! (Psalms 8:2). All the earth is full of His glory! (Isaiah 6:3).⁷⁴

Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters (Genesis 1:6), to divide between the Holy and the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:33). The Ancient One to the Short-Tempered One—separated and cleaving, not really separate. A mouth speaking grandly, designated and crowned with small crowns, with five kinds of water, as is written: Living water shall be put into it (Numbers 19:17). He is the living God and the eternal King (Jeremiah 10:10). I will walk before YHVH in the lands of the living (Psalms 116:9). The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life (1 Samuel 25:29). The Tree of Life in the midst of the garden (Genesis 2:9).⁷⁵

יה (Yod, he), יוד יהא (yod, he), ייהא (alef, he, yod, yod) between waters and waters (Genesis 1:6)—perfect waters and imperfect waters, perfect compassion and imperfect compassion.⁷⁶

YHVH said, “My breath shall not abide in the human forever, for he too is flesh” (Genesis 6:3). YHVH said—when He settled in the Short-Tempered One. From here, a saying in the name of its originator; for the concealed Ancient One said My breath shall not abide in the adam above, since through that breath exhaled from two holes of an armoire He emanates to those below.⁷⁷

Therefore it is written: Let his days be a hundred and twenty years (ibid.). יוד (Yod), perfect and imperfect. יה (Yod) alone is one hundred; two letters, two times—a hundred and twenty years. יוד alone, when [179a] revealed in the

Short-Tempered One, extends into ten thousand years. From here is written: *You set Your palm upon me* (Psalms 139:5).⁷⁸

The Nephilim were on earth (Genesis 6:4)—corresponding to what is written: *From there it divides and becomes four riverheads* (ibid. 2:10). From the place where the garden divided were they called הנפילים (*ha-nefilim*), *the fallen ones*, as is written: *From there it divides*.⁷⁹

Were on earth in those days (Genesis 6:4)—and not at a later time—until Joshua came and *the sons of God* were guarded. Solomon came and *the daughters of humankind* were included, as is written: ותענוגות (*ve-ta'anugot*), *and the delights of*—not called תענוגים (*ta'anugim*)—בני האדם (*benei ha-adam*), *the sons of adam* (Ecclesiastes 2:8); for from here were cast other spirits, not included in supernal Wisdom, as is written: *YHVH gave Solomon wisdom* (1 Kings 5:26), and similarly: *He became wise from the whole adam* (ibid., 11), since these were not included in *adam*.⁸⁰

YHVH gave [Solomon] wisdom—upper ה (*he*). *He became wise*—for thereby he became wise below.⁸¹

These are the heroes מעולם (*me-olam*), *of old* (Genesis 6:4)—עלמא (*alma*), world, above. אנשי השם (*Anshei ha-shem*), *Men of the name* (ibid.)—who conduct themselves by the Name. Which name? The Holy Name by which unholy ones below conduct themselves, doing so only by the Name. *Men of the name*—unidentified, not *men of YHVH*. Not intentionally obscured, rather of inferior status yet not inferior. *Men of the name*—unspecified, excluded from the category of *adam*.⁸²

It is written: *Adam does not abide in splendor* (Psalms 49:13). *Adam in splendor*—in the splendor of the King. *Does not abide*—without breath.⁸³

Thirteen kings of war with seven. Seven kings appeared on earth, victorious in war. Nine ascending rungs, running as they wish, with none to restrain them. Five kings stand in trepidation, unable to withstand four. Four kings go forth

toward four, hanging from them like grapes in a cluster. Bound with them are seven runners bearing witness, not tarrying in their places.⁸⁴

The sweetening tree sits within, nesting birds embraced by its branches. Beneath it shelters the living being who rules. This is a tree with twelve paths to follow, surrounded by seven supports on four corners, whirling in four directions.⁸⁵

The serpent racing in 370 leaps, leaping over mountains, bounding over hills, as is written: *leaping over mountains, bounding over hills* (Song of Songs 2:8). Its tail in its mouth, with its teeth piercing on two sides. As it moves, it is split into three spirits.⁸⁶

It is written: חנוך (Ḥanokh), *Enoch, walked with God* (Genesis 5:24), and it is written: חנוך לנוער (Ḥanokh la-na'ar), *Train the youth, according to his way* (Proverbs 22:6)—the well-known youth.⁸⁷

With האלהים (ha-Elohim), *God* (Genesis 5:24)—and not with YHVH.

And he was no more (ibid.)—with this name. *For* אלהים (Elohim), *God, took him* (ibid.)—to be called by His name.⁸⁸

Three courts are four; four courts above, four below, as is written: *You shall not commit perversion in justice—in measure, in weight, or in capacity* (Leviticus 19:35). Harsh judgment, judgment that is not harsh; balanced judgment, judgment that is not balanced; mild judgment, judgment not even this or that.⁸⁹

When האדם (ha-adam), *humankind, began to increase on the face of the earth* (Genesis 6:1). *Ha-adam, Humankind, began to increase*, corresponding to what is written: הוא בשגם (be-shaggam hu), *for he too is, flesh* (Genesis 6:3)—the adam above. And it is written: *on the face of* האדמה (ha-adamah), *the earth*.⁹⁰

Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone (Exodus 34:29)—corresponding to what is written: כתנות עור (kotnot or), *coats of skin* (Genesis 3:21).⁹¹ קרן (Qaran), *Shone*—

as is written: *He took קרן (qeren), the horn of, oil* (1 Samuel 16:13). Anointing is performed only with the horn. *By Your name our horn is lifted* (Psalms 89:18). *There I will make a horn sprout for David* (ibid. 132:17). Namely, the tenth of the King, coming from Jubilee who is Mother, as is written: *when they make a long blast with the horn of Jubilee* (Joshua 6:5)—the horn crowned by Jubilee, the tenth by Mother.⁹²

Qeren, horn—acquiring קרן וריוח (*qeren ve-revah*), principal and profit, to restore His breath to Him. This horn is of Jubilee, and Jubilee is ה (*he*), and *he* is blowing of breath to all. And all return to their place, as is written: אהה (*Ahah*), *Ah, YHVH Elohim!* (Jeremiah 1:6). When *he* reverts to *he*, He is called *YHVH Elohim*, the complete Name, and it is written: *YHVH alone will be exalted on that day* (Isaiah 2:11).⁹³

Until here, sealed and crowned is concealment of the King. Happy is one who has emerged, knowing its paths and ways!⁹⁴

*A Note on the Title and Context of Sifra di-Tsni'uta
(The Book of Concealment)*

The title ספרא דצניעותא (*Sifra di-Tsni'uta*) *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* can be rendered variously: “The Book of Concealment (or Secrecy, Modesty, Discreetness).” The term “concealment” applies to the profound subject matter, which is concealed from human comprehension, or which should be concealed from the uninitiated; but it also refers to the enigmatic style, which modestly conceals the mysteries.

In rabbinic literature the word צניעותא (*tсени'uta*) means “privacy, modesty.” Although the precise meaning of the biblical root צנע (*tsn'*) is in doubt, it apparently connotes “acting carefully, wisely, attentively, modestly, or humbly.” See the ideal expressed in Micah 6:8: הצנע לכת (*hatsne'a lekhet*), *walking humbly, with your God*. According to Proverbs 11:2, *Insolence comes and then comes shame, but with צנועים* (*tsenu'im*), *the humble, is wisdom*.

The root *tsn'* appears in a mystical context in BT *Qiddushin* 71a, “The Rabbis taught: ‘At first the [Divine] Name of Twelve Letters was transmitted to everyone. When the licentious became rife, it was transmitted לצנועים (*la-tsenu'im*), to the modest [or: discreet], among the priests [to be pronounced during the priestly blessing], and the modest among the priests uttered it inaudibly [literally, caused it to be swallowed] during the chanting of their brother priests.’ ... Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: ‘The Name of Forty-two Letters is transmitted only to one who is צנוע וענוי (*tsanu'a ve-anav*), modest and humble, has reached the middle of his life, is not prone to anger or

drunkenness, and does not insist on retaliation.’” See *Zohar* 3:146b.

The Aramaic causative form אצנע (atsna) means “to hide, conceal, withdraw, put aside.” See *Targum Onqelos* on Exodus 16:23, 33–34; *Zohar* 2:239a. In *Zohar* 1:217a (Vol. 3, p. 309, n. 35), the word אצנעוּתָא (atsna’uta), “concealment,” refers to the refined wisdom of Rabbi Shim’on, which has been stored away for safekeeping, and perhaps specifically to *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.

Already in early and reliable manuscripts (including C9, M4, P2, V5, V7), *Sifra di-Tsni’uta* is woven into the Zohar’s commentary on *Parashat Terumah*. After being quoted in the context of the Dwelling, the Book of Concealment is introduced by the parable of the mountain man (above, [pp. 530–34](#)). All of the above-mentioned manuscripts proceed from the conclusion of that parable directly to “Chapter One,” without even the title *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*, which is then mentioned in the first line. Thereby the commentary on *Parashat Terumah* segues into the Book of Concealment.

In the Cremona edition, based on several later manuscripts, *Sifra di-Tsni’uta* is placed in *Parashat Be-reshit*, befitting its form as a commentary on the opening of Genesis.

On the meaning of the title, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 200–201, n. 58; idem, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 128–32; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

REFERENCE MATTER

Abbreviations

<i>ABD</i>	David Noel Freedman, ed., <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
add.	addendum
Add.	Additional
<i>Arukh</i>	Nathan ben Yehiel of Rome, <i>Sefer he-Arukh</i>
<i>Arukh ha-Shalem</i>	Nathan ben Yehiel of Rome, <i>Arukh ha-Shalem</i>
<i>Battei Midrashot</i>	Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer, ed., <i>Battei Midrashot</i>
B.C.E.	before the Common Era
<i>Beit ha-Midrash</i>	Adolph Jellinek, ed., <i>Beit ha-Midrash</i>
<i>Bei'ur ha-Gera</i>	Elijah ben Solomon of Vilna, <i>Bei'ur ha-Gera le-Sifra di-Tsni'uta</i>
BT	Babylonian Talmud
C9	MS Add. 1023, University Library, Cambridge
C.E.	Common Era
Cremona	Cremona edition of the <i>Zohar</i>
Ct1	MS 104, Trinity College, Cambridge
<i>Derekh Emet</i>	<i>Derekh Emet</i> , in <i>Sefer ha-Zohar</i> , ed. Reuven Margalio
<i>Derekh Emet</i> (ed. Hamiz)	Joseph Hamiz, ed., <i>Derekh Emet</i>
diss.	dissertation

ed.	editor (pl. eds.); edition; edited by
Edri	Yehuda Edri, trans., <i>Sefer ha-Zohar</i>
esp.	especially
F1	MS Plutei 2:18, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence
fasc.	fascicle
frag.	fragmentary
Galante	Abraham Galante, in <i>Or ha-Ḥammah</i> , ed. Abraham Azulai
<i>Haggahot Maharḡu</i>	Ḥayyim Vital, <i>Haggahot Maharḡu</i>
<i>Hash</i>	<i>Hashmatot</i>
<i>Heikh</i>	<i>Heikhalot</i>
intro	introduction
<i>IR</i>	<i>Idra Rabba</i>
<i>IZ</i>	<i>Idra Zuta</i>
JT	Jerusalem Talmud
M	Mishnah
M4	MS Hebr. 12, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
M5	MS Hebr. 20, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
M9	MS Hebr. 219, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
<i>Ma'arikh</i>	Menahem ben Judah de Lonzano, <i>Sefer ha- Ma'arikh</i>
Mantua	Mantua edition of the <i>Zohar</i>
<i>Mat</i>	<i>Matnitin</i>
<i>MhN</i>	<i>Midrash ha-Ne'lam</i>
<i>MIN</i>	Yehudah Petaya, <i>Zohar Sava de-Mishpatim im Peirush Matoq la-Nefesh</i>
<i>MM</i>	Shalom Buzaglo, <i>Miqdash Melekh</i>

<i>MmD</i>	Daniel Frisch, <i>Peirush Matoq mi-Devash</i>
MS (plural, MSS)	manuscript(s)
Ms5	MS Guenzburg 293, Russian State Library, Moscow
n. (plural, nn.)	note(s)
N10	MS 1660, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
N41	MS 1930, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
N47	MS 2076, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
n.d.	no date
<i>Nefesh David</i>	David Luria, <i>Nefesh David</i>
<i>Netivot Ya'ir</i>	Bentsiyon Vainshtok, <i>Idra... Sifra di-Tsni'uta... im bei'ur... Netivot Ya'ir</i>
<i>Nitsotsei Orot</i>	Ḥayyim Joseph David Azulai, <i>Nitsotsei Orot</i>
<i>Nitsotsei Zohar</i>	Reuven Margaliot, <i>Nitsotsei Zohar</i>
n.p.	no publisher
O2	MS 1564, Bodleian Library, Oxford
O3	MS 1884, Bodleian Library, Oxford
O17	MS 2514, Bodleian Library, Oxford
<i>Or ha-Ḥammah</i>	Abraham Azulai, ed., <i>Or ha-Ḥammah</i>
<i>OY</i>	Moses Cordovero, <i>Or Yaqar</i>
P2	MS héb. 779, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris
par.	paragraph
<i>Piq</i>	<i>Piqqudin</i>
pl.	plural
<i>QhM</i>	<i>Qav ha-Middah</i>
R1	MS 2971, Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome

<i>RM</i>	<i>Ra'aya Meheimna</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Raza de-Razin</i>
Scholem	Gershom Scholem, <i>Sefer ha-Zohar shel Gershom Scholem</i>
<i>SdTs</i>	<i>Sifra di-Tsni'uta</i>
<i>ShS</i>	<i>Shir ha-Shirim</i>
<i>SO</i>	<i>Sitrei Otiyyot</i>
Soncino	Harry Sperling et al., trans., <i>The Zohar</i> (Soncino Press)
<i>ST</i>	<i>Sitrei Torah</i>
<i>Sullam</i>	Yehudah Ashlag, <i>Sefer ha-Zohar...im... ha-Sullam</i>
<i>Tiq</i>	<i>Tiqqunim</i> (in <i>Zohar Ḥadash</i>)
<i>Tos</i>	<i>Tosefta</i>
trans.	translator(s); translated by
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Tiqqunei ha-Zohar</i>
V5	MS ebr. 206, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V7	MS ebr. 208, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V20	MS ebr. 606, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
Vital	Ḥayyim Vital, in <i>Or ha-Ḥammah</i> , ed. Abraham Azulai
<i>Yahel Or</i>	Elijah ben Solomon of Vilna, <i>Yahel Or</i>
<i>ZḤ</i>	<i>Zohar Ḥadash</i>
<i>Zohorei Ya'bets</i>	Jacob Emden, <i>Zohorei Ya'bets</i>

Transliteration of Hebrew and Aramaic

א	<i>alef</i>	' <u>1</u>	ל	<i>lamed</i>	<i>l</i>
ב	<i>bet</i>	<i>b</i>	מ	<i>mem</i>	<i>m</i>
בּ	<i>vet</i>	<i>v</i>	נ	<i>nun</i>	<i>n</i>
ג	<i>gimel</i>	<i>g</i>	ס	<i>samekh</i>	<i>s</i>
ד	<i>dalet</i>	<i>d</i>	ע	<i>ayin</i>	' <u>2</u>
ה	<i>he</i>	<i>h</i>	פ	<i>pe</i>	<i>p</i>
ו	<i>vav</i>	<i>v</i>	פּ	<i>phe</i>	<i>f</i> <u>3</u>
ז	<i>zayin</i>	<i>z</i>	צ	<i>tsadi</i>	<i>ts</i>
ח	<i>het</i>	<i>h</i>	ק	<i>qof</i>	<i>q</i>
ט	<i>tet</i>	<i>t</i>	ר	<i>resh</i>	<i>r</i>
י	<i>yod</i>	<i>y, i</i>	שׁ	<i>shin</i>	<i>sh</i>
כ	<i>kaf</i>	<i>k</i>	שׂ	<i>sin</i>	<i>s</i>
כּ	<i>khaf</i>	<i>kh</i>	ת	<i>tav</i>	<i>t</i>

The English equivalent letter is doubled when a strong *dagesh* in Hebrew or Aramaic characterizes a verbal conjugation or indicates an assimilated letter, e.g., *dibber*, *yitten*. However, if the Hebrew letter (in which a *dagesh* appears) is represented by two English letters (such as *sh* or *ts*), then that English equivalent is not doubled, e.g., *va-yishaqehu*, *matsot*. Further, a single English equivalent letter is not doubled when preceded by a hyphenated prefix, e.g., *ha-sefer*, *la-melekh*, *mi-tokh*.

Proper names that appear in roman type do not follow the above schema. Biblical names are rendered according to the *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*. Rabbinic names are rendered according to common convention, e.g., Akiva,

Resh Lakish. Medieval names are Anglicized, e.g., Moses de León, Joseph Gikatilla. Authors' names in the Bibliography follow library listings or the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

1. *Alef* is not transliterated at the beginning or end of a word nor after a hyphenated prefix. Elsewhere it is transliterated only when accompanied by a vowel, e.g., *Shemu'el*.

2. *Ayin* is not transliterated at the beginning of a word, nor after a hyphenated prefix, nor, unless accompanied by a vowel, at the end of a word. Thus, *Shema*, but *Bava Metsi'a*.

3. Occasionally transliterated as *ph* to compare or contrast it to the letter *pe*.

[Glossary](#)

aggadah “Tale”; the nonlegal contents of the Talmud and Midrash, often based on biblical exegesis. It includes ethical and moral teaching, theological speculation, legends, and folklore.

alef The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the beginning of divine and human speech.

Amidah “Standing”; the central prayer, recited three times daily.

amora, pl. **amora'im** “Speaker, interpreter”; a teacher living in the three centuries or so following the compilation of the Mishnah (ca. 200 C.E.) and whose opinions are recorded in subsequent rabbinic literature.

Assembly of Israel Hebrew, כנסת ישראל (*Keneset Yisra'el*); in rabbinic literature, a phrase normally denoting the people of Israel. In the *Zohar*, the phrase can refer to the earthly community of Israel but also (often primarily) to *Shekhinah*, the divine feminine counterpart of the people.

Ayin “Nothingness”; the creative “no-thingness” of God, out of which all being emanates.

Binah “Understanding”; the third *sefirah*; the Divine Mother who gives birth to the seven lower *sefirot*.

blessed Holy One Common rabbinic name for God. In the *Zohar* it often designates *Tif'eret*.

Da'at “Knowledge”; the hidden *sefirah* mediating between *Hokhmah* and *Binah*.

Din “Judgment”; the fifth *sefirah*; the left arm of the divine body, balancing *Hesed*. The roots of evil lie here; also called *Gevurah*.

Dwelling Hebrew, משכן (*mishkan*). The portable sanctuary (or Tabernacle), which according to Exodus was constructed by Moses and the Israelites, and then carried from encampment to encampment as the people journeyed through the Sinai Desert. In the *Zohar*, often a symbol of *Shekhinah*.

Eikhah The book of Lamentations.

Ein Sof “There is no end”; that which is boundless; the Infinite. The ultimate reality of God beyond all specific qualities of the *sefirot*; the God beyond God.

Elohim “God, gods”; a biblical name for God. In the *Zohar* it has various sefirotic associations: *Binah*, *Gevurah*, *Shekhinah*.

Gedullah “Greatness”; the fourth *sefirah*; the outpouring of God’s great goodness; also called *Hesed*.

Gevurah “Power”; the fifth *sefirah*; also called *Din*.

gimatriyya Derived from the Greek *geometria* (“measuring the earth”); a method of interpretation based on the numerical value of Hebrew letters.

Hashmatot “Omissions”; additions printed at the end of the first of the three standard Aramaic volumes of the *Zohar*, drawn from the Cremona edition and *Zohar Ḥadash*.

ḥasid, pl. **ḥasidim** “Pious one,” devotee, saint, lover of God.

havdalah “Differentiation”; prayer recited at the conclusion of Sabbath and festivals to indicate the distinction between the sacred day that has ended and the weekday that is beginning.

Heikhalot “Palaces”; descriptions of the heavenly palaces in *Zohar* 1:38a-45b; 2:244b-268b.

Hesed “Loving-kindness, love, grace”; the fourth *sefirah*; the right arm of the divine body, balancing *Din*; also called *Gedullah*.

Hod “Splendor”; the eighth *sefirah*; the left leg of the divine body; source of prophecy along with *Netsah*.

Hokhmah “Wisdom”; the second *sefirah*; the primordial point of emanation.

Holy Ancient One The most ancient manifestation of *Ein Sof* through *Keter*, Its crown.

Hosha’na Rabbah “The Great *Hosha’na*”; the seventh day of Sukkot.

idra “Threshing place,” assembly.

Idra Rabba “The Great Assembly”; a description of the gathering of Rabbi Shim’on and the Companions at the threshing house, where profound mysteries of divine being are expounded. *Zohar* 3:127b–145a.

Idra Zuta “The Small Assembly”; a description of the last gathering of Rabbi Shim’on and the Companions, the master’s final teachings, and his ecstatic death. *Zohar* 3:287b–296b.

Israel Often, the people of Israel.

Jubilee The year of release, occurring every fifty years at the end of the cycle of seven sabbatical years. According to Leviticus 25, in the Jubilee all land reverts to its original owners and all indentured Israelite slaves are freed. In Kabbalah, often a symbol of *Binah*.

Kabbalah Hebrew, קבלה (*qabbalah*), “receiving, that which is received, tradition”; originally referring to tradition in general (or to post-Mosaic Scripture), but from the thirteenth century onward, specifically to the esoteric teachings of Judaism.

Keter “Crown”; the first *sefirah*; coeternal with *Ein Sof*; also called *Ratson* (“Will”) and *Ayin* (“Nothingness”).

Lilith A demoness who harms babies and seduces men; married to Samael.

lulav “Sprout”; rabbinic term for the palm branch used together with three other plant species on the festival of *Sukkot*.

Malkhut “Kingdom”; the tenth *sefirah*, ruling the lower worlds; also called *Shekhinah*.

Matnitin “Our Mishnah”; short pieces scattered throughout the *Zohar*, most of which appear as utterances of a heavenly voice urging the Companions to arouse themselves and open their hearts to the mysteries. Some of them contain principles of kabbalistic teaching in a condensed form, constituting a kind of mystical Mishnah, expounded in the main section of the *Zohar*.

Matronita Aramaized form of Latin *matrona*, “matron, married woman, noble lady,” often applied in the *Zohar* to *Shekhinah*, the wife of *Tif’eret*.

Metatron One of the supreme powers in the divine realm, often depicted as the chief angel. He is sometimes identified as *sar ha-panim* (Prince of the Countenance), standing face-to-face with God, or with *sar ha-olam* (Prince of the World).

midrash, pl. **midrashim** Homiletical or legal interpretation of the Bible.

Midrash ha-Ne’lam “The Concealed Midrash, the Esoteric Midrash”; an early stratum of the *Zohar*. Its language is a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic. *Midrash ha-Ne’lam* on the Torah pertains to several portions of Genesis, the beginning of Exodus, and several other portions; it is printed partly alongside the main text of the *Zohar* and partly in *Zohar Ḥadash*. *Midrash ha-Ne’lam* on Song of Songs, Ruth, and Lamentations is printed in *Zohar Ḥadash*. The subject matter of *Midrash ha-Ne’lam* is mostly Creation, the soul, and the world to come; its style is often allegorical.

minḥah “Offering”; second of the three daily prayer services, recited in the afternoon.

minyan Literally “counting”; hence, “quorum”—the minimum number of adult Jewish males traditionally required for various liturgical purposes.

Mishnah Collection of oral teachings compiled near the beginning of the third century by Rabbi Yehudah ha-

Nasi; the earliest codification of Jewish Oral Law; the core of the Talmud.

mitsvah, pl. ***mitsvot*** “Commandment”; one of the 613 commandments of the Torah or one of various rabbinic precepts; religious duty; by extension, good deed.

musaf “Supplement”; the additional Sabbath and festival worship service, usually recited immediately after the morning service.

nefesh “Soul,” life force; the basic level of the soul, animating the human being. (The other two levels are *ruah* and *neshamah*.)

neshamah “Breath, soul,” soul-breath; the highest level of the soul. (The other two levels are *nefesh* and *ruah*.)

Netsah “Endurance”; the seventh *sefirah*; the right leg of the divine body; source of prophecy along with *Hod*.

Oral Torah The rabbinic interpretation of the Written Torah (the Five Books of Moses); in Kabbalah, a symbol of *Shekhinah*.

Other Side Aramaic, אַחְרָא אַחְרָא (*Sitra Aħra*); the demonic realm, or the shadow of the divine, led by Samael and Lilith.

parashah “Portion”; portion of the Torah read on a particular Sabbath, named after its opening word (or phrase) or a key word (or phrase) in the opening sentence.

Pesah “Passover”; first of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, celebrated in the middle of the month of *Nisan*, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.

Piqqudin “Commandments”; kabbalistic interpretations of the commandments scattered throughout the *Zohar* (to be distinguished from *Ra’aya Meheimna*).

piyyut “Poem”; a liturgical poem inserted into a standard prayer.

Qaddish “Holy”; an Aramaic prayer praising God, recited at the conclusion of each main part of every service.

Qav ha-Middah “The Standard of Measure”; a detailed description of the process of divine emanation, delivered by Rabbi Shim’on. *Zohar Hadash* 56d–58d.

Qedushah “Sanctification”; one of several prayers describing and emulating the ongoing sanctification of God by the angels in heaven.

Ra’aya Meheimna “The Faithful Shepherd”; a separate composition on the kabbalistic meaning of the commandments, printed piecemeal in the *Zohar*. Here Moses, the Faithful Shepherd, appears to Rabbi Shim’on and the Companions, revealing secrets.

Rahamim “Compassion”; the sixth *sefirah*, harmonizing the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Din*; also called *Tif’eret*.

Raza de-Razin “The Secret of Secrets”; a section of the *Zohar* dealing with physiognomy, metoposcopy, and chiromancy (*Zohar* 2:70a–75a [printed alongside the main text], *Zohar Hadash* 35b–37c). A second version is incorporated into the main body of the *Zohar* (2:70a–78a).

Rosh Hashanah The Jewish New Year, celebrated on the first two days of the Hebrew month Tishrei.

ruah “Spirit, wind, breath”; the second level of soul. (The other two levels are *nefesh* and *neshamah*.)

Rut The book of Ruth.

Samael Prince of demons, married to Lilith; identical with Satan.

Sava “The Elder; old man.”

Sava de-Mishpatim “The Old Man of [Torah portion] *Mishpatim*”; an account of the Companions’ encounter with a donkey-driver who turns out to be a master of wisdom. *Zohar* 2:94b–114a (above, [pp. 1–139](#)).

Sefer ha-Zohar “The Book of Radiance.”

sefirah, pl. **sefirot** Literally, “counting,” number, numerical entity; in Kabbalah, one of the ten aspects of divine personality, nine of which emanate from *Ein Sof* and the first *sefirah*, *Keter*. See the diagram on [page ix](#).

Shaddai An obscure divine name, which may originally have meant “[God of] the mountain.” In Kabbalah it often denotes *Shekhinah*.

Shavu’ot “Weeks”; second of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, celebrated seven weeks after the beginning of Passover.

Shekhinah “Presence,” divine immanence; the tenth and last *sefirah*; female partner of *Tif’eret*; also called *Malkhut*.

Shema Literally, “hear”; central prayer recited morning and evening, comprising Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; and Numbers 15:37-41. The opening verse is: *Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one!*

Shir ha-Shirim The book of Song of Songs.

Sifra di-Tsni’uta “The Book of Concealment”; an anonymous, highly condensed commentary on the beginning of the Torah, consisting of five short chapters and composed in obscure sentences. Its subject is the mysterious dynamics of divine being. *Zohar* 2:176b-179a (above, [pp. 535-86](#)).

Sitra Ahra “The other side”; the demonic realm, or the shadow of the divine, led by Samael and Lilith.

Sitrei Otiyyot “Secrets of the Letters”; a discourse by Rabbi Shim’on focusing on the letters of the divine name *YHVH* and how they symbolize the process of emanation. *Zohar Hadash* 1b-7b.

Sitrei Torah “Secrets of Torah”; interpretations of certain verses of Genesis, printed in separate columns parallel to the main body of the *Zohar* and in *Zohar Hadash*. It includes allegorical explanations of the mysteries of the soul.

Sukkot “Booths”; festival of Booths, last of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, celebrated in the middle of the month of Tishrei at the conclusion of the summer harvest.

Talmud Each of the two compilations of Jewish law, legend, ethics, and theology comprising the Mishnah and

its vast commentary (the Gemara) by rabbis of the third through fifth centuries. The Jerusalem Talmud was compiled ca. 400 C.E.; the Babylonian Talmud, about one hundred years later.

tanna, pl. **tanna'im** "One who repeats, teacher"; an authority cited in the Mishnah or belonging to the Mishnaic period (first two centuries of the Common Era); an Amoraic scholar whose task was to memorize and recite tannaitic texts.

Targum "Translation"; an Aramaic translation of the Torah or the Bible.

tav The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

tefillin "Phylacteries"; two black leather boxes containing passages from the Torah (Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21) written on parchment. They are bound by black leather straps on the left arm and on the head, and are prescribed for men to wear during weekday morning prayer. Each of the biblical passages indicates that the Children of Israel should place a sign upon their hand and a frontlet (or reminder) between their eyes.

teshuvah "Return, turning back to God, repentance."

Tif'eret "Beauty, glory"; the sixth *sefirah*, harmonizing the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Din*; male partner of *Shekhinah*; the torso of the divine body; also called *Raḥamim*.

Tiqqunei ha-Zohar "Embellishments on the Zohar"; an independent book whose setting is similar to *Ra'aya Meheimna*. It comprises a commentary on the beginning of Genesis, each *tiqqun* opening with a new interpretation of the word בראשית (*be-reshit*), "in the beginning."

Tiqqunim "Embellishments"; additional material in the genre of *Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*, printed in *Zohar Hadash* 93c-122b.

Torah "Instruction, teaching"; the Five Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy); by extension, the

entire corpus of Jewish religious literature.

Tosafot “Additions”; a collection of comments on the Talmud written between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries in France and Germany, printed in standard editions of the Talmud. Also, a set of Zoharic additions printed at the end of the second and third of the three standard Aramaic volumes of the *Zohar*, drawn from the Cremona edition and from *Zohar Hadash*.

Tosefta “Addenda”; in rabbinic literature, a collection of precepts parallel to and contemporary with the Mishnah. In the *Zohar*, a collection similar to *Matnitin*.

Tsaddiq “Righteous One”; a name for *Yesod*, the ninth *sefirah*.

tzitzit “Tassels,” one of four on the hem of a garment, and later on a prayer shawl. See Numbers 15:37–41.

world that is coming Hebrew, העולם הבא (*ha-olam ha-ba*); Aramaic, עלמא דאתי (*alma de-atei*); often understood as referring to the hereafter and usually translated as “the world to come.” From another perspective, however, “the world that is coming” already exists—occupying another, timeless dimension. In Kabbalah this phrase often refers to *Binah*, the continuous source of emanation, who “is constantly coming, never ceasing.”

Written Torah The Five Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy); in Kabbalah, a symbol of *Tiferet*.

Yah A contracted biblical form of the divine name YHVH.

Yesod “Foundation”; the ninth *sefirah*, who channels the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*; the phallus of the divine body; also called *Tsaddiq*.

YHVH The ineffable name of God, apparently deriving from the root הוה (*hvh*), “to be.” In the *Zohar* it often symbolizes *Tif’eret*.

Yishtabah “May [Your name] be praised”; the prayer of benediction following the biblical hymns recited daily at the beginning of the morning service.

Yom Kippur The Day of Atonement, observed on the tenth of the Hebrew month Tishrei.

zohar "Radiance, splendor."

Zohar Ḥadash "New Zohar"; a collection of Zoharic texts not included in the early editions of the *Zohar*. It was first printed in Salonika in 1597. The title is misleading since *Zohar Ḥadash* contains much of *Midrash ha-Ne'lam*, an early stratum of the *Zohar*.

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[1.](#) For a list of eighty-four *Zohar* manuscripts, see Rubin, "Mif'al ha-Zohar," 172-73.

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1. SAVA DE-MISHPATIM סבא דמשפטים... “Old Man of [Torah portion] *Mishpatim* (Laws).” Here begins a long narrative (extending to [p. 139](#)), relating an encounter between the Companions Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Ḥiyya, and an aged wandering donkey-driver, who turns out to be more than he seems.

On this section, see Wolfson, “Beautiful Maiden Without Eyes”; Matt, “New-Ancient Words,” 192-94; Abrams, “Knowing the Maiden without Eyes”; Liebes, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 87-98; Oron, “Simeni kha-Ḥotam al Libbekha”; Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 35-68; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod ve-Sod ha-Parshanut*.

The material immediately preceding this section (*Zohar* 2:94a-b) belongs to the later Zoharic stratum of *Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*. See Scholem; Liebes, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 87, n. 126; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 20-22.

2. Tower of Tyre... In BT *Megillah* 6a, the original name of the city of Caesarea is recorded as מגדל שיר (*migdal shir*), “the Tower of Shir.” Several manuscripts, as well as *Ein Ya’aqov* (which reflects Spanish manuscript tradition), read מגדל צור (*migdal tsor*), “the Tower of Tyre.” Actually, both *shir* and *tsor* are corruptions of Caesarea’s real original name: the Tower of Strato, named after its builder, King Strato of Sidon (fourth century B.C.E.).

See Rabinovicz, *Diqduqei Soferim, Megillah* 6a, p. 17, n. 2. Cf. the phrase סולמה של צור (*sullamah shel tsor*), “the Ladder of Tyre” (Scala Tyrriorum), a promontory south of Tyre. See *Tosefta Pesahim* 2:16; *Bereshit Rabbah* 39:8 (and Theodor’s note); BT *Shabbat* 26a, *Eruvin* 64b.

3. How happy I am to see the face of Shekhinah According to rabbinic tradition, “whoever welcomes [literally, receives the face of] the wise is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.”

See *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Yitro)* 1. Cf. JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b: “Rabbi Shemu’el said in the name of Rabbi Zeira, ‘... Whoever receives the face of his teacher is considered as if

he receives the face of *Shekhinah*.' ... Rabbi Yishma'el taught: ...'One who receives the face of his friend is considered as if he receives the face of *Shekhinah*.'"

The *Zohar* transforms the rabbinic simile into an actual description of the righteous, who are called the face of *Shekhinah* "because *Shekhinah* is hidden within them: She is in concealment, they are revealed" (*Zohar* 2:163b).

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:6; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:5; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 27; *Zohar* 1:9a, 94b; 2:5a (*MhN*), 38a, 50a; 3:6b, 148a, 298a; *ZḤ* 11c (*MhN*); Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 370. Cf. Genesis 33:10.

4. donkey-driver... ט"י"א (Tayya'a), "Arab," Arab caravaner, derived from the name of the Arabian tribe Tayy'.

In the *Zohar*, *tayya'a* usually indicates one of various wandering donkey-drivers encountered by the Companions on the road. See 1:5b; 2:45b, 145b, 155b-157a; 3:21a-23a, 186b; *ZḤ* 83a-d (*MhN, Rut*); *TZ* 23, 69a. Cf. the story in BT *Hagigah* 14b (and parallels), below, [note 14](#); *Bereshit Rabbah* 32:10; BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 25a-b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:3.

On *tayya'a*, see BT *Berakhot* 56b, *Rosh ha-Shanah* 26b, *Yevamot* 120b, *Bava Batra* 73b, *Sanhedrin* 110a, *Hullin* 7a; Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*, 248-54; Pushinski, "Le-Ḥeqer Sefat ha-Zohar"; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 46; idem, *Kabbalah*, 227; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 76-79.

The prophet Elijah returns to earth as a *tayya'a* in BT *Berakhot* 6b (printed version), and as an ערבי (*aravi*), "Arab," in *Rut Zuta* 1:20; 4:11. On Elijah as סבא (*sava*), "an old man," see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:22; *ZḤ* 25b (*MhN*); *Tosafot, Hullin* 6a, s.v. *ashkeḥeih*; Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir*, 37, n. 6.

5. Who is a serpent... These riddles confuse not only Rabbi Yose; the cryptic language is intended to mystify the reader as well. Cordovero comments (*OY*): "Given that these words are like a dream without an interpretation, nevertheless we will explain them a little, with God's help."

Liebes (“Zohar ve-Eros,” 90) maintains that the old man himself does not initially know the meaning of his riddles, but discovers and formulates their significance as he proceeds.

As we learn eventually, the imagery in the first two riddles alludes to various stages in the process of reincarnation, one of the more esoteric doctrines in the *Zohar*. The third riddle is expounded below at [notes 96-103](#).

On the serpent, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 99:11: “All the animals go in pairs, whereas the serpent goes on the way all alone.” See *Zohar* 1:169b; 2:105b-106a, 112a. Cf. Proverbs 30:18-19.

On the sentence “Beginning in union...,” see *Zohar* 3:196a-b. On “Two who are one,” see 2:100a, 111a. On “one who is three,” see 2:100a. On likely traces of trinitarian influence in the *Zohar*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:973; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 140-45.

On the paradoxical style, cf. *Zohar* 1:232a (*Tos*); 2:100a; 3:270b. The phrase “though not by created creatures” can also be rendered “though not created creatures.” The phrase “a beautiful maiden” derives from *Targum Onqelos* on Genesis 24:16.

On these riddles, see also *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MM*; *MmD*; Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 63-65; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 30-31.

6. waste תהו (*Tohu*), which appears in Genesis 1:2: *The earth was תהו ובהו (tohu va-vohu), waste and empty, with darkness over the abyss and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters.*

7. the way would not have been empty Empty of meaning, or empty of the Divine Presence.

On the importance of engaging in Torah while on a journey, see Deuteronomy 6:7; *M Avot* 3:7; *BT Eruvin* 54a, *Ta’anit* 10b; *Zohar* 1:7a, 58b, 69b-70a, 76a, 87a, 115b, 157a, 164a, 230a-b; 2:13a, 138b, 155b. Cf. *M Avot* 3:2-3, 6.

“Empty” renders בריקנייא (*be-reiqanya*), “in emptiness,” recalling *Targum Onqelos*’s rendering of בהו (*vohu*), *empty*, in Genesis 1:2: ריקנייא (*reiqanya*). See the preceding note.

8. sometimes in those empty ones, you may discover bells of gold His apparently foolish riddles may conceal gems of wisdom.

On “empty ones,” see BT *Berakhot* 57a: “*Like a slice of pomegranate is ריקתך (raqatekh), your forehead* (Song of Songs 4:3)... Even ריקנין (*reiqanin*), the empty ones, among you [i.e., among Israel] are as full of *mitsvot* as a pomegranate [is full of seeds].”

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:3. Cf. *Zohar* 3:157b; Moses de León, *Orḥot Hayyim*, 20.

The “bells of gold” derive from those worn by Aaron the high priest on the hem of his robe: *You shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and crimson, on its hem all around, and bells of gold within them all around* (Exodus 28:33). *Targum Onqelos* translates פעמני זהב (*fa’amonei zahav*), *bells of gold*, as זגין דדהבא (*zaggin de-dahba*), which is adopted here by the *Zohar*. See *Zohar* 2:192b; 3:170b.

In rabbinic literature the bell appears as a symbol of revelation and inspiration. See BT *Sotah* 9b, in the name of Rabbi Yitshak: “*Shekhinah* was ringing before him like a bell”; and *Vayiqra Rabbah* 8:2, in the name of Rabbi Neḥemiah: “When the Holy Spirit rested upon him, his hairs tingled like a bell.” Both of these descriptions of Samson are derived midrashically from Judges 13:25: *The spirit of YHVH began to impel him*. See *Zohar* 3:188b.

9. getting fodder ready for his donkey According to rabbinic tradition, “A person is forbidden to taste anything until he has given food to his animal.” See BT *Gittin* 62a, in the name of Rav Yehudah, quoting Rav.

10. Now two are three, and three are like one As the old man joins the pair of rabbis, two become three, who mingle together as one. His remark may also allude to the

later description of three parts of the soul. See *Zohar* 2:100a. Cf. 3:162a; and the old man's riddle, above at [note 5](#): "Two who are one, and one who is three." See the accompanying note.

[11.](#) Rabbis, I have become a donkey-driver... Recently he undertook this occupation in order to support his son through school and pay his tuition. Perhaps the phrase "previously I wasn't one" alludes to his own reincarnation as a donkey-driver.

On the word טעין (*ta'ein*), "goad," see Radak on Genesis 45:17; idem, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, s.v. *t'n*; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 42; idem, *Kabbalah*, 227.

[12.](#) A beautiful maiden The last of the old man's three riddles. See above at [note 5](#).

[13.](#) YHVH is with me, I do not fear... Before revealing secrets of Torah, the old man invokes divine protection and assistance. He is hesitant, at first, to convey such precious teachings to rabbis who have not proven themselves worthy or learned.

The four adjectives—"fine, lovely, precious, and sublime"—may allude to four levels of meaning in Torah, expounded below at [notes 96-103](#).

On the tension between revealing and concealing, see M *Kelim* 17:16; *Tosefta Kelim (Bava Metsi'a)* 7:9; BT *Bava Batra* 89b; *Zohar* 1:11b (Vol. 1, p. 78, n. 589); 2:100b, 123b, 257b; 3:127b (*IR*); and 3:74b: "Rabbi Shim'on clapped his hands and wept. He exclaimed, 'Woe is me if I speak and reveal the secret! Woe is me if I do not speak, for the Companions will be deprived of the word.'"

[14.](#) enwrapped himself In his garment in preparation for revealing secrets of Torah. This description derives from a famous rabbinic story (BT *Hagigah* 14b): "Once Rabbi Yoḥanan son of Zakkai was riding on a donkey, traveling on the road, and Rabbi El'azar son of Arakh was guiding the donkey behind him. He [i.e., Rabbi El'azar] said to him, 'Master, teach me one chapter of the Account of the

Chariot [based on Ezekiel's vision].’ He [i.e., Rabbi Yoḥanan] replied, ‘Have I not taught you: “Nor [may one expound the Account of] the Chariot in the presence of one, unless he is a sage who understands on his own” (M *Ḥagigah* 2:1)?’ He said to him, ‘Master, permit me to say before you one thing that you have taught me.’ He replied, ‘Speak!’ Immediately, Rabbi Yoḥanan son of Zakkai dismounted from the donkey and enwrapped himself and sat upon a stone beneath an olive tree. He [Rabbi El’azar] said to him, ‘Master, why did you dismount from the donkey?’ He replied, ‘Is it possible that you are expounding the Account of the Chariot, and *Shekhinah* is with us and the ministering angels accompany us, and I should ride on the donkey?’ Immediately, Rabbi El’azar son of Arakh began expounding the Account of the Chariot, and fire descended from heaven and encompassed [or: intertwined with] all the trees of the field, whereupon they all opened in song....”

See *Tosefta Ḥagigah* 2:1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 21:1; JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77a; *Zohar* 3:287b (IZ). Cf. BT *Shabbat* 10a.

15. If the daughter of a priest... If she marries someone who is neither a priest nor a family member or servant of a priest, she is deprived of the sacrificial donations offered to the priests by the Israelites. The word *alien* renders זר (*zar*), “stranger, alien, one who is unauthorized,” which in this verse refers to “an outsider.” See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1861.

On the second verse (Leviticus 22:13), see *Zohar* 2:101a-b.

16. but words of Torah are sealed... Concealing countless gems of wisdom.

The expression “dreamy words, transmitted to whoever interprets them and conducted by the mouth” derives from BT *Berakhot* 55b: “Rabbi El’azar said, ‘... All dreams follow the mouth [of the interpreter]...’ Rava said, ‘But only if he interprets it in a way that corresponds with the dream.’”

Here, the old man indicates that if dreams, whose meaning depends on the interpreter, must be understood in their own context, all the more so words of Torah must be interpreted according to their true inner meaning.

See JT *Ma'aser Sheni* 4:12, 55c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 89:8; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:18; *Zohar* 1:183a, 191b, 194b; Liebes, "Zohar ve-Eros," 87-88; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 255-59.

On the significance of every element of Torah, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 336; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:47; BT *Eruvin* 13a; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37-38; *Zohar* 1:54a, 135a, 145b, 163a, 187a, 201a, 234b; 2:12a, 55b-56a, 59b, 65b, 98b-99b, 124a; 3:79b, 149a, 152a, 174b, 202a, 265a; ZH 6d (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Menahot* 29b; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:50.

17. daughter of a priest—supernal soul... The priestly daughter symbolizes the soul, which derives from *Binah* ("a supernal place") via *Hesed*, symbolized by Abraham (and by "priest"). Abraham, born into an idolatrous family and culture, came to recognize God, thereby becoming the prototypical convert.

On the soul as *daughter of a priest*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:5; *Zohar* 3:7a. On Abraham's daughter, see BT *Bava Batra* 16b; *Bahir* 52 (78); Nahmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:36a (Vol. 4, p. 164, n. 87), 37a, 85b. On Abraham as priest, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 46:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:6; BT *Nedarim* 32b. On Abraham as "first of converts," see BT *Sukkah* 49b in the name of Rava. On Abraham and souls (in the context of conversion), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 39:14 (below, [p. 201](#), [n. 45](#)); *Zohar* 3:168a. On the phenomenon of conversion to Judaism in medieval Europe, see Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 77-81, 143-48.

It was customary for converts to adopt the name Abraham or be called "son (or daughter) of Abraham." See *Zohar* 1:96a (Vol. 2, p. 109, n. 835).

18. What is the difference... The phrase *daughter of a priest* refers to the soul's derivation from *Hesed* (symbolized

by the unspecified term *priest*). In the verse from Leviticus 21, on the other hand, *a priestly man* apparently refers to the archangel Michael, who corresponds to *Hesed*. He engenders *nefesh*, the basic level of “soul,” animating the human being. The two higher levels are *ruah* (spirit, breath) and *nishmeta* (Hebrew *neshamah*, “breath, soul”), each deriving from its own source above: *Tif’eret* and *Binah*, respectively.

The continuation of the verse in Leviticus 21 alludes to this soul’s tendency to sin: *If the daughter of a priestly man defiles herself by whoring, she is defiling her father; in fire she shall be burned.*

The term גִּזְרֵן (*segan*), “prefect, chief,” refers to the chief of the priests, second in importance to the high priest, whom he attended. The *segan* supervised the daily sacrifice and Temple service.

According to *MM*, the phrase “a priest that is not high” refers to a priest designated on the eve of Yom Kippur as the potential substitute for the high priest in case the latter was impaired or disqualified.

On Michael, see *Zohar* 3:145b. For various interpretations of *a priestly man*, see *OY*; Vital; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *MmD*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:179. On the different types of priests, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

On the three aspects of the soul, see *Zohar* 1:62a, 81a (*ST*), 83a-b, 206a; 2:141b-142b, 182a; 3:25a, 70b; *ZH* 6d (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:684-722. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:37.

19. holy soul, drawn from a supernal place... Drawn from *Binah*, the soul (*nishmeta*) enters the core of the sefirotic Tree of Life, *Yesod*. When *Hesed* (“the supernal priest”) infuses this tree, souls fly from there to the treasury of souls.

The image of a treasure-house derives from Rashi’s commentary on a Talmudic passage (BT *Yevamot* 62a) in which Rabbi Assi mentions a heavenly “body” containing all

souls; Rashi refers to this body as אוצר (*otsar*), “a treasure-house.” In the *Zohar* the treasure-house of unborn souls is located in the Garden of Eden, though it is sometimes identified with *Shekhinah*.

See 3 Enoch 43:3; *Bahir* 126 (184); *Zohar* 1:28b (TZ), 119a, 181a; 2:142a, 157a, 161b, 174a, 253a (*Heikh*); 3:152a; *ZH* 10b-c (*MhN*), 60b, 69b (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 93; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:179-80; 2:696, 701-2; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 179-80, 226.

20. they draw a flow along with the evil impulse... During sexual union, if one is dominated by the lust of the evil impulse, then the body formed through that act will be tainted. The soul will be compelled to inhabit (or become *married to*) such an *alien* body and will be unable to manifest holiness in the world. Upon leaving the body (or this world), such a soul will not partake of spiritual sustenance and bliss (*the sacred donations*).

On the soul's perfection in this world, see Saadiah Gaon, *Emunot ve-De'ot* 6:4; *Zohar* 1:235a, 245b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 299; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 46-47 (translated in Matt, *Essential Kabbalah*, 148); idem, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 8a-10a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:752-54.

21. wretched is the holy soul... Souls of converts are formed by the union of the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. From there, they fly and shelter beneath the wings of *Shekhinah* and then descend into the bodies of converts—*alien* bodies, formed through the union of a Gentile woman and an uncircumcised Gentile man.

See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:180. On the souls of converts, see *Zohar* 1:13a-b, 96a; 2:27a, 87a, 98b-100a, 147b; 3:14a-b, 167b-168a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 16, 212-13; Wijnhoven, “The *Zohar* and the Proselyte.” On the wording “wretched is the...soul,” see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 34:3.

22. on the pillar erected for scales... Beneath *Shekhinah* stand cosmic scales, which incline toward one side or the other depending on the degree of virtue or vice in the world. When virtue dominates, the scale of righteousness tips toward holiness; when sins abound, the scale of deceit tips toward impurity. As souls leave the realm of *Shekhinah*, they pass through these scales to be weighed. If, at that moment, the scales happen to be tipped toward impurity, those particular souls fall into the hands of *Sitra Aħra* and are condemned to a life of torment.

The old man reads the verse in Ecclesiastes as: *a time when the [evil] adam [i.e., the demonic power] dominates [the holy] adam [i.e., the soul], to his harm [i.e., harming the soul]*. This demonic force is also known as *alien man*.

The expression “souls ascend” apparently alludes to the fact that when the body dies, the soul ascends back to the cosmic scales, where its good and bad deeds are weighed. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MmD*.

“Scale” renders טיקלא (*tiqla*), based playfully on the root תקל (*tql*), “to weigh, balance.” In the *Zohar*, *tiqla*’s range of meaning includes “scale, potter’s wheel, hollow of the hand, fist, water-clock.” Here the meaning “potter’s wheel” may also pertain, since the soul is being fashioned.

See *Zohar* 1:78a (Vol. 2, p. 8, n. 51), 92b (Vol. 2, p. 82, n. 634), 109a-110a (Vol. 2, p. 158, n. 320), 233b-234a (*Tos*); 2:61b, 252a (*Heikh*); 3:168a; *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 178; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:180; 2:511, 755-57; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 327-35 (esp. 331-32); Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 148. Cf. Daniel 5:27.

In their biblical context “scales of righteousness” and “scales of deceit” mean, respectively, just and false scales. See Leviticus 19:36; Ezekiel 45:10; Job 31:6; and Hosea 12:8; Amos 8:5; Proverbs 11:1; 20:23.

On the weighing of souls, see *Zohar* 1:229a (Vol. 3, pp. 380-81, n. 404); 2:61b (Vol. 4, p. 329, n. 462), 252a, 255a-b

(both *Heikh*); Brandon, “The Weighing of the Soul.”

23. But this soul... However, this soul retains her essential purity and overcomes her demonic tormentor. Now the old man reads the conclusion of the verse differently: *to his harm*—to the harm of that *alien man* himself. The soul, though, cannot partake of spiritual sustenance and bliss until God redeems her, as described below.

For various interpretations of “until the blessed Holy One does what He does for her,” see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 180; Scholem; *MmD*.

24. Here is the mystery... The cosmic scales are known as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Human conduct determines how these scales incline.

Just as the demonic tormentor is eventually overpowered by the holy soul that he captured, so did the Philistines suffer after capturing the holy Ark. See 1 Samuel 5.

See Liebes, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 87, n. 126. On human conduct and the scales, see BT *Qiddushin* 40b, in the name of Rabbi El’azar son of Rabbi Shim’on: “Since the world is judged by its majority, and an individual is judged by his majority [of deeds, good or bad], if he fulfills one *mitsvah*, happy is he, for he has tipped the balance for himself and for the whole world toward merit; if he commits one transgression, woe to him, for he has tipped the balance for himself and for the whole world toward guilt.”

25. What becomes of those souls?... Their victory over evil is manifested in the worthiness of their offspring.

Only the high priest may enter the Holy of Holies (“within, within”) on Yom Kippur, but if he is ignorant, then a bastard scholar takes precedence over him. See M *Horayot* 3:8: “A priest takes precedence over a Levite, a Levite over an Israelite, an Israelite over a bastard, a bastard over a *natin* [a descendant of the Gibeonites whom Joshua made into Temple slaves], a *natin* over a convert, and

a convert over an emancipated slave. When [does this apply]? When they are all [otherwise] equal. However, if the bastard is a scholar and the high priest an ignoramus, then the bastard scholar takes precedence over the ignorant high priest.”

See *Tosefta Horayot* 2:10; *BT Horayot* 13a; *ZH* 82a (*MhN, Rut*). On the relation between tormented souls and bastards, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 32:8; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:1; Scholem.

For other references to “books of the ancients,” see *Zohar* 1:10a, 34b, 41a (*Heikh*), 180b, 184a, 220a, 234b; 2:35a, 231a, 239a; 3:10a, 19a, 26b, 249b, 258b, 288a (*IZ*).

26. If a man sells his daughter... In the biblical context an impoverished father sells his daughter into a well-to-do family for the purpose of marriage or concubinage. If the daughter’s new husband or master finds her displeasing, he cannot sell her off outside the family *since he betrayed her* (i.e., failed to keep her as a wife or concubine); rather, he must let her be redeemed and freed.

For the old man, this passage concerns the mystery of a tormented soul, represented by the daughter. Before offering his interpretation, he first expounds a verse from Jeremiah.

The context in Exodus reads: *If a man sells his daughter as a slave-girl, she shall not go free as the male [or: other] slaves go free. If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master, who designated her for himself, he shall let her be redeemed; to an outsider he shall have no power to sell her since he has betrayed her.* The expression *an outsider* renders עַם נֹכְרִי (*am nokhri*), literally, “a foreign people (or kin).”

27. How many in the world blunder... By assuming that God is King of the nations, rather than King of Israel. Of course, God rules the entire the world, but He

designated heavenly princes to govern the other nations, whereas only Israel is ruled directly by Him.

See *Zohar* 1:9b-10a. On God as King of Israel, see Isaiah 44:6. On the seventy heavenly princes, see Daniel 10:13, 20-21; Septuagint, Deuteronomy 32:8-9; Jubilees 15:31-32; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 11:8, Deuteronomy 32:8-9; *Tanḥuma, Re'eh* 8; *Leqah Tov*, Genesis 9:19; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 24; *Zohar* 1:46b, 61a, 84b, 108b, 149b, 177a; 2:33a, 126b, 151b, 209a-b; 3:8a, 298b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:204-5, n. 91.

28. Furthermore, the end of the verse... constitutes praise to the other nations... By even comparing their sages and rulers to God.

The phrase “this verse” in the final sentence refers to the verse in Jeremiah. On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:10a; 2:37a.

29. I see that you have been behind their wall... Accepting the nations’ false belief that God rules them directly. Before proceeding to expound “everything” that is problematical in the verse from Jeremiah, the old man responds to Rabbi Hiyya’s challenge, which poses an obstacle on the path. On the image of the wall, see Vital.

30. All names and appellations... The various divine names (such as *Yah, YHVH, Elohim, Shaddai*) and epithets (such as Holy, Mighty, Awesome, Gracious, Compassionate). These branch out and conduct the world, but the choicest name, יהוה (*YHVH*), is reserved for Israel, the chosen people, and they cleave to it.

Here *YHVH* appears with the name of each Hebrew letter spelled out. On Israel’s being “choicest” (or “chosen”), see *Zohar* 2:164a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 73.

For the verses in Deuteronomy 32, see above at [note 27](#). The verse in Deuteronomy 4 reads: *You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!*

31. One name among His other names... אלהים (Elohim)... This divine name also designates angels and the

heavenly princes ruling other nations. Such princes appeared, for example, to Balaam and Abimelech. Even idolatry is called by this name, as in Exodus 20:3: אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים (*elohim aḥerim*), *other gods*.

See Exodus 22:19; Naḥmanides, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:111b; 3:8a, 113a, 200a. In rabbinic tradition, *Elohim* and *YHVH* represent Justice (or Judgment) and Compassion respectively. See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 26; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15; 33:3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:2; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 56:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:6; 6:1–3.

32. even idolatry would be included in this category Of those who are worthy of fear and reverence.

33. now that the wall behind which you were leaning... Rabbi Ḥiyya had relied on the verse from Psalms—*Elohim reigns over the nations*—to argue that God rules directly over all peoples. But the old man has demolished this interpretation of the verse by showing that *Elohim* refers to the heavenly princes. Now he proceeds to explain the verse in Jeremiah: *Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?* Although it appears that *King of the nations* refers to God, whom all fear, the phrase really refers to human kings of nations, all of whom fear God. Similarly, in the verse from Psalms, the clause *Praise, O servants of YHVH* might be understood to mean that the *servants of YHVH* should be praised; but actually they are being directed to praise God, as the verse concludes: *praise the name of YHVH*. In both verses, what could be construed as the object turns out to be the subject.

On the image of the wall, see above at [note 29](#). On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:232b. On its relation to the verse in Jeremiah, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

34. what word spreads among them... There is none like You... The simple meaning of the verse is: *among all the wise of the nations and among all their kingdoms, there is none like You*. But, as the old man

pointed out, this reading involves a comparison between God and other nations' sages and rulers. Instead, the old man understands the verse to mean that these sages and rulers all acknowledge that *there is none like You*. See above, [note 28](#).

35. He too wept, as before See above after [note 25](#); below at [note 159](#).

36. Drive out this slave-girl and her son... According to rabbinic interpretation, Sarah demanded that Abraham banish Hagar and Ishmael because she saw Ishmael reveling in idolatry.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 53:11 (and Theodor's note); *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 31; *Tosefta Sotah* 6:6; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 21:9; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:1; *Zohar* 1:118b (Vol. 2, p. 185, n. 541); *ZH* 20a (*MhN*). The verse in Genesis reads: *She said to Abraham....*

"Have educated" renders אתערו (*it'aru*), literally, "were aroused." The underlying medieval Hebrew term, התעורר (*hit'orer*), refers to "having one's awareness aroused," "eliciting the (latent or potential) meaning" of a particular word or phrase, "expounding, interpreting." See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 392; Ben-Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 5:4392a-b.

37. If a man sells his daughter—this is the soul... If a soul (God's *daughter*) passes through the cosmic scales when sins abound in the world, the scales tip toward impurity and that soul falls into the hands of Lilith, the demonic *slave-girl*, who torments her.

See above, [p. 7](#) and [n. 22](#). The verse in Exodus reads *If a man sells his daughter* לאמה (*le-amah*), *as a slave-girl*, but the old man interprets this hyperliterally: *If a man sells his daughter le-amah, to a slave-girl*. Having just linked Hagar the *slave-girl* (and her son, Ishmael) with idolatry, he now identifies the *slave-girl* in the verse from Exodus with the Other Side. The conclusion of the verse—*she shall not go free as the male slaves go free*—is explained below.

On Lilith, see Margalioth, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 235–41; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 356–61. On Lilith as a slave-girl, see *Zohar* 1:122a–b, 131b, 190b, 204a; 2:60b–61a, 117b–118b (RM); 3:69a, 266a, 279b (RM); TZ, intro, 2a, all of which quote Proverbs 30:21–23: *At three things the earth trembles, four it cannot bear: a slave becoming a king, a scoundrel sated with food, a loathsome woman getting married, and a slave-girl supplanting her mistress.* The concluding phrase is understood as referring to Lilith supplanting *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 2:114b; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 120–22.

On the term גלגולא (*gilgula*), “rolling, revolving, rotation, circulation,” see below, [notes 85](#), [104](#), [108](#). “Scales” renders טיקלא (*tiqla*), which in the *Zohar* also means “wheel, potter’s wheel.” See above, [note 22](#); Galante; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 328. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 34:3, 9; BT *Shabbat* 151b; *Rut Rabbah* 5:9.

[38](#). All those tormented souls, who are they?... Such souls inhabit the bodies of certain babies, suckling at the breast. God foresees that if these infants endure in the world they will degenerate and sin, so He allows Lilith to kill them while they are still pure. In this way the old man explains the tragic death of babies.

On the relation between tormented souls and little children, see *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:1; above, [note 25](#). On the relation between the suffering of children and the theory of reincarnation, see Saadiah Gaon, *Emunot ve-De’ot* 6:8; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 140. On Lilith toying with little children before they die, see below, [p. 15](#) and [n. 43](#).

On removing a person from the world while he is innocent (or righteous), see *Wisdom of Solomon* 4:10–11; *Bereshit Rabbah* 25:1 (and Theodor’s note); BT *Hagigah* 5a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 6:2; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:15; *Zohar* 1:56b; 2:10b; ZH 20a–b (*MhN*), 36b (*ST*). Cf. M

Sanhedrin 8:5; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 218; *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:353).

“Potent breasts” renders תוקפא (*tuqpa*), “power, strength,” also “anger.” In the *Zohar* this word usually means simply “power,” but occasionally it signifies “bosom, breast.” This new sense derives from *Targum Onqelos* on Numbers 11:12, which renders the biblical expression בחיקך שאהו (*sa’ehu ve-ḥeiqekha*), *carry it* [the people Israel] *in your bosom*, as סוברחי בתוקפך (*sovarhi ve-tuqpakh*), “carry it in your strength.” This Targumic rendering is a paraphrase, unless the translator read or imagined the Hebrew בחזקך (*ve-ḥizqekha*), *in your strength*, instead of בחיקך (*ve-ḥeiqekha*), *in your bosom*—a tiny orthographical difference.

Based on this Targumic usage of *tuqpa*, the *Zohar* sometimes employs the word to signify “bosom.” Scholem contends that this is due to a misunderstanding: “The author mistook the Midrashic *interpretation* for a *literal translation!*” However, it seems more likely that the newfangled meaning is due not to ignorance but to linguistic playfulness, so typical of the *Zohar*.

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 11:12; *Zohar* 2:9a, 113a-b; 3:127b (*IR*), 206a, 234a; *ZH* 92c-d (*MhN*, *Eikhah*); Galante; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *tuqpa*; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 389, n. 48.

39. if you say that those are souls that might generate goodness... Perhaps some of those babies would grow up to live virtuously. However, the verse in Exodus indicates that such a baby’s soul *is evil in the eyes of her master*—in the eyes of God, who foresees the infant’s future corruption if he would endure with this soul. Only these babies are tormented and killed by Lilith.

The verse in Exodus reads: *If she is רעה (ra’ah), evil [or: displeasing], in the eyes of her master, who designated her for himself, he shall let her be redeemed; to an outsider, he shall have no power to sell her since he has betrayed her.*

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I further saw all העשוקים (ha-ashuqim), the torments, that are committed under the sun. Look, the tears of ha-ashuqim, the tormented—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their tormentors, power—with no one to comfort them.* See *Zohar* 2:112b-113b.

40. Who designated her לָ (lo), for him... According to the simple sense of the clause, the subject is the slave-girl's intended husband or master, *who designated her לו (lo), for himself* (see the preceding note). Yet, although the Masoretic tradition dictates that the word should be read (and understood) as לו (lo), *for himself*, it also insists that the word should be written as לָ (lo), *not*. This inspires the old man's interpretation: Do not imagine that God has destined this soul to be tormented by the demonic side ever since it came into existence; לָ יַעֲדָהּ (lo ye'adah), *He has not designated her*, in this manner. However, because of the movement of the scales, when the Other Side dominates the world due to human sin, the demonic force takes control of the soul that happens to pass through the scales at this moment—fulfilling the Masoretic reading: לו (lo), *for him* [that is, for the demonic force], *he* [that is, God] *has [now] designated her*.

See above, [note 37](#); Ibn Ezra (long) and *Minḥat Shai* on the verse; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 21:8, n. 169*.

41. He shall let her be redeemed... In allowing Lilith to kill the baby, God removes and redeems the soul before she (or the infant) turns sour.

On God (or an angel) teaching little children or their souls, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b (and Rashi, s.v. *gemulei me-ḥalav*); *Kallah Rabbati* 2:9; *Zohar* 2:113b, 169b; *ZḤ* 36b; Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 134-35; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 163-65. On the Heavenly Academy, see also BT *Bava Metsi'a* 85a; *Zohar* 1:4a, 38b (*Heikh*), 41a (*Heikh*); 3:161b-174a (*Rav Metivta*), 185b-186a, 192a, 197b.

42. Now, you might say,... ‘He gives her... to the pious of other nations...' And to bastard scholars, as was taught in “books of the ancients” (see above at [note 25](#)). However, the verse here demonstrates that since, in a sense, God *has betrayed her*, by allowing her to pass through the scales and be tormented, *to an outsider* [i.e., a Gentile or bastard] *he* [apparently, the demonic power] *shall have no power to sell her*. Rather, such a soul enters the body of a legitimate Jewish baby.

For various interpretations, see *MLN*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:184; *MmD*.

43. Now, if you say that that side... That the demonic side maintains control of the soul and plants her in the baby’s body. No; rather, Lilith snatches her and delights in her, but the soul escapes and enters the body (“that place”). Subsequently, Lilith visits that baby, toys with it, and lusts for its flesh. Soon the baby dies, its body succumbing to Lilith, its soul returning to God. “All is in the power of the blessed Holy One” apparently refers to the future resurrection, when the body too will escape from demonic domination.

On Lilith’s toying laughter, see *Zohar* 1:19b; 2:111a, 264b (*Heikh*); 3:77a, 234a; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 161-62.

On the notion that the demonic power (or the Angel of Death) rules over the flesh, not over the soul, see *Zohar* 1:65a; 2:76a (Vol. 4, pp. 409-10, n. 146), 269a; 3:170a, 172b.

44. She shall not go free as the male slaves go free... When she leaves the scales, the Other Side rejoices, imagining its control over the ill-fated soul and confident that she will enter a Gentile or an illegitimate body, as do certain other tormented souls (pictured as *male slaves*). However, God designates her, protects her with a divine name, and delivers her to a legitimate Israelite baby. See above at [note 42](#).

The old man interprets the verse as *To an outsider* [a Gentile or bastard] *he* [the Other Side] *shall have no power to sell her* בַּבְּגָדוֹ בָּהּ (*be-vigdo vah*), *with his garment upon her*. The simple meaning of this last phrase is *since he has betrayed her*, but the old man interprets *be-vigdo* as *with his* בְּגָד (*beqed*), *garment*. This pun derives from rabbinic sources; see *Mekhilta, Neziqin 3; Mekhilta de-Rashbi, Exodus 21:8; JT Qiddushin 1:2, 59c; BT Qiddushin 18a-b*. Cf. English “coat, turncoat.”

On the name אֵלֹהִים (*Eloah*), see *Zohar 1:94a; 2:172b; 3:23b*.

45. All inhabitants of the world... God directly determines when each person’s life will end—except for a baby with an ill-fated soul, who can be snatched by Lilith at any moment.

“Pluck” renders לְסַלְקָא (*le-sallaqa*), whose Zoharic range of meaning includes “to rise, raise, remove.”

46. and He fashioned all the souls... All souls exist individually since Creation. Before descending to earth, each soul is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body she will inhabit on earth; she retains this while in the physical body until shortly before death, and then regains it afterward. Here, the soul worries that it will be subjugated to physical needs and desires, and soiled by the body’s submission to the evil impulse.

On the preexistence of the soul, see *Bereshit Rabbah 8:7; BT Yevamot 62a; Tanḥuma, Yitro 11, Pequdei 3, Nitsavim 3; Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*, in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:153; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *guf*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:698–703. On the soul entering the body unwillingly, see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei, 3; Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*, 153. Cf. *M Avot 4:22*. On the descent of the soul, see *Zohar 1:235a, 245b* (Vol. 3, p. 502–3, n. 900); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:749–54. The dialogue here between God and the soul is based on *Tanḥuma, Pequdei*, or *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*.

On the ethereal body, see *Zohar* 1:7a, 38b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 90b-91a, 115b (*MhN*), 131a, 217b, 219a, 220a, 224a-b, 227a-b, 233b; 2:11a, 13a-b, 141b, 150a, 156b-157a, 161b; 3:13a-b, 43a-b, 61b, 70b, 104a-b; *ZH* 10b-c (*MhN*), 90b (*MhN, Rut*); Naḥmanides on Genesis 49:33; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 390; idem, *Seder Gan Eden*, 133; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 215-45; idem, *Kabbalah*, 158-59; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 251-73; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:770-73. Cf. Rashi on BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, s.v. *ve-ruḥot u-nshamot*.

47. Torah, who offers advice... Torah informs human beings that God has given them the precious soul freely.

In Gnostic literature the soul is often pictured as a pearl. See, e.g., the Hymn of the Pearl, in the apocryphal Acts of Thomas, chaps. 108-13. On Torah as advice, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 322; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:28; BT *Avodah Zarah* 17b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:12; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:5; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Temurah* 4:3; *Zohar* 2:82b.

48. let her not go out... The clause is usually understood to mean: *she shall not go free as the male slaves go free*.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy נפשך (nafshekha), your thirst [or: soul], בצחצחות (be-tsaḥtsaḥot), in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail*. The old man understands the rare word בצחצחות (be-tsaḥtsaḥot), *in parched regions*, to mean “with radiancies,” based on the root צחח (tshḥḥ), “to gleam.” See *Zohar* 1:113b-114a (*MhN*), 141a, 224b; 2:142b, 210b.

49. However, If she is evil... If the soul is defiled by sin, then her earthly body will not be resurrected and reunited with her in the hereafter. However, if the sinner repents, the soul can be redeemed. The clause *He shall let her be redeemed* refers to two “aspects”: the human

redemptive act of repentance and God's redeeming the soul from the path to the pit of Hell.

On the variant readings לו יעדה (*Lo ye'adah*), *To him he has designated her*, and לא יעדה (*Lo ye'adah*), *He has not designated her*, see above, [note 40](#). For various interpretations of the clause "except for one whose Master delights in her...", see Galante; *MIN*; *MmD*.

"Treasure-house" renders אחמתא (*aḥmeta*). This word appears in Ezra 6:2 as the name of the ancient capital of the Medes (modern Hamadan), but the context mentions archives and treasures: *Thereupon, at the order of King Darius, they searched the archives [literally, house of the books] where the treasures were stored in Babylon. And in the citadel of Aḥmeta in the province of Media, a scroll was found in which a memorandum was written.* Rashi and Ibn Ezra, *ad loc.*, quote an interpretation of *aḥmeta* as "a vessel" for letters and scrolls. (Cf. Hebrew חמת (*ḥemet*), "(goat's) skin," containing water or wine.) In the *Targum* to Esther 1:4, אחמיתין (*aḥmitin*) means "vessels" containing gold and gems. In the *Zohar*, *aḥmeta* can refer to a treasure-house, treasury, archive, or an account book.

See *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Friedlander) 50; *Zohar* 1:220a (printed edition); 3:149b, 154b, 156b, 166b, 172a; Galante; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 173; *Sullam*; Liebes, "Shimmushan shel Millim," 17-18; *idem*, *Peraqim*, 346; Scholem; *MmD*.

[50](#). לעם נכרי (*Le-am nokhri*), **To a foreign people...** The verse reads: *If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master, who designated her for himself, he shall let her be redeemed; לעם נכרי (le-am nokhri), to an outsider [literally, to a foreign kin, or people], he shall have no power to sell her בה בבגדו (be-vigdo vah), since he has betrayed her.*

The old man interprets *a foreign people* as referring to the menacing angels of destruction. He understands *be-vigdo vah* as *with his בגד (beqed), garment, on her*—namely, the protective divine garment. See above, [note 44](#); *Zohar*

2:245a–b (*Heikh*). On the way to the Garden of Eden and way to Hell, see BT *Berakhot* 28b.

51. If for his son he designates her... If God designates this soul for the body that she has left behind in this world, intending their reunion at the time of resurrection.

The verse concludes: *according to the manner of daughters he shall do for her*. This may be a general remark, or include specific obligations such as providing a bride-price or the items mentioned in the following verse: *her food, clothing, and conjugal rights*. See *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 21:9; Saadiah, Rashi, Ibn Ezra (long), Naḥmanides, Ḥizzequni, Sforno, and Sarna, ad loc.

52. Within a mighty rock... In the heavenly realms is the Palace of Love, where *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One) kisses *Shekhinah*, as implied by the verse *Jacob kissed Rachel*. Here, too, God kisses the pure soul.

On the heavenly connotation of the mighty rock, see *Zohar* 2:202a; 3:202a; *ZḤ* 90a (*MhN, Rut*). On the Palace of Love, see *Zohar* 1:44b–45a (*Heikh*); 2:146b, 253a (*Heikh*), 254b (*Heikh*), 260b (*Heikh*). On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:45a; 2:146b, 253b (*Heikh*); 3:250b; *ZḤ* 64b (*ShS*).

53. He shall do... You will do... Both these clauses render the same Hebrew word: עָשָׂה (*ya'aseh*), literally, “he will do.” By verbal analogy, the old man demonstrates that as a reward for the soul’s virtuous action (“doing”) in this world, God will do wonders for her in the world that is coming.

The expression “until here” concludes the old man’s interpretation of Exodus 21:9. On the connection between the verse from Isaiah and the world that is coming, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has*

seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You].”

54. He wept as before See above, [note 35](#).

55. If another woman he takes... The verse reads: *If another woman he takes for himself [or: for him], he shall not diminish this one's [literally: her] food, clothing, or conjugal rights.* In the biblical context, the subject is the slave-girl's master and husband, who, even if he *takes for himself* (i.e., marries) another woman, must continue to provide for the slave-girl (i.e., *this one*). For the old man, the subject is God, who *takes for him* (that is, for the righteous person) *another woman* (another soul). But how, he asks, can this be? The resurrection of a righteous person must involve his original soul, who conducted the body virtuously, not *another* soul. Otherwise, righteous conduct remains unrewarded and unfulfilled.

Cf. above, [note 40](#). The expression *her conjugal rights* reflects the traditional understanding of עֲנָתָה (*onatah*), whose precise meaning is uncertain. The noun עֹנָה (*onah*) may mean “housing, oil, or ointment.” See Sarna, *Exodus*, ad loc.

56. The dust will return... For the old man, *dust* symbolizes the demonic power, who returned to rule הארץ על (al ha-arets), *over the land* (of Israel), when the Temple was destroyed. This demonic control was *as it was*—resembling the situation before Joshua conquered this territory from the Canaanites, who embody the demonic force.

On the application of the verse from Ecclesiastes to the destruction of the Temple, see *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:7. On dust and the demonic force, see Genesis 3:14; *Zohar* 1:80a (ST), 170a; 2:266b.

According to Genesis 9:22-25, after Noah's son Ham saw his father's nakedness, Noah cursed Ham's son, Canaan. On the demonic nature of Canaan, see *Zohar* 1:73a, 79b, 228a. On the verse in Genesis 12, see Rashi, ad loc.

57. And the spirit will return... Namely, *Shekhinah*, who is identified with the Holy Spirit. As the Temple was being destroyed, She gradually withdrew, witnessing Israel's refusal to turn back to God in repentance. In Her absence the Holy Land was controlled by demonic powers and their earthly representatives, Israel's enemies. *Shekhinah* ultimately returned to Her source in *Binah*, who is signified in this verse as *האלהים* (*ha-Elohim*), *God*.

According to BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 31a (in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan), *Shekhinah* departed from the Temple (and Jerusalem and earth) in ten stages, the final one being from the desert to Her place in heaven.

58. The spirit of a virtuous person is adorned... Upon departing from this world, his *ruah* (spirit) moves to the earthly Garden of Eden, where it is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body it inhabited on earth. On festive days, these *ruhot* are stripped of the garments they wear in the earthly Garden, and they ascend to the heavenly Garden, the dwelling place of the *neshamah* (highest level of "soul"). Just as God delights the *neshamah* constantly in this higher realm, so He delights the *ruah* when it ascends on these special occasions.

See above, [note 46](#). On the various levels of soul, see above, [note 18](#). On the spirit's (or soul's) Sabbath and festival ascent, see *Zohar* 1:134b (*MhN*); 2:141b-142a, 212a; 3:70b, 144b-145a (*IR*), 159b, 168a; Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 138-39. On God's delighting the soul, see above at [notes 52-53](#).

59. Now, you might say... That since God turns His attention to the *ruah* (spirit), He neglects the *neshamah* (soul). But the old man shows otherwise by reading the verse as follows: *If another woman he takes* [that is, if God takes the spirit, in addition to the soul], *he shall not diminish her* [i.e., the soul's] *food, clothing, or conjugal rights*. These various delights of the soul issue from *Binah*, who is known

as “the World that is Coming.” Each of them is linked with a divine name, as explained below.

עלמא דאתי (*Alma de-atei*) is the Aramaic equivalent of the rabbinic Hebrew העולם הבא (*ha-olam ha-ba*), “the World that is Coming.” This term has often been understood as referring to the hereafter and often been translated as “the world to come.” From another point of view, however, “the world that is coming” already exists, occupying another dimension. See *Tanḥuma, Vayiqra* 8: “The wise call it *ha-olam ha-ba* not because it does not exist now, but for us today in this world it is still to come.” See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 8:8; and Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 37: “‘The world to come’ does not succeed ‘this world’ in time, but exists from eternity as a reality outside and above time, to which the soul ascends.”

In Kabbalah “the world that is coming” often refers to *Binah*, the continuous source of emanation. See *Zohar* 3:290b (*IZ*): “the World that is Coming, constantly coming, never ceasing.” Cf. *Bahir* 106 (160); Asher ben David, *Peirush Shelosh Esreh Middot*, in *Kabbalah* 2 (1997): 293; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 26 (30); idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot*, 375; *Zohar* 1:83a, 92a, 141b.

On the verse in Exodus, see above, [note 55](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see above, [note 53](#).

[60.](#) שארה (*she'erah*), **her food...** The nurturing flow from *Binah*, sustaining the soul and all worlds. *Binah* is known by the name יהוה (*YHVH*), vocalized with the vowels of אלהים (*Elohim*), apparently alluding to Her essential Compassion (symbolized by *YHVH*) and Her role as source of Judgment (symbolized by *Elohim*). On this dual name, see *Zohar* 3:10b, 11b, 65a; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 83b–84b.

[61.](#) שארה (*She'erah*)... אשר (*asher he*)... By inverting the letters of שארה (*she'erah*), *her food*, the old man fashions אשר (*asher he*), both of whose elements allude to *Binah*. She is known as *asher* (that, who), as in the divine expression אהיה אשר (*ehyeh asher ehyeh*), *I am who I am* (Exodus 3:14); and

She is also signified by the first ה (he) in the name יהוה (YHVH).

The verse in Genesis reads: *From Asher, rich is his bread; he will provide delicacies of a king.* Here, this alludes to *Binah's* nurturing role. See *Zohar* 1:246a (Vol. 3, p. 504, n. 903). On the symbolic meanings of Asher, see also *Zohar* 1:15a, 47b, 49a, 158a, 235b, 244b, 245b-246a; 2:49b, 85a; 3:65b.

62. Her clothing... כסותה (*Kesutah*), literally, *her covering*. This divine garment is identified with the name אלוה (*Eloah*), "God." See above, [p. 16](#) and [n. 44](#).

63. her conjugal rights... A flow from *Binah*, who is known as "the World that is Coming." This flow is here identified with the divine name יהוה צבאות (*YHVH Tseva'ot*), "Lord of Hosts," whose *gimatriyya* (numerical value) of 525 is equivalent to that of ענתה (*onatah*), *her conjugal rights*. In the *Zohar*, *YHVH Tseva'ot* can refer to *Yesod*, the divine phallus and procreative force, who channels the flow of the sefirotic Tree of Life to *Shekhinah* or, as here, to the soul.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:189; Scholem; *MmD*. On the term עונה (*onah*), "conjugal rights," see above, [note 55](#).

64. she shall go out without compensation... The verse reads: *If he does not do these three for her, she shall go out [or: go free] without compensation, with no money.* The simple meaning is that if the master/husband does not provide for his slave-girl/wife, then she is liberated without having to buy her freedom. Here, the old man transforms the meaning into: If God does not provide these benefits to the soul, because she does not deserve them, then *she shall go out* (and be thrust) from His presence *without compensation*, deprived of all desire and pleasure.

65. Until here... Until this point in the biblical text, Torah (source of all advice) admonishes her readers how to live virtuously. Now the old man returns to the topic of the

protective garment consisting of the name *Eloah* that is spread over the soul. See above, [pp. 16-19](#) and [nn. 44, 50](#).

66. when you reach the rock supporting the world... “When you reach Rabbi Shim’on, the righteous hero upon whom the world depends, tell him to remember the stormy day when he explored with us a certain divine mystery. Then, he will explain to you the meaning of this verse.”

The word פולין (*polin*), “beans,” may allude to פלפולין (*pilpulin*), “dialectic argumentations.” The specific number of גוונין (*gavnin*), “colors, kinds, aspects,” alludes to the word בן (*ben*), “son,” whose *gimatriyya* (numerical value) is fifty-two. Below, the old man expounds the mystery of the son.

The expression “snowy day” apparently derives from 2 Samuel 23:20: *Benayahu son of Yehoyada, son of a living man, abounding in good deeds, from Kabzeel. He smote the two Ariel of Moab. He went down and slew the lion within the pit on a snowy day.* In BT *Berakhot* 18b, this last sentence is interpreted as referring to intensive study on a winter’s day. In *Zohar* 1:6a-b, a donkey-driver expounds the entire verse, offering a different interpretation of a *snowy day* and referring to the divine son.

See Vol. 1, p. 38, n. 260; p. 41, n. 280; *Zohar* 2:104a, 109a-b; Liebes, “Myth vs. Symbol,” 222. Cf. Rashi on the parallel verse in 1 Chronicles 11:22; Radak on the verse in Samuel. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MLN*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:190.

On the special status of Rabbi Shim’on, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; JT *Berakhot* 9:2, 13d; BT *Sukkah* 45b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15; *Zohar* 3:159a, 206a, 241b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 1-84.

Cf. the midrashic interpretation of Proverbs 10:25: עולם וצדיק יסוד (Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam) as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*, whereas its simple sense is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*. See *Mekhilta*,

Shirta 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:1; *Bereshit Rabbah* 75:1; BT *Yoma* 38b, *Hagigah* 12b.

67. when you mention this sign to him... “When you mention to Rabbi Shim’on ‘the snowy day when beans of fifty-two colors were sown,’ he will complete what I teach you now.”

68. Whoever attains thirteen years... At this age, a Jewish male is bound by the commandments and becomes the son of *Shekhinah*, who is known as Assembly of Israel. If he acts virtuously in his teenage years, at the age of twenty (when he becomes liable to punishment from heaven) he becomes the son of *Tif’eret*, known as “the blessed Holy One.”

According to rabbinic tradition, the evil impulse attempts to seduce a person from the moment of birth, whereas the good impulse enters only at age thirteen. See Genesis 8:21; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 16; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:13; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:5; *Zohar* 1:78a–79a (*ST*), 110b (*MhN*), 179a–b; 2:33b, 72b (*RR*), 101a, 113a; *ZH* 10c–d (*MhN*).

On the legal significance of the age of twenty, see Numbers 14:29; BT *Shabbat* 89b, *Bava Batra* 155a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:4; *Zohar* 2:186a, 248b (*Heikh*); 3:293b (*IZ*); *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

On the Christological parallel, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 144–52.

In rabbinic Hebrew the phrase כנסת ישראל (*Keneset Yisra’el*), “Assembly of Israel,” normally denotes the people of Israel. The Midrash on the Song of Songs describes an allegorical love affair between the maiden (the earthly community of Israel) and her lover (the Holy One, blessed be He). In the *Zohar*, *Keneset Yisra’el* can refer to the earthly community but also (often primarily) to *Shekhinah*, the divine feminine counterpart of the people, the aspect of God most intimately connected with them. The lovers in the Song of Songs are pictured as a divine couple, *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*.

69. When David reached the age of thirteen...

When King David reached his thirteenth birthday and began his fourteenth year, he sang this verse from Psalms, celebrating his rebirth as the son of *Shekhinah*, who is known as אֲנִי (*ani*), *I*. At this age, a person receives *neshamah* (the highest level of “soul”), whereas until then he is dominated by the evil impulse, deriving from the Other Side and symbolized by foreskin.

David’s son, Solomon, celebrated his twentieth birthday by declaring that he had now become the son of *Tif’eret* (the blessed Holy One), who is *Shekhinah*’s partner and the father of the soul.

On the significance of ages thirteen and twenty, see the preceding note. On the *neshamah* entering at age thirteen, see *Zohar* 1:78a-79a (*ST*); *ZH* 10c-d (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:762.

On *Shekhinah* as אֲנִי (*ani*), “I,” see *Zohar* 1:6a-b, 65b, 204b, 228a; 2:91a, 236b; 3:178b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 380 (and Wolfson’s [notes 8-9](#)). Cf. *M Sukkah* 4:5; *BT Sukkah* 45a, and Rashi and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *ani va-ho*; *Zohar* 1:23a (*TZ*); 3:222b (*RM*), 227a (*RM*), 276b (*RM*).

70. If for his son he designates her... If God designates the *neshamah* for one who has reached thirteen years and become a son of *Shekhinah*.

71. the blessed Holy One sees that child... If God sees him overcoming the evil impulse through study and prayer, He welcomes and adorns the *neshamah* and then “marries” her to him at age thirteen.

On overwhelming the evil impulse through study, see *BT Sukkah* 52b: “A scholar from the school of Rabbi Yishma’el taught, ‘If this repulsive one [namely, the evil impulse] attacks you, drag him to the house of study. If he is of stone, he will dissolve; if of iron, he will shatter.’”

On the wedding imagery, see *ZH* 10c, 15d (both *MhN*). On the simple meanings of the phrase *according to the manner of daughters*, see above, [note 51](#).

72. If another woman he takes for him... The verse reads: *If another woman he takes for himself* [or: *for him*], *he shall not diminish this one's* [literally: *her*] *food, clothing, and conjugal rights*. In the biblical context, the subject is the slave-girl's master and husband, who, even if he *takes for himself* (i.e., marries) another woman, must continue to provide for the slave-girl (i.e., *this one*). For the old man, the subject is God, who *takes for him* (that is, for His "son," who possesses a *neshamah* and celebrates Sabbath) *another woman* (an additional soul, issuing from the sefirotic Tree of Life). Nevertheless, the son's permanent *neshamah* is not deprived of her benefits and pleasures.

See above, [note 55](#). The image of an additional soul derives from BT *Beitsah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "On Sabbath eve the blessed Holy One imparts an additional soul to a human being. When Sabbath departs it is taken from him."

See *Zohar* 1:48a; 2:88b, 135b, 136b, 204a-b; 3:173a, 288b (*IZ*); *OY*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1230-33; Ginsburg, *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah*, 121-36.

73. blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel are here... *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* delight in listening to words of Torah. Beneath *Shekhinah* stand the cosmic scales, known also as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. When sins abound in the world, the scales incline toward evil; when virtue manifests itself in the world, for example, through discovering and sharing new interpretations of Torah, then the scales incline toward good, stimulating the union of the divine couple.

See above, [notes 22](#), [24](#). On divine participation in the study of Torah, see M *Avot* 3:2, in the name of Rabbi Hananya son of Teradyon: "If two are sitting engaged in words of Torah, *Shekhinah* dwells between them." On the verse in Proverbs, see *Zohar* 1:96b; 3:297a.

74. You have already joined many battles... In the intense struggle to comprehend Torah. Here, and periodically in this section, the old man exhorts himself.

On the battle of Torah, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 34, 321; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:25; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 25; JT *Ta'anit* 4:6, 69b; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:4; BT *Shabbat* 63a, *Megillah* 15b, *Hagigah* 14a, *Qiddushin* 24a, 30b, *Sanhedrin* 42a, 93b, 111b; *Rut Rabbah* 4:3; *Tanḥuma*, *Noah* 3, *Vezot Haberakhah* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 45:6; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 3:8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:3; 13:10; *Zohar* 1:17b, 226a, 240b; 2:56a, 110a-b, 111b; 3:42a (RM), 59b, 127b (IR), 188a-189b, 190b-191a, 278b (RM); *ZH* 14a (MhN).

75. YHVH, my God—beginning of faith... Alluding to *Hokhmah* and *Binah* (known respectively as *YHVH* and *my God*); they are the first elements of the realm of faith that are perceptible to the human mind, since *Keter* (the highest *sefirah*) is incomprehensible. *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) is known as “Thought,” *Binah* as “the World that is Coming” (see above, [note 59](#)). They are pictured as Divine Father and Mother, whose union is constant, unlike that of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, which is dependent on human virtue.

76. You are great—beginning... גדלת (*Gadalta*), *You are great*, implies the *sefirah* of *Gedullah* (Greatness), also known as *Hesed*, on the right side of the sefirotic tree. This is the beginning of the seven lower *sefirot*, issuing from the union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*. These seven *sefirot* are pictured as the primordial days of Creation, through which the world is constructed and conducted.

77. Very—on that left side Alluding to *Gevurah*, which is situated on the left side of the sefirotic tree and is characterized by harsh Judgment.

This interpretation of *very* derives from a midrashic reading of the expression *Look, it was very good* (Genesis 1:31) in *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:10 (per Oxford MS 147, Paris MS 149, and *Yalqut Shim'oni*): “Rabbi Shemu'el son of Rav

Yitshak said, ‘*Look, it was good*—this is the Angel of Life; *very*—this is the Angel of Death.’”

According to Rabbi Shemu’el, the Angel of Death is *very good* because he kills those who fail to accumulate good deeds. According to *Zohar* 2:149b, he is *very good* because the awareness of mortality stimulates a person to return to God. See 1:14a, 47a, 144b; 2:68b, 103a, 149b-150a, 163a, 249a (*Heikh*), 264b (*Heikh*). Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:5.

78. Splendor and majesty—two shoots of willow
Alluding to the sefirotic pair *Netsah* (Endurance) and *Hod* (Splendor), which are symbolized by the two willow branches adjoined to the *lulav* on the Festival of *Sukkot*. See *Zohar* 3:193b-194a.

79. Until here... Until here, David the Psalmist describes various *sefirot*: *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Netsah*, and *Hod*. However, he skips from *Hesed* and *Gevurah* (*You are great and very*) to *Netsah* and *Hod* (*splendor and majesty*), omitting *Tif’eret* (the trunk of the sefirotic Tree of Life). Why? Because *Tif’eret* hid itself, not wishing to be included along with *very*, which alludes to harsh Judgment. From this harsh quality issue all forces of Judgment in the world, including the bitter demonic power that manifests itself as the Angel of Death.

To rectify the omission of *Tif’eret*, in the following verse David begins to describe the seven lower *sefirot* again, beginning with *Hesed*, the primordial light of the first cosmic day, then skipping over *Gevurah*, or *Din* (harsh Judgment), and continuing immediately with *Tif’eret*, known as שמים (*shamayim*), *the heavens*. The name *shamayim* alludes to both עש (esh) and מים (mayim), symbolizing *Gevurah* and *Hesed* respectively, which are blended and harmonized by *Tif’eret*. Now the harshness of Judgment on the left is not described independently—as *very*—but is rather included in the right, radiating through *Tif’eret*, *the heavens*.

On the verse in Psalms, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayaqhel* 7: “Rabbi Shim’on son of Rabbi Yehotsadak asked Rabbi Shemu’el son of Naḥman, ‘Since you are a master of *aggadah*, tell me how the blessed Holy One created the world.’ He replied, ‘When the blessed Holy One wished to create the world, He enwrapped Himself in light and created the world, as is said: *Wrapped in light as in a garment*, and afterward: *spreading the heavens like a curtain.*’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:4 (and Theodor, ad loc.); Vol. 4, p. 189, n. 177.

80. *Setting the rafters...* *Tif’eret* now manifests itself in joy, flowing from *Ḥokhmah* above (symbolized by Eden), with the two willow shoots (*Netsaḥ* and *Hod*) rooted in its waters. This lower sefirotic pair are also described as *rafters*, *roots*, and *streams*.

The verse in Jeremiah now apparently means: *Tif’eret* spreads *its roots* (namely, *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*) *by means of a stream* (the flow from *Binah* through *Yesod*). The verse in Psalm 46 similarly refers to this flow of emanation, whose *streams* (namely, *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*) *gladden the city of God* (namely, *Shekhinah*). Cf. *Zohar* 2:63b.

The image of the “river issuing from Eden” derives from Genesis 2:10: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden...* In Kabbalah this river symbolizes the flow of emanation issuing from *Ḥokhmah*, conveyed by *Binah* through *Yesod*, entering the garden of *Shekhinah*.

On יובל (*yuvāl*), *stream*, as the name of the primordial river, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:10 (in the name of Rabbi Shim’on); BT *Bekhorot* 55b (in the name of Rabbi Me’ir); *Zohar* 2:83a; 3:58a, 97a, 290b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 335; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 106; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 56 (69).

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:193; *MmD*. The full verse in Psalm 104 reads:

Setting the rafters of His lofts in the waters, making the clouds His chariot, walking on the wings of the wind.

The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *He will be like a tree planted by water, spreading its roots by a stream; it does not fear when heat comes and its leaves are fresh; in a year of drought it is not anxious and does not cease yielding fruit.*

81. the clouds... Michael and Gabriel... Two of the archangels, associated respectively with *Hesed* and *Gevurah*.

82. to provide healing to the world... Raphael... Whose name means “God heals.”

The simple meaning of the concluding verset is רוחות מלאכיו עושה (oseh mal’akhav ruhot), *He makes winds His messengers*, but here the old man adopts a midrashic reading that follows the precise order of the words: *He makes His angels spirits.*

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 4; *Tanḥuma, Hayyei Sarah* 3; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 2:4; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 77; *Zohar* 1:40b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 101a, 144a; 2:10a, 173a-b, 229b; 3:126b, 152a; *ZḤ* 10a (*MhN*), 81b (*MhN, Rut*).

83. let the words of your mouth shine For this expression, see JT *Berakhot* 3:4, 6c; BT *Berakhot* 22a; *Zohar* 2:4a; 3:79a, 105b; *ZḤ* 37c, 67c (*ShS*), 70c (*ShS*), 73c (*ShS*).

84. You have entered the great sea... You have plunged into profound and dangerous depths of meaning.

The seafaring metaphor extends throughout *Sava de-Mishpatim*. See *Zohar* 2:100b, 101b, 103b-104a, 109a. On Torah as the sea, see *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 13; cf. JT *Sheqalim* 6:2, 49d; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:14. “Row” renders לשטטא (*le-shattata*), “to row, roam, swim.”

85. How many ancient revolutions... Mysterious movements in the lives of souls.

The term גלגולין (*gilgulin*), “revolutions,” includes the sense of גלגול (*gilgul*), “rolling, revolving, circulation,

transmigration, reincarnation,” which the old man discusses below.

See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:194; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 311; Vol. 3, p. 169, n. 529; above, [note 37](#); below, [notes 104, 108](#).

86. souls of converts... These souls are formed by the union of the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. From there, they soar and shelter beneath the wings of *Shekhinah*, and then descend into the bodies of new converts. (See above, [note 21](#).) When a convert dies, the old man wonders, where does his soul return?

87. Whoever first seizes the possessions... According to rabbinic law, if a convert dies without heirs, his property is considered *hefker* (ownerless) and belongs to the first one who seizes it. The old man applies this law to the convert's soul: Jewish souls who have departed from this world (as well as those who are destined to come into this world) abide in the Garden of Eden. On festive days (such as Sabbath, a holiday, or a new moon), each of these souls obtains a convert's soul, hovering by the Garden. Clothing herself in the convert's soul, the Jewish soul ascends to the heavenly Garden of Eden; subsequently, she descends back to the earthly Garden in this same soul-garment. Thus, the convert's soul enters the earthly Garden.

See above, [notes 46, 58](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MIN*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:194; Scholem; *MmD*. On a convert's property, see *M Bava Batra* 3:3; 4:9; *Tosefta Bava Batra* 2:11; 7:1; *BT Bava Batra* 52b, 53b-54a.

88. Now, you might say... That because they attained the soul-garment, they forfeit their earlier (or future) delights. But no, as the verse in Exodus implies: even if the soul clothes herself in a convert's soul (namely, *another woman*), she still does not lose anything she deserves.

The soul-garment is required for the soul to ascend from the earthly Garden of Eden to the heavenly Garden. Once she arrives there, however, she removes this garment.

On the verse in Exodus, see above, [notes 55, 59, 72](#). On the distinction between what is worn in each Garden, cf. *Zohar* 1:81a (*ST*); 2:210a-b.

[89. He wept as before...](#) See above, [note 35](#). On possessing and being adorned by words, see above at [note 73](#).

[90. All those holy souls...](#) As they descend to this world to appear to human beings (at gravesites, in visions, or in dreams), these souls clothe themselves in converts' souls. So too, these souls enter Jewish seed. Through the medium of the convert's soul (who has previously experienced the world), the holy soul gathers impressions of the world.

On the soul's appearance to humans, see *Zohar* 2:102a. On the soul's subjugation, see above, [note 46](#). On the fragrance of the soul's garment, cf. *Zohar* 1:224b. For various interpretations of this difficult passage, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MIN*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:195; *MmD*.

[91. All concealed things...](#) In the Torah God has included hints of all His secret actions and ways.

On appearance and disappearance, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1, intro: "The subject matter will appear, flash, and then be hidden again, as though this were the nature of this subject matter."

On Torah being both revealed and concealed, see *Zohar* 2:230b. The expression "full of eyes," applied here to the wise, derives from descriptions of angels and demons. See Ezekiel 1:18; 10:12; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:29; BT *Avodah Zarah* 20b; Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §§ 29, 33, 40-41, 596, 873; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:3; *Zohar* 1:148b

(ST); 2:50b, 202a; 3:126b; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 200–201, 228, n. 195.

92. In numerous places... The Torah often refers to the stranger, emphasizing not to oppress him. Within these passages lies concealed the profound significance of the convert's soul—a secret that momentarily reveals itself in the phrase *the stranger's soul*, but is then immediately concealed in the historical justification that follows: *for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*. Only the wise glimpse the deeper meaning: *You know the convert's soul*, since your soul is clothed in it! Further, *you know* things of this world by means of *the convert's soul*. See above, [note 90](#).

“Stranger” renders Aramaic גִּיּוּרָא (*giyyora*) and Hebrew גֵּר (*ger*), both of which can mean “stranger” or “convert.” On the Torah's numerous references to the stranger, see BT *Bava Metsi'a* 59b; *Tanḥuma, Vayiqra* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayiqra* 3; Rashi on Exodus 23:9. “Matter” renders מִלָּה (*millah*), “word, matter.”

The full verse in Exodus reads: *A stranger, you shall not oppress: you know the stranger's soul, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*.

93. Moses entered within the cloud... The old man equates this cloud at Sinai with an earlier cloud from the days of Noah. After the Flood, God displayed a rainbow in the clouds as *a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth*, guaranteeing that life would never again be annihilated. See Genesis 9:12–15.

In Exodus the cloud signifies the Divine Presence. Here, it enwraps *Shekhinah*, who is Herself symbolized by the rainbow. This symbolism derives from Ezekiel, who compares the Divine Glory to *the appearance of the bow in the cloud on a rainy day* (Ezekiel 1:28). In Kabbalah the rainbow of *Shekhinah* displays the colors of the *sefirot*. The old man teaches that She removed Her garment of cloud and gave it to Moses. Shielded by this cloud, Moses ascended Mount Sinai and encountered the beyond. As holy souls

enjoy things of this world by being clothed in converts' souls, so Moses enjoyed supernal delights by being clothed in the cloud.

Alternatively, the rainbow may symbolize *Yesod*, clothed within the cloud of *Shekhinah*. See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 337–38, n. 40; 386–87; Idel, *New Perspectives*, 227–29. Cf. Vol. 4, p. 365, n. 584.

With the words “until here,” the old man pauses. See above, [notes 53](#), [79](#).

For the significance of the cloud in Exodus, see Exodus 13:21–22; 16:10; 19:9, 16; 24:15–16; 33:9–10; 40:34–38. On Moses and the cloud, see BT *Yoma* 4a: “Moses ascended in the cloud, was covered by the cloud, and made holy within the cloud, to receive Torah for Israel in holiness.” See BT *Shabbat* 88b, *Yoma* 4b; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20; *Zohar* 1:66a; 2:51b, 58a, 197a, 229a; 3:2a–b, 59a, 78b.

On the rainbow and the Divine Presence, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:3; BT *Ḥagigah* 16a; Naḥmanides on Genesis 9:12; *Zohar* 1:1b, 71b, 72b, 117a, 232a, 247a; 2:66b; 3:84a, 15a–b; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 334, n. 30. On the garments of *Shekhinah*, see *Sifra*, *Tsav, millu'im*, 1:6, 41a.

94. If we have come into the world... Similar exclamations appear in rabbinic literature and often in the *Zohar*. See BT *Berakhot* 16a, 24b; *Shabbat* 41a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 6:2; *Qohelet Zuta* 5:17; *Zohar* 1:2a, 129b (*MhN*), 148b, 164b, 235b, 240a; 2:121b–122a, 193b; 3:26a, 121a, 203a.

95. If another woman... The old man continues his exploration of this verse. See above at [notes 55](#), [85](#), [88](#).

“Rattle” renders עבִיד קִישׁ קִישׁ (*aveid qish qish*), “make (the sound) *qish qish*,” which derives from a folk saying in BT *Bava Metsi'a* 85b: “A coin in a bottle goes *qish qish*.” There, the point is that a scholar in a family of empty-headed fools is conspicuous. See *Zohar* 1:197b (Vol. 3, p. 209, n. 183).

96. Torah calls to them every day, cooing... On daily divine cooing, see BT *Berakhot* 3a.

The clause “Although I said...” refers to the old man’s teaching above at [notes 91-92](#).

97. This may be compared to a... maiden... The old man begins to expound one of his riddles (above at [note 5](#)): “Who is a beautiful maiden without eyes, her body hidden and revealed? She emerges in the morning and is concealed by day, adorning herself with adornments that are not.” Apparently, the description “without eyes” means that no one (but her lover) has set eyes upon her: “None of those near the lover sees or notices.”

On the Torah as an unrecognized divine princess in the palace, see *Devarim Rabbah* 8:7. Cf. *Tanḥuma*, *Pequdei* 4; *Bahir* 43 (63). See also Maimonides’ parable of the ruler in his palace in *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:51; Gikatilla, *Sha’arei Orah*, 46a, 48b-49b.

On the parable here, see Bacher, “L’*exégèse biblique dans le Zohar*,” 36-38; Lachower, *Al Gevul ha-Yashan ve-he-Ḥadash*, 40-51; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 55-56; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1084-85; Talmage, “Apples of Gold,” 316-18; Idel, *New Perspectives*, 227-30; Wolfson, “The Hermeneutics of Visionary Experience,” 321-24; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 16-19; idem, “Beautiful Maiden Without Eyes”; idem, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 384-88; Liebes, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 94-98; Oron, “Simeni kha-Ḥotam al Libbekha,” 10-13; Idel, *Absorbing Perfections*, 304-5; Abrams, “Knowing the Maiden without Eyes”; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 191-266 passim.

The expression “beautiful in form and appearance” is a playful variation on *Targum Onqelos*, Genesis 29:17.

98. words suitable for him... derasha Torah begins to unfold gradually through דרשא (*derasha*), equivalent to Hebrew דרשה (*derashah*) and מדרש (*midrash*), “searching for meaning, interpretation, homiletical interpretation.”

Through hermeneutical techniques and imaginative midrash, the meaning of Torah expands.

99. from behind a delicate sheet... riddle... *haggadah* Now Torah reveals more of herself through הגדה (*haggadah*), “telling, homiletics, tales,” but here referring specifically to allegorical interpretation of Torah, which was employed by medieval Jewish and Christian thinkers to convey philosophical truths. The marriage of Abraham and Sarah, for example, could represent the union of form and matter.

On the various levels of meaning in Torah, see *Zohar* 3:202a; *ZH* 83a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 56; Bacher, “L’*exégèse biblique dans le Zohar*,” 34-40; idem, “Das Merkwort ספרדס”; Sandler, “Li-V’ayat ‘Pardes’”; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 50-62; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1077-92; Heide, “PARDES”; Talmage, “Apples of Gold,” 319-21; Idel, “PaRDeS”; idem, *Absorbing Perfections*, 429-37; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 213-19.

On הדיה (*hidah*) as allegory, see *ZH* 83a (*MhN, Rut*); Scholem; idem, *On the Kabbalah*, 55; Talmage, “Ha-Munnah ‘Haggadah.’” For a different interpretation, see *OY*.

“Sheet” renders שושפא (*shushifa*), “garment, cloak, mantle, towel.” See *Targum Onqelos*, Genesis 38:18; Deuteronomy 22:17; *Targum Yonatan*, 1 Kings 19:19; 2 Kings 2:8, 13-14; Isaiah 3:22; Nahmanides on Genesis 38:18; *Zohar* 2:44a.

100. since primordial days... According to rabbinic tradition, Torah existed two thousand years before the creation of the world.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:2; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 19:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:24; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11; *Midrash Shemu’el* 5:2; *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Yitro* 16; *Midrash Tehillim* 90:12; *Bahir* 4 (5); *Zohar* 2:49a, 84b, 161a; 3:128a (*IR*), 159a.

101. a complete man, husband of Torah... Fulfilled and wedded to his beloved source of wisdom. Now Torah is “concealing nothing,” which may solve part of the old man’s riddle: “adorning herself with adornments that are not” (above at [note 5](#)). The encounter with Torah yields various meanings, but eventually the lover sees through these apparent “adornments” and discovers the naked reality of revelation. See *Zohar* 3:152a.

The expression גבר שלים (*gevar shelim*), “complete man,” derives from *Targum Onqelos* on Genesis 25:27. The verse itself reads: *The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was איש תם (ish tam), a simple man, dwelling in tents.* The word *tam* means “simple, innocent, plain, mild, quiet, sound, wholesome, complete, perfect.” *Targum Onqelos* renders *ish tam* as גבר שלים (*gevar shelim*), “a complete (or perfect, consummate) man.”

“Husband of Torah” renders בעל תורה (*ba’al torah*), “master of Torah,” whose simple meaning is a scholar; here the old man implies another meaning of *ba’al*, “husband.” See Galante.

Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, the phrase מארי דביתא (*marei de-veita*), “master of the house,” designates both Jacob and Moses (as well as the Divine Male), each of whom is husband of *Shekhinah*. Here, the old man applies the phrase to one who masters the secrets of Torah.

See *Zohar* 1:21b, 138b, 152b, 236b, 239a; 2:22b, 133b, 134b, 235b, 238b, 244b (*Heikh*); 3:163b. Cf. Numbers 12:7: *Not so My servant Moses, in all My house he is trusted.* On Moses as husband of *Shekhinah*, see below, [p. 223](#), [n. 94](#). For the association of “house” with “wife,” see *M Yoma* 1:1.

On the erotic nature of engaging in Torah, see BT *Eruvin* 54b, *Pesahim* 49b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhoh Issurei Bi’ah* 22:21; Liebes, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 98.

102. the hinting word... The word that Torah momentarily revealed.

103. one should not add... or diminish... The text must be safeguarded to preserve and convey its secrets. See Deuteronomy 13:1: *Everything which I command you—that shall you be careful to do. You shall not add to it and you shall not diminish it.*

The פשוט (*peshat*) is the “simple meaning.” The verbal root *psht* means “to spread, stretch, strip, make plain, explain.” Often, the *peshat* is contrasted with deeper layers of meaning, but here the old man adopts a more dialectical approach. The *peshat* is the starting point, the simple word on the page. As meaning unfolds, layer by layer, the seeker eventually encounters the face of Torah, experiencing revelation. This seemingly ultimate moment, however, leads back to the initial word: *peshat* reappears, now overflowing with meaning. One emerges from the mystical experience of Torah with a profound appreciation of her form.

On the significance of every element of Torah, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 336; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:47; BT *Eruvin* 13a; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37–38; *Zohar* 1:54a, 135a, 145b, 163a, 187a, 201a, 234b; 2:12a, 55b–56a, 59b, 65b, 95a, 124a; 3:79b, 149a, 152a, 174b, 202a, 265a; ZH 6d (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Menahot* 29b; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:50. On the appreciation of the outer, literal form of Torah, see *Zohar* 3:152a.

104. If another woman... The old man returns again to this verse. See above, [note 95](#).

On a person being judged constantly, see *Tosefta Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:13; JT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, 57a ; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16a. On human characteristics (such as strength, intelligence, wealth) being determined before birth, see BT *Niddah* 16b. On the cosmic scale, see above, [note 22](#).

“Cycle” renders גלגולא (*gilgula*), “rolling, revolution, circulation, transmigration.” See above, [notes 37, 85](#); below, [note 108](#).

105. naked spirits... If a person dies without having lived virtuously, his spirit lacks a garment of good deeds and is condemned to roam the upper worlds aimlessly, barred from entering the divine realm.

On naked spirits, see *Zohar* 1:14b; 2:150a. On being naked of good deeds, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:6; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 14; *Bahir* 141 (200); *Zohar* 1:224a-b. Soon the old man focuses on the lack of a specific good deed, the first commandment of the Torah: procreation. This lack, in particular, bars entrance through the royal curtain. See *Zohar* 1:13a, 48a, 90a, 115a, 186b; *ZH* 37a, 89b (*MhN, Rut*).

On nakedness and childlessness, cf. the rare biblical term עֲרִירִי (*ariri*), which apparently means “stripped,” hence “stripped of children, childless.” See Genesis 15:2; Leviticus 20:20-21; Jeremiah 22:30; *Targum Onqelos* and Rashi on Leviticus 20:20. In this section of the *Zohar*, the term for “naked” is עֲרִירָא (*artira*), pl. עֲרִירָאִין (*artira'in*), instead of the normal form עֲרִירָאִי (*artilai*), pl. עֲרִירָאִין (*artila'in*). Perhaps the strange spelling *artira('in)* is influenced by *ariri(n)*.

On the image of the sling, see BT *Shabbat* 152a: “Rabbi Eli'ezer said, ‘... The souls of the wicked are continually muzzled, while one angel stands at one end of the world and another stands at the other end, and they sling their souls [the souls of the wicked] to each other, as is said: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling.*’”

See Radak on the verse in Samuel; *Zohar* 1:77b, 128a, 217b; 2:59a, 103a, 106a, 142b; 3:25a, 185b-186a, 213b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 351-53 (and n. 171, where Scholem cites De León's likely source in Jacob ha-Kohen's *Sefer ha-Orah*); idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 373 (and n. 6), 399; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 67-68; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 345-48 (who discusses the Zoharic neologism קוּספֶּתָא [*quspeta*], “hollow of a sling”).

Cordovero (*OY*) remarks that the spirit's wandering explains a phrase in the old man's riddle (above at [note 5](#)): "moving in separation."

106. all נשמתין (*nishmatin*), souls, issue... The *neshamah* (the highest level of soul) issues through *Tif'eret* or *Yesod*, identified with the cosmic tree (or Tree of Life), rooted in the river of *Binah*, who Herself issues from *Ḥokhmah* (identified with Eden). The *ruah* (the next level of soul) issues from *Shekhinah*, identified with "another, small tree," corresponding to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Just as *Tif'eret* (who is masculine) and *Shekhinah* (who is feminine) join together, so do *neshamah* and *ruah*. Their union is symbolized by the word נר (*ner*), whose letters are the initials of נשמה (*neshamah*) and רוח (*ruah*).

On the various levels of soul, see above, [note 18](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:684–722 (esp. 696). On *neshamah* issuing from *Tif'eret*, and *ruah* from *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:81a–b (*ST*); 3:170a. On *Shekhinah* as the small tree, see *Zohar* 1:7a. Cf. below, [note 133](#). For various interpretations of the tree(s), see *OY*; Vital; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 113–14; Oron, "Simeni kha-Ḥotam al Libbekha," 20.

On the river issuing from Eden, see Genesis 2:10: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *The breath (or: spirit) of a human is the lamp of YHVH, searching all the innermost chambers*.

107. Then *neshamah* wraps herself in *ruah*... In the celestial, palatial Garden of Eden, the *ruah* *envelops* the *neshamah*. As the *neshamah* descends to the earthly Garden of Eden, "she clothes herself in that other *ruah*," namely, in the soul-garment of a convert, which issues from the Garden of Eden. See above, [note 87](#).

The clause "*neshamah* does not come there" apparently means "... does not appear there without a garment." In the

closing sentence, the phrase “in all of them” refers to both *ruhot*.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *For ruah, spirit, יַעֲטֹף (ya’atof), would grow faint, before Me, וְנִשְׁמֹת (u-nshamot), and the souls, that I have made.* The old man understands *ya’atof* as a transitive verb and according to a different meaning of the root עָטַף (*’tf*), “to wrap, envelop.”

108. A spirit leaving this world... If a man dies childless (without his spirit having “grown or spread”), his spirit rolls restlessly through the world—unless his brother redeems his spirit through performing levirate marriage: marrying the widowed wife, impregnating her, and consciously drawing that homeless spirit into the embryo. This process of reincarnation provides the spirit with another opportunity to fulfill itself on earth.

According to the biblical custom of levirate marriage, if a married man dies childless, his brother should marry the widow and then father a child who will be considered the son of the deceased. Posthumously providing the dead man with a son prevents his name from being blotted out. In Kabbalah, levirate marriage is understood in terms of reincarnation: not just the name, but the soul of the deceased husband is preserved, transmigrating into the embryo generated by the union of his widow and his brother.

On levirate marriage, see Genesis 38; Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Ruth 3-4; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 231, 482-83. On the medieval context, see Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 127-74; Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious*, 90-101. The term “levirate” derives from Latin *levir*, “husband’s brother.” The Hebrew term יָבֻם (*yibbum*), “levirate marriage,” similarly derives from יָבֵם (*yabbam*), “husband’s brother.”

On reincarnation in Kabbalah, see *Bahir* 86 (121-22), 104 (155-56), 126-27 (184), 135 (195); Naḥmanides on Genesis 38:8; Deuteronomy 25:6; Job 33:30; *Zohar* 1:48a, 131a, 186b-188a, 239a; 2:75a, 91b; 3:7a, 88b, 182b; *ZH*

59a-c (*MhN*), 89b-90a (*MhN, Rut*); Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod, Yevamot* 62a, p. 25c-d; *Ketubbot* 111a, p. 27c; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 242-43; idem, *Kabbalah*, 344-50; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 188-94, 237-38 (on the Catharist theory of reincarnation), 456-60; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 197-250 (on the Catharists, 199-200); idem, *Shedim Ruhot u-Nshamot*, 186-214, 298; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1362-63; Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo*, 234-56; Gottlieb, *Mehqarim*, 370-96; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 291-327; Elijah, "Torat ha-Gilgul be-Sefer Galya Raza"; Oron, "Qavvim le-Torat ha-Nefesh ve-ha-Gilgul," 283-89; Schwartz, "Ha-Biqqoret al Torat Gilgul ha-Neshamot"; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 113-29. This section (*Sava de-Mishpatim*) constitutes the first extensive kabbalistic discussion of reincarnation.

On levirate marriage and reincarnation, see Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 537; Nahmanides on Genesis 38:8; *Zohar* 1:155b (*ST*), 186b-188a; 3:167a, 177a; *ZH* 59a-c (*MhN*), 89d-90a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 353-60; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 240-52; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 136-46; idem, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 33-35; Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 62-65; 167-71.

On the term גלגולא (*gilgula*)—Hebrew גלגול (*gilgul*)—"rolling, revolving, circulation, transmigration, reincarnation," see Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 302-3, n. 23; idem, *Shedim Ruhot u-Nshamot*, 186-93; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 294-96. Cf. above, [notes 37](#), [85](#), [104](#).

On "vessel" as a metaphor for wife, see BT *Sanhedrin* 22b; *Zohar* 3:167a. Moses de León employs the same image in *Shushan Edut*, 355; *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 244; *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 34. The image of building ("that redeemer builds it as before") derives from Deuteronomy 25:9. Cf. Genesis 16:2; 30:3. On levirate marriage as redemption, see Ruth 3-4.

[109](#). The spirit that he left... During his lifetime, through uniting sexually with his wife, the deceased

husband had infused some of his spirit into her, and this remained in her even after he died. Now this spirit pursues its origin—the husband’s wandering spirit—and brings it to his widow’s womb, where it is implanted in the embryo generated by the widow and her brother-in-law.

See the fragment by Naḥmanides published by Scholem in “Peraqim Mi-Toledot Sifrut ha-Qabbalah (8),” 417–18. On everything having its place, see *M Avot* 4:3; below at [note 120](#).

The phrase “the spirit of his mate who emerged with him” refers to the idea that a human couple is predestined for one another: their souls were originally one, then split into male and female, and entered the world in order to reunite.

See Plato, *Symposium* 189d–191d; *Zohar* 1:85b, 91b; 2:246a (*Heikh*); 3:43b, 167a, 283b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1355–56. Cf. the rabbinic tradition on the original androgynous nature of Adam in *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1: “Rabbi Yirmeyah son of El’azar said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him androgynous, as is said: *Male and female He created them* (Genesis 1:27).’ Rabbi Shemu’el son of Naḥmani said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces. Then He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.’”

[110.](#) **‘This spirit is the same as it was’...** Since it is built out of the deceased husband’s spirit, why is it considered new? Because, the old man implies, it is transformed by joining with the remnant of the husband’s spirit found in his wife.

[111.](#) **the Book of Enoch...** A volume of esoteric knowledge housed in the real or imaginary Zoharic library. Concerning Enoch, Genesis 5:24 states: *He was no more, for God took him*. In postbiblical literature this verse is taken to mean that God transported Enoch through the heavens, a journey recorded extensively in the Enoch

literature. The *Zohar's* Book of Enoch, though influenced by this literature, is not identical with any of its particular volumes.

On this book, see *Zohar* 1:13a, 37b, 58b, 72b; 2:55a, 103b, 105b, 180b, 192b, 217a, 277a-b; 3:10b, 236b, 240a, 248b, 253b; *ZH* 2c (*SO*). See Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:158, 163, nn. 60, 61; Margalio, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 80-83; Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 25; and Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:22d: "All such books mentioned in the *Zohar* ... have been lost in the wanderings of exile... Nothing is left of them except what is mentioned in the *Zohar*."

112. This structure that is built... The new spirit in the embryo is formed by the remnant of the deceased husband's spirit left in his wife, which draws the wandering spirit, joining with it as one. When the child is born, the remnant of spirit becomes his *ruah* (spirit) and the formerly wandering spirit becomes his *neshamah* (soul). If the son eventually "increases" by engendering new life, these two spiritual elements become a single *ruah*, which clothes a new *neshamah* from above.

Other Jews (called here "inhabitants of the world") possess a convert's soul-garment (see above, [note 87](#)), as well as their own *ruah*, which together clothe the *neshamah*. Correspondingly this new child possesses two *ruhot* (spirits)—the remnant of the deceased husband's spirit (which takes the place of the convert's soul) and the wandering spirit.

The old man's description of the "two spirits that are one" solves his riddle of "two who are one" (above at [note 5](#)).

113. Look! This one has another body... Having quoted from the Book of Enoch, the old man poses a challenging question: Since the infant has a new body containing the soul of the deceased, what will happen at the end of days? Which body will be resurrected and reunited with the soul—the original husband's body or this

new body? In either case, one or the other is בריקניא (*be-reiqanya*), “in vain, in emptiness,” emptied of soul. One might assume that the first body vanishes, because it failed to complete itself by engendering new life. But if so, whatever commandments the original husband did manage to fulfill were fruitless, earning no reward. How can this be?

On the problem of a single soul and the resurrection of multiple bodies, see *Zohar* 1:131a; 3:308a-b; Scholem, *Shedim Ruhot u-Nshamot*, 191, 197. Cf. Matthew 22:23-33.

On the image of the pomegranate, see BT *Berakhot* 57a: “Like a slice of pomegranate is רקתך (*raqatekh*), your forehead (Song of Songs 4:3)... Even ריקנין (*reiqanin*), the empty ones, among you [i.e., among Israel] are as full of *mitsvot* as a pomegranate [is full of seeds].” See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:3. Cf. above, [note 8](#).

114. for I know that you think and perceive so... This, in fact, is the view of Rabbi Yose, according to *Zohar* 1:131a.

“Those bodies are marked...” refers to gravesite markings. See *ZH* 89c (*MhN, Rut*); cf. *TZ* 31, 76a.

115. the blessed Holy One does not withhold the reward... See BT *Pesahim* 118a.

The prayer *Modim* (We “thankfully acknowledge”) is part of the *Amidah* and acknowledges God’s divinity, miraculous power, and eternal compassion. Traditionally, one is supposed to bow at the beginning of this prayer. According to BT *Bava Qamma* 16a, if a person fails to do so, after seven years his spine will turn into a snake. Here, the old man interprets this transformation as ensuring that a sinner who totally rejects God will never be resurrected in human form.

See *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *ve-hu de-la kara*; *Zohar* 3:162b, 164a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 269-70; Galante; *MLN*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

116. But these, not so... Those who have died childless are not punished so severely, since they believe in

God and have fulfilled various other *mitsvot*. How, then, are they resurrected? The old man begins his explanation by identifying the three spirits within the widow: the one infused by the redeeming brother, the remnant of the spirit of the original husband, and this same husband's formerly naked, wandering spirit. Apparently, these three spirits within her pertain to the phrase in the old man's riddle (above at [note 5](#)): "one who is three." But how can anyone contain three spirits?

117. these are the supernal mighty acts... The redeemer's spirit (infused in the widow) clothes his brother's soul, taking the place of a convert's soul-garment. (See above, [note 87](#).) The original husband's wandering spirit will clothe the soul of the new child. And the remnant of this husband's spirit flies off to the Garden of Eden, where it is reserved for his bodily resurrection.

"One who is two" apparently means that one spirit animates two bodies: the original husband's spirit enters the new embryo, while the remnant of his spirit is reserved for his body's resurrection. Although the old man refers back to his riddle, the wording there is actually "two who are one." See above at [note 5](#); [notes 10](#), [112](#).

Here the old man's view differs from the Book of Enoch, where the remnant of the original husband's spirit (rather than the redeemer's spirit) replaces the convert's soul. See above, [note 112](#).

On the deceased husband's spirit being preserved, see *Zohar* 1:187b (Vol. 3, p. 142, n. 366). On "the clefts of the rock behind the back of the Garden of Eden," cf. *Zohar* 3:308a; *ZH* 37a; Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 132. "Clefts" renders כּוּיִן (*kavvin*), "apertures, windows." (The phrase "cleft of the rock" [from Exodus 33:22] appears in *Seder Gan Eden*.) "The back" renders כּתפּוֹי (*katpoi*), "its shoulders," which may be a scribal error for כּתלּוֹי (*kutloi*), "its walls," namely, the walls of the Garden, as in *ZH*.

118. Adamah, next to Arqa... Rabbinic literature depicts “seven earths,” namely, seven strata of the earth. In some of these descriptions, the order from below to above is *Erets* (earth), *Adamah* (earth, ground), *Arqa* (Aramaic, earth), *Gai* (valley), *Tsiyyah* (dry region), *Neshiyyah* (oblivion), *Tevel* (firm land, world).

Since this body did not generate new life, it is brought down to one of the lowest levels of earth (*Adamah*), punished there, and then raised to the earth’s surface (*Tevel*). It continues descending and rising, attaining rest only on special days. This apparently explains the line in the old man’s riddle (above at [note 5](#)): “Ascending, they descend; descending, they ascend.”

See *ZH* 89c (*MhN, Rut*). On the levels of earth, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:11; *Ester Rabbah* 1:12; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:10; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:11 (all following the order above); *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 37; B, 43; *Sefer Yetsirah* 4:12; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 6:4 (following an almost identical order); *Midrash Mishlei* 8:9; *Seder Rabbah di-Vreshit* 9 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:24); *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:32–33); *Zohar* 1:9b, 39b–40a (*Heikh*), 54b, 157a; 2:30b; 3:9b–10a; *ZH* 9b–c (following an almost identical order), 12a (*MhN*), 87b (*MhN, Rut*), 89c (*MhN, Rut*, following an almost identical order); *TZ* 32, 76b (following the order above); 64, 95b (following an almost identical order).

According to rabbinic tradition, even the wicked in Hell enjoy the tranquility of Sabbath. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:5; *BT Sanhedrin* 65b; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 33; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 23; *Zohar* 1:14b, 17b, 41a (*Heikh*), 48a, 62b, 197b, 237b; 2:31b, 88b, 130a, 136a, 150b–151a, 203b, 207a; 3:94b, 288b (*IZ*); *ZH* 17a–b (*MhN*), 79b (*MhN*). The extension of tranquility to new moons derives from Ashkenazic sources. See *Ta-Shma, Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 40.

119. These sleep in אדמת עפר (*admat afar*), ground of dust... The phrase from Daniel is usually understood to

mean *the dust of the earth*, but the old man reads it hyperliterally: *ground of dust*, referring to *Adamah* (ground), the low level where this body is punished, and *afar* (dust), equivalent to *Tevel* (firm land), the surface of earth. On the association of *afar* with *tevel*, see Proverbs 8:26.

If the naked, wandering spirit reincarnates in the new fetus, and the child grows up and engenders new life, thereby attaining perfection, then the remnant of the original husband's spirit (hidden away in Paradise) will be restored to the husband's body at resurrection. See above, [note 117](#). Those who do not engender new life will suffer *shame and everlasting contempt*.

On *admat afar*, see below at [notes 227-29](#).

[120.](#) Even a breath of the mouth has a place... On the significance of breath, word, and voice, see *Zohar* 1:4b-5a (where God transforms human words of Torah into new heavens and earth), 92a, 146b (*ST*); 2:39a, 59a; 3:31b, 55a, 85a, 121b, 168b-169a, 260b, 294a-b (*IZ*). Cf. BT *Shabbat* 119b, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince, "The world endures only for the sake of the breath of schoolchildren."

On everything having its place, see M *Avot* 4:3; above at [note 109](#).

[121.](#) This one who was just constructed... The fetus embodying the original husband's spirit is born as a new creature, but he has lost his mate, since she has become his mother, who was married to his brother, who in turn redeemed the wandering spirit and fathered the newborn. Therefore, there is no heavenly proclamation of this fetus's future mate.

See BT *Sotah* 2a, in the name of Rav: "Forty days before the formation of the fetus, a heavenly voice issues, proclaiming: 'The daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so.'" See *Zohar* 1:89a, 91b.

[122.](#) son of Yoḥai Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai.

[123.](#) O daughters of Zion... The full verse reads: *O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze upon King Solomon,*

upon the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of his heart's delight.

On this verse, see M *Ta'anit* 4:8; *Sifra, Shemini, millu'im*, 15, 44c; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petihta* 33; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; Naḥmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:29b, 218a, 246a, 248b; 2:22a, 58a, 84a, 134a; 3:61b, 77b, 95a, 98a.

124. who can gaze at King שלמה (Shelomo), Solomon... King Solomon symbolizes the masculine divine potency, spanning the entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Binah* (or *Ḥokhmah*) through *Yesod*, which is known as World of the Male. This potency contains (or “possesses”) *Yesod*, who is called “peace” because He mediates between the right and left poles of the *sefirot*, or because He unites *Tif'eret* with *Shekhinah*. See BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim'on son of Ḥalafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.”

Since this masculine potency is concealed, how can the verse in Song of Songs tell the *daughters of Zion* to *go out and gaze upon King Solomon*? Furthermore, even the location of the Divine Glory is unknown to the angels, who are compelled to ask, “Where is the place of His glory?” So how can anyone gaze upon the higher realms?

On the phrase “the King who possesses peace,” see *Sifra, Shemini, millu'im*, 15, 44c; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:2, 3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1), 1:12 (on 1:2); *Zohar* 1:5b, 29a, 184a, 226b, 248b; 2:5a (*MhN*), 14a (*MhN*), 127b, 132a-b, 143b-144b; 3:10b, 20a, 60a, 73b.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You will do for one who awaits You*. In the *Zohar* the clause *no eye has seen* can refer to the hiddenness of *Binah* and beyond. See BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You]*.” On “the world that is coming” as a designation of *Binah*, see above, [note 59](#).

The angels' question, 'Where is the place of His glory?' appears in the *musaf* service for Sabbath and festivals. See *Sifra, Vayiqra, dibbura di-ndavah* 2:12, 4a-b; BT *Hagigah* 13b; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4; *Bahir* 90 (131); *Zohar* 3:103a, 159a.

125. upon the crown, not and upon the crown... If the verse read *gaze upon King Solomon and upon the crown*, this would mean that both He and His crown are visible. However, the wording *upon King Solomon, upon the crown* implies that only by gazing upon *Shekhinah* (known as *Atarah, crown*) can one glimpse the splendor and beauty of the higher royal realm.

126. He calls her 'daughter' ... 'sister' ... 'mother'... According to a rabbinic tradition, God expresses His growing love for Israel by calling her each of these successively.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11: "Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai asked Rabbi El'azar son of Rabbi Yose, 'Perhaps you have heard from your father the meaning of *upon the crown with which his mother crowned him?*' He replied, 'Yes.' He asked him, 'How [did he explain it]?' He replied, 'Like a king who had an only daughter whom he loved lavishly, calling her "my daughter." He went on loving her until he called her "my sister." He went on loving her until he called her "my mother." So the blessed Holy One loved Israel lavishly and called them "My daughter".... He went on loving them until He called them "My sister".... He went on loving them until He called them "My mother"....' Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai stood and kissed him on his head, saying, 'If I have come just to hear this interpretation from your mouth, it is enough for me!'"

The point of Rabbi Yose's midrash is that God loved Israel more and more, addressing them successively as daughter, sister, and finally mother. Here, the old man applies this interpretation to *Shekhinah* (who is known as Assembly of Israel). She can be pictured as the divine

daughter, sister, or even mother. The verse in Song of Songs now means: *go out and gaze upon King Solomon* [i.e., the divine male potency], *upon the crown with which his mother* [i.e., *Shekhinah*] *crowned him*. *Shekhinah* is both *the crown* and *his mother*. Whoever “beholds and knows” Her, perceives higher wisdom.

The interchange of daughter, sister, and mother echoes the old man’s conclusion above (at [note 121](#)), which he soon elaborates: “His former mate has become his mother, and his brother his father.”

On the rabbinic parable, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pequdei* 8; *Shemot Rabbah* 52:5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; *Bahir* 63 (43); Naḥmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:156b (*ST*); 3:7b, 262a; *ZḤ* 91c (*MhN*, *Eikhah*); Green, *Keter*, 80–81. Cf. *Sifra*, *Shemini*, *millu’im*, 15, 44c. On the significance of Mother Israel crowning God, see *Yefeh Qol* on *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Maharzu* on *Shemot Rabbah* 52:5. On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 68](#).

[127. If I speak... If I do not speak...](#) On ambivalence about revealing secrets, see *Zohar* 3:74b: “Rabbi Shim’on clapped his hands and wept. He exclaimed, ‘Woe is me if I speak and reveal the secret! Woe is me if I do not speak, for the Companions will be deprived of the word.’”

See above, [note 13](#). On being “orphaned,” see Rabbi Akiva’s exclamation at the death of Rabbi Eli’ezer son of Hurkanos (*Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 25): “Woe unto me, my master, because of you! Woe unto me, my teacher, because of you! For you have left the whole generation orphaned!”

See *Mekhilta*, *Pisha* 16; *Zohar* 1:99a (*MhN*); 2:23b, 68a; 3:100b, 232b, 236a; *ZḤ* 7a (*MhN*), 19c (*MhN*); Scholem.

[128. A vessel that was below...](#) How could his former wife, who had been subservient to him, turn into his mother, above him? How could he, the formerly dominant husband, become his wife’s son? His brother, by marrying

his widow and together engendering a new child (in whom his spirit reincarnates), has become his father.

See above, [p. 43](#) and [n. 121](#). The old man's suggested alternative—"his original father would redeem him"—refers to an earlier form of levirate marriage, in which the deceased husband's father would marry his widowed daughter-in-law. See Genesis 38:26; Naḥmanides on Genesis 38:8, 26; Gersonides and Sarna on Genesis 38:26.

On the world turning upside-down, see the story in BT *Pesahim* 50a about Rabbi Yosef, the son of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi, who "became ill and fell into a coma. When he recovered, his father asked him, 'What did you see?' He replied, 'I saw an upside-down world: the upper below and the lower above.' He said to him, 'My son, you saw a clear world.'" See *Zohar* 3:143a (*IR*).

[129.](#) ***He changes times and seasons... He knows...*** These two verses read in full: *He changes times and seasons, removes kings and establish kings; He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals the deep and the hidden; He knows what is in darkness, and light dwells with Him.*

[130.](#) ***One who dwells in light...*** See *Tanḥuma*, *Tetsavveh* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tetsavveh* 6; *ZḤ* 27a (*MhN*).

On the interdependence of light and darkness, see *Zohar* 1:32a; 2:187a; 3:47b. Cf. *Massekhet Atsilut*, 1-2.

[131.](#) ***something said by the ancients...*** The old man paraphrases a rabbinic statement about dreams (BT *Berakhot* 57a): "One who cohabits with his mother in a dream may expect [to attain] understanding, as is written: *כי אם לבינה תקרא* (*Ki em la-binah tiqra*), *For you will call understanding 'Mother.'*" The verse in Proverbs actually reads *כי אם לבינה תקרא* (*ki im la-binah tiqra*), *If you indeed call to understanding...* The Talmudic midrash playfully changes the vowel beneath the *א* (*alef*) of *אם* (*im*), *if*, turning the word into *אם* (*em*), *mother*.

The old man assumes that the midrashic reading םא (em), *mother*, alludes to *Binah* (Understanding), the Divine Mother; but why does the statement read “cohabits with” rather than simply “see”?

On the midrashic reading of the verse in Proverbs, see *Targum Yonatan*, ad loc.; *Midrash Mishlei* 23:25; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:4; *Bahir* 74 (104); *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:290b-291a (*IZ*); *TZ*, intro, 2a, 12a; 20-21, 56a; 65, 96a-b; 69, 106b, 115b; *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc.

132. he was transformed from below to above... At first this person was a son, subservient to his mother, and at age thirteen he was considered a son of *Shekhinah*, beneath Her. His dream of sleeping with his mother symbolizes a reversal: now he rises above her and also above *Shekhinah*—the divine tree who is overturned. He climbs the rung of *Yesod*, the divine phallus symbolized by Joseph, and attains the further rung of *Binah*, thus ruling over *Shekhinah*.

On becoming a son of *Shekhinah* and then reaching a higher rung, see above, [notes 68-69](#). The association of Joseph with *Yesod* includes several motifs. *Yesod* is known as Righteous, based on Proverbs 10:25: וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*). The verse is understood midrashically as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*, whereas its simple sense is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*. See BT *Ḥagigah* 12b; *Bahir* 71 (102); Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 34.

In rabbinic literature Joseph is granted the title Righteous in recognition of resisting the sexual advances of Potiphar’s wife. See Genesis 39; *Bereshit Rabbah* 93:7; BT *Yoma* 35b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana, nispaḥim*, 460. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 5, and *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 38, which cite Amos 2:6.

According to the *Zohar*, Joseph’s sexual purity enabled him to scale the sefirotic ladder and attain the rung of *Yesod*, the divine phallus and site of the covenant of circumcision.

The entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod* comprises the World of the Male, ready to join *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 1:96a, 147a-b, 149a, 160b, 200a, 246a-247a, 248b; 2:4a, 105b, 127b, 165b; *ZH* 72b (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 343; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 23 (and Wolfson's [note 6](#)); idem, Commentary on the Ten *Sefirot*, 375b; Scholem, *Le-Heqer Qabbalat R. Yitshaq ben Ya'aqov ha-Kohen*, 66-67. Cf. *Zohar* 1:5b, 17b, 46b, 163a.

133. Similarly, this vessel... Similarly with the widow. When her husband was still alive, the two of them represented the sefirotic couple, and their union below stimulated the divine union above. Further, by occupying the rung of *Yesod* (symbolized by Joseph), the husband dominated both his wife and the Divine Wife, *Shekhinah* ("the lower tree"). However, since he failed to perform with the phallus and engender new life, he descends, by reincarnating as the son of his widow and his brother. His former wife now assumes the superior role of mother, while his brother ("the redeemer") inherits from him not only the role of husband but of the Divine Husband, *Yesod*.

Shekhinah is the feminine archetype, embodied and realized in all females. Thus, "every female bears the image of the Female." See *Zohar* 1:228b: "All females of the world abide in the mystery of *Shekhinah*." See below at [note 171](#); *Zohar* 3:124a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:464; 3:1357, 1373, n. 23.

On *Shekhinah* as "the lower tree," see *Zohar* 3:239b. Cf. Her description "small tree," above, [note 106](#).

134. Once he descends... Now the deceased husband's spirit becomes once again the son of *Shekhinah* (see above, [note 132](#)). Whereas previously he had dominated Her (and his wife), now She (and his widow) dominate him. His brother, who marries his widow, becomes his father and inherits the rung of *Yesod* (the father of his soul, which issued from the union of the divine couple).

World of the Male refers to the entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod*, ready to join with *Shekhinah*, World of the Female. See above, [note 132](#).

Whereas normally before birth, a proclamation is made in heaven concerning the future mate of the fetus, in this case the widow's fetus has no mate, since his soul's former mate has become his mother and he himself has returned to World of the Female. See above, [note 121](#).

[135.](#) that first body... The body of the deceased childless husband suffers terribly when his spirit transmigrates into his widow's son, moving from World of the Male to World of the Female.

[136.](#) if he does have a mate, by supplication... Through praying fervently, he might find another mate—an unmarried woman whose intended mate had not yet found her. If he then marries her, he anticipates the unmarried man.

See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 18b: "Shemu'el said, 'One is allowed to betroth a woman during the intermediate days of a festival, lest another [rival suitor] anticipate him.'... But could Shemu'el have said, 'Lest another anticipate him'? Surely Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shemu'el, 'Every single day a heavenly echo issues, proclaiming: "The daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so!..."' ...Rather, 'lest another anticipate him by supplication.'" In other words, even though a man's mate has been decreed from above, through prayer and supplication another suitor can anticipate an unmarried man and obtain the latter's intended mate. See *Zohar* 1:73b, 91b, 229a; 3:78b, 283b-284a.

Here in the *Zohar*, "another" alludes to a spirit reincarnated in another body, not originally intended to be matched with this particular woman. See *Zohar* 1:91b; below at [notes 172-73](#).

[137.](#) If the daughter of a priest... Symbolizing the soul, as the old man previously taught.

See above, [pp. 5-8](#). The verse concludes: *of her father's bread she may eat, but no stranger [or: alien, outsider] shall eat of it.*

[138.](#) **A widow—of that first body** Of the childless deceased man.

[139.](#) **Divorced...** Because the man failed to engender new life, he removed himself from the World of the Male, and now his soul has no access to the Divine King. See above, [note 105](#).

[140.](#) **if she had seed...** If the man had fathered a child.

[141.](#) **And she returns to her father's house...** To *Shekhinah*, World of the Female, pictured as the house of the divine male, who is the soul's father. Through reincarnation, the soul reverts to the World of the Female, because the man failed to fulfill his role in the World of the Male. Now he descends from being husband to being son, and his widow (the "vessel" that he failed to utilize) becomes his mother, above him.

See above, [notes 132-34](#). The association of *house* with female may derive from rabbinic sources such as M *Yoma* 1:1. Soon, the old man offers another perspective on the soul's return *to her father's house*.

[142.](#) **As in her youth...** At age thirteen, when the soul originally became a son of *Shekhinah*.

See above, [notes 68-69](#), [132](#), [134](#). On the verse in Job, see *Zohar* 1:187b.

[143.](#) **If she attains perfection...** If she is reincarnated as the widow's son and he grows up to father a child, then after he dies she will enjoy the delights of *Shekhinah*, tasting the manna that flows from above.

"Bread of the mighty" refers to manna, based on Psalms 78:25, recounting Israel's wandering in the desert: *Man ate the bread of the mighty*. In this verse *mighty* may refer to the angels, who according to rabbinic sources are sustained by *Shekhinah*.

See Septuagint; Wisdom of Solomon 16:20; BT *Yoma* 75b (in the name of Rabbi Akiva); Nahmanides on Exodus 16:6; *Zohar* 2:61b, 156b. On the angels being nourished by *Shekhinah*, see *Shemot Rabbah* 32:4; *Kallah* 1:17. On manna in the *Zohar*, see Hecker, *Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals*, 82–115.

144. But to gaze and enjoy... This soul, however, cannot partake of higher delights in World of the Male deriving from *Hokhmah*, who is known as *holy*, because she is confined to World of the Female. See Leviticus 22:10: *No stranger shall eat of the holy*. Instead, she partakes of *terumah*, the “raised donation” given to the priest—or here, to *Shekhinah* and by Her to the soul.

Shekhinah is associated with night, so the donation can be eaten only then, as indicated by the verse in Leviticus (referring to a priest who is ritually impure and must immerse himself in water): *When the sun sets, he becomes clean, and after he may eat of the holy*. According to rabbinic tradition, the phrase *of the holy* refers specifically to this donation—not all that is holy but rather *of the holy*. See BT *Yevamot* 74b; Rashi on Leviticus 22:7; *Zohar* 3:189a. Other *holy* offerings, deriving from World of the Male, can be eaten only the following day.

By describing *terumah* as being “given to World of the Female,” the old man may be alluding to the fact a divorced or widowed daughter of a priest (if she is childless) is permitted to eat her father’s *terumah* but not certain other holy offerings—a ruling based on Leviticus 22:13: *If the daughter of a priest becomes a widow or divorced, having no seed, and she returns to her father’s house as in her youth, of her father’s bread she may eat*. See M *Yevamot* 9:6; *Sifra, Emor* 6:1, 97d; JT *Yevamot* 9:6, 10b; BT *Yevamot* 68a; *Yahel Or*.

On the association of *terumah* with evening, see M *Berakhot* 1:1; Moses de León, *Orhot Hayyim*, 8.

145. *Holy is Israel to YHVH...* As opposed to this soul, which is confined to World of the Female, other righteous souls (called Israel) enjoy higher delights from World of the Male, which derive from *Hokhmah*, who is known as *holy*.

In the verse from Jeremiah, *the first fruits of His harvest* refers to Israel, but it also alludes to *Hokhmah*, the primordial point of emanation and the beginning of World of the Male. See *Zohar* 3:296b–297a.

146. *When spirits come visiting...* Spirits that have departed from the world visit their bodies' graves, except for spirits of those who have died childless. Such spirits have not attained the higher realm of *the holy* and cannot convey holiness below. If such a spirit does not perfect itself by reincarnating and engendering new life, then it does not even attain the realm of *Shekhinah* or enjoy the sacred donation.

See *Tanḥuma, Vayiqra* 8; *Zohar* 1:226a–b; 3:166b. On not eating the sacred donation, see Leviticus 22:12.

147. *when this redeemer cohabits with the vessel...* When the deceased husband's brother marries the widow and unites with her, he infuses some of his spirit into her.

On nothing being lost, see above at [notes 109, 120](#). As mentioned above, [note 74](#), the donkey-driver periodically exhorts himself.

148. *When other people of the world depart...* When a man who has fathered a child dies, what happens to the part of his spirit that he infused in his wife? And if she now remarries, her new husband also infuses spirit into her. Unlike the case of levirate marriage, where the deceased husband's brother acts as a redeemer, here there is no need for a redeemer, since the deceased engendered new life and his spirit does not need redemptive reincarnation. So how can both husbands' spirits coexist in the widow?

149. *O YHVH, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes raised high...* The verse concludes: *I do not pursue*

matters too great or too wondrous for me.

According to rabbinic tradition, King David studied Torah every night. See BT *Berakhot* 3b: “Rabbi Osha’ya said in the name of Rabbi Aḥa, ‘David said, “Midnight never passed me by in my sleep.”’ Rabbi Zeira said, ‘Till midnight, he used to doze like a horse; from then on, he became mighty as a lion.’ Rav Ashi said, ‘Till midnight, he engaged in Torah; from then on, in songs and praises.’... But did David know the exact moment of midnight?... David had a sign, for...Rabbi Shim’on the Ḥasid said, ‘There was a harp suspended above David’s bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn.’”

The description of King David as “ruling over all kings east and west” does not match any biblical or rabbinic portrayal of him, though it could apply to his son and successor, King Solomon. The phrase “all kings east and west” actually derives from BT *Berakhot* 4a (following soon after the passage quoted above), where David contrasts the lazy and arrogant behavior of “all kings east and west” with his own virtues, such as rising at midnight to praise God.

See Galante; Scholem; *MmD*. On David’s midnight activity, see Psalms 119:62; JT *Berakhot* 1:1, 2d; *Zohar* 1:206b–207a. On the verse in Psalms, see JT *Sanhedrin* 2:3, 20b; *Midrash Tehillim* 131:1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 4:20.

150. If this is the case with King David... If the greatest of kings behaved humbly, then surely everyone else should do so.

151. the precious oil running down... Anointing Aaron the high priest. See Psalm 133:2: *Like precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, descending over the collar of his robes.*

See the description of Aaron’s anointing in BT *Horayot* 12a. In the *Zohar* this verse from Psalms alludes to the flow of emanation from the divine head to the *sefirot* below. See

Zohar 2:87b; 3:7b, 34a, 39a, 88b-89a, 132a (*IR*), 209a, 295b (*IZ*).

152. Other people who have departed... The old man repeats his question. See above, [note 148](#).

153. When this second husband comes... The spirit that he infuses into the widow cannot coexist peacefully with the spirit of her former husband, whose vibration within her keeps him on her mind. Such a marriage is severely troubled, and one of the two male spirits within her must leave.

On the problem caused by remembering a former spouse, see BT *Pesaḥim* 112a-b. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 32b.

154. from two on, a man should not marry... If a woman's first and second husbands both die, she is considered deadly. The hidden reason for this is that the spirit of the first husband will defeat and banish any newly infused spirit, killing that new husband.

See BT *Yevamot* 64b: "If a woman was married to one husband who died, and to a second one who died, to a third she must not be married"—so says Rabbi [Yehudah the Prince]. Rabbi Shim'on son of Gamaliel says, "To a third she may be married; to a fourth, she must not be married."

See *Tosefta Shabbat* 15:8; Moses de León, *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, 57; Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious*, 262-72.

155. If so, this second one does not die justly... If the first husband's spirit expels the second husband's spirit, leading to his death, it would seem that he does not die by divine justice. However, the old man insists that God determines which spirit will prevail, based presumably on merit.

On the danger of marrying a widow, see *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira* (ed. Yassif), 209. Cf. BT *Pesaḥim* 112a-b. See Jacob Emden's critical comment in *Zohorei Ya'bits*, 49-50; and Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious*, 253-72.

156. you have emerged here! That is, it has come to this!

157. since the day that Doeg and Ahithophel... Doeg the Edomite was King Saul's chief herdsman (1 Samuel 21:8); Ahithophel was a counselor of King David, whose advice was *like an oracle sought from God* (2 Samuel 16:23). According to BT *Sanhedrin* 106b, "Doeg and Ahithophel posed four hundred questions concerning a tower flying in the air." This obscure image apparently refers to a tower-shaped chest or vehicle (perhaps not directly touching the ground but supported by posts). The many questions related to the ritual purity or impurity of its contents.

The old man indicates that Doeg and Ahithophel's many questions about the tower flying in the air included his own questions about the wandering, flying spirit of the deceased childless husband.

See M *Oholot* 4:1; *Tosefta Oholot* 5:5; BT *Hagigah* 15b; Rashi on both Talmudic passages; *Zohar* 1:6a (Vol. 1, p. 36, n. 251); 2:91a; *ZH* 58a, 66a-b (*ShS*), 70a (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 89-90 (112-14); *MIN*; *MmD*.

158. The spirit that left... The spirit of the first husband that left his widow, displaced by the second husband's spirit.

159. all these tears that I weep... The old man is not weeping because the Companions (Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose) are unworthy to hear these secrets, but rather because he is revealing so much without divine permission. To prove their worthiness, he states that he had previously seen the glorious reward awaiting one of the two Companions in the hereafter and that just now he has seen the other's reward.

On Rabbi Ḥiyya's future reward, see JT *Kil'ayim* 9:4, 32b; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 85b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:10; *Zohar* 1:4a-b (Vol. 1, pp. 20-21, n. 139).

For formulations similar to "I have not acted for my own glory..." see BT *Ta'anit* 20a, *Megillah* 3a, *Bava Metsi'a* 59b; *Zohar* 3:291a (*IZ*).

160. One man is thrust away in favor of another...

The old man quotes this Talmudic statement and applies it to the first husband's spirit, displaced by that of the second. This spirit leaves the widow's body and eventually visits the grave of its own body (that of the first husband). From there it roams and appears in people's dreams in his image.

This spirit's dream revelations on earth harmonize with the paradisiacal existence of its original, essential spirit, of which it is a part, having been infused by the husband into his wife. Eventually, the original spirit visits its body's grave, and then it clothes itself in the partial spirit and flies off with it to the Garden of Eden. When the original spirit enters its place in the Garden of Eden, it strips itself of the partial spirit, which finds its own place either in the Garden's palaces or outside, based on its merit.

The Talmudic statement quoted by the old man appears in BT *Ta'anit* 5b, in the name of Rabbi Yonatan. Cf. above, [note 136](#).

161. When spirits visit this world... In times of trouble, when the dead are invoked by the living who come to pray at their graves, the essential spirits of the dead reach the living by means of the partial spirit they left in their wives, in which the essential spirit ("another spirit") clothes itself.

On going to the cemetery to arouse the dead to plea for mercy for the living, see BT *Ta'anit* 16a; *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *yotse'in*; *Zohar* 1:225a-b; 2:16a-b (*MhN*), 141b; 3:70b-71a; Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 34a, 70a; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 559:10, 568:10, 579:3, 581:4, 605:1. Cf. Maimonides' critical remark in *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Avel* 4:4. In sixteenth-century Safed, prostrating by the graves of revered sages became a kabbalistic custom.

162. If so, it is a benefit... One might conclude that the widow's marriage to a new husband benefits the partial spirit (which leaves her body and reaches the Garden of

Eden) and also benefits many others by providing a means of contact between the dead and the living. But the old man insists that without the second marriage, the partial spirit would not have been thrust away in favor of the second husband's spirit, would have enjoyed a different benefit (described below), and would not have been compelled to roam the world or be bound to the living.

163. If so, the second coupling... If the spirit is better off when the widow does not remarry, then this second marriage must not be sanctioned from above, and yet the old man has claimed that the first husband's spirit is thrust away in favor of the second spirit according to divine decree.

164. Well, I say... If the first husband's spirit is thrust away, this is because the second husband is the woman's genuine mate. So, the second marriage is intended by divine will. See above, [notes 136](#), [160](#).

165. all those second ones that are thrust away... If, on the other hand, the second husband's spirit is thrust away, this is because the first husband was indeed the woman's genuine mate, and consequently the second husband's spirit cannot endure together with the first spirit within the woman.

166. for one who marries a widow... If she is not his genuine mate, his spirit will be ousted by her former husband's spirit, leading to his death.

The first verse reads: *Like a bird rushing into a snare, not knowing it will cost him his life.* The second verse is understood here to mean that the winged creature does not realize why the net is spread, i.e., the second husband does not realize the danger of marrying someone who may not be his true mate.

167. A widow who does not marry... Given the danger, she is not compelled to remarry and is not punished in the afterlife for having refused, even if she has no child, since only men and not women are obligated to

fulfill the commandment *Be fruitful and multiply* (Genesis 1:28).

See M *Yevamot* 6:6; JT *Yevamot* 6:6, 7d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:12; BT *Yevamot* 65b–66a; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

168. This woman who does not remarry... The spirit left in her by her husband remains within her for twelve months after he dies, and each night it visits and comforts the husband's soul (*nafsha*) at his grave and then returns. After twelve months, when her husband's punishment abates, this spirit leaves the widow and flies to the Garden of Eden, returning regularly to visit her. When she eventually dies, the spirit leaves her finally, clothing itself within her departing spirit. The widow restores this partial spirit of her husband to his essential spirit, and the two of them (the spirits of both husband and wife, or the two aspects of his spirit) shine as one.

On the soul lingering with the body, see BT *Shabbat* 152b–153a: "For all twelve months [after death], one's body endures and his soul ascends and descends; after twelve months, the body ceases to exist and the soul ascends and never again descends." See *Zohar* 1:225a; 2:199b.

169. they all follow the way of truth... and all of them accord... The antecedent of both pronouns is God's "hidden ways."

170. These who transmigrate... If a man has failed to engender new life, his soul is banished from heaven and then reincarnated in order to perfect itself by succeeding this time around. But how can such a reborn soul find a mate, since its previous mate was not obligated to fulfill the procreative commandment and consequently has not transmigrated? See above, [note 167](#).

171. For one who divorces his first wife... See BT *Gittin* 90b, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "For whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears."

Here the altar symbolizes *Shekhinah*, whose image is reflected in every human female. Consequently, each

woman inherits seven blessings under her wedding canopy, deriving from the sevenfold abundance of *Shekhinah* (who is the consummation of the seven lower *sefirot*). The act of divorce, tearing woman from man, impairs the sefirotic union above and pains the divine altar in which that woman was rooted—cutting away, as it were, one of its stones.

The old man soon clarifies the meaning of “divorcements join one another.”

On the Talmudic passage, see *Zohar* 2:255b (*Heikh*). Cf. *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 34, and Luria’s [note 21](#). On the relation of women to *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 133](#). Seven blessings are traditionally recited under the wedding canopy. See *Zohar* 2:169a-b; 3:44b, 124a, 266b. On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 68](#).

[172.](#) **and he writes her...** The biblical context reads: *When a man takes a wife and possesses her, if she does not find favor in his eyes because he finds in her something indecent, and he writes her a document of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her away from his house, and she leaves his house and goes and marries another man, and the latter man hates her and writes her a document of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her away from his house, or the latter man, who took her as his wife, dies—her first husband, who sent her away, shall not be able to come back to take her to be his wife after she has been defiled...* (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). In other words, if a husband divorces his wife, and she remarries and is eventually divorced again or widowed, her first husband cannot remarry her.

The old man wonders why the biblical verse, in describing the divorcée’s remarriage, has to specify that *she goes and marries another man*. Isn’t it obvious that she would marry *another man*, and not the man who divorced her? He explains that here *another* refers to a soul reincarnated in another body. See above, [note 136](#).

“‘Another,’ we have learned” refers to the passage in BT *Mo’ed Qatan* 18b (quoted in that note), which for the old man alludes similarly to a reincarnated soul.

Thus, the verse in Deuteronomy now implies how a reincarnated soul finds a mate: “divorcements join as one...,” i.e., the reincarnated soul—banished and divorced from “that [heavenly] world”—joins with a divorcée of this world. However, the divorcée’s remarriage to *another man* involves a descent: previously she assumed the image of *Shekhinah*, whereas now she reflects a lower form.

The context of the verse in Job describes a plant suddenly uprooted, representing a person who has suffered disaster. This verset reads: *From other [or: another] soil it will sprout*—apparently predicting restoration through the image of transplanting. The old man applies the verse to a soul transplanted and reincarnated in *another* body (deriving from *soil*). On transplanting as a metaphor for reincarnation, see *Bahir* 135 (195).

173. We call him... another... last... The context in Deuteronomy refers to the reincarnated soul as both *another* and *last*: *...and she leaves his house and goes and marries another man, and the latter [or: last] man....* See the preceding note. Similarly, the verse in Job may now imply that the new body of the reincarnated soul (*the last one*) will be resurrected (*will stand upon earth*) at the end of days. (For a different interpretation of this verse, see Galante.)

But why is the divorcee’s new husband called *last* rather than *second*, which he is? After all, she is technically allowed to marry many other husbands, one after the other, if she is divorced or widowed again and again; so he may not be the *last*. However, *aḥaron*, *last*, is the same as *aḥer*, *another*, namely, the reincarnated soul, who marries the divorcée.

“A stone rolls in a sling” alludes to the process of reincarnation—here apparently to the soul rolling into a

second body. See above, [p. 36](#) and [n. 105](#), [p. 38](#) and [n. 108](#). The verse in Job opens: *I surely know that my Redeemer lives*. On the role of the redeemer, see above, [note 108](#).

174. Another—why is he called so?... The original body of the reincarnated soul has turned to dust in the grave, but this soul, now inhabiting a new body, is the same as it was; so why is it called *another*?

The designation *last* also seems inaccurate. Granted, if the reincarnated soul lives virtuously and engenders new life, it will not have to transmigrate again; but if it fails this time too, it will have to return, so this reincarnation may not be its *last*.

On transplanting as a metaphor for reincarnation, see above, end of [note 172](#).

175. look, it was very good... See *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:10 (per Oxford MS 147, Paris MS 149, and *Yalqut Shim'oni*): “Rabbi Shemu’el son of Rav Yitshak said, ‘*Look, it was good*—this is the Angel of Life; *very*—this is the Angel of Death.’”

According to Rabbi Shemu’el, the Angel of Death is *very good* because he kills those who fail to accumulate good deeds. According to *Zohar* 2:149b, he is *very good* because the awareness of mortality stimulates a person to return to God. Here, the goodness of death is apparently the opportunity of transmigration by which the soul can rectify its failure and by which the Angel of Death is transformed into *very good*. See above, [note 77](#); *OY; Sullam*.

176. A river issues from Eden... *Yesod*, the river of emanation, issues from *Hokhmah* (known as *Eden*) and pours into *Shekhinah* (*the garden*). Its fruitfulness contrasts with the sterility and impotence of the demonic realm, known as *another god* (Exodus 34:14). However, if a man sins sexually (especially by masturbation), he empowers the demonic sphere, enabling it to increase and spread; such a sinner is called evil and will never gaze upon *Shekhinah*.

See BT *Niddah* 13b; *Zohar* 1:19a, 56b–57a, 62a, 69a, 100b, 188a, 219b; 2:214b, 263b; 3:90a, 158a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 353; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 230; idem, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 23b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1365–66.

The theme of demonic impotence derives in part from BT *Bava Batra* 74b, in the name of Rav: “Everything that the blessed Holy One created in His world, He created male and female. Even Leviathan the elusive snake and Leviathan the writhing snake He created male and female, and if they mated with another, they would destroy the entire world. What did the blessed Holy One do? He castrated the male and killed the female, salting her for the righteous in the world to come.”

See Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen, *Ma’amar al ha-Atsilut ha-Semalit*, 262–63; *Zohar* 1:34b, 46b; 2:34b (Vol. 4, pp. 150–51, n. 45), 108b–109a, 112a; 3:170b. Here, the theme of impotence may allude to Christian celibacy and the monastic ideal, to which the *Zohar* is absolutely opposed. See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 149, and 234, n. 47.

177. This person who revolves... By failing to engender children, he has sinned, imitating the impotent demonic realm—*another god*. Now this demonic name determines his name: *another*.

178. Last—from the first one on... From the first transmigration on, he is known as *last* and called so in the Bible, rather than “second,” “third,” etc., expressing the hope that he will mend his ways and make this reincarnation his last. If he were labeled numerically (e.g., “second”), this would provide an ominous pretext, or opening, for demonic machinations, causing him to fail to mend his ways and thus forcing him to reincarnate again, in which case his current (second) body would perish fruitlessly.

179. How do we know this?... We learn that something second can be called *last* from the Second

Temple, of which the prophet Haggai said: *The glory of הבית הזה האחרון (ha-bayit ha-zeh ha-aḥaron), this latter [or: last] house, will be greater than the first.* If instead a number were assigned, this would provide an ominous opening for demonic intervention, threatening the destruction of the Temple, which would then have to be rebuilt as before. Similarly, the reincarnated soul is called *last*.

180. shall not be able...to take her... Why not simply *shall not take her*? The old man explains that by marrying the reincarnated soul (called *another*), this woman has fallen under the sway of the demonic realm (called *another god*). God does not want her first husband to remarry her because he would have to abandon his own rung (corresponding to the Divine Male) and cling to her lower rung. In fact, he *shall not be able to come back*—to recover the original harmony he had with her, in which he played the role of *Tif'eret* and she of *Shekhinah*. Cf. BT *Yevamot* 11b.

181. After she has been defiled... The verse reads: *Her first husband, who sent her away, shall not be able to come back to take her to be his wife after she has been defiled* [by marrying another]. If *she has been defiled* means that the remarried divorcée has become loathsome to her former husband, then she should also be forbidden to him if she played the whore but did not remarry. However, by marrying *another* (the reincarnated soul), she has partaken of the demonic realm (“that side”) and has become truly *defiled*; therefore her former husband must stay away from her. If *the latter* [or: *last*] *man* (i.e., the reincarnated soul) divorces her or dies, she is permitted to marry someone else—perhaps she will find another reincarnated soul (called *last*).

182. Whoever has children from his first wife... If a man has already engendered children with his first wife (who has died or been divorced), his soul will not have to transmigrate; so there is no need for him to remarry. If he subsequently marries a woman such as this (who has

already been married twice), he invites disaster for two reasons. First, because he may become her third ex-husband. Second, because she has been married to (and dominated by) a reincarnated soul (*another*) and thus has descended to a lower rung; by uniting with her, he would cling to that rung.

See above, [note 180](#). Cf. p. 54 and nn. 154–55. See the statement attributed to Rabbi Akiva in BT *Pesaḥim* 112a, referring to marrying a divorcée (or possibly a widow): “Do not cook in a pot in which your neighbor has cooked.”

The image of a whirling sword derives from Genesis 3:24: *He drove out the human and placed east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life*. Here, the sword is double-edged. See *MIN*.

[183](#). Rabbi Levitas of Kefar Ono... He mocked her latest marital attempt, because if a divorcée has remarried a reincarnated soul (known as *a last man*) and is then divorced from him as well, any subsequent marriage seems doomed to failure.

For various interpretations, see Galante; *MM*; Soncino; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. The name Rabbi Levitas of Kefar Ono does not appear in any rabbinic sources. A Rabbi Levitas of Yavneh is mentioned in M *Avot* 4:4; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 23, 52, 54. Cf. *ZḤ* 91c (*MhN*, *Eikhah*). Kefar Ono is located near Lydda.

[184](#). a certain great and lofty place... Obed (who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David) was born to Ruth after her husband, Mahlon, died childless and she was remarried to Mahlon’s relative, Boaz, through a quasi-levirate marriage. Thus Obed was *another*—a reincarnation of Mahlon’s soul, occupying a low rung. How could the entire line of Davidic kingship emerge from such a place?

On Mahlon, see Ruth 1:1–5. On Ruth’s remarriage to Boaz, see Ruth 3–4.

185. Obed was perfected nobly... Because he failed to engender children, Mahlon was reincarnated and his wife became his mother, inverting everything. Obed, however, restored harmony by living virtuously and engendering a son, Jesse. His name indicates that he cultivated the tree of *Shekhinah*, abandoning the bitter, demonic branches.

On the inversion of the tree, see above at [notes 128-34](#). On the bitter branch(es), see above at [note 79](#).

186. His son came... Obed's son, Jesse, inherited the cultivated tree of *Shekhinah* and joined it to its partner, the masculine tree of *Tif'eret*. Jesse's son, David, was thus born into a harmonious setting and inherited kingship.

187. but now, you cannot... Be silent.

188. Obed was perfected... Thereby escaping the demonic forces. His son, Jesse, maintained and enhanced the tree.

On hesitating to reveal mysteries, see above, [pages 4, 46](#). "Thistles" renders גובין (*gubbin*), "pits," a misspelling of כובין (*kubin*), "thorns, thistles," apparently resulting from scribal error, a phonetic interchange of כ (*kaf*) and ג (*gimmel*), or playful variation. For the image of a field of thorns, see BT *Bava Qamma* 61a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:22. On *gubbin*, see *Targum Yonatan*, Jeremiah 2:13.

189. although the tree was enhanced... Although the cosmic trees had been joined, David remained in the lower tree of *Shekhinah*, who, on Her own, is characterized by lack and is sometimes referred to as Tree of Death. This accords with the midrashic view that David was destined to be lifeless and die at childbirth, but Adam offered him 70 of his own 1,000 allotted years, so David lived for 70 years and Adam for 930.

The closing sentence apparently means "If even the virtuous Obed (who was a reincarnation of Mahlon's soul) could not attain a high enough rung to guarantee life for

his descendant David, then all the more so for other reincarnated souls who cannot even attain Obed's rung."

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *MIN*; *MmD*. On being in the realm of the Female, see above, [pp. 50-51](#) and [nn. 143-45](#). The image of the Tree of Death derives from *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 5, where the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is called the Tree of Death, because when Adam and Eve ate of its fruit, death ensued. See Genesis 2:17. In Kabbalah, *Shekhinah* is identified with the Tree of Knowledge. When She is united with *Tif'eret* (the Tree of Life), She conveys life to the world; but if She is separated from Him by human sin, the vivifying flow of emanation ceases and death dominates. See *Zohar* 1:12b, 35b-36a, 51a-52a, 53b, 208b-209a, 246a; 2:44b; 3:157a. On *Shekhinah* as "the lower tree," see above, [note 133](#).

On Adam's life and his gift of life to David, see Genesis 5:5; Jubilees 4:30; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 19, and David Luria, ad loc., n. 31; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:10; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:12; *Bereshit Rabbati* 5:5; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 41; *Zohar* 1:55a-b, 91b, 140a, 168a, 233b, 248b; 2:235a; *ZH* 67d (*ShS*), 81a (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 68 (85); idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 383.

[190](#). **In all aspects, transformed...** The line of King David, descended from Judah, was formed and transformed through a series of reincarnations. According to Genesis 38, when Judah's firstborn son (Er) died, Judah instructed Er's brother (Onan) to perform the rite of levirate marriage with Er's widow (Tamar). Onan, however, failed to fulfill his brotherly duty, and instead, *when he would come to bed with his brother's wife, he would waste his seed on the ground* (38:9). For this he was put to death by God. Judah then told Tamar to wait for his youngest son, Shelah, to grow up and marry her. A long time passed, and eventually Tamar took matters into her own hands, disguising herself and seducing Judah. According to Kabbalah, the twins born

to them, Perez and Zerah, were reincarnations of the souls of Er and Onan. Perez's descendant, Boaz, was the father of Obed, who was the reincarnation of Mahlon's soul (see above, [note 184](#)). Obed was the father of Jesse, who fathered David.

In his list of transmigrators, the old man includes not only Perez and Obed, but Boaz. See below, [note 206](#). Through this series of reincarnations, the tree of *Shekhinah* was disentangled from evil and joined its holy partner.

Genesis does not specify the nature of Er's *evil*, but rabbinic tradition maintains that it was the same as that of his younger brother, Onan: wasting his seed (as mentioned in the first paragraph of this note). See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 38:7; *Bereshit Rabbah* 85:4 (and Theodor's note); BT *Yevamot* 34b; *Zohar* 1:56b-57a, 219b.

Unlike Er and Mahlon, "by these" (namely, by Obed and Jesse), evil was consumed and good emerged—that is, David, who is described as *goodly* and accompanied by God. Now, the tree of *Shekhinah* stood firm, ensuring divine dominion.

On Perez and Obed as reincarnations, see *Zohar* 1:188b (Vol. 3, pp. 149-50, n. 409). The wording *goodly to look on, and YHVH is with him* combines two verses in 1 Samuel 16: *He* [i.e., David] *was ruddy, with fine eyes and goodly to look on* (verse 12); *a handsome man, and YHVH is with him* (verse 18).

191. In the beginning of all... Judah was preceded by the triad of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, who symbolize, respectively, *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (as explained below), all issuing from "another essential foundation," apparently *Binah*. Leah's fourth son, Judah, is linked with *Shekhinah*, completing the sefirotic quartet. When he was born, his mother, Leah, declared, "This time אודה (*odeh*), I will praise, YHVH." So she named him יהודה (*Yehudah*), Judah. And she ceased bearing children.

On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:154b–156a, 186a (Vol. 3, p. 134, n. 311).

192. In the Book of Enoch... According to this source, the phrase *she ceased bearing children* alludes to the barrenness of *Shekhinah* at an early stage of Her being. The birth of Judah corresponds to the emergence of *Shekhinah* cleaving to *Tif'eret* but joined back-to-back and incapable of bearing children. Only after the blessed Holy One (apparently *Binah*) split the divine couple and rearranged them face-to-face, could they unite fruitfully.

The image of a couple being joined back-to-back and then sawed apart derives from *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1: “Rabbi Yirmeyah son of El’azar said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him androgynous, as is said: *Male and female He created them* (Genesis 1:27).’ Rabbi Shemu’el son of Nahmani said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces. Then He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.’”

See Plato, *Symposium* 189d–191d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:15 BT *Berakhot* 61a, *Eruvin* 18a; *Tanḥuma*, *Tazri’a* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri’a* 2; *Midrash Tehillim* 139:5; *Zohar* 1:2b, 13b, 34b, 47a; 2:55a, 176b (*SdTs*), 178b (*SdTs*); 3:5a, 10b, 44b, 292b (*IZ*). Cf. BT *Bava Batra* 99a; above, [note 109](#).

On the Book of Enoch, see above, [note 111](#).

193. this refers not to Leah, but rather to Rachel... The biblical verse obviously refers to Leah, but according to the Book of Enoch, Rachel is the subject. She symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who weeps over Her children in exile and who remained barren until She and Her divine partner were brought face-to-face.

The image of Rachel weeping over her children derives from Jeremiah 31:15: *A voice is heard on a height—wailing, bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.*

The sefirotic significance of the name יהודה (*Yehudah*) is clarified below.

[194.](#) רֵאוּבֵן (***Re'uven***), **Reuben...** The name of Jacob and Leah's firstborn son alludes to *Hesed*, which is symbolized by אור (*or*), "light," and is pictured as God's right arm. *Hesed* corresponds to the first day of Creation, when God said, *Let there be light!*

[195.](#) שִׁמְעוֹן (***Shim'on***), **Simeon...** The name of the second son implies *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), the divine left arm, symbolized by gold. The left side is linked to the demonic force, which is the source of iniquity and evil, pictured as the dross left behind by the refining process of emanation.

On this dross, see *Zohar* 1:30a, 71b, 118b, 179b, 193a, 228a; 2:24b, 203a, 224b, 236b. Scholem discusses its alchemical associations in *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 38-40.

[196.](#) לוי (*Levi*), **Levi—convergence...** The name of the third son is associated here with the root לוו (*lvh*), “to join.” See Genesis 29:34. Levi symbolizes *Tif’eret*, who blends the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*.

[197.](#) יהודה (*Yehudah*), **Judah—Female cleaving to Male...** The name of the fourth son symbolizes *Shekhinah* joined with Her male partner. The first three letters of his name—י ה ו (*yod, he, vav*)—designate the Male (including *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, or extending from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*). The last two letters—ה ד (*dalet, he*)—designate two stages of *Shekhinah*. At first, She is *dalet*, implying דלה (*dallah*), “poor,” when evil clings to Her, for example, the evil associated with Er and Onan. In order to gradually purge this evil, Judah (representing *Shekhinah*) has to initiate a series of reincarnations, culminating in the birth of King David. As the bodies of Er, Onan, and Mahlon decay in the earth, their souls reincarnate (as Perez, Zerah, and Obed), sprouting again to attain virtue. Thereby Judah realizes his royal destiny, while his divine counterpart, *Shekhinah*, as it were, “transmigrates” too, emerging from poverty to wealth, attaining the fulfillment symbolized by the letter ה (*he*). This development corresponds to the transformation from back-to-back to face-to-face.

See above, [notes 190, 192](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Galante*; *MM*; *MIN*; *Scholem*; *MmD*. On ד (*dalet*) and דלה (*dallah*), “poor,” cf. BT *Shabbat* 104a.

[198.](#) **celestial camps...** Of angels.

[199.](#) **I am acting for Your glory...** See above, [note 159](#).

[200.](#) יהודה אתה (*Yehudah attah*), **Judah, you...** The full verse (from Jacob’s blessing to his sons) reads: *Judah, you, will your brothers acclaim—your hand on your enemies’ nape—your father’s sons will bow to you.* In the *Zohar*, the word אתה (*attah*), *you*, often symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, who can be addressed directly. The traditional formula “Blessed are You” alludes to the divine couple: the

masculine source of blessing and *Shekhinah*. When Jacob blessed his sons, he reserved the word *you* for Judah (“the necessary site”), symbolizing his root, *Shekhinah*.

Actually, in Jacob’s blessing to his sons, the word אַתָּה (*attah*), *you*, also appears in connection with Reuben (see Genesis 49:3). On *Shekhinah* as אַתָּה (*attah*), see *Zohar* 1:15b, 37a, 154b, 158b, 198a, 205b; 2:23b, 70a (RR), 138b, 140a, 221a, 261a (*Heikh*); 3:199a. Cf. 3:193b.

201. This name will your brothers acclaim... The verse reads: *Judah, you, will your brothers acclaim...* The old man understands this to refer to two names: *Judah* and *you*. When he is called יהודה (*Yehudah*), *Judah*, the demonic force emerges along with *Shekhinah*, since that name includes the letter ד (*dalet*), alluding to *Shekhinah*’s impoverished state, when evil clings to Her (see above, [note 197](#)). Once אַתָּה (*attah*), *you*, is uttered, the demonic force is subdued, since this name contains the letter ה (*he*)—signifying the dominion of *Shekhinah*—and not the letter *dalet*. The brothers’ acclaim focuses on the name *you*, which guarantees the ascendancy of *Shekhinah* above and the victory of Judah (and his descendants) on earth.

For the full verse, see the preceding note.

202. you ascribe this name to another lofty place... The name *you* is also applied to *Hesed*, on the right, symbolized by *priest*. *Hesed* is the first *sefirah* that can be addressed directly, since *Binah* (above *Hesed*) is concealed. The old man acknowledges that this meaning of the name *you* (advocated by Rabbi Shim’on) is also valid and represents a fine interpretation of *You are a priest forever*. However, he urges Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yose to remind their Master of the snowy day when they explored multifaceted mysteries such as this one. The verse in Psalms can also mean: *You* (namely, *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the cup of blessing) *are* (joined to) *a priest* (namely, *Hesed*), on the right. This is fitting because the cup of blessing is traditionally held in the right hand.

On *you* as alluding to *Hesed*, see *Zohar* 3:193b, 271a (*Piq*), both of which quote the verse in Psalms.

On the snowy session, see above, [note 66](#); *OY*. On how to hold the cup of blessing (during Grace after Meals), see BT *Berakhot* 51a: “One takes it with both his hands and places it in his right hand.”

See *Zohar* 1:1a, 156a (*ST*), 233b, 240a, 250a–b; 2:138b, 143b, 157b, 168b; 3:245a–b (*RM*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 105; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 383.

[203.](#) Therefore, יהודה אתה (*Yehudah attah*), *Judah, you...* The verse emphasizes *attah, you*, because this is the name of *Shekhinah*—the place where Judah was rooted and the focus of the brothers’ acclaim.

[204.](#) Judah, first father and second father... Judah was the father of Er and Onan. After both sons died, normally their brother Shelah would have performed the rite of levirate marriage with Er’s widow, Tamar, thereby redeeming Er and Onan’s souls through the process of transmigration. However, in this case, Judah himself fulfilled the levirate duty toward Tamar, thereby becoming the “second father” of his two sons, as their souls reincarnated as Perez and Zerah. See above, [notes 128, 190](#).

Judah was “never replaced”—his paternal role was not assumed by his son, Shelah. The biblical wording *Judah, you* also implies: “You remained the father.” If Shelah had married Er’s widow, Tamar, then Er’s soul (reincarnated as Perez) would have fallen, in the sense that his brother Shelah would be his father. Now, however, since Judah remained his father, Perez was fully empowered. Appropriately, in the book of Ruth the ancestry of David is reckoned from Perez, and not from Boaz, “who [apparently] underwent change” when he performed levirate marriage with Ruth and fathered Obed, since he had not been the first father of Mahlon, whose soul was reincarnated as Obed. See above, [note 184](#).

On David's descent being reckoned from Perez, see Ruth 4:18-22. The wording "Perez was empowered potently" derives from *Targum Onqelos* on Genesis 38:29. Cf. *Zohar* 1:188b.

205. he gained this name called you... Which implies that *you*, Judah, are the original father of Er and Onan, and the subsequent father of their reincarnated souls, Perez and Zerah. Others who transmigrate have two fathers (their original father and their brother, who becomes the father of the "structure" of their reincarnated soul) and two mothers (their original mother and their wife, who becomes the mother of their reincarnated soul).

On the image of finding pearls, see BT *Yevamot* 92b (in the context of levirate marriage).

206. Boaz appears to have undergone change... Unlike Judah (who was both the original father of Er and Onan, and the subsequent father of Perez and Zerah), Boaz apparently changed (once he performed the rite of levirate marriage with Ruth) from being Mahlon's relative into being the father of Mahlon's reincarnated soul, Obed. As for Obed, his original father (that is, the father of Mahlon) was Elimelech from the tribe of Judah (see Ruth 1:2), and his biological father was Boaz; so apparently he too underwent change. Actually, however, there was no fundamental change. Boaz was none other than Ibzan, the Israelite leader mentioned in Judges 12:8-10. He acquired the name Boaz after marrying Ruth, because "when he aroused for this act," Judah, "the first father" of the Davidic line, reincarnated temporarily in him. The name בועז (*Bo'az*) implies בו עוז (*bo oz*), "in him is strength," namely, within him is Judah, who is strong as a lion (see Genesis 49:9, quoted below). The continued presence of Judah's soul (in Perez, Boaz, and Obed) ensured that no change would occur in the ancestry of David. *You*, Judah, spanned the generations.

The sentence "Now, if you say that he is he..." apparently means: "If you think that Boaz was the

permanent reincarnation of Judah's soul—not so; rather, when Boaz roused himself to fulfill the duty of levirate marriage, Judah temporarily reincarnated within him.” For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

This temporary kind of reincarnation, known as *ibbur* (impregnation), involves the entry of another soul into a person during his lifetime for the purpose of performing a specific act. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 348–49.

On the identity of Boaz and Ibzan, see BT *Bava Batra* 91a, in the name of Rav. On *Bo'az* as *bo oz*, see *ZH* 85b–c (*MhN*, *Rut*).

207. Will your brothers acclaim... The verse reads: *Judah, you, יודוך אחיך (yodukha aḥekha), will your brothers acclaim* [or: *your brothers will acknowledge to you*]. The wording *brothers* indicates that in the case of Tamar, it was not any of Judah's brothers, but Judah himself, who performed levirate marriage, thereby ensuring that his soul would infuse the entire Davidic line. The brothers *will acknowledge* that Judah's descendants retain the purity of his zodiacal sign (the lion), not intermingling with any of the signs associated with their own tribes, such as lamb, ox, or kid.

According to rabbinic sources, each of the twelve tribes is associated with one of the zodiacal signs. See *Massekhet Soferim*, add. 1, 1:3; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, add. 1, p. 442; *Midrash Tehillim* 90:3; *Zohar* 1:173a, 200b, 236a. On Judah as lion, see Genesis 49:9, quoted below. On levirate marriage, see above, [note 108](#).

208. From the prey... This next verse in Genesis reads: *A lion's whelp is Judah; from the prey, O my son, you mount. He crouches, lies down like a lion, like the king of beasts—who will arouse him?* Here, the clause in question is taken to mean that Judah did not share his descendants' souls with any of his brothers or their tribes.

209. He crouches... lies down... When Judah's sons Er and Onan died, he seemed to fall. However, when he performed levirate marriage with Er's widow, Tamar, he grew mighty, engendering the reincarnations of his sons' souls: Perez and Zerah. See above, [notes 190, 204](#).

210. Who will raise him?... The verse reads מי יקימנו (*mi yeqimennu*), *who will arouse him?*—meaning: “Who dares arouse Judah, the crouching lion?” (See above, [note 208](#).) The old man interprets this hyperliterally as: *Who will raise him?*—Who will raise Judah from Tamar, insisting that he no longer unite with her? One might argue as follows: Because Tamar has conceived from her father-in-law, Judah, she has accomplished the reincarnation of the soul of her deceased husband, Er; so it is now fitting for Judah to withdraw from her, since the prohibition of marrying one's daughter-in-law applies once again. However, in this case, *who will raise him?* After all, Judah has removed the remnant of Er's soul that was rattling in Tamar's belly; now Er's soul is reincarnated in a new being (Perez). Therefore, it is as if Tamar had never been married to Er, and she is permitted to Judah.

The verse in Genesis 38 describes Judah's behavior after discovering that he had impregnated Tamar: ולא יסף (*Ve-lo yasaf*), *And he did not continue, to know her any longer*. According to one version of *Targum Onqelos* on this verse, *ve-lo yasaf* does not mean *and he did not continue*, but rather *ve-la pesaq, and he did not cease (to know her)*, i.e., Judah continued having sexual relations with her.

See Radak on Genesis 38:26. Cf. BT *Sotah* 10b; Rashi and Naḥmanides on Genesis 38:26; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 353. Cf. also Numbers 11:25; *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.; Deuteronomy 5:19; *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 2:81a (Vol. 4, p. 442, n. 275).

On the question of whether the deceased husband's brother may remain married to the widow after she has

given birth, see BT *Yevamot* 39a; *Ketubbot* 82a-b, *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *mahu de-teima*.

211. Why a man's brother?... Why does levirate marriage have to be performed by the deceased husband's brother, rather than by any man? The old man implies that if a complete stranger were to perform this rite, then the remnant of the deceased husband's spirit would reject the stranger completely and no reincarnation would occur. (See above at [notes 152-55](#).) However, if the rite is performed by the deceased husband's brother, a different scenario unfolds: the remnant of the deceased's spirit sees that his brother, who had been protecting him (i.e., preventing anyone from marrying his widow) is "denouncing him" (i.e., trying to replace him), so he is forced to leave. He goes and invites the essential spirit of the deceased to join forces with him, and together they reenter the widow, until the spirit of the deceased is reincarnated through the semen of his brother in the midst of their brotherly competition ("denunciation"). Once the reincarnation is complete, the deceased's widow has become his mother and is permitted to remain married to his brother.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

212. Happy is the share of Judah!... In fathering Er and Onan, marrying Tamar himself, engendering the reincarnations of Er and Onan's souls, and spanning the Davidic line, Judah progressed from *whelp* to *lion* to *king of beasts*. Fittingly, he is addressed as *Judah, you*.

The old man's second question was: Why did Judah, who was Er's father, perform levirate marriage with Er's widow, Tamar? The answer, apparently, is that thereby Er's soul had no quarrel with Judah: although Er's widow became his mother, Judah remained his father. Furthermore, Judah's soul thereby infused the entire Davidic line. See above, [notes 204](#), [207](#).

The different stages of the lion appear in Genesis 49:9, quoted above, [note 208](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MIN*; *MmD*.

[213](#). **Reuben, Simeon, Levi...** The old man returns to the correspondence between the twelve tribes and the sefirotic realm. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi represent the triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (the right and left divine arms and the trunk of the body). Judah, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, completes the sefirotic quartet. See above at [notes 194-97](#).

[214](#). **Issachar, Zebulun...** Symbolizing the pair of *Netsah* and *Hod*, who are the divine thighs and source of prophecy. Issachar, representing the right thigh, is linked with *understanding* and Torah. Zebulun went out (using his thighs), engaged in commerce, and supported Issachar, enabling him to study. These two complete the list of the six sons of Leah, who herself symbolizes *Binah*, the Divine Mother.

The “great measure” apparently refers to the extended measure of Zebulun’s territory. According to Genesis 49:13, *Zebulun will dwell by the shore of seas, and he by a haven of ships, and his flank upon Sidon*. The simple meaning of the verse is that the tribe of Zebulun will live along the seacoast of the Mediterranean. A midrashic tradition (*Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:17) understands *by the shore of seas* as referring to two seas, apparently the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee, suggesting that Zebulun’s territory included a strip of land extending eastward to the latter body of water. Josephus similarly states (*Antiquities of the Jews* 5:1:22) that Zebulun’s territory “included the land that lay as far as the Lake of Ginnosar [the Sea of Galilee] and that which belonged to Carmel and the [Mediterranean] Sea.” See *Zohar* 1:241b; 2:48b (Vol. 4, p. 236, n. 137); Sarna, *Genesis*, on 49:13. Scholem suggests that “the great measure” may allude to שְׁעוֹר קוֹמָה (*shi’ur qomah*), “the measure of the [divine] stature.”

Zebulun, representing the divine left thigh (*Hod*), extends to *Sidon*, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, who is also pictured as seas, filled with angelic *ships*. The old man interprets *yarkhato*, *his flank*, as referring to ירך (*yarekh*), “thigh.”

On the relationship between Issachar and Zebulun, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 72:5; 97 (p. 1220); 98:12; 99:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:2; *Tanḥuma*, *Vayḥi* 11; *Zohar* 1:241b-242a; 2:27a. See also 1 Chronicles 12:33-34. On Issachar’s wisdom and study of Torah, see also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 354.

The verse in Chronicles reads: *Of the children of Issachar, those who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do*. The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and Issachar, in your tents*. The full verse in Genesis reads: *Zebulun will dwell by the shore of seas, and he by a haven of ships, and his flank upon Sidon*.

215. Benjamin remained above... Benjamin and Joseph, Rachel’s two sons, both symbolize *Yesod*, the divine phallus. Joseph embodied *Yesod* on earth, consummating the union of the divine couple. During the Exodus, Moses took Joseph’s bones with him because Moses (symbolizing *Tif’eret*) could only unite with *Shekhinah* by means of Joseph’s *sefirah*. According to the old man, Benjamin’s soul ascended to the rung of *Yesod* and he attained His title: Righteous One of the World.

Yesod is known as Righteous, based on Proverbs 10:25: וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*). The verse is understood midrashically as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*, whereas its simple sense is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*. See BT *Ḥagigah* 12b; *Bahir* 71 (102); Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 34.

In rabbinic literature Joseph is granted the title Righteous in recognition of resisting the sexual advances of Potiphar’s wife. According to the *Zohar*, Joseph’s sexual purity enabled him to embody *Yesod*. See above, [note 132](#).

Benjamin is the only other of Jacob's sons who is accorded the title Righteous. See BT *Yoma* 12a; *Bava Batra* 11a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 3.

On Joseph and Benjamin, see *Zohar* 1:153b, 155a-b. On Moses and Joseph's bones, see *Zohar* 1:21b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 10 (12-13).

"Performed" renders *אשתמש* (*ishtammash*), "use, make use of," serve, minister, have conjugal relations. The verse in Exodus continues: *for he [Joseph] had solemnly made the children of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take notice of you, and you shall take up my bones from here with you."* See Genesis 50:25.

216. From the knees and below... Four sons of Jacob were born to Rachel and Leah's maids, Bilhah and Zilpah. Dan and Naphtali (born to Bilhah) symbolize, respectively, the divine lower left leg (from the knee to the foot) and the left foot joint. Gad and Asher symbolize similar parts of the right leg and foot.

On the four sons of the maids, see *Zohar* 1:154a, 155a, 158a. On Naphtali being fast like a hind, see BT *Sotah* 13a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 97, p. 1223; 98:17; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 39; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:4; *Leqah Tov*, Genesis 49:21.

Genesis 49:19 reads in full: *Gad will be raided by raiders, yet he will raid their heel.* Deuteronomy 33:24 reads: *Blessed among sons is Asher; may he be favored of his brothers, dipping in oil his foot.* The following verse reads: *Iron and bronze מנועליך (min'alekha), your bolts [or: gate-bolts, bars, locks].* In later Hebrew, *min'al* means "shoe," and that sense of the word is adopted by various translators of this verse (including the Septuagint, Peshitta, and Vulgate).

217. All these are supernal images... The twelve tribes symbolize the various limbs of the sefirotic body. By appearing in the world, they constitute the array of *Shekhinah*. Essentially, the tribes of Israel are joints, or

extensions, of the divine Israel—*Tif'eret Yisra'el*, “Beauty of Israel.” In the verse in Genesis the tribes are referred to as אלה (elleh), *these*. When *elleh, these*, is joined by the Divine Mother, *Binah*, known as מי (mi), *Who*, these two components constitute the complete name אלהים (Elohim).

Binah's name *Who* implies that a seeker may inquire about Her, unlike even higher realms, which are so inaccessible that they cannot even be questioned or explored. Still, one should not expect any clear or conclusive answers about the nature of *Binah*. Rather, the mystical name *Who* becomes a focus of meditation, as question turns into quest. See Shim'on Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:91a: “Concerning everything that cannot be grasped, its question constitutes its answer.”

Already in the Midrash, *Who* appears as a divine name designating “the one to whom Israel said at the [Red] Sea, *Who is like You?* (Exodus 15:11).” See *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 2:13; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:17; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 16:3. On *Binah* as *Who*, see *Zohar* 1:1b-2a, 3b-4a, 29b-30a, 45b, 85b-86a, 237b; 2:126b-127a, 138a, 139b, 197b, 226a, 231b; 3:185b, 204a. On *Elohim* as a combination of *elleh* and *mi*, see *Zohar* 1:2a, 3b-4a.

On *Shekhinah* and the twelve tribes, see *Zohar* 1:155a, 157b-158a, 174a, 225b, 231b, 240b-241a, 246a-b, 248a; 2:229b-230a; 3:62a, 118b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 8. On the twelve joints, see *Zohar* 1:241a.

The expression “twelve מתיחין (*metihin*), extensions,” suggests the “twelve תחומין (*teḥumin*), boundaries (or limits, dominions),” referred to elsewhere in the *Zohar* and recalling the twelve גבולי אלכסון (*gevulei alakhsan*), “diagonal borders” (edges of a cube), mentioned in *Sefer Yetsirah* 5:1. See *Bahir* 64 (95); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 511-12; *Zohar* 1:76b (ST), 199a; 2:58b, 62b, 64b, 66b, 229b; 3:78a, 148b.

218. Chieftain of Esau... When Jacob wrestled with a supernatural being, he received a new name. The full verse

in Genesis reads: *He said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but יִשְׂרָאֵל (Yisra'el), Israel, for שָׂרִית (sarita), you have strived, with divine and human beings, and have prevailed."* In rabbinic sources, Jacob's wrestling partner is identified as Esau's heavenly power, Samael. Here, the old man links both *Yisra'el* and *sarita* with שָׂר (sar), "prince," or שָׂרָה (serarah), "princeliness, authority." Samael acknowledged that Jacob-Israel (symbolizing *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, "Beauty of Israel") had *become prince with Elohim*—he had joined the primordial structure of *Binah* (who includes within Herself all of the lower *sefirot*).

The phrase כָּל אֵלֶּה (kol elleh), *all these*, alludes to both the lower *sefirot* (known as *elleh, these*) and *Binah*—either because *all* suggests Her total, encompassing nature, or because the numerical value of כָּל (kol), *all*, is equal to Her name מִי (mi), *Who*.

Because Jacob-Israel is linked with *Binah*, the people of Israel will never be destroyed. In fact, if they were, the divine name *Elohim*, Itself, would cease to exist, since the two are interdependent.

Apparently, *Elohim* is known as "primordial (or first) name" because it is the first divine name in the Bible: *In the beginning Elohim created...* (Genesis 1:1). On Esau's prince wrestling with Jacob, see *Tanḥuma, Vayishlah* 8; *Bereshit Rabbah* 77:3; *Zohar* 1:146a, 166a, 170a-171b, 179b. The full verse in Joshua reads: *When the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land hear [that Israel has fled from her enemies], they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?*

219. Now that Israel are in exile... The people of Israel, God's children, are rooted in אֵלֶּה (elleh), *these*, the lower *sefirot* who are children of *Binah*. She is known as מִי (mi), *Who*, the other component of אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*). In time of exile the Divine Mother withdraws from Her children, interrupting the divine flow, and the structure of *Elohim*

collapses. However, when redemption finally arrives, *mi* and *elleh* will reunite, reconstituting the fullness of *Elohim*—as demonstrated in the verse from Isaiah, which describes the Israelites rushing back home from exile.

The foundational prayer Kaddish opens: “May His great name יתגדל (*yitgaddal*), be exalted, and sanctified.” *Yitgaddal* means “be increased, enlarged, exalted, glorified.” Here, it alludes to the restored fullness of *Elohim*, which cannot be actualized without Israel.

On the separation of *Binah* from Her children, see *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:85b; 3:12a. On the Kaddish, see *Zohar* 2:129b. On “enlarging” the divine name, see BT *Sukkah* 39a; Solomon ben Isaac, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 325–26; *Tosafot*, *Berakhot* 3a, s.v. *ve-onin*; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 70 (and Wolfson’s [note 3](#)); Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 31; below, [p. 458](#), [n. 759](#).

The expression “will be fragrantly firm” renders יתבסם (*yitbassam*), “will be sweetened” or “... firmly established.” The root בסם (*bsm*) conveys both senses. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 66:2; *Midrash Shemu’el* 26:4; *Zohar* 1:30b, 31a, 34a, 37a, 56a, 137a; 2:10a, 94a, 143a, 147b, 168a, 227a; 3:18a; Bronsnick, “Ha-Shoresh ‘Bsm’”; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 44; idem, *Kabbalah*, 228.

220. When He created worlds... The name *Elohim* emerged as the primordial structure, encompassing *Binah* and Her sefirotic children. The old man transforms the verse in Isaiah from a question—*Who created these?*—into a declaration: מי (*Mi*), *Who* (namely, *Binah*), *created* אלה (*elleh*), *these* (the lower *sefirot*), thereby fashioning the name אלהים (*Elohim*). The lower *sefirot* were enhanced by angelic forces, as indicated by the continuation of the verse.

The full verse, referring originally to the stars and constellations, reads: *Lift your eyes on high and see: Who created these? The one who brings forth their array by number and calls them each by name: because of His great might and vast power, not one is missing.* On this verse, see

Zohar 1:1b-2a, 3b-4a, 29b-30a; 2:126b, 226a, 231b. On *Binah* as *Who*, see above, [note 217](#).

221. What is במספר (*be-mispar*), *by number*?... The word מספר (*mispar*), *number*, apparently refers to *Yesod*, the Divine Son whose power spans the lower sefirotic realm. The head of this cosmic tree reaches *Tif'eret* (symbolized by heaven), and its roots are embedded in *Shekhinah* (symbolized by earth). The five רקיעין (*raqi'in*), “expanses” (or “firmaments, heavens”) are the five *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Hod*, which are suspended from *Yesod* and share His name: *mispar*, *number*.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *MM*; Scholem; *MmD*. On Christological associations of the divine son, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 146-52. The expression “whose head reaches heaven” derives from *Targum Onqelos*, Genesis 28:12 (describing Jacob’s ladder).

222. Who has counted?... Paralleling the two sefirotic powers of *Binah* and *Yesod*, there were two biblical figures who counted Israel in a census: Moses and King David (see Numbers 1-4, 26; 2 Samuel 24). The reference to “the evil eye” alludes to the belief that it is dangerous for a human mass to be counted, perhaps because assigning an exact number makes them vulnerable targets for demonic forces. (See Exodus 30:12, and Rashi, ad loc.; 2 Samuel 24.) Moses and King David, however, were protected from the evil eye. When Moses counted *the dust of Jacob*, he was actually counting the people’s divine roots: “smooth stones” from which issues the flow of emanation. As the dust of the earth provides food for the world, so Abraham’s seed nourishes all nations.

The image of “smooth stones” derives from BT *Ḥagigah* 12a, where the term בהו (*bohu*), *emptiness* (Genesis 1:2), is defined as “אבנים מפולמות” (*avanim mefullamot*), “slimy [or: smooth] stones, sunk in the abyss, from which water issues.” See BT *Zevaḥim* 54a; *Targum*, Job 28:3. On *bohu*, see Vol. 4, p. 153, n. 54.

The verse in Numbers reads: *Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered רבע (rova) the seed of, Israel?* The meaning of the unusual term *rova* is unclear, though it probably means “dust cloud,” or perhaps “a fourth” (that is, “Who can number even a fraction of the Israelites?”). The rendering *seed* is based on the root רבע (*rv*), “to copulate.” See Milgrom, *Numbers*, and Alter, *Five Books of Moses*, on the verse. On the sense of “seed, copulation, mating,” see Leviticus 18:23; BT *Niddah* 31a; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 20; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:19; *Midrash Tehillim* 139:3; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 23:10; Rashi and Rashbam on Numbers 23:10; *Zohar* 3:211a.

223. U-mispar, Or numbered... Referring to King David, the second biblical figure who counted Israel. The old man apparently reads the verse: *or numbered רבע (rova), the reclining of, Israel?* (based on the Aramaic root רבע [*rv*], “to lie down”). David counted the female angels accompanying *Shekhinah*, who is Herself pictured as a bed upon which *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, “Beauty of Israel,” lies.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; *MIN*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*. On other meanings of the term *rova*, see the end of the preceding note. “Pearly feet” renders מרגלאן (*margelan*), which can mean “pearls” or “feet.” On the angels of *Shekhinah* as pearls, see *Zohar* 1:147b, 149b (*ST*).

224. From then on, He counts all... The subject now is apparently *Yesod* (parallel to David), who is characterized as טוב עין (*tov ayin*), “(having) a good eye,” i.e., generous, and therefore invulnerable to the evil eye (see above, [note 222](#)). In the verse from Psalms, the word מספר (*mispar*), *number*, is reinterpreted as the subject rather than the object: *Mispar, Number* (that is, *Yesod*), *counts the stars*. See above, [note 221](#).

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On the expression *tov ayin*, “a good eye,” see Proverbs 22:9. Cf. the description of David in 1 Samuel 16:12: *He*

was ruddy עֵינַיִם וְטוֹב רֵאִי (im yefeh einayim ve-tov ro'i), *with fine eyes and goodly to look on*.

225. In the time to come... In describing the Messianic age, Jeremiah does not name the enumerator of Israel and simply calls him *one who counts*. This befits the unified state of being, when there will be no need to specify a particular enumerator or a particular divine quality.

226. When the blessed Holy One arouses... When the time comes to revive the dead, what will happen with the two bodies of a single soul that has transmigrated? Which one of them will be reunited with that soul? And which of the transmigrator's two fathers will claim him: his original father, or the man who married his widow and restored his soul to a new body? And which mother will be his: his original mother, or his widow who mothered him anew? See above, [pp. 43-46](#) and [nn. 121, 128](#).

The old man has already addressed this issue (see above, [pp. 42-43](#) and [nn. 117-19](#)); now he links it to the verse in Numbers: *Who (Binah) has counted the dust of Jacob*—He knows every body and soul and will arrange resurrection for each one.

The phrase אֲדָמַת עָפָר (*admat afar*), *ground of dust*, is usually understood to mean *the dust of the earth*, but the old man already explained it hyperliterally: *ground of dust*, referring to *adamah* (ground), the low stratum of earth where the body is punished, and *afar* (dust), the surface of earth, to where it is temporarily raised before descending again. See above, [notes 118-19](#).

On the resurrection of multiple bodies of a single soul, see *Zohar* 1:131a; 3:308a-b; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 191, 197; *OY*; *MmD*. The expression “cycles revolve” renders גִּלְגּוּלִין מִתְגַּלְגֵּלִין (*gilgulin mitgalgelan*), which can also be translated: “(How many) reincarnations do they undergo (for this)?” See *Sullam*. On the term *gilgul* (rolling, revolving, circulation, transmigration, reincarnation), see above, [notes 37, 85, 104, 108](#).

The verse in Daniel concludes: *these to everlasting life, those to shame and everlasting contempt.*

227. In the Book of Enoch... According to this source, the Companions saw the letters of אדמת עפר (*admat afar*), *ground of dust*, rearranged as א, ע, ד, פ, מ, ת, ר (*alef, ayin, dalet; pe, mem, tav, resh*). The verse from Ecclesiastes alludes to those who died previously and were then reincarnated and enabled to fulfill their souls before dying again; they are more praiseworthy *than the living, who are still alive* (ibid.)—apparently meaning “than those who have not died and been punished for their misdeeds,” or “than those who have been reincarnated but have not fulfilled their souls.”

The context in Ecclesiastes (4:2–3) reads: *I praise the dead, who have already died, more than the living, who are still alive. But better than both is one who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil deeds that are being done under the sun.* See Zohar 1:187b, 188b; 3:182a–b, 308b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 144–45. On the Book of Enoch, see above, [note 111](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MIN*; *MmD*.

228. A voice aroused... Interpreting the phrase עפר אדמת (*admat afar*), *ground of dust*, in a new way. The cryptic pronouncement apparently means: The first bodily structure is lowly *admat, ground*, which is like refuse compared to the second structure of the soul (containing holy *afar, dust*), because now the reincarnated soul can perfect itself.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. Technically, *admat* is in the construct state and means *ground of*.

229. Admat afar, Ground of dust—all of them will awake... At the end of days, all who have been reincarnated will rise from the dead. Those who attained perfection in their second lifetime by having children will be restored to the World of the Female (“the world below”), though they cannot regain their original status in the World

of the Male (“the world above”). (See above, [pages 50–51](#).) Those who failed to engender new life, even when reincarnated, will suffer *shame*. Although the demonic force itself will be eradicated, those who reflected a demonic aspect (by failing to procreate) will endure as objects of contempt. See above, [note 119](#).

Here the biblical word עולם (*olam*), “eternity” (*everlasting*), is reinterpreted according to its later meaning, “world.”

[230](#). Who caused all this?... The man who refused to engender new life, thereby failing to convey the flow from *Yesod*, which is the divine phallus and site of the covenant of circumcision.

[231](#). they did not know if it was day or night... This ecstatic description echoes an account about Rabbi Eli’ezer: when he expounded Torah, “no one knew if it was day or night.”

See *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 13; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 2, and David Luria, ad loc., n. 16; *Zohar* 1:94b; 2:15a (*MhN*). Cf. Ibn Ezra on Zechariah 14:7.

[232](#). If you buy a Hebrew slave... The old man now turns to the opening section of Torah portion *Mishpatim*. The phrase *with no payment* means “without paying for his redemption.”

Every male reflects the image of World of the Male, the entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod*. Every female bears the image of World of the Female, *Shekhinah*. One who faithfully serves God cleaves to Him, specifically to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, which are known as “primordial years.” However, if he abandons this holy service by neglecting or violating the commandments (such as the commandment to be fruitful and multiply), God uproots him and forces him into servitude.

“Someone from six sides” may refer to Metatron, the chief angel and Prince of the World, who reflects the

qualities of the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. He himself is also described as עבד (*eved*), “servant” (or “slave”). Alternatively (or also), the figure “from six sides” may refer to a human male (reflecting the sefirotic qualities of World of the Male), who enslaves this person literally. Serving another master for six years, the person is uprooted from the divine six years, and is then delivered to *Shekhinah*, World of the Female, who is the *seventh sefirah* issuing from *Binah*. Thus, וּבְשִׁבְעִיטָה (*u-va-shevi’it*), *and by [or: in] the seventh, he shall go free*—from servitude, though now he belongs to Her.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MIN*; *MmD*. On World of the Male, see above, [note 132](#). On the relation between Metatron and “six sides,” see *Zohar* 2:94a (standard edition), 115a (*RM*). On Metatron as *eved*, “servant” (or “slave”), see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §§ 1, 227; *Zohar* 1:126a–b (*MhN*), 181b; 2:94a (standard edition), 115a (*RM*), 142b; 3:29a–b (*RM*), 82b (*RM*), 276a (*RM*). He is often referred to as נַעַר (*na’ar*), “youth, lad, servant.” See 3 Enoch 4:10; BT *Yevamot* 16b; Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563.

233. If he does not want to abide in Her... If he refuses to leave his servitude, he descends further to the demonic realm. Fittingly, he is marked with a blemish, as indicated in Exodus 21:5–6: *If the slave declares, “I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go free,” his master shall make him approach the gods [or: the judges], and make him approach the door or the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.*

According to rabbinic tradition, *he shall serve him forever* means until the next Jubilee, celebrated every fifty years. The old man indicates that from that time on, once the man dies he transmigrates in order to mend his ways and return to serving God. He remains linked to World of the Female, and if he is worthy he fathers children who

accompany (and are rooted in) *Shekhinah*. Such children imitate the angelic maidens who follow Her, as described in the verse from Psalms.

On the rabbinic interpretation of *forever*, see *Mekhilta, Mishpatim 2; Targum Yerushalmi, Exodus 21:6; BT Qiddushin 15a*.

234. If he does not prove worthy even in the transmigration of Jubilee... If, given this opportunity of reincarnation provided by the Jubilee, he does not marry and engender new life, then his existence is totally unfulfilled. To him the verse in Exodus applies: *If he came by himself* (If, upon dying, his spirit enters the world above without his having married and fathered children), *he shall go out by himself* (his spirit will be flung alone), until it reaches a certain rock, apparently outside the Garden of Eden. There his spirit encounters the remnant of a spirit of a man who died childless, which had been within his widow but left her (“abandoned by his female”). (See above, [note 117](#).) This spirit blows upon his spirit, forcing him to roam through the world *by himself* until someone redeems him by providing him another chance to transmigrate.

See *Zohar 1:187b* (Vol. 3, p. 142, n. 366). For various interpretations, see *OY; MLN; Sullam; MmD*.

On the image of a stone in a sling, see *BT Shabbat 152a*: “Rabbi Eli’ezer said, ‘... The souls of the wicked are continually muzzled, while one angel stands at one end of the world and another stands at the other end, and they sling their souls [the souls of the wicked] to each other, as is said: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (1 Samuel 25:29).’” See above, [note 105](#).

On the remnant of a spirit hidden in the clefts of a rock outside the Garden of Eden, see above, [note 117](#). On “the mighty rock,” cf. [note 52](#).

The description “moving alone like a serpent joining no other on the path” recalls the old man’s riddle: “Who is a serpent that flies in the air, moving in separation...?” See

above, [note 5](#); and *Bereshit Rabbah* 99:11: “All the animals go in pairs, whereas the serpent goes on the way all alone.”

235. However, if he was husband to a wife... The full verse reads: *If he came by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he was husband to a wife, his wife shall go out with him.* The old man understands the second sentence to mean: If he did marry and try to have children but was unsuccessful, his spirit is not banished; when he dies, his spirit does not enter the upper worlds alone, nor does it leave to transmigrate alone. Rather, since both husband and wife tried sincerely, God reincarnates both of them, arranging for them to find one another again, remarry, and (if they prove worthy) have children.

If that man had never married, then in his reincarnation he would marry a divorcée, as indicated below. See above, [note 172](#).

On trying to engender new life but not succeeding, see *Zohar* 1:187b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 250–51; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 141–42. On God not withholding anyone’s reward, see above at [note 115](#); BT *Pesaḥim* 118a.

236. If his master gives him a wife... Now Scripture returns to the case of a man who has never married, “who goes out [from this world] alone, without any female.” *Shekhinah*, the seventh *sefirah* issuing from *Binah*, eventually redeems him and hopefully restores him to this world through reincarnation. Then he will find and marry a divorcée, and the children born to them will belong to *Shekhinah*, the *master*.

See above, [notes 232–33](#). On the altar’s shedding tears, see BT *Gittin* 90b, in the name of Rabbi El’azar: “For whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears.” See above, [notes 171–72](#).

237. For if he returns... If the person turns back in repentance and mends his ways by having children, he also mends the damage he caused in the sefirotic realm. By failing to convey new life into the world, he had failed to

imitate and stimulate *Yesod* (the divine phallus and gushing river of vitality), and had, as it were, weakened the divine flow. Now he is accepted above and becomes a בעל תשובה (*ba'al teshuvah*), “master of returning (or repentance),” returning to his source (in World of the Male) and restoring both himself and *Yesod*, whose rung he inherits.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On World of the Male, see above, [note 232](#). On nothing blocking the way to repentance, see JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 16b: “Nothing withstands any master of repentance.” See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhoh Teshuvah* 3:14; *Zohar* 3:78b, 122b; *ZH* 19d (*MhN*).

238. What is he shall go out by himself?... Later the old man offers a different explanation (see below at [notes 304-6](#)), but here he interprets בגפו (*ve-gappo*), *by himself*, according to the sense of a similar-sounding word in Proverbs describing Wisdom: *She has sent out her maidens to announce על גפי (al gappei), on the summit of, the heights of the city*. Just as in there, *gappei* denotes elevation, so here, *gappo* denotes a similar phenomenon: the elevated state attained by “masters of returning.”

See BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: “In the place where *ba'alei teshuvah*, masters of returning, stand, the completely righteous cannot stand.” See *Zohar* 1:39a (*Heikh*), 129b; 2:113b; 3:16b, 202b.

239. [109a] In the standard printed editions of the *Zohar*, there appears here (106a-108b) a long passage on *teshuvah*, beginning “We have learned: Nothing in the world withstands *teshuvah*” and extending to “there will be a new world by the handiwork of the blessed Holy One.” I have placed this passage below, beginning at [note 331](#), as it appears in V20. See Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 22-28.

Following this long passage in the standard editions, there appears another passage (108b-109a) beginning “*If he comes בגפו [be-gappo], by himself*” and extending to “*he comes into its wing, he will go out in its wing*, as has been

said, all precisely arranged.” I have placed this below, beginning at [note 305](#), as it appears in V20. See Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, pp. 26–27, n. 38.

[240.](#) **Master of the earth** *Shekhinah*. See above at [note 236](#).

[241.](#) **it is not in one’s power...** A man does not find a wife on his own; rather, his mate is determined for him according to how a couple’s souls are balanced and matched on the cosmic scales before birth—or according to one’s merits, which are weighed on the cosmic scales. In this case, through fervent prayer and supplication, the transmigrator is granted a wife by *Shekhinah*, but one who was intended for another man. The children whom they engender belong not to him but to the *master*, *Shekhinah*, and they will inhabit the World of the Female.

On balancing and matching couples before birth, see JT *Beitsah* 5:2, 63a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:8; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:8; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 16; *Bereshit Rabbati*, p. 95; *Zohar* 1:229a; 2:255a–b (*Heikh*); Liebes, *Peraqim*, 329; Vol. 3, pp. 380–81, nn. 403–404. (All of the traditional sources cited here quote Psalms 62:10.) On the cosmic scales, cf. above, [note 22](#).

See BT *Sotah* 2a, in the name of Resh Lakish: “A man is paired with a woman only according to his deeds.”

On being granted a wife originally intended for another man, see BT *Mo’ed Qatan* 18b: “Shemu’el said, ‘One is allowed to betroth a woman during the intermediate days of a festival, lest another [rival suitor] anticipate him.’... But could Shemu’el have said, ‘Lest another anticipate him’? Surely Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shemu’el, ‘Every single day a heavenly echo issues, proclaiming: “The daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so!...”’.... Rather, ‘lest another anticipate him by supplication.’” In other words, even though a man’s mate has been decreed from above, through prayer and supplication another suitor can anticipate an unmarried man and obtain the latter’s

intended mate. See *Zohar* 1:73b, 91b, 229a; 2:101a (above at [note 136](#)); 3:78b, 283b-284a.

On garden as representing woman, see Song of Songs 4:12; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21.

Above, the old man presents a different interpretation of the verse *If his master gives him a wife*. See above, [note 236](#); *MM*; *MIN*.

[242.](#) **Old man, old man!...** He urges himself to clarify the meaning and push open the gate of wisdom any way that he can.

[243.](#) **This poor unfortunate one...** Regarding this childless man whose soul has been reincarnated, why are the children that he engenders not considered his? Granted, he has married a woman who was originally intended for someone else; but after all, he did not marry her on his own initiative—rather through God's grace—so why aren't the children his?

[244.](#) **This one... is not like other transmigrators...** This man never tried to have children in his previous lifetime, so he never expanded the Tree of Life, but rather forced it to shed souls who could have flourished in the world. Now reincarnated, he is given a wife not intended for him by God and the children they engender are not really his. Cf. Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 41, n. 97.

[245.](#) **He to whom his master gave a wife...** As opposed to the man who never tried to have children, there is the more common case of one who tried but failed. After being reincarnated, he is granted a wife by *Shekhinah*, and their children are indeed his. If he had been completely virtuous, his soul would never have been forced to transmigrate, since his worthiness would have compensated for his lack of children. Since he was not that worthy, but at least tried to engender, God reincarnates his soul and gives him another opportunity.

See *Zohar* 1:187b. The verse in Isaiah is addressed to *the eunuchs*, understood here as those who failed to

engender new life. Cf. below, [note 307](#).

Earlier, the old man presented a different scenario for a man who tried and failed to have children. See above, [note 235](#); *MM*; *MIN*.

[246.](#) **Whereas this one...** If he prays fervently, a reincarnated man who never tried to have children in his first lifetime may be granted a wife intended for another man. However, the children whom they engender are not his but God's, in compensation for his initial failure to procreate, which weakened and diminished the spring of *Yesod* by preventing it from conveying potential souls to the world. Afterward, this man will be reincarnated once again in order to engender children that are truly his.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Galante*; *MmD*.

[247.](#) **you said that he endeavored in vain...** You said that the children he engendered are not really his and were born to a wife who was intended for another man; yet the following verse indicates that both wife and children are his: *my wife... my children*. For the biblical context, see above, [note 233](#).

[248.](#) **this verse has emerged from behind a wall...** This verse surprised and contradicted you. The verse contains fourteen words, with thirteen spaces ("leaps") between them.

[249.](#) **the snowy day...** See above, [notes 66](#), [202](#). Then the old man confronted thirteen scholars, who challenged his teachings.

[250.](#) **When the time arrives...** When the woman is destined to find her true mate, God kills this man who had temporarily married her and he leaves this world without a wife or children. See the end of Exodus 21:4: *and he shall go out by himself*.

[251.](#) **If the slave says, yes, says...** According to rabbinic tradition, the repetition of the verb *says* indicates that the slave's declaration (*I will not go free*) is valid only if he *says* this at the beginning of his six years of servitude

(or during those years) and says it again at the end, before the beginning of the seventh year.

See BT *Qiddushin* 22a. Cf. *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 21:5; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 121; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 21:5; JT *Qiddushin* 1:2, 59d.

252. Here, while he is still with this woman... The old man moves from the simple sense of the verse to his interpretation. Here, the reincarnated person is still married to the woman who was intended to be another's wife, but through fervent supplication he may change the decree and gain her as his own true mate. Just as he was able to anticipate the intended husband and marry this woman ברחמי (*be-rahamei*), "by supplication," so now his supplication will be accepted *be-rahamei*, "with mercy." See above, [note 241](#).

253. I love my master... By declaring his love for God and acting upon it, he gains divine acceptance and is spared the ordeal of further reincarnation. Instead, when he dies, he is judged in heaven, punished by demonic forces for a limited time (for not having engendered children in his first lifetime), and then redeemed.

The reference to the Court and the divine mark derive from Exodus 21:6: *His master shall make him approach האלהים (ha-elohim), the gods [or: the judges], and make him approach the door or the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.* See above, [note 233](#). On the heavenly lashes, see *Zohar* 2:249b (*Heikh*). On the demonic nature of foreskin, see above, [note 69](#).

254. If when he is branded... The Jubilee, the fiftieth year, signals the final liberation from servitude and (here) from punishment. Even if the Jubilee arrives only one day after this person's soul has been marked, his punishment ends and he is ushered into the Divine Presence.

On the Jubilee and the end of servitude, see above, [note 233](#). There, the old man offers a different scenario: from

the Jubilee on, when such a man dies he transmigrates.

The expression “until here” concludes the old man’s interpretation of Exodus 21:5–6. See above, [notes 53](#), [79](#), [93](#).

[255.](#) **Hear, O mountains...** Until now, the old man was battling the sea, engaged in the profound and perilous theme of transmigration. Now he suddenly shifts to the mountains, whose significance unfolds below. He must contend with both challenges.

The verse concludes: *and He will contend with Israel.*

[256.](#) **Two verses are written...** The opening two verses of this chapter seem contradictory. According to the first verse, God’s רִיב (*riv*), “grievance, contention, lawsuit,” is with the mountains; according to next verse, it is with Israel and to be heard by the mountains. (See the end of the preceding note.)

The old man indicates that the *mountains* of the second verse allude to *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, who are also symbolized by the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This sefirotic triad is summoned to hear God’s grievance. The *mountains* of the first verse allude to the lower sefirotic triad of *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*. Near them lurks the “pursuer of quarrels,” apparently the demonic force.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Galante*; *MM*; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On mountains as symbolizing the patriarchs, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 353; *JT Sanhedrin* 10:1, 27d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:6; *BT Rosh ha-Shanah* 11a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:6; *Tanḥuma*, *Ki Tissa* 28; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:4, 26; 28:2; *Zohar* 1:87a, 208b; 2:58b.

[257.](#) **and let the hills hear... now you make them mountains...** How can the lower sefirotic triad be referred to as both *mountains* and *hills*? The old man explains that compared to the higher triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, they are *hills*, while on their own they are *mountains*.

[258.](#) **and you firm ones... mountains...** These are two triads, united as one. The *mountains* represent *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*,

and *Tif'eret*, “three lofty ones,” which are situated above the lower triad of *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, known as *firm ones*. *Netsah* and *Hod* are pictured as two legs or firm supports of the divine house, while *Yesod* (the divine phallus) provides joy by uniting *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

On *Yesod* as “joy of the house,” cf. BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim'on son of Ḥalafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.” On *Netsah* and *Hod* as *firm ones*, see TZ 21, 43b-44a.

259. waging battle... The weak hand, holding the shield, is poised for defense, while the right hand is ready to strike. On the battle of Torah, see above, [note 74](#).

260. משכיל לאיתנים (Ve-ha-eitanim), you firm ones... (Maskil le-Eitan)... The old man just said that *eitanim*, *firm ones*, alludes to *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*. However, another verse threatens this teaching: *Maskil le-Eitan*, *A maskil for Ethan*. Since *Eitan* is traditionally identified as Abraham, it follows that his son and grandson were *eitanim*. And since the three patriarchs symbolize *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, the term *eitanim* really applies to them, not to *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*.

The word משכיל (*maskil*) is a literary or musical term whose precise meaning is unclear. Ethan the Ezrahite is probably the Temple singer and musician mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:17, 19. See 1 Kings 5:11. On Abraham as Ethan the Ezrahite, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:1; BT *Bava Batra* 15a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:3; *Zohar* 1:230b; 2:170b.

261. איתן (Eitan), Enduring...morning of Abraham... The old man responds to this challenge by insisting that the word *eitan* (enduring, firm) indicates *Yesod* rather than Abraham. However, *Yesod* is linked with Abraham's *sefirah*, *Ḥesed*, the primordial light illumining *Yesod*. Thus, *Yesod* is called “morning of Abraham,” drawing light from his *sefirah*. He is also the cosmic pillar supporting the world, as indicated by His name: *Yesod* (Foundation). Further, he is the streaming river of emanation.

The verse in Numbers is spoken by the prophet Balaam. Abraham is often linked with morning, based on Genesis 22:3: *Abraham arose early in the morning*. Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, the phrase “morning of Abraham,” refers simply to *Hesed*. See *Zohar* 1:203a-b; 2:119b-120a; 3:204a, 233a, 242a. Its association here with *Yesod* is tied to the verse in Genesis, whose context is the story of Joseph, who symbolizes *Yesod*.

On *Yesod* as cosmic pillar, see above, [note 215](#). The image of the “river issuing from Eden” derives from Genesis 2:10: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden...* In Kabbalah this river symbolizes the flow of emanation issuing from *Hokhmah* (identified with Eden) and conveyed by *Yesod* into the garden of *Shekhinah*.

[262.](#) **משכיל לאיתן (*Maskil le-Eitan*), A maskil for Ethan...** This wording presents another challenge. *Maskil*—which can also mean “enlightens”—signifies the river *Yesod*, who informs and enlightens *Shekhinah* (symbolized by King David), conveying to Her hidden matters of emanation. But if *maskil* is *Yesod*, then the following phrase—*le-Eitan, for [or: of] Ethan, the Ezrahite*—refers not to *Yesod*, but to his source of illumination, namely Abraham’s *sefirah*, *Hesed*. So once again it seems that *eitan* characterizes the higher sefirotic triad (*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*), not the lower one (*Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*).

On *maskil* as “interpreter,” see BT *Pesaḥim* 117a; *Midrash Tehillim* 24:3; Rashi on Psalms 88:1.

[263.](#) **I am striking at this thought...** He fights back by showing that the phrase *Ethan the Ezrahite* alludes to two *sefirot*, not one. Just as the clause *morning dawned* includes both the river of *Yesod* (*morning*) and the primordial light of Abraham’s *sefirah*, *Hesed* (*dawned*), so *Ethan the Ezrahite* includes both *Yesod* (*Ethan*) and the patriarch’s *sefirah*, *Hesed* (*Ezrahite*).

On Abraham as (Ethan) the Ezrahite, see above, end of [note 260](#).

264. Here comes King Solomon... A verse about him, conveying a further attack.

“The field” renders חקלא (*ḥaqla*), used here in the sense of “battlefield,” a nuance foreign to the Aramaic word and probably deriving from Castilian *campo*, “field, battlefield.”

265. the month of Ethanim... in which the *eitanim*, firm ones, were born... The biblical phrase refers to the month of Tishrei, preceding the winter rains, when only the *eitanim* (“strongly flowing” streams) are still filled with water. In BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 11a, Rabbi Eli’ezer interprets *the month of Ethanim* as referring to the month in which were born the *eitanim*, *mighty* [or: *firm*] *ones*, of the world, namely the patriarchs. Here, the challenge consists in the fact that the patriarchs symbolize *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, and that consequently *eitanim* refers to this triad, not to *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*.

The first three letters of the word תשרי (*Tishrei*) are the last three letters of the alphabet in reverse order. This backward (or upside-down) pattern reflects the sternness of *Din* (Judgment), which appears on Rosh Hashanah at the beginning of Tishrei.

On the reversed letters of the alphabet, see *Zohar* 1:2b, 55b–56a, 205b; *ZH* 88c–d (*MhN*, *Rut*). The verse in Kings concludes: *which is the seventh month*. See *Targum Yonatan* and Radak, ad loc.

266. it is fitting that you leave the field... The old man should quit the battlefield because his interpretation is fatally flawed. If it were written משכיל איתן (*Maskil Eitan*), *A maskil of Ethan*—with no Hebrew word separating *maskil* from *Eitan*—then one could argue that the two are one and the same, both signifying *Yesod*. But since it is written משכיל לאיתן (*Maskil le-Eitan*), *A maskil for Ethan*, the two are separated and must refer to distinct *sefirot*.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

267. Here I will encounter King Solomon... By demonstrating the true meaning of this verse from Kings that pertains to him.

268. If it were written משכיל לדוד (*Maskil le-David*), A maskil for David... This wording would indicate the two *sefirot Yesod* (known as *maskil*) and *Malkhut*, or *Shekhinah* (symbolized by King David). However, *A maskil for Ethan* alludes to another, higher *maskil*, namely the divine brain, *Hokhmah*. When the river of *Yesod* is aroused to unite with *Shekhinah*, all the sefirotic limbs join with Him. Then He ascends and receives from the brain a flow channeled through *Hesed* (Abraham). Hence, *maskil le-Eitan* means that the divine mind *enlightens Yesod* (known as *Eitan*). And just as the higher *maskil* emanates to *Yesod*, so the latter (the lower *maskil*) *enlightens David*, conveying the stream to *Shekhinah*.

See above, [note 262](#). Behind the imagery lies the ancient theory that sperm derives from the brain. See below, [p. 261](#), [n. 200](#); [p. 469](#), [n. 795](#).

269. In the month of Ethanim... As indicated above (at [note 265](#)), in this month were born the patriarchs, known as *eitanim*, *mighty* [or: *firm*] *ones*, and symbolizing *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. But in fact, the old man explains, two parallel triadic structures emerged in this primordial month. The lower triad is called *firm ones* and consists of *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*: the two divine thighs and the firm phallus between them. The higher, more concealed triad is called *mountains* and consists of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*.

270. When Moses ascended to receive the Torah... According to a statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a), "Fifty gates of understanding were created in the world, and all were given to Moses except for one." Here, perhaps, this tradition is blended with the theme of "seventy aspects of Torah."

The manuscripts V20 and N47, the Cremona edition, and OY all read "fifty-nine." The Mantua edition (followed

by nearly all later editions) reads “sixty-nine.” Although “sixty-nine” sounds more plausible (being immediately before the final, seventieth key), “fifty-nine” may be correct, alluding to the fullness of *Yesod*, the key that opens *Shekhinah*. The seventy keys correspond to the seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*, each of which includes ten aspects or keys. The first key would be *Hesed* of *Hesed*; the next, *Gevurah* of *Hesed*; the tenth, *Shekhinah* of *Hesed*; etc. The fifty-ninth key would be *Yesod* of *Yesod*, the most potent key.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MIN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On the fifty gates, see Nahmanides, *Peirush al ha-Torah*, intro, 3-4; *Zohar* 1:3b. On the seventy aspects (or faces) of Torah, see *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:16; *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:354); Vol. 1, p. 257, n. 1167. See *Zohar* 2:83b (Vol. 4, p. 462, n. 343). On the single key, see *Zohar* 1:3b; 2:174a; 3:250a.

271. Eitan, Firm one, and all those eitanim, firm ones... The potent key of *Yesod* along with other *firm ones* (linked with *Netsah* and *Hod*). The triad of *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod* lies outside *Tif'eret*, who constitutes the trunk of the sefirotic body. *Tif'eret*, symbolized by Written Torah, conveys the entire flow of emanation to the key, which then epitomizes Written Torah. When *Shekhinah*, symbolized by Oral Torah, prepares for union with this key, the key attains full potency and illumines Her. On the erotic quality of the key, see *Zohar* 1:3b.

272. Since Oral Torah inherits... *Shekhinah* is characterized by *Din* (Judgment), so letters possessed by Her are reversed. Tishrei (the seventh month) symbolizes *Shekhinah* (the seventh of the lower *sefirot*), and consequently the name תשרי (*Tishrei*) begins with the last three letters of the alphabet in reverse order. *Shekhinah* is also known as God's “name,” so fittingly the final letter of תשרי (*Tishrei*)—י (*yod*)—signifies the name יהוה (*YHVH*), which balances the reversed letters.

The altar in the Tabernacle also symbolizes *Shekhinah*, and its copper *mesh* is called רשת (*reshet*), which consists of the first three letters of תשרי (*Tishrei*). The definite article ה (*ha*), *the*, adds to this triad the ה (*he*) of יהוה (*YHVH*). The prophetess Deborah added the ו (*vav*) of יהוה (*YHVH*), producing the word ותשר (*va-tashar*), *then sang*. Thus all three component letters of יהוה (*YHVH*) are sealed within *Shekhinah* by Her spouse.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MIN*; *Sullam*. On the reversed letters and Tishrei, see above, [note 265](#). On *Shekhinah* as God's name, see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 20:21. On the altar symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 171](#).

[273](#). When that key opens Oral Torah... The penetration and opening of *Shekhinah* by the key of *Yesod* is reflected in the study of Oral Torah, whose passages often begin with the formula תניא (*tanya*), "It has been taught," an anagram of *Yesod's* name, איתן (*Eitan*), "firm, enduring." The term *tanya* usually introduces a *baraita*, "an external (teaching)," i.e., a Tannaitic tradition not included in the Mishnah. Here, *baraita* alludes to *Yesod*, the phallus situated immediately "outside" the trunk of the sefirotic body.

Yesod's companion *sefirot*, *Netsah* and *Hod*, represent the divine legs, supporting the trunk of the body. They are known as איתנים (*eitanim*), *firm ones*, and in the context of Oral Torah, they are called תנאים (*tanna'im*), Mishnaic "teachers," an anagram of איתנים (*eitanim*).

On *tanya* and *eitan*, see *Zohar* 3:238b (*RM*); *TZ* 21, 43b-44a.

[274](#). When these relate to Written Torah... to Oral Torah... When *Netsah* and *Hod* pertain to *Tif'eret* (known as Written Torah), they are described as *eitanim*, His "firm" supports. Pertaining to *Shekhinah*, they are called *tanna'im*, "teachers," conveying the flow to Her.

[275](#). I am on the field... Old and seemingly feeble, but actually mighty. King Solomon will observe the old man's

enduring strength, acknowledge his interpretations, and leave in peace—befitting the king's name, שלמה (*Shelomoh*), which suggests שלום (*shalom*), "peace."

For the phrase "victor of battles," see *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 15:3.

276. Return to your place... To the verse in Micah. Now, though, weapons are unnecessary since no further challenges will be raised.

277. Hear, O mountains—as we have said... These symbolize *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. The *firm ones* symbolize *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, who sustain *Shekhinah*, known as *earth*. See above, [notes 256–58](#).

278. Therefore he says to these, Hear, O mountains... The prophet, realizing that the divine grievance is unbearable, turns to the sefirotic *mountains* to plead for the people. This constitutes one quarrel. A second quarrel consists of God contending *with the mountains*, namely with the patriarchs, for example, with Jacob (as described below).

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MmD*. On God reprimanding Israel like a father chastising his son, see Deuteronomy 8:5.

279. Concerning Jacob... God *has a grievance against Jacob* because he deceived his twin brother, Esau, in their mother's womb (as explained below). Eventually, Jacob cunningly obtained Esau's birthright, and later he deceived Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing. When Esau complained about his brother's deceptive behavior, he indicated that these two thefts were actually one by saying *He deceived me* זה פעמים (zeh fa'amayim), *this two times*: בכרתי (*bekhorati*), *my birthright, he took, and look, now he's taken* ברכתי (*birkhati*), *my blessing*. The phrase *zeh fa'amayim* is normally understood as *these two times*, but here the old man reads it hyperliterally: *this two times*, reflecting the fact that בכרתי (*bekhorati*), *my birthright*, is an anagram of ברכתי (*birkhati*), *my blessing*, and that by stealing the first,

Jacob also stole the second; hence, *this* [single act of stealing the birthright amounted to] *two times* [namely, two thefts].

According to Genesis 25:26, when Esau and Jacob were born, Jacob's hand was *grasping Esau's* עִקֵב (*aqev*), *heel*, and Jacob's name יַעֲקֹב (*Ya'aqov*) is etymologized as "heel-grabber." In Genesis 27:36, Esau adds another layer of etymology by linking יַעֲקֹב with the verb וַיַּעֲקֹבֵנִי (*va-ya'qeveni*), *he deceived me*.

Hosea 12:3-4 reads: *YHVH has a grievance against Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways, and according to his deeds requite him. In the womb* עִקֵב אֶת אֲחִיו (*aqav et ahiv*), *he seized his brother by the heel [or: he betrayed his brother, he tried to supplant his brother], and in his strength he strove with God.* On Jacob's striving, see Genesis 32:25-33 and below. On "one that is two," cf. the old man's riddle, above at [note 5](#): "two who are one." On *zeh fa'amayim*, *this two times*, see *Zohar* 1:145a; cf. 1:160a.

280. Esau did not know... How Jacob deceived him in the womb (as explained below), but Samael, Esau's heavenly prince, did know. At the sound of Samael's complaint (on behalf of Esau), God shook the heavens. Samael could have demanded that the blessing be restored to Esau because Jacob had gained this deceptively from their father, Isaac. Yet he only demanded simple brotherhood, which Jacob had violated by refusing to feed Esau until the latter handed over his birthright. See Genesis 25:29-34; 27.

Jacob deprived Esau of both the spiritual and physical benefits of the birthright. This lack is indicated by the deficient spelling of בְּכֹרָתִי (*bekhorati*), *my birthright*, without the ו (*vav*).

According to rabbinic tradition, Esau's bitter weeping over the loss of his blessing moved God to reward him and his descendants with worldly blessing and dominion, including dominion over Israel. Esau symbolizes both the

Roman Empire and medieval Christianity, both of which subjugated the Jewish people.

See Genesis 27:34, 38; *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 15; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 24; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 47; *Midrash Tehillim* 80:4; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 14, 22, 28; Rashi on Psalms 80:6; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 61; *Zohar* 1:145a, 146b; 2:12b; Yisraeli, "Za'aqato ha-Kevushah shel Esav."

281. he seized his brother by the heel... deceiving him... עֻקְבָא (*Aqav*), *he seized...by the heel*, suggests עֻקְבָא (*uqba*), "deception." Jacob deceived Esau by making him emerge first into the world and ceding earthly dominion to him, thereby reserving the future world of bliss for himself and guaranteeing that Jacob would ultimately surpass his older twin.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:14; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:20; *Tanḥuma, Terumah* 9; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Friedlander), 37; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 19; *Zohar* 1:172a; and the preceding note. On the verse in Hosea, see above, [note 279](#).

282. his hand gripping Esau's heel... Jacob grasped Esau, who was called *heel*, but this name derives from the primordial demonic serpent, whose curse in Genesis includes the word *heel*. At present, the demonic forces led by Samael, along with their earthly representatives, strike Israel, but eventually all evil powers above and below will be destroyed.

On the question of how Jacob could possibly grasp Esau's heel in the womb, see Radak on Genesis 25:26 (ed. Mossad Harav Kook).

Biblical tradition, of course, associates "heel" with Jacob, not Esau. See above, [note 279](#). On Esau as symbolizing Israel's enemies, see above, [note 280](#). The full verse in Genesis 3 reads: *Enmity I will set between you and the woman, between your seed and hers. He will strike you at the head, and you will strike him at the heel.*

283. *These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom...* Since Esau acquired this world first, the kings of his nation (Edom) reigned *before any king reigned over the Children of Israel*.

On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:177a-b, 223b; 2:108b; below, [p. 546](#), [n. 4](#); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 65-67, 134-35.

284. *In his strength he strove with God...* The simple meaning of *in his strength* does not convey the deeper sense (the true “clarity of the word”), namely, that Jacob embodied the primordial beauty and power of Adam.

See BT *Bava Metsi’a* 84a: “The beauty of our father Jacob resembled the beauty of Adam.” The old man transforms the Talmudic comparison into an affirmation of identity. See *Zohar* 1:35b, 142b, 145b-146a, 168a, 222a; 2:141b, 169b; *ZH* 37c, 65a (*ShS*).

The full verse in Hosea reads: *In the womb he seized his brother by the heel, and in his strength he strove with God*. See above, end of [note 279](#).

285. *As for Adam...* He was overcome by the seductive serpent because his potent son Seth had not yet been born. Like Adam, Seth was born circumcised.

On Seth, see *Zohar* 1:54b-55a; 2:168a, 231b. On those who were born circumcised, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 2; *Bereshit Rabbah* 26:3; 63:7; 84:6; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:1; BT *Sotah* 12a; *Tanḥuma*, *Bereshit* 11, *Miqqets* 3, *Noah* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 6; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:7; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:20. The verse in Genesis opens: *Adam lived a hundred and thirty years*.

286. *What is the voice of a woman...?* As Cordovero notes (*OY*), this passage seems incomplete.

On the voices of a woman and a serpent, see *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 34: “The voices of six go from one end of the world to the other, and their voices are not heard.... When the serpent sheds its skin, [the voice goes forth from one end of the world to the other—and] the voice is not heard.

When a woman is divorced from her husband, the voice goes forth from one end of the world to the other—and the voice is not heard. When a woman joins with her husband in the first act of intercourse, the voice goes forth from one end of the world to the other—and the voice is not heard. When the infant comes forth from its mother's womb, the voice goes forth from one end of the world to the other—and the voice is not heard."

See David Luria, ad loc., nn. 20, 23; *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:7; BT *Yoma* 20b; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 14; *Zohar* 1:118a (*MhN*); 2:265a (*Heikh*); 3:168b-169a. Cf. Genesis 3:16; Isaiah 26:17; 42:14; Jeremiah 46:22. On the union of the serpent and Eve, see BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a.

287. The voice of a serpent cannot join... Its voice can cling to the voices of only two kinds of women. The first is a woman who does not follow the requirements of menstrual purity, including refraining from intercourse until she has immersed herself in water seven days after any menstrual discharge. The second is a woman who inflicts suffering upon her husband by delaying her immersion and thereby postponing legitimate intercourse. Any woman who hastens to immerse herself before the full seven days have passed causes the serpent's voice to cleave to hers; and similarly with any woman who delays her immersion in order to tease or torment her husband.

On prompt immersion, see *Tosafot, Yoma* 8a, s.v. *de-khulei alma*; idem, *Niddah* 30a, s.v. *u-shma minnah*; *Beit Yosef, Yoreh De'ah* 197:2 (citing this *Zohar* passage); Scholem; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 176-77.

288. What do we care if voice joins voice or not?... If the serpent's voice joins a woman's voice, this can lead to the death of children. When the wicked Lilith roams the world, she encounters these two voices; then the woman becomes aroused and an evil spirit is conceived, which enters the woman's womb. When the woman gives birth,

Lilith assigns the spirit to toy with the baby until Lilith herself arrives. Often the infant dies.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I further saw all the torments that are committed under the sun. Look, the tears of the tormented—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their tormentors, power—with no one to comfort them.* The phrase “not as you say” apparently refers to a midrashic interpretation of this verse, according to which *the tormented* are illegitimate children who are excluded from the community of Israel by the *power* of the Sanhedrin (*their tormentors*). See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 32:8. Here, the *tormentors* are not human, but rather Lilith and the evil spirit, who kill innocent children. See above, [note 38](#); *Zohar* 2:113a; 3:203a, 234a. Cf. *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:1.

According to *MM* and *Sullam*, the subject of “the woman is inflamed...” is Lilith, the wicked female. On Lilith and the death of infants, see above, [p. 13](#) and [n. 38](#). On the demonic laughter, see above, [note 43](#).

“Vessel” renders אִיפָה (*eifah*), a biblical measure. See Zechariah 5:5–8, which describes a woman of wickedness sitting in an *eifah*. The printed editions and the text printed with *OY* read here אִיבָה (*eivah*), “enmity,” apparently referring to the opening of a demonic chamber mentioned in *Zohar* 2:266a (*Heikh*). See Genesis 3:15; *OY*; Vital; *Derekh Emet*; Galante; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *MIN*; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 159, n. 276.

[289.](#) **now you have friends...** No further challenges confront the old man. Still, he intends to continue striving for deeper meaning.

[290.](#) **crouching sin lies by the opening...** The demonic serpent Samael lies by the opening of the womb. When the woman lets out her final cry before giving birth, he follows that cry. Meanwhile, God sends an angelic key to open the womb. The serpent leaves the opening of the womb, but afterward he moves to the mother’s swollen belly until she is purified from the ordeal of giving birth.

On sin crouching, see Genesis 4:7: *At the opening crouches sin*. See BT *Berakhot* 61a; *Qiddushin* 30b; *Sanhedrin* 91b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 16; B, 16, 30; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:13; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:5; *Zohar* 1:78b (ST), 165b, 179a; 2:219b, 267b.

On the woman's final cry before giving birth, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:7; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:6. On the divine key opening the womb, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 73:4; BT *Ta'anit* 2a-b. The image of "the hill of the belly" may derive from Song of Songs 7:3: *Your belly is a mound of wheat*.

On the connection between the serpent's bite(s) and giving birth, see BT *Bava Batra* 16b, where Rabbah interprets God's words to Job out of the whirlwind, explaining His wondrous precision in nature: "*Do you observe the calving of does?*" (Job 39:1). This doe has a narrow vagina. When she crouches to give birth, I prepare a serpent who bites the vagina and she is loosened of her offspring. If it comes one second too soon or one second too late, she immediately dies." See *Zohar* 2:52b (Vol. 4, p. 266, n. 236); 3:249b.

On God spinning revolutions, see *Zohar* 1:109a, 110a-b (Vol. 2, p. 157, n. 315; p. 159, n. 331).

291. All this because that belly was thrust away... Samael possesses this power because of the curse delivered to Eve: *I will greatly increase your birth pangs, in pain you will bear children* (Genesis 3:16). Yet, although he is empowered to inflict pain at childbirth, Samael was later thrust from Rebekah's belly by Jacob's act of deception (see above, [pp. 96-98](#) and [n. 281](#)) and he cannot dominate women's bellies—except for the belly of the straying wife, which swells as a result of her drinking a potion if she is guilty. See Numbers 5:11-31.

By providing a portion to Samael, the Torah ensures that he will be occupied, assuaged, and deterred from interfering in the realm of holiness. On this theme, see

Sifra, Shemini 1:3, 43c; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46; Nahmanides on Leviticus 16:8; Moses of Burgos, *Ammud ha-Semali*, 158-59; *Zohar* 1:11a, 64a, 65a, 113b-114b, 138b, 145b, 174b, 190a, 210b; 2:33a, 130a, 141a, 152b, 154b, 169a, 184b-185a, 203b, 237b-238a, 242b, 266b, 269a; 3:63a-b (*Piq*), 101b-102a, 202b-203a, 224a-b, 258b-259a; *ZH* 20c (*MhN*), 46c, 86b-c (*MhN, Rut*), 87b-c (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 165-67; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 124-27; idem, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 49; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:453-54, 3:890-95, 959; Vol. 4, p. 140, n. 13.

292. I have not seen you... Apparently meaning, "Even though I never saw you before, I have revealed all this to you." For another interpretation, see Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 244-45.

293. All words are tiresome... Even the Torah's account of Jacob's wrestling match is *tiresome*, in the sense that it describes weakness. According to rabbinic tradition, Jacob's wrestling partner was Samael, the heavenly prince of his brother, Esau. By wrenching Jacob's thigh (which corresponds to the divine thigh, *Netsah*), Samael weakened the power of prophecy (which derives from this *sefirah*). *Netsah* remained impaired until the prophet Samuel appeared and retrieved the thigh from Samael, depriving him of it and restoring prophecy.

On Jacob wrestling with Samael, see above, [note 218](#). On the weakening of *Netsah* and Samuel's role in restoring it, see *Zohar* 1:21b, 170b-171a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 11 (13-14). See 1 Samuel 3:1: *In those days the word of YHVH was rare; vision was not widespread*. On Samuel lifting the thigh, cf. 1 Samuel 9:24.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All הדברים (ha-devarim), things [or: words], are tiresome; no human can utter them; the eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*. Genesis 32:26 concludes: *and the*

socket of Jacob's thigh was wrenched as he wrestled with him.

294. The blessed Holy One did not rob... him totally... Although Samuel retrieved the thigh from Samael, God compensated Samael with the thigh of the straying wife. Similarly, in exchange for the belly that was confiscated from Samael, God compensated him with the belly of the straying wife. All this, to ensure that the demonic force would not intrude on the realm of holiness.

See Numbers 5:27, describing what will happen to the straying wife after she drinks the potion: *Her belly will swell and her thigh sag.* See above, [note 291](#).

295. ולנפיל ירך (Ve-lanpil yarekh), and to sag the thigh... Why this unusual form of the verb, rather than ונפלה (*ve-nafelah*), *and (her thigh) will sag*, as in verse 27, or *her thigh will be broken*? Because, the old man explains, this causative form means “to throw down,” implying that a portion is thrown to Samael, like throwing a dog a bone to keep him occupied and satisfied.

See above, [note 291](#). On the metaphor of throwing a bone to a dog, see *Zohar* 2:152b; 3:63a-b (*Piq*), 197a; *ZH* 86b (*MhN, Rut*). The verse in Numbers reads: *This cursing water will enter your innards to swell the belly and to sag the thigh.*

296. The only thing that tormented him... What pained Samael most deeply was losing the thigh, which he had won from Jacob by wrestling.

297. All his chariots and company... All of Samael's forces pursue the missing thigh. Consequently they attack scholars' knees, which thereby grow weary—even though scholars are sitting and studying most of the time and rarely move their knees. “Every thing returns to its place” could conceivably imply that Jacob's thigh was restored to holiness, but its primary sense is that the demonic powers manage to retrieve a semblance of the thigh by attacking scholars' knees. This divine concession occupies the

demons, thereby enabling Israel to dwell in holiness. Israel imitates this divine strategy by providing the Other Side with its own portion in order to keep it occupied and satisfied. (See the sources cited above, [note 291](#)). Since God wants Israel alone to engage in holiness, it is forbidden to teach Torah to Gentiles.

In his mother's womb, Jacob thrust Samael away (see above, [note 291](#)); later, Samuel thrust him away (see above, [note 293](#)). The nations' hatred of Israel derives from this rejection of Esau's heavenly prince.

On demonic forces causing weariness in scholars' knees, see BT *Berakhot* 6a: "Abba Benjamin says, 'If the eye were empowered to see, no creature could endure the demons.' Abaye said, 'They are more numerous than we are, and they stand over us like a mound to a furrow.' Rav Huna said, 'Every one of us has a thousand on his left and ten thousand on his right.' Rava said, 'The crushing in the Kallah [i.e., biannual study session] comes from them. Weariness of the knees comes from them. The wearing out of scholars' clothes is due to their rubbing. The bruising of feet comes from them.'"

On the prohibition against teaching Torah to Gentiles, see BT *Hagigah* 13a, in the name of Rabbi Ammi (quoting Psalms 147:20). See *Zohar* 3:73a. The context in Psalms reads: *He tells His words to Jacob, His statutes and laws to Israel. He has not done so for any other nation, and the laws they know not. Hallelujah.*

On the reason for anti-Semitism, see *Zohar* 1:182b (Vol. 3, p. 113, n. 184). On Israel as God's portion, see Deuteronomy 32:9: *For YHVH's share is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance.*

[298](#). a dog who snatched a pure bird... A kosher bird. Similarly, Samael, the heavenly prince of Esau, is given the belly and thigh of the straying wife in place of all women's bellies and Jacob's thigh.

299. She strays from her husband... Just as Lilith strays from her partner, Samael, and seduces humans, so the straying wife betrays her husband.

See *Zohar* 3:231b. The subject of the verse in Proverbs is *the alien woman* mentioned in the preceding verse and identified here with Lilith.

300. This woman acted like her... The straying wife imitates Lilith, yet Lilith torments her.

301. did Solomon come to teach only this?... Traditionally, Solomon is regarded as the author of Ecclesiastes. Some of his statements there seem shocking or even heretical; this verse, for example, seems to indicate that no human action is worthwhile. There must be some deeper meaning.

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 28:1; BT *Shabbat* 30b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 8:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:3; 11:9; *Zohar* 1:91b, 195a, 223a-b; 2:59a; 3:64a, 157a, 177b, 182a, 236a.

302. a person in the world who engages constantly in evil... Namely, the demonic personality, Samael. The old man distinguishes between עמל (*amal*), which can mean “toil, mischief, trouble, harm,” and יגיע (*yegi’a*), “labor, toil.” Samael engages constantly in *amal*, “mischief.”

On the demonic force as *adam* (human, person), see above, [note 22](#); Liebes, *Peraqim*, 46.

303. He strives for evil... The demonic personality, Samael, engages in evil *under the sun*, seducing human beings on earth. However, God has made him impotent; otherwise, he would proliferate and destroy everything. Thus, *all his* (mischievous) *toil* is fruitless. A human being who does not strive to have children imitates the impotent Samael and clings to him.

On the significance of the wording *under the sun*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 28:1; BT *Shabbat* 30b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 8:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:3. On the impotence of the demonic force, see above, [note 176](#).

304. Ruth said, Spread the wing... Ruth asked Boaz to spread the כנף (*kenaf*), “hem” (or “skirt, wing”) of his garment over her, that is, to marry her. God protects a person in this world in order for him to be fruitful; but one who refuses to fulfill the divine purpose comes under the wing of the impotent Samael.

The verse in Exodus, referring to a slave, reads: *If he comes בגפו (be-gappo), by himself, he shall go out be-gappo, by himself.* Here, the old man interprets *gappo* according to Aramaic גפא (*gappa*), “wing,” yielding the reading: *he comes into [i.e., under] its wing.*

The description “like a serpent moving alone” recalls the old man’s riddle: “Who is a serpent that flies in the air, moving in separation...?” See above, [notes 5, 234](#); and *Bereshit Rabbah* 99:11: “All the animals go in pairs, whereas the serpent goes on the way all alone.”

On the image of spreading the hem, see Ezekiel 16:8.

305. [108b] The following passage (extending to “all precisely arranged” on [p. 108](#), before [n. 309](#)) I have placed here, as it appears in V20. See above, [note 239](#).

306. If he comes בגפו (be-gappo), by himself... The verse continues: *he shall go out by himself. Targum Onqelos* renders בגפו (*be-gappo*) as בלחודוי (*bi-lḥoldoi*), “by himself.” The old man acknowledges this as a fine simple meaning, but probing more deeply, he links *gappo* to the Aramaic word גפא (*gappa*), “wing.” (See above, [note 304](#).) He paraphrases a formulation in *Seder Rabbah di-Vreshit*, 17 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:28): “The entire world stands on one fin of Leviathan.”

Leviathan is the primordial sea monster who, together with his mate, threatened the world until they were vanquished by God. In the time to come, the righteous will feast at a banquet, and their main course will be Leviathan’s female partner. See BT *Bava Batra* 74b: “*God created the great sea serpents* (Genesis 1:21)... Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav, ‘Everything that the

blessed Holy One created in His world, He created male and female. Even *Leviathan the elusive snake* and *Leviathan the writhing snake* (Isaiah 27:1) He created male and female, and if they mated with one another they would destroy the entire world. What did the blessed Holy One do? He castrated the male and killed the female, salting her for the righteous in the world to come.” The expression “cooled [the sexual ardor of] the female” (employed by the old man) appears in the continuation of this Talmudic passage, referring to the legendary Behemoth.

Here Leviathan’s single wing represents the impotent demonic couple. The notion that the world stands on this wing may mean that evil and punishment play a vital role in the divine plan. Still, Leviathan and his mate cannot procreate. A man who fails to engender new life enters, as it were, beneath the impotent “wing” of Leviathan, and after death he is fittingly thrust into Leviathan’s demonic domain, banished from the heavenly realms.

On the fin(s) of Leviathan, which support(s) the world, see Apocalypse of Abraham, 21; *Midrash Konen (Beit ha-Midrash, 2:26)*; *Midrash Aseret ha-Dibberot (Beit ha-Midrash, 1:63)*; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 9; Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, *Sodei Razayya*, 1:1:31; *Zohar* 1:30b; 2:34b; 3:279a (RM). Cf. *Pesiqta Rabbati*, add., 194b.

On Leviathan and his mate, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 1:21; Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen, *Ma’amar al ha-Atsilut ha-Semalit*, 262-63; *Zohar* 1:34b, 46b; 2:34a-b; Idel, “Livyatan u-Vat Zugo.” On the impotence of the demonic force, see above, [note 176](#).

On not entering the heavenly curtain, see above, [note 105](#). On *gappo*, see Rashi and Ibn Ezra on the verse.

307. ערירים (*Aririm*), **Childless, they will die...** The deficient spelling ערירם (*aririm*), without the second ׳ (*yod*), indicates a single combination of male and female: since this person failed to have children, he entered beneath the wing of the demonic male in his lifetime, and upon death he

will cling to the demonic female. God does not welcome anyone who has “emasculated” himself by failing to engender new life.

The rare biblical term עֲרִירִים (*aririm*) apparently means “stripped,” hence, “stripped of children, childless.” The biblical context describes the punishment for having sexual relations with one’s aunt: *childless they will die* (the plural subject *they* referring to both the nephew and his aunt). See *Targum Onqelos*, Leviticus 20:20; *Zohar* 1:228b.

In the Masoretic text, the word *aririm* is not spelled deficiently. The old man may be playing with another deficient spelling, in Genesis 1:21: תַּנִּינִים (*tanninim*), *sea serpents*, which is interpreted as referring to Leviathan without his mate. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:4; *Zohar* 2:34a-b, 176b (*SdTs*); *Minḥat Shai* on the verse. Cf. the preceding note.

For various interpretations, see Galante; *MLN*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. Here, the theme of impotence may allude to Christian celibacy and the monastic ideal, to which the *Zohar* is absolutely opposed. See above, [note 176](#).

[308](#). Come and see from a sacrifice... According to the verse in Leviticus, *Anything with squashed or crushed or tom or cut testicles you shall not offer to YHVH, and in your land you shall not do it.*

On the prohibition against human castration, see *Sifra*, *Emor* 7:11, 99a; BT *Shabbat* 110b. On the prohibition against castrating any creature, see *Sifra*, *Emor* 7:11, 99a; BT *Hagigah* 14b; *Zohar* 3:63a (*Piq*). On the link between castration and the Other Side, see above, [notes 176](#), [306](#).

[309](#). If he endeavored... If he married yet did not want to have children (or if his wife did not want to), when he dies and enters the upper world childless, he will be subjected to the demonic male; and his wife, to the demonic female.

“They disregarded the handiwork of their Lord” means that they failed to participate in the miraculous act of

creating new life. The full verse in Exodus reads: *If he comes [or: came] by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he was husband to a wife, his wife shall go out with him.* See above, [note 306](#).

[310](#). The grievance brought by the blessed Holy One... Previously, the old man had discussed various aspects of God's grievance and had interpreted the word *mountains* in Micah 6:1 as referring to *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, and the word *mountains* in Micah 6:2 as referring to *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. (See above, [pp. 89-97](#) and [n. 256](#).) Now he offers another interpretation of the *mountains* in the first verse. These "mountains below" signify angels, regarding whom Israel sinned by drawing down angelic powers contained within the stars and by conjuring the angels for material benefit. Consequently, God contends with the angels, interfering with the transmission of their power, and the entire process collapses.

On drawing down astral powers, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:29; *Zohar* 1:99b-100a; 2:69a, 172a-b. On God interfering with the conjuring of angels, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:5. On the connection between angels and *Netsah* and *Hod*, see *Zohar* 2:232a.

"Ministering" and "service" render שמושא (*shimmusha*), whose root means "to use, perform, serve, minister, wield, make theurgic use (as in conjuring)." The phrase "they were not baffled" derives from Daniel 4:6, where אַנִּיס (*aneis*), literally "oppresses, constrains," means in context "overwhelms, intimidates, baffles."

[311](#). Who are the hills?... Angelic maidens serving *Shekhinah*.

In midrashic literature, *hills* signifies the matriarchs (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah). Here, "matriarchal maidservants" renders אַמְהוֹת, which can be construed as *immahot*, "mothers, matriarchs," or *amahot*, "maidservants," or both.

On *hills* as the matriarchs, *Mekhilta, Amaleq* (*Beshallah*) 1; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 353; JT *Sanhedrin* 10:1, 27d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:6; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 11a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 3; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 19. Cf. above, [note 256](#). On the verse in Psalms, see above at [note 233](#).

[312.](#) Israel acted like this... Drawing down astral powers, thereby collaborating with lower, demonic rungs. By doing so and by committing other sins—such as that of the straying wife, whose “thigh” sags—Israel empowered the demonic forces.

The virtuous Mordecai was descended from Jacob, while (according to tradition) the wicked Haman was descended from Esau. A legend relates that once, in a desperate situation, Mordecai supplied Haman’s troops with provisions in exchange for Haman selling himself to Mordecai as his slave. Their pact was written on the legging on Mordecai’s knee. Later, when Haman was appointed as royal minister, Mordecai stretched out his leg toward Haman, reminding him of their agreement, thereby enraging Haman. Here, Haman represents Samael, and Mordecai, by revealing his leg, enrages his demonic foe by demonstrating that the thigh which was “fittingly” Samael’s (because he had won it by wrestling with Jacob) has now been restored to Jacob’s descendant, Mordecai.

See *Targum Ester* (*Targum Yerushalmi*) 3:2; *Targum Ester* 3:6; 5:9; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 4:397-99; 6:464, nn. 104-5. On the straying wife, see above, [notes 291, 294, 298](#).

[313.](#) Rebekah took the precious garments of Esau... Wearing Esau’s clothes, Jacob tricked his father, Isaac, and stole Esau’s blessing. Consequently, the demonic powers have a pretext to wear out the clothes of scholars, who embody the quality of Jacob (who dwelled in the tents of Torah). Similarly, because Samael won Jacob’s thigh by wrestling with him, the demonic forces have a pretext to

cause weariness in scholars' knees. Otherwise, scholars' clothes would not wear out so soon nor would their knees grow weary, since they spend most of their time sitting and studying, not exerting themselves physically.

On the demons wearing away scholars' clothes and causing weariness in their knees, see above, [note 297](#). In Genesis 25:27, Jacob is described as *dwelling in tents*, which is interpreted midrashically as dwelling in tents of Torah. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:10; *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 25:27; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlah* 9.

On nothing happening unjustly, cf. BT *Berakhot* 5b: "Is the blessed Holy One suspect of executing judgment unjustly?" On the clause "every thing returns to its place," see above, [note 297](#).

314. *I returned and saw all the torments...* The speaker is King Solomon, the traditional author of Ecclesiastes. The verse reads: *I returned and saw all* הַעֲשׂוּקִים (*ha-ashuqim*), *the torments* [or: *oppressions*], *that are committed under the sun. Look, the tears of ha-ashuqim, the tormented—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their tormentors, power—with no one to comfort them.*

Earlier the old man had briefly discussed part of this verse (see above at [note 288](#)). Now he probes more deeply, starting with its first word. The expression *I returned and saw* is usually understood as *Again* [or: *Next*] *I saw, I further saw, I turned to see*, but here the old man reads it hyperliterally.

Instead of הַעֲשׂוּקִים (*na'asim*), *are committed*, the old man records הַעֲשׂוּ (*na'asu*), *were committed* [or: *done, made*], and his subsequent interpretation of the verse depends on the past tense. Perhaps he is confusing this verse with (or playing on) Ecclesiastes 1:14: *I have seen all the deeds* הַעֲשׂוּ (*she-na'asu*), *that were done, under the sun*. See *Zohar* 3:234a; *Zohorei Ya'bits*.

315. However, I returned and saw... King Solomon literally *returned* from his fantastic daily adventure. Each morning he would turn toward the rising sun and see certain signs in the sky. Then he turned toward the north, which symbolizes harsh Judgment, source of the demonic powers. An eagle appeared and gave Solomon two leaves, which the king realized were from the two fallen angels, Uzza and Aza'el, known respectively as *falling* and *eyes uncovered*.

According to rabbinic legend, the angels Uzza and Aza'el opposed the creation of Adam and Eve, fell from heaven, and were attracted by *the daughters of men* (Genesis 6:2). They were punished by being bound in chains of iron in the Mountains of Darkness, from where they still manage to wreak havoc, teaching sorcery to humans. Their names here, *falling* and *eyes uncovered*, derive from a description of the prophet Balaam in Numbers 24:4: *Oracle of one who hears God's sayings, who beholds a vision of Shaddai, falling with eyes uncovered*. (Cf. *ibid.*, 16.) According to the *Zohar*, Balaam consulted these two fallen angels.

See 1 Enoch 6-11; Jubilees 5; BT *Yoma* 67b; *Aggadat Bereshit*, intro, 39; *Midrash Avkir*, 7 (cited in *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 44); *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 22; *Zohar* 1:9b, 23a (*TZ*), 25a-b (*TZ*), 37a, 37a (*Tos*), 58a, 126a, 133b; 3:60b, 144a (*IR*), 184b, 194a, 207b-208b, 212a-b, 233a-b; *ZH* 81a-b (*MhN, Rut*); Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:147-51. Cf. Testament of Solomon 6:1-3.

On Solomon and the eagle, see *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:25; *Zohar* 3:233a-b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 4:149-50; 6:291, nn. 50-53; Steinsaltz, "Ha-Nesher ha-Gadol." Cf. the reference to an eagle in the old man's riddle, above at [note 5](#). On seeing signs in the morning sky, see *Zohar* 2:130b. On the pillars of cloud and fire, see Exodus 13:21-22.

316. He sealed his throne with a signet ring... Before departing on the eagle's wings, King Solomon

sealed his throne so that the demon Ashmedai would not usurp it.

See BT *Gittin* 68a-b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 4:165-72; 6:299-300, n. 86; Vol. 3, p. 220, n. 251.

317. The eagle mounted... Transporting him to the abode of Uzza and Aza'el. With the verse from Isaiah, Solomon implores God to subdue the demonic forces.

See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:25, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Rav Yitshak: "Solomon had a large eagle upon which he rode and traveled to Tadmor in the desert and returned in one day, as is written: *He* [namely, Solomon] *built* [i.e., fortified] *Tadmor in the desert* (2 Chronicles 8:4)." See *Zohar* 3:233a-b.

Tadmor was an important oasis in the Syrian desert, known as Palmyra in classical sources. (Palmyra is a translation of the Semitic name Tadmor, which is probably connected with the word *tamar*, "palm tree." Cf. 1 Kings 9:18.) Here, the name appears as Tarmod, as in some rabbinic sources. The rabbis viewed the city with animosity, and according to midrashic tradition the Palmyrenes participated in the destruction of the First and Second Temples. According to Arab legend, Tadmor was built by jinns (spirits, demons) under the command of Solomon. See JT *Ta'anit* 4:6, 69b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 56:11; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:4; BT *Yevamot* 17a; Hitti, *History of Syria*, 389; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 166-68.

The olive tree mentioned here is the source of the two leaves brought to Solomon by the eagle. See above at [note 315](#). On "four hundred parasangs," see BT *Gittin* 68b, where Ashmedai hurls King Solomon this same distance.

The Mountains of Darkness appear in rabbinic stories about the campaigns of Alexander the Great and refer there to a region of Africa. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:1; BT *Tamid* 32a-b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:1. Cf. Jeremiah 13:16 (and Rashi and Radak, ad loc.); *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:25; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers

24:22; *Leqah Tov*, Exodus 10:23; *Sekhel Tov*, Exodus 10:2. See above, [note 315](#); *Zohar* 1:9b; 2:191a; 3:196a, 208a, 212a, 233a, 249b, 259b, ZH 81a-b (*MhN, Rut*).

318. He entered there... By the power of the ring engraved with the Divine Name, King Solomon elicited from Uzza and Aza'el whatever he wished to know of alien, demonic wisdom. Then Solomon *returned and saw*—returning to his throne, he now understood the role played by demonic forces in tormenting humans on earth and he conveyed elements of alien wisdom in a holy idiom.

On the ring, see above at [note 316](#); *Zohar* 3:233b. Cf. BT *Gittin* 68a-b. On the relation between demonic wisdom (or sorcery) and holy wisdom, see *Zohar* 1:99b-100b; Cohen-Alloro, “Ha-Magyah ve-ha-Kishuf be-Sefer ha-Zohar”; Idel, “The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance”; idem, “Hermeticism and Judaism”; Liebes, “Zohar and Iamblichus.”

As mentioned above ([note 314](#)), the verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I returned and saw all העשוקים* (*ha-ashuqim*), *the torments, that are committed under the sun. Look, the tears of ha-ashuqim, the tormented...* For the remainder of this passage, the old man understands both occurrences of *ha-ashuqim* in this verse as *the tormented*.

319. Are there so few in the world... How could King Solomon have seen *all the tormented* in the world? Rather, he saw or considered all types of torment in the world, in particular, babies in their mother's bosom who are tormented in various ways. Some babies are tormented before birth, when their souls pass through the cosmic scales, which incline toward one side or the other depending on the degree of virtue or vice in the world. When virtue dominates, the scale of righteousness tips toward holiness; when sins abound, the scale of deceit tips toward impurity. As souls pass through these scales to be weighed, if the scales happen to be tipped at that moment toward impurity, those particular souls fall into the hands

of *Sitra Aħra* and are condemned to a life of torment below and premature death.

See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:1; *Zohar* 3:234a; above, [notes 38, 288](#). On the cosmic scales, see above, [note 22](#). “Potent bosoms” renders תוקפא (*tuqpa*); see above, [note 38](#).

320. Among those tormented... Some are tormented because in a previous lifetime they tormented others; some suffer because their parents or ancestors sinned, stretching back several generations.

On the connection between the verse in Exodus and reincarnation, see Oron, “Qavvim le-Torat ha-Nefesh ve-ha-Gilgul,” 285–86. The biblical context (Exodus 34:6–7) reads: *YHVH, YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and faithfulness, keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, bearing crime, trespass, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations.*

321. How is he tormented?... If a person has murdered, for example, he will be tormented in a future life (or his descendant will be tormented), leaving the divine realm and passing through the cosmic scales when they are tipped toward impurity.

The “empty pit” symbolizes the demonic power. On the cosmic scales, see above, [note 319](#).

322. There is a tormented one... Another type of sinner is one who oppresses his fellow. He will be tormented by the suffering of his children at the hands of the demonic power.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: לא תעשק (Lo ta’ashoq), *You shall not defraud [or: exploit, oppress, torment], your fellow and you shall not rob. The wages of a hired laborer shall not remain with you through the night until morning.*

323. That נעשו (na’asu), were made, under the sun... The verse reads: *I returned and saw all the torments that נעשו (na’asu), were committed, under the sun.* Here, the

old man understands this as: ...*all the tormented that na'asu, were made, under the sun*. He wonders why the verse doesn't read: *all the tormented that were withdrawn*—removed from the world prematurely. If their physical “making” has any value, it must have been ordained above the sun.

324. But surely, were made... If such souls were tormented already on the cosmic scales (“in spirit”), why do they even come into this world? Well, they *were made* into bodies untainted by sin, and then tormented and killed as babies by the demonic force, who revels in such a pure body most of all. It seems then, shockingly, that they enter the world in order to provide pleasure to their tormentor.

325. others that were made by people troubling their Lord... Another example of the *tormented* is a child born through adultery. The sinning couple, in effect, compels God to form the embryo that results from their immoral union, extorting it, as it were.

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 54b, where Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish teaches as follows concerning an act of adultery: “The blessed Holy One said, ‘Not enough that the wicked make My coinage public, but they trouble Me and make Me set My seal [upon it] against My will!’” In other words, the adulterers make illegitimate, vulgar use of the divinely sanctioned power of sexuality and compel God to form the embryo. See Rashi, ad loc., and on Genesis 7:4; *Zohar* 3:44b; Recanati on Deuteronomy 23:3, 89d-90a.

326. so with those that were already made by foreskin... Apparently referring to teenagers. All children are dominated by the evil impulse until the age of thirteen—in this sense, raised, or *made*, by the demonic foreskin. Then, upon reaching thirteen they are removed from demonic control, “confiscated” by God, endowed with *neshamah* (the highest level of soul), and from then on held accountable for their actions.

On a child being dominated by the evil impulse (symbolized by foreskin) and receiving *neshamah* at age thirteen, see above, [notes 68-69](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MIN*; Scholem; *MmD*.

[327.](#) If he commits a sin, he is killed... Once he reaches the age of thirteen, if he commits a capital offense he is put to death. Such a person has a valid complaint against God, since when he turned thirteen he became God's son—in effect, newly born. How can a newborn be punished?

On becoming God's son at age thirteen, see above, [notes 68-69](#).

[328.](#) bastard... ממוזר (*Mamzer*), “misbegotten,” technically, the offspring of an adulterous or incestuous union (not a child born out of wedlock). A *mamzer* is isolated from the community in the sense that he is forbidden to marry another Jew, based on Deuteronomy 23:3: *No mamzer, misbegotten, shall come into the assembly of YHVH.*

A *mamzer* can complain that he is being punished and tormented unfairly for his parents' sin. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 32:8; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:1. Cf. above, [note 325](#).

[329.](#) those who die in their mother's potent bosom... Causing countless others to shed tears over these tragic deaths and to question God's justice.

See *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:353). On the expression “potent bosom,” see above, [notes 38, 319](#).

[330.](#) those tears of theirs in that world, protecting the living... In heaven, the tears of these babies who have died protect the living. They weep and study in the Heavenly Academy, learning Torah directly from God.

The verse in Psalms indicates that *from the mouth of babes and sucklings* God establishes (a heavenly school of) Torah, which is known as *strength*. Their study of Torah defeats demonic forces that threaten Israel below.

The tradition quoted here, “There is a place prepared...” is a paraphrase of a statement concerning *ba’alei teshuvah*, “masters of repentance (literally, of returning)” in BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu (which is alluded to here in the final sentence): “In the place where *ba’alei teshuvah* stand, the completely righteous cannot stand.” See above at [note 238](#).

On the Heavenly Academy and on God teaching the souls of little children, see above, [note 41](#). On Torah as *strength*, (based on Psalms 29:11), see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:2; 19:16; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 343; BT *Zevachim* 116a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; 2:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 8:4; 21:2. On the beneficial effect of a child’s death on his living parent, see *Tanḥuma, Ki Tetse* 2.

[331. \[106a\]](#) The following long section (extending to [note 374](#)) discusses *teshuvah* (returning, repentance). It may have originally been a separate composition, later interpolated into *Sava de-Mishpatim*. See above, [note 239](#).

[332. Nothing in the world withstands teshuvah...](#) See above at [note 237](#) and the end of that note. *Teshuvah* means “returning, repentance.”

[333. For even of something sworn by the blessed Holy One...](#) One should read the verse in Isaiah not as a rhetorical question but as a declaration concerning a divine oath to punish: *YHVH of Hosts has decided, and Who [namely, Binah] will annul it.* (On this name of *Binah*, see above, [note 217](#).) *Binah*, the Divine Mother, is symbolized by *teshuvah* (returning) because from Her all issues and to Her all returns. She has the power to annul the divine decree.

[334. when the blessed Holy One swears an oath...](#) A divine oath or decree can be annulled through sincere repentance.

King Jehoiachin (also known as Coniah and Jeconiah) reigned briefly in Judah before he was exiled to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C.E. (along with his family and ten

thousand captives). Although God condemned him to be childless, Jehoiachin's repentance reversed this decree.

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 10:5; 19:6; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 24:11; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:6. On the wording of the verse in Chronicles, see *Minḥat Shai*. "Weapons" renders גזיזין (*gezizin*), "fists," which is interpreted in the *Arukh* as "weapons." See Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 229b-230a; Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 274b.

335. who transgress... The present tense indicates that these sinners stubbornly persist in their wickedness, refusing to repent even at the gates of Hell. See BT *Eruvin* 19a.

336. damaged a place that he should not... Interrupted the divine flow by sinning.

337. But who needs healing? Those who are in pain... See BT *Bava Qamma* 46b.

338. When the blessed Holy One draws them near... Apparently meaning that He draws them near with greater power than He rejects them.

On rejecting with the left and drawing near with the right, see BT *Sotah* 47a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 31.

339. He went backsliding... In Isaiah these verses are addressed to Israel; *his mourners* refers to the survivors of Israel mourning the catastrophe.

According to rabbinic law, warning a person (who is about to commit a sin) transforms the act he is about to commit from an inadvertent sin into an intentional one. See BT *Sanhedrin* 8b.

340. Is the verse speaking of the living... The passage in Isaiah begins by saying: *He went backsliding.... I have seen his ways and I will heal him*, which implies that the person is still alive. However, the closing reference to *his mourners* implies the opposite.

341. Look, it seems that he is dead!... Since the verse mentions *his mourners*.

Although physically alive, the wicked are considered dead. See BT *Berakhot* 18a-b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya.

342. What is: And compensate him and his mourners... *Mourners* refers to this person's two guardian angels, who mourn over his crooked behavior. When he turns back to God, these angels will be comforted along with him.

On a person's two accompanying angels, see BT *Shabbat* 119b; *Ta'anit* 11a; *Ḥagigah* 16a; *Zohar* 1:12b, 144b, 165b; 2:239a; 3:52b; *ZḤ* 47a; *ZḤ* 84d (*MhN*, *Rut*). The reference to the age of thirteen alludes to the rabbinic tradition that whereas the evil impulse attempts to seduce a person from the moment of birth, the good impulse enters only at age thirteen. See above, [note 68](#). On the identification of the angelic pair with the good and evil impulses, see *Zohar* 1:144b, 165b, 174b. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 61a; *Zohar* 1:49b; 3:263b (*Piq*).

The proclamation "Give honor to the image of the King!" alludes to the idea that the human being is created in God's image. See *Devarim Rabbah* 4:4; *Tanḥuma*, *Mishpatim* 19; *Midrash Tehillim* 17:8; *Zohar* 2:199a; 3:52b, 160b, 265a; *ZḤ* 41d; Moses de León, *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, 15.

The expression "for all sides" means for both the person and his angels.

343. Now he is really alive... And he grasps *Tif'eret*, the Tree of Life, who is wedded to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). As the daughter of *Binah*, *Shekhinah* shares Her mother's name: *teshuvah* (returning, repentance), since all creatures return to Her and She returns to the higher *sefirot*. A person who returns to God is *ba'al teshuvah*, "master (or husband) of *teshuvah*," imitating *Tif'eret*, the Divine Husband of *Shekhinah*, and unifying the *sefirot*. The Ancient Ones insisted that such a person not only imitates *Tif'eret* but becomes himself the actual husband of *Shekhinah*, conveying the divine flow to Her. (Alternatively, "*ba'al teshuvah*, precisely!" means master, or husband, of *Binah*.) By attaining such a high level,

ba'alei teshuvah surpass even the completely righteous, who attain the rung of *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), below *Tif'eret*.

See BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: "In the place where *ba'alei teshuvah*, masters of returning, stand, the completely righteous cannot stand." See above, [note 238](#).

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MIN*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1513; *MmD*. On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 68](#). On *teshuvah* as a name of *Binah*, see above, [note 333](#). On *Shekhinah* sharing this name, see *Zohar* 3:122b. On *ba'alei teshuvah* as "masters (or husbands) of *Binah*," see *Zohar* 3:16b. On Moses as husband of *Shekhinah*, see below, [p. 223, n. 94](#).

[344.](#) **sins... against people and not against the blessed Holy One...** For example, if one person rebukes another for wrongdoing, but the one rebuked suffers and feels that the rebuker himself has sinned against him by speaking harshly. See *OY*; *MIN*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *MmD*.

[345.](#) **that sin of Bathsheba...** Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of King David's warriors. One day while strolling on the roof of his royal palace, David saw her bathing and, stricken by her beauty, he ordered her brought to him. When David later learned that she was pregnant by him, he arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle with the Ammonites and then he married Bathsheba. The prophet Nathan rebuked and cursed David for sleeping with Bathsheba and murdering her husband. (See 2 Samuel 11-12.) According to tradition, David responded to Nathan's visit by uttering Psalm 51, whose superscription reads: *...upon Nathan the prophet's coming to him when he had come to bed with Bathsheba*. Verse 6 of this psalm is being discussed here: *Against You alone have I sinned, and what is evil in Your eyes I have done*.

The point is that by sleeping with Bathsheba, David rendered her forbidden to her husband, Uriah, thereby sinning against both him and God. See BT *Hagigah* 9b-10a.

346. Not so! For that was permitted... Rabbinic tradition tries to justify David's adultery or at least mitigate its sinfulness. According to one source, Bathsheba was always destined to be David's wife. Another source records the custom that soldiers going to war would give their wives conditional divorces, which became valid if they failed to return, enabling their wives to remarry. Because Uriah fell in battle, Bathsheba was technically not married to him (at least when David married her, and perhaps even retroactively when he first slept with her).

See BT *Sanhedrin* 107a: "Rava expounded, '... Ever since the six days of Creation, Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, was designated for David, but she came to him with suffering.' The school of Rabbi Yishma'el taught likewise: 'She was designated for David, but he ate her unripe [prematurely, while she was still married to Uriah].'"

See BT *Shabbat* 56a: "Rav said, 'Rabbi [Yehudah the Prince], who is descended from David, seeks to defend him, and expounds [the verse] in David's favor: *You have taken his wife to be your wife* (2 Samuel 12:9) implies that you have marriage rights to her [since the verb *to take* denotes marriage, as in Deuteronomy 24:1]. For Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥmani said in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: "Everyone who went to war in the dynasty of David would first write a document of divorce for his wife.'""

See *Zohar* 1:8a-b, 73b; 3:78b; Rashi and *Tosafot* on the passage in BT *Shabbat* 56a; Galante; *MM*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *MLN*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *MmD*; Vol. 1, pp. 55-56, nn. 394, 401.

347. What was the sin that he committed... David instructed Joab, his commander-in-chief, to place Uriah in the front line of battle against the Ammonites, leading to his death. David's sin was not that he had Uriah killed,

since Uriah deserved to die—having rebelled against royal authority by addressing Joab as master when King David was his real master. Rather, David sinned by utilizing *the sword of the Ammonites* to bring about Uriah's deserved death. This act had grave consequences, as explained below.

See BT *Shabbat* 56a; Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *vadoni yo'av*; *Tosafot*, *Yoma* 66b, s.v. *mahu*; *Qiddushin* 43a, s.v. *mored ba-malkhut*. The list of David's warriors in 2 Samuel 23 concludes with Uriah the Hittite.

348. Scripture states that no fault... According to rabbinic hermeneutics, when the word *רק* (*raq*), *only*, appears in a biblical passage, it can serve to limit or exclude the meaning of the following phrase. Here, *only in the matter of Uriah* implies that David's sin did not consist in having Uriah killed but was rather *only in the matter of Uriah*—namely, in how he had him killed: *by the sword of the Ammonites*. This sword was engraved with the image of the demonic serpent, worshiped by the Ammonites, and when it slew Uriah this evil serpent was empowered.

The image of the dragon, or serpent, was displayed as the ensign of the Roman army, and in rabbinic literature it is considered emblematic of idolatry. See M *Avodah Zarah* 3:3; BT *Avodah Zarah* 42b-43a; *Zohar* 1:173a. The full verse in Kings reads: *For David had done what was right in the eyes of YHVH and did not turn aside from all that He had commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.*

349. Now, if you say that Uriah was not virtuous... One might assume that being a Hittite (one of the seven idolatrous Canaanite nations), Uriah was morally suspect; so even if he was killed *by the sword of the Ammonites*, this entailed no sin. However, his title *the Hittite* simply means that he resided in Hittite territory. See BT *Qiddushin* 76b.

350. the abomination of the Ammonites prevailed over the camp of God... By enabling *the sword of the*

Ammonites to prevail over the Israelites and impair their camp, David also caused a defect above, enabling the demonic power to impair the camp of *Shekhinah*.

In 1 Chronicles 12:23, David's camp is compared in size to *the camp of God*. The phrase "abomination of the Ammonites" appears in 1 Kings 11:7. See *Zohar* 1:173a.

351. *The eyes of YHVH...* In describing God's providential eyes, Chronicles employs the feminine verb משוטטות (*meshotetot*), *are ranging*, while Zechariah uses the masculine form משוטטים (*meshotetim*), *are ranging*. Here, the eyes are pictured as female and male divine forces. When King David acknowledged his sin, He said *in Your eyes* because he realized that his failure stemmed from ignoring the divine eyes gazing upon him, thereby impairing their function; his sin lay precisely there. (In this and the following passages, David's sin is acknowledged, not explained away.)

The Hebrew noun עַיִן (*ayin*), "eye," is always feminine in the Bible, except twice in Zechariah (this verse and 3:9). On *meshotetim* and *meshotetot*, see *Zohar* 1:241a-b; 3:130a (*IR*), 293b (*IZ*). The verse in Zechariah actually reads: *These seven are the eyes of YHVH, ranging over the whole earth*.

352. *So that You will be justified when You speak...* King David had served as God's jester. Even now, when confessing his sin with Bathsheba, he reverted to this role, amusing God as follows: "When I told You to test me, You said that I could not endure such a test. I only sinned so *that You will be justified*—and not proven wrong!"

See BT *Sanhedrin* 107a, in the name of Rava: "Why is it written: *Against You alone have I sinned, and what is evil in Your eyes I have done, so that You will be justified when You speak, You will be blameless when You judge?* David said before the blessed Holy One, 'It is revealed and known before You that if I had wanted to suppress my impulse, I would have; but I thought, [I will sin] so that people will not say, "The servant defeated his Master [by withstanding the

temptation and thereby disproving God, who had told David that he would fail].”””

On King David and jesting, see El'azar Kallir, *Le-Ma'an Tamim* (a *piyyut* for *Hosha'na Rabbah*), where David is referred to as “חַיֵּךְ (*Hayyakh*), Jestling [or: laughing] one, whirling in song,” based on the account of David whirling before God when returning the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:13–23). See *Zohar* 1:148a–b.

Yitzhak Baer has pointed out a parallel between the *Zohar's* description of King David and St. Francis of Assisi's instruction to his followers to serve as *ioculatores Domini*, “the Lord's jesters (or minstrels).” See Francis of Assisi, *Speculum Perfectionis* (The Mirror of Perfection), 100; Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1:269, 437–38, n. 24.

The verse in Psalm 51 reads: *Against You alone have I sinned, and what is evil in Your eyes I have done; so You are just [or: so that You will be justified] when You speak, You are [or: will be] blameless when You judge.* The verse in Psalm 26 reads: *Test me, O YHVH, and try me.*

353. That deed was not befitting of David... The sin of Bathsheba was unworthy of David, whose heart contained no evil. He only sinned (or, was brought to sin by God) in order to prove the effectiveness of repentance.

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 4b–5a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai. The vowelization חָלַל (*ḥalal*) indicates a verb in the past tense: *was pierced*, meaning that the evil impulse in David's heart had been killed. See Ibn Ezra and Radak on Psalms 109:22.

Alternatively, *ḥalal* suggests חָלִיל (*ḥalil*), “hollow,” which is how *Targum Onqelos* renders the word נְבוּב (*nevuv*), *hollow*, in Exodus 27:8, which describes the altar for the Tabernacle: נְבוּב לִוְחֹת (*Nevuv luḥot*), *Hollow boarded, shall you make it.* See Rashi and Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 27:8.

In the second-to-last sentence, “King David sinned...” probably means: If King David—who was so holy and with

whom God was consequently so strict—sinned and repented and was forgiven, all the more so for other human beings!

According to the second-century Greek physician Galen, whose theories dominated medieval science, the human heart has two chambers. On bad blood representing evil, see *Zohar* 3:192b.

354. he was reprimanded... According to rabbinic tradition, the Sanhedrin excommunicated David for the sin of Bathsheba.

See *Bemidbar Rabbah* 3:2; *Midrash Shemu'el* 8:2. On keeping a distance of four cubits from a person who has been excommunicated, see BT *Nedarim* 5a, *Sanhedrin* 68a.

355. What Shimei son of Gera did to him... Shimei was a relative of King Saul who held David responsible for various deaths in Saul's family. When David was fleeing Jerusalem, Shimei cast curses, stones, and dirt at the king and his cohort. David is advised to kill Shimei, but he spares him, insisting that God instructed Shimei to curse.

Here David's response to Shimei's attack expiates his sin with Bathsheba. Shimei was inspired from above ("another place") to confront and vilify David in order to break his heart, causing him to repent.

On Shimei and David, see 2 Samuel 16:5–13. Verse 10 reads: *If he curses, it is because YHVH told him, "Curse David," and who can say, "Why have you done this?"* On the link between Shimei's curse and Bathsheba, see BT *Shabbat* 105a; *Midrash Tehillim* 3:3.

According to rabbinic tradition, Shimei was a sage and became Solomon's teacher. See BT *Berakhot* 8a; Rashi on 1 Kings 3:1; Radak on 1 Kings 2:8. On his role as head of the Sanhedrin, see Rashi on 2 Samuel 16:10.

356. Two commands he gave to his son Solomon... On his death bed, King David instructed his son Solomon to execute Joab and Shimei. Joab had killed two of David's military commanders, Abner and Amasa. Here, his misdeed

against David is understood as something more “concealed,” namely, that after Uriah the Hittite was killed in the battle with the Ammonites, Joab (seeking to justify himself) showed his angry officers the letter that David had sent to him, ordering him to place Uriah in the front line of battle. Solomon never should have been informed of this episode, since it exposed his father’s affair with Bathsheba and his scheme to eliminate Uriah. The wording *You also know* implies: “only because others know, and this is something you should not know.”

On David’s final instructions, see 1 Kings 2:5–9. On Joab showing David’s letter to his officers, see *Tanḥuma, Mas’ei* 12.

357. Here, with you is Shimei... The phrase *with you* implies that Shimei was Solomon’s teacher, constantly with him.

See above, end of [note 355](#), and especially Radak on 1 Kings 2:8.

358. Build yourself a house in Jerusalem... King Solomon ordered Shimei to settle in Jerusalem so that his wisdom would spread there.

359. He came out, coming out and cursing... In the account of Shimei’s coming out to curse King David, the verb “to come out” is doubled. Solomon understood this as referring to two separate exits by Shimei: his leaving the house of study to curse David, and his leaving Jerusalem years later to capture two of his slaves who had run away. This second “coming out” led to Shimei’s death, as Solomon had warned. See 1 Kings 2:36–46.

360. And flinging dust... Shimei had flung dust at Solomon’s father, King David. Years later, he crossed the Wadi Kidron to capture his runaway slaves. Solomon realized that the combination of water and dust signified betrayal, as in the case of a wife suspected of adultery, who is tested by an ordeal involving these two elements. See Numbers 5:17.

361. Now, was Shimei stupid?... Didn't he realize that if David swore not to kill him *with the sword*, later David could kill him with another weapon?

362. a child, son of a great fish... The son of the great sage Rav Hamnuna Sava. The name *הַמְנוּנָא* (*Hamnuna*) suggests *נוּנָא* (*nuna*), "fish."

Historically, Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder) was a mid-third-century Babylonian teacher, but in the *Zohar* he appears as a contemporary of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai (who lived in the second century). See below, [p. 164](#), [n. 69](#).

On Hamnuna and *nuna* (fish), see *Zohar* 1:6a; 3:187a; *Tosafot, Qiddushin* 25a, s.v. *hamnuna karnuna*.

363. The oath of King David... his sword... When David said *with the sword*, he wasn't referring to a method of execution but rather to how he always swore an oath: with his special sword, engraved with the name *YHVH*.

On David's sword, see Gaster, *The Exempla of the Rabbis*, 128.

364. Solomon inferred something else... From David's oath that he would not kill Shimei *with the sword*, Solomon reasoned as follows: "Shimei cursed my father with words, so I will have him killed with words," namely, by the power of the name *YHVH*, known as "the Explicit Name."

According to 1 Kings 2:46, King Solomon instructed Benaiah son of Yehoiada to kill Shimei. On Shimei's being killed with the name *YHVH*, see *Nitsotsei Orot; Nitsotsei Zohar*. On Moses killing an Egyptian by the power of the Divine Name, see *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 10; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:30.

365. Since David swore to him... How could David swear not to kill Shimei and then instruct Solomon to kill him? Well, the fact is that David not kill him himself. As to why David did not forgive Shimei, that was because David was the heart of Israel, and just as the heart cannot bear any foreign particles or the slightest damage, so David,

even though he tried to bear Shimei's insulting behavior and curses, finally instructed Solomon to kill him.

The final sentence apparently means that since David was linked to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), She Herself was provoked by Shimei's assault on the king, so She caused David to avenge the deed.

On the simile of a serpent, see BT *Yoma* 22b-23a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yehotsadak: "Any scholar who does not avenge and bear a grudge like a serpent, is no scholar." See *Zohar* 2:74b; *ZH* 79a (*MhN, Rut*).

"Members" renders שׁיפין (*shaifin*). Deriving from a root meaning "to smooth, rub, slip," שׁיפא (*shaifa*) signifies "limb" in the *Zohar*, perhaps based on the Talmudic expression (BT *Sotah* 7b) על איבריה לשפא (*al eivreih le-shafa*), "each limb entered its socket"—"slipping" into place—or "...entered the casket." See *Arukh*, s.v. *shaf*; Rashi, ad loc., and on Job 33:21, citing *Hullin* 42b; *Zohar* 3:170a; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 227.

The verse in Kings (spoken by David to Solomon regarding Shimei) reads in full: *Now do not leave him unpunished, for you are a wise man and you will know what to do to him; bring his gray hair down to Sheol in blood.* For the idiom of heart and mouth being in accord, see M *Terumot* 3:8; BT *Pesaḥim* 63a.

366. For You do not desire that I should give sacrifice... How can this be, when God commanded sacrifices? The explanation is that sacrifices must be offered appropriately only to the name *YHVH* (which expresses Compassion), not to the name *Elohim* (expressing Judgment). Since throughout this psalm David was addressing *Elohim* (vv. 3, 12, 16, 19), he could say *You do not desire... sacrifice*, but rather the offering of a broken and contrite heart.

On sacrifices being directed exclusively to *YHVH*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 143; BT *Menaḥot* 110a; Naḥmanides on

Leviticus 1:9; *Zohar* 1:247b; 3:5a; *ZH* 3d (*MhN*), 18c (*MhN*), 19c (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 287.

On *YHVH* and *Elohim* as signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 26; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15; 33:3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:2; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 56:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:6; 6:1–3.

The passage in Psalms concludes: *A broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not spurn.* On this psalm, see above, [note 345](#).

[367.](#) whoever has a bad dream... A bad dream indicates that the dreamer is under the sway of Divine Judgment, associated with *Elohim*; so he must bring an offering appropriate to *Elohim*, namely, sadness and *a broken spirit*. If he does, his sadness fulfills the dream, and he need not fear any further consequences.

See BT *Berakhot* 55a. in the name of Rav Hisda: “A bad dream—its sadness fulfills it. A good dream—its joy fulfills it.”

[368.](#) Enhance Zion with Your favor... The word *enhance* implies that Zion (identified with the Temple) already has goodness that is waiting to be enhanced. This, in fact, is true because God has prepared (or is preparing) a heavenly Temple that will not be completed perfectly until the time of Redemption, when *favor* arouses above and God kindles all the lights. Then the Temple will descend, fully enhanced, to Jerusalem.

On God building the Temple with His own hands, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:17; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 15:17; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 11; *Yalqut Shim’oni*, Psalms 848; Rashi on Exodus 15:17; idem, *Rosh ha-Shanah* 30a, s.v. *la tserikha*; *Sukkah* 41a, s.v. *i namei*; *Zohar* 1:114a (*MhN*); 3:221a. Cf. *Zohar* 2:240a–b. On the heavenly Jerusalem, see also Revelation 21:2; *Targum Yonatan*, Psalms 122:3; BT *Ta’anit* 5a; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 1.

The verse in Psalms reads: הִטִּיבָה בְרִצּוֹנָךְ (*Heitivah virtsonekha*), *Show goodness in Your favor, to Zion*. Here, the verb *heitivah* is interpreted according to later Hebrew: *enhance*.

The phrase “with goodness will He tend” renders יִטִּיב (*yeitiv*), which plays on Exodus 30:7: בְּהִטִּיבוּ (*be-heitivo*), *when he tends, the lamps*. Cf. Vol. 3, p. 387, n. 428.

369. He begins with the external... Normally, God first fashions the outer layer (or shell) to protect the subsequent inner layer (or kernel). Although the kernel emerges only later, it arises in divine thought first. Whereas the protective shell derives from the demonic realm (the Other Side), the kernel derives from the realm of holiness. Once the kernel (or fruit) has matured, the shell is discarded.

“Righteous One of the world” designates *Yesod*, who channels the divine flow to *Shekhinah* and, through Her, to the worlds below. See above, [note 215](#).

On the shell preceding the kernel, see *Zohar* 3:185a-b; Farber-Ginat, “Qelippah Qodemet li-Fri.” On the image of shell and kernel, see *Zohar* 1:19b-20a; 2:140b, 233b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 156-60; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 239; Altmann, *Studies*, 172-79; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 20-27; Vol. 1, p. 151, n. 341.

In the Masoretic text, the verse from Job reads: *What he will prepare, the righteous will wear*. The reading here matches the quotation in BT *Bava Qamma* 119a, *Bava Metsi’a* 61b.

370. Here, however, with the building of the Temple... As for the heavenly Temple that will descend to earth at the time of Redemption, both kernel and shell are divine. Therefore God begins with the kernel, building the Temple itself (represented by *Zion*); then He constructs the shell, *the walls of Jerusalem*. These walls are constituted by divine fire, not by the Other Side.

371. Israel is the kernel of the world... Just as the kernel precedes the shell in divine thought, so Israel arose in God's mind before all other nations. And just as the shell precedes the kernel in formation, so the rulers of Edom reigned *before any king reigned over the Children of Israel*. However, in the time of Redemption, Israel (the kernel) will precede all other nations (the shell) and yet be fully protected.

On Israel as the kernel and the nations as the shell, see Judah Halevi, *Kuzari*, 4:23. On Israel arising in God's thought before Creation, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:4; *Midrash Tehillim* 93:3. On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:177a-b, 223b; 2:111a (above, [note 283](#)); below, [p. 546](#), [n. 4](#); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 65-67. 134-35.

372. Then you will desire sacrifices of righteousness... Previously offerings could be brought only to the name *YHVH*, because if they were brought to the name *Elohim*, then other, demonic forces—known as אַחֲרִים אֱלֹהִים (*elohim aḥerim*), “other gods”—would have participated and drawn sustenance. However, in the time of Redemption offerings will be brought to the complete name *YHVH Elohim*, since all false gods will be eliminated.

See above, [note 366](#). On *YHVH Elohim* as the “complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; cf. 12:15.

373. See now that I, I am He... The word *now* demonstrates that never before did holiness reign alone.

374. until now, death came from the Other Side... From the Angel of Death, a manifestation of the demonic force. However, on the eve of Redemption anyone living will be killed by God Himself and then immediately resurrected.

On the demonic nature of the Angel of Death, see BT *Bava Batra* 16a, in the name of Resh Lakish: “Satan, the evil impulse, and the Angel of Death are one and the same.” “Filth” characterizes the demonic serpent, as in BT *Yevamot* 103b.

375. Ten things were created on the eve of Sabbath... Various supernatural phenomena, fashioned by God in the closing moments of the six days of Creation. Among these were three elements of the Ten Commandments: the tablets, the letters to be engraved on the tablets, and the unique engraving of the letters, which miraculously could be read from both the front and the back of the tablets.

See *M Avot* 5:6; *Zohar* 1:120b. On the miraculous engraving of the letters, see Vol. 4, pp. 469–70 and nn. 369, 373.

376. the complete Name is not mentioned... Throughout the first chapter of Genesis, the only divine name that appears is *Elohim*. Then after Creation was entirely completed, “the complete Name,” *YHVH Elohim*, appears: *These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created, on the day that YHVH Elohim made earth and heaven* (Genesis 2:4).

The old man reasons that the name *Elohim* by itself applies to that which was created and completed before the beginning of the first Sabbath, including *the tablets, made by Elohim*. If the tablets had been fashioned anytime afterward, they would have been called *the tablets, made by YHVH Elohim*.

The last sentence apparently means: By the formation of the tablets, the world was firmly established, since the world is based on Torah. See *MmD* and below, [note 378](#).

On *YHVH Elohim* as “the complete Name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; cf. 12:15. Genesis 2:2 reads: *Elohim completed on the seventh day His work that He had done [or: made], and He ceased on the seventh day from all His work that He had done [or: made]*. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MIN*; *MmD*.

377. He smashed them... When Moses saw the Israelites worshiping the Golden Calf, he smashed the tablets, and the Ocean threatened to flood the world.

Exodus 32:20 reads in full: *He took the calf that they had made and burned it in fire and ground it until it was fine and scattered it over the face of the water and made the Children of Israel drink.*

[378.](#) Was not the world established solely by Torah of the tablets?... The world is based on Torah, and without it, reverts to chaos.

See *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1: “With her [namely, Torah], God sealed the Ocean, so that it would not inundate the world.... The world was established only upon the Torah.”

See *M Avot* 1:2; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1; and *BT Shabbat* 88a, in the name of Resh Lakish: “The blessed Holy One stipulated a condition with the works of Creation, saying to them: ‘If Israel accepts the Torah, you will endure. If not, I will return you to *chaos and void* (Genesis 1:2).’”

[379.](#) Look, all that they made is delivered to you!... Moses burnt the calf, ground it into fine dust, *and scattered it over the face of the water*—interpreted here as the waters of the Ocean. Thereby he delivered the idolatrous object to the threatening monster. Furthermore, at Moses’ command the Levites killed some three thousand Israelites, and others died in a plague (see Exodus 32:26–29, 35). However, the Ocean did not subside until Moses made the Israelites drink some of its water mixed with the dust of the calf.

According to a rabbinic tradition, when Moses made the Israelites drink the water mixed with the dust of the calf, he was testing them to determine who had betrayed the Torah by worshiping the Golden Calf, as a suspected straying wife is tested by being made to drink a potion.

See *Tosefta Avodah Zarah* 3:19; *JT Sotah* 3:4, 19a; *Avodah Zarah* 3:3, 42d; *BT Yoma* 66b, *Avodah Zarah* 43b–44a; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 26; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 10; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:48; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 45. On the straying wife, see Numbers 5:11–31; above, [note 291](#). For the full verse in Exodus 32:20, see above, [note 377](#).

380. For in that desert there was no water... Moses scattered the dust of the Golden Calf *over the face of the water*. Since there was no water in the desert (as demonstrated by the verse in Numbers 20), Moses must have scattered the dust over the face of the Ocean. One might imagine that Miriam's well, which miraculously accompanied the Israelites through the desert, provided the water for Moses, but he would never have cast the impure residue of the Golden Calf into those pure waters.

The wording "Furthermore, they did not yet have it" is puzzling because traditionally Miriam's well appeared before the giving of the Torah and the incident of the Golden Calf. Eventually, when Miriam died toward the end of the forty years of wandering, the well disappeared, afterward reappearing through the merit of Moses and Aaron. Conceivably, the old man is playing further with the midrashic reading of the verse in Numbers 21: *from the desert* מַתָּנָה (*mattanah*), *a gift*—namely, the gift of the well. In the Midrash this interpretation applies retroactively to the original appearance of Miriam's well before the giving of the Torah, but the old man may be playfully suggesting that since that verse appears only after Miriam's death (which is recorded in Numbers 20:1), the midrashic reading *from the desert, a gift* pertains only then—as if the well appeared for the first time only long after the incident of the Golden Calf! For several other interpretations, see *MM*; *MIN*; *MmD*.

The final sentence demonstrates by analogy that the phrase *over the face of* implies the ocean, given the context in Genesis 1:2: *The earth was waste and empty, with darkness over the face of the abyss and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters*.

On Miriam's well, see Ginzberg, *Legends*, 3:50–54 and corresponding notes. On its disappearance and reappearance, see *Seder Olam Rabbah* 9–10; *Tosefta Sotah* 11:8; *Mekhilta*, *Vayassa* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus

16:35; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 305; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 34:8; BT *Ta'anit* 9a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:5; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:116, n. 664; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 4:876, n. 36.

The full verse in Numbers 21 reads: *Well, dug by princes, delved by the people's nobles, with a scepter, with their staves, and from the desert מתנה (mattanah), to [or: of] Mattanah.* For the midrashic reading *from the desert mattanah, a gift* (as referring to the well), see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 21:18; *Tanḥuma, Huqqat* 21; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat* 48; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:26; Rashi and *Leqaḥ Tov* on Numbers 21:18.

The full verse in Numbers 20 reads: *Why did you take us out of Egypt to bring us to this wretched place, not a place of seed or fig or vine or pomegranate, and no water to drink?* See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:5; *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qedoshim* 7. According to Deuteronomy 9:21, Moses flung the dust of the Golden Calf *into the wadi that came down from the mountain*, which indicates that, in fact, there was water.

381. חרות (*Ḥarut*), **Engraved...** חירות (*ḥeirut*), **freedom...** See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:3: “חרות (*Ḥarut*), *Engraved, upon the tablets.* Do not read: *Ḥarut, Engraved*, but rather: חירות (*Ḥeirut*), *Freedom.* Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Neḥemiah, and the Rabbis. Rabbi Yehudah said, ‘Freedom from the Angel of Death.’ Rabbi Neḥemiah said, ‘Freedom from kingdoms.’ The Rabbis said, ‘Freedom from suffering.’”

The old man adds that *ḥarut, engraved*, alludes to *Binah*, known as “the World that is Coming.” She is also known as Jubilee, the source of liberation, so *ḥeirut, freedom*, inheres in Her.

If the Israelites had not sinned by worshiping the Golden Calf and causing Moses to smash the tablets, the history of the world would have been entirely different and

Israel's future would not have been tainted by suffering and exile. Rather, they would have been angelic beings.

On *harut* and *heirut*, see *Avot* 6:2; BT *Eruvin* 54a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:6; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46; *Tanḥuma, Egev* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 9; *Shemot Rabbah* 41:7; *Zohar* 1:37b, 63b, 131b-132a, 152b; 2:45b, 183a; 3:6b, 176a. On *Binah* as "the World that is Coming," see above, [note 59](#).

According to the Bible, every seventh year is a Sabbatical, during which the land must lie fallow and at the end of which all debts are remitted (Leviticus 25:1-24; Deuteronomy 15:1-3). After seven Sabbaticals comes the Jubilee, proclaimed every fifty years, when slaves are released and land reverts to its original owner (Leviticus 25:8-55). In Kabbalah the Jubilee symbolizes *Binah*, who is characterized by the number fifty, based on a statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a): "Fifty gates of בינה (*binah*), understanding, were created in the world, all of which were given to Moses except for one, as is said: *You made him little less than God* (Psalms 8:6)."

According to rabbinic tradition, all of Israel's subsequent suffering, including the destruction of the Temple and their exile, is partly a retribution for the sin of the Golden Calf. See BT *Sanhedrin* 102a.

On Israel being deprived of angelic status due to this sin, see *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 9; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 320; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:1; 11:3; BT *Avodah Zarah* 5a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 8:1; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 47; *Tanḥuma, Egev* 8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:24; *Shemot Rabbah* 32:1, 7.

382. *The tablets, made by Elohim...* In primordial time, immediately preceding the first Sabbath and before the first mention of "the complete name," *YHVH Elohim*. See above, [note 376](#).

383. *המה (Hemmah), They were...* The verse reads: *The tablets, made by Elohim המה (hemmah), they were*. The old man

rearranges the letters of הַמָּה (hemmah) into מֵהֵ הֵ (me-he he), “from *he, he*,” namely, from *Shekhinah* and *Binah*, each of whom is symbolized by one of the two *hes* in the name יְהוָה (YHVH). The tablets derived from these two *sefirot*: their physical form reflected the fullness of *Shekhinah*, while their essence conveyed the freedom of *Binah*. See above, [note 381](#).

[384. black fire on white fire...](#) According to Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish, the Torah given by God at Sinai was inscribed in black fire upon white fire. Here, the black and white fires may allude, respectively, to *Shekhinah* and *Binah*, and may be implied by the double wording *the writing, written*.

See JT *Sheqalim* 6:2, 49d; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11; *Devarim Rabbah* 3:12; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 89; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 90:12; *Zohar* 2:84a, 226b; 3:132a (*IR*), 154b.

[385. Written by Elohim, הוּא \(hu\), it was...](#) *Elohim* often refers to *Shekhinah*, while the pronoun *hu, it* (or *he*), alludes to the hidden realm of *Binah*, who cannot be addressed directly (in the second person) but only indirectly (in the third).

In its simple sense, the verse in Numbers means *The Levite, he alone, will serve [at the Tent of Meeting]*. Here, it is understood as *The Levite* (symbolizing *Gevurah*) *will serve hu, he* (namely, *Binah*). See *Zohar* 1:154b; 2:221b; 3:171a, 178a-b, 183b. On *Binah* as *hu*, see also *Zohar* 1:67a, 156b, 157b (*ST*), 158b, 233a, 241a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 98. Although *Binah* is often pictured as the Divine Mother, She is also known as World of the Male. See above, [note 132](#).

[386. \(Ḥarut\), Engraved... Jubilee proclaims חֵירוּת \(ḥeirut\), freedom...](#) See above, [note 381](#), and Leviticus 25:10: *You shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim a release [or: freedom] in the land to all of its inhabitants. A jubilee it shall be for you, and you shall go back each man to his holding and each man to his clan, you shall go back.*

387. Until here, Companions... The old man concludes his presentation, assuring Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose that they will be “free” from demonic power. (See above, [note 381](#).) He finally reveals his name: Yeiva Sava—that is, Yeiva the Elder (or old man).

Historically, Rav Yeiva Sava was a Babylonian *amora* of the third century. See BT *Pesahim* 103b, *Bava Qamma* 49b; *Zohar* 1:47b, 79b, 117b, 225a; 2:6a, 60b, 206b; 3:7b, 155b, 289a (*IZ*), 290a (*IZ*), 295a (*IZ*).

“To arouse” renders לְאַתְעֵרָא (*le-it'ara*), “to arouse, elicit the (latent or potential) meaning, expound.” See above, [note 36](#), and at [note 97](#).

388. Set me as a seal upon your heart... This verse from Song of Songs conveys the love between *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) and the blessed Holy One. She wants Her image to remain engraved in His heart, even if She wanders in exile with Her people.

See *Zohar* 1:244b-245a; 2:11a; 3:54b; *TZ* 22, 65b. On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 68](#).

389. His left hand... *Shekhinah* is embraced by *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, the divine right and left hands or arms.

390. For love is fierce as death... So is Her love for the blessed Holy One. *Shekhinah* is known as Eternal Love, yet also as the dwelling place of death. If She is separated from the other *sefirot* by human sin, the vivifying flow of emanation is cut off and death dominates, channeled through Her.

On *Shekhinah* as Eternal Love, see *Zohar* 3:263b (*Piq*). On the link between *Shekhinah* and death, see *Zohar* 1:12b, 35b-36a, 51a-52a, 53b, 209a; 3:157a. Cf. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 189-92; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:373-79; Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 249, 251-54.

391. these names stem from that side Referring either to *jealousy* and *Sheol*, or to *love* and *jealousy*, which

derive from *Shekhinah*.

See the preceding note. On the essential role of jealousy in love, see *Zohar* 1:245a; 3:54b. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

392. *Its sparks are sparks of fire...* Angelic powers issuing from *Shekhinah*, whose fire derives from a higher sefirotic flame.

In the verse from Song of Songs, שלהבתיה (*shalhevetyah*) appears as a single word, with יה (*yah*) constituting a suffix denoting intensity; in its simple sense, the word apparently means *an intense* [or: *blazing*] *flame*. Here, the old man construes שלהבתיה (*shalhevet Yah*) as two words, meaning *a flame of Yah*, a divine flame. *Yah* refers specifically to *Binah* (or *Hokmah* and *Binah*), from whom issues the passionate flame of *Gevurah*, the divine left hand, which arouses the love of *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel) for the blessed Holy One, stimulating union.

See *Zohar* 1:245a; 3:54b. On the angelic gems of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:149a-b (*ST*). *Its sparks* renders רשפיה (*reshafeha*), whose precise meaning is unclear; the word רשף (*reshef*) has been understood here variously as “flame, flash, spark, dart, glow, coal.” Cf. רצף (*retsef*) and רצפה (*ritspah*), “hot stone, glowing coal”; Ibn Ezra on Song of Songs 8:6; Galante.

393. *When they reached Rabbi Shim'on...* When they rejoined their master and described their encounter, he was surprised that they had emerged unscathed, given how they failed to recognize the true identity of the donkey-driver and how Rabbi Yose in particular had insulted him.

See above, pp. 3-4. On the old man's prowess, see above at [note 249](#). On the figure of the lion, see Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 48, 92.

394. *He proclaimed for them...* Applying these verses to them. This concludes *Sava de-Mishpatim*.

1. [121a] The following passages (continuing to [p. 183](#)) constitute the rest of the commentary on *Parashat Mishpatim* in the main body of the *Zohar*. The material from *Zohar* 2:114a (bottom) to 121a (bottom) belongs to *Ra'aya Meheimna*, a later stratum of the *Zohar*. The three-line passage near the bottom of 2:114a does not appear in the first editions of the *Zohar* and apparently derives from the commentary of Bahya ben Asher. See Bahya ben Asher on Exodus 22:23; ZH 60a; Gottlieb, *Ha-Qabbalah be-Khitvei Rabbenu Bahya ben Asher*, 171-72; Scholem; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 91-92.

2. People of holiness... The verse concludes: *to the dog you shall fling it.*

3. He did not withdraw immense love from them... God's love for Israel expresses itself more and more intensely. The noun *קֹדֶשׁ* (*qodesh*), *holiness*, reflects a higher level than the adjective *קָדוֹשׁ* (*qadosh*), *holy*, as explained below.

The expression "He did not withdraw love from them before..." imitates the language of a rabbinic parable. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11: "Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai asked Rabbi El'azar son of Rabbi Yose, 'Perhaps you have heard from your father the meaning of *upon the crown with which his mother crowned him* (Song of Songs 3:11)?' He replied, 'Yes.' He asked him, 'How [did he explain it]?' He replied, 'Like a king who had an only daughter whom he loved lavishly, calling her "my daughter." He went on [literally, He did not move from] loving her until he called her "my sister." He went on loving her until he called her "my mother." So the blessed Holy One loved Israel lavishly and called them "My daughter."... He went on loving them until He called them "My sister."... He went on loving them until He called them "My mother."...' Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai stood and kissed him on his head, saying, 'If I have come just to hear this interpretation from your mouth, it is enough for me!'"

See above, [p. 45](#), [n. 126](#); *Zohar* 3:296b–297a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 312. The verse in Exodus 19 reads: *As for you, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.* The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God, and you has YHVH chosen to be a treasured people to Him of all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

4. Wisdom comes מַאֲיִן (me-ayin), from nothingness... Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret*, which emanates from *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), known as Primordial Torah and קִדְשׁ (*qodesh*), Holiness. *Hokhmah* itself emanates from the highest *sefirah*, *Keter*, known as Holy of Holies.

Keter represents the undifferentiated and incomprehensible essence of God, and is called אֵין (*ayin*), “Nothingness,” the divine no-thingness. Normally, the verse in Job reads as a rhetorical question: *Wisdom, מַאֲיִן (me-ayin), whence, does she come?* Now, this verse yields a mystical description of the first two *sefirot*: *Wisdom comes me-ayin, from nothingness.*

On the relation between Torah and Wisdom, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:5, in the name of Rabbi Avin: “Torah is an unripe fruit of supernal Wisdom.” See *Zohar* 1:47b; 2:62a, 85a; 3:81a, 182a, 192b; *ZH* 15b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 106–8, 326–30.

On *ayin*, see Matt, “*Ayin*: The Concept of Nothingness in Jewish Mysticism.” On the reinterpretation of *me-ayin*, see *ibid.*, pp. 75, 96, n. 36; *Zohar* 2:83a (Vol. 4, pp. 457–58, n. 328).

5. Jubilee is likewise called Holiness... Jubilee symbolizes *Binah*, the Divine Mother who is married to *Hokhmah* and who shares His name, Holiness (as indicated in the verse from Leviticus).

Israel symbolizes *Tif'eret*, whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). Consequently, Israel reflects the qualities of *Tif'eret*'s parents, *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, who are both called

Holiness. Since “Israel is composed of” both these divine parents, the people of Israel is called *people of holiness*.

On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, [p. 135](#), [n. 381](#). The verse in Leviticus reads: *It [or: She] is a jubilee; it [or: she] shall be* קדוּשָׁה (*qodesh*), *holiness [or: holy], for you*.

6. At first, holy, and now holiness... First, Israel was called *a holy nation*, and afterward *people of holiness*. See above, [note 3](#).

Rabbi Yose explains that the term *holiness* alludes to *Hokhmah* and *Binah* near the top of the sefirotic ladder, while *holy* alludes to the lower sefirotic couple, *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized respectively by *Zion* and *Jerusalem*.

7. What we learned about People of holiness... Namely, that in this verse *holiness* alludes to *Hokhmah*. See above at [notes 3-6](#).

8. He replied... Rabbi Abba confirms that *holiness* pertains to Israel and alludes to *Hokhmah* by quoting the verse from Jeremiah, which identifies Israel as *holiness* and calls them ראשית (*reshit*), *first (fruits) of, His harvest*. The word *reshit*, *first [or: beginning] of*, represents the primordial point of Wisdom, as shown by the phrase in Psalm 111: ראשית חכמה (*reshit hokhmah*), *the beginning of wisdom*.

Because the people of Israel are called *holiness*, they are forbidden to eat *flesh in the field torn by beasts*, which is tainted by demonic forces deriving from harsh Judgment, on the left side.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *Israel is* קדוּשָׁה (*qodesh*), *holy [literally holiness] to YHVH*. On this verse, see *Zohar* 3:296b-297a. On its connection with the verse from Exodus, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 311-13.

9. To the dog you shall fling it... The *dog* represents the demonic force, which has tainted this *flesh*.

On the demonic nature of the dog, see *Zohar* 1:242b; 2:65a, 163b; 3:25a, 32b, 63a-b (*Piq*), 155a, 211a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 313. Cf. above, [p. 103](#), [n. 295](#). On

the dog as the fiercest animal, see BT *Beitsah* 25b. On the dog as the most impudent animal, see *Shemot Rabbah* 42:9.

10. When a carcass is mentioned... In the verse in Deuteronomy, נבלה (*nevelah*), *carcass*, refers to the body of an animal that has died of natural causes. However, in rabbinic literature and here in the *Zohar*, the term refers as well to the carcass of an animal that has become unfit through improper slaughtering.

Again, Rabbi Abba distinguishes between *holy* and *holiness*. The latter term, representing a higher level of sanctity, appears appropriately in the context of *flesh in the field torn by beasts*, to balance the severe demonic forces that have tainted this flesh. Faulty slaughtering, on the other hand, is caused simply by a ritual mistake of an Israelite, not by a demonic power, so in this context the term *holy* appears, representing a lower level of sanctity.

The final sentence apparently refers to the various types of *nevelah*, both biblical (the body of an animal that has died of natural causes) and the extended rabbinic (due to different types of faulty slaughtering). For various interpretations of the passage, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MM*; *Nefesh David*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

11. Here is written... Rabbi Abba just explained why the Torah mentions *holiness* in the context of *flesh... torn by beasts* (in Exodus), and *holy* in the context of a *carcass* (in Deuteronomy). However, Rabbi Shim'on wonders why the verse in Deuteronomy reads *to YHVH your God* instead of *to Me*, as in the verse in Exodus. He explains that the verse in Exodus, which mentions *holiness*, appropriately reads: לי (*li*), *to Me*, apparently understood as ל"י (*le-yod*), *to yod*, namely to the primordial point of *Hokhmah* ("above, above"), symbolized by this letter and called *holiness*. The verse in Deuteronomy, which mentions *holy*, reads: ליהוה אלהיך (*la-YHVH Elohekha*), *to YHVH your God*, alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Elohim (God)* and *holy*.

As indicated earlier (see above, [note 6](#)), the verse in Isaiah also links *holy* with *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *Jerusalem*.

In the verse from Jeremiah, the phrase ראשית תבואתה (*reshit tevu'atoh*), *first fruits of His harvest*, alludes to both *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. *Reshit*, *beginning of*, alludes to the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*. *Tevu'atoh* is spelled unusually, ending with the pronominal suffix ה (he), instead of ו (vav); the *he*—often a feminine marker—alludes to the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The divine couple *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* share the name *holiness*, which appears in both this verse and the verse from Deuteronomy: *People of holiness shall you be to Me*.

See above, [notes 5](#), [8](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MmD*. On the spelling of תבואתה (*tevu'atoh*), see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 10; *Zohar* 1:226b; 3:297a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 89.

[12. Israel is holiness...](#) Rabbi Yitshak wonders how being *held guilty* connects specifically to Israel's *holiness*.

The full verse reads: *Israel is holiness to YHVH, first fruits of His harvest. All who devour him will be held guilty; disaster will befall them—declares YHVH*.

[13. All who devour him... corresponds to...](#) Rabbi Shim'on links the verse in Jeremiah to two verses in Leviticus that mention *holiness*, namely the sacred donation offered to the priest. Leviticus 22:10 reads: *No outsider* [i.e., one who is neither a servant or a family member of a priest] *shall eat a sacred donation* [literally *holiness*]. Leviticus 22:14 reads in full: *If a man eats the sacred donation* [literally *holiness*] *inadvertently, he shall add a fifth of its value to it and give the sacred donation to the priest*.

Rabbi Shim'on interprets the first verse to mean that *no outsider* [i.e., no foreign nation] *shall eat of holiness* [i.e., shall harm Israel]. The second verse implies that even

if another nation harms Israel *inadvertently*, it will be held *guilty*.

See *Zohar* 3:297a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 89, 312. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 81:1.

14. If I have sat here just to hear this word... Similar exclamations appear in rabbinic literature and often in the *Zohar*. See BT *Berakhot* 16a, 24b; *Shabbat* 41a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 6:2; *Qohelet Zuta* 5:17; *Zohar* 1:2a, 129a (*MhN*), 148b, 164b, 235b, 240a; 2:99a, 193b; 3:26a, 121a, 203a.

15. He said to him, “Master... Rabbi Yitsḥak asks Rabbi Shim’on a further question. If *holiness* alludes to a higher rung than *holy*, why does the “lower” word—*holy*—appear in the threefold formula in Isaiah? This formula, after all, signifies the unification of the sefirotic triad *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, which is total perfection.

On the significance of the threefold formula from Isaiah, see *Bahir* 89 (128); Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 56–57; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 149–52; *Zohar* 1:18b; 2:52a; 3:93a (*Piq*), 190b, 297a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 90 (and Wolfson’s note); idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 103–5 (131–34); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:969.

16. When they join as one... Each member of the triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret* is known as *holy*; but when they unite, they become a “house” or throne for *Binah*, who is *holiness*, and they now share Her name. When Israel attains true faith, becoming linked with the *sefirot* (the mystical realm of faith), they also attain *holiness* and are called by this name.

17. A legionnaire asked Rabbi Abba... The Roman soldier (surprisingly well-versed in the Torah) assumes that טרף (*teref*), “what is tom (by beasts), prey, food,” is fully synonymous with טרפה (*terefah*), “what is torn (by beasts).” If so, the verse in Psalms should read *Teref He has given to the*

dogs, since God would not give “what is torn by beasts” to those who revere Him.

“Legionnaire” renders לגיון (*ligyon*), derived from Greek *legeon* and Latin *legio*, “legion.” In rabbinic literature, the term applies to a legion of troops or a legate, and here, to a soldier or officer. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:6; *Zohar* 1:166b–167a; 2:125a, 193a.

18. Be precise!... Rabbi Abba explains that the word *teref* here in Psalms means *food*, and should not be confused with *terefah*, “what is tom (by beasts).” Yet, even if one claims that, in fact, the two terms are synonymous, the wording in Psalms is still justified: *Teref*, [the laws concerning] *what is torn by beasts*, *He has given to those who revere Him*—God has given this demanding law to Israel alone, not to those who fail to revere Him or His commandments.

“Be precise!” renders דקיא (*daiqa*), “precise,” i.e., “Look at the precise wording.” This reading is preserved in the manuscripts reflecting an earlier version (M4, P2, V5, V7, and apparently C9), as well as in Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 93d. Other manuscripts and the printed versions read ריקא (*reiqa*), “empty-headed one.”

19. Men of holiness... Why... ? Rabbi El’azar wonders, apparently, how the mundane word *men* can be paired with the heavenly word *holiness*. He explains that *holiness* refers to *Binah*, also known as Jubilee, who liberated the Israelites from Egypt. Consequently, they became Her children and Her men: *Men of holiness shall you be to Me*.

On *Binah* as Jubilee and the source of liberation, see above, [pp. 135–36](#), [n. 381](#). On Israel being liberated from Egypt “from the aspect of Jubilee,” see *Zohar* 1:21b; 2:43b (*Piq*), 46a, 83b, 85b.

The verse in Leviticus reads: *It [or: She] is a jubilee; it [or: she] shall be holy [literally holiness] for you*. See above at [note 5](#). The verse in Exodus reads: *Men [or: People] of holiness shall you be to Me...* See above at [note 2](#).

20. The blessed Holy One said this... *Binah* Herself, known as the blessed Holy One, called Israel Her *men* and Her children. Consequently, they became worthy of being called *brothers* of *Tif'eret*, who is son of *Binah* (and likewise known as the blessed Holy One). Afterward, they attained the name *holiness* itself, not just *men of holiness*, indicating that they had risen to the level of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*.

The verse in Psalms is addressed to Jerusalem. According to a midrashic interpretation, it is sung by God, who refers to the Israelites as *my brothers and friends*. See *Mekhilta, Beshallah* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:15; JT *Berakhot* 9:1, 13b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:3; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 5; *Zohar* 2:55b.

On the connection between the verses in Jeremiah and Leviticus, see above, [notes 12-13](#).

21. one is forbidden to call his fellow a shameful name... Or invent an insulting nickname; all the more so, to slander him.

See BT *Bava Metsi'a* 58b: "All who descend to Hell [eventually] ascend, except for three, who descend and do not ascend: one who fornicates with a married woman, one who shames his fellow publicly, and one who calls his fellow by an insulting nickname."

22. Keep your tongue from evil... *Leshon ha-ra* (evil speech, gossip, slander) arouses evil powers above and thereby inflicts disease.

See JT *Sotah* 2:1, 17d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:1-2; BT *Arakhin* 15b; *Tanḥuma, Metsora* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 5; *Zohar* 2:264b-265a (*Heikh*); 3:47a, 53a; *Nefesh David*. The verse in Psalms concludes: *and your lips from speaking deceit*.

23. Whoever calls his fellow something he is not... His false insult generates his own seemingly undeserved punishment.

See BT *Bava Metsi'a* 71a, in the name of Rabbi Yose: "If a person calls his fellow wicked, he [i.e., the one called

wicked] descends against his life.” The idiom יורד עמו לחייו (*yored immo le-ḥayyav*), literally “descends with him to his life,” has been interpreted and rendered variously: “(takes offense to the degree that he) pursues and torments him all his life,” “makes his life miserable,” “hounds him to death,” “cherishes animosity against him,” “strives against his livelihood,” “persecutes him to deprive him of his livelihood.”

Certain medieval commentators interpreted לחייו (*le-ḥayyav*), “to his life,” as *leḥayav*, “his cheeks,” understanding the idiom as “he strikes him on his cheeks.” Here, the *Zohar* plays on this interpretation: “... is cast down into Hell ונחתין ליה לעלעוי (*ve-naḥtin leih le-il’oi*), and they bring him down to his cheeks,” i.e., he is struck on his jaws. The word *il’oi* actually means “his ribs,” but in the *Zohar* it can also mean “his jaws.” (See *Zohar* 2:27b.)

See BT *Qiddushin* 28a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *rasha yored immo le-ḥayyav*; idem on *Bava Metsi’a* 71a, s.v. *yored immo le-ḥayyav*; Bezalel Ashkenazi, *Shitah Mequbbetset, Ketubbot* 50a (in the name of the disciples of Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi); Simeon ben Tsemah Duran, *She’elot u-Tshuvot* 3:204; Galante; *Nitsotsei Orot; Zohorei Ya’bets; Nefesh David; Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem. Cf. above, [note 21](#).

24. Surely, he is not guilty! How do we know?... What is the biblical proof that there is a significant difference between “x” and “like x”?

If the verse in Lamentations read *YHVH was an enemy* (against Israel), rather than *like an enemy*, then the people would have been totally annihilated. Similarly, Jerusalem is *like a widow*, not actually widowed or abandoned by God. These midrashic interpretations appear in *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:3, in the name of Rabbi Abba son of Kahana. See BT *Ta’anit* 20a.

25. From here it is proven—the essence of all... Rabbi Hiyya quotes a different verse to prove the significance of the word *like*. This example is the most

essential, since it demonstrates that God has no human form—not even *the appearance of a human*, only *an image like the appearance of a human*.

26. Like an apple tree... In Song of Songs, the maiden compares her beloved to an apple tree. The Midrash interprets the entire biblical book as a love song between the Assembly of Israel and her divine beloved. From a kabbalistic perspective, Assembly of Israel signifies not only the people of Israel but also their divine counterpart, *Shekhinah*, who sings to *Tif'eret*, the blessed Holy One. *Tif'eret* is *like an apple* because He combines the respective colors of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*: white, red, and green, corresponding to the white of the apple's pulp, the red of the skin, and the green of the leaves.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:3; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush Shir ha-Shirim*, 489; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 36; *Zohar* 1:85a; 3:74a, 133b (*IR*), 286b-287a. Cf. Vol. 4, pp. 471-72, n. 381.

27. If I have come here just to hear these words... See above, [notes 3, 14](#).

28. The feeblest among them will be like David... King David was not actually feeble, but he considered himself *poor and needy*. Those who are *the feeblest* resemble him in some way.

The full verse in Zechariah reads: *On that day YHVH will shield the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the feeblest among them on that day will be like David, and the House of David like a divine being—like an angel of YHVH before them*. The full verse in Chronicles reads: *See, in my poverty I have prepared for the House of YHVH one hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and as for copper and iron, so much it cannot be weighed, and I have prepared wood and stone; to these you shall add more*. Cf. 1 Chronicles 29:2.

29. Why did the blessed Holy One see fit to give laws... The various laws contained in this Torah portion,

Mishpatim (Laws), which follows the account of the revelation at Mount Sinai. Rabbi Yose explains that the Torah was given from the side of *Gevurah* (Power) on the left. To balance the severity of this *sefirah*, God sought to ensure peace and harmony among Israel by giving them laws of justice. Thereby, Torah would manifest both the strictness of *Gevurah* and the grace of *Hesed*, and the world would endure through balanced Justice. This passage plays with דינין (*dinin*), “laws”; and דינא (*dina*), “law, judgment, justice.”

According to rabbinic tradition, the revelation to Moses at Sinai (and the revelation of at least the first two of the Ten Commandments to all of Israel) was conveyed מפי הגבורה (*mi-pi ha-gevurah*), “from the mouth of [divine] Power.” See *Mekhilta, Ba-ḥodesh* 9; *Sifrei*, Numbers 112; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:2; BT *Shabbat* 88b, *Makkot* 24a; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 11, *Vayelekh* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'ethannan* 6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 33:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:6. On Torah being given “from the side of *Gevurah*,” see *Zohar* 1:48b, 198a; 2:81a, 84a; 3:32a, 39a, 80b. On protecting the Torah, see *Shemot Rabbah* 30:3; and M *Avot* 1:1: “Make a fence around the Torah.”

On the world being established on, and created by, Justice, see M *Avot* 1:18; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 43; *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:1; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:13; *Zohar* 1:180b; 3:30b, 32a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 291, 345.

30. Render judgment in the morning... Rabbi Abba interprets the verse to mean that a judge must not eat before rendering judgment, so that he will be clearheaded. Otherwise, he is considered guilty of shedding blood, since he might convict one who is innocent.

Rabbi Abba is apparently playing with two meanings of the word דמים (*damim*): “blood” and “money.” A judge who convicts one who is innocent in a monetary case “has given his actual money to another.” How much worse in capital

cases, where a mistaken verdict would entail the actual shedding of innocent blood!

The original meaning of the verse in Leviticus, *You shall not eat over the blood*, apparently relates to a pagan rite of divination, in which a ritual meal was consumed over a pit or large receptacle containing blood, perhaps with the idea that spirits of the dead could be conjured up from the blood. See Nahmanides on the verse; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1685–86; Alter, *Five Books of Moses*, ad loc.

In *Sifra*, *Qedoshim* 6:1, 90b, Rabbi Akiva learns from this verse that when the Sanhedrin executes someone, its members must not taste anything that entire day. Here, Rabbi Abba concludes that judges must not render judgment even in monetary matters before eating, a view that may derive from a formulation by Jonah Gerondi.

See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 14b, *Sanhedrin* 63a; Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi, *Iggeret ha-Teshuvah* 2, p. 268; Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 19:26; Gottlieb, *Ha-Qabbalah be-Khitvei Rabbenu Baḥya ben Asher*, 270; Scholem; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 128, n. 104. Cf. *Mekhilta*, *Amaleq (Yitro)* 2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:13; BT *Shabbat* 10a. On the verse in Jeremiah, see Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 19:26; Radak on Jeremiah 21:12. Cf. *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer*, 16, pp. 313–14; BT *Sanhedrin* 7b.

The wording “it is not a true judgment... after eating and drinking” does not appear in the manuscripts reflecting an earlier version (C9, M4, P2, V5, V7), nor in Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 94a. This material may have been omitted due to homoeoteleuton (a scribal error caused by skipping from a word or phrase to the next occurrence of the identical word or phrase)—in this case, from “eating and drinking” to “eating and drinking.”

The phrase “it is not a true דִּינָא (*dina*), judgment,” can also be construed as “he is not a true דַּיָּאנָא (*dayyana*), judge,” though nearly all of the manuscripts that include these

lines read דִּינָה, which reads more naturally as *dina*, “judgment.”

31. Whoever falsifies judgment... Any judge who acquits the guilty or convicts the innocent ruins the divine adornments, which consist of *love, justice, and righteousness*. “All depend on one another” apparently means that the divine adornments and human justice are interdependent: human justice draws on divine wisdom, and God’s glory is manifested by human justice.

“Adornments (of)” renders תִּקְוֵי (tiqqunei), whose range of meaning includes “mending, adornment, enhancement, perfection, arrangement, array, configuration.” On the adornments, see the following section. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *For I am YHVH, who acts with love, justice, and righteousness on earth; for in these I delight—declares YHVH.*

32. These are the adornments of the Throne... God’s throne is established by human justice. For various interpretations, see the sources cited near the end of the preceding note.

33. It has been taught in the Secret of Secrets This section (extending below to [p. 158](#) at [n. 56](#)) describes the divine anatomy and aspects of *Din* (Judgment). It concludes by emphasizing the relationship between the divine adornments and Judgment, discussed above by Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yose.

The presentation of the divine anatomy displays affinities with *Idra Rabba* and *Idra Zuta*, and this section can be considered part of the *Idra* literature. Although kabbalists have sometimes identified it as *Idra de-Vei Mashkena* (The Assembly of the Dwelling), this is doubtful.

See Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 13a; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 215; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 101-2; idem, “Ha-Mashiah shel ha-Zohar,” 153-57 and n. 238; idem, *Studies in the Zohar*, 35-37, 177-78, n. 109; *MmD*; below, [p. 192](#), [n. 19](#). On earlier

traditions of the divine anatomy in *Shi'ur Qomah* (Measure of the [Divine] Stature), see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 16–18.

The title *Roza de-Razin* (Secret of Secrets) recalls the identical title of another section of the *Zohar* dealing with human physiognomy, printed in *Zohar* 2:70a–75a (RR); ZH 35b–37c (RR). On that composition and its relation to the pseudo-Aristotelian composition *Secretum secretorum* (which includes a section on physiognomy), see Vol. 4, pp. 392–93, n. 76.

The identity of the intended speaker here is not completely clear; it may be Rabbi Yose, or conceivably Rabbi Yehudah, or Rabbi Abba (see below, [note 58](#)). Bearing on this question is the precise wording here. The opening word appears as תניא (*tanya*), or תאנא (*tana*), “It has been taught,” in Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir* 94a; Cordovero’s text in *OY*; Galante (citing manuscripts); and *Derekh Emet* (ed. Hamiz). However, numerous manuscripts (C9, M4, M5, N47, O2, O3, O17, P2, R1, V5, V7), as well as the earliest printed editions (Mantua and Cremona), read instead: דתניא (*de-tanya*), “For it has been taught,” linking the following passage from the Secret of Secrets with the preceding words of Rabbi Yose and indicating that he is the speaker. Yet below (at [note 58](#)), it appears that Rabbi Abba has delivered the material from the Secret of Secrets. Apparently, the editing process (in the manuscripts themselves) was incomplete.

[34. Head of the King...](#) The King is *Tif'eret*, or the entire sefirotic configuration from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*, centered on *Tif'eret*. The royal head consists of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, who are arrayed in the qualities emanating from them, *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. The hairs of the head are various divine powers, which derive ultimately from the highest *sefirah*, *Keter*, known as the Holy Ancient One.

The Holy Ancient One is characterized by pure compassion and is described as אריך אנפין (*arikh anpin*), “long-suffering, slow to anger” (an expression deriving from

Exodus 34:6). See Ibn Ezra (short), ad loc.; *Zohar* 3:129a-b (*IR*). The configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod* is characterized by a tension between opposites: right and left, loving-kindness and judgment. Relative to the highest realm, this configuration is described as זעיר אנפין (*ze'eir anpin*), "short-tempered" (deriving from Proverbs 14:17). This lower configuration is the focus of this section of the *Zohar* (from the Secret of Secrets).

On the divine hair (not including the beard), see *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdTs*); 3:128b-129b (*IR*), 136a-b (*IR*), 293a-b (*IZ*). "Masters of qualities" renders מארי דמאדין (*marei de-maddin*), "masters of *maddin*," apparently deriving from (*mdd*), "to measure." Here, *maddin* probably refers to the מדות (*middot*), the divine "qualities, measurements," namely the *sefirot*. Cf. the expression שעור קומה (*shi'ur qomah*), "the measure of the [divine] stature." See *Zohar* 1:223b; 2:63a, 213b; 3:130b (*IR*), 138b (*IR*); Vol. 4, p. 150, n. 44; p. 395, n. 89.

"Masters of balance" refers to powers that balance the tendencies of right and left (*Hesed* and *Din*), and that weigh human actions on the cosmic scale. See *Zohar* 1:223b; 3:136a (*IR*), 141a (*IR*), 143a (*IR*), 144a (*IR*); 293a (*IZ*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:338.

"Trumpeting" renders יבא (*yabbava*), which means "trumpeting, wailing." See *Targum Onqelos*, Leviticus 23:24; Vol. 4, p. 252, n. 197.

35. Forehead of the King... This divine forehead expresses *Din* (Judgment), also known as *Gevurah*, whereas the higher forehead (of the Holy Ancient One) conveys pure Compassion and Favor, extending forgiveness.

The author may be playing with מצח (*metsah*), "forehead," and נצח (*netsah*), "victory," achieved through *Gevurah* (Power). "Favor" renders רצון (*ratson*), "will, desire, favor," a name of *Keter*. See *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdTs*); 3:129a (*IR*), 136b (*IR*), 288b (*IZ*), 293a (*IZ*).

36. Eyes of the King... The various powers of divine providence are called eyes, categorized according to the

colors of the eye.

See above, [pp. 123-24](#), [n. 351](#); *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdT*s); 3:129b-130a, 136b-137b (both *IR*), 293b-294a (*IZ*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:338; *MmD*. Cf. Vol. 4, pp. 80-81, n. 37; p. 398, n. 97.

37. Eyebrows... The eyebrows convey divine providence from *Binah*, who is known as both river and Mother. She channels the flow from *Keter*, the Holy Ancient One, nurturing the eyes of providence with the pure white milk of compassion, which assuages the harshness of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His eyes are like doves by streams of water, bathing in milk, set by a brimming pool.* See *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdT*s); 3:136b (*IR*), 289a (*IZ*).

38. Nose of the King... The most prominent feature of the face. Here dwells wrath, as indicated by the Hebrew word for nose, אף (*af*), which means both “nose” and “anger.” The wrath of *Ze’eir Anpin* (the Short-Tempered One) issues from *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). This divine wrath can be assuaged only by the smoke of a sacrificial offering, as hinted by the verse in Genesis, describing God’s response to Noah’s sacrifices following the Flood, when He promised to never again destroy all life.

The nose of the Holy Ancient One is different, since He is described as ארך אפים (*erekh appayim*), “long-suffering, slow to anger” (taking a long time for His nostrils to flare). His nose is represented by the root of Wisdom within *Keter*, characterized by pure compassion and forgiveness. This nose is praiseworthy, as indicated by the verse in Isaiah, which reads in full: *For the sake of My name* אאריך אפי (*a’arikh appi*), *I defer My wrath* [or hyperliterally: *lengthen My nose*], *and for My praise* אחטם (*eḥetom*), *I refrain* [or: *restrain Myself, restrain it*] *for you, so as not to cut you off.* The verbal root חטם (*ḥtm*), “to restrain, bridle, muzzle,” is a cognate of the Hebrew noun חוטם (*ḥotem*), Aramaic חוטמא

(*hutma*), “nose.” God, as it were, promises Israel that His nose will be not short-tempered but, rather, long-suffering. King David also alluded to this praiseworthy nose.

On the significance of the nose, see M *Yevamot* 16:3: “Evidence [of the identity of a corpse] may not be given except from [proof provided by] the face together with the nose.” See Nahmanides on Leviticus 21:18; *Zohar* 2:177b (*SdT*s); 3:130a–b, 137b (*IR*), 294a (*IZ*).

On the sacrificial smoke, see *Zohar* 1:45b (*Heikh*), 51a–b, 70a, 176b, 244a, 247b; 2:130a, 141a, 242b, 259b (*Heikh*); 3:294a (*IZ*); Vol. 3, p. 493, n. 863. On *Ze’eir Anpin* and *Arikh Anpin* (OR *erekh appayim*), see above, [note 34](#). On the word תקונא (*tiqquna*), “enhancement,” see above, [note 31](#).

39. Ears of the King... Which hear the prayers of Israel. The brains of the King lie within the head, which includes *Hokhmah* and *Binah* (known as Father and Mother).

“Good and evil” may refer to goodness for Israel and evil for their enemies. The winged beings are angels, who convey prayers above. See *Zohar* 1:4a, 44a (*Heikh*), 92a, 152a (*Tos*); 2:13a; 3:80b; Vol. 1, p. 22, n. 150.

40. Face of the King... Illumined by *Hokhmah* and *Binah* (Father and Mother) and their expansion, the radiance of the hidden *sefirah* of *Da’at*. This triple radiance, glowing in the face, testifies to the nature of the King.

See M *Yevamot* 16:3 (quoted above, [note 38](#)): “Evidence [of the identity of a corpse] may not be given except from [proof provided by] the face together with the nose.” See *Zohar* 3:291a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*), 295a (*IZ*).

41. Beard of the King... Nine enhancements (or locks, curls) of the beard of *Ze’eir Anpin* are described in rich detail in the *Idrot*. Here, the enhancements are branches of *Hesed* and *Gevurah* (which themselves issue from the head, i.e., from *Hokhmah* and *Binah*) and of the radiance of Father and Mother, glowing in the face.

See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:340. On the significance of the beard, see BT *Shabbat* 152a, in the

name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Korḥah: "The glory of a face is the beard." See *Zohar* 2:177a (*SdT*s); 3:132b (*IR*), 289a (*IZ*). On the enhancements of the beard, see *Zohar* 2:177a-b (*SdT*s); 3:130b-134b (*IR*), 139a-141b (*IR*), 289a-b (*IZ*), 295a-b (*IZ*).

42. Lips of the King... The "brain of the King" refers to the first brain, derived from *Hokhmah*. See above, [note 39](#). The hidden path is the subtle passage between the Father (*Hokhmah*) and the womb of the Divine Mother (*Binah*). When She conceives, She generates five lights, each branching into ten, which constitute the fifty gates of *Binah*. One of these gates remains hidden; the forty-nine others correspond to forty-nine aspects of "pure" and forty-nine aspects of "impure" in Torah—namely forty-nine ways by which something can be proven pure (and thus permitted) and forty-nine ways by which the same thing can be proven impure (and thus forbidden). The fiftieth gate of *Binah* joins with the third, "suspended" light of Father to form the lips of the King.

On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see the statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a), "Fifty gates of *binah* (understanding) were created in the world, and all were given to Moses except for one." See Naḥmanides, *Peirush al ha-Torah*, intro, 3-4; *Zohar* 1:3b.

On the forty-nine facets (or aspects), see *Midrash Tehillim* 12:4, in the name of Rabbi Yannai: "With every utterance that the blessed Holy One spoke to Moses, He offered forty-nine facets of 'pure' and forty-nine facets of 'impure.'"

See *Massekhet Soferim* 16:5; JT *Sanhedrin* 4:1, 22a; BT *Eruvin* 13b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 26:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:2, 4; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:4; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 8:1; *Tanḥuma, Bemidbar* 10, *Huqqat* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat* 7, 18; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:2; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 21; *Zohar* 2:15b (*MhN*), 139b, 183a.

The verse in Job concludes: *nor spotted by a falcon's eye*. See *Zohar* 1:3b, 13b, 29b; 3:61b, 193b.

43. The mouth depends on them... On the lips. *Da'at* is the hidden *sefirah* mediating between *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, and linking them. It appears on the central line joining *Keter* and *Tif'eret*, and can be considered an “extension of *Tif'eret*.” When it radiates, it is called mouth of *YHVH*.

See *Zohar* 3:291a (*IZ*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:341. On the verse in Proverbs, see *Zohar* 3:136a (*IR*), 289b (*IZ*), 291a (*IZ*), 296a (*IZ*). On the verse in Song of Songs, see *Zohar* 3:295b (*IZ*).

The reading “concealed בגופא (*be-gufa*), in the body, of the King” is preserved in manuscripts reflecting an earlier version of the text (C9, M4, P2, V5, V7), as well in Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 94c. Other manuscripts (M5, O2, O17, R1), as well as the printed editions, read “concealed בפומא (*be-fima*) [or בפומא (*be-fuma*)], in the mouth, of the King.” On this reading, cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:16 (on 1:2); *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tissa* 10; *Shemot Rabbah* 41:3, all quoting Proverbs 2:6.

44. On this palate... The ruling authorities are angels, issuing from the divine mouth. The four letters listed here are technically guttural letters, not palatals. The first letter of the alphabet, א (*alef*), symbolizes the primordial *sefirah*, *Keter*, known as the Holy Ancient One.

On the angels issuing from the divine mouth, see BT *Ḥagigah* 14a, in the name of Rabbi Yonatan, “From every single utterance issuing from the mouth of the blessed Holy One, one angel is created, as is said: *By the word of YHVH the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their array.*”

On the guttural and palatal letters, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:3; *Zohar* 1:80a (*ST*); 3:295 (*IZ*); and below.

45. ה (Ḥet)—radiance of (Hokhmeta), Wisdom... Whose essence is unknowable. On the verse in Job, see *Zohar* 1:141b; 3:65b, 292a (*IZ*).

46. ה (He)—radiance of Mother... This letter, often a feminine marker, alludes to the Divine Mother, *Binah*, who nourishes Her offspring, the lower *sefirot*. Her flow, pictured as anointing oil, saturates *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), who pours into *Shekhinah*.

“White from within red” refers to the respective tendencies of *Hesed* (characteristic of *Yesod*) and *Gevurah* (characteristic of *Shekhinah*). *Myrrh* is a reddish resin; *frankincense*, whitish. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Before the day breathes and the shadows flee* [i.e., before the break of dawn], *I will hasten to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense*.

47. ׀ (Ayin)—radiance of seventy branches... Seventy—the numerical value of *ayin*—represents here the seven lower *sefirot*, each generating ten branches, all of which are nourished by the divine breath. The total of seventy also corresponds to the seventy names of God and the seventy members of Jacob’s household who entered Egypt. Jacob himself is the earthly symbol of *Tif’eret*, trunk of the sefirotic tree. The seventy *souls of the house of Jacob* represent the seventy sefirotic branches.

On the seventy branches, see *Zohar* 2:83b, 89a, 92b (*Piq*), 133b. On the seventy names of God, see *Targum*, Song of Songs 2:17; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:12; Naḥmanides, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:135; *Zohar* 1:5b; 2:51b, 160b; 3:223b (*RM*), 263a; Idel, “Olam ha-Mal’akhim bi-Dmut Adam,” 12–13. For various lists of these names, see *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:350–51); *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 1:1; *Aggadat Shir ha-Shirim*, ed. Schechter, on 1:1, pp. 9–10; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 46:8; *Ba’al ha-Turim* on Numbers 11:16.

The verse in Genesis reads: *All the souls of the house of Jacob coming to Egypt were seventy*.

48. From these letters shine four others... From the four guttural letters—א (*Alef*), ה (*het*), ה (*he*), ׀ (*ayin*)—shine the four palatal letters: ג (*gimel*), ׃ (*yod*), כ (*kaf*), ק (*qof*). *Gimel*

stands for גְּמוּלָה (*gemul*), “recompense, reward,” which derives ultimately from *Keter*, the Holy Ancient One, symbolized by *alef*.

The verse in Isaiah is usually taken to mean *Then you will delight in YHVH*, but here the phrase עַל יְהוָה (*al YHVH*) is understood hyperliterally: *upon* [or: *above*] *YHVH*—alluding to the realm of *Keter*, which lies *above Tif’eret* (known as *YHVH*).

On the guttural and palatal letters, see above, [note 44](#). On the hyperliteral reading of the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:216a, 219a; 2:50b, 83a, 88a-b; 3:94b.

49. From ה (het) shines י (yod)... Both letters signify *Hokhmah*, *het* being the initial letter of *Hokhmah*, and the shape of *yod* symbolizing the primordial point of this *sefirah*, which contains all potentially. The essence of *Hokhmah* is unknowable. See above at [note 45](#).

50. From ה (he) shines כ (kaf)... From *Binah*, the Divine Mother, symbolized by the letter *he*, shines *kaf*, symbolizing the radiant flow of emanation that reaches *Shekhinah*, known as *horn of Jubilee* and *Malkhut* (Kingdom), or Kingdom of David.

The line “Davidic anointing is performed only with the mystery of *kaf*” is based on a rabbinic tradition that priests were anointed in the shape of the Greek letter *chi*, shaped like an X. See BT *Horayot* 12a: “How are the kings anointed? In the shape of a wreath. And the priests? In the shape of a *chi*. What is meant by ‘the shape of a *chi*’? Rav Menashya son of Gadda said, ‘In the shape of a Greek *kaf* [i.e., the Greek letter *chi*].’”

This tradition specifies that priests, not kings, are anointed in the shape of a *chi*. The *Zohar*’s wording here —“Davidic anointing is performed only with the mystery of *kaf*”—may be influenced by another rabbinic formulation: “Kings must be anointed out of a horn.”

See JT *Sheqalim* 6:2, 49d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 10:8; *Zohar* 1:96a, 2:179a (*SdTs*). Cf. 1 Samuel 16:13; 1 Kings 1:39; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 71-72 (90-91). On the

letter *chi*, see also M *Menahot* 6:3; *Sifrei Zuta* 7:1; Rashi on Exodus 29:2, 7, 36; 30:26; Nahmanides on Exodus 29:7; Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 188-89; idem, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 1:345-46. Note Rashi's wording on Exodus 29:36: "All anointings resemble the Greek *chi*."

On *Binah* being symbolized by the letter *he*, see above, [note 46](#). *Binah* is also known as Jubilee; see above, [pp. 135-36](#), [n. 381](#). Thus *Shekhinah*, Her daughter, is *horn of Jubilee*. See *Zohar* 1:96a; 2:179a (*SdTs*); 3:19b.

[51.](#) ק (Qof)...י (ayin)... The numerical value of *ayin* is seventy, alluding to the seven lower *sefirot*. (See above, [note 47](#).) The numerical value of the final palatal letter, *qof*, is one hundred, alluding to all ten *sefirot*.

The wording of the last sentence ("Whoever knows this mystery and is careful with it...") derives from BT *Qiddushin* 71a, discussing the mystery of the forty-two-letter name of God. See *Zohar* 2:132b.

[52.](#) **Body of the King...** *Tiferet* is the trunk of the sefirotic body, balancing the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. These are symbolized, respectively, by white and red, and pictured as the right and left arms.

[53.](#) **His innards, enhanced with Da'at...** The hidden *sefirah* of *Da'at* first mediates between *Hokhmah* and *Binah* in the head, and then permeates the body, reaching its innards. See *Zohar* 3:296a (*IZ*).

[54.](#) **Thighs, joined with two lights...** The divine thighs are illumined by two lights, namely *Netsah* and *Hod*, also pictured as two kidneys. From *Netsah* and *Hod*, the anointing oil of emanation flows to the divine phallus, *Yesod*. He is known as *YHVH Tseva'ot*, Lord of *Netsah* and *Hod*, who are known as *Tseva'ot* (and also world).

[55.](#) **All these arrays...** *Yesod* channels the entire flow to *Shekhinah*. But their union is consummated only when humans administer judgment fairly on earth; then *Din* (Judgment) and *Hesed* are balanced above and harmony reigns.

The sefirotic adornments constitute the Holy Name. See *Zohar* 3:288a (*IZ*). This corresponds with the kabbalistic notion that the individual letters of יהוה (YHVH) symbolize all of the *sefirot*. The ך (yod) symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, while its upper stroke symbolizes *Keter*. The first ה (he), often a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The ו (vav), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). The second ה (he) symbolizes *Shekhinah*. See Asher ben David, *Peirush Shem ha-Meforash*, 112; *Zohar* 1:162a (*ST*); 2:126b-127a; 3:10b, 65b, 267b; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 44a-45b.

The verse from Psalms reads: ...in the midst of אלהים (*elohim*), the gods, He renders judgment. Traditionally here, the word *elohim* is interpreted as *the judges*. See BT *Berakhot* 6a, *Sanhedrin* 7a; Rashi and Radak on the verse.

On the interplay between human and divine judgment, see above at [notes 31-32](#). On the word תקונין (*tiqqunin*), “arrays, adornments,” see above, [note 31](#).

[56](#). And when judgments are not arranged below... When humans pervert justice on earth, harsh Judgment arouses above and the entire sefirotic array is disrupted. *Binah*, the Divine Mother, withdraws from the lower *sefirot*, depriving *Yesod* and thereby also *Shekhinah*. With the arousal of harsh Judgment, the demonic serpent is empowered. The final word, “them,” refers to the harsh powers of Judgment.

[57](#). My father revealed all these adornments... His father, Rabbi Shim'on, revealed these profound secrets to the Companions only when he was about to die, in order to ensure a glorious entry into heaven. Rabbi El'azar wonders why they have been revealed now unnecessarily.

On Rabbi Shim'on's motivation for revealing secrets before his death, see *Zohar* 3:287b, 291a-b, 295a (all *IZ*). On displaying knowledge of Torah so as to avoid shame in the world that is coming, see *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 1; *Midrash Mishlei* 10; *Zohar* 3:46a, 144a (*IR*), 196b; *ZH* 2c

(SO), 8d (MhN), 70d (ShS). Cf. *Zohar* 1:4a, 221a-222a; 2:134b; 3:205b.

58. What I recorded from the Holy Lamp... Rabbi Abba explains that he revealed to the Companions what he had recorded from Rabbi Shim'on (the Holy Lamp) because they already had some knowledge of these matters (from Rabbi Shim'on himself) and because deep knowledge of God is essential. From now on, the secrets will remain concealed. The concluding clause apparently means that even after Rabbi Shim'on's death, his presence still abides with the Companions and enlightens them.

בוצינא קדישא (*Botsina Qaddisha*), "the Holy Lamp," is the title of Rabbi Shim'on. See *Zohar* 1:3b-4a, 156a, 197b, 217a; 2:4a, 31a, 127b, 149a; 3:171a; *ZH* 85d (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. 2 Samuel 21:17; *Bereshit Rabbah* 85:4; BT *Ketubbot* 17a, where Rabbi Abbahu is called בוצינא דנהורא (*Botsina di-Nhora*), "Lamp of Light"; and *Berakhot* 28b, where Rabban Yoḥanan son of Zakkai is called נר ישראל (*Ner Yisra'el*), "Lamp of Israel."

On Rabbi Abba's role as scribe, see *Zohar* 3:287b (*IZ*), 296b (*IZ*). For the names of those Companions (including Rabbi Abba, Rabbi Yose, and Rabbi Yehudah) who previously learned similar secrets from Rabbi Shim'on, see the opening of *Idra Rabba* (*Zohar* 3:127b) and *Idra Zuta* (3:287b). From Rabbi Abba's remarks here, it seems that he is the intended speaker who delivered the material from the Secret of Secrets. See above, [note 33](#); Galante; Scholem; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 115; *MmD*.

On the commandment to know God, see Ibn Ezra, *Yesod Mora* 7; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 1:6; *Zohar* 2:25a (*Piq*); 3:256b (*RM*).

On the tension between revealing and concealing, see M *Kelim* 17:16; *Tosefta Kelim (Bava Metsi'a)* 7:9; BT *Bava Batra* 89b; *Zohar* 1:11b (Vol. 1, p. 78, n. 589); 2:95a, 100b, 257b; 3:127b (*IR*); and 3:74b: "Rabbi Shim'on clapped his hands and wept. He exclaimed, 'Woe is me if I speak and

reveal the secret! Woe is me if I do not speak, for the Companions will be deprived of the word.’”

59. I saw in a dream... Rabbi Abba recounts a dream in which he saw Rabbi Shim'on and asked him a question. He understands that the letter ם (yod) symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah* (see above, [note 49](#)), but why does ה (he) symbolize *Binah*? See above, [note 46](#).

60. A river issues from Eden... In the dream Rabbi Shim'on explains that *Binah* is the river of emanation issuing from *Hokhmah* (symbolized by *Eden*). The primordial point of *Hokhmah*, symbolized by the letter ם (yod), encloses itself within *Binah* and then expands Her into the wide letter ה (he). (These are the first two letters of יהוה [YHVH]). Impregnated by *Hokhmah*, *Binah* gives birth to *Tif'eret* (together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him, from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), symbolized by the letter ם (vav), whose numerical value is six. Fittingly, the shape of the letter ם (vav) corresponds to the left leg of the letter ה (he), implying that this son begins within the womb of the Divine Mother. After His birth, the son is placed before Her to be suckled, a relationship depicted by the progression ם ה (he, vav), the middle letters of יהוה (YHVH).

The secret Mishnaic source offers a related tradition: *Binah* was originally ד (dalet). Once Father *Hokhmah* joined with Her, She conceived a son, symbolized by ם (vav), and this vav constituted a new graphic element, or leg, transforming ד (dalet) into ה (he).

On ם ה ם (yod, he, vav), see *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdT*s); 3:11a-b, 65b, 290b (*IZ*). On the sefirotic significance of the letters of יהוה (YHVH), see above, [note 55](#).

The expression מתניתא דילן (*matnita di-lan*), “our Mishnah,” refers to a secret, mystical Mishnah often cited in the *Zohar* and known only to its own circle. In this instance, “our Mishnah” apparently alludes to *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*, the cryptic section of the *Zohar* that in some ways serves as an anonymous Mishnah for other parts of the *Zohar*, which

can be seen as its “Talmudic” commentary. A parallel to the teaching on the transformation of ך (dalet) into ה (he) appears in *Sifra di-Tsni’uta* (*Zohar* 2:178b). Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, this transformation pertains to *Shekhinah* rather than *Binah*; see *Zohar* 1:51a, 60a; 2:104a; 3:180b. (Likewise, *the garden* in the verse from Genesis elsewhere alludes to *Shekhinah* rather than *Tif’eret*.)

On *matnita di-lan*, “our Mishnah,” see *Zohar* 1:37b, 55b, 74a, 91b, 93a, 95b, 96a, 223b–224a, 252a (*Hash*); 3:57b, 61b, 78a, 284b, 285a, 293b (*IZ*); Matt, “Matnita di-Lan.” *Matnita di-lan* is to be distinguished from the *Matnitin* of the *Zohar*, on which see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 216; Gottlieb, *Mehqarim*, 163–214.

61. In this delight I awoke... From the dream. Rabbi Abba eats nothing for several days partly because he is so overjoyed from seeing and learning from Rabbi Shim’on that he feels no need to eat, but also out of sadness for being unworthy of seeing the Holy Lamp again.

On the connection between fasting and having a vision of a departed sage, see JT *Kil’ayim* 9:4, 32b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:10; *Zohar* 1:4a (Vol. 1, pp. 20–21, n. 139).

62. Why tishameru, you shall be guarded... This particular passive form, which appears only here in the Bible, is usually understood to mean *you shall be on guard, watchful, attentive*. However, the *Zohar* wonders why Scripture did not employ the active form of the verb (as in Leviticus 19:19; Deuteronomy 13:5). The answer focuses on the hyperliteral meaning of *tishameru*: if the people of Israel fulfill God’s commands, they will *be guarded* and protected from all the dire punishments listed in the Torah. Consequently, they will have no need to *mention* (or *invoke*) the name of any other god.

On the clause *the name of other gods you shall not mention*, see *Mekhilta, Kaspā* 20; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 23:13; BT *Sanhedrin* 63b. On the passive form

tishameru, cf. וּנְשַׁמְרֶתֶם (*ve-nishmartem*), *you shall be watchful*, in Deuteronomy 4:15; Joshua 23:11.

63. Alternatively, and the name of other gods... As if to say, “Do not violate God’s commands, thereby bringing upon yourselves the punishment of exile to foreign lands, where you will *worship other gods* and invoke their names.

64. The entire Torah is the name of the blessed Holy One... Consequently, one who adds anything to the Torah or diminishes it causes a defect in the Holy Name and, as it were, invokes *the name of other gods*.

On Torah as God’s Name, see Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 548; Naḥmanides, introduction to Commentary on the Torah, 6–7; *Zohar* 2:60a, 87a, 90b, 161b; 3:13b, 19a, 21a, 35b–36a, 73a, 89b, 98b, 159a, 265b, 298b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 341–42; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 37–44; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1085–86; Idel, “Tefisat ha-Torah.”

On not adding to or diminishing from the divine words, see Deuteronomy 4:2; 13:1.

65. And the name of other gods—one who is occupied... According to Rabbi Ḥiyya, Torah (which constitutes God’s name) contains all the wisdom that one needs, and delving into foreign wisdom is tantamount to invoking foreign gods.

The wording “or learn טעמא (*ta’ama*), reason [or: meaning, sense], from them, all the more so concerning Torah,” apparently alludes to the Jewish philosophers’ pursuit of טעמי המצוות (*ta’amei ha-mitsvot*), “the reasons for the commandments,” based in part on the insights of Greek philosophy. The kabbalists countered such rationalistic *ta’amei ha-mitsvot* with their own kabbalistic reasons. See Matt, “The Mystic and the *Mizvot*”; Scholem.

On the prohibition against reading ספרים חצונים (*sefarim hitsonim*), “external books,” i.e., those excluded from the biblical canon, see M *Sanhedrin* 10:1 (in the name of Rabbi Akiva); JT *Sanhedrin* 10:1, 28a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:12.

66. one who does not keep this... One who violates Passover, the Festival of *matsot* (Unleavened Bread), breaks faith with God, since Passover is linked with the divine realm. These two verses appear adjacently in order to demonstrate that by violating this festival, in effect, one invokes *other gods*.

In the *Zohar*, Passover is usually linked with *Shekhinah* and sometimes with *Hesed*. See *OY*; Galante; *MM*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1238–39. On the connection between violating the festivals and committing idolatry, see *BT Pesahim* 118a; *Zohar* 2:182a.

67. Similarly with all other holidays and festivals... All of which symbolize various *sefirot*, aspects of the Divine Name.

The full verse in Exodus, referring to the three pilgrimage festivals, reads: *Three times a year all your males shall appear in the presence of the Lord YHVH*. For Rabbi Yitshak, the phrase *three times a year* alludes to the three sefirotic columns (right, left, and center), the focus of mystical faith.

On the sefirotic correspondences of the various festivals, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1238–40. On the link between the Divine Name and the *sefirot*, see above, [note 55](#).

68. All your males shall appear... According to Rabbi El'azar, this refers to genuine males, namely those who are circumcised. The covenantal sign enables them to receive the flow of blessing from *Yesod*, the divine phallus. “The spring of the stream” may refer specifically to *Yesod* or to His source in higher sefirotic realms.

The phrase *in the presence* [or: *before the face*] of the Lord *YHVH* alludes to *Yesod*, apparently because אָדוֹן (*adon*), *Lord*, refers to *Shekhinah*, *before* whom is *Yesod*. Alternatively, here *Lord* refers to *Yesod*. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On the biblical phrase, see

Zohar 1:2a. On *your males* and the sign of circumcision, see *Zohar* 2:183a; 3:165b.

69. Once, Israelites were going up to celebrate the festival... Making pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The following year was devoid of blessing, and the Israelites approached Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder) to ask why. “Beforehand” means before the year proceeded, i.e., during or immediately following the pilgrimage.

Historically, Rav Hamnuna Sava was a Babylonian teacher who lived in the midthird century, long after the destruction of the Temple. Generally in the *Zohar*, Rav Hamnuna Sava appears as a contemporary of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yohai (who lived in the second century). In the Talmud, Rav Hamnuna occasionally transmits teachings of Rabbi Shim’on (e.g., BT *Hullin* 21a, *Temurah* 15a), and several prayers are attributed to him (BT *Berakhot* 11b, 17a, 58a). In the *Zohar*, roles are reversed and Rabbi Shim’on cites Rav Hamnuna. Throughout the *Zohar*, Hamnuna is greatly revered and several original ritual acts are attributed to him; the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava is cited frequently.

Elsewhere, the *Zohar* refers to Rav Hamnuna Kadma’ah (the First) and Rav Hamnuna Sava Kadma’ah. See *Zohar* 2:145a, 146b; 3:199a; *Zohorei Ya’bets*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:60; Cohen, “How Many R. Hamnunas in the Babylonian Talmud?”; Vol. 1, pp. 37–38, n. 257.

70. when we returned from there... From Jerusalem. “To be seen” means to *appear in the presence of the Lord YHVH* (Exodus 23:17).

71. He trembled and gazed... Rav Hamnuna had a vision of what went wrong. During the pilgrimage only Israelites who have the covenantal sign of circumcision are blessed and ensure future blessing. The presence of others interfered with this blessing and doomed the coming year.

See Exodus 12:43, 48: *This is the statute of the Passover offering: no foreigner shall eat of it.... and no*

uncircumcised man shall eat of it. See BT *Hagigah* 4b: “The uncircumcised and the impure are exempt from [bringing] the pilgrimage offering.”

72. The following year... This time, the Gentiles who intermingled with them were discovered to be eating from the pilgrimage offering without reciting a blessing. Questioned by the court, they were unable to identify the offering and were subsequently put to death.

This story seems to be based on an account in BT *Pesahim* 3b: “A certain pagan used to go up and eat of the Passover sacrifices in Jerusalem, saying, ‘It is written: *No foreigner shall eat of it... no uncircumcised man shall eat of it* (Exodus 12:43, 48); yet I eat of the very best!’ Rabbi Yehudah son of Beteira said to him, ‘Did they feed you from the fat tail?’ He replied, ‘No.’ [Rabbi Yehudah said to him,] ‘When you go up there, say to them, “Feed me from the fat tail.”’ When he went up, he said to them, ‘From the fat tail feed me.’ They replied, ‘The fat tail ascends to the Most High [i.e., is burned entirely on the altar].’ They asked him, ‘Who told you [to do] this?’ He replied, ‘Rabbi Yehudah son of Beteira.’ They said, ‘What is this [matter] before us?’ They investigated him and discovered that he was a pagan, and they put him to death. They sent [a message] to Rabbi Yehudah son of Beteira: ‘Peace be with you, Rabbi Yehudah son of Beteira, for you are in Nisibis [in Babylon] yet your net is spread in Jerusalem!’”

The phrase “tugging at the pleats of their fumigated togas” is a conjectural rendering of בקוטר״יהו לקוטר׳א דאומלא דטפסאן (*de-tafsan be-qutrai hu le-qutra de-umla*). The sense of the words *qutrai hu* and *qutra* may derive from a passage in BT *Beitsah* 23a (discussing what is permitted and forbidden on festivals), where the term קטור׳א (*qittura*) is interpreted in two ways: “pleating (or decorating)” the sleeves of a garment (based on the root *qtr*, “to tie”), and “fumigating, perfuming” (based on a different root *qtr*, “to burn, turn into smoke”). Cf. BT *Mo’ed Qatan* 10b; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, and

Tosefot he-Arukh ha-Shalem, s.v. *qtr*. Another conceivable translation of the first part of the phrase is: “clutching their bundles.”

The final word of the phrase—*umla*—is attested in several manuscripts (Ms5, M9, R1) as well as Mantua and Cremona, and probably derives from אִמְלָא (*imla*), “garment.” See *Targum Yonatan*, Ezekiel 27:24, which renders the biblical term גְּלוּמֵי (*gelomei*), *cloaks of*, as אִמְלִין (*imlin*). See Rashi and Radak, ad loc.; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, and *Tosefot he-Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *amelin*.

The manuscript variants of the rare word *umla* include: כּוּמְלָא (*khumla*) (Ct1, O2, O17), סַתְלָא (*satla*) (N10, O3), and רוּמְלָא (*rumla*) (OY). The first two of these are perplexing; the last, *rumla*, could conceivably refer to Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome together with his brother, Remus. Thus, OY understands the phrase as: “resembling in their binding [apparently meaning “clothing”] the binding of a certain nation [apparently the Romans, and referring to the toga].”

N41 reads כּוּתְלָא (*khutla*), “the wall,” which is nearly indistinguishable graphically from סַתְלָא (*satla*), mentioned above. The reading *khutla* (also recorded as a variant in *Derekh Emet*, ed. Ḥamiz) was adopted by later printed versions, and so the conclusion of the phrase—קוּטְרָא דְכוּתְלָא (*qutra de-khutla*)—has sometimes been taken to mean “the joint of the wall(s),” i.e., the corner, identifying the place where the Gentiles gathered.

N47 (recorded also by Menaḥem de Lonzano, as cited by Scholem) reads דְּגַמְלָא (*de-gamla*), “of a camel.” If this were correct (which is doubtful), then *qutra de-gamla* might mean “a caravan of camels,” if *qutra* reflects Arabic *qitar*, “train of camels.” (See *Zohar* 2:45b; Vol. 4, p. 212, n. 44.) The entire phrase might then be rendered: “clutching their bundles by the caravan of camels.”

For various interpretations, see Galante; *Or ha-Ḥammah*, 155c; *Derekh Emet*; *Nefesh David*; Luria, *Va-*

Ye'esof David, s.v. *tifsa*, p. 75; Soncino; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

73. Through the merit of circumcised Israel... Israel inherited the land of Canaan by the merit of male circumcision, as indicated by these two successive verses.

On circumcision and inheriting the land, see *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 29; *Zohar* 1:59b, 216a; 2:23a (Vol. 4, p. 78, n. 30), 26a, 59b; *OY*.

On the connection between “uprooting” and the word אָדוֹן (*adon*), *Lord*, see *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Joshua 14: “Behold, ark of the covenant, Lord of all the earth (Joshua 3:11). Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥmani said, ‘Wherever it is written אָדוֹן (*adon*), *Lord*, He uproots inhabitants and brings in inhabitants. This [i.e., the verse in Joshua] is the paradigm for them all: He uproots the Canaanites and brings in Israel.’” Rabbi Ḥiyya says “restores inhabitants” because the Israelites descended from the patriarchs, who had inhabited the land of Canaan.

The first verse in Exodus quoted by Rabbi Ḥiyya is nearly identical with Exodus 23:17, quoted above at [notes 67-68](#).

74. הָאֲדוֹן (Ha-Adon), the Lord... From the context in Isaiah, Rabbi Yehudah demonstrates that *ha-adon*, *the Lord*, uproots Israel's enemies and restores Israel, in a single combined action.

75. There is Adon, and then there is Adon... This term refers to two sefirotic potencies, apparently *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. “All depends upon one” may refer to *Yesod*, who unites the divine couple.

See *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MmD*. Cf. *Sullam*; above, [note 68](#).

76. אֲדוֹנֵי (Adonai), My Lord—א (alef), ד (dalet), נ (nun), י (yod)... According to Rabbi Yehudah, אָדוֹן (*adon*), *Lord*, refers to *Shekhinah*, who is called אֲדוֹנֵי (*Adonai*), “my Lord,” spelled י נ ד א (alef, dalet, nun, yod), and referred to here as the blessed Holy One. The name *Adonai* is pronounced as it is written, as

opposed to the name יהוה (YHVH), which is also pronounced *Adonai*, differently than it is written.

77. מראות (Mar'ot), Visions of... spelled מראת (mar'at), a vision of... According to Rabbi Yose, the word מראות (*mar'ot*), *visions of (Elohim)*, in the opening verse in Ezekiel is spelled without the letter ו (*vav*): מראת, implying the singular form *mar'at, a vision of*. Perhaps his teaching means something like this: What does the singular form *mar'at, a vision of*, indicate? *Shekhinah*, who includes and displays, as one, the entire spectrum of emanation, signified by the four letters of YHVH. But if so, why *mar'at*? After all, *Shekhinah* is known by the name אדני (*Adonai*), pronounced as it is written, whereas מראת (*mar'at*) is pronounced *mar'ot*, differently than it is written. Well, *Shekhinah* includes both singular and plural aspects, so the term מראת fits Her well—pronounced *mar'ot, visions of*, yet written *mar'at, a vision of*.

For various readings and interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*. The word מראה (*mar'ah*) means “vision” and “mirror,” both of which pertain to *Shekhinah*, who reveals and reflects the higher *sefirot*. On YHVH as indicating all of the *sefirot*, see above, [note 55](#).

Actually, in the Masoretic text, this word in the opening verse of Ezekiel is spelled with a *vav*; מראות (*mar'ot*), *visions of*. See *Zohar* 2:40a (Vol. 4, p. 196, n. 195), 82a (Vol. 4, p. 452, n. 309); *Minḥat Shai* on Ezekiel 1:1. A deficient spelling—*במראת (be-mar'ot)*—appears in Genesis 46:2. See *Zohar* 1:211a (Vol. 3, p. 295, n. 194); cf. Vol. 4, p. 158, n. 66.

For other instances of a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar's* reading, see *Zohar* 1:58b, 83b, 84a, 122b (*MhN*), 236b (Vol. 3, p. 435, n. 644); 2:5b (*MhN*), 40a, 41b (*Piq*), 83a, 176b (*SdT*s); 3:4b, 40b, 68a, 148a, 184a, 202b, 203b, 207a, 254a (*RM*). On this phenomenon, see Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 50, 131–32, n. 125.

78. Sometimes the higher are called... At times, a higher *sefirah* may share the name of a lower *sefirah*, for example, when *YHVH* (signifying *Tif'eret*) is pronounced *Adonai* (which usually signifies *Shekhinah*), or when *Binah* is called *Elohim*, a name of *Shekhinah*. Conversely, a lower *sefirah* may share the name of a higher *sefirah*, as when *Shekhinah* is called יהוה יהוה (Ha-Adon YHVH), *the Lord YHVH*. Cf. *Zohar* 2:38a (Vol. 4, p. 180, n. 146).

79. Here, I am sending an angel before you... The verse concludes: *to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared*.

80. O that he would kiss me... According to the Midrash, this verse is spoken by the Assembly of Israel to God. Here, Assembly of Israel also implies *Shekhinah*, who yearns for spiritual union with Her divine beloved.

רוחא (*Ruḥa*) means “wind, breath, spirit.” On a kiss as “cleaving of *ruḥa* to *ruḥa*,” see *Zohar* 1:184a; 2:146a-b, 254a (*Heikh*), 256b (*Heikh*); *ZH* 60c (*MhN, ShS*), 63a, 64b (both *ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 396; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 372. Cf. Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 485. On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 24](#), [n. 68](#).

The verse in Song of Songs concludes: *for your love is better than wine*. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:70a-b.

81. one whose soul departs by a kiss... According to rabbinic tradition, certain virtuous heroes (including Moses, Aaron, and Miriam) died not by the power of the Angel of Death but rather by the kiss of God. Here, this privilege is extended to a much wider circle, whose souls thereby cleave to the divine spirit.

See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 34:5; BT *Bava Batra* 17a (and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *she-lo shalat*); *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:2; *Devarim Rabbah* 11:10; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 42; *Tanḥuma, Va'ethannan* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'ethannan* 6.

The passage in *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* extends this privilege to all the righteous. See *Zohar* 1:168a.

82. Why any need here for wine... Why should wine be mentioned in this spiritual context, given its negative, intoxicating effects?

The verse in Leviticus, addressed to Aaron the high priest, reads: *Wine and beer, do not drink, you and your sons with you, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, lest you die.*

83. Than the wine of Torah The ecstasy of divine love surpasses even the joy of imbibing Torah.

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 35a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:4.

84. Wine that gladdens the human heart... Rabbi Hizkiyah indicates the positive effects of wine; yet divine love provides even greater joy.

85. look at what is written: and he kissed him... At their reunion, Esau kissed Jacob. Did this kiss also join spirit with spirit? No, because Esau's kiss was insincere, as implied by the fact that here the word וישקהו (*va-yishaqehu*), *and he kissed him*, is dotted in the Torah.

Certain letters in the Torah are dotted, inviting various midrashic interpretations. In this verse all the letters of וישקהו (*va-yishaqehu*) are dotted.

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 69; *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:9; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:5; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 87a; *Soferim* 6:3; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 34; B, 37; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Friedlander), 37; *Tanḥuma*, *Vayishlah* 4; *Midrash Mishlei* 26:24; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 3:13; *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 33:4; *Zohar* 1:171b. Cf. Ibn Ezra on Genesis 33:4.

86. As long as the blessed Holy One accompanies Israel... His spirit cleaves to theirs. Consequently, when Moses heard God say *Here, I am sending an angel before you*, he understood that God would no longer accompany them directly and he objected.

The fact that the two verses from Exodus appear far apart from one another does not present a serious problem, since according to rabbinic hermeneutics, “There is no earlier and later in the Torah,” i.e., there is no strict chronological order, and these two accounts could in fact be simultaneous. See Kasher, *Torah Shelema*, Exodus 23:20, n. 295.

On Moses not being satisfied with God *sending an angel*, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:29; BT *Sanhedrin* 38b; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 18; *Shemot Rabbah* 32:2-3, 7-8; *Midrash Tehillim* 90:9; *Aggadat Bereshit* 32. Cf. BT *Bava Qamma* 92b-93a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba* 20; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 17; *Shemot Rabbah* 32:1, 5.

On the hermeneutical principle “There is no earlier and later in the Torah,” see *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer*, 2, pp. 40-41; *Mekhilta, Shirta* 7; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:9; *Sifrei*, Numbers 64; JT *Megillah* 1:4, 70d; BT *Pesaḥim* 6b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:2; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:12.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!*

87. What is written before this?... The verse immediately preceding *Here, I am sending an angel before you* contains the prohibition *You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk*. According to Rabbi Abba, a *kid* symbolizes the demonic power, while *mother* refers to *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel), who nurtures the world. These two elements must not be mingled, lest the demonic force imbibe the rich flow of the Mother. The sequence of these two verses implies that if the people of Israel violate the divine command and mingle the demonic *kid* with the divine *mother*, then God will separate Himself from them and only *an angel* will accompany them.

On the kabbalistic significance of *a kid in its mother's milk*, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 315; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 146-47; *Zohar* 3:72a. Here, the *kid* may also allude to the Golden Calf, whose worship ruined the

intimacy between God and Israel, causing the substitution of *an angel* for God Himself.

On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 24](#), [n. 68](#). On Assembly of Israel as Mother, see BT *Berakhot* 35b: “Rabbi Hanina son of Papa said, ‘Whoever enjoys this world without reciting a blessing—it is as if he robs the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel, as is said: *He who robs his father and mother and says, “It is no crime,” is partner to a destroyer* (Proverbs 28:24)—*father* is none other than the blessed Holy One... and *mother* is none other than Assembly of Israel.’”

In this Talmudic passage, Assembly of Israel apparently refers to a supernal hypostasis (the mother of Israel), as it does regularly in Kabbalah, designating *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 3:44b; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 27; Vol. 4, pp. 467–68, n. 363.

On the mother’s milk, cf. above, [note 37](#). On Moses’ complaint, “But I received a promise from You!” see *Shemot Rabbah* 32:8.

[88](#). This statement was uttered... purely out of love... God informed Moses (and Israel) that He would send an angel in order to stimulate him to insist that God accompany them directly.

“Legionnaire” renders לגיון (*ligyon*), derived from Greek *legeon* and Latin *legio*, “legion.” In rabbinic literature, the term applies to a legion of troops or a legate, and here, to a soldier or officer. See above, [note 17](#).

Exodus 23:21 reads in full: *Watch yourself with him and heed his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for My name is within him.*

[89](#). At this point Moses said nothing... When God said, *Here, I am sending an angel before you*, Moses did not object because he realized that this *angel* was actually *Shekhinah*, God’s Presence, so “there was no separation from Him.”

Others “teach the opposite,” namely that this was indeed an *angel* (Metatron or Michael) and not purely divine, so Moses did object. The exact sense of the final clause (“and all convey their meaning by a single element”) is not clear. Perhaps it means that all depends on the identity of this *angel*, and both parties would agree that if the *angel* was *Shekhinah*, then Moses did not object, whereas if it was an actual angel, he did. Alternatively, even if *angel* does refer to Metatron, he is an effulgence of *Shekhinah* and thus not really separate from Her. See *OY*; Galante; *MmD*.

On this *angel* as *Shekhinah*, see Naḥmanides on the verse; *Zohar* 1:232a. On *Shekhinah* as angel, see also Jacob ben Jacob ha-Kohen, *Peirush Eser Sefirot*, 230; Moses of Burgos, fragment ed. Scholem, *Le-Heqer Qabbalat R. Yitshaq ben Ya’aqov ha-Kohen*, 209–10; Naḥmanides on Exodus 3:2; *Zohar* 1:61a, 113a, 120b, 159b, 166a, 191a, 228b, 230a, 232a; 3:95b, 187a, 270a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 382; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 75–76 (96). Cf. *Mekhilta*, *Shirta* 3; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 40; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:5.

Various sources identify this *angel* as Metatron or Michael. See BT *Sanhedrin* 38b; *Aggadat Bereshit* 32; Rabbeinu Ḥanan’el, *Leqah Tov*, *Midrash Aggadah*, Ibn Ezra (long and short), Naḥmanides, Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 23:20; Rashi on Exodus 20:21; Naḥmanides on Exodus 24:1.

90. When did Moses respond?... According to Rabbi Shim’on, the two accounts in Exodus 23 and 33 are separate incidents. (Cf. above, [note 86](#).) In the first one, Moses did not respond because he understood that the *angel* was, in fact, *Shekhinah*. Later, when God said *I will send an angel before you*, He went on to elaborate in the next verse: *But I will not go up in your midst* (Exodus 33:3), so Moses realized that God intended to send an actual angel instead of Himself. On the other hand, back in Exodus 23 the context implies God’s own potent presence: *But if you*

truly heed his voice and do all that I speak. For another interpretation, see *MM*.

91. If you say that both of them were an actual angel... Rabbi Yehudah suggests that in both instances (Exodus 23 and 33), the *angel* was simply an angel. However, Moses waited to respond until God's second announcement, after He threatened *But I will not go up in your midst* (Exodus 33:3)—or after God's cryptic statement: *My presence will go, and I will grant you rest* (ibid., 14).

92. Moses did not want an angel... But rather, God's own presence. The verse reads: *If I have found favor in Your eyes, my Lord, may my Lord go in our midst.*

93. the verse should read in the mother's milk... Because *its mother's milk* implies that *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel) is the *mother* of the demonic power (symbolized by *a kid*), whereas Rabbi Shim'on had taught that She is linked with Israel.

For Rabbi Abba's interpretation, see above at [note 87](#). For Assembly of Israel as Mother, see the corresponding note.

94. Yet what Rabbi Abba said is fine... Because in fact, *Shekhinah* can serve as the Mother of both holy and demonic forces, which issue respectively on the right and the left sides.

95. When are they linked with Her?... The lower demonic powers draw from the Mother when She Herself suckles from the demonic source, the Other Side. This catastrophic situation arises when *Din* (Judgment) overwhelms *Hesed* (Love), especially on account of human wickedness. Then the sanctuary (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) is defiled and the evil serpent arouses. In order to assuage such harsh judgment and weaken the demonic *kid*, Israel brings the first fruits—which is why this commandment is linked with *you shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk*.

According to Deuteronomy 26:5, when an Israelite brings the offering of first fruits to the priest, he recites a

brief account of the people's history, beginning: אַרְמֵי אוֹבֵד אָבִי (*Arami oved avi*), *An Aramean astray* [or: *wandering fugitive, perishing*] *was my father*, probably referring to Jacob or Abraham. Later, the clause was interpreted to mean *An Aramean was destroying my father*, referring to Laban the Aramean's attempt to destroy Jacob (Genesis 29-31). (See the Passover Haggadah, and Septuagint, *Targum Onqelos*, *Targum Yerushalmi* on this verse.) Here, Rabbi Shim'on adopts this midrashic reading of the formula recited over the first fruits, and he refers specifically to Laban's sorcery, which is linked with the same demonic force as the *kid*. By bringing these fruits and condemning Laban, Israel ensures that the demonic *kid* will not suck the Mother's milk and that harsh judgment will not prevail.

On Laban's expertise in sorcery, see Genesis 30:27; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and *Sekhel Tov*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:133b, 139b, 158b, 161a, 164b, 166b-167a; 2:64b; 3:208a.

96. Therefore, all holy seed... should not eat meat with milk... The commandment *You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk* was interpreted by the rabbis to mean that one should not eat meat with milk. Here, Rabbi Shim'on emphasizes that by eating these two foods together one provides a place for the demonic *kid*. Every human action, whether holy or impure, stimulates a corresponding power above.

On the prohibition against eating meat with milk (as derived from *You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk*), see M *Hullin* 8:4; *Mekhilta, Kaspā* 20; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 34:26; *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 23:19; JT *Avodah Zarah* 5:9, 45b; BT *Qiddushin* 57b.

On the principle of "Through arousal below, there is arousal above," see *Zohar* 1:35a, 77b-78a, 82b, 86b, 88a, 156b, 164a-b, 233a, 235a, 244a; 2:31b, 35b, 265a; 3:31b,

40b, 47b, 92a-b, 105a, 110b, 112b, 145a (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 144.

The full verse in Deuteronomy 14 reads: *For you are a holy people to YHVH your God, and you YHVH has chosen to be a treasured people to Him of all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

97. women rule over them—precisely... Alluding apparently to Lilith and her associate Na'amah (or Agrat daughter of Maḥalat), the demonic females who torment sinners. See *Zohar* 3:19b, 60b.

The Book of King Solomon is one of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. For other references to this book, see *Zohar* 1:7b, 13b, 225b; 2:67a, 70a (*RR*), 139a, 172a, 204b; 3:10b, 65b, 70b, 104a, 151b, 164a, 193b; *ZḤ* 12b (*MhN*). Naḥmanides several times refers to, and quotes from, an Aramaic version of the Apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*. See the introduction to his Commentary on the Torah, 5-6; idem, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:163, 182.

See Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 25; and the comment by Shim'on Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, on *Zohar* 1:7a: "All such books mentioned in the *Zohar*... have been lost in the wanderings of exile.... Nothing is left of them except what is mentioned in the *Zohar*." For a catalog of these books, see Neuhausen, *Sifriyyah shel Ma'lah*.

Scholem suggests that the reference here to the Book of King Solomon alludes to the famous story of two prostitutes who appeared before Solomon, each claiming to be the mother of a newborn. See 1 Kings 3:16-28; *Zohar* 2:178b (*SdT*s); 3:60b. In *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10 (on 1:1) (and *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:16; *Midrash Tehillim* 72:2), these two prostitutes are said to be two (evil) spirits who appeared as women. In his *Sod Yetsi'at Mitsrayim* (Schocken MS), Moses de León identifies Lilith and Na'amah as prostitutes, and similar characterizations appear in the *Zohar*.

98. if anyone eats this food... If one eats meat and milk together during a single meal, or if one waits less than an hour between eating one and the other, then his skin is marked with the image of a helmeted kid, whose demonic character attracts impure forces.

According to medieval Sephardic authorities, after eating meat one must wait a full six hours (the normal interval between two meals) before eating dairy products. The *Zohar's* view here accords with a more lenient Ashkenazic and French view, according to which one must wait just one hour. Waiting one hour between eating dairy products and then eating meat accords with a stricter Ashkenazic view, since many authorities permitted such eating after simply wiping and rinsing the mouth. See *Entsiqlopedyah Talmudit*, 4:713–19; Galante; *MM*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; and Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 32, 122, n. 61.

“A helmeted kid” renders גדיא מקלסא (*gadya meqallesa*), an aramaized form of the rabbinic expression גדי מקולס (*gedi mequllas*), referring to a kid roasted whole for a festival meal. The derivation of the term *mequllas* is uncertain, but Rashi interprets the word as related to Aramaic קולסא (*qulsa*), “helmet,” since in this type of roasting the entrails and lower legs were placed on the animal’s head like a helmet.

See *M Beitsah* 2:7; *Tosefta Beitsah* 2:15; *JT Pesahim* 7:1, 34a; *BT Berakhot* 19a; *Pesahim* 53a–b, 74a; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *qls*; Rashi on *BT Berakhot* 19a, s.v. *mequllasim*; *Pesahim* 74a, s.v. *mequllas* (quoting *Targum Yonatan*, 1 Samuel 17:5); Ben-Yehuda, *Dictionary*, 7:5963a, n. 1; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 5:957–58; Moreshet, *Leqsiqon ha-Po'al*, 324. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

99. If he engenders a son... A child born during those forty days receives an impure soul.

The context in Leviticus (11:43–44) reads: *Do not make yourselves abominable through any swarming thing that*

swarms and do not become impure with them, ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), becoming impure, through them. For I am YHVH your God, and you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am holy; you shall not make yourselves impure through any swarming thing that swarms on the earth. According to Rabbi Shim'on, the lack of the letter א (alef) in the word ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), *becoming impure*, allows for a different reading: ונטמתם (ve-nittamtem), *becoming dulled* [or: *obstructed*]. One who eats forbidden food defiles and obstructs himself irremediably.

This passage is based on BT *Yoma* 38b–39a: “Resh Lakish said: ‘... If one comes to defile himself, the door is opened to him; if one comes to purify himself, he is assisted.’ ... It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishma’el: ‘Sin dulls [or: obstructs] a person’s heart, as is said: *Do not become impure with them, ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), becoming impure, through them.* Do not read ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), *becoming impure*, but rather [per Munich MS] ונטמתם (ve-nittamtem), *becoming dulled* [or: *obstructed*].’ Our rabbis taught: ‘*Do not become impure with them, becoming impure through them.* If one defiles himself slightly, he is defiled greatly; [if one defiles himself] below, he is defiled from above; in this world, he is defiled in the world that is coming.’ Our rabbis taught: ‘*You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy.* If one sanctifies himself slightly, he is sanctified greatly; below, he is sanctified from above; in this world, he is sanctified in the world that is coming.’”

On the deficient spelling of ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), see *Zohar* 3:41b–42a, 75b.

100. he is terrified of dangerous beasts... Because he has eaten impure food, his divine image (the original form in which he was created) deteriorates, making him vulnerable to the beasts, who are no longer intimidated by him.

See BT *Shabbat* 151b: “Rami son of Abba said, ‘A wild beast has no power over a person until he appears to it as

an animal.” Cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:7: “It was taught: Before a person sins, he inspires awe and fear, and creatures are afraid of him. Once he sins, he is filled with awe and fear, and he is afraid of others.”

See Genesis 9:2; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 50; *Zohar* 1:71a, 191a (Vol. 3, pp. 165–66, nn. 508–12); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 337–38.

101. Rabbi Yeisa permitted the eating of chicken with dairy cheese... Since fowl are not mammals and have no mother’s milk, one could argue that the commandment *You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk* does not apply to them and that their flesh may be eaten together with dairy products. However, Rabbi Shim’on objected to this lenient interpretation because the consumption of such a mixture invites demonic forces.

A Nazirite vows not to eat grapes or drink wine (Numbers 6:1–3); as a precaution he is forbidden to even approach a vineyard. Similarly, although one could argue that the meat of fowl is different than mammalian meat and might be permitted with milk, it is better to forbid it and not blur the boundaries. Permitting it would be like tempting a Nazirite with wine.

On the saying “Go, O Nazirite...,” see BT *Shabbat* 13a, *Pesahim* 40b, *Yevamot* 46a, *Bava Metsi’a* 92a, *Avodah Zarah* 17a, 58b–59a; *Zohar* 1:31a; 3:127b. Cf. BT *Avodah Zarah* 6a–b; and M *Avot* 1:1: “Make a fence around the Torah.”

The name Rabbi Yeisa recalls Rabbi Yose (the Galilean), who, according to M *Hullin* 8:4, permitted eating chicken with milk based on the distinction between fowl and mammals. See BT *Hullin* 116a. On the verse in Deuteronomy, see BT *Hullin* 114b.

102. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah... According to the biblical account, Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den because he prayed to God, thus acknowledging a ruler other than King Darius. His three

companions were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship the image of King Nebuchadnezzar. Here, the *Zohar* indicates that all four were delivered because they refused to eat the royal food provided to them.

On Daniel in the lions' den, see Daniel 6. On his three companions in the fiery furnace, see Daniel 3. On the four companions' vegetarian diet, see Daniel 1.

103. Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself.. Because he refused to eat the impure royal food, Daniel retained the divine image in which he had been created, and so the lions feared him. On the other hand, because Nebuchadnezzar constantly ate meat and milk together, he eventually turned beastly. To each male animal that approached him, he appeared as its female partner, so each one copulated with him. This punishment fit his crime of mocking and sodomizing the kings that he captured.

On the power of the pristine divine image and the danger of losing it, see *Zohar* 1:191a; above, [note 100](#). "The secrecy of our Mishnah" alludes to an esoteric source known only to the kabbalists; see above, [note 60](#). Cf. M *Hullin* 8:1: "No meat... may be served on the table together with cheese...." The second element of the Persian loanword פת-בג (*pat-bag*), *provisions*, can be interpreted as an abbreviation for בשר גבינה (*basar gevinah*), "meat, cheese."

On Nebuchadnezzar being mounted by animals, see *Tanḥuma, Va'era* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 8; *Shemot Rabbah* 8:2. On his practice of sodomy, see BT *Shabbat* 149b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 18; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:423, n. 102.

104. At the end of ten days, they appeared better.. Daniel and his companions refused to eat the impure royal food, surviving instead on vegetables and water; yet *they appeared better* because they retained the divine image.

The verse in Exodus relates to food: *People of holiness shall you be to Me: flesh in the field torn by beasts you shall not eat; to the dog you shall fling it.* See above at [notes 2-](#)

20. The verse in Daniel reads: *...they appeared better and of healthier flesh than all the youths....*

105. **To Moses He said, "Go up to YHVH"...** The pronoun *He* alludes to *Shekhinah*, also known as *Elohim*. First, *Moses went up to Elohim*, attaining the rung of *Shekhinah*. Then She urged him to ascend further to *Tif'eret*, known as *YHVH*.

See *Zohar* 2:11b, 78b-79b. On the anonymous wording *He*, see *Zohar* 1:102b, 115a, 138a, 142b, 173b; 2:60b, 131a, 138a, 157a; 3:4b, 53b, 56a, 285a.

106. **Why all this?...** Why did Moses ascend further? Because Israel, while in Egypt, had fulfilled only the first half of the procedure of circumcision: cutting and removing the foreskin to disclose the mucous membrane. This step corresponds to *Shekhinah*. The second step is to tear the membrane down the center and pull it back, revealing the corona. This act is called פְּרִיעָה (*peri'ah*), "uncovering" the corona, and corresponds to *Yesod*, the divine phallus.

When the Israelites arrived at Marah on their way to Mount Sinai, they were instructed to perform *peri'ah* and reveal the "holy sign," thereby fulfilling both aspects of circumcision: the *statute and law* (corresponding respectively to *Shekhinah* and *Yesod*). Since the Israelites had been fully initiated into the covenant of circumcision and *raised* to *Yesod*, afterward at Mount Sinai Moses was instructed to ascend to the realm of the Divine Male (*YHVH*) and seal the covenant between God and His people.

See *Zohar* 2:40a, 60b-61a. On the two stages of circumcision, see M *Shabbat* 19:6: "If one circumcises but does not uncover the circumcision, it is as if he has not circumcised." See also *Zohar* 1:13a, 32a (*Tos*), 32a-b, 93b, 96b, 98b (*ST*), 238b; 2:3b, 57b, 66b-67a; 3:91b, 95b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 133; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 55 (67). On חֻק (*hoq*), *statute*, as alluding to circumcision, see *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:13; BT *Shabbat* 137b; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 20; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥayyei Sarah* 3, 6; *Shemot Rabbah* 19:4.

In the verse in Exodus 15, the simple sense of נִסָּהוּ (*nissahu*) is *He tested them* [literally *him*], but Rabbi Shim'on interprets it midrashically as related to the noun נֵס (*nes*), "flag, banner." See *Zohar* 2:60b. Cf. *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 9; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 20:16; *Bereshit Rabbah* 55:1, 6; *Zohar* 1:140a; 3:18a.

The verse in Exodus 24 (concerning the sacrificial blood) reads in full: *Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and he said, "Look, the blood of the covenant that YHVH has sealed with you over all these words."*

107. על המזבח (*al ha-mizbeah*), upon the altar... The altar symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Rabbi Yitshak reads the verse hyperliterally: Moses dashed the sacrificial blood *al ha-mizbeah, above the altar*, alluding to *Yesod*, who is *above Shekhinah*. By this act, Moses sought to link *Shekhinah* with Her male partner.

The full verse reads: *Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he dashed upon the altar.*

108. And you shall bow down from afar... Alluding to *Shekhinah*, who was not yet united with Her divine beloved and was thus still *afar*.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Galante*; *MM*; *MmD*. The verse in Jeremiah apparently implies that *from* (or through) *Shekhinah* (who was still *afar* from *YHVH*, namely *Tif'eret*), *YHVH appeared*.

The verse in Exodus 2 describes the action of Miriam, as she watches her baby brother Moses in the Nile: *His sister stationed herself afar, to know what would be done to him*. Here, it alludes to *Shekhinah*, *Tif'eret's sister*, who is still far from Him. On the spiritual sense of this verse, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:20; *JT Sotah* 1:9, 17b; *BT Sotah* 11a; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:22; *Zohar* 2:12a. Cf. *Zohar* 1:6a.

The context in Exodus 24 (vv. 1-2) reads: *To Moses He said, "Go up to YHVH, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall bow down*

from afar. Moses alone shall come near YHVH, but they shall not come near."

109. For the moon was waning... *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) is described as *afar* because Her light was diminished. Yet, Moses was about to rectify this lack by uniting Her above, and Israel would share in this union, sealing their covenant.

110. Why did Shekhinah tell him, "Go up"?... Because through Moses' mediation, She and Her people could join with YHVH. Moses dashed half of the sacrificial blood on the people, to include them in the covenantal union, and half upon [or: above] the altar, symbolizing *Shekhinah* and Her divine partner above.

Exodus 24:6 reads in full: *Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he dashed על המזבח (al ha-mizbeah), upon [or: above] the altar.* See above, [note 107](#). For the full quotation of Exodus 24:8, see above, [note 106](#).

111. באגנות (ba-agganot), in basins—spelled deficiently: באגנת (ba-agganot)... The deficient spelling, without a ם (*vav*), suggests a singular sense of the noun: a *basin*, which alludes to *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the moon and alluded to in Song of Songs by the phrase אגן (*aggan*), *the basin of, the moon*. Moses took blood from the *basin* of *Shekhinah* and dashed it on the people, linking them with Her.

On the deficient spelling of באגנות (*ba-agganot*), see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 6:5; *Midrash Hāserot vi-Yterot*, 71 (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:261); *Minḥat Shai* on Exodus 24:6. On the link between the verses in Exodus and Song of Songs, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tissa* 1; *Pesiḳta Rabbati* 10; Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 24:6.

112. Moses alone shall come near YHVH... The verse concludes: *but they shall not come near, and the people shall not go up with him.* The pronoun *they* refers to Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders (mentioned in the preceding verse). Moses alone ascends to the mountaintop

to encounter *YHVH* and these others go partway up, while the people stay at the foot of the mountain. See *Zohar* 2:79b; above, [note 105](#), and end of [note 108](#).

The reading אִתְּכֶשְׂרוּ (*ittakhsharu*), “they became worthy,” appears in N10, Cremona, and Galante. Various other witnesses read אִתְּבַשְׂרוּ (*itbassarū*), “they were informed, given the glad tidings, assured.”

[113.](#) ***They saw the God of Israel...*** This verse describes a vision experienced by Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel. It reads in full: *They saw the God of Israel, and beneath His feet was like a fashioning of sapphire pavement and like the essence of heaven for purity.*

[114.](#) ***This stature of yours resembles a palm...*** Palm trees are dioecious: male and female flowers grow on separate trees. Male flowers produce pollen, while female flowers develop into fruit. As early as 2300 B.C.E., Mesopotamian farmers had learned to hang a male flower in a female tree to enhance pollination. Here Rabbi Yehudah’s point is that *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) is called *palm* because She and Her male partner (the blessed Holy One) are interdependent and inseparable, becoming fruitful only by joining together.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 40(41):1; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:11; *BT Pesahim* 56a; *Bahir* 117 (172), 139 (198), and Scholem’s note, ad loc.; Rashi on *Pesahim* 56a, s.v. *Rav Aḥa*; *Tosafot, Menahot* 71a, s.v. *markivin*; *Zohar* 1:82a; 2:37b; 3:16a, 135b (*IR*), 143b (*IR*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 128. On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 24, n. 68](#).

[115.](#) ***Nadab and Abihu...*** Aaron’s two eldest sons. See Exodus 6:23.

[116.](#) ***אֵת (Et), precisely...*** The verse reads *They saw אֵת (et) the God of Israel*. Grammatically, the word אֵת (*et*) is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. However, already in rabbinic times, Naḥum of Gimzo

and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that the presence of *et* in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, as often in the *Zohar*, תא (*et*) alludes to *Shekhinah*, who comprises the totality of divine speech, the entire alphabet from א (*alef*) to ת (*tav*).

In this verse, according to Rabbi Yehudah, the word *et* indicates that they saw *Shekhinah*. He equates this name of *Shekhinah* with *from afar*, which also alludes to Her (as explained above, [note 108](#)). Since *et* often amplifies the meaning of a verse, Rabbi Yehudah adds that here it includes “what is within Her,” namely the higher *sefirot* reflected in *Shekhinah*.

On *et*, see BT *Pesaḥim* 22b, *Ḥagigah* 12a-b; *Zohar* 1:15b, 247a; 2:81b, 90a. On *et* in this verse, see *Zohar* 2:66b.

[117.](#) But look at what is written... If the phrase *the God of Israel* refers to *Shekhinah*, there is a problem with this verse in Ezekiel. Since *Shekhinah* can also be referred to as תייה (*ha-ḥayyah*), *the living being*, how can the prophet write *She is ha-ḥayyah, the living being, that I saw beneath the God of Israel?* Who is this *ḥayyah*?

On *Shekhinah* as *ḥayyah*, see Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 508-9; *Zohar* 1:12b, 16a, 21a, 34b, 46b-47a, 211a, 242a; 2:48b, 242a; 3:39b, 46b; *ZḤ* 9b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 51; idem, *Commentary on the Ten Sefirot*, 338b.

[118.](#) The small ḥayyah... *Shekhinah* is the supreme *ḥayyah*, while the small *ḥayyah* and the extremely small *ḥayyah* are angelic powers beneath Her. Thus, the verse in Exodus refers to *Shekhinah* as *the God of Israel*, while Ezekiel refers to the small *ḥayyah* beneath Her.

On various levels of *ḥayyot*, “living beings,” see *Zohar* 1:211a (Vol. 3, pp. 297-98, n. 205); 2:48b (Vol. 4, p. 234, n. 131), 177b-178a (*SdT*s).

[119.](#) a fashioning of sapphire pavement... Alluding to the *sapphires* with which God will one day rebuild the

Temple.

120. ***Yet against the nobles...*** The context (Exodus 24:10-11) reads: *They saw the God of Israel, and beneath His feet was like a fashioning of sapphire pavement and like the essence of heaven for purity. Yet against the nobles of the Children of Israel He did not send forth His hand—they beheld God, and they ate and drank.* In both verses the pronoun *they* refers to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders (mentioned in the preceding verse), but here (following a midrashic tradition) the *Zohar* focuses on Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's two eldest sons. Although they dared to gaze upon God, they were not punished here, but rather later when they *brought forward alien fire before YHVH* (Leviticus 10:1-3).

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:9, discussing the arrogance of Nadab and Abihu: "*Yet against the nobles of the Children of Israel He did not send forth His hand....* Rabbi Pinḥas said, 'From here it may be inferred that they deserved to have a hand sent forth against them.' Rabbi Hosha'yah said, 'Did they take loaves up with them to Sinai, that it is written *They beheld God and they ate and drank?* Rather this teaches that they feasted their eyes on *Shekhinah*, like a person looking at his friend while eating and drinking.'

"Rabbi Yoḥanan said, 'Actual eating, as is written: *In the light of the king's face is life* (Proverbs 16:15).' Rabbi Tanḥuma said, 'This teaches that they acted brazenly, standing up and feasting their eyes on *Shekhinah*.'...

"At Mount Sinai they [namely Nadab and Abihu] received their death sentence. This may be compared to a king who was marrying off his daughter, when something blameworthy was discovered among the representatives of the groom's family. The king said, 'If I slay them now, I will confound my daughter's joy. Later my own joyous celebration will arrive, and it is better [to punish them] during my own joy and not during my daughter's joy.'

Similarly, the blessed Holy One said, 'If I slay Nadab and Abihu now, I will confound the joy of Torah. Later, My own joyous celebration [the erection of the Tabernacle] will arrive; it is better [to punish them] during My own joy and not during the joy of Torah.'

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 24:11; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:10; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 6, *Beha'alotekha* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 7-8, 13, *Beha'alotekha* 27; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:25; 15:24; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Exodus 24:11; Rashi on Exodus 24:10-11; *Zohar* 1:104a.

121. This statement is in praise of them... The simple sense of *they ate and drank* is that the nobles held a communion feast concluding the covenant. However, according to the midrashic view of Rabbi Hosha'yah (quoted in the preceding note), "This teaches that they feasted their eyes on *Shekhinah*." This interpretation implies that Nadab and Abihu acted presumptuously, but here Rabbi Yose insists that the Torah is praising them for feasting their eyes on the divine radiance.

On the simple sense of *they ate and drank*, see Rashbam, Ibn Ezra (long), Naḥmanides, Ḥizzequni on Exodus 24:11. Cf. Genesis 26:30; 31:54; Exodus 18:12. On the negative tone of "feasted their eyes on *Shekhinah*," see Rabbi Tanḥuma's formulation (in the preceding note): "They acted brazenly, standing up and feasting their eyes on *Shekhinah*." See *Tanḥuma, Beha'alotekha* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 13, *Beha'alotekha* 27; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 15:24; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:1. On the positive sense of feasting one's eyes on *Shekhinah*, see the following note.

122. They actually ate... In gazing upon God, Nadab and Abihu were truly nourished by the divine radiance. How sad that later they acted sinfully and were punished by death! See Leviticus 10:1-3.

See the view of Rabbi Yoḥanan (quoted in [note 120](#)): "[*And they ate and drank.*] Actual eating, as is said: *In the*

light of the king's face is life (Proverbs 16:15).”

See Ezra of Gerona (in Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 15); Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittahon*, 377; *Zohar* 1:104a; *ZH* 48d; Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 24:11; idem, *Kad ha-Qemaḥ*, 265; Recanati on Exodus 24:11; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 24:11, n. 105. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 17a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; *Zohar* 1:135a–b (*MhN*).

123. This covenant and Torah all happened at once... The sealing of the covenant (described in Exodus 24:4–8) was an integral part of the revelation at Mount Sinai.

According to the sequence in Exodus, the covenant was sealed after the giving of the Ten Commandments, but various rabbinic sources place the sealing beforehand.

See *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 19:10; 24:1; BT *Shabbat* 88a; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Exodus 19:20; 24:1; *Midrash Aggadah*, Exodus 24:1; Rashi on Exodus 19:11; 24:1, 4; Naḥmanides on Exodus 24:1; Galante. Cf. above, [note 86](#): “There is no earlier and later in the Torah.” For an extended discussion, see Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Exodus 24:1, n. 1; add., 313–16.

1. For Yah has chosen Jacob ... For Jacob has chosen Yah... Based on its parallelism, the simple sense of the verse is *For Yah has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel as His own treasure*. However, drawing on a midrashic reading, Rabbi Ḥiyya construes the verse as *For Jacob has chosen Yah for himself...*

See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 312; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 14:2; *Midrash Tehillim* 119:21; *Zohar* 1:161b.

God rules the entire the world, but He designated heavenly princes to govern the other nations, whereas only Israel is ruled directly by Him. See above, [p. 10](#), [n. 27](#).

2. מי זאת (Mi zot), Who is this?... The name *Mi*, *Who*, pertains to the Divine Mother, *Binah*, implying that She is “susceptible to questioning,” that is, a seeker may inquire about Her, unlike even higher realms, which are so inaccessible that they cannot even be questioned or explored. Still, one should not expect any clear or conclusive answers about the nature of *Binah*. Rather, the mystical name *Who* becomes a focus of meditation, as question turns into quest. See Shim'on Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:91a: “Concerning everything that cannot be grasped, its question constitutes its answer.”

Applying this sense of *Who* to the verse in Isaiah, Rabbi Shim'on transforms its question—*Who created these?*—into a declaration: מי (*Mi*), *Who* (namely *Binah*), *created these* (the lower *sefirot*, which being more revealed and accessible are designated as *these*).

The name *zot*, *this*, pertains to *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, who is always right here. She is the Divine Daughter, who joins with Her Mother, *Binah*. Each of them constitutes a world, and these two worlds unite “in a single bond.”

The statement “this is world and world” apparently alludes to a kabbalistic interpretation of the biblical phrase מן העולם ועד העולם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*) in Psalms 106:48. In biblical Hebrew the word עולם (*olam*) means “eternity,” and

the simple sense of this phrase is *from eternity to eternity*; but the *Zohar* adopts the later sense of *olam*, “world,” and construes the phrase as *from world to world*—from the realm of *Binah* to the realm of *Shekhinah*.

On *Binah* as *Who*, see above, [p. 75](#), [n. 217](#). On *Shekhinah* as *this*, see *Zohar* 1:49b, 72a, 93b, 176b, 200b, 228a; 2:11b-12a, 37a-b, 39b, 50b-51a, 54b, 57a; 3:31a, 41a, 179b. On the verse in Isaiah, see above, [p. 77](#), [n. 220](#). The full verse, referring originally to the stars and constellations, reads: *Lift your eyes on high and see: Who created these? The one who brings forth their array by number and calls them each by name: because of His great might and vast power, not one is missing.*

On the interpretation of the phrase in Psalms as *from world to world*, see M *Berakhot* 9:5; *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:21; *Zohar* 1:34a, 153b, 158b, 210a, 247b, 248b; 2:22a, 53b, 144a; 3:145b, 285b, 297b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342-43.

3. הַנִּשְׁקָפָה (*Ha-nishqafah*), **Looking forth...** Rabbi Shim'on implies that the singular form, *ha-nishqafah*, matches the unified pair of *Binah* (*Mi*) and *Shekhinah* (*zot*).

4. **Like שַׁחַר (*shaḥar*), the dawn—like blackness...** Playing on שַׁחַר (*shaḥar*), *dawn*, and שַׁחֹר (*shaḥor*), “black.” Just as the deep darkness of night gradually yields dawn, so *Shekhinah* (symbolized by both night and the moon) progresses from a lack of light to the dim light of the moon’s crescent to the brilliance of the full moon, reflecting the light of the sun (which symbolizes Her spouse, *Tif’eret*). These stages appear in the verse in Psalms: *...like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun... ?*

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 6:10; *Zohar* 1:170a-b.

5. **Awesome—mighty to protect all...** Once She is fully illumined and empowered, *Shekhinah* protects Israel below. Jacob, who symbolizes *Tif’eret*, links *Shekhinah* with *Binah* (“the supernal world”). His marriage to Leah symbolizes his union with *Binah*, while his marriage to Rachel symbolizes

his union with *Shekhinah*. The twelve tribes who issued from him correspond to twelve supernal powers, or camps of angels accompanying *Shekhinah*.

On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the twelve tribes, see above, [p. 75](#), [n. 217](#).

6. Jacob ... infused love into two worlds... Having attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, Jacob was able to marry two sisters (Leah and Rachel), who respectively symbolize *Binah* and *Shekhinah*. His marriage below stimulated the union of *Tif'eret* with both females above. However, anyone else who marries two sisters impairs the sefirotic process, disrupting the union of the divine females and turning them against one another. The wording "expose nakedness above and below..." apparently applies to *Binah* ("above") and *Shekhinah* ("below"), but may also imply the sefirotic world above and the human family below.

The verse in Leviticus reads: *A woman with her sister you shall not take to become rivals, exposing her nakedness [i.e., of the second sister] in addition to her [i.e., the first sister] during her [i.e., the first sister's] lifetime.* In the Bible and generally in rabbinic literature, the idiom ערוה לגלות (*le-gallot ervah*), "to expose nakedness (or genitals)," means to initiate forbidden sexual relations. Here in the *Zohar*, however, it implies disrupting sefirotic union, thereby exposing the nakedness (or genitals) of the now-separated divine couple. See below, [note 975](#).

Medieval authorities offer various explanations for Jacob's marrying two sisters, including the fact that the Torah's prohibition had not yet been given. See *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 29:28; Ibn Ezra on Leviticus 18:26; idem, *Yesod Mora* 5; Naḥmanides on Genesis 26:5; idem on BT *Yevamot* 97b-98a; Ḥizzequni on Genesis 29:28; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod*, *Ḥagigah* 11b, p. 22c; Solomon ibn Adret, *Responsa*, 1:94; Yom Tov ben Abraham Ishbili on BT *Yevamot* 97b; David ibn Zimra, *Responsa*, 2:696. Cf. BT *Pesaḥim* 119b; *Zohar* 1:76a.

For the kabbalistic perspective, see *Zohar* 1:153b, 168a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 350-55; idem, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 40-41; Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 20:21; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1367-69; Idel, "Peirushim le-Sod ha-Arayot." For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

7. Now, you might say, 'Rachel was jealous of her sister'... If Rachel and Leah symbolize, respectively, *Shekhinah* and *Binah*, how can jealousy pertain to the *sefirot*? Rabbi Shim'on explains that *Shekhinah* yearns to be like Her mother, *Binah*.

"Elsewhere," namely in the Talmud (BT *Bava Batra* 21a), it is taught that "the jealousy of סופרים (*soferim*), scribes, increases wisdom," since each scribe tries to outperform the other. Here, too, there is jealousy of *soferim*—or rather, of ספרים (*sefarim*), "books," since *Shekhinah* and *Binah* can each be described as ספר (*sefer*), "a book." The sublime rivalry between *Shekhinah* and *Binah* stimulates an increased flow of emanation from *Hokhmah* (Wisdom).

On *Shekhinah* as *sefer*, see *Zohar* 2:56a, 70a, 200a. On *Binah* as *sefer*, see *Zohar* 2:137b. Rabbi Shim'on may also be playing here on ספירה (*sefirah*). Cf. *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1-2.

8. Nevertheless, even Jacob did not harmonize... Even Jacob could not establish complete harmony between his two wives, who were sisters. Anyone else who marries two sisters is certainly doomed to failure, and will cause estrangement between *Binah* and *Shekhinah*, who can be pictured as mother and daughter, as well as sisters.

"The world that is coming" often symbolizes *Binah*. See above, [p. 22](#), [n. 59](#). "Faith" can apply to the entire range of *sefirot*, or specifically to *Shekhinah*, who includes them all.

On exposing nakedness, see above, [note 6](#). On the prohibition against marrying mother and daughter, see Leviticus 18:17.

9. For Jacob has chosen Yah for himself... By marrying Leah, Jacob linked himself with *Binah* and with the

divine name *Yah* (which signifies *Hokhmah* and *Binah*). When he attained the name *Israel*, he united completely with *Shekhinah*, who includes all the divine riches and is known as סגולה (*segullah*), *treasure*.

On the verse in Psalms, see above, [note 1](#). Here, apparently, Rabbi Shim'on reads לסגולתו (*li-sgullato*) hyperliterally as *to his* [or: *His*] *own treasure* (rather than *as His own treasure*). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

10. when the blessed Holy One created the world... In the beginning of the process of emanation, God engraved the forms of the *sefirot*, which are symbolized by the various letters of the name יהוה (*YHVH*). “The upper world” corresponds to the highest *sefirot*, especially *Hokhmah* and *Binah*; “the lower world” corresponds to the seven lower *sefirot*, especially *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

See *Zohar* 1:38a (*Heikh*). On the sefirotic significance of the name יהוה (*YHVH*), see above, [p. 158](#), [n. 55](#).

11. The upper world was consummated... The first letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*) resembles a point and signifies the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, which emerged from the hidden unknowable realm of *Keter* and *Ein Sof*. This radiant point comprises the totality of all sefirotic lights. When it was stimulated by the hidden source, the subtle radiant point of *Hokhmah* generated the blissful radiance of *Binah*, which it then entered in rapture, hiding itself away.

On the upper world and the letter י (*yod*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10: “כי ביה יהוה צור עולמים” (*Ki be-Yah YHVH tsur olamim*), *For by Yah YHVH, an eternal rock* (Isaiah 26:4)—with these two letters the blessed Holy One created His world [thus interpreting the verse as *For ביה (be-Yah), by (the letters) ה י (yod, he), YHVH צר עולמים (tsar olamim), formed worlds*]. ... “This world’ was created by ה (*he*)... and ‘the world that is coming’ was created by י (*yod*).” As indicated above ([note 8](#)), “the world that is coming” often symbolizes *Binah*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that “the upper world [namely

Hokhmah and *Binah*] was consummated by mystery of the letter ך (yod).”

See JT *Hagigah* 2:1, 77c; BT *Menahot* 29b; *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva (Battei Midrashot, 2:363)*; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 1:1; *Tosafot on Berakhot* 51a, s.v. *zokheh*; *Zohar* 1:140a, 141b; 2:22b; 3:290b (IZ).

On the formulation “struck by one who did not strike, illumined by one who did not illumine,” see *Zohar* 1:15a: “Concealed of concealed struck its aura, which touched and did not touch this point.” See *OY*; Vol. 1, pp. 108–9, nn. 11, 16.

12. As for that radiance, bliss for concealed bliss...
Within the radiant bliss of *Binah* were fashioned the designs of six *sefirot* (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), known only to the subtle light of *Hokhmah* uniting with *Binah*. The radiance of *Binah*, issuing from *Hokhmah*, contains the roots of Judgment and is thus described as *fearsome* and *awesome*. As the six *sefirot* within Her gestated and grew numerous, Her womb expanded. When She gave birth to them, they constituted a complete totality of six, symbolized by the letter ם (vav), whose numerical value is six. This letter joined with the concealed world of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, symbolized by the letters ך ך (yod, he), the components of the name ך ך (Yah). Together, all three letters constitute the name ך ך ך (YHV).

Rabbi Shim'on reads the verse in Psalms as *For Jacob has chosen ך ך (Yah) for himself*, i.e., *Jacob*—symbolizing *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him, all six of them signified by the letter ם (vav)—*has chosen ך ך (Yah) for himself*, joining with *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, signified by the letters ך ך (yod, he) and the name ך ך (Yah).

The conclusion of the verse now describes all of Jacob's descendants: *Israel* לִּסְגֻלָּתוֹ (*li-sgullato*), *to His own treasure*, which implies that no other Israelites are permitted to ascend to the heights attained by Jacob; rather, they strive to reach the realm of *Shekhinah*, known as the divine *treasure*, filled with the riches of emanation. From within

that realm, they may draw on higher *sefirot* through contemplation (“secrecy of aspiration”), but not openly as did Jacob.

Finally, Rabbi Shim'on links this interpretation with the second verse of the Torah portion, which reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me* תרומה (*terumah*), *an offering*. The word *terumah* derives from the root רוּם (*rum*), “to rise,” and can be rendered: “raised contribution, offering, donation, gift.” Rabbi Shim'on apparently interprets the word hyperliterally as “raising,” or perhaps “rising,” alluding to contemplative ascent, or to *Shekhinah*, who rises through prayer to unite with *Tif'eret*. The verse now implies: *Have them take Me* [i.e., they may attain My higher realms by] *raising* [contemplative prayer, or by raising *Shekhinah* through prayer, or by means of *Shekhinah*, who is known as *rising*].

On the reading *Have them take Me* (understanding *Me* as the direct object), see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:13, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi: “As if it were possible, the blessed Holy One said, ‘Take Me and I will dwell among you.’ It is not written here *Have them take an offering*, but rather *Have them take Me* [as] *an offering*—‘It is Me you are taking!’”

See *Tanḥuma, Emor* 17; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 24; *Shemot Rabbah* 33:6. Cf. *Bahir* 66 (97). On *Shekhinah* as *terumah, an offering*, see below, [notes 18, 154, 170, 240, 282](#). On the wording *have them take Me an offering*, see below, [note 18](#); *Zohar* 2:134b, 140b.

On the name יהו (YHV), see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:13; Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 31–33. In the first sentence the word אתרקימו (*itreqimu*), “were embroidered,” recalls the rabbinic expression שפיר מרוקם (*shafir meruqqam*), “a fully fashioned fetus.” See M *Bekhorot* 8:1.

13. *Have them take Me an offering...* The full verse reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him,*

you shall take My offering. These offerings are donations of material for the construction of the Dwelling (or Tabernacle).

14. *מה (Mah), How, abundant Your goodness...* Rabbi Yehudah, relying on the Holy Lamp (Rabbi Shim'on), explains that *מה (mah)*, "what, how," refers to *Shekhinah* (the lower world), while *מי (mi)*, "who," refers to *Binah* (the upper world).

See *Tanḥuma, Qorah* 12: "Now, Israel, *מה (mah)*, what, does *YHVH* your God ask of you? (Deuteronomy 10:12)... Read [the word *מה (mah)*, what] as *מאה (me'ah)*, one hundred, referring to one hundred blessings [that one should recite each day]."

Here the number one hundred alludes to the ten *sefirot*, each of which contains ten aspects. All one hundred are included in *Shekhinah*, who is therefore called *מה (mah)*, implying *מאה (me'ah)*, one hundred.

See BT *Menaḥot* 43b; Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *mah*; Buber, *Midrash Tanḥuma*, intro, 87b. The wording "Do not read the word as *מה (mah)*, what, but rather *מאה (me'ah)*, one hundred" appears frequently. See, e.g., *Seder Amram Ga'on, birkhot ha-shaḥar*; Isaac Alfasi on *Berakhot* 44b; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *me'ah*; Solomon ben Isaac, *Siddur Rashi*, 1; idem, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, p. 318; Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, p. 3; *Tosafot, Menaḥot* 43b, s.v. *sho'el*; Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 1:28; Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, *Peirushei Siddur ha-Tefillah*, 1:1; Zedekiah Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 1; *Zohar* 3:179a (RM), 254a (RM); Asher ben Yeḥiel, *Berakhot* 9:24; *Kolbo*, 1; Aaron ben Jacob ha-Kohen, *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, 9b; David Abudarham, *Sefer Abudarham*, p. 29; Rabbinovicz, *Diqduqei Soferim, Menaḥot* 43b, p. 108, n. 2; Buber, "Divrei Shelomo," 270–72.

On *Shekhinah* as *mah*, see *Zohar* 1:b, 7a. On *Binah* as *mi*, see above, [note 2](#). On the verse in Psalms, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 307; *Zohar* 1:7a, 46a, 47a; 2:220a–b; 3:88a,

173b, 264a. On the Holy Lamp as the title of Rabbi Shim'on, see above, [p. 159](#), [n. 58](#).

15. Further, why is it called *mah*, What?... The entire flow of emanation pours into *Shekhinah*, where it is finally revealed. Yet even here, the spiritual seeker cannot comprehend the divine essence and is left wondering: "What have you seen? What do you know?" So this name fits *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *For you saw no image on the day that YHVH spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire.*

16. Abundant Your goodness—Foundation of the World... The phrase *abundant Your goodness* alludes to *Yesod* (Foundation), who conveys the rich stream of emanation to *Shekhinah* (known as *House of Israel*).

The primordial light, which issued on the first day of Creation, is called simply *good* (Genesis 1:3), without any qualification; whereas here *How abundant is Your goodness*, since the male potency of *Yesod* (known as *abundant goodness*) joins with the female power of *Shekhinah* (known as *מַה* [*mah*], *how*, or "what").

For other interpretations of the contrast between *good* and *abundant* [or: *mostly*] *goodness*, see *OY*; Galante; *MmD*. On *Yesod* as Foundation of the World, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 215](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:7a.

17. That You have hidden... The light of *Yesod* is concealed like the primordial light.

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7: "Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon said, 'With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, one could gaze and see from one end of the universe to the other. When the Holy One foresaw the corruption of the generation of Enosh and the generation of the Flood, He hid it away from them, as is written: *The light of the wicked is withheld* (Job 38:15). Where did He hide it? In the Garden of Eden. *Light is sown for the righteous, joy for the upright in heart* (Psalms 97:11).'"

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:6; 41:3; BT *Hagigah* 12a; *Shemot Rabbah* 35:1; *Tanḥuma, Shemini*, 9; *Bahir* 97-98 (147); *Zohar* 1:7a, 31b-32a, 45b-46a, 47a, 59a, 121b (*MhN*), 131a, 203b; 2:35a, 78b, 147b, 148b-149a, 220a-b; 3:88a, 173b; *ZH* 85a-b (*MhN, Rut*).

According to *Zohar* 2:166b-167a, the primordial light is hidden, or sown, by *Yesod* in the Garden of *Shekhinah*, yielding fruit each day to nourish the world.

18. That You have wrought... The creative power conveyed by *Yesod* to *Shekhinah* fashions the lower worlds and generates all souls. The opening verse of Genesis alludes to the emanation of the divine couple, symbolized by *heaven and earth*. Their mysterious union engendered the משכן (*mishkan*), “Dwelling, Tabernacle,” which thus reflects the structure of the *sefirot* and of the entire cosmos. In the verse in Exodus, God instructs Moses to ask the Israelites for a donation of materials for constructing the Dwelling, and the phrase לִי תְרוּמָה (*li terumah*), *Me an offering*, alludes to *Yesod* or *Tif’eret (Me)*, and *Shekhinah (an offering)*, “joined as one.”

On the kabbalistic interpretation of Genesis 1:1, see *Zohar* 1:15a. For various interpretations of its precise significance here, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *MmD*. On the phrase *li terumah, Me an offering*, see above, [note 12](#); *Zohar* 2:134b, 140b.

On the correspondence between the Dwelling and the cosmos, see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 2; BT *Berakhot* 55a; *Midrash Tadshe* 2; Naḥmanides on Exodus 31:2; *Zohar* 1:129a (*MhN*); 2:129b, 140b, 149a, 162b, 220b-221a, 222b, 231b, 235b, 277a; *ZH* 42d; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:872-74.

19. Rabbi Shim’on, Rabbi El’azar...on the plain by the Sea of Ginnosar... They were sitting on the fertile plain on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Ginnosar (Gennesaret). Rabbi Shim’on’s appreciation of nature, linked with his command to engage in Torah, contrasts sharply with the statement in

M *Avot* 3:7 (attributed, in some versions, to Rabbi Shim'on): "One who is walking on the road and studying, and interrupts his study and says, 'How beautiful is this tree! How beautiful is this ploughed field!'—Scripture considers him liable to the death penalty." Here, instead of threatening the study of Torah, nature inspires new insights.

On the fertility of the plain of Ginnosar, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 355; *Bereshit Rabbah* 99:12; BT *Berakhot* 44a. For a famous story about Rabbi Elisha son of Avuyah "sitting and learning on the plain of Ginnosar," see JT *Hagigah* 2:1, 77b.

On shade as a description of the Dwelling (or Tabernacle), see *Shemot Rabbah* 34:1. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 55a; *Zohar* 2:222a, 223b.

In the long section beginning here (and extending to [p. 336](#)), Rabbi Shim'on and these three Companions discuss several mysteries of the Dwelling and mostly mysteries of prayer. The kabbalist Joseph Angelet identified this section as *Idra de-Vei Mashkena* (The Assembly of the Dwelling), but Yehuda Liebes has argued that the real *Idra de-Vei Mashkena* disappeared.

See *Zohar* 2:214a; 3:127b (*IR*); Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 28a, 32a-b, 33c; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 386, n. 14; idem, *Kabbalah*, 215; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:4; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 101-2; idem, "Ha-Mashiaḥ shel ha-Zohar," 153-57 and n. 238; idem, *Studies in the Zohar*, 35-37, 177-78, n. 109; Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 92; above, [p. 150](#), [n. 33](#); below, [note 47](#).

20. King Solomon made himself a pavilion... In midrashic literature this *pavilion* is interpreted as referring to the Dwelling (or Tabernacle) and also the Temple in Jerusalem (built by Solomon). According to Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai, "הַהֵיכָל (Ha-heikhal), The Temple, below [i.e., the earthly sanctuary] was directly facing the Temple above [the heavenly Temple]" (*Tanḥuma*, *Pequdei* 2). Here, Rabbi

Shim'on sees the *pavilion* as alluding to *Shekhinah*, “היכלא (heikhla), the palace, below,” who resembles *Binah*, “the upper palace.”

In the Garden of *Shekhinah*, God delights in the souls of the righteous who have passed away. These souls, abiding in *Shekhinah*, gaze above to the realm of *Binah*, known as Delightfulness of *YHVH*, and are nourished by streams of balsam issuing from there.

Pavilion renders אפריון (*appiryon*), a biblical hapax legomenon of uncertain meaning, often translated “palanquin” but apparently referring to a stationary structure. On the midrashic interpretation of *appiryon* as referring to the Dwelling and the Temple, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:2; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* and *Targum* on Song of Songs 3:9. See *Zohar* 1:29a.

On the connection between the מִשְׁכָּן (*mishkan*), *Dwelling*, and *Shekhinah*, see *Tanḥuma, Naso* 22, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi, “Once the *mishkan* was erected, *Shekhinah* descended and settled among them.”

The name Eden is often associated with (and may derive from) עֵדֶן (*eden*), “delight.” On the relation between the Garden of Eden and *Shekhinah*, see *OY*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:593–94.

On God delighting in the souls of the righteous, see *Zohar* 1:82b; 3:84a. On the delight of the righteous in the hereafter, see BT *Berakhot* 17a: “A pearl in the mouth of Rav: ‘In the world that is coming, there is no eating or drinking or procreation or business or jealousy or hatred or competition; rather, the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, basking in the radiance of *Shekhinah*.’”

The phrase נְעֻם יְהוָה (*no'am YHVH*), “delightfulness (or beauty, loveliness, pleasantness, kindness) of *YHVH*,” appears in Psalms 27:4. In the *Zohar*, *no'am* designates *Binah*. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 8:4; *Zohar* 1:197b, 219a; 2:31a–b, 57b, 170b; 3:161b; *ZH* 85b (*MhN, Rut*).

According to rabbinic sources, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. See JT *Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 62:2; BT *Ta'anit* 25a; *Zohar* 1:4b, 7a, 88a (ST), 176a; 2:146b, 175b, 177a (SdTs); 3:131a (IR), 181a.

21. אפרסמון (*Afarsemon*), balsam... אפריון (*Appiryon*), *pavilion*... *Afarsemon*, “balsam,” symbolizes *Binah*, the upper palace; *appiryon*, *pavilion*, symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the palace below. (See the preceding note.) Rabbi Shim'on indicates that unlike the word אפרסמון (*afarsemon*), “balsam,” the word אפריון (*appiryon*), *pavilion*, lacks the letter ס (*samekh*), which suggests סמך (*semakh*), “support.” The *appiryon*, *pavilion* (namely *Shekhinah*), needs the support and nourishment of *afarsemon*, “balsam” (namely *Binah*). The structural shape of the letter ס (*samekh*) signifies its ability to support, as does the final ם (*mem*), another symbol of *Binah*. Further, like the letter *samekh*, the normal letter ם (*mem*) is also lacking in the word אפריון (*appiryon*) and present in אפרסמון (*afarsemon*).

On final *mem* as symbolizing *Binah*, see *Zohar* 1:34b; 2:135a, 180a; 3:66b, 156b, 285b; *ZH* 5c (SO), 38c, 41d, 72b-d (*ShS*).

22. What is the difference between them?... Between these two closed letters, both symbolizing the concealed realm of *Binah*. The letter ס (*samekh*) symbolizes *Binah* when She ascends to Her source in the primordial round point of *Hokhmah* and encloses Herself within. Afterward, when She returns to nurse Her sefirotic children (from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*), She assumes the form of the final letter ם (*mem*), whose shape is רביעא (*revi'a*), “quadrilateral,” alluding to the fact that She is now רביעא (*revi'a*), “crouching,” over Her children. The four sides of the final letter ם (*mem*) allude to the “four directions of the world,” which symbolize *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif'eret*, and *Shekhinah*.

23. אפרסמון (*afarsemon*), balsam... אפריון (*appiryon*), *pavilion*... *Binah's* אפרסמון (*afarsemon*) and *Shekhinah's* אפריון (*appiryon*) share five letters: א פ ר ו ן (*alef, pe, resh, vav, final nun*).

Instead of אפרסמון (*afarsemon*)'s ס (*samekh*) and מ (*mem*), אפריון (*appiryon*) has a י (*yod*)—a fitting substitution since the numerical values of *samekh* (sixty) and *mem* (forty) total one hundred, which equals the value of *yod* (ten) squared, as well as the totality of one hundred blessings. The letter י (*yod*) stands for יסוד (*Yesod*), the divine phallus and site of the covenant of circumcision. *Yesod* receives the entire flow of blessing issuing from *Binah* and conveys this to the *appiryon* of *Shekhinah*.

“Six aspects” refers to six *sefirot* issuing from *Binah* (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), while “four directions of the world” apparently refers to the quartet of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif’eret*, and *Shekhinah*. On the one hundred blessings, see above, [note 14](#).

24. Those rivers issue... Souls of the righteous who have departed from this world abide in the Garden of *Shekhinah* and are nourished by rivers of balsam issuing from *Binah*. Souls who are still embodied in this world ascend to this Garden (or *pavilion*) at night while their bodies lie asleep and are nourished by the radiance of *Shekhinah*. They emit the fragrance of their good deeds enacted on earth and absorb the fragrance of the Garden.

The verse in Genesis describes Isaac smelling the fragrance of the garments worn by his son Jacob when the latter sought Isaac’s blessing: *He smelled the fragrance of his garments and blessed him and said, “See, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field blessed by YHVH.”*

See *Tanḥuma, Toledot* 11: “When Jacob entered, the fragrance of the Garden of Eden, a pleasing fragrance, entered with him, and the mind of that righteous one [i.e., Isaac] was settled, as is said: *See, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field blessed by YHVH*. So he began to bless him.”

Here in the *Zohar*, both *field* and Garden symbolize *Shekhinah*. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:22; BT *Ta’anit* 29b; *Zohar* 1:142b–143a; 2:39a–b (Vol. 4, pp. 187–88, n. 172), 44a.

[25.](#) **King Solomon made himself—for himself...** How can the verse say that King Solomon made the pavilion for himself, when it is the souls of the righteous who find delight there? Well, King Solomon symbolizes the blessed Holy One, who delights in these souls and in *Shekhinah* (the pavilion). See *Zohar* 1:29a.

[26.](#) **King שלמה (Shelomo), Solomon...** King Solomon symbolizes the masculine divine potency, spanning the entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* and *Binah* through *Yesod*. This entire potency (known as World of the Male) contains (or “possesses”) *Yesod*, who is called “peace” because He mediates between the right and left poles of the *sefirot*, or because He unites *Tiferet* with *Shekhinah*. See BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim’on son of Halafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.”

Whereas *King Solomon* signifies the World of the Male, *the king* (with no name specified) signifies King Messiah, namely *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom) and also World of the Female.

The distinction between *King Solomon* and “*the king*, anonymous” derives from the Midrash on Song of Songs. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1): “Rabbi Yudan and Rabbi Levi said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, ‘Wherever in this scroll [the Song of Songs] the expression *King Solomon* appears, the text speaks of King Solomon, whereas *the king*, anonymous, connotes the blessed Holy One.’ The Rabbis say, ‘Wherever *King שלמה (Shelomo), Solomon*, appears, the text speaks of the King who possesses שלום (*shalom*), peace [i.e., the blessed Holy One], whereas *the king*, anonymous, connotes the Assembly of Israel.’” In the *Zohar*, Assembly of Israel alludes to *Shekhinah* (see above, [p. 24](#), [n. 68](#)).

See *Zohar* 1:15b, 29a-b. On the phrase “the King who possesses peace,” see *Sifra, Shemini, millu’im*, 15, 44c; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:2, 3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1), 1:12 (on 1:2); *Zohar* 1:5b, 29a, 184a, 226b, 248b;

2:5a (*MhN*), 14a (*MhN*), 100b, 132a-b, 143b-144b, 164a; 3:10b, 20a, 60a, 73b; *ZH* 62b (*ShS*); *OY*.

On *Shekhinah* as the Messiah, see *Zohar* 1:84a, 238a; 2:164b; 3:19b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 343; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 71-72 (90-91). On the World of the Male, see above, [p. 48](#), [n. 132](#).

27. From the trees of Lebanon—planted trees... *Lebanon* symbolizes *Hokhmah*, while its cedars are the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* to *Yesod*, which began as saplings in the higher sefirotic realm and were later transplanted and eventually fashioned into the *pavilion*.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:1: “*YHVH Elohim planted a garden in Eden* (Genesis 2:8)... As is written: *The trees of YHVH are sated, cedars of Lebanon that He planted* (Psalms 104:16). Rabbi Hanina said, ‘They resembled antennae of grasshoppers, and the blessed Holy One uprooted them, transplanting them in the Garden of Eden.’”

See Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush Shir ha-Shirim*, 504; *Zohar* 1:31a, 35a-b, 37a, 45b, 162b; 2:177a (*SdT*s); 3:4b, 217b; *Massekhet Atsilut*, 2.

28. From the trees of Lebanon—six days of Creation... The six primordial days, namely the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, each emanated uniquely into *Shekhinah*, generating creation day by day.

29. First arrangement: Primordial light... The primordial light of the first day of Creation symbolizes *Hesed*. This light entered the *pavilion* of *Shekhinah* by means of *Yesod* (Foundation), impregnating Her, and *Shekhinah* produced an image of the light.

Rabbi Shim'on asks why the verse in Genesis reads *And there was light*, rather than *And it was so*, as with nearly all the other commands of Creation. He explains that the repetition of the word *light* indicates that this light resembled the primordial light.

The phrase “performing its conjugal role” renders עבד שמושא (*aveid shimmusha*), “performed (its) function.” Here

this phrase carries an erotic connotation, based on the rabbinic idiomatic extension of the root שמש (*shms*)—literally “to minister, serve, perform, use.” See below, [pp. 203–4](#) at [n. 49](#); *Zohar* 3:83a–b (*Piq*).

On the primordial light being hidden away, see above, [note 17](#). On the wording *And there was light*, see *Bahir* 131 (190); Nahmanides on Genesis 1:3; *Zohar* 1:22b (*TZ*); 2:167a; *TZ* 30, 74a.

[30. Second arrangement: Division of waters...](#) The division of waters on the second day of Creation symbolizes the division within *Shekhinah* between the flow of *Hesed* on the right and that of *Gevurah* on the left. This division was made by a fiery flow from *Gevurah*. Then *Shekhinah* produced an image of the dividing force, which became *the firmament* described in Genesis.

[31. Third arrangement: A certain third day...](#) This day of Creation symbolizes *Tif'eret*, third of the lower *sefirot*, who emanates from, and harmonizes between, the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. *Tif'eret* united with the *pavilion* of *Shekhinah*, conveying to Her the fruitful flow of emanation and leaving His image within Her. She, in turn, replicated His image and generated fruitfulness in the lower worlds.

See Genesis 1:11: *God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, fruit trees bearing fruit of each kind, that has its seed within it upon the earth.” And it was so.*

[32. Fourth arrangement: Radiance of the sun...](#) The creation of the sun on the fourth day symbolizes the radiance of *Tif'eret*, conveyed by the following *sefirah*, *Netsah*. However, *Netsah* could not fulfill its conjugal role until the fifth day, when it was joined by its partner *Hod*. Only then did *Shekhinah* emit the radiance of *Netsah*, and generate a similar radiance.

[33. Fifth arrangement: A streaming swarming of waters...](#) The swarming of waters on the fifth day symbolizes the flow of *Hod*, fifth of the lower *sefirot*, which

conveyed the radiance of *Netsah* (from the fourth day) to *Shekhinah*, generating many species. *Hod* “performed more fully than all other days” because it performed both for itself and for *Netsah*. “Yet all remained suspended until the sixth day,” when *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth*) brought forth *living beings of each kind*.

See Genesis 1:20: *Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living creatures and let birds fly over the earth across the firmament of heaven*. Genesis 1:24, which relates to the sixth day, reads: *Let the earth bring forth living beings of each kind and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth of each kind. And it was so*. Earth symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

34. Sixth arrangement... the day that perfected the entire pavilion... The sixth day symbolizes *Yesod*, sixth of the lower *sefirot*, who was arrayed in all the preceding sefirotic days and conveyed them to the *pavilion* of *Shekhinah*, joining all of them with Her in unified passion, fulfilling and perfecting Her.

Spirits and souls are generated by the union of *Yesod* with *Shekhinah*. The “many beautiful maidens” are the angelic powers accompanying and adorning *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 1:159a, 194a (quoting Genesis 41:2 and Esther 2:9); 2:227b, 260b (*Heikh*), quoting Esther 2:9; 3:58b-59a; *ZH* 64a (*ShS*), quoting Esther 2:9.

35. Then this pavilion was sanctified... As the sixth day of Creation turned into evening, *Shekhinah* was sanctified with the holiness of Sabbath and adorned with Her sefirotic crowns. She was then named Sabbath, consummation of the entire process of Creation, unifying all worlds.

Now the verse in Song of Songs applies: *King Solomon* [namely World of the Male] *made himself a pavilion from the trees of Lebanon* [namely the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*]. See *Zohar* 1:29a; above, [notes 26-28](#).

Sabbath, consummation of all of the *sefirot*, is itself a divine name. See *Zohar* 2:88b, 204a; Moses de León, *Sefer*

ha-Rimmon, 332–35; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 117; TZ 19, 40b; OY; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1223–26.

36. One who attains this pavilion... By attaining *Shekhinah*, one attains all the *sefirot*, which become manifest within Her.

Sitting beneath the trees on the plain of Ginnosar (see above at [note 19](#)), Rabbi Shim'on informs his Companions that they are actually sitting in the divine shade within the *pavilion* of *Shekhinah*, whose presence fills and animates the world. He encourages them to offer words of Torah, adorning this place and drawing further divine shelter.

On the verse in Song of Songs, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:3. On the Dwelling (or Tabernacle) as shade, see above, [note 19](#).

37. Have them take Me an offering... These offerings are donations of material for the construction of the Dwelling (or Tabernacle). Rabbi Shim'on applies the biblical command to all ways of serving God and understands ויקחו (*ve-viqhu*), *have them take*, as *have them purchase* [or: *acquire*], i.e., one who serves God should not try to do it for free (“emptily, with nothing”), but should rather pay for it according to his capacity.

On paying for serving God, see 2 Samuel 24:24–25. The context in Deuteronomy (16:16–17) reads: *Three times a year all your males shall appear in the presence of the YHVH your God in the place that He chooses: on the Festival of Unleavened Bread and on the Festival of Weeks and on the Festival of Booths, and he shall not appear in the presence of YHVH empty-handed. Each according to the gift of his hand, according to the blessing of YHVH your God that He has given you.*

38. Now, you might say... According to rabbinic interpretation, *wine and milk* symbolize Torah, so it seems from the verse in Isaiah that one should be engaged with God *without cost*. Rabbi Shim'on explains that the study of Torah and the pursuit of the knowledge of God are

exceptions, available for free to anyone who expends the effort. However, other ways of serving God, which involve action, require payment.

On *wine and milk* symbolizing Torah, see BT *Ta'anit* 7a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:2; *Devarim Rabbah* 7:3; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer*, 2, p. 33, n. 9; *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 49:12; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Isaiah 480; *Zohar* 1:240a.

On Torah being available for free (based on the verse in Isaiah), see *Tanḥuma, Vayaqhel* 8; Radak on the verse. Cf. BT *Nedarim* 36b-37a. The verse in Isaiah opens: *Ho, all who thirst, come to the waters! You who have no money, come, buy and eat!*

39. In the Book of Sorcery, taught to King Solomon... By the demon Ashmedai. The impure spirit costs nothing and foists itself upon people; but in order to remove it, one must pay in full for the necessary procedure.

On Solomon and Ashmedai, see BT *Gittin* 68a-b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 4:165-72; above, [p. 112](#), [n. 316](#). On the book that he taught to King Solomon, see *Zohar* 3:19a, 43a, 77a, 194b.

40. But the Holy Spirit is not so... Unlike the impure spirit, the Holy Spirit can only be acquired by intense effort and full payment; even so, there is no guarantee that one will thereby gain it. Furthermore, even if one does attain it, unless he continues to live virtuously it disappears.

41. ויקחו (ve-yiqḥu), Have them purchase... See above, [note 37](#).

42. whoever overpowers his impulse is called man See BT *Avodah Zarah* 19a: "*Happy is the man who reveres YHVH* (Psalms 112:1)... Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi said, '*Happy is one who overpowers his impulse like a man.*'" Cf. M *Avot* 4:1, in the name of Ben Zoma: "Who is mighty? One who subdues his impulse."

43. Whose heart impels him... Based on a midrashic interpretation, Rabbi Shim'on understands *heart* as the

divine heart. The truest offering comes from one who is impelled by God's love.

The verse in Psalm 73 reads: *God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever*. This serves as a proof-text for the idea that God is Israel's heart. See *Eikhah Rabbah, Petihta* 16; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:2. Here, Rabbi Shim'on extends the divine sense of *heart* to various other verses.

The verse in Psalm 27 reads: *Of You, my heart said, "Seek My face."* Here, Rabbi Shim'on reads it as *To You he said, "My heart,"* meaning that King David called God *my heart*. See *Zohar* 2:218a; 3:93b.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *All the days of the poor are wretched, but a good-hearted person has a continuous feast*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on refers to God as *good-hearted*. See *Zohar* 2:197b, 259b.

The verse in Ruth reads: *Boaz ate and drank and his heart was glad*. According to *Rut Rabbah* 5:15, Boaz's *heart was glad* because he blessed God for the food that he had eaten. Based on this tradition, Rabbi Shim'on reinterprets the verse as *He gladdened his heart*, that is, Boaz *gladdened* God by blessing Him. See *Zohar* 2:218a; *ZH* 86c, 87c (both *MhN, Rut*).

44. How do we know... If a person displays passion to strive for God, this indicates that the Divine Presence already dwells within him. It is worth whatever it may cost to gain such a person as an associate or a learning partner.

See *M Avot* 1:6, in the name of Yehoshu'a son of Perahyah: "Provide yourself with a teacher and acquire for yourself a companion." The term חבר (*haver*), "companion," means here "a companion for study, a fellow-student."

45. That virtuous one should pursue a sinner... Just as one should procure a virtuous companion, so should a virtuous person procure a sinner and lead him back to God, whatever it may cost. One who accomplishes this forms, or transforms, the sinner's soul and creates him anew. This

constitutes the greatest praise of God because evil is vanquished and the sinner restored to holiness.

On the human power to form souls, see the midrashic interpretation of Genesis 12:5: *and the souls they had made in Haran*. According to the simple sense of this verse, נפש (*nefesh*), *souls*, means *persons*, and אָשׁוּ (asu), *made*, means *acquired*, referring to the slaves that Abraham and Sarah had acquired. However, the Midrash offers a radically different reading. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 39:14: “*And the souls they had made in Haran*. Rabbi El’azar said in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Zimra, ‘If all the nations assembled to create a single mosquito, they could not cast a soul into it, yet you say: *and the souls they had made?*! Rather, these are converts. Then the verse should read: [*and the souls*] *they had converted*. Why *they had made?* To teach you that whoever draws a Gentile near is as though he created him.’ Then the verse should read: *he* [Abraham] *had made*. Why *they had made?* Rabbi Hunya said, ‘Abraham converted the men, and Sarah the women.’”

See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 32; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:3; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 12; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12; B, 26; *Zohar* 1:78b–79b, 130a (*MhN*); 2:147b, 198a; 3:168a; *ZH* 25a (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 99b, in the name of Resh Lakish: “Whoever teaches Torah to his friend’s son is regarded by Scripture as though he had made him, as is said: *And the souls they had made in Haran* (Genesis 12:5).” See BT *Sanhedrin* 19b.

On Aaron leading sinners back to God (based on Malachi 2:6), see *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 8:10, 83c; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12. Malachi 2:1–9 is addressed to the priests of the tribe of Levi, of whom Aaron was the first.

46. He enters twelve gates... Twelve heavenly gates. See *Zohar* 1:92a; 3:170a. Cf. *ZH* 18d (*MhN*), mentioning thirteen such gates.

The passage in Psalms reads: *Mighty in the land his seed will be, the generation of the upright will be blessed*.

Wealth and riches in his home, and his righteousness stands forever. Light dawns in darkness for the upright; gracious, compassionate, and just.

47. In the upper chamber... Rabbi Shim'on moves to a discussion of the mysteries of prayer, which eventually relates to the theme of transforming the sinner.

The three modes of color appear in a "chamber," namely in *Shekhinah*, the abode of the other *sefirot*. The flame in which the colors flash issues from *Hesed*, the divine right hand situated in the south. The three colors themselves correspond to the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, or to the lower triad of *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*. The sun symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who illumines *Shekhinah* through *Yesod*. The qualities and paths of each color are described below.

"Chamber" renders אדרא (*iddera*), "threshing floor, barn, chamber." Elsewhere in the *Zohar* this word sometimes applies to the dramatic assembly with Rabbi Shim'on described in *Zohar* 3:127b-145a (known as *Idra Rabba*, "The Great Assembly"), as well as to the location of the assembly and the composition entitled *Idra Rabba*. On *Idra de-Vei Mashkena* (The Assembly of the Dwelling), see above, [note 19](#). On the various connotations of the term *iddera*, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, 93-107.

48. One color, the one ascending, emerges... This color reflects the quality of *Hesed*, symbolized by pure white. It enters the flame, whose own color barely tinges it, and then rests on the top of the chamber of *Shekhinah*.

In the daily morning liturgy, the blessing "Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who has redeemed Israel" immediately precedes the *Amidah*, the "standing" prayer—so central that it is known simply as Prayer. It is considered meritorious to join the blessing of Redemption to this prayer without any interruption or pause. Here, this joining is seen as the beginning of the union of the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, which is consummated during the *Amidah*. Fittingly,

this prayer is recited silently, or in a whisper, and the angels above also fall silent.

According to BT *Berakhot* 10b (in the name of Rav), when King Hezekiah said to God *I have done what is good in Your eyes*, this meant that he had joined Redemption to Prayer. Here, *good* alludes to *Yesod* (the divine phallus and extension of *Tif'eret*), also known as Righteous One. All the sefirotic limbs join with *Yesod* before uniting with *Shekhinah*.

According to rabbinic tradition, Israel's prayers are woven into crowns, which are placed on God's head. See *Shemot Rabbah* 21:4: "Rabbi Pinhas said in the name of Rabbi Me'ir, and Rabbi Yirmeyah said in the name of Rabbi Abba, 'When Israel prays, you do not find them all praying as one, but rather each assembly prays on its own, one after the other. When they have all finished, the angel appointed over prayers gathers all the prayers offered in all the synagogues and fashions them into crowns, which he places on the head of the blessed Holy One.'"

See *Ma'yan Hokhmah (Beit ha-Midrash, 1:59)*; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20; *Midrash Tehillim* 88:2; *Tosafot, Hagigah* 13b, s.v. *ve-qosher*; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 495; *Zohar* 1:37b, 132a, 162a, 167b, 168b-169a; 2:58a, 146b, 202b, 209a, 245b-246a (*Heikh*); Recanati on Genesis 19:27, 26a; Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 148-54; Green, *Keter*, 20-41.

On the importance of joining Redemption to Prayer, see also BT *Berakhot* 4b, 9b. On its kabbalistic significance, see *Zohar* 1:132b, 205b, 228b; 2:138b, 156a, 200b, 216a-b; 3:195b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 78-79; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 75-76 (96).

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47-48](#), [n. 132](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Yoma* 38b, *Hagigah* 12a; *Zohar* 1:30b, 33a, 60a, 82b; 2:11b, 176b (*SdTs*); 3:16a, 110b. "Limbs" renders שַׁיִפִּין (*shaifin*), on which see above, [p. 128](#), [n. 365](#).

The full verse in Kings reads: *“Please, O YHVH, remember how I have walked in Your presence in truth and wholeheartedly, and have done what is good in Your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept profusely.* See Isaiah 38:3; *Zohar* 1:228b.

49. As they reach ‘Grant peace’... The final blessing of the *Amidah* begins with the words “Grant peace,” alluding to *Yesod*, who is known as Peace and who conveys the river of emanation that issues from *Hokhmah* (called Eden). As the *Amidah* concludes, *Yesod* flows into the chamber of *Shekhinah*, consummating their union, so at this point all people praying should leave the divine couple alone and not make any further requests; even the angels should depart.

Immediately following the cantor’s repetition of the *Amidah*, the *Taḥanun* (supplication) is recited, a prayer of confession of sins and petition for grace. This prayer is also known as *nefilat appayim* (falling on the face, prostration), and originally it was recited in this position, though later it became customary to recite *Taḥanun* in a seated (or half-seated) posture with lowered head and one’s face buried in the bend of the arm. Here, Rabbi Shim’on refers to both these positions, explaining that “one must fall on the face... covering his face” as a sign of being embarrassed during the union of the divine couple. Yet at the same time, by praying this prayer passionately one can participate and “merge his soul” in the divine union, so that it may be renewed in the stream of souls issuing from *Yesod*.

The image of the chamber of *Shekhinah* being “enveloped above and below by souls” alludes to souls flowing from *Yesod* above and souls of human worshipers below, rising in passionate prayer.

Yesod is called “peace” because He mediates between the right and left poles of the *sefirot*, or because He unites *Tif’eret* with *Shekhinah*. See BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim’on son of Ḥalafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.”

On not making requests following the *Amidah*, see Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 59. On *Tahanun* and *nefilat appayim*, see JT *Ta'anit* 2:4, 65d; *Avodah Zarah* 4:1, 43d; BT *Megillah* 22a-b, *Ta'anit* 14b; *Bava Metsi'a* 59b; *Zohar* 2:200b, 202b; 3:120b-121a, 176b, 241b; ZH 42a-b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:969-71; Hallamish, *Ha-Qabbalah*, 474-85.

On the phrases עבִיד שְׂמוּשָׂא (*aveid shimmusha*), “performs its conjugal role,” and שְׂמוּשָׂא (*shimmusha*), “conjugal union,” see above, [note 29](#).

50. Then another color... The second color descends and settles at the bottom of the chamber of *Shekhinah*. Now, as new souls are issuing from above, a herald invites the hero who has himself “formed” sinners’ souls to appear before God. See above at [notes 45-46](#).

51. Then appear two witnesses... Two angels, who are among God’s many eyes roaming the world, verify that this person transformed sinners and renewed their souls.

The fact that these angels mention the name of the person’s father guarantees that he too will be rewarded. See BT *Sanhedrin* 98a.

On the angelic eyes, see Zechariah 4:10; 2 Chronicles 16:9; above, [pp. 123-24](#), [n. 351](#).

52. At that moment, a certain official appears... The angel Yehodi’am is in charge of the images of the souls of the righteous and apparently conveys them to the chamber of *Shekhinah* as She unites with Her beloved and generates souls. Here, at the moment of union, Yehodi’am takes the image of the soul of this earthly hero, who has himself “made” (or “transformed”) the souls of sinners, and brings it before the divine King and Queen to be rewarded. The soul image is delivered back to Yehodi’am, presented with keys to the divine treasures, and granted all the blessings bestowed upon Abraham, who also “made” or transformed the souls of sinners. See above, [note 45](#).

On the images of souls, see below, [note 305](#); *OY*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:751-52. The name יהודיעם (*Yehodi'am*) contains the three component letters of the name *YHVH*: י ה ו (*yod, he, vav*), which themselves constitute the name יהו (*YHV*). Joseph Angelet (*Livnat ha-Sappir*, 32b) suggests that יהודיעם (*Yehodi'am*) may mean: יהו הודיע לעם (He revealed the name *YHV* to the people). For other interpretations, see *OY*; *MmD*. On this angel, see Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 64-65. Cf. *Zohar* 1:121b (*MhN*); 2:142b; *ZH* 82d (*MhN, Rut*). On the name יהו (*YHV*), see above, [note 12](#).

The “crown of the wielded Holy Name” alludes to theurgical use of the divine name. “Wielded” renders שמושא (*shimmusha*), literally “using, performing,” but sometimes implying theurgical practice. See *M Avot* 1:13; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 12; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 358, n. 17; above, [p. 109](#), [n. 310](#). Cf. above, [notes 29](#), [49](#).

מטרוניתא (*Matronita*) is an aramaized form of Latin *matrona*, “matron, married woman, noble lady,” and is often applied in the *Zohar* to *Shekhinah*, the divine wife. For the blessings bestowed upon Abraham, see Genesis 12:2-3. On these blessings being bestowed upon the soul, see *Zohar* 1:78a (*ST*); *ZH* 24a-b (*MhN*), 75c (*MhN, Rut*). The “four supernal camps” are camps of angels accompanying *Shekhinah*.

53. A poor person renders people worthy... By enabling them to perform the *mitsvah* of helping him survive. However, one who leads a sinner to holiness achieves something greater: subduing the demonic force that had controlled the sinner and thereby glorifying God.

See above, [note 45](#). On a poor person rendering his benefactor worthy, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 34:8; *Zohar* 1:104a (Vol. 2, p. 137, n. 161); 2:198a. “In that world” means in the world that is coming.

The expression *other gods* appears frequently, most famously in the second of the Ten Commandments: *You shall have no other gods beside Me* (Exodus 20:3).

54. Another color, visible and invisible... The third of the three colors appears when Israel reaches the prayer known as *Qedushah de-Sidra* (Sanctification of the Scriptural Section), a version of the *Qedushah* in Hebrew and Aramaic included in the prayer *ובא לציון גואל* (*u-va le-tsiyyon go'el*), *A redeemer will come to Zion* (Isaiah 59:20), and originally recited after a public scriptural lesson. In the daily morning liturgy this prayer appears near the end of the service after *Taḥanun*. It includes the threefold sanctification in Isaiah 6:3 (*Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory*) in both the original Hebrew and an Aramaic paraphrase, along with a similar treatment of Ezekiel 3:12 and Exodus 15:18. The sanctification in Isaiah 6:3 (together with Ezekiel 3:12) appears two other times in the morning liturgy, once before the *Shema*, when the angels' recitation of *Holy, holy, holy...* is described, and then again during the repetition of the *Amidah*, when the angels join Israel in sanctifying God. By reciting this sanctification a third time, Israel outdoes the angels, who could thereby be provoked to punish them. To prevent the angels from noticing this bold act of sanctification, the third color appears, concealing the people from view.

See *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 55. On the three colors, see above, [note 47](#). On *Qedushah de-Sidra*, see also BT *Sotah* 49a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *a-qedushah desidra*; *Zohar* 1:14b; 2:132b-133a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 85; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 70-71.

55. Who is haughty of spirit... On not being haughty in words of Torah, see above, [pp. 52-53](#). On humility, see M *Avot* 4:4; BT *Sotah* 4b-5b. For a critique of pride in one's learning, see BT *Ta'anit* 20a-b. Cf. M *Avot* 4:7. On displaying one's knowledge of Torah in the world that is coming, see above, [p. 159](#), [n. 57](#). On the connection between *Qedushah de-Sidra* and the study of Torah, see the preceding note.

56. With this *Qedushah* we must be careful... “In the beginning” refers to an earlier *Qedushah*, known as *Qedushah* of *Yotser* (pertaining to the blessing “‘who forms’ the luminaries,” recited before the *Shema*). In that *Qedushah*, Israel describes the angels’ act of sanctification and praises their arrangement in Hebrew (“the holy language”): “His ministers all stand in the height of the universe and reverently proclaim in unison aloud the words of the living God and King of the universe. All of them are beloved, all of them pure, all of them mighty, all of them holy; and all of them perform with awe and reverence the will of their Maker. They all open their mouths in holiness and purity, in song and melody, blessing and praising, glorifying and revering, sanctifying and acclaiming the name of the great, mighty, and revered God and King; holy is He. They all accept upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, one from the other, lovingly granting permission to one another to sanctify their Creator. In serene spirit, in pure speech and sacred sweetness, they all proclaim as one, in awe and reverence: *Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory* (Isaiah 6:3)....”

Stimulated by this praise, the angels allow Israel to enter the upper gates and obtain greater holiness, so that during the *Qedushah* of the *Amidah*, Israel sanctifies God along with the angels, again in Hebrew: “We will sanctify and revere You in the sweet words of the assembly of holy seraphim who thrice acclaim Your holiness, as is written by Your prophet: *One called to another, saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory’....*”

Finally, “in the end,” that is, near the end of the service in *Qedushah de-Sidra*, Israel conceals their words of sanctification by coating them immediately in Aramaic, a language not understood by the angels. Thereby, Israel secretly outperforms the angels.

On the angels not understanding Aramaic, see BT *Shabbat* 12b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “If one

petitions for his needs in Aramaic, the ministering angels do not attend to him, for they do not know Aramaic.” See Solomon ben Isaac, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 326; *Zohar* 1:9b, 74b (ST), 88b–89a (ST).

On *Qedushah* of *Yotser*, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 72–73; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 59–61. On *Qedushah de-Sidra*, see above, [note 54](#). According to a rabbinic tradition, the angels do not sanctify God’s name in heaven until Israel sanctifies it on earth. See BT *Hullin* 91b: “The ministering angels do not utter song above until Israel sings below.” See *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 90a (ST), 231a; 2:164b; 3:66a, 190b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 91.

57. This is deception... How can Israel bribe the angels in the early part of the service by praising them in order to be admitted through the upper gates? Rabbi Shim’on explains that this apparent deception is justified because Israel is not as holy as the angels and needs their assistance in order to gain admission to the higher realms, become their companions, and draw holiness down to earth. Thereby, God is glorified.

On the simultaneous sanctification of God by both Israel and the angels, see the end of the preceding note.

58. The *Qedushah* at the end is in Aramaic... The *Qedushah de-Sidra*, recited near the end of the service, includes an Aramaic paraphrase of *Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts...* and related verses. (See above, [note 54](#).) According to Rabbi Shim’on, the Aramaic rendering may be recited by an individual, whereas the original Hebrew may be recited only in a quorum of ten.

On the question of who may recite the Hebrew and Aramaic lines of *Qedushah de-Sidra*, see *Zohar* 2:132b–133a; Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 32c; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 404, n. 23; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 58; Scholem. Cf. *Sha’arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge’onim*), 55. On the question of who may recite the *Qedushah* of *Yotser* (above, [note 56](#)), see also *Massekhet Soferim* 16:9; Moses de León,

Sefer ha-Rimmon, 72-73 (and Wolfson's discussion there, n. 12); idem, *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 24-25; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 59, 402, n. 20.

On the requirement for a minyan in order to recite *Qedushah*, see BT *Berakhot* 21b (quoting the verse in Leviticus). The phrase "Aramaic translation" renders תרגום (*targum*), "translation," which in rabbinic literature often refers to an Aramaic translation of the Bible. Some have argued that the fact that the *Zohar* refers to Aramaic simply as *targum* indicates that the author lived when this language was no longer widely spoken and was known as a language of biblical translation. See *Zohar* 1:9a-b, 88b-89a (*ST*); 2:132b-133a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:75. Cf., however, M *Yadayim* 4:5; BT *Shabbat* 115a-b.

59. What about the sanctification of the *Qaddish*...

Since that prayer is completely in Aramaic, why does it require a quorum of ten? Because, Rabbi Shim'on explains, the *Qaddish* is more potent than other *Qedushot* (sanctifications), which include the triple formulation *Holy, holy, holy* and stimulate only three of the ten *sefirot* (*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*). The sanctifying power of *Qaddish* arouses all the divine forces and smashes the powers of evil. It is recited in the "foreign, alien" language of Aramaic (rather than in the holy tongue of Hebrew) because this corresponds to the alien Other Side. Furthermore, the congregational response "Amen! May His great Name be blessed" must be uttered powerfully in order to help break the demonic power and exalt the glory of God. Even though it is recited in Aramaic and not in the holy tongue, the *Qaddish* requires a quorum of ten, corresponding to all ten *sefirot*.

On the correspondence between the threefold formula *Holy, holy, holy* and the triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, see Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 151 (in the name of Isaac the Blind); *Zohar* 2:52a.

On the power of the response “Amen! May His great Name be blessed,” see BT *Shabbat* 119b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi: “Whoever responds with all his might: ‘Amen! May His great Name be blessed’—his [heavenly] decreed sentence is torn up.”

See *Zohar* 1:38b (*Heikh*), 62b; 2:165b–166a; 3:220a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 69–71. On God remembering His children as a result of this response, see BT *Berakhot* 3a (per Munich MS 95), in the name of Rabbi Yose (quoting a teaching that he heard from the prophet Elijah): “When Israel enters the synagogues and houses of study and responds ‘May His great name be blessed,’ the blessed Holy One shakes His head and says, ‘Happy is the king who is praised thus in his house! Woe to the father who has exiled his children, and woe to the children who have been banished from their father’s table!’”

60. Since we have begun words... Sitting beneath the trees together with the Companions, Rabbi Shim’on has begun to adorn *Shekhinah* with words of Torah. He now intends to continue on their behalf. See above at [notes 19, 36](#).

61. This is the offering... This verse pertains to both the holy and unholy realms. In creating the world, God began from the side of *Hesed*, on the right, symbolized by *silver*, which was then balanced by *Gevurah* (or *Din*), on the left, symbolized by *gold*. Yet in fashioning the Dwelling in the Sinai Desert, which resembles the world, God began from the left side (*gold*), which was then balanced by the right (*silver*), as indicated by the sequence *gold, silver* in this verse. The reason for beginning with *gold* is that the Dwelling symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is linked with *Gevurah* on the left, which is also the origin of the Other Side.

On the world being based on *Hesed*, see Vol. 3, p. 392, n. 452; cf. n. 453. On the Dwelling resembling the world, see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 2; above, [note 18](#).

The gold of the left side may also allude to the Golden Calf. According to midrashic tradition, the gold that Israel contributed for the Dwelling atoned for the gold that they contributed for the Golden Calf. See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 1; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 1:1; JT *Sheqalim* 1:1, 45d; *Tanḥuma*, *Terumah* 8; *Shemot Rabbah* 51:8.

62. This is the offering... Evening morning and noon... Rabbi Shim'on now resumes his discussion of prayer, which is a kind of *offering*. He moves from the triad *gold, silver, and bronze* to the three times of prayer: *evening, morning, and noon*.

Evening corresponds to *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as “a speculum that does not shine” on its own (see below). *Morning* corresponds to *Tiferet*, “a speculum that shines.” *Noon* symbolizes *Yesod*, who joins the divine couple. Although *noon* (or *Yesod*) is not to be identified with *Gevurah* (symbolized by darkness), the time of the afternoon prayer (*minḥah*), recited as the sun declines, is associated with the darkness of *Gevurah*, which in turn is linked with *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *evening*).

The full verse in Psalms reads (according to its simple sense): *Evening, morning, and noon I complain and moan, and He hears my voice*. See BT *Berakhot* 31a; *Midrash Tehillim* 55:2; *Zohar* 1:132b.

“Speculum” renders אִסְפָּקְלָרְיָא (*ispaqlarya*), “speculum, glass, mirror, lens,” deriving from Greek *speklon*, “mirror, window-pane,” and Latin *speculum*, “mirror.” See BT *Yevamot* 49b: “All the prophets gazed through an opaque glass [literally: an *ispaqlarya* that does not shine], whereas Moses our teacher gazed through a translucent glass [literally: an *ispaqlarya* that shines].”

In the *Zohar*, *Shekhinah* is a speculum that does not shine on its own but rather reflects and transmits the other *sefirot*. She is the medium through which prophets normally perceive a sefirotic vision. Moses, however, attained the

rung of *Tif'eret*, “a speculum that shines,” and was able to gaze directly at the divine splendor.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12: “For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face-to-face.” See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:14; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 33-34; Naḥmanides on Exodus 6:2; *Zohar* 1:33b, 120a, 183a; 2:23b, 221a; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:44-45, n. 242; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, index, s.v. “speculum”; Huss, “Ḥakham Adif mi-Navi,” 109-14; idem, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 17-21.

63. As for the word *noon*... How can the word *noon* be associated at all with darkness? Rabbi Shim'on explains that here *noon* is a euphemism. Similarly, the Mishnah employs the word אור (*or*), “light,” euphemistically to mean “evening.” See M *Pesaḥim* 1:1; BT *Pesaḥim* 3a.

The verse in Numbers relates to Moses' marriage. On *Ethiopian* implying “beautiful” in this verse, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 99; *Tanḥuma*, *Tsav* 13; *Midrash Tehillim* 7:18; Rashi on Numbers 12:1. On the positive sense of *Ethiopians* in the verse in Amos, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 99; BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16b; *Midrash Tehillim* 7:18.

64. Evening is the evening prayer... This prayer corresponds to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by evening and vulnerable to the demonic power, who darkens Her light. The evening prayer is optional because the demonic influence prevailing at this time could interfere with prayer or draw power from it. Similarly, it has no set time, so that demonic forces will not be able to plan ahead for it.

According to rabbinic law, sacrificial portions and fat that were not totally consumed by fire during the day can be burnt on the altar throughout the night. Here, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that such nighttime offerings are intended to nourish demonic forces. See below.

On the evening prayer being optional, see BT *Berakhot* 27b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Tefillah* 1:6; *Zohar* 1:132b, 229b; 2:162a; 3:242a (RM); Ta-Shma, *Ha-*

Tefillah ha-Ashkenazit ha-Qedumah, 115-26. On its not having a set time, see M *Berakhot* 4:1; BT *Berakhot* 26b, 27b. On the sacrificial portions and fat, see M *Berakhot* 1:1; BT *Berakhot* 26b; *Zohar* 2:141a, 162a; *ZH* 46c.

“Ravaging bands of dazzling demons” renders טהירין חבילי (*havilei tehirin*). The first word derives from either חבל (*hevel*), “band, group,” or the root חבל (*hvl*), “to injure, destroy.” טהירין (*Tehirin*) derives from the Aramaic root meaning “brightness, noon.” One class of demons is named טהרי (*tiharei*), “noonday demons.”

See Psalms 91:6 and Rashi, ad loc; *Targum*, Song of Songs 4:6; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Numbers 6:24, Deuteronomy 32:24; *Zohar* 1:125a-b, 130b, 198b, 200a, 232b (*Tos*), 237b; 2:195b, 205a, 207a. The Hebrew root טהר (*thr*), “pure,” lends this demonic name a euphemistic tone.

65. all those masters of the Other Side... The land of Israel is protected from impure forces, so why do the Israelites stimulate and nourish them by burning sacrificial portions and fat during the night?

On the Holy Land being protected from demonic powers, see *Zohar* 1:61a; 2:140b-141a, 151b, 173a. Cf. *Tanḥuma*, *Re’eh* 8; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 18:25; Vol. 1, pp. 350-51, n. 80.

66. at night that smoke ascends... Usually, the smoke from sacrifices ascends in a straight path to heaven; but the smoke from these nightly offerings ascends in a twisted way, finally reaching the haunt of evil spirits and nourishing them, thereby assuaging them so that they do not wreak havoc on earth.

On the normal, straight ascent of the sacrificial smoke, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 35: “Ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the Temple: ...The wind never prevailed over the column of smoke. When the column of smoke went forth from the altar of the ascent offering, it rose straight up like a staff until it reached the sky. When the column of incense went forth from the

golden altar, it entered straight into the chamber of the Holy of Holies.”

See M *Avot* 5:5; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 39; BT *Yoma* 21a-b; *Zohar* 1:176b-177a; 2:141a, 242b, 278a (below at [note 470](#)); Vol. 3, p. 66, n. 450.

On the smoke twisting, see *Zohar* 2:141a, 242b; 3:32b. Cf. *ZH* 46c. On the smoke heading north, see BT *Yoma* 21b (in a much more positive context). On assuaging demonic powers, see above, [p. 102](#), [n. 291](#).

67. One official... Sangirya... His name derives from Greek *sunegoria*, “defense, advocacy.” His role apparently is to advocate for Israel once the sacrificial smoke reaches the evil spirits.

Countless demons roam the night, blocking the path of souls who ascend from sleeping bodies.

The word קרי (*qeri*) derives from the root קרה (*qrh*), “to meet encounter, happen to.” In Leviticus, *qeri* implies “hostile encounter, opposition.” In rabbinic usage, *qeri* means “accident, mishap, pollution, nocturnal emission.” See Deuteronomy 23:11, and the following note.

On Sangirya, see *Zohar* 2:207a, 253a (*Heikh*). For another interpretation of his name, see *OY*. On the biblical term *qeri*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 3:2309-10.

68. These ravaging bands... disseminate falsehood... Through false dreams. Further, they appear as alluring females, arousing male dreamers to emit semen.

According to BT *Berakhot* 55b, angels convey prophetic dreams, while demons convey false ones. See *Zohar* 1:83a, 130a, 150b, 183a, 199b-200a; 2:264a (*Heikh*), 267a; 3:25a, 156b.

On demonic seduction, see *Zohar* 1:19b, 54b-55a; 2:264a-b; 3:76b-77a; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 51-54; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 154-57; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1366-67. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 151b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: “One may not sleep

alone in a house, and whoever sleeps alone in a house is seized by Lilith.” Cf. *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 17.

The expression “masters of mishap” renders מאריהון דקרי (mareihon de-qeri), “masters of qeri.” As mentioned in the preceding note, in rabbinic usage the term qeri means “accident, mishap, pollution, nocturnal emission.” The rabbinic term בעל קרי (ba'al qeri), “master [or: owner] of mishap,” means one to whom a mishap happens, one who succumbs to nocturnal emission. See M *Berakhot* 3:4-5.

69. ערב (Erev), Evening... ערב רב (Erev rav), A mixed multitude... Rabbi Shim'on associates ערב (erev), evening, with the root ערב ('rv), “to be mixed with,” since the demons “intermingle” with *Shekhinah*'s nighttime dominion. Her evening prayer is optional because due to the demonic threat it is nearly impossible to arrange this prayer perfectly. Only the patriarch Jacob, who attained the rung of *Tif'eret*, was able to eliminate the demonic contamination from *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the Dwelling) and institute Her prayer.

On the evening prayer being optional, see above, [note 64](#). On Jacob and the evening prayer, see BT *Berakhot* 26b: “Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ḥanina said, ‘The patriarchs instituted the prayers.’... Abraham instituted the morning prayer Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer... Jacob instituted the evening prayer.”

See JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a-b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9. The verse in Exodus indicates that a *mixed multitude* joined the Israelites as they left Egypt.

70. Yet although it is optional... The evening prayer may be technically optional, but it is actually vital, intended to secure protection from various forms of terror.

The full verse in Psalms, which introduces the daily evening service, reads: *Yet He is compassionate, He purges iniquity and does not destroy, and often restrains His wrath and does not arouse all His rage.* On Sabbath eve, when harsh judgment is eliminated, this verse is inappropriate

and must not be recited; anyone who does so arouses judgment.

The Ashkenazic custom of omitting this verse on Sabbath eve spread to Spain and by the time of the *Zohar* had largely displaced the native Sephardic custom of reciting the verse. See Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 1:118-19, 133; *Zohar* 2:135b; *ZH* 79b (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 113-14; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 80; Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 44-45; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh sheba-Nistar*, 29; Liebes, "Ha-Zohar ke-Sefer Halakhah," 582, 584-85. Cf. Vol. 1, p. 264, n. 1220.

According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:5, one of the dwellers in Hell reports: "Whoever does not observe Sabbath willingly in your world observes it here against his will.... All week long we are punished and on Sabbath we are allowed to rest."

See BT *Sanhedrin* 65b; *Tanḥuma*, *Ki Tissa* 33; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 23; *Zohar* 1:14b, 17b, 41a (*Heikh*), 48a, 62b, 197b, 237b; 2:31b, 88b, 100a, 136a, 150b-151a, 203b, 207a; 3:94b, 288b (*IZ*); *ZH* 17a-b (*MhN*), 79b (*MhN*).

71. Fear of accusation of souls... The evening prayer also offers protection against demonic forces that block the path of souls ascending from sleeping bodies by accusing them of sin.

The blessing "who guards His people Israel forever" is the second blessing recited after the *Shema* in the daily evening prayer. On its precise wording, see Zedekiah Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 51; *Zohar* 1:48a; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 80; *Tur*, *Orah Hayyim* 236; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

72. Fear of many demons... To protect against them, the evening prayer includes "Guard our going out and our coming in," which precedes the blessing "who guards His people Israel forever."

73. Even so... Even though the evening prayer is intended to secure protection from all these fearsome forces, Israel still entrusts their bodies and souls to *Shekhinah*, known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom). Whereas previously, when the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the nightly burning of the sacrificial portions and fat ensured that demonic forces would not wreak destruction, now the evening prayer is intended to achieve the same goal.

On entrusting one's spirit to God at night, see BT *Berakhot* 5a, where Abbaye recommends that scholars recite each night before sleep the following verse (from Psalms 31:6): *Into Your hand I entrust my spirit. You redeem me, O YHVH, faithful God.* This verse is included in the nightly recital of *Shema* before sleep.

74. At midnight, when the north wind arouses... The demonic forces are overwhelmed at midnight.

On the north wind blowing at midnight, see BT *Berakhot* 3b: "Rabbi Shim'on the Hasid said, 'There was a harp suspended above [King] David's bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn.'" See Psalms 119:62.

In the *Zohar* this legendary custom is expanded into a ritual. At midnight, God delights in the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden, and those who study Torah here below partake of this joy. Kabbalists are expected to rise at midnight and adorn *Shekhinah* with words of Torah in preparation for Her union with *Tif'eret*. This parallels the midnight vigil common among Christian monks from early medieval times. In *Zohar* 3:119a, Rabbi Yehudah alludes to the Christian practice: "I have seen something similar among the nations of the world."

See JT *Berakhot* 1:1, 2d; *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 3:3, 111b; *Aggadat Bereshit* 23:5; BT *Sanhedrin* 102a; 2 Enoch 8:3; *Zohar* 1:10b, 72a, 77a-b, 82b, 92a-b, 136b, 178a, 206b-207b, 231b, 242b; 2:26b, 36b, 46a, 136a, 173b, 195b-196a;

3:13a, 21b-22b, 49b, 52b, 67b-68a, 81a, 193a; *ZH* 13b-c (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 3:138; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 146-50; Hellner-Eshed, *Ve-Nahar Yotse me-Eden*, 149-76.

On the demonic mighty rock, see *Zohar* 1:157b, 184a. On the holy mighty rock, see above, [pp. 19-20](#), [n. 52](#).

75. When morning comes... The nighttime dominion of *Shekhinah* recedes and the daytime rule of *Tif'eret* commences. Through *Yesod*, He waters the Garden of *Shekhinah* and conveys some of the primordial light to all the worlds.

On “lamp” as a metaphor for the moon, see BT *Hullin* 60b (quoted below, [note 230](#)). On the primordial light, see above, [notes 16-17](#), [29](#).

76. Here is a mystery for fathomers... The letters by which God created the world reappear each morning, renewing Creation.

On these particular letters, see immediately below. “Ascending... descending” alludes to the permutation of these letters, as in *Zohar* 1:30a-b, 33b; 2:92b (*Piq*), 234a.

On God creating the world through letters, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1-2; 2-6. On seeing letters in the morning sky, see *Zohar* 3:165a. Cf. 2:57a, 112b, 188a.

“Fathomers” renders ידעי מדין (*yade’ei middin*), “those who know *middin*,” apparently deriving from מודד (*mdd*), “to measure.” See Judges 5:10: *you who sit on middin*, where the word is variously rendered as “[extended, wide] carpets, blankets” or—based on דין (*din*), “judgment”—“the judgment seat.” See BT *Eruvin* 54b: “It was taught in the school of Rav Anan: What is the meaning of the verse... *you who sit on middin*?... You who render judgment in absolute truth.”

In the *Zohar* the expression may refer to kabbalists who know the מדות (*middot*), the divine “qualities, attributes” (*sefirot*), or who know שעור קומה (*shi’ur qomah*), “the measure of the [divine] stature.” See Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §952: “Whoever knows this שייעור (*shi’ur*), measure,

of our Creator..., concealed from creatures, is assured of life in the world that is coming." See *Zohar* 1:133a, 241b; 2:34a, 71b, 134b, 161a, 163a; *ZH* 73b (*ShS*), 74b (*ShS*), 106b (*Tiq*).

77. If, by the mystery of those letters... These letters in heaven constitute the Name of Forty-two Letters by which God created the world. If one realizes this and invokes them correctly and with devout intention, he will then see other letters, signifying the priestly blessing, which is bestowed upon the world each morning.

The Name of Forty-two Letters is mentioned in the name of Rav, though not recorded, in BT *Qiddushin* 71a. Hai Gaon indicates that it consists of the following seven sets of six letters: שקוציח, יגלפזק, חקבטנוע, בטרצתג, נגדיכש, קרעשטן, אבגיהז, which are also the initial letters of the forty-two words constituting the prayer *Anna be-Khoah* (Please, with the Strength [of Your Right Hand's Greatness]). According to Jacob ben Meir Tam (Rabbenu Tam), this name consists of the first forty-two letters of the Torah, from the ב (*bet*) of בראשית (*Be-reshit*), *In the beginning*, through the ב (*bet*) of בהו (*bohu*), *empty* (or *void*) (Genesis 1:2).

See Lewin, *Otsar ha-Ge'onim*, 4:2:23 (on *Hagigah* 14b); *Tosafot*, *Hagigah* 11b, s.v. *ein doreshin*; *Zohar* 1:1a, 15b, 30a-b; 2:92b (*Piq*), 175b, 234a-b; 3:78a, 172b; *ZH* 42a; Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* 21:12-13; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 94-95; Idel, "Al ha-Peirushim," 161-62, n. 24; 167-68, n. 52. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:62. In *OY* 1:4a, Cordovero describes how the name *YHVH* can be permuted into the Name of Forty-two Letters. See *Zohar* 1:9a; 2:260a (*Heikh*).

The priestly blessing consists of three verses (Numbers 6:24-26), which read: יברכך יהוה וישמרך (*Yevarekhecha YHVH veyishmerkha*), *May YHVH bless you and protect you*. יאר יהוה (*Ya'er YHVH*), *May YHVH shine, His face upon you* ויהנוך (*vi-yhunneka*) *and be gracious to you*. ישא יהוה (*Yissa YHVH*), *May*

YHVH lift up, His face to you וַיָּשֶׂם (ve-yasem), *and grant, you peace.*

The six *yods* seen in the sky correspond to the initial letters of the first two words of each verse. The three *vavs* correspond to the initial letters of the second clause of each verse. The numerical value of each combination of ״״״ (yod, yod, vav) is twenty-six, equivalent to יהוה (YHVH).

If one prays before setting out on the road, *Shekhinah* accompanies him. See *Zohar* 1:49b (Vol. 1, p. 275, n. 1292), 58b, 121a (*MhN*), 178a, 230a-b, 240b. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 14a, 29b-30a.

78. When this morning comes... The column that now appears is distinguished from another column set in the middle of the Garden, joining the earthly Garden of Eden to the celestial Garden, enabling souls to ascend.

The three colors correspond to the colors of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, blending together into purple. The birds are angels singing praise.

On the expanse of firmament above the Garden, see *Zohar* 2:136a, 209b-210a; *ZH* 82d (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 132-33. On the column in the middle of the Garden, see *Zohar* 1:39a-b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 219a; 2:184b, 210a, 211a; 3:185b; Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 132-35, 139-40. In 1:219a, this column itself is described as three-colored. On the color purple, see below, [note 167](#). For various interpretations of the imagery, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

79. One opens, declaring... Each winged angel proclaims a verse of Psalm 113. Then a herald calls for angels and humans to offer morning praise to God. Ideally, one moves from nighttime study of Torah to morning prayer. See above, [note 74](#).

80. The watchman said, 'Morning came, and also night... The context in Isaiah (21:11-12) reads: *An utterance concerning Dumah. One calls to me from Seir: "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the*

night?" The watchman said, "Morning came [or: is coming], and also night. If you would inquire, inquire. Return, come!"

This obscure oracle is addressed to Dumah, which may be a poetic form of Edom, a nation located southeast of Judah and also known as Seir. In rabbinic literature Edom and Seir represent Rome, and in medieval literature they represent Christianity; this biblical passage is understood as conveying Israel's anguished cry from the darkness of exile and God's response.

See JT *Ta'anit* 1:1, 64a; BT *Sanhedrin* 94a; Rashi and Radak on Isaiah 21:11; *Zohar* 1:144a; 2:38b; *ZH* 8a (*MhN*).

81. Morning came—I already shone upon you... The divine watchman replies that He already redeemed Israel from Egypt and gave them the Torah, but because they abandoned its teachings He cast them into exile once again.

82. If you would inquire, inquire... God instructs Israel to search the Torah, where they will discover how to ensure their redemption: through *teshuvah* (returning, turning back to God).

83. מִשָּׂא (Massa), An utterance... Biblical prophecy is described in numerous ways, including חֲזוֹן (*hazon*), *vision* (Isaiah 1:1); מַחֲזֵה (*mahazeh*), *appearance* (Genesis 15:1); חֲזוּת (*hazut*), *sight* (Isaiah 21:2); חִזְיוֹן (*hizzayon*), *revelation* (ibid. 22:1); דָּבָר (*davar*), *word* (Ezekiel 1:3); and מִשָּׂא (*massa*), *utterance*. (Several of these Hebrew terms are cognate synonyms and virtually indistinguishable.)

The root נָשָׂא (*ns'*) means "to carry, lift, raise." The noun מִשָּׂא (*massa*) can mean "burden" (that which is carried), or "utterance, pronouncement" (raising of the voice). Here Rabbi Shim'on plays with both meanings.

The first five terms for prophecy describe a revelation that is partially hidden (like "looking from behind a wall") or filtered (like "seeing through [thick or colored] glass"), but *massa*, a *burdensome utterance*, implies great effort on

the part of the prophet and a message that remains, in some sense, unrevealable. In the verse in Isaiah, the word דומה (*dumah*), which may refer to Edom (see above, [note 80](#)), is now equated with its homonym, meaning “silence.” This prophecy is neither fully seen nor heard.

On various names for prophecy, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 34; B, 37; *Bereshit Rabbah* 44:6; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:4.

On seeing from behind a wall, see Maimonides, *Shemonah Peraqim*, 7; *Zohar* 1:232b (Tos) (Vol. 3, p. 405, n. 509); 2:69a–b, 82a, 213a; 3:174b; *ZH* 15c (*MhN*), 39d. “Glass” renders עששיתא (*ashashita*), “bar of metal, glass, glass lantern.” See *Zohar* 1:33b; 2:23a, 82a, 186b, 221a; *ZH* 41c, 63b (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 69 (87), 97 (124); Vol. 4, p. 80, n. 36.

For plays on the two meanings of *massa*, see Jeremiah 23:33–38; *Targum Yonatan*, Ezekiel 12:10; *Zohar* 1:197a. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Moses said to YHVH, “Why have You done evil to Your servant, and why have I not found favor in Your eyes, that You lay [literally: to lay] the burden of this entire people upon me?”*

84. One calls to me from Seir... Rabbi Shim’on wonders who is speaking in this verse: is it God, saying that Israel calls to Him from their exile in Seir; or is it the prophet Isaiah, saying that God calls to him from Seir? He affirms the second interpretation. The demonic shell of Seir surrounds the kernel of holiness, and through this shell God revealed Himself to Isaiah vaguely, in *a burdensome utterance of silence*. Similarly, at Mount Sinai (as indicated in the verse from Deuteronomy), God revealed Himself to Israel *from Seir*—through this demonic shell.

The various shells surrounding the kernel are derived from Ezekiel’s vision: *I looked, and here, a stormy wind coming from the north, a great cloud and flashing fire, and a radiance surrounding it; and from within it, like the color of amber, from within the fire. From within it, an image of*

four living beings, and this was their appearance: they had the image of a human. The first four elements mentioned by Ezekiel (*stormy wind, great cloud, flashing fire, radiance*) represent four demonic shells surrounding the kernel of holiness—which is identified with *השמל* (*hashmal*), *amber*. Further within lie the *חיות* (*hayyot*), *living beings*, angels carrying the Divine Throne.

See *Zohar* 2:81b-82a; *ZH* 38a-d; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:463-64, 509. On shell and kernel, see also *Zohar* 1:19b-20a (Vol. 1, p. 151, n. 341); 2:108b, 140b, 147b, 233b. On Seir, see above, [note 80](#).

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *YHVH from Sinai came and from Seir He shone upon them, He radiated from Mount Paran and appeared from myriads of holy ones [or: holiness]*. For its midrashic interpretation, see Vol. 4, p. 6, n. 24.

In Ezekiel 1:4 the precise meaning of *hashmal* is unclear, but the context indicates a bright substance. It has been rendered *amber, gleaming amber, glowing metal*. In postbiblical literature it was regarded as endowed with holy and dangerous properties. See BT *Hagigah* 13a.

85. Here, too, when the blessed Holy One revealed Himself... At Mount Sinai, the blessed Holy One (centered on *Tif'eret*) began to reveal Himself through *Sinai* (apparently symbolizing *Shekhinah*). Then He revealed Himself further through the shell of *Seir*, and then through the next shell, *Mount Paran*. Finally, the source and impulse of revelation manifested itself, namely *Hokhmah* (known as *holiness*).

For the verse in Deuteronomy, see the preceding note.

86. Here, too, One calls to me from Seir... Similarly, Isaiah records that God called to him through the demonic shell of *Seir*, which adheres to holiness.

87. Watchman... Metatron... The *watchman* is the chief angel, Metatron, who guards *his master, Shekhinah*, and shares with Her the dominion over night.

Rabbi Shim'on here associates the name מטטרון (*Metatron*) with the root נטר (*ntr*), "to guard, protect." See *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut*, 72b. Cf. Ezra of Gerona, in Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 10-11; *Zohar* 2:164a.

Metatron is often described as נער (*na'ar*), "youth, lad, servant," and עבד (*eved*), "servant, slave." See 3 Enoch 4:10; BT *Yevamot* 16b; Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563.

88. לילה (*Lailah*)... ליל (*leil*)... The second is a poetic abbreviated form of the first. Here, though, Rabbi Shim'on explains that each form indicates a different condition of *Shekhinah* during the night. From sunset to midnight, the demonic Other Side dominates and *Shekhinah* is vulnerable and incomplete, so She is called ליל (*leil*), lacking the letter ה (*he*). From midnight on, the demonic power recedes, and *Shekhinah* regains Her full name, לילה (*lailah*).

See *Zohar* 2:38b; 3:22a. Exodus 12:42 reads in full: *It is a night of watch [or: guarding], for YHVH, for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; this night is YHVH's, a watch for all the Children of Israel throughout their generations.*

Exodus 12:29 reads in full: *It happened in the middle of the night that YHVH struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and every firstborn of the beasts.*

The verse in Psalms may imply here that during the night of the Exodus the sun shone. See *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), pp. 43-44 and nn. 18, 1; *Zohar* 2:38a; 3:181b. Sefirotically, it implies that *Shekhinah* shines with the light of *Tif'eret*, symbolized by *day*.

89. The watchman אמר (*amar*), **said**... Rabbi Shim'on cites a tradition from a mysterious source distinguishing between two forms of the verbal root אמר (*'mr*), "to say," both of which mean "he said." ויאמר (*Va-yomer*) applies to *Tif'eret*, while אמר (*amar*) applies to Metatron (or *Shekhinah*, whom He guards and represents). The verse in Exodus 24 reads: *To Moses amar, He said, "Go up to YHVH,"* which

implies that Metatron (or *Shekhinah*) urged Moses to ascend to *Tif'eret*, known as *YHVH*.

See above, [p. 177](#), [n. 105](#). On Metatron as *the watchman*, see above, [note 87](#).

On the Book of Adam, see BT *Bava Metsi'a* 85b-86a, where Rabbi Yehudah the Prince states that he was once shown the Book of Adam, which contained the genealogy of the entire human race. See Genesis 5:1; *Bereshit Rabbah* 24:1; BT *Sanhedrin* 38b, *Avodah Zarah* 5a. The *Zohar's* Book of Adam is not to be confused with the Book of Adam in the Apocrypha. According to various medieval traditions, the angel Raziel transmitted a magical book to Adam. Later, probably in the seventeenth century, *Sefer Razi'el* was compiled in its present form, comprising ancient magical, mystical, and cosmological teachings.

See *Zohar* 1:17b, 37a-b, 55a-b, 58b, 72b, 90b, 227b; 2:70a-b, 70a-b (*RR*), 77a, 143b, 180a, 181a, 197a; 3:10a, 68b; *ZH* 16b (*MhN*), 37b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:117-18, n. 110; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 85-87. Note the comment by Shim'on Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:22d: "All such books mentioned in the *Zohar*... have been lost in the wanderings of exile.... Nothing is left of them except what is mentioned in the *Zohar*."

90. Morning comes—morning prayer... The watchman Metatron announces that *Tif'eret*, symbolized by *morning* and the morning prayer, comes to manifest His dominion, now that night (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) has passed. Yet, He does not come alone but rather together with *Shekhinah*, as indicated by the following phrase: *and also night*. Both await the morning prayers of Israel.

91. If...you would inquire, inquire... The verse reads: *Morning came, and also night. If you would inquire, inquire. Return, come!* The united divine couple, *morning and also night*, urges the children to return in devotion.

92. Then the Holy People... Now that morning has come, Israel should gather to pray. The first one to arrive in the synagogue attains the rung of *Yesod*, known as Righteous One, and thereby unites with *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Proverbs, spoken there by Wisdom, begins: *I love those who love me*. The phrase *those who seek me early* renders מִשְׁחָרֵי (meshaharai)—literally *those who seek me*, from the root שָׁחַר (shḥr), “to seek.” Rabbi Shim’on apparently associates the word with שָׁחַר (shahar), “dawn.” See *Devarim Rabbah* 8:1. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:140a. On coming early to synagogue, see BT *Berakhot* 47b. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47-48](#), [n. 132](#).

93. But we have learned... In BT *Berakhot* 6b in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “When the blessed Holy One comes to a synagogue and does not find ten there, He instantly turns angry, as is said: *Why have I come, when there is no man? Why when I called did no one respond?* [... *By My rebuke, I dry up the sea*] (Isaiah 50:2).” According to Rabbi Yoḥanan, the wording *did no one respond* implies a minyan, since various liturgical congregational responses require such a quorum.

The point here is that if God becomes angry when there are less than a minyan, then how can a single person arriving early in synagogue attain such a high rung?

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see *Zohar* 1:201a; 3:126a.

94. Why have I come, when there is no man?... In the passage from *Berakhot* (quoted in the preceding note), the continuation of this verse demonstrates the necessity of a minyan. Here, Rabbi Shim’on emphasizes the singular *man* as the partner of *Shekhinah*.

Moses is called אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים (*ish ha-elohim*), *man of God* (Deuteronomy 33:1; Psalms 90:1), which is understood midrashically as “husband of God” (able to command Him) and kabbalistically as “husband of *Shekhinah*” (united with Her). The *ish*, “man,” who comes early to synagogue attains

this same status, becoming *ish*, “husband,” of the Divine Female.

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana, nispaḥim, Vezot Haberakhah*, 443–44, 448 (variants); *Tanḥuma, Vezot Haberakhah 2 (Ets Yosef, ad loc.)*; *Devarim Rabbah* (Lieberman) on 33:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 90:5; *Zohar* 1:6b, 21b–22a, 148a, 152a–b, 192b, 236b; 239a; 2:22b, 235b, 238b, 244b (*Heikh*); 3:261b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 25; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 101–2 (129); Vol. 4, p. 74, n. 17.

On assuming the role of the divine husband, see *Zohar* 2:134b–135a. On the significance of *there is no man*, cf. *Zohar* 3:126a.

95. if one day he does not come... See BT *Berakhot* 6b, in the name of Rabbi Yitṣḥak: “If anyone comes regularly to the synagogue and one day does not come, the blessed Holy One inquires about him, as is said: *Who among you reveres YHVH, heeding the voice of His servant? Though he walks in darkness and has no gleam, [let him trust in the name of YHVH and rely upon his God].*” The verse from Isaiah implies that God inquires about the person who *reveres YHVH* (namely who comes regularly to the synagogue) but one day *walks in darkness* (that is, fails to appear).

Here Rabbi Shim’on identifies *His servant* with Metatron, who calls each morning through the demonic shell of *Seir*, urging Israel to come and pray.

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see *Zohar* 3:196a. On the shell of *Seir*, see above, [notes 80, 84](#). On Metatron as *servant*, see above, [note 87](#).

96. immersed in songs and praises... Namely, in the early part of the service known as *Pesukei de-Zimra* (Verses of Song), consisting almost entirely of psalms. These songs stimulate divine love above, thereby ensuring that grace will flow to the lower worlds. Such singing imitates the

service of the Levites in the Temple in Jerusalem. See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 60.

97. Whoever talks in the synagogue... His brazen behavior indicates complete unawareness that prayer is intended to restore divine union, and his lack of devotion hinders such union, so “he manifests division” above. By acting as if God were not present, he diminishes the unity of the supernal realm of faith.

On the opposition to conversing during prayer, see *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 1589; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margalioṭ), par. 18; *Zohar* 2:205b–206a; 3:126a; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Ḥallamish, *Ha-Qabbalah*, 401–33.

98. angels who appear at every single Qedushah... On Israel and the angels joining in *Qedushah*, see above, [note 56](#).

99. supernal maidens arrayed around Matronita... Angels accompanying Her. See above, [note 34](#). On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary.

100. All of these are arrayed... All these camps of angels are arrayed by Israel’s singing the psalms of *Pesukei de-Zimra* composed by King David and by other prayers. On *Pesukei de-Zimra*, see above, [note 96](#).

101. When Israel concludes those praises of David... After completing the psalms of *Pesukei de-Zimra*, Israel continues with the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15:1–18). One might ask why this passage from Written Torah (the Five Books of Moses) is recited after the psalms, when in the Bible it precedes Psalms (which are part of the Writings) as well as the Prophets. Rabbi Shim’on explains that since very soon, in the part of the morning service known as “the prayer recited seated,” *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) will be arrayed, it is fitting that this passage from Written Torah be recited right here, because *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Oral Torah) is arrayed only by *Tif’eret* (symbolized by Written Torah).

“The prayer recited seated” precedes the central prayer, which is recited standing and known as *Amidah*

(standing). See *Zohar* 1:132b. On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 24](#), [n. 68](#).

102. At the moment that the Song at the Sea is recited... Israel's recital of this song in prayer recalls its origin at the crossing of the Red Sea, when *Shekhinah* was adorned in a crown engraved with divine names. Whoever sings the Song at the Sea with full devotion in this world proves worthy of singing it in the Messianic age.

The divine names engraved on the crown are apparently the seventy-two names of God. See *Zohar* 2:51b-52a; Vol. 4, pp. 257-64 and nn. 216, 221-26.

On God being crowned at the Red Sea and crowning the Messiah, see *Zohar* 2:8b. "She was crowned" renders דאחעטר (*de-it'atar*), which can also (more literally) be rendered "He was crowned," referring to the blessed Holy One. See *Zohar* 2:8b, 52a.

On chanting the Song at the Sea in the Messianic age, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:1; BT *Sanhedrin* 91b; *Tanḥuma, Beshallah* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beshallah* 13; *Zohar* 2:54a-b, 60a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 65.

103. As soon as one reaches *Yishtabaḥ*... This prayer (meaning "May [Your name] be praised") follows the Song at the Sea. The blessed Holy One now takes the crown temporarily from the head of *Shekhinah* and gazes at it. Israel helps to adorn *Shekhinah* with thirteen words of praise included in *Yishtabaḥ* (namely "song and praise... holiness and sovereignty"), which correspond to the thirteen qualities of Compassion enumerated in Exodus 34:6-7 (*YHVH, YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God...*) and also to thirteen spices mentioned in Song of Songs. The final term of praise in *Yishtabaḥ* is appropriately מלכות (*malkhut*), "sovereignty, kingdom," which is the title of *Shekhinah*.

On the number of words of praise in *Yishtabaḥ*, see Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 61. For attempts to identify thirteen spices in the passage from Song of Songs, see

Galante; *Or ha-Hammah* 166b; *MmD*. Cf. *Zohar* 2:117a (*RM*), where this verse is said to include seven spices, and *Zohar* 2:210a, where it is said to include twelve.

104. one should... not speak at all... See above at [note 97](#). On the wording, “who cut off... may he be... cut off,” see *Zohar* 1:122b (*Tos*); 3:162a.

105. From here on, ‘God of thanksgiving’... The conclusion of *Yishtabah*. Until here, praises have been offered to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) by Her camps of angels along with Israel. Now, the prayer focuses on Her partner, the supernal King—namely *Tif’eret*, or the entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod* (which is known as World of the Male). This potency contains (or “possesses”) *Yesod*, who is called “peace” because He mediates between the right and left poles of the *sefirot*, or because He unites *Tif’eret* with *Shekhinah*. See above, [note 26](#).

106. From there on, ‘who forms light and creates darkness’... This blessing opens “the prayer recited seated” (see above, [note 101](#)). Rabbi Shim’on indicates that these words array *Binah*, known as the upper world. The prayer that soon follows, אֵל בָּרוּךְ (*El barukh*), “Blessed God,” arrays *Shekhinah*, the lower world, with all twenty-two letters of the alphabet. This prayer is an acrostic, its first twenty-two words each beginning with a successive alphabetical letter.

Certain letters in the Torah are written large, for example, the ב (*bet*) of בְּרֵאשִׁית (*be-reshit*), *In the beginning* (Genesis 1:1). Others are written small, for example, the א (*alef*) of וַיִּקְרָא (*va-yiqra*), *And He called* (Leviticus 1:1). Here, the entire small alphabet is associated with *Shekhinah* (the lower world), and the large alphabet with *Binah* (the upper world, also known as “the World that is Coming”).

On the small and large letters, see *Zohar* 1:3b, 159b; 2:174a, 180b, 205b, 228b; 3:2a, 220a; *ZH* 66c (*ShS*), 74c-d

(*ShS*). On *Binah* as “the World that is Coming,” see above, [p. 22, n. 59](#).

The clause “who forms light...” originates in Isaiah 45:7. The prayer *Barekhu*, in between *Yishtabaḥ* and “who forms light,” is interpreted in the context of the Sabbath eve service in *Zohar* 2:135b.

[107](#). In all respects they are large... Sometimes the letters of the large alphabet appear prominently on their own among other, small letters in a biblical word (as explained in the preceding note). They may also appear prominently in an acrostic prayer such as אֵל אֲדוֹן (*El Adon*), “God, Master,” recited at this point in the Sabbath morning service. Each line of this prayer forms “a fitting chariot” for the alphabetical letter with which it begins. The first two lines of *El Adon* contain “five” words each, representing the “fifty” gates of *Binah* (known as “the World that is Coming”), from which the large letters derive.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On *El Adon*, see *Zohar* 2:205b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 124. On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see above, [p. 154, n. 42](#).

[108](#). Two other letters at the end—שׁ (shin, tav)... The last two lines of *El Adon* begin, respectively, with the last two letters of the alphabet—שׁ (*shin*) and תׁ (*tav*)—and contain six words each. Each of these sextets corresponds to the six *sefirot* issuing from *Binah* (known as “the World that is Coming”), namely *Hesed* through *Yesod*.

[109](#). All the other letters in the middle, all in four each... Whereas the first two lines of *El Adon* contain five words each, and the last two lines contain six words each, the middle eighteen lines—beginning, respectively, with the letters גׁ (*gimel*) through רׁ (*resh*)—contain four words each. These middle lines symbolize the sefirotic quartet of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif’eret*, and *Shekhinah*, which constitute a chariot-throne for *Binah*.

The first two lines (beginning with the first two letters of the alphabet and containing five words each) contain a total of ten words, and the last two lines (beginning with the last two letters of the alphabet and containing six words each) contain a total of twelve words, which all together number twenty-two, corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, specifically to the supernal alphabet of *Binah*.

The four words of each of the middle eighteen lines constitute chariots of the initial letters of these lines (*gimel* through *resh*); all together, they total seventy-two words, corresponding to the Name of Seventy-two, with which *Shekhinah* is adorned. "The mission of Her Lord" may allude to Exodus 14:19: *The angel of YHVH journeyed [or: moved]*. ... The letters of this verse are the first component of the Name of Seventy-two.

On earlier Ashkenazic and Sephardic sources for the significance of the number of words in the various lines of *El Adon*, see Ta-Shma, "Li-Mqorotav ha-Sifrutiiyim shel Sefer ha-Zohar"; idem, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 30, 67. See *Zohar* 2:92b (*Piq*).

On the alphabet of *Binah*, see above at [note 106](#). On the Name of Seventy-two Letters (or seventy-two triads), see *Zohar* 2:51b-52a; Vol. 4, pp. 257-64 and nn. 216, 221-26. Cf. above, [note 102](#).

110. Your mnemonic for these letters... Rabbi Shim'on offers a mnemonic device for the relation between the initial letters and the number of words in each line of *El Adon*. This device consists of a technique of letter permutation known as א"ת ב"ש (at bash: *alef, tav; bet, shin*), according to which the first letter of the alphabet is substituted by the last, the second by the penultimate, etc. Here, the substitution is not what matters, but simply the first three pairs of letters: א"ת ב"ש ג"ר (*alef, tav; bet, shin; gimel, resh*). The first two pairs obviously correspond to the first and last lines, and the second and penultimate lines, of *El*

Adon, which begin respectively with *alef, tav; bet, shin*. The first line (beginning with *alef*) contains five words, the last line (beginning with *tav*) six; the second line (beginning with *bet*) contains five words, the penultimate line (beginning with *shin*) six. As explained in the preceding note, all four lines total twenty-two words, corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. Combined with the ten *sefirot*, the total reaches thirty-two, alluding to the “thirty-two wondrous paths of Wisdom,” mentioned in *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1-2.

The next pair in the permutation series of *at bash* is ג"ג (gimel, resh). This pair spans the middle eighteen lines of *El Adon*, each of which begins with a successive letter from *gimel* through *resh*, which then extends (“ascending”) into a chariot of four words. As explained in the preceding note, these lines total seventy-two words, corresponding to the Name of Seventy-two, which issues from the upper chariot-throne of *Hesed, Gevurah, and Tif'eret* to crown *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 24, n. 68](#). *Shekhinah* is sometimes considered part of the upper chariot-throne.

The phrase “א"ת ב"ש (alef, tav; bet, shin), mystery of the Holy Name” apparently alludes to the secret name מ"צפ"ץ (mem, tsadi, pe, tsadi), which, when permuted according to the technique of *at bash*, yields the name יהוה (YHVH).

[111](#). that name encompasses mystery of the patriarchs... The Name of Seventy-two is associated with, and arranged according to, the triad of *Hesed, Gevurah, and Tif'eret*. These three *sefirot* are symbolized respectively by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and situated respectively on the right and left and in the middle of the sefirotic tree.

“Not...like those supernal Names” apparently refers in particular to the Name of Forty-two (see above, [note 77](#)), which is discussed further below.

King David symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is crowned by the patriarchal triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*.

On David and the patriarchs, see *Zohar* 1:79b, 99a, 125a, 248b, 2:31a; Vol. 3, p. 134, n. 311. On the relation between the patriarchs and the chariot, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:6, in the name of Resh Lakish: “The patriarchs themselves constitute the [divine] chariot.” According to Kabbalah, Abraham had perfected and attained the quality of *Ḥesed*; Isaac, the quality of *Gevurah*; and Jacob, the quality of *Tif'eret*. This patriarchal sefirotic triad constitutes a chariot-throne for a higher level of divinity. See below, [note 353](#).

On the arrangement of the Name of Seventy-two, see below, [note 113](#); *Zohar* 2:51b–52a; Vol. 4, pp. 257–62 and nn. 216, 221–26.

[112. Name of Forty-two Letters...](#) This sublime name alludes to the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* being crowned with *Binah* (“the upper world”), and *Binah* Herself being crowned with the realm of Divine Thought.

Since this name suggests an upward path, “it ascends and does not descend.” This pair of verbs appears elsewhere in the *Zohar* in descriptions of letter permutation. See *Zohar* 1:30a–b, 33b; 2:130b, 234a. In all but the second of these four passages, the letters of the Name of Forty-two are said to ascend and descend. The meaning of “ascend” and “descend” is soon explained further.

On the Name of Forty-two, see above, [note 77](#). The wording of the last sentence (“one who knows it and is careful with it”) derives from BT *Qiddushin* 71a, discussing the mystery of this name. See above, [p. 157](#) at [n. 51](#).

[113. Name of Seventy-two...](#) Unlike the Name of Forty-two, which “ascends and does not descend,” the Name of Seventy-two ascends to higher rungs and then descends in order to convey the flow of emanation to the worlds.

The word מְצַפֵּי (mem, tsadi, pe, tsadi), when permuted according to the technique of אֶת בַּשׁ (at bash: alef, tav; bet, shin), yields the name יְהוָה (YHVH). See above, [note 110](#). This name begins the list of the thirteen qualities of Compassion in Exodus 34:6–7.

All the divine names ascend and descend, except for the Name of Forty-two (as explained in the preceding note). But now, “ascends and descends” implies something further. The Name of Seventy-two consists of three verses (Exodus 14:19–21) whose letters are rearranged into seventy-two triads according to the following pattern: the first letter of the first verse, the last letter of the second verse, the first letter of the third verse (forming one triad); the second letter of the first verse, the penultimate letter of the second verse, the second letter of the third verse (the second triad); etc. Thus, the first verse retains its normal order (“ascends”), while the second verse is reversed (“descends”), and the third verse “ascends” again. See Vol. 4, pp. 257–62 and nn. 216, 221–26.

Similarly, the coded Name of Thirteen Qualities—מְצַפֵּי (mem, tsadi, pe, tsadi)—progresses (or ascends) from *mem* to *tsadi* (which appears later in the alphabet and has a higher numerical value), then regresses (or descends) to *pe* (which precedes *tsadi* and has a lower value), and finally ascends again to *ץ* (final *tsadi*).

The entire series of *at bash* follows a similar pattern: the first letters of all the pairs proceed successively through the alphabet, ascending in value, while the second letters of the pairs follow a reverse order, descending in value.

[114. Name of Forty-two...Name of Seventy-two...](#) The first adorns the triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who constitute a chariot for *Binah*; the second adorns *Shekhinah*, who forms a chariot for that triad.

[115. Therefore the praise of Sabbath...](#) Sabbath herself (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) offers the praise of *El Adon* to the King who possesses peace. The middle eighteen lines of

this hymn (consisting of four words each) allude to the Name of Seventy-two, while its first two and last two lines (consisting respectively of ten and twelve words) allude to the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. (See above, [note 109](#).) Together, all these lines of praise adorn *Shekhinah* Herself, initiating Her ascent to the upper chariot of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, while this chariot ascends to *Binah* (known as “the World that is Coming”) and beyond.

On Sabbath herself praising God, see *Midrash Tehillim* 92:3; and the prayer *La-Elasher Shavat* (To God who rested), in the Sabbath morning liturgy immediately following *El Adon*. On the phrase “the King who possesses peace,” see above [notes 26, 105](#). On *Binah* as “the World that is Coming,” see above, [p. 22](#), [n. 59](#).

116. א"ל ב"ם (Alef, lamed; bet, mem)... א"ת ב"ש (Alef, tav; bet, shin)... As mentioned above, the entire permutation series of א"ת ב"ש (*at bash: alef, tav; bet, shin...*) follows a pattern of ascending and descending: the first letters of all the pairs proceed successively through the alphabet, ascending in numerical value, while the second letters of the pairs follow a reverse order, descending in value.

Another technique of letter permutation is known as א"ל ב"ם (*al bam: alef, lamed; bet, mem*), according to which the first letter of the alphabet (*alef*) is substituted by the first letter of the second half of the alphabet (*lamed*), the second letter of the alphabet (*bet*) is substituted by the second letter of the second half of the alphabet (*mem*), etc. This series follows a pattern of pure ascent: the first letters of all the pairs proceed successively through the alphabet, ascending in value, and so do the second letters.

The *at bash* series corresponds to Sabbath, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, who ascends to higher *sefirot* and then descends to convey the flow of emanation to the worlds below. The *al bam* series corresponds to Sabbath and Yom Kippur (which symbolizes *Binah*), implying a continual ascent.

See above, [notes 110, 112-13](#). The phrase לעילא לעילא (*le-eila le-eila*), “above, above,” associated here with Yom Kippur, appears in the version of the *Qaddish* recited during the Ten Days of Repentance (from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur).

[117.](#) אל ברוך (*El barukh*), **Blessed God...** This daily acrostic prayer adorns *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), or Her angelic maidens, with all the letters of the small alphabet, associated with Her. Unlike the Sabbath hymn *El Adon*, in which each successive alphabetical letter is followed by an entire phrase, in *El Barukh* “there is no space between them,” i.e., each letter generates only its own word, followed immediately by the next alphabetical letter with its word.

On *El Barukh* and the small letters, see above, [note 106](#). On the spacing of the letters, see *Zohar* 2:205b. On the angelic maidens accompanying *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 34](#). On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary.

[118.](#) **This Qedushah enacted by supernal angels...** There are three *Qedushot* recited in the daily morning service: *Qedushah* of *Yotser* (pertaining to the blessing “‘who forms’ the luminaries,” recited before the *Shema*), in which Israel describes the angels’ act of sanctification; the *Qedushah* of the *Amidah*, when Israel sanctifies God along with the angels; and *Qedushah de-Sidra* (Sanctification of the Scriptural Section), a version of the *Qedushah* in Hebrew and Aramaic near the end of the service.

Here Rabbi Shim’on indicates that the first of these, *Qedushah* of *Yotser*, must be recited only in a minyan and not by an individual, following the principle that any *Qedushah* in Hebrew requires a quorum. On the other hand, when the congregation recites *Qedushah de-Sidra* toward the end of the service, the Aramaic lines must be recited only individually (and quietly), not all together aloud, while the Hebrew lines, which require a minyan, may not be recited individually.

In BT *Berakhot* 8a-b, the expression “twice Scripture and once translation” means that one should study the weekly Torah portion twice in the original Hebrew and once in Aramaic translation. Here, Rabbi Shim’on applies this formula to the *Qedushah* and interprets it as “two for Scripture, and one for translation,” i.e., when this prayer appears in Hebrew (the language of Scripture), it should be recited only in a quorum (“two” implying many), whereas any passages in Aramaic translation may be recited only individually (by “one”).

Rabbi Shim’on goes on to play with another formula: “One raises [or: increases, promotes] in holiness, and does not lower.” In its original context, this principle means that one should progress from a lesser to a greater degree of holiness and not the reverse, or that a person may be promoted to a higher or more dignified level but not demoted. Here, Rabbi Shim’on interprets the formula to mean that one should “increase in holiness” by reciting *Qedushah* (sanctification) in a minyan, and not “decrease” by reciting it individually. On the other hand, in reciting the Aramaic translation, which is associated with the Other Side (see above at [note 59](#)), one should “decrease” by reciting it individually, and not “increase” by reciting it aloud all together. Rabbi Shim’on’s statement may also reflect the fact that translation necessarily restricts the range of meaning latent in the original text, whereas the original retains its multivalence.

On the three *Qedushot*, see above, [notes 54, 56](#). On the requirement for a minyan in order to recite *Qedushah*, see BT *Berakhot* 21b. On the question of who may or may not recite *Qedushah* of *Yotser* or the Hebrew and Aramaic parts of *Qedushah de-Sidra*, see *Massekhet Soferim* 16:9; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 72-73 (and Wolfson’s discussion there, n. 12); idem, *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 24-25; Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 32c; Vital; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 59, 402, n. 20, 404, n. 23; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh*

sheba-Nistar, 58; above, [note 58](#). Cf. *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 55.

On the phrase "Aramaic translation," see above, [note 58](#). For the Talmudic principle "One raises in holiness..." see M *Sheqalim* 6:4; BT *Berakhot* 28a, *Shabbat* 21b, *Yoma* 20b, 73a, *Megillah* 21b, *Horayot* 12b; *Zohar* 2:182b; 3:152b-153a, 162b, 285a.

119. By this Qedushah, Shekhinah is sanctified... By *Qedushah* of *Yotser*, *Shekhinah* is prepared to enter the presence of King *Tif'eret*. Since this *Qedushah* pertains to *Shekhinah* (known as the lower world, in comparison to the higher sefirotic realm), it is recited seated. The *Qedushah* in the *Amidah* (the "standing" prayer), recited when that prayer is repeated aloud by the cantor, pertains to the higher sefirotic realm (known as the upper world), so it is recited standing, to strive upward and help to draw down blessing.

On *Qedushah* of *Yotser*, see the beginning of the preceding note. On the prayer recited seating, see above, [note 101](#).

120. By all these Qedushot, Israel is sanctified below... They become sanctified by *Qedushah* of *Shekhinah* (the lower chariot) while seated, and by *Qedushah* of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (the upper chariot) while standing.

"Another *Qedushah*" refers to *Qedushah de-Sidra* (Sanctification of the Scriptural Section), a version of the *Qedushah* in Hebrew and Aramaic included in the prayer גואל וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן (*u-va le-tsiyyon go'el*), *A redeemer will come to Zion* (Isaiah 59:20), recited near the end of the daily morning service. This *Qedushah* supplements the others and is consequently recited last. Rabbi Shim'on explains that its Aramaic lines are intended for individuals, who alone are permitted to recite them and who may not recite the Hebrew. See above, [note 118](#).

On the lower and upper chariots, see above, [note 114](#). On *Qedushah de-Sidra*, see above, [pp. 206-8](#) and [nn. 54-58](#).

121. But it includes Qedushah in the holy language!... Why does *Qedushah de-Sidra* include Hebrew as

well? Rabbi Shim'on explains that the Hebrew enables the whole congregation to be sanctified together, while the Aramaic is intended for each individual.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!*

122. Behold, I know... These verses are spoken by the Shunammite woman to her husband concerning the prophet Elisha. Rabbi Shim'on interprets the passage as alluding to prayer. For example, the clause *I know* suggests one's awareness and intention during prayer, known to no one else.

On the passage in Kings, see *Zohar* 2:44a.

123. holy man of God—upper world... The biblical phrase alludes to the entire World of the Male, from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod*, which unites with ("sits upon") *Shekhinah*, pictured as the Throne of Glory. Sincere prayer stimulates their union.

On the World of the Male, see above, [p. 48](#), [n. 132](#).

124. Passing our way regularly... God conveys (or "passes") holiness to both upper and lower worlds. In fact, holiness above depends upon holiness below, for God is fully sanctified only when Israel becomes holy.

In BT *Berakhot* 21b, the verse in Leviticus is quoted to demonstrate the need for a minyan in order to recite *Qedushah*. See above at [note 58](#).

125. let us make a small walled upper chamber... In other words, "Let us arrange and adorn *Shekhinah*," who is symbolized by a *wall*. When King Hezekiah prayed sincerely, he faced *Shekhinah*.

Rabbi Shim'on apparently associates קיר (*qir*), *wall*, with Greek *kyrios*, "lord." *Shekhinah*, the last *sefirah*, rules as Lord over the world. On *qir* and *kyrios*, see *Zohar* 1:228b. Cf. Vol. 4, p. 75, n. 21. For rabbinic knowledge of the Greek term *kyrios*, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 11b, *Hullin* 139b.

The context in Kings (2 Kings 20:1-2), describing Hezekiah praying, reads: *In those days Hezekiah became*

deathly ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him and said, "Thus says YHVH: Set your house in order, for you are going to die; you will not live." Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to YHVH. The same passage appears in Isaiah 38:1-2. See BT Berakhot 5b, 10b; JT Berakhot 4:4, 8b; Qohelet Rabbah on 5:6; Zohar 1:11a, 132a, 228a-b; 2:44a; 3:260a-b.

126. Small—because She is small... *Shekhinah* is small compared to the other *sefirot*.

On the verse in Ecclesiastes, see *Zohar* 3:68b; *ZH* 80d (*MhN, Rut*). On the reduced size of *Shekhinah*, cf. story told by Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi in BT *Hullin* 60b (quoted below, [note 230](#)), according to which the moon was originally the same size as the sun but was told by God: "Go, diminish yourself!" This story is often applied in Kabbalah to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the moon.

127. And place there for him... Israel's song and prayer adorn *Shekhinah* in preparation for union with Her Husband, the upper world. See above, [note 123](#).

128. In the arrangement of evening prayer... Each prayer provides a unique adornment for *Shekhinah*.

Near the beginning of the morning service appears a section describing the sacrifices, which is followed by various psalms of praise and the prayer "recited seated" (preceding the *Shema*). The unification of the *Shema* is described in detail below. The "prayer recited standing" is the *Amidah* (standing). On the various *Qedushot*, see above, [notes 54, 56, 118](#).

129. to bring perfection to his Lord... To adorn *Shekhinah* through devout prayer and stimulate the union of the divine couple.

130. A bed was given to Jacob to prepare... Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who unites with *Shekhinah*, so fittingly he instituted evening prayer (representing *Shekhinah*) and prepared a *bed* (another of Her symbols). Upon the *bed* of *Shekhinah*, Her lover reclines.

On *Shekhinah* as “bed,” see *Zohar* 1:37a, 225b, 226b, 248b; 2:5a, 48b, 51a; 3:60a, 114a, 118b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 370. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 55b, where it is said that Jacob kept a bed in his tent for *Shekhinah*. See Rashi on Genesis 49:4. According to the eleventh-century Catholic reformer Peter Damian, Mary is the golden couch upon which God, tired out by the actions of humanity and the angels, lies down to rest. See Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 280.

On Jacob and the evening prayer, see BT *Berakhot* 26b: “Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ḥanina said, ‘The patriarchs instituted the prayers.’... Abraham instituted the morning prayer.... Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer.... Jacob instituted the evening prayer.” See JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a-b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9.

131. A table was arranged by King David... King David is linked with *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom), and he arrayed Her with his psalms. The *table* mentioned in this particular psalm refers to Her.

132. A chair was prepared by Abraham... Abraham arrayed *Shekhinah* by treating people lovingly and spreading the awareness of God, thereby perfecting souls. He symbolizes *Ḥesed* (Love), which emanates to *Shekhinah*, fulfilling Her. She is pictured as a *chair*, or the Divine Throne.

On Abraham’s extreme hospitality and his efforts to spread the awareness of God, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 48:9; 54:6; BT *Sotah* 10a-b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 7; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 12; *Midrash Tehillim* 37:1; 110:1; *Zohar* 1:230b. On his perfecting (or forming) souls, see above, [note 45](#). The verse in Isaiah reads: *In love will a throne [or: chair] be established*.

133. A lamp was prepared by Isaac... By being bound on the altar by his father, Isaac sanctified the name of God and illumined the lamp of *Shekhinah*.

On the kabbalistic significance of the binding of Isaac, see *Zohar* 1:119b.

134. the Holy People should constantly utter praise... Thereby arranging all these aspects of *Shekhinah* for Her Husband, the upper world.

See above, [note 123](#). “Master of the house” means Master of *Shekhinah*. See above, [p. 35](#), [n. 101](#).

Moses is called אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים (*ish ha-elohim*), *man of God* (Deuteronomy 33:1; Psalms 90:1), which is understood midrashically as “husband of God” (able to command Him) and kabbalistically as “husband of *Shekhinah*” (united with Her). Here, Rabbi Shim’on applies this title to the upper world. See above, [note 94](#). In 2 Kings 4:9 (interpreted here), Elisha is called אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים (*ish elohim*), *a man of God*.

135. When Israel enacts the unification... When the people of Israel recite the *Shema* with full intention, declaring the oneness of God, they unify the *sefirot*. A ray of light issues from the highest realm and strikes a spark of darkness, scattering into seventy lights, which generate seventy branches of the central *sefirah*, *Tif’eret*, symbolized by the Tree of Life. The seventy branches correspond to the seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*, whose core is *Tif’eret*.

“A spark of darkness” renders בּוֹצִינָא דְקַרְדִּינּוּתָא (*botsina de-qardinuta*), “a lamp of impenetrable darkness.” The spark is so potently brilliant that it overwhelms comprehension. This blinding light is the impulse of emanation flashing from *Ein Sof* and proceeding to delineate the various *sefirot*. See below, [p. 560](#), [n. 35](#).

The opening verse of the *Shema* in Deuteronomy reads: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one.* On the significance of the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 1:12a, 18b; 2:43b (*Piq*), 160b-162a, 216b; 3:162a, 195b, 203b-204a, 236b, 262b-263a, 264a-b, 268a; *ZH* 48a, 56d-58d (*QhM*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:971-74. On the connection between the number seventy and the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 2:160b.

136. Then that Tree wafts fragrances... *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the Tree of Life, emits aromas, along with all the trees of the Garden of Eden (corresponding to the various powers of *Shekhinah*), as the Bride (*Shekhinah*) is adorned in preparation for marrying *Tif'eret*. The sefirotic male limbs (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*) converge in preparation for this union.

On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary.

137. we arouse Her, saying שמע ישראל (Shema Yisra'el), Hear, O Israel... The opening words of the *Shema* are now understood to mean: *Listen, Shekhinah!* Prepare and adorn Yourself, for Your Husband, *Israel* (namely *Tif'eret*, whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, “Beauty of Israel”), is ready to join You!

138. YHVH our God, YHVH is one... The rest of the first line of the *Shema* completes a verse of six words: יהוה אחד שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו (*Shema Yisra'el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH ehad*), *Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one.* By reciting the complete verse, Israel actualizes the unification of the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, centered in *Tif'eret*. This sixfold unity is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*) in the name יהוה (*YHVH*), whose numerical value is six and whose shape is one extended line, seamless (“with no other attachment”).

On the sixfold unification, see BT *Berakhot* 13b, where the recitation of the first line of *Shema* is described as enthroning God “above, below, and over the four directions of heaven.”

139. At that moment, Matronita prepares... Now that *Tif'eret* is unified with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, *Shekhinah* prepares to join Him under the canopy. Her angelic retinue escorts Her, whispering the next line of the *Shema*, which is whispered simultaneously by Israel below.

On whispering this line, see BT *Pesahim* 56a: “Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish said, ‘... [Upon his death bed] Jacob wished to reveal to his sons the end of days, but *Shekhinah* departed from him [depriving him of inspiration]. He said,

“Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is a blemish in my bed [i.e., someone unfit among my children], like Abraham, from whom issued Ishmael, or like my father Isaac, from whom issued Esau.” His sons answered him, “*Hear, O Israel!* [i.e., Jacob]. *YHVH is our God, YHVH is one*—just as there is only *one* in your heart, so there is only *one* in our heart.” At that moment our father Jacob opened and exclaimed, “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!” Our rabbis said, ‘How should we act? Should we recite it [i.e., “Blessed be the name...”]? But Moses our teacher did not say it [i.e., this line does not appear in the passage from Deuteronomy]. Should we not recite it? But Jacob said it!’ They ordained that it should be recited in a whisper.”

See *Zohar* 1:234a-b; Vol. 3, p. 418 and nn. 573-75. Below, Rabbi Shim'on offers a different reason for whispering.

140. As Husband and Wife unite... Now the angelic camps who adore *Shekhinah* are called to present themselves. The presiding angel appears, holding four keys, which unlock the treasures of emanation for the lower worlds. Each of these keys is engraved with one letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*). The first three keys turn into one, and the fourth key then joins with this one composite key. By bringing these two keys into the Garden, the angels stimulate the union of the divine couple, corresponding to Israel's act of unification (by reciting the *Shema*) below.

The individual letters of יהוה (*YHVH*) symbolize all of the *sefirot*. The ם (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, while its upper stroke symbolizes *Keter*. The first ה (*he*), often a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The ו (*vav*), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). The second ה (*he*) symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

Here the unification of the first three keys symbolizes the unification of the upper *sefirot*, in preparation for the wedding with *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the fourth key, which

is engraved with the second *he*. The Tree of Life corresponds to *Tif'eret*, so the fourth key (representing *Shekhinah*) is placed beneath this tree.

For various interpretations, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1024; *OY*; Galante; *MmD*. The name בואל (*bo'el*), Boel, means “God is in him.” Elsewhere he is identified with the archangel Raphael. See *Midrash Konen (Beit ha-Midrash, 2:27)*; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 67; *Zohar* 2:147a-b, 209b-210a; *ZH* 48c; Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 18.

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of יהוה (*YHVH*), see above, [p. 158](#), [n. 55](#).

141. יהוה (*YHVH*)... אלהינו (*Eloheinu*)... יהוה (*YHVH*)... These three divine names, in the middle of the opening line of the *Shema*, symbolize the range of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*. The initial letter of the first occurrence of the name יהוה (*YHVH*) is י (*yod*), representing the primordial point of *Hokhmah*.

The name אלהינו (*Eloheinu*), *our God*, alludes to *Binah*, who is the source of Judgment, which is associated with the name *Elohim*. As indicated in the preceding note, *Binah* is symbolized by the second letter of יהוה (*YHVH*): ה (*he*).

The final one of these three names, the second יהוה (*YHVH*), represents the emanation of *Tif'eret* (along with the other five *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*). As indicated in the preceding note, *Tif'eret* (together with these *sefirot*) is symbolized by the third letter of יהוה (*YHVH*): ו (*vav*). The preceding two letters—*yod* and *he* (symbolizing, respectively, *Hokhmah* and *Binah*)—“are drawn here,” i.e., they convey the flow to *Tif'eret*, who “is one” with His surrounding *sefirot*. Now “all these three”—namely יהוה אלהינו יהוה (*YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*), or יה"ו (*yod, he, vav*), or *Hokhmah, Binah, and Tif'eret*—“are one,” prepared to unite with *Shekhinah*.

Medieval Christian polemics asserted that these three divine names in the opening line of the *Shema* signify the Trinity. Here, instead, the *Zohar* presents a kabbalistic

trinity, insisting that “these three are one.” See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:973–74; Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 18–19; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 140–45; below at [note 669](#).

142. Once all this has been unified... At this point, all the upper *sefirot* have been unified and their energy channeled into the letter vav (*vav*), from *Ḥokhmah* (“the source of the spring”) and *Binah* (“the innermost chamber,” who contains the seed of *Ḥokhmah* and generates the lower *sefirot*). *Tif’eret* (symbolized by this *vav*) has inherited the treasures of emanation from Father *Ḥokhmah* and Mother *Binah*, and now the angelic escorts convey *Shekhinah* to Him. These angels whisper so that the demonic stranger will not hear of the imminent union and interfere or share in the joy.

On *Tif’eret* inheriting from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, see *Zohar* 2:51b; 3:291a (*IZ*). The full verse in Proverbs reads: *The heart knows its own bitterness, and in its joy no stranger shares.*

143. Once He unites above... The six words of the opening line of the *Shema* symbolize the unification of *Tif’eret* with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*). The six words of the following line symbolize the unification of *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), with Her angelic retinue, which corresponds to *Tif’eret’s* sefirotic retinue. The divine Bride and Groom must each be complete and unified before they can join as one.

Tif’eret is often identified with *YHVH*, while *Shekhinah* (the Divine Presence) is designated as God’s *name* (making Him known in the world). Thus the verse in Zechariah alludes to the both of them. The full verse reads: *YHVH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHVH will be one and His name one.*

The second line of the *Shema* alludes doubly to *Shekhinah* as both “name” and “kingdom.” On the first two lines of the *Shema*, see above, [note 139](#); *Zohar* 1:12a, 18b; 2:139b;

3:264a. On *Shekhinah* as God's name, see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 20:21.

144. one is written above, whereas below one is not written... If the first two lines of the *Shema* both indicate unification, why doesn't the second line conclude with the word אֶחָד (*eḥad*), *one*, like the first? Rabbi Shim'on explains that the final word of the second line— וְעַד (*va-ed*), "and ever"—is actually an encoded form of אֶחָד (*eḥad*), *one*. The initial letter of each word— א (*alef*) and ו (*vav*)—is a consonantal vowel (that is, a consonant that can indicate a vowel sound) and thus (according to Rabbi Shim'on) interchangeable with the other. The second letter of each word— ח (*het*) and ע (*ayin*)—is a guttural letter and thus interchangeable. The third letter of each word— ד (*dalet*)—is identical. Hence, וְעַד (*va-ed*), "and ever," is simply a cipher of אֶחָד (*eḥad*), *one*.

The word *eḥad* (along with the entire first line of the *Shema*) pertains to *Tif'eret*, who is male, and (in this word) these letters are not interchanged. The word *va-ed* (along with the entire second line) pertains to *Shekhinah*, who is female, and these letters are interchanged. The constancy and stability of the male (and his letters) is more praiseworthy than the inconstancy and fluctuation of the female (and hers).

Here, in the unification of *Shekhinah*, the coded form *va'ed* replaces *eḥad* in order to fool the evil eye and thwart demonic interference. Because of Her vulnerability to the Other Side, *Shekhinah* is not yet fully and openly *one*; but in the Messianic age, when evil will be eliminated, She will be called *one* explicitly, no longer in a whisper or cipher, as demonstrated by the verse in Zechariah.

On female and male letters, see *Zohar* 1:159a-b; 2:205b, 228a-b; *ZH* 66c (*ShS*) 74c-d (*ShS*); above, [note 106](#). On the interchangeability of letters pertaining to *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:18b (Vol. 1, p. 141, n. 261).

145. Therefore we unify Her... The people of Israel call on *Shekhinah* to testify to their belief. The word וַעַד (*va-ed*), “and ever,” suggests עֵד (*ed*), “witness.” Cf. below, [note 671](#).

146. She comes only as one invited to gaze... In order to fool the Other Side, *Shekhinah* and Her angelic maidens pretend that they are approaching the King simply to gaze upon His glory, not for marital union.

Here the verse from Song of Songs is addressed to these maidens, who are invited to *gaze upon King Solomon*, namely the Divine King. The full verse reads: *O daughters of Zion, go out and gaze upon King Solomon, upon the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of his heart's delight*. See above, [p. 44, n. 123](#).

147. and would mingle in Her joy... וַיִּתְעַרְבּ בְּחֵדוּוֹהָא (*Ve-yit'arav be-ḥedvaha*), following what appears to be the reading in O2, matching the formulation above at [note 142](#). The words can also be divided differently: חֵדוּוֹתָא (וַיִּתְעַרְבּ חֵדוּוֹתָא): (ve-yit'arbev ḥedvaha [or ḥedvata]), “and Her joy (or the joy) be confounded,” a reading supported by several MSS and the early printed editions.

148. we arouse the joy of right and left... In the continuation of the *Shema*, Israel stimulates *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, the right and left arms of the Divine Male, to embrace *Shekhinah*. The paragraph of the *Shema* beginning *You shall love* represents *Ḥesed* (Love); the next paragraph, which includes warnings and the threat of punishment, represents *Gevurah* (Power), or *Din* (Judgment).

Unlike the line “Blessed be His glorious kingdom...,” these paragraphs can be recited aloud since the demonic force is unaware of the divine union and cannot intrude. Furthermore, he has no power to interfere with the *sefirot* above *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Deuteronomy 6 reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might*. The full verse in Deuteronomy 11

reads: *It shall be, if you indeed heed My commands that I command you today, to love YHVH your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

149. Whenever one wishes to bring the Bride... The divine union engenders souls for this world, and without a secret strategy the demonic power could interfere at this crucial moment and those souls would be blemished. Rabbi Shim'on relates this to the story about Jacob and his sons in BT *Pesahim* 56a (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish): “[Upon his death bed] Jacob wished to reveal to his sons the end of days, but *Shekhinah* departed from him [depriving him of inspiration]. He said, ‘Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is a blemish in my bed [i.e., someone unfit among my children], like Abraham, from whom issued Ishmael, or like my father Isaac, from whom issued Esau.’ His sons answered him, ‘*Hear, O Israel!* [i.e., Jacob]. *YHVH is our God, YHVH is one*—just as there is only *one* in your heart, so there is only *one* in our heart.’ At that moment our father Jacob opened and exclaimed, ‘Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!’”

Here, according to Rabbi Shim'on, Jacob fears that when his sons were conceived he may have harbored impure thoughts, thereby empowering the Other Side to blemish his sons' souls. However, Jacob's sons assure him that they are untainted because the Other Side “was removed from your bed,” i.e., Jacob's intention was pure. After he realizes that the demonic force has not infected his sons and that *Shekhinah* has not departed on their account, She reappears. Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret*, the Husband, and *Shekhinah*'s, reappearance signals Her preparation for divine union, as She is escorted by six angelic maidens. Jacob acknowledges and encourages Her approach to the canopy by uttering the six words *ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד* (*Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le-olam va-ed*), “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!”

On the Talmudic passage, see above, [note 139](#). On souls being blemished, cf. above, [pp. 7-8](#), [n. 22](#). On the term שמושא (*shimmusha*), “conjugal union,” see above, [notes 29, 49](#).

150. Jacob and his sons bore a supernal image... Jacob symbolized *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*), while his sons symbolized the sixfold retinue of *Shekhinah*.

According to the Talmudic passage (quoted in the preceding note), “Jacob wished to reveal to his sons קץ הימין (*qets ha-yamin*), the end of days,” the eventual time of redemption. This phrase originates in the book of Daniel, where ימין (*yamin*) is an aramaized form of the Hebrew ימים (*yamim*), “days,” but Rabbi Shim'on now interprets *yamin* as the Hebrew ימין (*yamin*), “right.” He distinguishes between קץ הימין (*qets ha-yamin*), *end of the right*, and קץ הימים (*qets ha-yamim*), “end of days.”

Qets ha-yamin, End of the right, alludes to *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), who is the consummation of the divine flow, characterized by the grace of *Hesed* on the right (as opposed to the Other Side, which derives from the left). She will eventually bring redemption, reigning as the Kingdom of Heaven throughout all the worlds.

Qets ha-yamim, “End of days,” refers to the Other Side, who appears as the Angel of Death and ends all human life. He is also known as קץ כל בשר (*qets kol basar*), *end of all flesh*, consuming all mortal creatures. “Wicked kingdom” refers both to this demonic force and its manifestation as Gentile rule over the Jewish people in exile.

According to Rabbi Shim'on, Jacob wished to reveal to his sons *qets ha-yamin, end of the right*, namely the secret of *Shekhinah* and Her unification with *Tif'eret*, which provides a foretaste of redemption.

The full verse in Daniel reads: *As for you, go on till the end; you will rest, and arise for your share לקץ הימין (le-qets ha-yamin), at the end of days.*

The full verse in Genesis reads: *God said to Noah, "End of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Here, I am about to destroy them, with the earth!"* According to the *Zohar*, the demonic force (known as *end of all flesh*) came before God to denounce human corruption and seek authorization to destroy life.

On *qets ha-yamin*, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:6; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 17:5; *Zohar* 1:54a-b, 62b-63a, 75a (ST), 152b, 193a, 210b, 233b, 234b-235a; 2:33a-34a, 181b; 3:142b (IR); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 73-75, 368-71; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 80-81 (102-3). On *end of all flesh*, see also *Zohar* 1:35b, 58a, 106a, 107a; cf. 3:170a.

On the demonic nature of the Angel of Death, see BT *Bava Batra* 16a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Satan, the evil impulse, and the Angel of Death are one and the same." On the relationship between Jacob's sons and *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 75](#), [n. 217](#).

[151](#). Once he saw that *Shekhinah* had withdrawn from him... As related in the Talmudic story quoted above, [note 149](#). Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets the response of Jacob's sons in a sefirotic sense: "Just as you, Jacob, represent and stimulate the mysterious unification of *Tif'eret* with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, so we represent and stimulate the mysterious unification of *Shekhinah* (the lower world) with Her angelic forces." The two references to "heart" in this story ("in your heart... in our heart") allude to the link between Jacob's heart and *Tif'eret*, and the link between his sons' heart and *Shekhinah*. Once Jacob was assured of his sons' virtue and purity, he brought *Shekhinah* to the canopy secretly to prevent any demonic interference.

[152](#). Just as they were unified... Just as Jacob and his sons stimulated the unification of *Tif'eret* and the unification of *Shekhinah*, so must Israel unify each of these two realms by reciting the six words of the first line of the *Shema* and the six words of *Barukh shem*, "Blessed be the name..." Thereby,

the verse in Zechariah is fulfilled: *YHVH (Tif'eret) is one and His name (Shekhinah) is one*. See above, [note 143](#).

153. Rav Hamnuna Sava... Rabbi Shim'on acknowledges that this sage has spoken well about stimulating the divine union. His own words, however, will one day be repeated in heaven openly and gloriously.

On Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder), see above, [p. 164, n. 69](#). The term the Ancient of Days appears in Daniel 7:9: *As I watched, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat—His garment like white snow, the hair of His head like clean fleece, His throne flames of fire, its wheels blazing fire*. In the *Zohar* this name designates the primordial *sefirah* of *Keter*.

In BT *Pesahim* 119a, secrets of Torah are referred to as “things hidden by the Ancient of Days.” See the rabbinic blessing in BT *Berakhot* 17a: “May your steps run to hear words of the Ancient of Days!” See also BT *Bava Batra* 91b; *Zohar* 1:4b, 8b-9a; 2:143a, 149a, 168a; 3:20a, 105b, 138b (*IR*), 232b.

On displaying knowledge of Torah without (or to avoid) shame in the world that is coming, see above, [p. 159, n. 57](#).

154. Have them take Me an offering... Rabbi Shim'on links his discussion of divine union with the opening verses of Torah portion *Terumah*. He apparently interprets this particular verse as *Have them take Me* (namely *Tif'eret*), along with *an offering* (namely *Shekhinah*)—uniting the two as one.

The full verse reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering*. On the reading *Have them take Me* (understanding *Me* as a direct object), see above, [notes 12, 18](#). On *Shekhinah* as תרומה (*terumah*), *an offering*, see above, [note 12](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MmD*.

155. master fathomers מארי מדין (*Marei middin*), “masters of *middin*,” apparently deriving from מדד (*mdd*), “to measure.”

See Judges 5:10: *you who sit on middin*, where the word is variously rendered as “[extended, wide] carpets, blankets” or—based on דין (*din*), “judgment”—“the judgment seat.” See BT *Eruvin* 54b: “It was taught in the school of Rav Anan: What is the meaning of the verse... *you who sit on middin*?... you who render judgment in absolute truth.”

In the *Zohar* the expression may refer to kabbalists who know the מדות (*middot*), the divine “qualities, attributes” (*sefirot*), or who know שעור קומה (*shi'ur qomah*), “the measure of the [divine] stature.” See Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §952: “Whoever knows this שי'ור (*shi'ur*), measure, of our Creator..., concealed from creatures, is assured of life in the world that is coming.” See above, [note 76](#).

156. Where do they obtain the will of their Lord...

The phrase *from every man* now alludes to *Yesod*, who is called both כל (*kol*), “all, every,” and איש (*ish*), “man.” *Yesod*, also known as Righteous One, is called *kol*, “all,” because He includes the entire flow of emanation and conveys it to *Shekhinah*. The verse in Ecclesiastes implies that the *abundance* of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *earth*) derives from *Yesod* (known as *all*). Similarly, the verse in Psalms implies that all of the *mitsvot* issue from this divine source.

The name *man* alludes to *Yesod's* role as husband of *Shekhinah*, a role assumed by various biblical heroes including Noah, who is called *a righteous man*. “Master of the house” means master (or husband) of *Shekhinah*.

The clause *his heart impels him* here implies mutual affection: *Yesod's* own *heart impels him* to love *Shekhinah*, while *Shekhinah* (known as *heart*) is impelled to love Him.

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47-48](#), [n. 132](#). On *Yesod* as *kol*, “all,” see *Bahir* 14 (22); Nahmanides on Genesis 24:1. On the verse in Ecclesiastes, see Nahmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:122a; 2:157a. On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:59b-60b.

On the title “Master of the house,” see above at [note 134](#); [p. 35](#), [n. 101](#). On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the

Glossary. On *Shekhinah* as heart, see *Bahir* 75 (106), 91 (134); Nahmanides on Genesis 6:6.

157. from that kol ish, every man... you shall take My offering... Unlike human beings, the blessed Holy One is not jealous; He actually instructs Israel to *take Shekhinah* (*My offering*) from *Yesod* (*every man*).

“That supernal place...” refers to *Yesod*, who links *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*. On the theme of jealousy, see *Zohar* 1:66b, where the intimacy between a righteous man and *Shekhinah* arouses the jealousy of the divine male.

158. from them... If the blessed Holy One is commanding Israel to take *Shekhinah* from Him, why does the verse read *from them* and not *from Him*? Because, Rabbi Shim’on explains, the plural *them* refers to both names of *Yesod*: *every* and *man*. See above, [note 156](#).

159. מאתם (Me-ittam), from them—מאת (me-et mem)... The final letter ם (*mem*), closed on all sides, symbolizes the concealed realm of *Binah* (known as the upper world), to whom *Yesod* (known as Righteous One) ascends in order to draw vitality for the worlds below.

“All is one entity” refers to the unity of *Yesod* and *Binah*. On the letter ם (*mem*), see above, [notes 21–22](#).

160. performing for Him a ritual of love... Israel obtains *Shekhinah* with God’s loving permission through their daily prayer, which arouses love and union above. See *Zohar* 3:220b.

161. From them—from the totality of six... Alternatively, the plural *them* can allude to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, from all of whom *Shekhinah* is “taken.”

The concluding formula, “all is one,” may imply that these six *sefirot* constitute one entity, or that this explanation accords with the earlier ones relating to *Yesod* or *Binah*.

162. From them—from those holidays... Alternatively, *them* alludes to six holidays, enumerated below. Conceivably, Rabbi Shim’on is playing here with

מאתם (*me-ittam*), *from them*, and מעתם (*me-ittam*), “from their time(s),” i.e., from their holy times. “All is one mystery” implies that this festal sextet parallels the six *sefirot* just mentioned.

163. Gold, silver, and bronze... The list of offerings brought for the construction of the Dwelling alludes to the various holidays. For example, *gold*, which symbolizes *Din* (Judgment) on the left side of the *sefirot*, corresponds to Rosh Hashanah (the Day of Judgment), dominated by the left side.

The verse in Job demonstrates that *gold* derives from *Din*, which is symbolized by *north*. See *Zohar* 2:24a, 147a.

The context in Exodus (25:3–8) reads: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen and goat hair; reddened ram skins, tanned-leather skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense. Carnelian stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and the breast-piece. Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them.* The terms *blue, purple, and crimson* refer to dyed yarns. On תכלת (*tekhelet*), *blue*, see below, [note 166](#).

164. Silver—Yom Kippur... Silver’s whitish color suggests the purging of sin on Yom Kippur.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *For on this day atonement will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure.*

165. bronze—days of Festival sacrifices... Namely, the seventy bulls offered on the festival of *Sukkot* (known as the Festival). In rabbinic literature these are interpreted as offerings for the seventy heavenly princes (or “chariots”) of the seventy nations of the world.

According to Numbers 29:12–34, on each successive day of the seven days of *Sukkot* the number of bulls offered decreases (thirteen, twelve,... seven), finally reaching a total of seventy. Here, Rabbi Shim’on explains that this

gradual diminishment befits the alien nature of the foreign princes, who deserve to receive less and less.

The phrase “mountains of bronze” derives from Zechariah 6:1. Here, נְחֹשֶׁת (*nehoshet*), “bronze,” apparently suggests נָחָשׁ (*nahash*), the demonic “serpent,” source of the seventy alien princes. See *Zohar* 2:139a, 229a, 233a, 260a (*Heikh*).

On the seventy bulls and nations, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:23; BT *Sukkah* 55b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:9; *Tanḥuma, Pinḥas* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pinḥas* 16; *Zohar* 1:64a-b, 208b; 2:59a, 186b-187a; 3:24a-b, 54b-55a (*Tos*), 96b-97a, 104b, 258b-259a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 177-78; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1251-53. On the gradual diminishment of these offerings, see BT *Sukkah* 47a; *Tanḥuma, Pinḥas* 17; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), 16; *Leqah Tov*, Numbers 29:36; *Zohar* 3:24b, 258b-259a. On the seventy heavenly princes, see above, [p. 10, n. 27](#).

166. Blue—Pesah... In this verse the color תכלת (*tekhelet*) actually refers to a violet or bluish purple dye whose essential ingredient is extracted from the gland of the *Murex trunculus* snail. Here, it symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is identified with *Pesah*, when Her power became manifest in Egypt.

On *Shekhinah* and *tekhelet*, see *Zohar* 1:51a-b (describing the blue light); 2:27b, 138b-139a, 149b, 152a-b, 226b; 3:175a (*Piq*). See *Sifrei*, Numbers 115, in the name of Rabbi Me’ir: “Whoever fulfills the commandment of [wearing] the tzitzit [Numbers 15:38-40] is as though he greeted the face of *Shekhinah*, for the *tekhelet* [the colored thread on the tassel of the garment] resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory.” See BT *Sotah* 17a.

Here Rabbi Shim’on may be associating תכלת (*tekhelet*), “blue,” with the root כלה (*klh*), “to destroy.” The verse in Exodus, describing the killing of the firstborn, reads: *YHVH will pass through to strike Egypt, and when He sees the*

blood [of the Paschal Lamb] on the lintel and on the two doorposts, YHVH will pass over the entrance and will not allow the Destroyer to enter your houses to strike.

On colors in a dream, see BT *Berakhot* 57b: “All kinds of colors bode well in a dream, except blue.” See *Zohar* 1:51b; 2:139a, 152a; 3:175a (*Piq*).

167. Purple—Shavu’ot... This festival, commemorating the giving of the Torah, is symbolized by the color purple, which is a blend of several colors—corresponding to *Tif’eret* (symbolized by Written Torah), which blends the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Din* (respectively on the right and left). Thus Torah reflects both Love and Judgment.

The verse in Deuteronomy mentions the divine *right hand* and alludes to the left, symbolized by fire. It reads in full: *YHVH from Sinai appeared and from Seir He shone upon them; He radiated from Mount Paran and He came from myriads of holy ones; from His right hand, a fiery law for them.* See *Zohar* 1:198a, 243a; 2:81a, 84a–b, 166b, 206b, 223a; 3:176a.

On the all-inclusive quality of purple, see *Zohar* 1:147b (*ST*); 3:141b (*IR*). Cf. *Zohar* 2:147b, 149b; above, [note 78](#).

168. And crimson—the Fifteenth of Av... According to the Mishnah (*Ta’anit* 4:8), on this day eligible maidens went out in borrowed white garments (so that the poorer ones among them would not be shamed). As they danced in the vineyards, young men would select wives from among them.

This rabbinic source specifies white (not *crimson*) and does not mention wool. Here, Rabbi Shim’on associates *crimson* with the daughters of Israel, based on the verse in Lamentations, which describes how the wealthy of Jerusalem have been reduced to desperate measures as a result of the Babylonian siege. The full verse reads: *Those who feasted on delicacies lie desolate in the streets; those reared in crimson embrace garbage heaps.*

169. Until here, six holidays... The first six items offered (*gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson*) correspond to six holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, *Sukkot, Pesah, Shavu'ot*, and the Fifteenth of Av). The remaining nine items correspond to the first nine of the Ten Days of *Teshuvah* (from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur)—with Yom Kippur itself completing the decade.

170. From all these we take *the offering of YHVH*... From all six holidays, Israel draws down *Shekhinah* (*the offering of YHVH*). Rabbi Shim'on proceeds to link *Shekhinah* with each holiday. For example, *gold*, which symbolizes *Din* (Judgment) on the left, corresponds to Rosh Hashanah (the Day of Judgment). Since *Shekhinah* derives from “the side of *gold*,” She is “the mystery of Rosh Hashanah.”

See above, [note 163](#). The phrase תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה (*terumat YHVH*), *the offering of YHVH*, appears in Exodus 35:5. On *Shekhinah* as *terumah, offering*, see above, [note 12](#).

171. From Yom Kippur we take Her... Yom Kippur often symbolizes *Binah*, the Divine Mother; but since *Shekhinah* is Her daughter, She inherits this symbol. See *Zohar* 3:102a-b.

172. From *Sukkot* we take Her... Immediately following the seven days of *Sukkot* comes *the eighth day... a convocation*, a time for Israel's intimacy with God. This day is identified with *Shekhinah* (*the offering*). See *Zohar* 1:64a-b, 208b; 3:104b.

173. From *Pesah*—She is *Pesah*... *Shekhinah* (the blue light) is identified with this holiday in particular. See above, [note 166](#).

174. From *Shavu'ot* we take Her... This holiday commemorates the giving of the Torah, when *Elohim spoke all these words*, namely the Ten Commandments. *Elohim* designates *Shekhinah*, who is also symbolized by Oral Torah, which derives (or is “taken”) from the Written Torah (symbolizing *Tif'eret*), which was dictated to Moses.

175. The Fifteenth of Av... This festival of love and marriage fittingly symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the blessed Holy One's beloved, and She presides over the daughters of Israel as they dance in the vineyards and find their mates. See above, [note 168](#).

"All other days" may refer to the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*, or to all the other days of year. The plural wording *from them* refers to the various days, especially the holidays enumerated above, from all of which *Shekhinah* (*the offering*) is to be taken. See above, [note 162](#).

176. Just as they unite above... The six holidays mentioned above (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, *Sukkot*, *Pesah*, *Shavu'ot*, and the Fifteenth of Av) parallel the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. As these six *sefirot* join in preparation for union with *Shekhinah*, She too joins below with Her six angelic camps. When both the male divinity (the blessed Holy One) and *Shekhinah* (pictured as His throne) have each attained individual oneness, the couple unites.

On the meaning of the phrase "the mystery of *one*," see above, [notes 143-44](#). On the six holidays and the six *sefirot*, see above, [notes 161-62](#).

In the second half of the eighteenth-century, kabbalists introduced this passage (extending below to "Then, beginning of prayer...", at [note 179](#)) into the Sephardic liturgy for Friday evening as a prelude to *Barekhu*. It is known by its opening word: כגוונא (*Ke-Gavna*), "Just as (they unite)." See Hallamish, *Hanhagot Qabbaliyyot be-Shabbat*, 246-51.

177. Mystery of Sabbath: She is Sabbath... The mystery is that Sabbath Eve represents *Shekhinah*, seventh of the primordial days (the seven lower *sefirot*). Unified with Her angelic camps, She is prepared to marry the blessed Holy One. This holy time is their wedding celebration.

On Sabbath as the divine wedding, see *Zohar* 3:94b-95a, 105a.

178. Prayer for the entrance of Sabbath... The following description serves as an introduction to the opening prayer of the Friday evening service, which is expounded below.

Shekhinah (the Throne) is arrayed for Her royal Husband. During the week, She is vulnerable to demonic forces and powers of harsh judgment, but now all of these flee. Israel, by welcoming Sabbath, joins in adorning Her, and they themselves are adorned with additional souls issuing from Her.

The image of an additional soul derives from BT *Beitsah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "On Sabbath eve the blessed Holy One imparts an additional soul to a human being. When Sabbath departs it is taken from him."

See *Zohar* 1:48a; 2:88b, 136b, 204a-205b; 3:95a, 173a, 288b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 111, 114; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1230-33; Ginsburg, *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah*, 121-36.

On Sabbath as queen and bride, see BT *Shabbat* 119a: "Rabbi Ḥanina would wrap himself in a garment, stand toward evening as Sabbath entered, and say, 'Come, let us go out to meet Queen Sabbath!' Rabbi Yannai would don his garments as Sabbath entered and say, 'Come, O Bride! Come, O Bride!'"

On the King sitting on His Throne on Sabbath eve, see *Zohar* 3:178a, 296a (*IZ*). On demonic forces disappearing then, see *Midrash Tehillim* 92:5; *Zohar* 1:14b, 48a; 2:88b; 3:288b (*IZ*).

179. Then, beginning of prayer... Then, the Sabbath evening prayer begins with *Barekhu* (Bless). Rabbi Shim'on interprets the wording "Bless ׀א (*et*) *YHVH*" as a reference first to *Shekhinah* (known as *et*) and then to Her partner, *Tif'eret* (*YHVH*).

Grammatically, the word ׀א (*et*) is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. However, already

in rabbinic times, Naḥum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that the presence of *et* in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, as often in the *Zohar*, ם (et) alludes to *Shekhinah*, who comprises the totality of divine speech, the entire alphabet from ׀ (alef) to ם (tav). See BT *Pesahim* 22b, *Ḥagigah* 12a-b; *Zohar* 1:15b, 247a; 2:81b, 90a; 3:190b (on this prayer).

On the image of “beaming faces,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:2, on the verse *God blessed the seventh day* (Genesis 2:3): “He blessed it with the light in a person’s face. On Sabbath the light in a person’s face is different than on all other days of the week.” See *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 25.

180. The Holy People are forbidden... In the weekday evening service the *Barekhu* is preceded by a verse from Psalms: *Yet He is compassionate, He purges iniquity and does not destroy, and often restrains His wrath and does not arouse all His rage.* However, on Sabbath eve, when harsh judgment is eliminated, this verse is inappropriate and must not be recited. Anyone who does so arouses judgment below, thereby arousing demonic powers above, who interfere with the adornment of *Shekhinah* and oppress Her.

On not reciting the verse from Psalms on Sabbath eve, see above, [note 70](#). “Oppressed” renders אִתְּדַחֵק (itdaḥaqat). Cf. BT *Ḥagigah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Yitshak: “Whoever sins secretly, it is as if דוּחֵק (doḥeq), he thrusts away [or: squeezes], the feet of *Shekhinah*.”

181. Do not say that only this is so... Not only do the people of Israel have the capacity to arouse the demonic forces; they can also arouse holiness above. The verse in Psalms implies that each festival is determined and sanctified by the people themselves and is thus actually “theirs.”

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Blast the ram’s horn on the new moon, בַּכֶּסֶה (ba-keseh), on the full moon, for our*

festival day. The rare word *ba-keseh* apparently means *on the full moon*, but in BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 8a-b it is derived from the root כסה (*ksh*), “to cover,” and understood as referring to the new moon (specifically, the new moon of Tishrei), when the moon is almost totally concealed. Here, the point is that when the people of Israel sanctify the new moon of Tishrei (or of any month), they thereby determine the calendar and the precise date of Rosh Hashanah (or any festival); hence, the wording *for our festival day*.

Various rabbinic sources make the same point by interpreting the following verse in Psalms (81:5): *For it is a law for [or: of] Israel, a ruling of [or: for] the God of Jacob*—namely, only after the earthly court determines the new moon of Tishrei (establishing *a law of Israel*) does God assemble the heavenly court for the Day of Judgment (Rosh Hashanah); thus, Israel’s legal determination becomes *a ruling for the God of Jacob*. See JT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, 57b; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 8b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:13; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:6.

182. ‘Bless אה (et) YHVH’—et, precisely... These opening words of *Barekhu*, chanted by the cantor, contain an allusion to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *et*. She is identified specifically with Sabbath eve.

See above, [notes 177-79](#). On the various sefirotic aspects of Sabbath, see *Zohar* 1:5b; 2:47b, 92a-b, 92a-b (*Tos*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1223-26.

183. ‘Blessed be YHVH, who is blessed’... This congregational response spans the flow of emanation, beginning with *Hokhmah* (“the source of life”), who is called here ברוך (*barukh*), “Blessed,” continuing through *Tif’eret* (*YHVH*) and on to *Yesod* (“the place from which all saturation streams”). *Yesod*, the divine phallus, is the site of the covenant of circumcision and a source of blessing for *Shekhinah* (“the well”), so He is called “who is blessed.” Once the blessings reach *Yesod*, whose flow never ceases, the well of *Shekhinah* is filled.

See *Zohar* 3:190b. On *barukh*, “blessed,” as a name of *Hokhmah*, see *Zohar* 2:162a; cf. 3:271a (*Piq*).

184. we do not say, ‘Blessed be אַ (et) YHVH... The congregational response does not include the word *et* (signifying *Shekhinah*), because this would imply that the flow proceeds directly from *Hokhmah* (referred to as “Blessed”) to *Shekhinah*, which cannot happen. Rather, after “Blessed (be)” comes “YHVH, who is blessed,” referring to *Tif’eret* and *Yesod*, since only through *Yesod* can the well of *Shekhinah* be filled.

The full congregational response reads: “Blessed be YHVH, who is blessed forever and ever.” The closing phrase, “forever and ever,” alludes to the final *sefirah*, *Shekhinah*. By chanting this line, Israel conducts the blessing from the sefirotic heights to *Yesod* (“who is blessed”), who conveys this flow to *Shekhinah* “from all sides,” i.e., from all the intermediate *sefirot* (*Hesed* through *Yesod* Himself).

185. Blessed—upper source... Rabbi Shim’on recapitulates his interpretation of the congregational response. “Blessed” refers to *Hokhmah*, the upper source of blessing. When *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) attains fullness, She provides blessing to the worlds below and shares this name. “YHVH” refers to *Tif’eret*, the central *sefirah*. “Who is blessed” signifies *Yesod*, who brings peace to the house of *Shekhinah*. “Forever and ever” alludes to *Shekhinah*.

On *Shekhinah* sharing the name *barukh*, “blessed,” with *Hokhmah*, see *Zohar* 3:271a (*Piq*). On the connection between *Yesod* (the divine phallus) and peace, cf. BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim’on son of Halafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.”

186. Who is blessed...A fruitful son The full verse reads: *A fruitful son is Joseph, a fruitful son by a spring; daughters stride by a rampart.* Joseph symbolizes *Yesod*, whose fruitful blessing is demonstrated by this verse. See *Zohar* 1:246b.

187. Therefore this blessing must be recited... As Sabbath begins, Israel should respond to the cantor’s call

by reciting this second line of *Barekhu*, and they must not open with the verse from Psalms relating to wrath and judgment.

See above, [note 180](#). “This Sabbath entering by night” refers to *Shekhinah*.

[188](#). Israel does not utter this blessing until... The additional Sabbath soul descends upon Israel precisely at this moment. See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 114.

[189](#). On this night, conjugal union of the wise... The eve of Sabbath is the appropriate time for scholars to unite with their wives through the pure power of the additional soul. Such union draws down a holy soul generated by the union of the divine couple above, ensuring that the human couple will engender a holy child.

The sentence “Although we have already established this...” apparently means: Although elsewhere in the *Zohar* the recommendation that scholars should unite with their wives on Sabbath eve is based on the fact that this is the time when the divine couple unites, and here this recommendation is based on the presence of the additional soul, “all is one” because the two explanations are linked. For another interpretation, see Galante.

The phrase “whether in one aspect or sometimes in another” may mean: whether on Sabbath eve or even occasionally on a weeknight, e.g., upon returning from a journey (see *Zohar* 1:50a). Alternatively, whether they rise at midnight during the week to engage in Torah (and unite with *Shekhinah*) or whether they rise at midnight on Sabbath eve to unite with their wives. Alternatively, whether during their conjugal union on Sabbath eve they have in mind either of the explanations mentioned in the preceding paragraph. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; Scholem; *MmD*. On the midnight ritual of Torah study, see *Zohar* 3:81a; above, [note 74](#).

The Mishnah (*Ketubbot* 5:6) discusses how often husbands of various professions are required to fulfill the

commandment of עונה (*onah*), “conjugal rights,” i.e., to satisfy their wives sexually. According to Rabbi Eli’ezer, “The *onah* mentioned in the Torah [applies as follows]: Those who are unoccupied, every day; laborers, twice a week; donkey-drivers, once a week; camel-drivers, once every thirty days; sailors, once every six months.”

The Talmud (BT *Ketubbot* 62b) adds: “When is the *onah* of the disciples of the wise? [i.e., What is the proper interval between two successive times of fulfilling this *mitsvah*?] Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shemu’el, ‘From one Sabbath eve to the next.’”

See *Zohar* 1:14a-b, 50a, 112a (*MhN*); 2:63b, 89a-b, 204b-205a; 3:49b, 78a, 81a, 82a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1232-33; Wolfson, “Eunuchs Who Keep the Sabbath.”

On the term שמושא (*shimmusha*), “conjugal union,” see above, [notes 29, 49](#). On the phrase “with new, additional holy souls and spirits,” see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1267, n. 167. Several manuscripts (N41, O2, 017), as well as the Mantua and Cremona editions, read: נשמתין דרוחין (*nishmatin de-ruhin*), “... souls of spirits.”

190. At the moment when night is split... At every midnight of the weekdays the blessed Holy One enters the Garden of Eden, where He delights with the souls of the righteous. However, as Sabbath enters, these souls are elevated above the Garden by angels, and then transported by a chariot to the higher Garden of Eden, where the blessed Holy One meets them. Meanwhile, additional Sabbath souls descend to adorn Israel.

On the weekday midnight scenario, see above, [note 74](#). “The mystery of the upper source” may allude to *Hokhmah*, as above at [notes 184-85](#). On “the firmament above the Garden,” see above, [note 78](#). On souls of the righteous ascending as additional Sabbath souls descend, see *Zohar* 3:173a; *ZH* 82d-83a (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. above, [p. 21, n. 58](#).

191. But then during Sabbath the Garden on earth sits empty... If souls of the righteous ascend to the higher Garden for Sabbath, then isn't the earthly Garden of Eden left empty? No, because souls of righteous who have just cleansed themselves from whatever sins they committed during their lifetime and have not yet entered the Garden are permitted to enter it in time for Sabbath.

The reference to the Bread of the Presence refers to twelve loaves in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. Each Sabbath new loaves were arranged in two rows on a gold-covered table, where they remained until the following Sabbath, when they were replaced by twelve fresh loaves. According to M *Menahot* 11:7, the weekly ritual of replacement was performed with such precision that the table was never left empty: "Within [the sanctuary] was a table of gold on which the Bread of the Presence lay continually. Four priests entered, two bearing two rows [of bread] in their hands and two bearing two dishes [of frankincense] in their hands. Four preceded them, two to remove two rows and two to remove two dishes.... These withdrew [the old] and the others laid down [the new], the handbreadth of one coinciding with the handbreadth of the other, for it is written: [*You shall set on the table the Bread of the Presence,*] *before Me continuously* (Exodus 25:30)."

On the Bread of the Presence, see also Leviticus 24:5-9; 1 Samuel 21:4-7; Naḥmanides on Exodus 25:24; *Zohar* 1:88b; 2:154b-155a. The phrase "on the day it was taken away" comes from 1 Samuel 21:7. On the Garden never being empty, see *ZH* 83a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 60a. Cf. *Zohar* 2:253a (*Heikh*).

192. When they return on the weekdays... When souls of the righteous that have ascended to the higher Garden return after Sabbath to the earthly Garden, how can this Garden hold both these souls and the ones that arrived right before Sabbath? (See the preceding note.) Does the Garden somehow expand? Rabbi Shim'on explains

that the earthly Garden expands as the land of Israel expanded to hold its inhabitants. Furthermore, some of the souls of the righteous who ascend to the higher Garden remain there, so the lower Garden is not so crowded.

The word צְבִי (*tsevi*) means both “splendid” and “gazelle.” The comparison between the land of Israel and the gazelle appears in BT *Gittin* 57a in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: “She [the land of Israel] is called אֶרֶץ צְבִי (*erets tsevi*), land of the gazelle [or: splendid land]. Just as the skin of a gazelle cannot hold its flesh [i.e., once it dies and its skin is stripped, the skin shrinks and cannot contain the whole body], so the land of Israel when inhabited expands, and when not inhabited contracts.”

On the land of Israel and the gazelle, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 37; BT *Ketubbot* 112a; *Tanḥuma*, *Mishpatim* 17, *Re’eh* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Mishpatim* 10; *Shemot Rabbah* 32:2. On the land of Israel changing size, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:16. The phrase אֶרֶץ הַצְּבִי (*erets ha-tsevi*), *the splendid land*, appears in Daniel 11:16, 41. See Jeremiah 3:19.

193. Souls ascend, and souls descend to adorn the Holy People... Souls of the righteous ascend from the Garden of Eden to the higher Garden, while other souls descend to adorn Israel on Sabbath. See above, [notes 178, 190](#). On the movement of other souls, see above, [note 191](#).

The formula “Sanctified! Sanctified!” derives from M *Rosh ha-Shanah* 2:7, in the context of the sanctifying of the new moon once the witnesses have been examined and their testimony confirmed: “The head of the court says, ‘Sanctified!’ and all the people respond after him, ‘Sanctified! Sanctified!’” Naḥmanides (on Exodus 20:7) links this formula with Sabbath.

On the wicked resting in Hell on Sabbath, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:5, where one of the dwellers in Hell reports: “Whoever does not observe Sabbath willingly in your world observes it here against his will.... All week long we are

punished and on Sabbath we are allowed to rest.” See above, [note 70](#).

“Cycling” renders גלגולא (*gilgula*). See above, [pp. 38–39](#), [n. 108](#).

194. At midnight of Sabbath eve... When a scholar sleeps on Sabbath eve, his additional Sabbath spirit (or soul) takes his “other” (regular) soul and guides her through heaven to gaze upon the divine glory. At midnight, the additional spirit descends (along with the regular soul) so that the scholar can awaken and engage in conjugal union with his wife.

See above, [note 189](#). On midnight as the appropriate time for conjugal union, see BT *Nedarim* 20a-b; *Zohar* 2:205a; 3:81a.

195. The wise should recite a verse of arousal... By reciting such a verse with pure intention, a scholar ensures that the additional Sabbath soul returning to him at midnight will convey another pure soul for the embryo that he and his wife hope to engender.

See above, [note 189](#). The various verses here all refer to a *spirit*. The verse from Isaiah describes prophetic inspiration. The verses from Ezekiel describe the chariot-throne whirling through heaven, supported by *living beings* and *wheels*, both animated by *spirit*. In verse 20 *they* refers to *the living beings*, who are then referred to collectively as *the living being*. In verse 21 *these* and *those* refer, respectively, to *the living beings* and *the wheels*. Here, all three verses apply to the soul and the additional Sabbath soul, which provides *release* and *liberation*. For detailed interpretations of the verses, see *OY*; Galante; *MmD*.

The phrase “conjugal enjoinderment” renders שמושא דמצוה (*shimmusha de-mitsvah*), “sexual union for (i.e., by which one performs) a *mitsvah*.” See *Zohar* 1:176a. On *shimmusha*, see above, [notes 29](#), [49](#).

196. When Rav Hamnuna Sava used to emerge... After immersing himself in the river in preparation for

receiving the additional Sabbath soul, he would pause and see certain angels ascending with souls of the righteous from the Garden of Eden toward the higher Garden and other angels descending with additional souls for Israel. See above, [note 190](#).

On Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder), see above, [p. 164, n. 69](#); above, [note 153](#). On bathing before Sabbath, see BT *Shabbat* 25b; *Zohar* 2:204a. On the world of souls, see Nahmanides on Exodus 6:2; Leviticus 18:29; 26:12. In *Zohar* 2:205a-b, Sabbath is called “the day of souls.”

197. As day lightens on Sabbath morning... The divine wedding celebration continues on Sabbath morning, enhanced by several psalms. The first of these is Psalm 19, which opens by describing *the heavens*, symbolizing *Tif'eret*. The Name apparently refers to *YHVH*, often associated with *Tif'eret*.

See Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 48-51; *Zohar* 1:8a; *ZH* 45a-b. On the order of the Sabbath morning psalms, see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 95.

198. What is מספרים (*mesapperim*), declare?... The simple sense of *mesapperim* (*declares, tells*) does not convey its full meaning here; rather, the word suggests ספיר (*sappir*), “sapphire,” and also alludes to the *sefirot*. *Tif'eret* sparkles radiantly, attaining the full brilliance of the name *YHVH*. His ספור (*sippur*) is not “a story,” but rather ספירו (*sefiru*), “a sapphirine radiance,” flashing from *Hokhmah*, who is symbolized by ספר (*sefer*), “a book.”

“Every single *glory*” and “every single ring” apparently refer to the *sefirot* surrounding *Tif'eret* (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), or to the various aspects of *Shekhinah* (who is known as *glory*).

On *mesapperim*, see *Zohar* 1:8a; *ZH* 45a. Cf. *Bahir* 87 (125); Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 52; *TZ, Haqdamah*, 12b. On *sefer* as referring to *Hokhmah* (or *Binah*), see *Zohar* 1:37b; 2:200a; 3:40b; below at [note 219](#).

199. And His handiwork—that supernal dew... The flow of emanation is God's handiwork, revealed especially on Sabbath.

See Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 54-56; ZH 45a-b. On emanation as dew, see also Naḥmanides on Exodus 16:6; *Zohar* 1:95b, 143b, 224b, 225b, 232a; 2:61b, 62b, 83a-b, 88a, 156b, 176b (*SdT*s), 210a; 3:26a, 128b (*IR*), 135a-b (*IR*), 208a, 288a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*).

200. The sky מגיד (*maggid*), proclaims... *Yesod*, symbolized by *the sky*, draws the dew of emanation from the head of the *sefirot*. *Yesod* is also pictured as "spring of the well" and the river issuing from Eden (symbolizing *Hokhmah*). He conducts the flow to *Shekhinah*, pictured as "the well" and Sabbath eve. This flow is enriched by the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, another symbol of divine energy.

On the relation between dew and the head, see Song of Songs 5:2: *For my head is drenched with dew*. This verse is often applied to God, e.g., in *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34: "Rabbi Yehudah said, '... In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *Your dead will live... my corpses will arise... Awake and shout for joy, O dwellers in the dust!... For Your dew is a dew of lights... and the earth will give birth to spirits of the dead* (Isaiah 26:19)...' Rabbi Tanḥum said, '...From where does it descend? From the head of the blessed Holy One. In the time to come, He will shake the hair of His head and bring down a dew of revival, reviving the dead, as is said: *I was asleep, but my heart was awake... For my head is drenched with dew* (Song of Songs 5:2).'"

See JT *Berakhot* 5:2, 9b; BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, *Shabbat* 88b; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 32-33; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 19; Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 54; *Zohar* 1:118a (*MhN*), 130b-131a, 225b, 232a; 2:28b, 83a, 88a; 3:128b (*IR*), 135b (*IR*), 288a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*); ZH 45a, 90d (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 88-89.

The phrase “crystalline dew” renders טלא דבדולחא (*talla di-vdulḥa*). The Aramaic בדולחא (*bedulḥa*) derives from Hebrew בדולח (*bedolah*), “bdellium,” a word that appears only twice in the Bible, once in the context of the geographical setting of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:12) and once describing the color of the manna (Numbers 11:7)—which is also linked with dew (*ibid.*, 9; Exodus 16:13–14). Originally, *bedolah* apparently designated an aromatic yellowish transparent resin of trees, though a number of ancient and medieval sources identify it as a precious stone. Rashi on Numbers 11:7 describes it as “crystal,” and in medieval Hebrew *bedolah* means “pearl” and “crystal.”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 16:2; *Zohar* 1:225b; 2:176b (*SdTs*), 225b; 3:49a, 128b (*IR*); *ZH* 48c. On letters and paths, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1–2. On the path of *Yesod*, cf. below, [note 213](#).

The dew conveyed by *Yesod* from the divine head to *Shekhinah* also represents sperm, which according to one ancient theory derives from the brain. See above, [pp. 93–94](#), [n. 268](#); below, [note 795](#).

201. Day to day pours forth utterance... The lower seven *sefirot* are pictured as seven primordial days, conveying the flow of dew from one to another. Thereby, *Tif'eret* (*the heavens*) adorns *Shekhinah* (*glory*) in radiance, and the river of *Yesod* (*sky*) gathers the flow of dew from the other *sefirot* and conveys it to *Shekhinah*.

On the rings, see above, [note 198](#). On the phrase *day to day*, see Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 58-61; *Zohar* 1:8b; *ZH* 45b.

202. יביע (Yabbi'a)...מבע (mabba)... Rabbi Shim'on pictures the lower *sefirot* as hastening to be illumined by one another. He interprets יביע (*yabbi'a*), *pours forth*, as related to מבע (*mabba*), "quick."

The formula "as is said" suggests that the phrase "מבע אתעבד (mabba it'avid), swiftly done," is a biblical verse, but no such verse exists. Apparently, the author has in mind *Targum Onqelos* on Deuteronomy 32:35, which renders *what is readied for them comes swiftly* as ומבע דעתיד להון (*u-mabba da-atid lehon*). Perhaps *it'avid* is a corruption or transformation of *da-atid*. See *Nitsotsei Orot*; Scholem.

203. אמר (Omer), Utterance... Each of the three letters of this word symbolizes a particular *sefirah*, which together represent and convey the entire linguistic flow of emanation. The א (*alef*) stands for אבא (*abba*), "father," namely the Divine Father, *Hokhmah*. The מ (*mem*), which joins *alef* to form the word אמ (em), "mother," stands for the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The ר (*resh*) stands for רישא (*reisha*), "head," namely *Tif'eret*, the Son. (Alternatively, this third component is *Da'at*, who is linked with *Tif'eret*.) Together the triad אמר (*omer*) reigns on Sabbath.

The phrase "ascending and descending" apparently refers to the permutation of letters. See above, [note 76](#). The phrase "אמר (*omer*), utterance—supernal dominion" is based on the original sense of the root אמר (*'mr*), "to command."

204. When all this is drawn... When the entire flow reaches *Yesod* (sky), He conveys it to *Shekhinah* (glory), thereby generating souls formed in the image of *Tif'eret* (heavens).

Night to night alludes to the various powers of *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by night and the divine chariot-throne. Whereas the nocturnal powers of *Shekhinah* constitute the lower chariot (upon which sits *Tif'eret*), the sefirotic days from *Hesed* through *Yesod* constitute the upper chariot (upon which sits *Binah*).

The verse in Psalm 16 reads: *I bless YHVH who counsels me; even in the nights כליותי (khilyotai), my kidneys, admonish me.* The kidneys were thought to be the seat of emotion and conscience.

205. יחיה (Yeḥavveh), Displays—יחיה (yeḥayyeh), enlivens... Through Her nocturnal powers, *Shekhinah* enlivens the souls issuing from *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*. Rabbi Shim'on demonstrates the equivalence of יחיה (yeḥavveh), *displays*, and יחיה (yeḥayyeh), “enlivens,” by quoting the verse from Genesis, where Eve’s Hebrew name חוה (Ḥavvah), is explained on the basis of the word חי (ḥai), *living*. Adam would have called her חיה (ḥayyah), “living one,” but the middle letter—י (yod)—was replaced by ו (vav), which fittingly symbolizes *Tif'eret*, the Tree of Life. Thus, חוה (Ḥavvah), “Eve,” and חיה (ḥayyah), “living one,” are equivalent. Similarly, יחיה (yeḥavveh), *displays*, and יחיה (yeḥayyeh), “enlivens,” are equivalent.

On Eve’s name, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:11; *ZḤ* 19b (*MhN*). The numerical value of the letter ו (vav) is six, corresponding to the sextet of *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). On the significance of vav, see *Zohar* 1:12b, 33b, 241b; 3:176b.

206. Knowledge—mystery of heavens... *Knowledge* alludes to *Tif'eret*, also known as *heavens*. The biblical word דעת (da'at), *knowledge*, may allude here to sexual knowledge

(as in Genesis 4:1) or to the *sefirah Da'at*, who is linked with *Tif'eret*.

Just as *Tif'eret* includes six aspects (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), so does *Shekhinah*, since from *Tif'eret* She receives and enlivens souls who reflect His six aspects. The expression *day to day* alludes to the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, while *night to night* alludes to the powers of *Shekhinah*, who is illumined by Her male partner, *Tif'eret*.

The verset *Night to night displays knowledge* now means apparently: The nocturnal totality of *Shekhinah* “enlivens” the souls issuing from *Tif'eret* (*knowledge*), or alternatively: Her nocturnal totality is enlivened by Him. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On אֹמֶר (*omer*), *utterance*, see above, [note 203](#).

[207](#). Because this utterance is a sublime mystery... As explained above ([note 203](#)), the first two letters of the word אֹמֶר (*omer*), *utterance*, allude to *Hokhmah* and *Binah*. This hidden realm generates an inaudible *utterance*, unlike normal utterances of the world or even the lower sefirotic rungs, which can be heard.

On audible and inaudible *sefirot*, see *Zohar* 1:50b, 209b-210a. According to the simple (yet paradoxical) sense of Psalms 19:2-5, the heavens speak a wordless language.

[208](#). However, Through all the earth their line extends... Although the highest *sefirot* are unknowable in and of themselves, their emanation streams through the lower, more accessible *sefirot*. Thereby even the hidden divine reality is knowable to a certain degree, and human faith becomes profound, not superficial.

The verse in Psalms reads: *Through all the earth קוֹם (qavvam), their line, extends; to the edge of the world, their words*. The word *qavvam* is often rendered *their voice*, based either on the Arabic verb *qawwah*, “to shout,” or the emendation קוֹלָם (*qolam*), *their voice*. The *Zohar* prefers the meaning *their line*; see *Zohar* 1:8b-9a.

209. How are they known?... The hidden divine reality is revealed by *Yesod* (*the sun*), who is like a dwelling (or *tent*) for the higher *sefirot*, absorbing them and conveying their light to the world.

The verse in Psalms reads: *For the sun He set up a tent in them* (that is, in the heavens), but Rabbi Shim'on understands it as *The sun* (namely *Yesod*) *He set up as a tent for them* (for the hidden *sefirot*).

On *Yesod* as sun, see *Zohar* 1:9a, 33b; 2:3b, 205b; 3:217a; Moses de León, *Sod Eser Sefirot*, 381; idem, *Shushan Edut*, 338; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 50 (61).

210. Whoever grasps the sun... By attaining or comprehending the *sefirah* of *Yesod*, one attains all the *sefirot* that gather there. *Yesod* is the *groom* of *Shekhinah*, showered with sparkling gifts and infused with the passion of the other *sefirot*.

See *Zohar* 1:9a; *ZH* 45b. The verse in Psalms reads: *He is like a groom coming forth מִחֻפְתּוֹ (me-ḥuppato), from his nuptial chamber [or: canopy], rejoicing כְּגִבּוֹר (ke-gibbor), like a mighty one [or: warrior, champion, hero] running [literally: to run] his course.* In this verse the simple sense of חֻפָּה (*ḥuppah*) is “nuptial chamber,” but Rabbi Shim'on understands it according to its later meaning: “canopy.”

211. Who is his canopy?... The *canopy* covering all is *Hokhmah*, source of the stream of emanation.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads.* In Kabbalah this river symbolizes the flow of emanation issuing from *Hokhmah* (who is known as *Eden*), conveyed by *Binah* through *Yesod*, entering the garden of *Shekhinah*. See Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 100.

212. Rejoicing like a mighty one... *Yesod* combines the polar opposites *Hesed* (Love) and *Gevurah* (Power, Might). He rejoices with the quality of *Hesed*, symbolized by the primordial light of Creation, which contains no admixture

of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). He also manifests the quality of *Gevurah*, but He sweetens its Judgment with the Love of *Hesed*. This is why the verse describes Him as כַּגִּבּוֹר (*ke-gibbor*), *like a mighty one*, not simply *gibbor, a mighty one*.

See Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 101; ZH 45b. On the primordial light, see above, [notes 16–17](#), [29](#). On *ke-gibbor, like a mighty one*, as opposed to *gibbor, a mighty one*, see *Zohar* 1:173b–174a; 2:47b. Cf. *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:3; 2:8–9; *Zohar* 2:122a.

[213](#). **All this, to run his course...** The goal of *Yesod* is to stream into *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the sea* and the moon) and enable Her to convey the flow below.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Who makes a way through the sea, a path through mighty waters*. In the *Zohar*, *a way through the sea* is often interpreted as “a way through *Shekhinah*.” See *Zohar* 1:29b, 48b, 197b, 237a, 243b; 2:31a–b, 215a; 3:171b.

[214](#). **From the end of the heavens...** *Yesod*, the phallus, is the “end” (or “consummation”) of the divine male body, which extends from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod* and is centered on *Tif'eret*, known as *the heavens*. Thus *Yesod* “goes forth” and “brings forth” the flow of emanation *from the end of the heavens*.

Rabbi Shim'on reads the phrase in Deuteronomy from below to above: *from one end of the heavens* (namely *Yesod*) *to the other end of the heavens* (namely the upper world: *Binah*). שלמא דיליה (*Shelama dileih*), “His peace,” derives from the expression מלכא דשלמא דיליה (*malka di-shlama dileih*), “the King who possesses peace,” which refers to the entire male realm extending down from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*), which “possesses” *Yesod*, known as peace. Just as the upper realm absorbs all divine light, so does *Yesod*.

On *Yesod* as “end (or consummation) of the body,” see *Zohar* 1:246b. On the genitals as distinguishing male from female, see *Zohar* 1:246a. On the expression “the King who possesses peace,” see above, [notes 26](#), [105](#).

The verse in Deuteronomy refers to God redeeming Israel from Egypt and revealing Himself to them at Mount Sinai. It reads in full: *For ask now of primal days that were before you, from the day God created a human on the earth and from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, has anything as great as this ever happened or has its like been heard?* See *Zohar* 1:1b; 2:200a; Vol. 4, pp. 530-31, n. 598.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *From the end of the heavens his going forth, and his circuit to their ends, and nothing is hidden from his heat.*

215. And his circuit... *Yesod* encircles and illumines all the lower *sefirot*, or all the aspects of *Shekhinah*.

See Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 104; *ZH* 48b. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *MmD*.

216. When all are fulfilled... Then *Shekhinah* (the moon) is adorned like *Binah*, the Divine Mother. *Shekhinah* is symbolized by Oral Torah, which is now complete, or *perfect*.

On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see the statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a), "Fifty gates of *binah* (understanding) were created in the world, and all were given to Moses except for one." See Nahmanides, *Peirush al ha-Torah*, intro, 3-4; *Zohar* 1:3b.

The expression "five rungs" apparently refers to the five *sefirot* whose light is conveyed through *Yesod* to *Shekhinah*, namely *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif'eret*, *Netsah*, and *Hod*.

217. She comes in sentences of five words each... The following verses of the psalm contain six versets of five Hebrew words each. The subjects of these versets are either Torah (or synonymous terms) or *awe*, both pertaining to *Shekhinah*. The various fives allude to the fifty gates of *Binah*, whom *Shekhinah* resembles.

218. YHVH, YHVH, six times... These six versets each contain the name *YHVH*, alluding to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, all of which fulfill *Shekhinah* on Sabbath. Her

fulfillment is celebrated with this psalm chanted on Sabbath morning.

“Sabbath above and below” refers to the masculine aspect of Sabbath (represented by *Yesod*) and the feminine aspect (represented by *Shekhinah*). Alternatively, “Sabbath above” refers to *Binah*. On the various aspects of Sabbath, see below, [note 229](#).

[219](#). radiance increases everywhere... On Sabbath, *Tif'eret* (*the heavens*) receives the flow of emanation from *Hokhmah* (“the source of life”) and He illumines *Shekhinah* (*glory*).

The three terms, or names, סֵפֶר (*sefer*), “book,” סְפָרָה (*sefar*), “counting,” and סִפּוּר (*sippur*), “story,” appear at the beginning of *Sefer Yetsirah*, though their exact vocalization is uncertain. Here, they allude respectively to *Hokhmah* (known as Father), *Binah* (known as Mother), and apparently the mysterious *sefirah* *Da'at* (Knowledge), who harmonizes *Hokhmah* and *Binah*. The subject of “He derives from the mystery...” is *Tif'eret* (*the heavens*), who is linked with *Da'at*.

On *sefer*, *sefar*, and *sippur*, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1; Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 22, 273, n. 48. For *sefar* as “counting, calculation,” see 2 Chronicles 2:16. On *sefer* as alluding to *Hokhmah* (or *Binah*), see above, [note 198](#). On מְסַפְּרִים (*mesapperim*), *declare*, see the same note.

[220](#). David uttered this praise... He composed this psalm, inspired by the Holy Spirit. “The supernal Name” refers to *YHVH*, which is completed in the *sefirot* above (extending through *Yesod*) and in *Shekhinah*—or alternatively, in the *sefirot* above and in the worlds below.

[221](#). Torah of YHVH is perfect—Sabbath of Sabbath eve... *Torah* (specifically Oral Torah) symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is identified with Sabbath eve.

Appropriately, the first psalm of Sabbath morning is Psalm 19, which describes how *Tif'eret* (*the heavens*) illumines *Shekhinah*; through Her, all worlds below are bathed in light. Next comes Psalm 33, which opens by addressing

the *righteous*, alluding to *Yesod* (known as Righteous One). He is the river (conveying the entire flow) and the sun (shining upon *Shekhinah*).

The sequence of Psalms 19 and 33 reflects the Sephardic liturgy. Cf. Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 30. "The source of life" may allude to *Hokhmah*. See above, [note 219](#); for various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MmD*. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47-48](#), [n. 132](#).

222. Afterward, the moon... The next Sabbath morning psalm (in the Sephardic liturgy) is Psalm 34, an alphabetical acrostic, except that no verse begins with the letter ו (*vav*) and at the end an additional verse appears, beginning with the letter פ (*pe*). The psalm opens: *For David, when he altered his (good) sense [or: feigned madness] before Abimelech, and he banished him and he went away.* This superscription refers to the incident related in 1 Samuel 21:11-16, where David flees from Saul and seeks refuge with the Philistine king of Gath, Achish. When David is recognized as the one who defeated the Philistines in battle and slew Goliath (who came from Gath), he feigns madness and is expelled by the king. (Here in Psalms, the king is referred to as Abimelech rather than Achish.)

Rabbi Shim'on interprets the first verse as referring to *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), symbolized by King David and the moon. *When he altered his sense* alludes to *Shekhinah's* Sabbath transformation, when She separates Herself from the demonic force that threatens Her during the week, represented here by the alien king *Abimelech*. Apparently, Rabbi Shim'on reverses the antecedents of the pronouns in the conclusion of the sentence: *he banished him and he went away* now means that *Shekhinah* (King David) banishes the Other Side (Abimelech), who flees. Once She is safe from the demonic power, *Shekhinah* unites

with *Yesod* (the sun), who infuses Her with the energy of the twenty-two letters of this acrostic psalm.

On *Shekhinah* separating from the Other Side, see above at [notes 145-47](#).

[223.](#) Afterward, union and ascension... The next Sabbath morning psalm is Psalm 90. Its superscription, *A prayer of Moses, man of Elohim*, alludes to the union of *Shekhinah* with *Tif'eret*, Her Husband, since *prayer* symbolizes *Shekhinah* and *Moses* symbolizes *Tif'eret*. The phrase *man of Elohim* is understood to mean "husband of *Shekhinah*." See above, [note 94](#).

The "right and left arms" refer to *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, the divine arms embracing *Shekhinah*.

[224.](#) All these the heavens declare... All these adornments of *Shekhinah* are conveyed by *Tif'eret* (*the heavens*) and celebrated in Psalm 19. Following Psalms 33, 34, and 90 (in the Sephardic liturgy) come various others, beginning with Psalms 91 (not discussed here) and 98.

"The mystery of the Holy Name" refers to *YHVH*, which symbolizes the totality and unity of the *sefirot*. (See above, [p. 158, n. 55](#).) *Tif'eret* ascends together with *Shekhinah*, and the divine couple is united. For the kabbalistic meaning of *The heavens declare the glory of God*, see above, [notes 197-98](#).

[225.](#) A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song... This psalm appears in the Sephardic liturgy for Sabbath morning, though not in the Ashkenazic liturgy.

Rabbi Shim'on indicates that although this psalm is discussed elsewhere in the *Zohar*, the Talmudic interpretation of the Companions is fine. He is referring to BT *Avodah Zarah* 24b, which explores the account of the Ark of the Covenant in 1 Samuel. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines in battle, but God miraculously punished the enemy by breaking the idol of its god Dagon and striking the population with a plague. Consequently, the suffering Philistines send the Ark back on a wagon drawn by two milch cows, who miraculously head straight

to Israelite territory as if they knew the way, as described in 1 Samuel 6:12: *The cows went straight on the way, on the way to Beth-shemesh; on a single road they went, lowing as they went, and veering neither right nor left.* The Talmudic discussion focuses on the opening of this verse: וישרנה הפרות (*Va-yisharnah ha-parot*), *The cows went straight.* “What is the meaning of *va-yisharnah*? Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Me’ir, ‘They sang שירה (*shirah*), a song.’... Which song did they sing?... Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish said, ‘The orphaned psalm [whose author is anonymous]: *A psalm. Sing to YHVH a new song, for He has done wonders. His right hand and His holy arm have won Him victory.*’”

Rabbi Shim’on compares the cows’ singing to the chanting of the *ḥayyot* (living beings) who sing this same psalm while carrying the divine Throne. The Throne symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is raised above to unite with *Tif’eret*.

On the Sephardic custom of reciting Psalm 98, see Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 1:153. On Psalm 98, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 54:4; *Zohar* 1:123a-124a; 3:170b, 201a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 122.

226. Why is it written here new... Why does the psalm call this *a new song*, given that the *ḥayyot* sing it again and again? He explains that *new* refers to the renewal of the moon (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), when she is illumined by the sun (symbolizing Her partner). See *Zohar* 3:170b.

227. His right hand and His holy arm... Alluding to *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, who embrace *Shekhinah*. Just as the cows and wagons transporting the Ark went straight to Beth-shemesh (which literally means “house of the sun”), so on every Sabbath the *ḥayyot* carry *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Ark and Throne) to Her partner, the divine sun. Appropriately, on Sabbath this psalm is also chanted by Israel below.

The expression “the unique nation” derives from 2 Samuel 7:23: *Who is like Your people Israel, a nation unique on earth?*

[228](#). ***A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day...*** Also recited on Sabbath morning. According to rabbinic tradition, the Sabbath day itself defended Adam after he sinned on Friday afternoon. See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 19 (emended slightly according to *Yalqut Shim'oni*): “The Sabbath day arrived and became Adam’s advocate, saying before Him: ‘Master of all worlds! During the six days of Creation, no creature in the world has been killed, and You will begin with me [i.e., by executing Adam on Sabbath]? Is this my sanctity, is this my blessing—as is said: *God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it* (Genesis 2:3)?’ By the merit of the Sabbath day, Adam was saved from the judgment of Hell. When Adam saw the power of Sabbath, he said, ‘Not for nothing did the blessed Holy One bless Sabbath and sanctify it.’ He began to sing and chant to the Sabbath day, as is said: *A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day.*”

Here Rabbi Shim'on indicates that *Shekhinah* Herself (the lower world) sings this psalm to *the Sabbath day*—namely to the upper world, which signifies the male realm extending downward from *Hokhmah* and *Binah* (and centering on *Tif'eret*). The upper world is entirely Sabbath, entirely tranquil. This realm is described as “the King who possesses peace,” that is, who possesses *Yesod*, known as “peace.” On this description, see above, [notes 26](#), [105](#), [214](#). On the World of the Male, see above, [p. 48](#), [n. 132](#).

The superscription of Psalm 92 names no author, and such anonymity is characteristic of *Shekhinah*, as explained below in [note 230](#).

On Sabbath defending Adam, see *Midrash Tehillim* 92:3; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Psalms 843. On Adam uttering this psalm, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:13; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 10:5; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 24:11; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 25; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:7; 100:2; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 46; *Zohar* 1:54b (*Tos*). Cf. *Zohar*

3:79b, 284b; ZH 17b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 123.

In rabbinic literature, the world that is coming is described as “a day that is entirely Sabbath.” See M *Tamid* 7:4; *Mekhilta, Ki Tissa* 1; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 1; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 31a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 4:8 (on 4:3). In Kabbalah, “the world that is coming” often alludes to *Binah*. See above, [p. 22](#), [n. 59](#).

229. For the Sabbath day... This is Sabbath, and that is Sabbath... Generally, the *Zohar* identifies three sefirotic aspects of Sabbath: *Binah*, *Yesod* (or *Tif’eret*), and *Shekhinah*. Here, Rabbi Shim’on focuses on Sabbath eve (symbolizing the Female, *Shekhinah*, who is identified with night) and Sabbath day (symbolizing the Male, specifically *Tif’eret* or *Yesod*, identified with day). The word Sabbath by itself, without further qualification, indicates Sabbath eve, *Shekhinah*—as in the verse ושמרו בני ישראל (Ve-shameru venei yisra’el), *The Children of Israel shall keep, the Sabbath*. According to Kabbalah, the verb שמר (*shmr*), “to keep,” pertains to the female, as in the version of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5:12: שמור (*Shamor*), *Keep, the Sabbath day to hallow it*—in contrast to the version in Exodus: זכור (*Zakhor*), *Remember, the Sabbath day to hallow it*, where *zakhor* suggests זכר (*zakhar*)—Aramaic דכורא (*dekhura*)—“male.”

According to Rabbi Shim’on, *Shekhinah* sings this psalm *to the Sabbath day*—to Her male Sabbath partner. The phrase ליום השבת (*le-yom ha-Shabbat*) can be rendered *to* [or: *for*] *the Sabbath day*.

On the various sefirotic aspects of Sabbath, see *Zohar* 1:5b; 2:47b, 92a-b, 92a-b (*Tos*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1223-26. On *zakhor* and *shamor* as pertaining respectively to male and female, see BT *Berakhot* 20b; *Bahir* 124 (182); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 496-97; Nahmanides on Exodus 20:8; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittahon*, 420; *Zohar* 1:5b, 47b, 48b, 164b, 199b, 248a; 2:70b, 91a, 92a-b, 92a-b (*Piq*);

3:81b, 92b (*Piq*), 115b, 224a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 118; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 110; Wolfson, introduction to *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 63–71.

230. the lower world does not attain a name... *Shekhinah* (the lower world) sometimes appears anonymously, as in the superscription to Psalm 92, where the psalmist goes unnamed. Similarly, in the verse in Exodus the anonymous subject *He* refers to *Shekhinah*, who calls upon Moses to ascend to the higher rung of *Tif'eret*, known as *YHVH*. So too in the opening verse of Leviticus *He* refers to *Shekhinah*, while the continuation of the verse specifies the divine name of *Tif'eret*: *and YHVH spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting*. In relation to the higher rung of *Tif'eret*, *Shekhinah* is nameless, just as a lamp is hardly recognized in bright daylight.

On the verse in Exodus and other examples of the anonymous wording *He*, see above, [p. 177](#), [n. 105](#). The image of a lamp in the sunlight derives from a passage in BT *Hullin* 60b that is often applied to *Shekhinah*: “Rabbi Shim’on son of Pazzi pointed out a contradiction. ‘It is written: *God made the two great lights* (Genesis 1:16), and it is written [in the same verse]: *the greater light... and the lesser light*. The moon said before the blessed Holy One, “Master of the Universe! Can two kings possibly wear one crown? [i.e., How can both of us be *great*?]” He answered, “Go, diminish yourself!” She said before Him, “Master of the Universe! Because I have suggested something proper I should make myself smaller?” He replied, “Go and rule by day and night.” She said, “But what is the value of this? What good is a lamp at noon?”... Seeing that her mind was uneasy [that she could not be consoled], the blessed Holy One said, “Bring an atonement for Me for making the moon smaller.”” As was said by Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish: ‘Why is the goat offered on the new moon distinguished by the phrase *to* [or: *for*] *YHVH* (Numbers 28:15)? The blessed

Holy One said, “Let this goat be an atonement for My having made the moon smaller.””

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 6:3; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 6, 51; *Zohar* 1:19b-20a, 181a-b; 2:144b, 147b-148a, 219b; *ZḤ* 70d-71a (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 189; idem; *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 35b.

231. נשמת כל חי (*Nishmat kol ḥai*), **The soul of all living...** This prayer is recited on Sabbath morning following the various psalms. It begins: “The soul of *kol ḥai*, everything that lives [or: every living being] shall bless Your name, *YHVH* our God.” Here, *kol ḥai* alludes to *Yesod*, who is known as *Ḥei ha-Olamim* (Ḥei ha-Olamim), “Life of the Worlds.” He is the source of blessing and of souls, who fly from Him to His partner, *Shekhinah*, and then to the worlds below.

Rabbi Shim’on focuses on “this soul,” namely the additional Sabbath soul, who flies forth as Sabbath begins and enters the bodies of those welcoming Sabbath on earth. This soul has permission to bless *Shekhinah* (“this place”), who is also known as the Divine Name. Thus, the opening line of this prayer now means: “The (additional) soul of all living (i.e., issuing from *Yesod*) shall bless Your name (i.e., *Shekhinah*).” While this soul blesses *Shekhinah* from below, *Yesod* blesses Her from above.

On the prayer *Nishmat kol ḥai*, see *Zohar* 2:205b. On various senses of the title *Ḥei ha-Olamim* (Ḥei ha-Olamim), “Life of the Worlds,” see Daniel 12:7; *Mekhilta, Pisha* 16; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:5; *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:9; Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §275; *Bahir* 123 (180); *Zohar* 1:4b, 132a, 135b, 164a, 167b.

On souls flying forth from *Yesod*, see *Bahir* 39 (58); cf. 105 (157), 123 (180). On the additional Sabbath soul, see above, [note 178](#).

232. On weekdays She receives... During the week *Shekhinah* receives blessings from the normal soul, while on Sabbath She is blessed by the additional soul through the first forty-five words of the prayer *Nishmat kol ḥai*, from *Nishmat*

through אַנְחֵנוּ מוֹדִים (*anaḥnu modim*), “we give thanks.” This number is equivalent to the numerical value of the word מַה (*mah*), “what,” which designates *Shekhinah* (the lower world).

The following fifty words of *Nishmat*—from וְאֵלּוּ פִּנּוּ (*ve-illu finu*), “If our mouth,” to מִלְּפָנִים (*mi-lefanim*), “In the past”—correspond to the word מִי (*mi*), “who,” whose numerical value is fifty and which designates *Binah* (the upper world), often associated with the number fifty. The clause “Although nothing there is susceptible to counting” refers to the fact that the sublime realm of *Binah* transcends counting, as opposed to the realm of *Shekhinah*, which is characterized by counting. See *Zohar* 1:46b (Vol. 1, p. 248, n. 1103); 2:200a, 225b, 261b (*Heikh*); *MM*; *Nefesh David*. For other interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

The following one hundred words—from מִמִּצְרַיִם (*mi-mitsrayim*), “from Egypt,” to וְתוֹשִׁיעַ (*ve-toshi’a*), “and You deliver”—correspond to the consummation of all ten *sefirot*, each including ten aspects. “And one chariot” may correspond to the conclusion of *Nishmat*, or to the following lines (which mention the divine throne), or the following lines (which mention four components that could be construed as four wheels of the chariot or legs of the throne). Upon this chariot-throne settles the hundredfold *sefirotic* consummation. (For various interpretations of the final clause, see *OY*; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*.)

On *mah* and *mi* as designating, respectively, *Shekhinah* and *Binah*, see *Zohar* 1:1b-2a; above, [notes 2, 14](#). On *Binah* and the number fifty, see above, [p. 136, n. 381](#).

There are various versions of the long prayer *Nishmat kol ḥai*. For one version that contains precisely forty-five, fifty, and one hundred words (up to *ve-toshi’a*, “and You deliver”), see Meir ibn Gabbai, *Tola’at Ya’aqov*, 26. However, even this version does not exactly match the presentation here, since Ibn Gabbai counts *mi-lefanim*, “in the past,” as the first of the final one hundred words, whereas Rabbi Shim’on

counts it as the last word of the middle group of fifty words. See Vital; Galante; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

233. All this praise... The entire prayer *Nishmat kol hai*—which includes subtotals of words alluding to *Shekhinah*, *Binah*, and the full sefirotic spectrum—completes and perfects Sabbath.

From here on, come the rest of the morning prayers, including *Shema* and *Amidah*.

234. And You, YHVH, be not far... David uttered this psalm intending to unite the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized, respectively, by sun and moon. The word *וְאַתָּה* (*ve-attah*), *and You*, designates both of them united as one. The letter *ו* (*vav*), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). *Shekhinah*, last of the *sefirot*, is the most accessible and can therefore be addressed directly as *attah*, *You*.

On *Shekhinah* as *attah*, see *Zohar* 1:15b, 37a, 154b, 158b, 169a, 198a, 205b; 2:23b, 70a (*RR*), 104a, 140a, 179b, 221a, 261a (*Heikh*); 3:199a. Cf. 3:193b. On *ve-attah*, see *Zohar* 2:23b, 179b.

235. Be not far... When *Shekhinah* ascends to join with *Tif'eret* (together with the other *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), all in the upper realm of *Binah*, then *Tif'eret* seeks to rise further to *Ein Sof*, so that all the *sefirot* can return to their ultimate source. Consequently, David prays that the divine couple will not abandon Israel.

236. during the arrangement of praise... During the psalms of the early Sabbath morning liturgy and during the prayers leading up to *Amidah*, the people of Israel must cleave to the divine couple so that they will not be abandoned but rather included in the union. Then, the *Amidah* itself is recited silently (or in a whisper) and confidentially, ensuring that King *Tif'eret* will not move away.

“Glory” here refers to *Shekhinah* united with Her partner. On the silent (or whispered) recitation of *Amidah*, see BT

Berakhot 24b, 31a; *Zohar* 1:209b-210a; 2:202a; Vol. 3, p. 288, n. 165.

237. אֵילוּתִי (*Eyaluti*), *My strength...* אֵיִל (*ayyal*), **a deer...** Rabbi Shim'on relates the rare word *eyaluti*, *my strength*, with *ayyal*, "a deer." Just as a deer returns to its place, so the blessed Holy One (*Tif'eret*) returns to be close with the people of Israel, assuming that they cleave to Him.

On the deer (or gazelle) fleeing and returning, or rather turning back, see *Zohar* 2:14a (*MhN*); 3:155a. See Song of Songs 2:9: *My beloved is like a gazelle, or a young deer*. Based on this verse, rabbinic sources compare God to a gazelle, and describe the gazelle (and the Messiah) appearing and disappearing. See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:8; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:9; *Rut Rabbah* 5:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:2.

238. when joining Redemption to Prayer... In the morning liturgy, the blessing "Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who has redeemed Israel" immediately precedes the *Amidah*, the central prayer that it is known simply as Prayer. It is considered meritorious to join the blessing of Redemption to this prayer without any interruption or pause. Here, this joining initiates Israel's confidential whispering with God, which ensures His continued presence. The quiet atmosphere befits the divine union, which is consummated during the *Amidah*.

On the importance of joining Redemption to Prayer, see BT *Berakhot* 4b, 9b, 10b; above, [note 48](#).

239. At that moment Rabbi Shim'on rose... Having concluded the lengthy presentation that he began while sitting with the Companions beneath some trees by the Sea of Galilee. His son, Rabbi El'azar, compares (or equates) the shade of these trees with the shade of the Tree of Life, which is identified with Torah. As they walk on, Rabbi El'azar says, they should continue engaging in Torah, thereby preserving and enhancing the Tree.

See above at [note 19](#), and Rabbi Shim'on's statement at [note 36](#): "Now that we are sitting in this shade of comfort, we should observe that we are actually sitting in the shade of the blessed Holy One within that *pavilion*! We should adorn this place with supernal crowns, until the trees of the *pavilion* are swayed to cover us with further shade."

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MmD*. On the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, see Genesis 2:9. On Torah as the Tree of Life, see Proverbs 3:18; BT *Berakhot* 32b, 61b. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 6:14 (on 6:8), where Rabbi Yudan son of Rabbi Il'ai describes "sixty bands of the righteous who sit in the Garden of Eden beneath the Tree of Life, engaging in Torah."

On the importance of engaging in Torah while on the way, see Deuteronomy 6:7; M *Avot* 3:7; BT *Eruvin* 54a, *Ta'anit* 10b; *Zohar* 1:7a, 58b, 69b-70a, 76a, 87a, 115b, 157a, 164a, 230a-b; 2:13a, 95a. Cf. M *Avot* 3:2-3, 6. The expression "ways that guard this Tree" recalls Genesis 3:24: *to guard the way to the Tree of Life*.

[240](#). Have them take Me an offering... The word תְּרוּמָה (*terumah*), *offering*, derives from the root רוּם (*rum*), "to rise," and can be rendered: "raised contribution, offering, donation, gift." Rabbi El'azar (following his father, Rabbi Shim'on) interprets the word hyperliterally as "raising" or "rising," alluding to *Shekhinah*, who rises through prayer to unite with *Tif'eret*.

Shekhinah derives from *Gevurah* on the left, which is symbolized by *gold*, and She is known as lower *Gevurah*. However, within *Shekhinah* the harsh quality of *Gevurah* is sweetened by *Hesed* on the right, symbolized by *silver*.

On *Shekhinah* as *terumah*, see above, [note 12](#). On *Shekhinah* deriving from the side of *gold*, see above, [note 170](#).

The context in Exodus (25:2-8), describing donations of material for the construction of the Tabernacle, reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall*

take My offering. This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen and goat hair; reddened ram skins, tanned-leather skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense. Carnelian stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece. Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them. (The terms *blue*, *purple*, and *crimson* refer to dyed yarns.)

241. mystery of the cup of blessing... Held during Grace after Meals. According to BT *Berakhot* 51a, “One takes [the cup] with both his hands and places it in the right hand.” As to the question of whether the left hand should support the right, the Talmudic conclusion is that it should not (51a-b). However, according to the thirteenth-century author Zedekiah Anav (in his *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 156), while the left hand cannot hold the cup entirely, it may be placed beneath the right hand.

Here Rabbi El’azar adopts this view. For him, right and left symbolize, respectively, *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, who embrace *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the cup of blessing). The harsh quality of *Gevurah* must then yield to *Ḥesed* and remain beneath, as indicated by the verse in Song of Songs, which is often applied by the *Zohar* to the union of the divine couple.

On the cup of blessing and how it should be held, see *Zohar* 1:1a, 156a (*ST*), 233b, 240a, 250a-b; 2:104a, 143b, 157b, 168b; 3:245a-b (*RM*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 105; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 383; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 38-39. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MmD*.

242. Gold and silver... Symbolizing, respectively, *Gevurah* and *Ḥesed*. From a kabbalistic perspective, the verse in Haggai is spoken by *Tif’eret*, who possesses and harmonizes both these qualities.

On the verse in Haggai, see *Bahir* 34-35 (52); *Zohar* 1:217a; 2:90b, 197b. The full verse in Exodus reads: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze.*

243. And bronze... This color may allude to *Tif'eret* or *Shekhinah*, both of whom combine the aspects of right and left, *silver* and *gold*. *Shekhinah* is known as altar, and specifically the bronze altar. Her name *Malkhut* (Kingdom) is associated with David, the ideal king. Though She is small, She contains the light of all the *sefirot*. See the following note.

The desert Tabernacle contained a bronze sacrificial altar. The context in Kings is the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. The full verse reads: *On that day the king consecrated the center of the court that was in front of the House of YHVH; for there he presented the ascent offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the communion offerings, because the bronze altar that was before YHVH was too small to hold the ascent offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the communion offerings.*

David was the youngest of Jesse's sons, and in the verse in Samuel he is referred to as *הַקָּטָן* (*ha-qatan*), *the youngest* (literally, *the smallest*). See also 1 Samuel 16:11; BT *Hullin* 60b.

On the sefirotic and alchemical symbolism of *gold, silver, and bronze*, see *Zohar* 2:24a-b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 94-96 (120-22); Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 26-30.

244. Another altar is called small... A small incense altar was located in the inner precinct of the Tabernacle, directly in front of the Ark. This measured one cubit long by one cubit wide by one cubit high, and was overlaid with gold. The larger, sacrificial altar (five cubits long by five cubits wide by three cubits high), overlaid with bronze, was located in the outer court. One might wonder, then, why the bronze sacrificial altar is called small, when it was

significantly larger than the golden incense altar. Rabbi El'azar explains that "small" alludes not to the physical size of the bronze altar but to *Shekhinah*, who is identified with the moon, *the small light* of Creation. The golden incense altar, located in the inner precinct, symbolizes the hidden *sefirah* of *Binah*, identified here with *the great light*.

On the bronze and golden altars, see Exodus 27:1-8; 30:1-10; *Zohar* 2:219a; 3:30b, 151b; *ZH* 61b (*MhN*, *ShS*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 66 (83). The full verse in Genesis reads: *God made the two great lights, the great light for dominion of day and the small light for dominion of night, and the stars.*

245. Blue—blue of tzitzit... In Exodus 25, the color תכלת (*tekhelet*) actually refers to a violet or bluish purple dye extracted from the gland of the *Murex trunculus* snail. In Numbers 15:38-40, the Israelites are commanded to make ציצית (*tsitsit*), "a tassel," on the hem of their garments, and to entwine a thread dyed with *tekhelet* in the tassel. Eventually, this commandment evolved into the requirement of a special garment with tassels (or fringes) attached to its four corners.

Here the color blue symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is also identified with the Throne (upon which sits King *Tif'eret*) and the phylactery of the hand. (The phylactery of the head symbolizes *Tif'eret*.) *Shekhinah* conveys the strict power of *Din* (Judgment), or *Gevurah*, so She is identified specifically with the seat (or throne) from which capital cases are judged. See *Zohar* 2:152a-b; 3:175a. (The seat "from which civil cases are judged" may refer to *Tif'eret*, who, together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, serves as a throne for *Binah*.)

According to BT *Berakhot* 57b: "All kinds of colors bode well in a dream, except blue." Rabbi El'azar understands this to mean that the color blue informs the dreamer that his soul is being judged and that his body may be sentenced to destruction. Here תכלת (*tekhelet*), "blue," is linked with the root כלה (*klh*), "to destroy."

On *Shekhinah* and *tekhelet*, see above, [note 166](#). For the context in Exodus, see above, [note 240](#). On the association between *tekhelet*, Throne, and *Shekhinah*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 115, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "Whoever fulfills the commandment of [wearing] the tzitzit is as though he greeted the face of *Shekhinah*, for the *tekhelet* [on the tassel] resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory." See BT *Sotah* 17a.

[246](#). **Blue is the Throne...** On the association of *tekhelet* with the Throne, see the quotation from *Sifrei* at the end of the preceding note. The context in Ezekiel is the prophet's description of the divine chariot-throne moving through heaven. The full verse reads: *I looked, and here, a stormy wind coming from the north, a great cloud and flashing fire, and a radiance surrounding it; and from within it, like the color of amber, from within the fire.*

Here, the passage apparently reflects the following custom of winding the tzitzit. One inserts four threads through the holes in the four corners of the garment. Three of these threads are white and one longer thread is dyed *tekhelet* (or three are white and the longer one is half white and half dyed *tekhelet*). The white thread (or the white half of the longer thread) is wound around the other threads; then the blue thread (or the blue half of the longer thread) is wound around the other threads close to the winding with the white thread. The threads are then tied, completing one section. Two more sections are formed by winding with only the blue thread. A fourth section is formed by winding with the blue thread and finally once with the white thread.

Rabbi El'azar interprets *אש מתלקחת* (*esh mitlaqqahat*), *flashing fire*, as alluding to the winding of the blue thread. Blue characterizes the fire; *mitlaqqahat*, *flashing*, may here be associated with the root *לקח* (*lqh*), "to take"—thus, blue "taken" and wound. A *radiance* alludes to the final winding with the white thread. Blue symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who tends toward *Din* (Judgment); white (or here, apparently, yellow)

symbolizes *Hesed*, who sweetens the quality of Judgment and transforms the color of *Shekhinah* from blue to green, the harmonious color of *Tif'eret*.

According to Rabbi Eli'ezer (in M *Berakhot* 1:2), the morning *Shema* can be recited as soon as one can distinguish “between blue and leek-green.” Here, Rabbi El'azar explains this on the basis of the transformation of *Shekhinah's* color and quality, as Her time approaches to unite with *Tif'eret*. Their union is stimulated and celebrated by Israel's reciting *Shema*.

According to M *Sanhedrin* 4:1, capital cases must be tried during the day. Here, Rabbi El'azar explains this on the basis of *Shekhinah's* color blue, which rules the night, imbuing it with harsh Judgment that could doom a soul to injustice. During the day, ruled by משפט (*mishpat*), Justice (symbolizing *Tif'eret*), the soul is guaranteed a fair hearing.

On winding the tzitzit, see BT *Menahot* 39a; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tsitsit* 1:6-7; and commentaries ad loc.; Galante. The phrase “without justice” appears in Proverbs 13:23: *Some are swept away* בלא משפט (*be-lo mishpat*), *without justice*. See BT *Hagigah* 4b-5a, where this verse is applied to a situation in which the Angel of Death harvests the soul of a person before his destined time. See *Zohar* 1:113b, 119a; 2:196a, 249a (*Heikh*); 3:54b, 59b, 283b, 291b (*IZ*); *ZH* 77c (*MhN, Rut*).

247. When morning arrives... Morning is characterized by the light of *Hesed* on the right. The yellow sunlight transforms the blue of *Shekhinah* into the green of *Tif'eret*, who reigns over *Shekhinah* during the day.

Tif'eret, together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, serves as a throne for *Binah*. On the time of reciting the *Shema*, see the preceding note. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; Galante; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

248. Purple—gathering of all... The color purple, which is a blend of several colors, corresponds to *Tif'eret*, who blends the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Din*. Alternatively,

this color corresponds to all the archangels, alluded to below.

See above, [notes 78, 167](#); *Zohar* 2:147b. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

[249.](#) ותולעת שני (*Ve-tola'at shani*), **And worm of crimson...** Referring to a dye derived from the eggs of scale insects found on trees. The word שני (*shani*), *crimson*, is spelled שנים (*shanim*) in the verse in Proverbs. Rabbi El'azar interprets this alternate spelling as if it were a plural form, indicating that “all are included within it as one.” The normal spelling, *shani*, refers to a particular aspect of this *worm of crimson*, when it emerges “from the supernal Throne that reigns over *blue* from the right side.” The right side is *Hesed*, who is linked with the throne of *Tif'eret* ruling over *Shekhinah* (*blue*). From *Hesed* issues the angel Michael, who guards Israel from all lurking foes and defends them verbally as well by pleading their case before God and demolishing accusations made against them. Thus, Michael resembles the *worm*, whose power lies in its mouth.

See *Zohar* 2:147b. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *Nefesh David*; *MmD*. On Michael as Israel's advocate, see *Shemot Rabbah* 18:5; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 44. On the oral power of the worm, see *Mekhilta, Beshallah* 2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:10; *Zohar* 1:177b-178a. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed in crimson.*

[250.](#) **Worm of crimson—two colors as one...** Perhaps implying that Michael combines the qualities of *Hesed* on the right (symbolized by white) and *Gevurah* on the left (symbolized by red). Alternatively, this is a separate explanation, perhaps referring to Michael on the right and Gabriel on the left. For various interpretations, see Galante; *MM*; *MmD*.

[251.](#) ושיש (*Ve-shesh*), **And linen...** The Hebrew homonym שש (*shesh*)—Aramaic שית (*shit*)—means “six.” Rabbi El'azar links the two homonyms by picturing linen yarn consisting

of six strands. He then plays with תרשיש (*tarshish*), *topaz*, from Daniel's description of an angel who is identified in the Talmud as Gabriel. "In these two are included two others" apparently means that Michael and Gabriel include also the two other archangels, Uriel and Raphael.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *Nefesh David*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*. According to rabbinic tradition, the linen yarn used in the Tabernacle consisted of six strands. See *BT Yoma* 71b-72a, where שש (*shesh*), *linen*, and ששה (*shishah*), "six," are linked.

On Gabriel as the angel described in Daniel 10:5-6, see *BT Yoma* 77a; and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *lavush ha-baddim*. Cf. Daniel 9:21; *Bereshit Rabbah* 21:5; *Zohar* 2:231a.

252. And goat hair... The roof-covering of the Tabernacle comprised four separate layers: linen, goat hair, ram skins, and, uppermost, *taḥash* leather (on which see below, [note 254](#)). The goat hair covering the linen symbolizes powers outside the divine realm that protect the inner, holy powers. These outside forces must be provided a place and a measure of sustenance, since they derive from the left side of the sefirotic tree (symbolized by gold) and constitute part of the divine plan.

See *Zohar* 2:147b. עזים (*izzim*), "goat hair, goats," suggests שעיר (*sa'ir*), "goat, demon, satyr," and the scapegoat sent to the demon Azazel (Leviticus 16). On the demonic shell protecting the holy kernel, see above, [p. 131](#), [n. 369](#).

253. Reddened ram skins... Symbolizing further outside powers, which cover those represented by the *goat hair*.

See *Zohar* 2:147b. For various interpretations, see *OY*; Galante; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

254. Skins of תחשים (*teḥashim*)... The exact meaning of *teḥashim* is uncertain. It may refer to yellow-orange tanned leather or to a specific animal (dolphin, dugong, narwhal, badger). In rabbinic literature, *taḥash* is identified as a pure (i.e., kosher) animal, either a type of unicorn, an animal

resembling a genet, or another species. Here, it is described as breeding in desolate locations, which are associated with the demonic realm, and yet it retains a pure aspect.

On *taḥash*, see JT *Shabbat* 2:3, 4d; BT *Shabbat* 28a-b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:9; *Tanḥuma*, *Terumah* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Terumah* 5; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 33; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 6:3; 13:19.

255. In the Book of King Solomon... In this ancient source the bronze altar is associated with the *altar of earth*, mentioned earlier in Exodus. Both terms allude to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by bronze (above, [note 243](#)) and *earth*, and is also known as *altar*.

When other powers (“mountains”) who control foreign nations dominate and *Shekhinah* needs to nourish them, She is tinged with the color bronze and the mountains are named accordingly. A spirit originating in *Shekhinah* animates the mountains, though She herself “ascends in another ascension,” to unite with *Tif’eret*. Her ascension is signified by the withdrawal of the first letter of נחשת (*neḥoshet*)—נ (*nun*)—so what remains is תחש (*taḥash*), which now designates the spirit animating the bronze mountains. This spirit separates into other spirits, called by the plural form תחשים (*teḥashim*), the term that appears here in Exodus 25. The name *taḥash* also applies to one of the foreign nations mentioned in Genesis, descended from *Tahash*, who was born to Reumah, the concubine of Abraham’s brother Nahor. The people of this nation were familiar with the animal called *taḥash* (see the preceding note), which was named after them.

On the Book of King Solomon, see above, [p. 174](#), [n. 97](#); below, [note 882](#). On the “mountains of bronze,” see above, [note 165](#). On נ (*nun*) as a symbol of *Shekhinah*, who is known as נוקבא (*nuqba*), “Female,” see *Zohar* 1:147a (Tos); 2:91a, 215a; 3:66b, 155a; *ZH* 41c. On *teḥashim* and *Tahash* (born to Reumah), see *Zohar* 2:147b.

256. And acacia wood... The planks (or frames) of the Tabernacle were made of *acacia wood*, which symbolizes the angels known as *seraphim*. Rabbi El'azar demonstrates this association by verbal analogy: the word עומדים (*omedim*), *standing, upright*, describes both the *acacia wood* used for the planks and the *seraphim* seen by the prophet Isaiah.

“From here on” refers to the continuation of the list of donations: *oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil* (Exodus 25:6). The *anointing oil* was poured not only over Aaron and his sons but also over the Tabernacle, its furniture, and its utensils. Here, the oil symbolizes the stream of emanation issuing from above and flowing upon the angels.

On the analogy between *seraphim* and *acacia wood*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Shemot Rabbah* 33:4; 35:6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; *Zohar* 2:147b, 169a, 170a, 233b. On the application of the *anointing oil*, see Exodus 30:26; 40:9–15; Numbers 7:1.

The full verse in Exodus 26 reads: *You shall make the planks for the Dwelling of acacia wood, upright.*

257. Carnelian stones and stones for setting... These stones were to be engraved with the names of the twelve tribes and worn by the high priest on his ephod (a splendid apron) and in his breastpiece (a kind of pouch). Here, they allude to twelve angels accompanying *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the Sanctuary).

The phrase “designated on their own” apparently refers to the fact that these stones merit their own separate verse: *Carnelian stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece.*

The phrase “where the priest would gaze” probably alludes to the Urim and Thummim, the oracular device contained in the high priest’s breastpiece. See Exodus 28:30.

On the twelve angels, see *Zohar* 1:149a-b (*ST*). The phrase “for glory and praise” derives from *Targum*

Onqelos, Exodus 28:2, describing the clothes of Aaron the high priest. On the stones evoking the twelve tribes, see Exodus 28:29; 39:7.

258. There are thirteen types... The list of donations in Exodus 25:3-6 includes thirteen items before the precious stones are mentioned: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen and goat hair; reddened ram skins, tanned-leather skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense.* Together with the twelve *stones for setting*, the total comes to twenty-five, corresponding to the twenty-five letters in the first line of the *Shema*, which symbolizes the union of *Tif'eret* and the *sefirot* surrounding Him in preparation for His marriage to *Shekhinah*.

On the first line of the *Shema*, see above, [note 138](#). On the theme of twenty-five letters, cf. BT *Sotah* 36a-b, where the names of the twelve tribes are described as two sets of twenty-five letters. The passage from “Moses engraved” until “mystery of all faith” (below at [note 263](#)) appears also in *Zohar* 3:264b.

259. Jacob sought to array below... Corresponding to Moses’ formulation of the first line of the *Shema* (unifying *Tif'eret* with the *sefirot* surrounding Him), Jacob sought to unify *Shekhinah* by uttering the second line of the *Shema*. However, this line consists of only twenty-four letters, since the Dwelling (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) had not yet been constructed. As soon as it was (in the time of Moses), the Torah records a verset containing precisely twenty-five letters, demonstrating that now both *Shekhinah* and Her Dwelling were complete.

On Jacob’s uttering of the second line of the *Shema*, see BT *Pesahim* 56a, quoted above, [note 139](#). On its kabbalistic significance, see [notes 143, 149](#). On the correspondence between the Dwelling and the heavenly realms (and all of

Creation), see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 2; above, [note 18](#). The verse in Leviticus opens: *He called to Moses*.

260. Therefore, twenty-five types... The thirteen types of donations for the Dwelling plus the twelve *stones for setting* amount to a total of twenty-five, corresponding to the twenty-five letters of unification.

Rabbi El'azar refers to traditions concerning engraved letters that were taught by Rabbi Shim'on. On a volume containing such secrets, see *Zohar* 1:33b, 224a; 3:175b, 264b, 285a, 286b; Vital; Galante. Cf. *Zohar* 3:156b, 180b.

261. Since the Dwelling was completed... *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the Dwelling, is called כה (*koh*), “thus,” which is numerically equivalent to twenty-five, indicating consummation and unity. The verse in Psalms is understood as *Your devoted ones* יברכו כה (*yevarekhu koh*), *will bless koh* (namely *Shekhinah*). The numerical value of the letters כ"ה (*kaf, he*) also corresponds to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet plus the three units of the Bible: Torah, Prophets, and Writings.

On *koh* as a name of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:90b, 96a, 152b, 174b; 2:23b, 37b, 79b; 3:145b-146a; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 12a-13a. On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 2:79b; 3:146a, 267a; *ZH* 1c (*SO*).

262. When the people of Israel enact unification... By uttering the opening two lines of *Shema* with devotion and intention, the people of Israel unify *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. By focusing on each of the forty-nine letters, they stimulate these letters to join and ascend to their source in the forty-nine gates of *Binah*, who is known as Jubilee. With the elevation of the final three letters of the second line—the word ועד (*va-ed*), “and ever”—the gates open and the flow of emanation descends.

On the gates of *Binah*, see the statement attributed to Rav and Shemu'el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a), “Fifty gates of *binah* (understanding) were created in the world, and all were given to Moses except for one.” See

Nahmanides, *Peirush al ha-Torah*, intro, 3-4; *Zohar* 1:3b. On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, [pp. 135-36](#), [n. 381](#).

According to rabbinic tradition, there are forty-nine aspects of “pure” and forty-nine aspects of “impure” in Torah—namely forty-nine ways by which something can be proven pure (and thus permitted) and forty-nine ways by which the same thing can be proven impure (and thus forbidden). See *Midrash Tehillim* 12:4, in the name of Rabbi Yannai: “With every utterance that the blessed Holy One spoke to Moses, He offered forty-nine facets of ‘pure’ and forty-nine facets of ‘impure.’” See above, [p. 154](#), [n. 42](#).

On the significance of reciting the *Shema* and its relation to Torah, see BT *Berakhot* 10b, *Menaḥot* 99b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer*, 13, p. 256; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:17.

The phrase וִיכוּון כָּל הָאֶדָּה בְּהוֹ (vi-khavven kol ḥad be-ho), “focusing on each one of them,” can also be rendered: “each one of them [i.e., of Israel] focusing.”

[263](#). Therefore, one should focus... One should focus first on the individual letters, and then on the unification of the divine couple, which is stimulated and celebrated by the uttering of the first two lines of the *Shema*, as explained by Rabbi Shim’on (above at [notes 135-53](#)).

The phrase “entirety of Torah, above and below” may allude to *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized, respectively, by Written Torah and Oral Torah.

“The complete אָדָם (*adam*), Human,” refers to the unified divine couple, in whose male and female image the human being was created. See Genesis 1:27: *God created the human in His image; in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them*. On the divine significance of *adam*, see also Ezekiel 1:26; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 52.

[264](#). A dispute between Shammai and Hillel... These two *tanna'im* differ as to how one should fulfill the command to recite the *Shema* when you lie down and when you rise. The school of Shammai held that the biblical

wording should be followed literally, while the school of Hillel disagreed. See M *Berakhot* 1:3: “The school of Shammai says, ‘In the evening every person should recline and recite, and in the morning he should stand, as is said: *when you lie down and when you rise.*’ The school of Hillel says, ‘Every person recites in his own way, as is said: *when you go on the way* (Deuteronomy 6:7).’”

Here Rabbi El’azar explains both views kabbalistically. Shammai reasons that at night one should imitate *Shekhinah*, who rules the night and reclines; in the morning one should imitate *Tif’eret*, who rules the day and stands upright, just as one stands during the *Amidah*. Hillel, on the other hand, emphasizes the union of the divine couple, insisting that one honors and preserves this union by imitating their state of pleasurable comfort, that is, by reciting the *Shema* in whatever posture one happens to be in at the time. Otherwise, by imitating *Tif’eret* alone (by standing in the morning) or *Shekhinah* alone (by reclining in the evening), one would separate them.

The verse in Deuteronomy, referring to God’s words, reads: *You shall retell them incisively to your children and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you go on the way and when you lie down and when you rise.* The opening word of the verse, וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם (ve-shinnantem), can be rendered variously: *you shall repeat* [or: *rehearse, recite, teach, impart, impress, inculcate*] *them*; or *you shall retell* [or: *teach*] *them incisively* [or: *diligently, thoroughly*]. The biblical author may be playing with two senses of the root שָׁנַן (*shnn*): “repeat” (based on שָׁנָה [*shnh*]), and “sharp.” See Deuteronomy 11:19; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*; and Alter, *Five Books of Moses*, on Deuteronomy 6:7.

265. Therefore, the Male appears... The six words of the opening line of the *Shema* correspond to *Tif’eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*), who all join as one in preparation for uniting with *Shekhinah*. The six words of the second line correspond to *Shekhinah* and Her

angelic companions, who also join as one. The united couple then rises toward the forty-nine gates of *Binah*.

See above, [note 143](#). On the principle that “the law is always according to the school of Hillel,” see JT *Yevamot* 1:4, 3b; *Sotah* 3:4, 19a; BT *Eruvin* 6b.

[266.](#) **Who has aroused...** The name מי (*Mi*), *Who*, pertains to the Divine Mother, *Binah*. She is hidden in a supernal realm, and one wonders *who* She really is. This *Who has aroused*—that is, from Her issue the lower *sefirot*, which begin to reveal the divine mystery.

On *Binah* as *Mi*, “Who,” see above, [p. 75](#), [n. 217](#); above, [note 2](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:85b–86a.

[267.](#) **Furthermore, Mi, Who...** Rabbi Shim’on now offers a different interpretation. *Mi*, “Who,” can also refer to an even more concealed realm, apparently *Keter*. The term *east*, which normally refers to *Tif’eret*, here apparently designates *Hokhmah*, the primordial point known as beginning.

The verse from Isaiah now means: *Who* [namely *Keter*] *has aroused* [and revealed the divine essence] *from the east* [i.e., via *Hokhmah*].

[268.](#) **Afterward...** The continuation of the verse—לרגלו יקראו צדק (tsedeq yiqra’ehu le-raglo)—is sometimes rendered: *calling righteousness to follow Him*. However, Rabbi Shim’on understands this as *righteousness calling*, etc. As the process of emanation proceeds, *Shekhinah* (known as *righteousness*) “calls,” announces, and reveals the higher *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, from whom She derives, thereby proclaiming the reign of the blessed Holy One. *Shekhinah* Herself is granted dominion over the lower worlds. (The word *le-raglo* is interpreted below.)

[269.](#) **Furthermore... who calls whom?...** Although the verse seems to say that *righteousness* is called, Rabbi Shim’on explains that *righteousness* (namely *Shekhinah*) calls—calling now to Her beloved, *Tif’eret*, who is known as המאירה

אספקלריא (*ispaqlarya ha-me'irah*), “a speculum that shines,” a resplendent speculum.

לרגלו (*Le-raglo*), literally *at His foot*, apparently alludes to the *sefirot Netsah* and *Hod*, pictured as the divine legs. *Shekhinah* stands by these sefirotic feet, calling to *Tif'eret*.

The verse from Psalms implies that *Shekhinah* will never be silent, will never cease singing to *Tif'eret*.

On the phrase *ispaqlarya ha-me'irah*, “a resplendent speculum,” see above, [note 62](#). On the verse from Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:77b, 86a-b, 178b; 2:256b (*Heikh*); 3:219a; *ZH* 85b (*MhN, Rut*).

[270. Rabbi Abba opened a verse...](#) Or, “... opened (with) a verse.” Scripture indicates the setting of these psalms to emphasize that although David was being pursued by King Saul, he still sang praises to God.

Psalm 34 opens: *For David, when he altered his sense before Abimelech, and he banished him and he went away.* See above, [note 222](#). The full verse in Psalm 54 reads: *When the Ziphites came and said to Saul, “Is not David hiding among us?”*

[271. Although he spoke through the Holy Spirit...](#) If so, one might argue that David did not make any effort on his own to praise God; he was simply a passive vessel of inspiration. However, the spirit from above does not settle upon a person until he arouses it from below.

On the principle of “Through arousal below, there is arousal above,” see *Zohar* 1:35a, 77b-78a, 82b, 86b, 88a, 156b, 164a-b, 210b-211a, 233a, 235a, 244a; 2:31b, 35b, 265a; 3:31b, 38b, 40b, 47b, 92a-b, 105a, 110b, 112b, 145a (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 144.

[272. מזמור לדוד \(Mizmor le-David\)... לדוד מזמור \(Le-David mizmor\)...](#) These titles, whose precise meaning is unclear, alternate in Psalms. The interpretation implied here is a reversal of the rabbinic tradition in BT *Pesaḥim* 117a: “מזמור לדוד (*Le-David mizmor*), *To David, a psalm*, indicates that *Shekhinah* settled upon him [i.e., came to David and inspired

him] and then he exclaimed a song. מזמור לדוד (*Mizmor le-David*), *A psalm, to David*, indicates that he exclaimed a song and then *Shekhinah* settled upon him.” (The preposition ל [*le*] can mean either “of” or “to”.)

Here, according to the challenge imagined by Rabbi Abba, the wording *Mizmor le-David, A psalm of David*, indicates that *Shekhinah*—identified with the Holy Spirit and known as *mizmor, a psalm*—settled upon David and then he sang. The alternate wording—*Le-David mizmor, Of David, a psalm*—would indicate that David sang first, and then *Shekhinah* settled upon him. Since Psalm 63 opens *Mizmor le-David, A psalm of David*, in this case the Holy Spirit (or *Shekhinah*) settled upon David first, apparently without any effort on his part!

See *Midrash Tehillim* 24:1, 3; Rashi on Psalms 23:1; Jacob bar Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 92; Todros Abulafia, *Sha’ar ha-Razim*, 48; *Zohar* 1:39b, 67a, 239a; 2:50a, 170a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 378–79.

273. Well, if he had not focused... Rabbi Abba explains that even here, inspiration depended on David’s prior *kavvanah*, “intention, concentration, focused awareness.”

Shekhinah (or the Holy Spirit) is called *Mizmor, A psalm*, because She sings constantly to Her beloved, King *Tif’eret*. By singing to God, David showed the world how to imitate this divine pattern.

According to some commentators, the clause “אשכח (*Ashkah*), (She) found, a body fittingly prepared” should be rendered “He found a body fittingly prepared,” i.e., David found *Shekhinah* fittingly arrayed. (See Galante; *Sullam*; Scholem; cf. above, [p. 64](#), at [n. 186](#).) However, the context (including the following paragraph) seems to favor the rendering “She found....”

Galante interprets וְהוּא מְגַלֵּי (*va-havah megallei*) not as “and he revealed,” but rather “and he went wandering in exile” through the desert.

[274.](#) לְדָוִד (*Le-David*), *Of David—a man completely arrayed...* David, the ideal king, symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom) and represents the consummation of the *sefirot*. Apparently, the palindromic spelling of the name דָּוִד (*David*) indicates that he is always one and the same. On David's unchangeability, see *Zohar* 2:104a-b.

[275.](#) *When he was in the desert...* Being pursued by King Saul.

[276.](#) *What praise did he utter?...* At first glance, David's opening words seem redundant: אֱלֹהִים אֵלֵי אַתָּה (*Elohim eli attah*), *God, You are my God*. Rabbi Abba explains that since the name *Elohim* can refer to various *sefirot*, the psalmist continues by saying *eli, my God*, specifying *Shekhinah*, who is David's *sefirah*. (See above, [note 274](#).) Actually, however, these three Hebrew words can be interpreted as referring to three sefirotic realms. *Elohim* designates *Binah*, who is known as אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים (*Elohim hayyim*), "Living God." *Eli* refers to all six *sefirot* in the cluster of *Tif'eret*, who is known as heaven—namely *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*. Perhaps, אֵלֵי (*eli*), *my God*, is understood here as indicating all the *sefirot* from אֵל (*el*), "God," (a name of *Ḥesed*) through יָ (yod), standing for *Yesod*. Finally, *attah, You*, indicates *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, who is more revealed than the higher *sefirot* and can be addressed directly. All of these *sefirot* issue from, and were originally contained within, *Binah*.

On "end of heaven to end of heaven," see above, [note 214](#). On *Shekhinah* as *attah, You*, see above, [note 234](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Galante*; *MM*; *Sullam*.

[277.](#) אֲשַׁחֲרֶךָ (*Ashahareka*), *I will search for You...* The simple meaning, *I will search for You*, is perfectly adequate; but Rabbi Abba offers a deeper meaning, based on the root שָׁחַר (*shḥr*), "to be black or dark." According to this sense, David declared that he would enhance the darkness of *Shekhinah*, who has no light of Her own, by stimulating Her

union with *Tif'eret*, a white light, also known as “a resplendent speculum.”

“The world that is coming” often refers to *Binah*. See above, [p. 22](#), [n. 59](#). On the black and white lights, see *Zohar* 1:51a-b. On the resplendent speculum, see above, [note 62](#).

[278.](#) **ומשחרוי (U-mshaḥarai), Those who seek me...** Again, associating the verb שחר (shḥr), “to seek, search,” with root שחר (shḥr), “to be black or dark.” On this verse, see above, [note 92](#).

[279.](#) **ימצאוני (Yimtsa'uneni), Will find me...** The doubling of the letter נ (nun) implies two lights, *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*. On the two speculums, see above, [note 62](#).

[280.](#) **In a parched and weary land...** Describing the Judean desert, where David was hiding from King Saul. Since the empty desert lacks holiness, it has *no water*—no flow of emanation. In the next verse, David yearns to behold God *in the sanctuary*.

On the desert as an abode of demonic forces, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 32:10; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:14b, 126a, 169b, 178b, 228a; 2:21a (*MhN*), 60a, 157a, 184a, 236b-237a; 3:63b.

[281.](#) **As for us...** As David thirsted for God, so Rabbi Abba and the Companions thirst for the wisdom of Rabbi Shim'on, both here in Galilee and soon in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

On Rabbi Shim'on's divine status, see *Zohar* 1:218b, 223a; 2:38a; 3:79b.

[282.](#) **Have them take Me an offering...** On Moses' difficulty in understanding an aspect of the Dwelling, see BT *Menaḥot* 29a: “It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishma'el: Three things were too difficult for Moses until the blessed Holy One showed him with His finger, namely [how to construct] the lamp stand [in the Tabernacle], [how to recognize precisely] the new moon, and [how to determine which] creeping things [are pure and impure].”

Rabbi Abba now raises his own difficulty: since God gave the *offering* (namely *Shekhinah*) to Moses alone, enabling him to attain intimacy with Her, how could He then give Her to all *the Children of Israel*, instructing them to *take Her*?

On *Shekhinah* as תְּרוּמָה (*terumah*), *an offering*, see above, [note 12](#). On Moses' intimacy with *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 94](#), and below. The full verse in Exodus reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering.*

On the passage in *Menaḥot*, cf. *Mekhilta, Pisha* 1; *Sifrei*, Numbers 61; *Pesiḳta de-Rav Kahana* 5:14; *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 6, 8; *Beha'alotekha* 3, 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemini* 11; *Beha'alotekha* 4, 11; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 15:4, 10; *Pesiḳta Rabbati* 15; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:28; *Zohar* 2:157b-158a (*RM*), 221, 241a.

283. the matronita was not with the king... Eventually, her arrival guarantees that the king will remain with the people.

מַטְרוֹנִיתָא (*Matronita*) is an aramaized form of Latin *matrona*, “matron, married woman, noble lady, or (here) queen.”

The expression “are... bolstered” renders מְתִיַאשֵׁי (*mitya'ashei*), which is based on the roots אָוַשׁ (*'ush*), “to be strong, firm,” or שָׁשׂ (*'shsh*), “to strengthen, make firm.” See Isaiah 46:8; Jeremiah 50:15; Ezra 4:12; *Bereshit Rabbah* 67:12; *Zohar* 2:47a; 3:160b; *ZH* 72a (*ShS*).

284. Similarly, at first... Despite the divine miracles, Israel felt insecure until *Shekhinah* dwelled among them, guaranteeing that the blessed Holy One would remain with them.

The command *Have them take Me an offering* now implies that Israel will share in the presence of *Shekhinah* (*an offering*) along with Moses. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:13, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi: “As if it were

possible, the blessed Holy One said, ‘Take Me and I will dwell among you.’ Here is not written *Have them take an offering*, but rather *Have them take Me [as] an offering*—‘It is Me you are taking!’” See above, [note 12](#).

Similarly, God assures Israel that He will place *Shekhinah* (*My dwelling*) in their midst. *Shekhinah* becomes *the Bride of Moses*, united with him, but as such She dwells among the entire people.

The verse in Numbers reads: *It happened on the day כלות משה (kallot Mosheh), Moses consummated, setting up the Dwelling, that he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings and the altar and all its furnishings....* Although in the Masoretic text the word כלות (*kallot*), *consummated*, is spelled with a ו (*vav*), it is interpreted midrashically as if it were spelled without the *vav*, so that it can be read כלת (*kallat*), *the bride of*, implying that Israel is the bride of God. Here, Rabbi Abba adopts this reading but reassigns the roles: the bride is *Shekhinah*, who is married to Moses, known as *husband of Elohim* (namely husband of *Shekhinah*). The reader is left wondering: does the parable’s king represent God—or Moses?

On *kallat Mosheh, the Bride of Moses*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Tanḥuma, Naso* 20, 26; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlah* 28, *Naso* 28; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; Rashi on Numbers 7:1; *Zohar* 1:236b; 2:5b (*MhN*), 145a, 235a, 245a; 3:4b, 148a, 226b (*RM*), 254a (*RM*); *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 7:1. On Moses as *husband of Elohim*, see above, [note 94](#).

On the connection between the משכן (*mishkan*), *Dwelling*, and *Shekhinah*, see *Tanḥuma, Naso* 22, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi, “Once the *mishkan* was erected, *Shekhinah* descended and settled among them.”

285. Everywhere, ויהי (va-yhi), it happened... ויהי (va-yhi), *It happened*, is read as וי היה (*vai hayah*), “there was woe,” or וי הי (*vai, hi*), “woe, wailing.” But how can this possibly apply to the completion of the Dwelling and the descent of

Shekhinah to earth? Rabbi Abba explains that as *Shekhinah* was about to descend, the demonic Accuser appeared (apparently to accuse Israel of being unworthy) and darkness obstructed Her.

See BT *Megillah* 10b: “Rabbi Levi, or some say Rabbi Yonatan, said, ‘This matter is a tradition handed down to us from the Men of the Great Assembly: Wherever it is said: ויהי (*Va-yhi*), *It happened*, this denotes suffering.’... Rav Ashi said, ‘*Va-yhi, It happened*, sometimes denotes this and sometimes not, while ויהי בימי (*Va-yhi bi-yimei*), *It happened in the days of*, always denotes suffering.’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 41:3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7; BT *Megillah* 11a; *Zohar* 1:16b, 119b; 2:167a; 3:231a; ZH 77a (*MhN, Rut*). On *va-yhi* and the verse in Numbers 7, see *Tanḥuma, Naso* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 24; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:6.

The phrase חשך קבל (*hashokh qeval*), “dismal darkness,” appears in *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 10:22, rendering אפלה חשך (*hoshkeh afelah*). See *Zohar* 2:242b.

286. Fifteen million accusing angels... Apparently accusing Israel of being unworthy of *Shekhinah*.

On the angels’ objection to *Shekhinah* descending to dwell among Israel, see *Tanḥuma, Terumah* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Terumah* 8.

287. Shekhinah steeled Herself... *Shekhinah*, who is known as God’s *name*, broke through the darkness obstructing Her and descended to dwell among Israel, thereby causing pain and suffering to the angels who opposed Her descent.

“Chunks of ice” renders גזיזין (*gezizin*), “chunks.” See BT *Berakhot* 18b: “He broke גזיזי דברדא (*gezizei de-varda*), “chunks of ice.” See *Zohar* 2:75a (RR).

On the verse in Psalms in the context of the Dwelling, see *Tanḥuma, Terumah* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Terumah* 8. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 88b–89a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:11;

Pesiqta Rabbati 25; *Midrash Tehillim* 8:2; *Zohar* 2:3a (Vol. 4, p. 7, n. 25).

288. Have them take Me an offering... This wording implies that Israel should *take Me* (the blessed Holy One) along with *an offering* (*Shekhinah*), demonstrating the unity of the divine couple, whose joint presence among Israel reassures and bolsters them. See the parable above at [note 283](#), and [notes 12](#), [18](#), [284](#).

289. The making of the Dwelling... The Dwelling in the desert provided a home for *Shekhinah*, resembling Her sefirotic abode above. She is the Holy Spirit, and the Dwelling represents Her body. All of existence, both divine and earthly, assumes the pattern of kernel and shell.

On the correspondence between the Dwelling and the heavenly realms (and all of Creation), see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 2; above, [note 18](#). On the image of kernel and shell, see above, [p. 131](#), [n. 369](#); above, [note 84](#).

290. This Holy Spirit becomes like a body... In relation to the material Dwelling on earth, *Shekhinah* is pure spirit; yet She serves as a body for “another spirit,” namely *Tif’eret*. He too serves as a body (or shell), for a higher spirit (or kernel).

291. The hard shell... Rabbi Abba compares existence to a nut with various layers: a thin outer sheath, a hard shell within, a thin shell further within, and finally the kernel. These correspond, respectively, to the physical world, the demonic hard shell (“ruling the body”), a thin shell, and the holy kernel.

On the image of the nut, see *Zohar* 1:19b (Vol. 1, p. 151, n. 341), 44b; 2:15b (*MhN*), 233b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 156–60; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 239; Altmann, *Studies*, 172–79; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 574–79.

On the thin shell—known as נֹגַהּ (*nogah*), “radiance”—separating the demonic realm from the holy kernel, see *Zohar* 2:69a, 81b, 203b, 216a; *ZH* 38a–b; Moses de León,

Peirush ha-Merkavah, 59–60; TZ 18, 36a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:463–64, 509.

292. In the Holy Land all is arranged differently... The demonic Other Side has no power over the Holy Land, where its shell is split wide open and blessing pervades the land. As long as Israel brought offerings in the Temple, this opening endured and holiness prevailed. However, when the people sinned, this stimulated the demonic shell to close the opening, obstructing holiness and dooming the Temple to destruction and the people to exile.

On the Holy Land being protected from demonic forces, see above, [note 65](#). On the special opening there, see *Zohar* 2:209b.

293. why is it still a ruin... If the demonic shell has no lasting power over the Holy Land, why has the latter not been restored and the Temple rebuilt? Rabbi Abba explains that once the people had been punished, the shell was reopened and, ever since, a holy covering protects the land by preventing the shell from closing once again. Yet this same holy covering prevents the holy flow of blessing from descending to the land, which explains why the ruins have not been rebuilt.

On the continued desolation of the Holy Land, see *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 6:5, 112a; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 26:16.

294. That covering of a thin curtain... The thin covering protecting the Holy Land derives from a higher curtain that protects the holy realm above from demonic forces. When a Gentile dwelling in the Holy Land dies, his soul is not accepted by this covering nor allowed to ascend through it, and such souls are forced to roam until finally reaching the realm of impurity. When a Jew dies in the Holy Land, his soul is welcomed by the thin covering and conveyed to holiness above.

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: “All Israelites who die outside the land [of Israel],

their souls are gathered into the land, as is said: *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life* (1 Samuel 25:29). All Gentiles who die in the land [of Israel], their souls are cast by a sling outside the land, as is said: *and the soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (ibid.).”

See BT *Shabbat* 152a; *Zohar* 2:151a-b; 3:72b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 349-53; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 57-58; above, [pp. 36-37](#), [n. 105](#). The full verse in Samuel (recording Abigail’s blessing of David) reads: *If a person rises to pursue you, to seek your life, the soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with YHVH your God, and the soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling.*

On every species seeking its own kind, see BT *Bava Qamma* 92b: “It was taught in the Mishnah: ‘Anything attached to something subject to impurity is itself subject to impurity. Anything attached to something that remains pure will itself remain pure.’ It was taught in a *baraita* [a Tannaitic tradition not included in the Mishnah]: Rabbi Eli’ezer said, ‘Not for nothing did the starling follow the raven, but because it is of its kind.’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:3; *Zohar* 1:20b, 126b, 137b, 167b.

[295](#). Souls of Israel who depart outside the land... When a Jew dies outside of the land of Israel, where demonic forces prevail, his soul must take a circuitous route to its holy abode.

God rules the entire world, but He designated seventy heavenly princes to govern the other nations, whereas only Israel is ruled directly by Him. In the *Zohar* these princes are sometimes pictured as demonic forces. On the seventy princes, see above, [p. 10](#), [n. 27](#).

See *Zohar* 2:151a-b; 3:72b. Cf. BT *Ketubbot* 110b: “Whoever lives in the land of Israel is like one who has a God; whoever lives outside the land of Israel is like one

who has no God.” See BT *Ta’anit* 10a; *Tanḥuma, Re’eh* 8; Vol. 4, p. 432, n. 235.

On the process of revolving, cf. BT *Ketubbot* 111a: “Rabbi Yirmeyah son of Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, ‘Whoever walks four cubits in the land of Israel is assured membership in the world to come.’ Now... aren’t the righteous outside the land going to be revived? Rabbi Ila’a said, ‘By rolling [i.e., by their bones rolling underground to the land of Israel].’ Rabbi Abba Sala the Great objected, ‘Rolling will be painful to the righteous!’ Abbaye replied, ‘Tunnels will be made for them underground.’” See *Zohar* 1:113b (*MhN*), 131a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 349–50; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 57–58.

296. If one whose soul departs in the Holy Land... Burial of the corpse before nightfall deprives the roaming demonic forces of a means of entering the Holy Land.

The passage in Deuteronomy concerns one who is executed for a capital offense, after which his body is hung and exposed. The verse reads in full: *You shall not leave his corpse on the tree overnight, rather you shall surely bury him on that day, for a hanged body is under God’s curse, and you shall not defile your land that YHVH your God is giving you as an inheritance.* On the meaning of *under God’s curse*, see Tigay, *Deuteronomy*; and Alter, *Five Books of Moses*, ad loc.

Based on this verse, the Mishnah teaches that all corpses should normally be buried on the day of death. See M *Sanhedrin* 6:5; BT *Sanhedrin* 46a–b; *Zohar* 1:169b–170a; 3:88b, 143b–144a (*IR*).

297. Limbs and fat that are consumed at night... According to rabbinic law, sacrificial portions and fat that were not totally consumed by fire during the day can be burnt on the altar throughout the night. Here, Rabbi Abba indicates that such nighttime offerings were intended to nourish the demonic forces and keep them at a distance.

Normally, the smoke from sacrifices ascended in a straight path to heaven, nourishing the holy powers. However, the smoke from these nightly offerings ascended in a twisted way, finally reaching the haunt of evil spirits in the north (the direction associated with harsh Judgment). “From that opening” in the north, the impure forces were nourished and assuaged; consequently they did not enter the Holy Land or wreak havoc. See above, [notes 64, 66](#).

[298](#). Bodies of the righteous that were not lured...

If a person is lured by the pleasures of this world, which derive from the demonic realm, then after death his body will be defiled by the spirit of impurity. If one is extremely righteous and abstains from those pleasures, then his body will remain pure after death. The delight of feasting on Sabbath and festivals, as well as the pleasure deriving from fulfilling various *mitsvot* (such as sexual union with one’s spouse), are permitted and holy.

In normative Jewish law, all corpses are impure. See Numbers 19:14; BT *Sukkah* 25b; *Bava Batra* 58a; *Sanhedrin* 39a. However, according to a statement attributed to the prophet Elijah in *Midrash Mishlei* 9:2, “No impurity contaminates the righteous [who have died].”

See *Tosafot*, *Yevamot* 61a, s.v. *mi-magga*; idem, *Bava Metsi’a* 114a-b, s.v. *mahu*; BT *Bava Metsi’a* 86a; Naḥmanides on Numbers 19:2; *Zohar* 1:125a, 168a (Vol. 3, pp. 15-16, n. 106); Baḥya ben Asher, *Kad ha-Qemah*, 35; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 35-36.

[299](#). One whose soul departs outside the Holy Land... If someone has died outside the land of Israel (where demonic forces prevail) and his body is then brought to the land for burial, that corpse defiles the Holy Land, though only temporarily. God blows a new spirit from above to dispel the impure spirit.

See JT *Kil’ayim* 9:4, 32c-d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 96 (p. 1240); *Tanḥuma*, *Vayḥi* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayḥi* 6; *Zohar*

1:225b–226a; 2:151b; 3:72b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 349–50; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 57–58.

300. As for Joseph... Joseph led a pure life and resisted being seduced by Potiphar's wife, so he was not contaminated by the impure spirit even though he lived outside the land of Israel. Still, out of respect for the Holy Land, he did not want his corpse to be brought there for burial. He demanded only that his bones eventually be interred there. See *Zohar* 1:21b.

301. Jacob did not die... In a sense, Jacob never died. Further, his body was embalmed and remained intact. Since "his bed was complete" (i.e., all his sons were virtuous), the demonic force had no power over him.

The twelve tribes may correspond to the twelve camps of angels accompanying *Shekhinah*. The seventy souls (or descendants of Jacob) may correspond to the seventy branches of the Tree of Life (extending from the seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*). On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the twelve tribes, see above, [p. 75](#), [n. 217](#). On the seventy souls, see Exodus 1:4; Deuteronomy 10:22.

On Jacob's immortality, see BT *Ta'anit* 5b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Jacob our father did not die..., as is said: *Do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—do not be dismayed, O Israel! For I will save you from afar, your seed from the land of their captivity* (Jeremiah 30:10). The verse compares him to his seed; just as his seed is alive, so he too is alive."

See Rashi and Naḥmanides on Genesis 49:33; *Tosafot*, *Ta'anit* 5b, s.v. *ya'aqov avinu*; *Zohar* 1:235b, 248b; 2:48b, 174a; *ZḤ* 76c (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 108–9, 370; idem, *Commentary on the Ten Sefirot*, 336b.

On Jacob's bed being complete, see BT *Pesaḥim* 56a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "[Upon his deathbed] Jacob wished to reveal to his sons the end of days, but *Shekhinah* departed from him [depriving him of inspiration]. He said, 'Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is a

blemish in my bed [i.e., someone unfit among my children], like Abraham, from whom issued Ishmael, or like my father Isaac, from whom issued Esau.’ His sons answered him, ‘Hear, O Israel! [i.e., Jacob]. *YHVH is our God, YHVH is one*—just as there is only *one* in your heart, so there is only *one* in our heart.’ At that moment our father Jacob opened and exclaimed, “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!”

See *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 8:7, 112c; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 31, 312; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:5; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 4; above, [notes 139](#), [149](#).

302. he is the body of the supernal image... Jacob embodied *Tif’eret*, the trunk of the *sefirot*. Further, according to rabbinic tradition, his image is engraved on the Divine Throne. Jacob’s beauty resembled that of *Tif’eret*, who embraces all aspects of the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*. His beauty also resembled the original pristine beauty of Adam, whose sin he rectified. Since Jacob’s body was so perfect and totally uncontaminated by impurity, it was preserved by embalming and brought intact to the Holy Land for burial.

On Jacob’s image being engraved on the Divine Throne, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:12; Vol. 3, pp. 332–33, n. 177. On his beauty, see BT *Bava Batra* 58a: “The beauty of our father Jacob resembled the beauty of Adam.” See BT *Bava Metsi’a* 84a; *Zohar* 1:35b (where Jacob rectifies the flaw of Adam’s sin), 142b, 145b–146a, 222a; *ZH* 65a (*ShS*).

On the significance of Jacob’s embalming, see *Zohar* 1:250b–251a. On his burial in the Holy Land, see *Zohar* 1:225b–226a. The verse in Genesis 47 (addressed by Jacob to Joseph) reads: *I will lie down with my fathers, and you will carry me from Egypt and bury me in their burial place.*

303. As for other inhabitants of the world... By dying in the Holy Land, they escape the torments that normally afflict those who die elsewhere: their bodies are

not subjected to *hibbut ha-qever* (beating in the grave), and their souls avoid any torment.

On *hibbut ha-qever*, administered by the Angel of Death or other heavenly or demonic beings, see 3 Enoch 28:10; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:150–52; 5:49; *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Margaliot, par. 30; *Zohar* 1:185a; 2:151a, 199b; 3:126b–127a.

304. The soul of a human is called by three names... *Nefesh* (soul) is the basic power animating the human being. The two higher levels of soul are *ruah* (spirit, breath) and *nishmeta* (Hebrew *neshamah*, “breath, soul”). After death, *nefesh* remains stationed by the corpse in the grave until the body decomposes, though from there she roams the world.

On the three aspects of the soul, see *Zohar* 1:62a, 81a (*ST*), 83a–b, 206a, 224b; 2:95a–b, 182a; 3:25a, 70b; *ZH* 6d (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:684–722. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:37. On the soul maintaining contact with the corpse, see JT *Yevamot* 16:3, 15c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 100:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1; BT *Shabbat* 152b–153a. On departed souls perceiving the pain of the living, see BT *Berakhot* 18b. On their pleading for mercy, see BT *Ta’anit* 16a; *Zohar* 1:225a; 3:70b–71b; and below.

305. Ruah enters the earthly Garden... Upon death, *ruah* enters the earthly Garden of Eden, where she assumes a shape resembling her earthly body. On special occasions, she ascends to the heavenly Garden of Eden, and afterward returns to her place in the earthly Garden.

The verse in Ecclesiastes now implies that *the ruah will return* intermittently to *Elohim*, namely to *Shekhinah*, who dwells in the celestial Garden. The full verse reads: *The dust will return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.*

According to Kabbalah, before descending to earth each soul is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body she will inhabit on earth. She retains this

form while in the physical body until shortly before death, and then regains it afterward.

On the ethereal body, see Naḥmanides on Genesis 49:33; *Zohar* 1:7a, 38b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 90b-91a, 115b (*MhN*), 131a, 217b, 219a, 220a, 224a-b, 227a-b, 233b; 2:11a, 13a-b, 96b, 150a, 156b-157a, 161b; 3:13a-b, 43a-b, 61b, 70b, 104a-b; *ZH* 10b-c (*MhN*), 90b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 390; idem, *Seder Gan Eden*, 133; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 215-45; idem, *Kabbalah*, 158-59; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 251-73; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:770-73. Cf. Rashi on BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, s.v. *ve-ruḥot u-nshamot*. On the Sabbath and festival ascent, see above, [p. 21](#), [n. 58](#). Cf. above at [note 190](#).

[306.](#) *Neshamah* ascends immediately to her place... Upon death, this highest level of soul ascends to the heavenly Garden of Eden, the dwelling place of *Shekhinah*, whence *neshamah* issued into the world. Returning to her source, *neshamah* kindles the lamp of *Shekhinah*, who is encompassed by *neshamah* below and by the higher *sefirot* above.

On *Shekhinah* being stimulated by the soul, see *Zohar* 1:60a-b, 235a, 244a-b, 245b.

[307.](#) When inhabitants of the world are in need... At such times, they go to the cemetery and pray, and *nefesh* (inhabiting the grave) flies to the Garden of Eden, where it arouses *ruaḥ*, who arouses the patriarchs (who are buried in the cave of Machpelah, adjoining the Garden). From there, *ruaḥ* ascends to the celestial Garden to arouse *neshamah*.

The various discussions and presentations of matters of the soul harmonize with one another.

According to the *Zohar*, the cave of Machpelah leads to the Garden of Eden. See *Zohar* 1:81a (*ST*), 127a, 219a; 2:151b; *ZH* 79d (*MhN, Rut*). On praying for mercy at the cemetery, see BT *Ta'anit* 16a, 23b; *Bava Metsi'a* 85b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:10; *Zohar* 1:225a; 3:70b-71b.

308. When *neshamah* is hindered from ascending... Apparently due to sins during her time on earth. In such a case, both *ruah* and *nefesh* are also unsettled. These three aspects of soul correspond to three *sefirot*, as Rabbi Abba proceeds to explain.

On the *nefesh* mourning over the body, see JT *Mo'ed Qatan* 3:5, 82b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 100:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1; BT *Shabbat* 152a; *Tanḥuma, Miqquets* 4; *Zohar* 1:122b (*MhN*), 218b–219a, 226a; *ZH* 75c, 83a, 83d–84a (all three *MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 396–97.

On the expression “breeding worms,” cf. Exodus 16:20. On the punishment of the grave, see above, [note 303](#).

309. *Nefesh* has no light of her own... In the sefirotic realm, *Shekhinah* is *nefesh*. She has no light of Her own but simply reflects the light of the higher *sefirot*. Her body consists of the throne and Her accompanying angels, nourished by Her.

On *Shekhinah* as the soul of Her angelic body, see *Zohar* 1:245a–b; below at [note 326](#); Idel, “Olam ha-Mal’akhim bi-Dmut Adam.” Cf. above at [note 204](#): “the body of the Throne”; and also [pp. 6–7, n. 19](#).

The image of *Shekhinah* having no light of Her own derives from a medieval astronomic description of the moon. See Ibn Ezra on Exodus 3:15; Radak on Genesis 1:16; *Zohar* 1:20a, 31a, 124b–125a, 132b, 179b, 181a, 233b, 238a, 249b; 2:43a (*Piq*), 90b–91a, 145b, 215a, 218b; 3:113b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 338; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 113, 188, 257; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 68–69 (85–86); idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 381. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 156a. Similarly, *Shekhinah* is described as “a speculum that does not shine.” See above, [note 62](#).

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *She rises while it is still night and provides food for her house [or: household] and a portion for her maidens.*

310. *Ruah* is the one who rides on this *nefesh*... The sefirotic *ruah* is *Tif'eret*, who controls and illumines *Shekhinah*.

311. Neshamah is the one who generates this ruḥa... The supernal *neshamah* is *Binah*, the Divine Mother who generates the lower *sefirot*, including the central *sefirah* of *Tif'eret*, also known by the Hebrew term *ruah* (Aramaic *ruḥa*).

312. Until this supernal neshamah ascends... Until *Binah* ascends to the highest *sefirah*, *Keter*, by whom She is filled with the flow of emanation, *Tif'eret* cannot enter the Garden of *Shekhinah* nor can *Shekhinah* settle on Her angelic throne.

313. Similarly, all below... Although forming a single entity, the three aspects of soul separate when a human being dies. *Neshamah* ascends to *Shekhinah* (pictured as a well); *ruah* enters the earthly Garden of Eden; *nefesh* settles in the grave. See above at [notes 304-6](#).

314. Nefesh above... where is the grave?... If *Shekhinah* corresponds to *nefesh*, where is Her corresponding grave? Rabbi Abba explains that this is the hard demonic shell, which lies beneath the body of the angelic throne.

On the hard shell, see above, [note 291](#).

315. When *nishmeta* is adorned above... Upon death, *neshamah* (Aramaic *nishmeta*) ascends to the abode of *Shekhinah*. On Sabbath and festivals, *ruah* ascends from its place in the earthly Garden of Eden and visits *neshamah*. As these special days conclude, *ruah* returns to the earthly Garden, still sparkling with radiance from above, which it shares with *nefesh* below. Then *nefesh* rises within the grave, assuming a form that resembles its former earthly body, and the bones themselves praise God. The future tense, *will say*, refers to the time after death, in the grave.

On the Sabbath and festival visits, and the image assumed by the soul, see above, [note 305](#).

316. If the eye were permitted to see... Human foolishness blinds one from seeing deeply and comprehending the basis of existence. See BT *Ḥagigah* 12b: “Rabbi Yose said, ‘Woe to creatures, for they see but do not know what they see; they stand but do not know on what they stand!’”

See *Zohar* 1:99a, 175b, 195b, 203b, 224a, 226b; 2:23b; 3:77a. On the phrase “if the eye were permitted to see,” see BT *Berakhot* 6a; *Zohar* 3:104b.

317. On the night of Rosh Hashanah... Each *nefesh* pleads for mercy for the living. Then, once the verdict has been pronounced, she may inform a person in a dream, stimulating him to mend his ways.

On spirits hearing a decree on Rosh Hashanah, see BT *Berakhot* 18b. Cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 3; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 1543; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margalioṭ), par. 18.

On the passage from Job, see *Zohar* 1:183a. The verses read in full: *In a dream, a vision of night, when deep sleep falls upon humans in slumber upon the bed, He then uncovers human ears, ובמוסרם יחתום (uv-mosaram yaḥtom), and with a warning, terrifies them [or: and seals their warning].*

מוסר (*Musar*) means “discipline, chastisement, reproof, correction, instruction, training, exhortation, warning.”

318. On the night when decrees issue... On *Hosha'na Rabbah* (the seventh day of *Sukkot*), the divine decrees for the coming year issue from above. On that night, anyone who is destined to die during the year does not see his shadow by the light of the moon, since this image (associated with the ethereal body) is seized by cohorts of the angel Yedomi'am, who is appointed over the engraved and sealed decrees.

The idea that divine decrees are finalized on *Hosha'na Rabbah* derives from medieval sources. See Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, pp. 444–45; Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 2:402–3 (and parallels cited there by Raphael); *Zohar* 1:220a (standard edition); 3:31b–32a; Wilhelm, “Sidrei Tiqqunim,” 130–43; Tamar, “Hosha'na-Rabbah ke-Yom Hittum ha-Din”; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 30–31.

The notion and significance of not seeing one's shadow by the light of the moon derives from European folklore and German Hasidism. See Eleazar of Worms, *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, 12a; *Sefer Hasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 1544; *Sefer Hasidim* (ed. Margaliot), par. 452; Naḥmanides on Numbers 14:9; *Zohar* 1:217b (Vol. 3, p. 313, n. 58), 220a (standard edition), 257b (*Hash*); 3:13b; Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 14:9; Recanati on Numbers 14:9, 74d–75a; *Kolbo*, par. 52; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:108; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 214–25; Wilhelm, “Sidrei Tiqqunim,” 130–43; Weinstock, “Ha-Adam ve-Tsillo”; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:771, 831–32; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 30. Cf. BT *Horayot* 12a. On the ethereal body, see above, [note 305](#).

On the angel Yedomi'am, see *ZH* 82d (*MhN, Rut*); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 62–63; cf. above, [note 52](#). On the wording “in engraved mystery of a signet ring in clear script,” see *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 28:11; and Rashi on the verse.

[319.](#) **The *nefesh* that we have mentioned...** Above at [note 317](#). If such a *nefesh* sees someone's shadow being lifted to heaven by the angels, she knows that the person is destined to die in the coming year.

Yedomi'am's cohorts bring the shadow to the chief angel, Metatron, who awaits it eagerly. The verse in Job reads: *like a slave [or: servant] panting [or: he pants] for [evening's] shadow*. On Metatron as a servant, see above, [pp. 81-82](#), [n. 232](#).

[320.](#) **For there is a *nefesh*...** After death, souls of certain sinners wander constantly without rest.

On the image of the sling, see BT *Shabbat* 152a, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: "The souls of the righteous are treasured away under the Throne of Glory, as is said: *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life*. Those of the wicked are continually muzzled, while one angel stands at one end of the world and another stands at the other end, and they sling their souls [i.e., the souls of the wicked] to each other, as is said: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling*."

See above, [note 294](#); [pp. 36-37](#), [n. 105](#); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 349. 352-53. The full verse in Samuel (recording Abigail's blessing of David) reads: *If a person rises to pursue you, to seek your life, the soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with YHVH your God, and the soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling*.

[321.](#) **The one destroyed with the body...** The biblical punishment of כרת (*karet*), being "cut off," is reserved for certain grave offenses. See Genesis 17:14; Leviticus 7:20-21, 27; 19:8; Numbers 9:13. *Targum Onqelos* renders ונכרתה (*ve-nikhretah*), *shall be cut off*, as וישתתצי (*ve-yishteitsei*), *shall be destroyed*.

[322.](#) **cut off from another place...** Such a *nefesh* is cut off from *ruah*, who dwells *before Me*, so she cannot enjoy

supernal bliss nor discover what transpires in the world. Cf. Naḥmanides on Leviticus 18:29.

323. A *nefesh* who finds rest... The angel Yedomi'am shows her the glory and bliss of the Garden of Eden, where she cleaves to her *ruah*.

The *ruah*'s garment apparently refers to the ethereal body. See above, [note 305](#). For another interpretation, see OY; MmD. On Yedomi'am, see above, [note 318](#).

324. When that *ruah* ascends... On Sabbath and festivals, when *ruah* ascends to the celestial Garden of Eden to join *neshamah*, *nefesh* is illumined. Meanwhile, *neshamah* is bound within *Shekhinah*, who is known as End of Thought—the consummation of emanation, which begins in the Divine Mind. *Shekhinah* represents the sefirotic *nefesh*, who is bound on these special occasions within supernal *ruah* (*Tif'eret*), who is bound within supernal *neshamah* (*Binah*), who is bound within *Ein Sof*. See above, [notes 309–11](#).

325. Then, tranquility of *nefesh* below... This *nefesh* is thereby linked with (and “corresponds to”) the supernal *nefesh*, *Shekhinah*, and through Her with even higher realms.

The word *et* (אֶת), *with*, alludes to *Shekhinah*. See above, [note 179](#). On the verse in Samuel, see above, [note 320](#).

326. When the moon... descends... When *Shekhinah* descends from Her union with the higher *sefirot*, She illumines all Her camps of angels. On *Shekhinah*'s angelic body, see above, [note 309](#).

327. Similarly, this lower *nefesh* descends... As a Sabbath or festival concludes, the human *nefesh* descends back to the grave, where she illumines and energizes all the limbs and bones of the corpse, transforming them into a spiritual entity that rises to glorify God. See above, [note 315](#).

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy נפשך (nafshekha), your thirst [or: soul] בצחצחות (be-tsaḥtsaḥot), in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a*

spring whose waters do not fail. Rabbi Abba understands the rare word בצחצחות (*be-tsahtsaḥot*), *in parched regions*, to mean “with radiancies,” based on the root צח (*tshḥ*), “to gleam.” See *Zohar* 1:113b–114a (*MhN*), 141a, 224b; 2:97a, 210b.

“Triple tranquility” refers to that of all three aspects of the soul: *nefesh*, *ruah*, and *neshamah*.

328. Song of ascents... The simple sense of *ascents* is uncertain. It may refer to pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or it could be a musical term. Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets it as referring to angels on high “from the side of supernal powers,” i.e., who derive from the side of *Gevurah* (Power). These heavenly singers correspond to the Levites who sang in the Temple and who are associated with *Gevurah*. The angels' multiple rungs and ranks may correspond to the many watches of the Levites.

According to Numbers 8:25, *From the age of fifty years he [the Levite] shall retire from the legion of service and serve no more.* Here, the fifty years allude to the fifty years of the Jubilee, which symbolizes *Binah*, the source of *Gevurah* and of the angels. *Binah* also contains fifty gates.

On the semi-retirement of the Levites, see *Zohar* 1:249b (Vol. 3, p. 533, n. 992). On the Levitical (and angelic) watches, see below, [note 339](#). On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, [pp. 135–36](#), [n. 381](#). On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see above, [note 262](#). On the verse in Psalms, see *Midrash Tehillim* 125:1; *Zohar* 1:231b.

329. they trust in Him through deeds... Based on the merit of their virtuous conduct. See BT *Berakhot* 17b.

330. the righteous do not rely on their deeds... Because they fear that they are unworthy or may succumb to sin.

When Abraham went to Egypt with Sarah, he pretended that she was his sister and not his wife, because he feared that otherwise the Egyptians might kill him and take her. A similar fear overcame Isaac when he was in

Gerar. Jacob felt intense fear when he was about to encounter his brother Esau, whom he had cheated.

331. But surely it is written ככפיר (ki-khfir), as a young lion... The lion is known by various Hebrew names, and כפיר (*kefir*) refers specifically to a *young lion*, who is still relatively weak and small, not yet totally confident. The trust of the righteous is compared to the confidence of this young beast.

The word שחל (*shaḥal*) is one of various biblical terms for “lion.” See Job 4:10, and Rashi, ad loc. On שחצ (*shaḥats*), “pride,” as another of these terms, see BT *Sanhedrin* 95a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 39; B, 43; *Midrash Mishlei* 20:2; Rashi on Job 28:8.

332. Consequently, Those who trust in YHVH... Although now the righteous are not fully confident, trusting only *as a young lion*, in the time to come they will trust *like Mount Zion*, which is *never shaken*.

On the comparison between the righteous and Mount Zion, cf. BT *Berakhot* 58b; *Midrash Tehillim* 125:1.

333. And you, my sons... Rabbi Shim'on celebrates the trust of the Companions, which even now is as firm as Mount Zion.

334. Just as this day has illumined us... Through engaging in Torah. New interpretations of Torah are crowned in the presence of the Ancient of Days.

The term the Ancient of Days appears in Daniel 7:9: *As I watched, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat—His garment like white snow, the hair of His head like clean fleece, His throne flames of fire, its wheels blazing fire.* In the Zohar this name designates the primordial *sefirah* of *Keter*.

In BT *Pesahim* 119a, secrets of Torah are referred to as “things hidden by the Ancient of Days.” See the rabbinic blessing in BT *Berakhot* 17a: “May your steps run to hear words of the Ancient of Days!” On the crowning of words of Torah in the presence of the Ancient of Days, see *Zohar*

1:4b. See also BT *Bava Batra* 91b; *Zohar* 1:8b-9a; 2:134b, 168a; 3:20a, 105b, 138b (*IR*), 232b.

335. They sat until night split... Until midnight, the time appropriate for adorning *Shekhinah*, the Holy Chariot.

On the midnight ritual of Torah study, see above, [note 74](#). The reading יתבו (*yetavu*), “they sat,” appears in M5, N41, and Cremona. Other witnesses (O2, O17, OY, and Mantua) read: בתו (*batu*), “they spent the night,” i.e., slept.

336. Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s... In *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12 (on 1:2), various opinions are offered as to where and when the Song of Songs was uttered: at the crossing of the Red Sea, at the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, as the Tabernacle was erected in the desert, or when the Temple was built. However, Rabbi Yose insists that this perfect song must have been composed and sung at the moment of perfection: when King Solomon completed the Temple and *Shekhinah* descended to dwell on earth.

According to the Midrash, just as the moon does not become full until the fifteenth day of its cycle, so it remained incomplete until the glorious reign of Solomon in the fifteenth generation from Abraham. See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:12; and *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: “When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full.” Here, the moon symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bo* 15; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15; *Zohar* 1:73b-74a, 150a, 223a, 225b, 238a, 243a, 249b-250a; 2:11a, 28b, 85a; 3:40b, 46a, 61a, 74b, 181b, 297a; *ZḤ* 37d and esp. 83b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 24, 47.

337. Moses fashioned the Dwelling... As Moses completed the Dwelling (or Tabernacle) in the desert, a heavenly Dwelling was also erected—that of the chief angel and Prince of the World, Metatron. The phrase “and nothing further” alludes to an even higher Dwelling, in the realm of *Binah*.

For Rabbi Yose, apparently, the passive construction, *The Dwelling was erected* (instead of the active, *he erected the Dwelling*), alludes to the erection of a heavenly Dwelling. Alternatively, the definite article *the (Dwelling)* alludes to the heavenly Dwelling; or *the Dwelling*, without further specification, includes the heavenly Dwelling.

See *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:12, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “When the blessed Holy One told Israel to erect the Dwelling, He hinted to the angels that they too should construct a Dwelling. When it was erected below, it was erected above; and that is the Dwelling of the Youth named Metatron, in which he offers up the souls of the righteous to atone for Israel in the days of their exile.”

See *Tanḥuma, Naso* 18; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 22b; *Zohar* 1:35a; 2:159a (standard edition), 164a, 169b, 235b, 240a; 3:3b; Bahya ben Asher on Exodus 40:17. On the Dwelling above that of Metatron, see *Zohar* 2:159a (standard edition), 235b, 240a. On the various Dwellings, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:869–72. On Metatron, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:626–31; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 377–81. On Metatron as Youth, see 3 Enoch 4:10; BT *Yevamot* 16b; Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563.

On Moses bringing *Shekhinah* down to earth, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:7 (quoted below, [note 392](#)); *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:1; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 6, *Naso* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 24; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 18b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:2; Gikatilla, *Sha’arei Orah*, 8a–9a.

338. When the First Temple was built... When Solomon completed the Temple in Jerusalem, *Binah* (the Temple above) radiated Her light through all the worlds. Then, the angels above and Israel below opened in song.

On the heavenly and earthly temples, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 10; JT *Berakhot* 4:5, 8c; *Tanḥuma, Vayaqhel* 7; *Pequdei* 1–3; *Shemot Rabbah* 33:4; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:1.

The expression “became fragrantly firm” renders אַחֲבַסָּם (*itbassam*), “was sweetened” or “... firmly established.” The root בָּסַם (*bsm*) conveys both senses. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 66:2; *Midrash Shemu’el* 26:4; *Zohar* 1:30b, 31a, 34a, 37a, 56a, 137a; 2:10a, 94a, 105a, 147b, 168a, 227a; 3:18a; Bronsnick, “Ha-Shoresh ‘Bsm’”; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 44; idem, *Kabbalah*, 228.

“Windows” renders מַשְׁקוּפֵי (*mashqofei*). The Hebrew term מַשְׁקוּף (*mashqof*) means “lintel,” but here *mashqofei* connotes “windows, window openings, window frames,” apparently based on שְׁקוּפִים (*shequfim*) in 1 Kings 6:4; 7:4. See *Zohar* 2:172a, 181a, 241b; *ZH* 15c (*MhN*), 76c (*MhN, Rut*), 90b-d (*MhN, Rut*).

The interpretation “*Song of Songs*—song of those musicians” is based on a midrashic rendering of שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים (*Shir ha-Shirim*), *Song of Songs*, as: שִׁיר שֶׁאִמְרוּ אוֹתוֹ הַשָּׂרִים הַשׁוֹרְרִים (*shir she-ameru oto ha-sharim ha-shorerim*), “a song uttered by the chanting singers.” See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12 (on 1:2); *Zohar* 2:18b-19a (*MhN*); Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 123-25.

339. King David... King Solomon... Both of their songs involve heavenly singing; but the difference between them is that when David ruled, the Temple had not yet been built, so the Levitical musicians and singers were not were arranged in their מִשְׁמָרוֹת (*mishmarot*), “watches,” or rotating divisions. Consequently, their corresponding angelic minstrels were not arranged above.

The term מִשְׁמָרוֹת (*mishmarot*) refers both to the rotating divisions of priests and Levites in the Temple and to the three “watches” of the night. See BT *Berakhot* 3a (referring to the latter sense): “There are *mishmarot*, ‘watches’ in heaven, and there are watches on earth.”

See *Zohar* 1:159a, 189a, 231a-b; 2:173a-b, 195b; 3:64b; *ZH* 6a (*MhN*).

340. On the day that the Temple was erected... The heavenly and earthly singers were arranged, *Shekhinah* began

to shine, and Song of Songs (the most sublime praise) was chanted for the Divine King.

Shekhinah is “the lamp that does not shine” on Her own, since She needs illumination from above. Similarly, She is called “a speculum that does not shine.” See above, [note 62](#).

The expression “the King who possesses peace” appears in *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12 (on 1:2), in the name of Rabbi Natan in a discussion on the authorship of Song of Songs: “The blessed Holy One Himself uttered it in His majestic glory, as is said: *Song of Songs*, אשר לשלמה (*asher li-Shlomo*), which is Solomon’s (Song of Songs 1:1)—שלוֹם למלך שהשלום (*la-melekh she-ha-shalom shello*), of the King who possesses peace.” Here, שלמה (*Shelomo*), *Solomon*, is construed as שלמו (*shelomo*), “His peace.”

In the *Zohar*, “the King who possesses peace” symbolizes the masculine divine potency, spanning the entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod*. This potency contains (or “possesses”) *Yesod*, who is called “peace” because He mediates between the right and left poles of the *sefirot*, or because He unites *Tif’eret* with *Shekhinah*. See BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim’on son of Ḥalafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.” On “the King who possesses peace,” see above, [note 26](#); ZH 62b (*ShS*).

On Song of Songs transcending all other songs, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1). Rabbi Yose describes Song of Songs as Holy of Holies based on the statement by Rabbi Akiva (M *Yadayim* 3:5), who insisted on the sanctity of this book: “The whole world is not worth the day on which Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the Writings [the third division of the Bible] are holy, and Song of Songs is Holy of Holies.”

341. In the Book of Adam... This ancient source predicted that the patriarchs would stimulate the supernal beings above and Israel below to celebrate the completion

of the Temple by singing. Therefore, the opening letter of Song of Songs—the *shin* in *shir*, *Song of*—is written large in the Masoretic text, its three prongs symbolizing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The patriarchs themselves do not sing or play instruments; rather, they arouse others to sing.

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים (*Shir ha-Shirim*), *Song of Songs*, is interpreted as שִׁיר הַשָּׂרִים (*shir ha-sarim*), “song of [heavenly] princes,” or הַשָּׂרִים שִׁיר (*shir ha-sharim*), “song of [heavenly] singers.” See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12 (on 1:2), which records both of these interpretations; *Zohar* 2:18b–19a (*MhN*); above, [note 338](#).

Here the “princes (or singers) appointed over all worlds” may refer to *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, who are aroused by the patriarchs. See below at [note 354](#). Alternatively, the princes (or singers) are angels, as in *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*.

On the Book of Adam, see above, [note 89](#). On the large opening letter of Song of Songs, see *ZH* 60c–d (*MhN*); Baḥya ben Asher on Deuteronomy 28:10; *Minḥat Shai* on the verse.

[342. Jacob the Perfect arose...](#) On the day that the Temple was completed, Jacob (symbolizing *Tif’eret*) entered the Garden of Eden (symbolizing *Shekhinah*).

[343. a song encompassing the whole Torah...](#) As Rabbi Yose explains below (at [note 350](#)), Song of Songs alludes to all the major events of the Torah. See *Zohar* 2:18b (*MhN*).

In rabbinic literature, the world that is coming is described as “a day that is entirely Sabbath.” Here, “the world that is entirely Sabbath” alludes to *Binah*, who in Kabbalah is identified with “the world that is coming.” See above, [note 228](#).

“The Holy Name” may refer specifically to *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the name *YHVH*) or to *Shekhinah* (known as God’s name). On *Shekhinah* as God’s name, see *Targum*

Onqelos and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 20:21. On Song of Songs as Holy of Holies, see above, [note 340](#).

344. Why are all its words in love and joy?... Why is Song of Songs replete with such language? Because *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the cup) is held by the divine right hand, *Hesed*, the source of love.

Traditionally, during Grace after Meals a cup of wine is held. According to BT *Berakhot* 51a, "One takes [the cup] with both his hands and places it in the right hand." On the symbolism of the cup of blessing, see above, [note 241](#).

On Song of Songs as reflecting *Hesed*, see *Zohar* 2:39a (*MhN*).

345. When this right hand was withdrawn... When *Hesed* withdrew from *Shekhinah*, on account of Israel's sins, She was dominated by the harsh Judgment of *Din* (the divine left hand) and Israel's enemy was empowered to destroy the Temple. In response, Israel below and the angels above uttered the laments recorded in the book of Lamentations, which opens with the exclamation אֵיכָה (*Eikhah*), *Alas!* [or: *How?*]. Rabbi Yose divides this word in two: אֵי כֹה (*Ei koh*), "Where is *koh*?" *Koh*, "thus," is a name of *Shekhinah*. The heavenly and earthly lamenters cry out, asking where She now is, since the Temple has been destroyed and Her supernal haven has disappeared (apparently alluding to the illumination from *Binah* through *Hesed*, which God *has withdrawn*).

The verse in Lamentations 2 reads: *He has withdrawn His right hand in the face of the enemy*. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:6; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petihta* 24; 2:6; *Tanḥuma, Beshallah* 15.

The book of Lamentations opens: אֵיכָה (*Eikhah*), *Alas!* [or: *How?*] *The city full of people sits lonely...* On אֵיכָה (*eikhah*) as אֵי כֹה (*ei koh*), or אֵיָה כֹה (*ayyeh koh*), see *Eikhah Rabbah* (ed. Buber) 1:1. On *koh* as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 261](#).

346. Song of Songs... Lamentations... The former book derives from the divine right hand, *Hesed*, so it is filled with joyous love; the latter book reflects the left hand, *Din*, so it is filled with lament.

347. But all joy... all song derive from the left... According to Kabbalah, the priest symbolizes *Hesed* on the right, while the Levite symbolizes *Din*, or *Gevurah*, on the left. The joyous singing of the Levites is thus associated with the left side. Why, then, is the joyous love of Song of Songs associated with the right side, and Lamentations associated with the left?

Rabbi Yose explains that joy issues from the left only when that side's harshness is soothed by *Hesed* from the right. The final phrase, "from that side," means "from the left."

348. But when the right does not appear... Without the soothing balance of *Hesed*, the harshness of *Din* can threaten *Shekhinah* (known as *koh* and Cup of Blessing). See above, [notes 344-45](#).

349. However, שיר השירים (*Shir ha-Shirim*), Song of Songs... As opposed to אִיכָה (*Eikhah*), Lamentations, the book of Song of Songs reflects *Hesed*, the right hand, lovingly embracing *Shekhinah*. The triad of the patriarchs symbolizes *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, perfectly balanced, so fittingly the patriarchs aroused this sublime song. See above at [note 341](#).

350. The day that this song was revealed... This same day the Temple was completed and *Shekhinah* descended to dwell on earth. Her presence pervaded the Temple so intensely that the priests could not remain there.

Song of Songs encompasses the entire Torah. Many of its verses are interpreted allegorically as referring to major biblical events and key moments in the history of Israel. On the connection between Song of Songs and the work of Creation, see above at [note 28](#), and Rabbi Akiva's statement in M *Yadayim* 3:5 (quoted above, [note 340](#)): "The

whole world is not worth the day on which Song of Songs was given to Israel.”

On the connection between Song of Songs and the patriarchs, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:19 (on 1:2); 1:20 (on 1:3); 5:1 (on 5:1). On the exile in Egypt, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:35 (on 1:5). On leaving Egypt, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:44 (on 1:7). On the Red Sea, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:48–50 (on 1:9); 2:31 (on 2:14). According to *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12 (on 1:2), Song of Songs was uttered at the Red Sea. On the revelation at Mount Sinai, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12–15 (on 1:2). According to the beginning of this passage, Song of Songs was uttered at Mount Sinai. On Israel’s wandering in the desert, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 3:4 (on 3:6). On entering the land of Israel, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 4:6 (on 4:1). On the Temple, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 2:31 (on 2:14). On Israel’s exile, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 3:1–3 (on 3:1). On their redemption, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 8:11 (on 8:8).

“The supernal Holy Name” may refer specifically to *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the name *YHVH*) or to *Shekhinah* (known as God’s name). See above, [note 343](#).

The day that is *Sabbath to YHVH* refers to the world that is coming. “The seventh day” may refer to the seventh millennium, based on the tradition in BT *Sanhedrin* 97a in the name of Rabbi Katina: “The world will exist for six thousand years and for one thousand lie desolate.”

On Solomon composing Song of Songs under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, see *Tosefta Yadayim* 2:14; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 15; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:6–8 (on 1:1).

The full verse in Kings reads: *The priests could not stand and minister because of the cloud, for the Glory of YHVH filled the House of YHVH.*

[351](#). Whoever recites a verse from Song of Songs... See BT *Sanhedrin* 101a: “One who recites a verse of Song of Songs and treats it as a [secular] song, and one who

recites a verse in a banquet hall not at its proper time, brings evil upon the world. For Torah girds herself in sackcloth, and stands before the blessed Holy One, saying before Him, 'Master of the Universe! Your children have made me like a harp played by the frivolous!'"

See *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 12:10; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 36; *Kallah* 1:4.

352. Why is it among the Writings?... If Song of Songs is so precious, why is it placed in the Writings (the third and last division of the Bible) and not in an earlier, more prominent location? Rabbi Yose explains that Song of Songs adorns *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) and escorts Her above to unite with the blessed Holy One. Since She is associated with the Writings, Song of Songs pertains there.

On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 24](#), [n. 68](#).

353. שיר (shir), Song of, one... In the phrase שיר השירים (*Shir ha-Shirim*), *Song of Songs*, the word *shir*, *song (of)*, indicates one song; the word *shirim*, *songs*, in the plural, indicates two (the minimum plural); so the full phrase totals three songs. These three apparently correspond to *Shekhinah* (the Cup of Blessing) and the divine right and left arms (*Hesed* and *Gevurah*), which embrace Her, initiating Her union with the King, whose core is *Tif'eret*. The rapture of their union ascends to *Ein Sof*.

Alternatively, the three songs correspond to *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who together unite with *Shekhinah*. This triad is symbolized by the patriarchal triad of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:6, in the name of Resh Lakish, "The patriarchs themselves constitute the [divine] chariot." Here, King David (who symbolizes *Shekhinah*) joins the patriarchs, forming a fourfold chariot. The sefirotic chariot serves as a throne for a higher level of divinity. The four components of the chariot correspond to the four words in the opening verse of Song

of Songs: שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמֹה (*Shir ha-shirim asher li-Shlomo*), *Song of Songs, which is Solomon's*.

On “שִׁיר (*Shir*), *Song of*, one; הַשִּׁירִים (*ha-Shirim*), *Songs*, two, totaling three,” see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10 (on 1:1); below at [note 373](#).

On the placement and symbolism of the cup of blessing, see above, [notes 241](#), [344](#). On the phrase “the King who possesses peace,” see above, [note 340](#).

On the patriarchal chariot, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 57; *Zohar* 1:60b, 99a, 150a, 154b, 173b, 186a, 222b, 223–224a, 248b; 3:38a, 99a, 146a, 182a, 262b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 239–40.

On David and the patriarchs, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 57; *Zohar* 1:79b, 99a, 125a, 154b, 248b, 2:31a, 132b; Vol. 3, p. 134, n. 311. On David as the fourth component of the chariot-throne, see also *Zohar* 1:20a, 89b (*ST*).

[354](#). שִׁיר (*Shir*), ***Song of—mystery of King David...*** The first word of this opening verse alludes to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by King David), who sings to Her divine spouse. הַשִּׁירִים (*Ha-shirim*), *Songs*, refers to the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the patriarchs), who are divine שָׂרִים (*sarim*), “princes.”

The closing words, אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמֹה (*asher li-Shlomo*), *which is Solomon's*, signify *Binah*, known as “the King who possesses שלמא (*shelama*), peace,” namely who possesses *Yesod*. *Binah* rides upon the sefirotic chariot. See above, [note 340](#).

On *shirim*, *songs*, and *sarim*, “princes,” see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12 (on 1:2); above, [note 341](#).

[355](#). מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם (*min ha-olam ve-ad ha-olam*), ***from world to world...*** In biblical Hebrew the word עוֹלָם (*olam*) means “eternity,” and the simple sense of this phrase is *from eternity to eternity*. But here Rabbi Yose adopts the later sense of *olam*: “world.” The two worlds are *Binah* and *Shekhinah*. Their entire span constitutes the ultimate chariot,

serving as a throne for the highest level of divinity, who remains unknowable.

As explained above, the four words of the first verse of Song of Songs allude to the *sefirot* from *Binah* through *Shekhinah*. Beyond this realm is a mystery.

On the meaning *from world to world*, see M *Berakhot* 9:5; *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:21; *Zohar* 1:34a, 153b, 158b, 210a, 247b, 248b; 2:22a, 53b; 3:145b, 285b, 297b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342-43.

356. One who sees grapes in a dream... A paraphrase of a rabbinic teaching (*Midrash Tehillim* 128:4): “One who sees grapes in a dream: if white, whether in season or not, a good omen; if black—in season, good; if not in season, mercy is needed. If he ate them, he can be assured that he is destined for the world that is coming.”

See BT *Berakhot* 56b; Rabbinovicz, *Diqduqei Soferim*, ad loc., p. 314, n. 5; *Zohar* 1:192a; *ZH* 64c (*ShS*).

357. The tree with which Adam sinned was of grapes... According to a midrashic tradition in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Ila'i, the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was grapes. Here, Rabbi Yose identifies these as black grapes, deriving from the side of death.

According to *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 5, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is called the Tree of Death, because when Adam and Eve ate of its fruit, death ensued. See Genesis 2:17. In Kabbalah, *Shekhinah* is identified with the Tree of Knowledge. When She is united with *Tif'eret* (the Tree of Life), She conveys life to the world and yields white grapes; but Adam separated Her from the Tree of Life and its vivifying sap, turning Her into the Tree of Death, which now yielded black poisonous grapes.

See *OY; MmD*. On the Tree of Death, see above, [pp. 64-65](#), [n. 189](#). On Adam's sin, see Vol. 1, p. 298, n. 1438.

For the midrashic interpretation of Rabbi Yehudah son of Ila'i, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:1;

Ester Rabbah 5:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 20:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 42, 175a (all but the last quoting the verse in Deuteronomy). See also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 323; *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:5; BT *Berakhot* 40a, *Sanhedrin* 70a-b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 23; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:2, 8; *Zohar* 1:36a-b, 192a; 2:267b.

358. In season, good... If the black grapes in the dream are in season, this is a good omen, since it indicates that they have been ripened and sweetened by the vivifying force of the white grapes. At such a time, the black grapes also fulfill a function—assuaging demonic forces, for example, or punishing the wicked with their strict judgment. However, if the black grapes are not in season, this indicates that the vivifying force of the white grapes is weak or absent, that harsh judgment dominates, and that the dreamer may soon die. His only hope is to repent and plead for mercy.

359. Here one should contemplate... If everything in this world is patterned on the upper world, does that mean that the demonic serpent brought death above as well? We might say that *Shekhinah* (the Divine Woman, corresponding to Eve) lost some of Her light due to the serpent. She is symbolized by the moon, which wanes at times, and such waning could be described as death. But what about *Tif'eret*, the Divine Male, who corresponds to Adam?

Furthermore, how can we say that the moon (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) dies as a result of the serpent's advice or incitement on the sixth day of Creation? According to rabbinic tradition, her light diminished for a different reason on the fourth day. See BT *Hullin* 60b: "Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi pointed out a contradiction. 'It is written: *God made the two great lights* (Genesis 1:16), and it is written [in the same verse]: *the greater light... and the lesser light*. The moon said before the blessed Holy One, "Master of the Universe! Can two kings possibly wear

one crown? [i.e., How can both of us be *great?*]" He answered, "Go, diminish yourself!"

In any case, Heaven forbid that *Shekhinah's* Husband, *Tif'eret*, suffered any diminution!

"The Master" referred to by Rabbi Yose is Rabbi Shim'on. On the liberating effects of his presence, see *Zohar* 2:86b; 3:79a, 105b.

The theme of "as above, so below" is a cardinal principle of Kabbalah. See *Zohar* 1:38a, 57b-58a, 129a, 145b, 156b, 158b, 205b; 2:15b (*MhN*), 20a (*MhN*), 48b, 82b, 251a (*Heikh*); 3:45b, 65b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:273. On the similar Hermetic formulation, see *Secretum secretorum*, ed. Robert Steele, *Opera hactenus*, fasc. 5, 262.

On seduction of the Female above, see *Zohar* 2:203b. On the phrase "בעטיו (*be-etyo*), due to the advice [or: incitement], of the serpent," see BT *Shabbat* 55b; Vol. 4, p. 279, n. 280. For the full Talmudic passage on the moon, see above, [note 230](#).

360. the serpent established diminution in all... Even in the sefirotic realm.

Each level of existence, from the realm of emanation to the physical world, consists of rungs that are grouped together and fashioned in the human image, male and female.

See BT *Bava Batra* 74b: "Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav, 'Everything that the blessed Holy One created in His world, He created male and female.'"

On the various levels of *Adam*, see *OY*; Vital; Scholem, *Le-Heqer Qabbalat R. Yitshaq ben Ya'aqov ha-Kohen*, 81; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 56-60; Idel, "Olam ha-Mal'akhim bi-Dmut Adam."

361. On the second day of Creation... This second day corresponds to the second of the lower *sefirot*, *Din* (Judgment), and fittingly on this day Hell was created along with angels of Judgment, who were fashioned into a body of

angelic limbs resembling a human. These angelic limbs approach the fire, are consumed, and then renewed. Just as the earthly Adam was seduced by the serpent (via Eve) and became mortal, so this heavenly angelic Adam was seduced by the demonic power and destroyed by fire, only to be reborn.

On the creation of hell, see BT *Pesaḥim* 54a, in the name of Rabbi Bana'ah son of Rabbi Ulla: "Why was the expression *that it was good* not said concerning the second day of Creation? Because on that day the fire of Hell was created." See Vol. 1, p. 128, n. 156.

On angels and fire, see Daniel 7:10: *A river of fire was flowing and gushing from His presence, a thousand thousands serving Him, a myriad of myriads attending Him.* On angels issuing from fire, see BT *Ḥagigah* 14a: "Shemu'el said to Rabbi Ḥiyya son of Rav, 'O son of a lion! Come, I will tell you one of those fine words said by your father: Every single day ministering angels are created from a river of fire, chant a song, then cease to be, as is said: *New every morning, immense is Your faithfulness!* (Lamentations 3:23).'"

On angels issuing and reemerging from the same fire, see *Shemot Rabbah* 15:6: "The angels are renewed every day, praise the blessed Holy One, and then return to the river of fire from which they emerged, and God renews and restores them to their former condition, as is said: *New every morning [immense is Your faithfulness!]* (Lamentations 3:23)."

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:1; *Eikhah Rabbah* 3:8; BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; 3 Enoch 40:4; *Zohar* 1:17b, 18b-19a, 44a-b (*Heikh*); 2:10a, 213b-214a, 247a (*Heikh*); *Sidrei de-Shimmusha Rabba*, 123-24 (and Scholem's n. 31); *Ma'yan Ḥokhmah* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:60); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 507, 510; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 65; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 205; idem, *Seder Gan Eden*, 139; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod*, *Ḥagigah* 14a,

p. 23d; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:513-14, 624-25; Vol. 4, pp. 21-22, n. 81.

On the angelic Adam, see Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 49b-50a; OY; Idel, "Olam ha-Mal'akhim bi-Dmut Adam"; and the other sources cited at the end of the preceding note.

362. Everywhere, Adam is male and female... In the sefirotic realm, the angelic realm, and on earth. The male and female aspects of the *sefirot* rule and nourish all; they cannot actually die, but the demonic serpent, when empowered, diminishes even their light. When the serpent defiles the Dwelling (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), the female and male of the angelic *Adam* (beneath *Shekhinah*) die and are then reborn, as described above. Thus, what happened to Adam and Eve on earth corresponds, in a sense, to the heavenly pattern.

On *Adam* being male and female, see Genesis 1:27; 5:2. See BT *Yevamot* 63a, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "Any אדם (*adam*), man, without a wife is not an *adam*, as is said: *Male and female He created them... and He named them adam* (Genesis 5:2)." See *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:2; below, [note 800](#).

363. If he ate those grapes... Rabbi Yose returns to his discussion above (at [notes 356-58](#)). If one dreams that he is eating the black grapes, this is a good omen because those grapes symbolize demonic forces, which he is consuming and crushing.

The verse in Daniel describes the prophet's vision of the fourth beast.

364. Similarly, there was no song... Until David (who symbolizes *Shekhinah*) eliminated the demonic forces. Then, his son Solomon built the Temple and uttered Song of Songs.

Even when *Shekhinah* ("this place") is purified, She contains grapes, but these are white grapes. The verse in Hosea pertains to *Shekhinah*, who is known as Assembly of Israel.

365. This song transcends all songs... Song of Songs transcends all songs uttered by Solomon's predecessors, including the psalms of David. Those psalms accompanied the songs of the angels, as indicated by the superscription of Psalm 122, where המעלות (*ha-ma'alot*), *ascents*, alludes to angels, who are arranged on various *ma'alot*, "levels." The phrase *To David* alludes to his *sefirah*, *Shekhinah*, from whom the angels seek nourishment.

On *A song of ascents*, see above at [notes 328, 339](#).

366. Further, A song of המעלות (*ha-ma'alot*), *ascents*... Rabbi Yose offers further proof that מעלות (*ma'alot*), *ascents*, refers to angels. This word is an anagram of עלמות (*alamot*). In the superscription of Psalm 46, *alamot* is a technical term that may refer to an instrument such as a flute or express a vocal quality, perhaps "youthful" (soprano), based on עלמה (*almah*), "maiden, damsel." Rabbi Yose associates *alamot* in Psalm 46 with the verse in Song of Songs, where the word clearly means *maidens*. These angelic maidens sing *for David*, namely for *Shekhinah*, who Herself sings constantly to the Divine King.

On the technical term *alamot*, see Psalms 9:1; 48:15; 1 Chronicles 15:20. On its connection with *maidens*, see *Zohar* 1:158b-159a.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *As for scent, your oils are fragrant; your name is oil poured—therefore, maidens love you.*

367. As soon as King Solomon appeared... David's psalms accompanied the song of the angels; his successor, Solomon, attained a higher level with Song of Songs, which is also uttered by the lower *sefirot* themselves ("sublime nobles") to *Binah* ("the supernal King who possesses all peace").

All other humans who sang to God attained the level of the angels ("lower chariots"), whereas Solomon attained the level of the *sefirot* ("upper chariots").

On the title “the supernal King who possesses all peace,” see above, [note 340](#); ZH 62b (*ShS*).

[368. Moses, who ascended...](#) Moses attained such an exalted rung. Didn't his Song at the Sea (Exodus 15) ascend as high as Solomon's Song of Songs?

[369. The song uttered by Moses...](#) In the Song at the Sea, Moses praised God for redeeming Israel from Egypt. However, King David in his psalms arrayed *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*) and Her angels in preparation for union with *Tif'eret*. Then when Solomon appeared, he found the Bride fully adorned and brought Her and the Groom together to the canopy. By uttering the sacred love poetry of Song of Songs, he conveyed romantic words between the two of them, stimulating their union. Thus, he attained a higher rung than even Moses.

[370. Moses wedded *Matronita* to this world below...](#) By building the Dwelling, Moses brought *Shekhinah* down to earth. Solomon, however, first united *Shekhinah* with *Tif'eret* and then brought both of them to earth, inviting them to dwell in the Temple.

On Moses bringing *Shekhinah* down to earth, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:7 (quoted below, [note 392](#)); *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:1; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 6, *Naso* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 24; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 18b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:2. In *Sha'arei Orah*, 8a-9a, Gikatilla extends this midrashic theme to David and Solomon, explaining that only with Solomon's Temple did *Shekhinah* finally find a permanent dwelling place on earth.

[371. How could Moses bring *Matronita* alone...](#) Separating Her from *Tif'eret*. Rabbi Yose explains that first God wedded *Shekhinah* to Moses, who assumed the role of *Tif'eret*. Then when *Shekhinah* descended to the Dwelling, through Moses She was still united with *Tif'eret* here on earth.

On *Shekhinah* as Bride of Moses, see above, [note 284](#).

[372.](#) **But there has never been anyone...** Only Solomon was able to convey love between the divine couple above (by uttering Song of Songs) and then invite them to the Temple on earth. Ever since God told the moon (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) to diminish Herself, She never joined completely with the sun (symbolizing *Tif'eret*), until Solomon appeared.

On God's command "Go, diminish Yourself," see above, [note 359](#). On the fulfillment of the moon in Solomon's reign, see *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: "When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full." See above, [note 336](#).

[373.](#) שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים (*Shir ha-Shirim*), **Song of Songs—here are five rungs...** The opening verse of Song of Songs alludes to five rungs: *Shir*, *Song of*, indicates one; *ha-Shirim*, *Songs*, in the plural, indicates two (the minimum plural); so up to here there are three. Next, אֲשֶׁר (*asher*), *which is*, adds a fourth; and finally לְשִׁלְמוֹהַ (*li-Shlomo*), *Solomon's*, makes five.

The five rungs refers to five levels *Shekhinah* ascends in order to reach *Binah*, known as "the World that is Coming." These levels may be conceived as: *Yesod*, then *Netsah* and *Hod* (both together on one level), then *Tif'eret*, then *Hesed* and *Gevurah* (both together on one level), and finally *Binah*. For various interpretations, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

On לְשִׁלְמוֹהַ (*li-Shlomo*), *Solomon's*, as alluding to *Binah*, see above, [note 354](#). Five implies *Binah*, since She is associated with the fifty years of Jubilee. See above, [note 328](#); [pp. 135–36](#), [n. 381](#). On *Binah* as "the World that is Coming," see above, [p. 22](#), [n. 59](#).

On "*Shir*, *Song of*, one; *ha-Shirim*, *Songs*, two..." see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10 (on 1:1); above at [note 353](#).

[374.](#) **Solomon could arrange coupling above only...** He was able to unite the divine couple only because Moses had already joined *Shekhinah*.

[375.](#) **He spoke three thousand** מַשַּׁל (*mashal*), **proverbs...** The word *mashal* means "saying, proverb,

allegory, parable.” Traditionally, the books of Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes are attributed to Solomon. Here, Rabbi Yose indicates that every single verse Solomon composed contains *three thousand proverbs*, or allegorical meanings.

See BT *Eruvin* 21b: “Rav Hamnuna said, ‘Why is it written *He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his song was a thousand and five*? This teaches that Solomon uttered *three thousand proverbs* for every single word of Torah and *a thousand and five* reasons for every single word of the Scribes.’”

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:3: “Our rabbis say, ‘*Three thousand proverbs* for every single verse; *a thousand and five* reasons for every single proverb.’”

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1); *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:23; *Tanḥuma, Huqqat* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat* 14; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 60b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:3; *Zohar* 1:135a; *ZH* 7a (*MhN*), 62b (*ShS*). On the wisdom of Solomon’s words, see also *Zohar* 2:29a, 39a; 3:64a, 157a, 178a.

The opening verse of Proverbs and of Song of Songs attributes each book, respectively, to Solomon. In the opening two chapters of Ecclesiastes, the designation קהלת (*qohelet*)—apparently meaning “one who assembles”—serves as an epithet for Solomon or a king like Solomon. The verse in Kings, describing Solomon’s wisdom, reads: *He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his song was* [or: *his songs were*] *a thousand and five*.

376. For when Rav Hamnuna Sava the First... See the passage from BT *Eruvin*, quoted in the preceding note, where Rav Hamnuna says that “Solomon uttered *three thousand proverbs* for every single word of Torah and *a thousand and five* reasons for every single word of the Scribes.” Here, this Rav Hamnuna yearns for a profound interpretation of Solomon’s seemingly licentious advice:

Rejoice, young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in your youthful days.

According to Rabbi Shemu'el son of Yitshak, the Rabbis were about to exclude Ecclesiastes from the biblical canon on account of this apparently heretical verse, but they decided to include the book because of the verse's conclusion. The full verse reads: *Rejoice, young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in your youthful days. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, and know that for all these, God will bring you to judgment.*

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 28:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 8:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:3; 11:9; *Midrash Mishlei* 25:1. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 63b.

“Some simple interpretation” renders אשׁר רָאָה (*derasha*), “interpretation, homiletical interpretation,” contrasted here with deeper wisdom. See Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 2a: “I have not come here for *derasha*, but rather for the essence of the matter.” See *Zohar* 1:213a; *ZH* 25d (*MhN*). The phrase “what we see with our eyes” plays on the wording in Ecclesiastes: *whatever your eyes see*.

On Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder) see above, [pp. 163-64](#), [n. 69](#). On Rav Hamnuna the First and Rav Hamnuna Sava the First, see *Zohar* 2:146b; 3:199a.

377. Immediately he went on... Rav Hamnuna Sava immediately offers a deeper meaning, matching phrases of the verse in Ecclesiastes with phrases of a verse in Genesis. The full verse in Genesis reads: *These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, seventeen years old, was tending the flock with his brothers, and he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.* For the full verse in Ecclesiastes, see the preceding note.

And let your heart cheer you apparently corresponds to Joseph's carefree days accompanying his brothers, *tending*

the flock. Similarly, *In your youthful days* corresponds to *the sons*.

God will bring you במשפט (*ba-mishpat*), to judgment, alludes to *Tif'eret*, known as *mishpat*, judgment. This clause corresponds to *These are the generations of Jacob...*, since Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret*. As noted above, the verse in Genesis reads: *These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, seventeen years old...*; but Rav Hamnuna, borrowing a playful midrashic reading, conveniently breaks off his citation with the phrase *Jacob: Joseph*. In the Midrash, *Jacob: Joseph* implies the similarity between these two biblical heroes. Here, it implies that Joseph's *sefirah* (*Yesod*) is included in Jacob's (*Tif'eret*).

On the hyperliteral reading *Jacob: Joseph*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 84:6, 8; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 2; *Tanḥuma*, Noah 5; *Vayeshev* 1, *Miqqets* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayeshev* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:5; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 10 (12-13); *Zohar* 1:21b, 85a, 176b, 180a, 182b, 222a; 2:242a.

378. This allegory expands... Each משל (*mashal*), “proverb, allegory,” spoken by Solomon includes three thousand facets. (See above at [note 375](#).) For example, the interpretation of the verse in Ecclesiastes (in light of the verse in Genesis) implies that *Yesod* (symbolized by Joseph) is included in *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Jacob), and suggests further that three thousand aspects appear in the triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by all three patriarchs).

“Wandering donkey-drivers” renders טיינין (*tayya'in*), “Arabs,” Arab caravaners, derived from the name of the Arabian tribe *Tāyyi'*. In the *Zohar*, *tayya'a* usually indicates one of various wandering donkey-drivers encountered by the Companions on the road. Here, Rabbi Yose exclaims that there are so many of these, loaded with secrets of wisdom, disguising their true identity as mighty warriors armed to wage the battle of Torah.

On the battle of Torah, see above, [p. 27](#), [n. 74](#). On *tayya'a*, see above, [p. 2](#), [n. 4](#). On דַּיָּרֵי (*dayyarei*), “bearers,” see BT *Sanhedrin* 63b; Radak on 2 Kings 17:31; Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 322a. For various interpretations of the closing sentence, see *OY*; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

[379](#). וַיְהִי שִׁירוֹ (*Va-yhi shiro*), *And his song was...* The full verse reads literally: *He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his song was a thousand and five*. The noun שִׁיר (*shir*), “song,” can serve as a singular collective, so the verse in its simple sense means *and his songs were...* See *Tanḥuma, Huqqat* 6: “Our rabbis say, ‘*Three thousand proverbs* for every single verse; *a thousand and five* reasons for every single proverb. Here it is not written וַיְהִי שִׁירָיו (*va-yhi shirav*), *and his songs were*, but rather שִׁירוֹ (*shiro*), *its* [or: *his*] *song*—the song [i.e., amplification] of the proverb.” See above, [note 375](#).

Here Rabbi Yose accepts both meanings of שִׁירוֹ (*shiro*): *his song* (namely Solomon’s) and *its song* (namely each proverb’s). “All is one,” since Solomon uttered all these proverbs.

[380](#). **Now, is Song of Songs a thousand and five?...** The entire book contains only 117 verses. Rabbi Yose explains first that *five* alludes to the five *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Hod*, which are openings in the masculine divine realm known as “the King who possesses peace,” extending from *Binah* (or *Ḥokhmah*) through *Yesod*.

These five *sefirot* (within the sefirotic Tree of Life) are also pictured as five hundred years, which is how long it would take to traverse, or climb, this Tree. The fifty years of Jubilee symbolize *Binah*, from whom these five *sefirot* issue.

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:3, in the name of Rabbi Shemu’el son of Naḥman: “We have gone through all of Scripture and found that Solomon was inspired to utter only about eight hundred verses, and you say *three thousand proverbs* (1 Kings 5:12)? However, this teaches

that every single verse that he was inspired to utter contains two or three meanings.”

The three Solomonic books (Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes) contain a total of 1,254 verses, but Rabbi Shemu’el may be counting only actual proverbs or similes. On reaching a total of *three thousand proverbs* (including the additional meanings), see Maharzu on *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:3. See the sources quoted above, [note 375](#).

On the five gates, see *Zohar* 1:1a. On “the King who possesses peace,” see above, [note 340](#). On the five hundred years, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:6, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Il’ai: “The Tree of Life extends over a journey of five hundred years, and all the waters of Creation branch off beneath it.”

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 2:9; *Zohar* 1:18a, 35a, 76b (ST), 78b (ST); 2:2a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 56 (69).

On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, [notes 328, 373](#); [pp. 135-36, n. 381](#).

[381](#). A thousand—the Tree of Life... *Yesod*, the Groom, issues from the cosmic tree. He is *a thousand*, inheriting the *five sefirot* above Him and conveying them to *Shekhinah*, His Bride. *Yesod*’s description as *a thousand* is linked to His being pictured as a divine day, which resembles a millennium according to Psalms 90:4: *For a thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday gone*.

Yesod is also the river of emanation, conveying from the flow from Eden (symbolizing *Hokhmah*). Further, He is represented by Joseph the Righteous, who is called צדיק (*Tsaddiq*), “Righteous,” after *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon), who is known as צדק (*Tsedeq*), “Righteousness.”

“As the blessed Holy One stipulated with Her” refers to the compensation offered by God to the moon after He commanded her to diminish Herself: “Go! The righteous will be named after you.” (Some of the righteous were

called “So-and-so the Small.”) See BT *Hullin* 60b, quoted partially above, [note 230](#).

On Joseph the Righteous and *Yesod*, see above, [pp. 47-48, n. 132](#).

[382. Song of Songs is Holy of Holies...](#) As taught by Rabbi Akiva (M *Yadayim* 3:5): “The whole world is not worth the day on which Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the Writings [the third division of the Bible] are holy, and Song of Songs is Holy of Holies.”

Rabbi Yose insists that every verse in Song of Songs alludes to the five *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Hod* along with *Yesod*. On five rungs within the opening verse of Song of Songs, see above, [note 373](#).

[383. Why isn't a thousand mentioned here?...](#) The opening verse of Song of Songs alludes to five rungs but not to *a thousand*. Rabbi Yose indicates that since *a thousand* alludes to *Yesod*, the divine phallus, it is fittingly concealed until the moment of union with *Shekhinah*.

The image of the seal, alluding here to a sefirotic process, may be linked to the covenantal seal of circumcision, associated with *Yesod*. It also suggests Solomon's seal or signet ring. See above, [p. 112, n. 316](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

[384. As soon as he made Holy of Holies...](#) Once Solomon constructed the Holy of Holies in the Temple, he placed the cherubim there, whose loving embrace symbolizes sefirotic union, which is also known as Holy of Holies.

“Above and below” may allude to two dimensions of divine union (as Rabbi Yose proceeds to explain) or to union above and union in the Temple below. On the term שמושא (*shimmusha*), “conjugal union,” see above, [notes 29, 49](#).

On the erotic quality of the cherubim, see BT *Yoma* 54a, in the name of Rabbi Katina: “When Israel ascended [to Jerusalem] for the Festival, the curtain would be rolled open for them and the cherubim revealed, their bodies

intertwined. They [the people] would be addressed: ‘Look! God’s love for you resembles the love of male and female.’”

385. Holy of Holies is above... Alluding to the union of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), known as Holy, and *Binah* (symbolized by Jubilee), known as Holies. One would expect that *Tif’eret* (the Divine Son) would inherit from *Hokhmah* (the Father), and that *Shekhinah* (the Divine Daughter) would inherit from *Binah* (the Mother), but here the process is reversed. *Shekhinah*, inheriting from Her Father, *Hokhmah*, attains both His names, Holy and Wisdom. (She is known as Lower Wisdom or Wisdom of Solomon, and is also described as the Divine Name.) *Tif’eret* inherits from His Mother, *Binah*, and attains Her name, Holies, absorbing all of Her sacred flow, which He conveys to His Bride, *Shekhinah*.

On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, [notes 328, 373](#); [pp. 135-36](#), [n. 381](#). On *Shekhinah* sharing the names of *Hokhmah*, see *Zohar* 3:297a. On the son bringing treasures to the bride, cf. *Bahir* 104 (156).

386. Therefore he said Song of Songs... In uttering these words, Solomon alluded to *Shekhinah* (known as Holy, corresponding to *Song*) and *Tif’eret* (known as Holies, corresponding to *Songs*). Thereby he stimulated their union.

387. Which is לשלמה (li-Shlomo), Soloman’s... Alluding to *Binah*, known as “the King who possesses שלמא (*shelama*), peace,” namely who possesses *Yesod*. See above, [notes 340, 354, 373](#).

388. Now, if you say that this praise is His... Pertaining apparently to *Binah*. Rather, this praise pertains even higher. When *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah* join beneath *Binah* (the supernal King), then *Binah* ascends and is filled with holy blessing, which He joyfully pours below upon the divine couple.

For other interpretations of “if you say that this praise is His,” see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

389. This is prayer... The purpose of prayer is to perfect *Binah* (the supernal spring, the upper world), so that (via *Tif'eret*) His radiant gaze may then illumine *Shekhinah* (the lower world) and Her angelic maidens.

The moon and sun symbolize, respectively, *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*. On the moon having no light or her own, see above, [note 309](#). The word “gaze” renders חִזּוֹ (*heizu*), “appearance, vision.”

390. Solomon strove... He aimed to perfect *Binah*, who is alluded to by the phrase *which is לשלמה* (*li-Shlomo*), *Solomon's*—interpreted as “of the King who possesses שלמא (*shelama*), peace.” See above, [note 387](#).

391. Mystery of mysteries... When the most hidden divine realm began to manifest Itself, It blew a spirit from the primordial point of *Hokhmah*—a spirit that eventually became *Shekhinah*. Why did It initiate this process, which established a dwelling place for *Shekhinah* in the world? Because otherwise there would be no means of conveying divine energy below, and the world would vanish. This spirit and the world are interdependent: the spirit's fulfillment and arrayal depend on the world (as explained below), while the spirit's flow of emanation nourishes those on earth along with the angels above.

The printed editions (and M5) identify this passage (extending below to [note 395](#)) as part of *Sitrei Torah*, but the manuscripts representing an earlier version (O2, O17, N41), as well as the text presented in *OY*, do not. See *MM*. O2 and O17 indicate that some material is missing in between the preceding passage and this one.

392. Perfection of arrayal of this spirit... *Shekhinah* is arrayed and fulfilled by the righteous, who stimulate Her union with *Tif'eret*.

The antediluvian figures Enoch, his father Jared, and his grandfather Mahalalel performed this function (after Adam had initially blemished *Shekhinah*), but then the wicked of the world marred Her spirit through their evil deeds.

They were annihilated by the Flood, and Noah again perfected the divine spirit. The generation of the Tower of Babel (who were eventually dispersed throughout the world) impaired the spirit, and then Abraham restored it. And so it continued, until eventually God instructed Israel to restore *Shekhinah* and make the Dwelling.

On Enoch, see Genesis 5:24: *Enoch walked with God, and he was no more, for God took him*. On Mahalalel, see below at [note 809](#). On the nature of Adam's sin, see above, [note 357](#); Vol. 1, p. 298, n. 1438.

Jacob's bed is considered perfect or complete because all his sons were virtuous. See above, [note 301](#).

On the various stages of *Shekhinah*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:7, in the name of Rabbi Abba son of Kahana: "The root [or: essence] of *Shekhinah* was in the world below. Once Adam sinned, She withdrew to the first heaven. Cain sinned; She ascended to the second heaven. The generation of Enosh sinned; She ascended to the third. The generation of the Flood sinned—to the fourth. The generation of the Dispersion—to the fifth. The Sodomites—to the sixth. The Egyptians in the days of Abraham—to the seventh.

"Opposite these, seven righteous ones arose—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses—and brought Her down to earth. Abraham, from the seventh to the sixth; Isaac brought [Her] down from the sixth to the fifth; Jacob brought [Her] down from the fifth to the fourth; Levi brought [Her] down from the fourth to the third; Kohath brought [Her] down from the third to the second; Amram brought [Her] down from the second to the first; Moses brought Her down below."

See the parallels, above, end of [note 370](#). The opening of this midrash ("The root [or: essence] of *Shekhinah* was in the world below") has influenced the *Zohar's* wording in the preceding paragraph: "without an essential root of this world."

393. Have them take Me an offering... Apparently understood to mean: *Have them take Me* [by attaining *Shekhinah*, who is known as] *an offering*. Or, *Have them take Me* [together with *Shekhinah*].... See above, [notes 12, 18, 284, 288](#); *OY*.

Moses wonders how the Israelites can possibly attain and restore *Shekhinah*. On Moses' difficulty in understanding an aspect of the Dwelling, see above, [note 282](#).

394. Moses, not as you think... The challenge is not impossible: the people's pure intention will enable them to attain *Shekhinah* and restore Her. See *Bahir* 66 (97).

395. When Solomon came... By constructing the Dwelling in the desert, Moses provided a temporary home for *Shekhinah* on earth. Later, Solomon united Her above with *Tif'eret* and invited both of them to dwell in the Temple that he built in Jerusalem. Further, he enhanced the gaze of *Binah* (the upper world), ensuring that *Shekhinah* (the lower world) would be enhanced.

The conclusion of the opening verse in Song of Songs—which is לשלמה (li-Shlomo), *Solomon's*—alludes to *Binah*, who is known as “the King who possesses שלמה (shelama), peace.” See above at [notes 367–74, 389–90](#).

396. when the blessed Holy One revealed Himself... Each of the Ten Commandments generated a voice, which then branched into seventy voices, miraculously seen by the Israelites.

On the voice branching, see *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 25, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “The voice went forth and split into seven voices, and from seven voices into seventy languages, so that all the nations would hear. Each and every nation heard His voice in its own language.”

The full verse in Exodus 20, describing the revelation at Sinai, reads: *All the people were seeing הקולות (ha-qolot), the thunderings [or: voices], and the flashes and קול (qol), the sound of, the shofar and the mountain smoking and the people saw and trembled and they stood at a distance.*

On the striking formulation *seeing the qolot*, see *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 9, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: “All the people were seeing *ha-qolot*.... They were seeing the fiery word issuing from the mouth of Power and being engraved on the tablets.”

See *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 20:15; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 41; *Midrash Shemu’el* 9; Rashi, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra (short and long) on the verse; *Bahir* 29 (45); Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:46; *Zohar* 2:81a-b; *ZH* 41b-c; *TZ* 38, 79a.

On the voice branching, see also BT *Shabbat* 88b; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:9; 28:6; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:3; *Sefer Ḥanokh (Beit ha-Midrash, 2:116)*; Ibn Ezra, introduction to Commentary on the Torah; *Zohar* 1:26a (*TZ*), 47b, 54a; 2:83b; 3:160a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 366 (and Wolfson’s n. 16).

The full verse in Exodus 25 reads: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze.*

397. That voice warned every single Israelite... A paraphrase of the midrashic treatment of Song of Songs, according to which the Israelites yearned for a divine kiss, which they received at Mount Sinai.

See *Midrash Aseret ha-Dibberot (Beit ha-Midrash 1:69)*; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:13 (on 1:2). On the voice moving, cf. *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 117; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 25; *Tanḥuma (Buber), Shemot* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:9.

398. all that Israel saw... Within *Shekhinah*, they saw the reflected colors of the higher *sefirot*. God told the people that *Shekhinah* was *the offering* that they would obtain. The *sefirot* illumining Her are symbolized by the various elements recorded in Exodus. In particular, *gold, silver, and bronze* represent, respectively, *Ḥesed, Gevurah, and Tif’eret*.

The context in Exodus (25:2–8) reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My*

offering. This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen and goat hair; reddened ram skins, tanned-leather skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense. Carnelian stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece. Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them.

On *Shekhinah* as offering, see above, [note 12](#). On the symbolism of the various elements listed here, see above at [notes 240-60](#).

[399.](#) between the upper world and the lower world... Between the male divinity (extending from *Binah*, or *Hokhmah*, through *Yesod*) and *Shekhinah*.

[400.](#) passionate cleaving of רוחא (*ruḥa*), spirit, to spirit... The word רוחא (*ruḥa*) means “wind, breath, spirit.” Spirit cleaves passionately to spirit only through a kiss—a kiss delivered by the mouth, from which *ruḥa* (breath, spirit) issues. When the male and female partners kiss, their *ruḥin* (spirits, breaths) unite.

On a kiss as “cleaving of *ruḥa* to *ruḥa*,” see *Zohar* 1:44b (*Heikh*), 184a; 2:124b, 254a (*Heikh*), 256b (*Heikh*); *ZH* 60c (*MhN, ShS*), 63a, 64b (both *ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 396; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 372. Cf. Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 485; *Zohar* 1:70a.

[401.](#) In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava the First... As mentioned in the preceding note, רוחא (*ruḥa*) means “wind, breath, spirit,” but it also means “direction, bearing.” Here, the kiss expands in four *ruḥin*, “directions,” and into four “spirits” (or “breaths”). The male *ruḥa* combines with the female *ruḥa*, and the female *ruḥa* with the male, making a total, as it were, of four (“two and two as one”). The phrase “within mystery of faith” indicates that the kiss occurs within the sefirotic realm between the divine couple.

The four letters of the word אהבה (*ahavah*) correspond to the letters of יהוה (*YHVH*), which signify the four *sefirot* *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif'eret*, and *Shekhinah*, who constitute a supernal chariot for *Binah*. From the union of the four spirits (symbolized by the four letters), a new spirit is formed, named Love, who ascends to the heavenly Palace of Love, stimulating this palace to unite with a higher realm.

On four spirits forming through a kiss, see *ZH* 60c (*MhN*, *ShS*), 64b (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 372. On the Palace of Love, see *Zohar* 1:44b-45a (*Heikh*); 2:97a, 253a (*Heikh*), 254b (*Heikh*), 260b (*Heikh*). The passage in 2:254b (*Heikh*) mentions the union of this palace with a higher palace.

On Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder) see above, [p. 164](#), [n. 69](#). On Rav Hamnuna the First and Rav Hamnuna Sava the First, see *Zohar* 2:145a; 3:199a. The Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava is quoted frequently in the *Zohar*. On books such as this, see above, [p. 174](#), [n. 97](#).

[402](#). Four letters correspond to four spirits... The four letters of the word אהבה (*ahavah*), “love,” symbolize the four spirits formed by the kiss. The first letter, א (*alef*), is the spirit (or breath) issuing from the mouth of the male divinity. Immediately, ה (*he*) issues from the mouth of the female and joins *alef*. The process continues with the last two letters of אהבה (*ahavah*), engendering a new spirit (or soul) named Love, who ascends to the palace, adorned and accompanied by the four letters.

[403](#). As that complete Love ascends... As the new spirit named Love ascends, it encounters the mighty Akhtariel, who confronts it but cannot prevent it from crossing the rivers of balsam and entering the Palace of Love.

The number 1,390 apparently includes an allusion to all the שמים (*shamayim*), “heavens,” a word whose numerical value is 390.

According to rabbinic sources, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. See JT *Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 62:2; BT *Ta'anit* 25a; above, [note 20](#).

“The mystery of dew above” alludes to the source of emanation in *Keter*. See above, [notes 199–200](#); Vol. 4, pp. 459–60, n. 334.

The angel Akhtariel (whose name includes the word כתר [*keter*], “crown”) appears in BT *Hagigah* 7a, where Rabbi Yishma'el has a vision of “Akhtariel *Yah YHVH Tseva'ot*.” Here, Rabbi Yose portrays Akhtariel as fashioning crowns for God out of Israel's prayers “with [apparently meaning: by the power of] the name *YHVH Yah Tseva'ot*.” The role of weaving divine crowns out of prayers is usually played by another angel, Sandalphon.

See BT *Hagigah* 13b; above, [note 48](#); *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 13–14, n. 2; Green, *Keter*, 20–41, 62–65. On pp. 37–38, Green discusses a passage in *Sefer ha-Hesheq* that has Metatron (instead of Sandalphon) weaving a crown of prayers.

[404. Once it enters the Palace of Love...](#) There the kisses of the divine couple (symbolized by Jacob and Rachel) are aroused. The verse in Song of Songs conveys *Shekhinah's* yearning to be kissed by Her beloved.

Cf. above, [note 397](#). On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:45a; 2:97a, 253b (*Heikh*); 3:250b; *ZH* 64b (*ShS*).

[405. Who is he?...](#) To whom is *Shekhinah* referring when She says *O that he would kiss me?* To the sefirotic essence concealed above. But how can such a sublime realm, from whom kisses originate, kiss *Shekhinah* far below?

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; Soncino; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

[406. Concealed of all concealed—there is no one who knows Him...](#) *Keter*, the most concealed realm, is unknowable. Yet He reveals “one tenuous radiance” (*Hokhmah*) by a slender path of emanation. This radiance

itself remains essentially concealed, but it reveals aspects of divine being and stimulates kisses between *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

The concealed origin of the process is conveyed by the fact that the verse in Song of Songs begins “in a concealed way,” namely in the third person: *O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*, rather than in the second person: *O that you would kiss me with the kisses of your mouth* (matching the second half of the verse: *For your love is better than wine*). The expression בארה סתים (*be-orah setim*), “in a concealed way,” alludes to the Hebrew word נסתר (*nistar*), which literally means “concealed” but is also a grammatical term for “third person.”

407. If they depend upon Him... If the kisses do, in fact, stem from *Hokhmah* (and ultimately from *Keter*), why does the verse in Genesis read *Jacob kissed Rachel*, since Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret*? After all, the kisses really depend on the higher realm. Rabbi Yose explains that while ultimately the kisses come from that higher realm, they are conveyed to *Shekhinah* by the supernal chariot of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, which culminates in the last of these *sefirot*, symbolized by Jacob. Here, all the divine colors blend. Uniting with the King (*Hokhmah*) is possible only through the Son (*Tif'eret*). The third-person wording, *O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*, alludes to the royal Father.

The formulation “Clinging to the King clingingly comes through His Son” echoes the Christological idea that one comes to the Father only through the Son. See John 14:6. Cf. Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 146-52.

On the verse in Genesis, see above, [note 404](#). On the sefirotic chariot, see above, [note 353](#).

408. For your love is better... The second half of the verse is addressed directly to *Tif'eret*, (the sun), who illumines *Shekhinah* (the moon) with the radiance of the sefirotic lamps. This loving radiance issues from *Binah*, who

is pictured as vintage wine, delighting and nourishing all. *Binah* is also known as Living God.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better מִיַּיִן (mi-yayin), than wine.* Here, Rabbi Yose interprets *mi-yayin* as *from wine*. See Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 485; *Zohar* 1:70a-b; *ZH* 64c, 68c-d (both *ShS*).

According to BT *Berakhot* 34b (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi), in the world that is coming the righteous will enjoy "wine preserved in its grapes since the six days of Creation." In the *Zohar*, this wine symbolizes both the deepest secrets of Torah and also the emanation stored within, or flowing from, *Binah*, who is known as "the World that is Coming."

See *Zohar* 1:135b (*MhN*), 192a, 238b; 2:169b; 3:4a, 12b, 39b-40a, 93b, 100a (*RM*); *ZH* 28a-b, 64c (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 130.

409. Further, מִיַּיִן (mi-yayin), from wine... Apparently alluding to the numerical value of יַיִן (*yayin*), *wine*, which is seventy, and its correspondence to a certain permutation (or permutations) of the name יְהוָה (*YHVH*).

Vital (*Haggahot Maharḥu*) suggests that Rabbi Yose is referring to two permutations: יוֹד הֵי וָו הֵי (*yod, hei, vav, hei*) and יוֹד הֵי וַיֵּו הֵי (*yod, hei, vayv, hei*), which together contain seven *yods*, equivalent numerically to seventy.

For various other interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nefesh David*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. Cf. *ZH* 64c, 68c-d (both *ShS*). On the numerical value of *yayin*, "wine," see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:4; BT *Eruvin* 65a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:19 (on 1:2).

410. The Companions came and kissed him... They kissed Rabbi Yose for revealing such profound wisdom.

On the expression "Holy spirit מְכַשְׁכְּשָׁא (*mekhashkesha*), pulsates, within you," cf. *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 8:2, in the name of Rabbi Neḥemiah, "When the Holy Spirit settled upon him [i.e., Samson], his hairs were מְקִישוֹת (*maqqushot*), tingling [or:

knocking], like a bell.” See BT *Sotah* 9b, in the name of Rabbi Yitshak: “*Shekhinah* was מקשקשת (*meqashqeshet*), ringing [or: knocking], before him [i.e., Samson] like a bell.” See above, [page 53](#): “the first spirit מכשכשא (*mekhashkesha*), pulsates, within her... his spirit *mekhashkesha*, rattles, in her belly like a snake.”

According to rabbinic sources, Rabbi Shim'on claimed that he could protect the world until the Messiah arrives. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; JT *Berakhot* 9:2, 13d; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15. Cf. BT *Sukkah* 45b.

According to the *Zohar*, Rabbi Shim'on's generation is the greatest one there will be until the Messiah appears. See *Zohar* 2:9a; 3:58a, 159a, 206a, 236b, 241b. On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see also *Zohar* 1:225a; 2:149a, 156a; 3:79a, 287a. On Rabbi Shim'on's messianic status in the *Zohar*, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 1-84.

The declaration “Torah has been restored לעתיקותהא (*le-attiqutaha*), to her anciencey” is a paraphrase of a rabbinic formulation concerning Shim'on son of Shetaḥ, a president of the Sanhedrin who lived in the first century B.C.E. Shim'on pioneered education by requiring children to attend school (JT *Ketubbot* 8:8, 32c). Based on accomplishments such as this, a Tannaitic tradition states (BT *Qiddushin* 66a): “He restored Torah ליושנה (*le-yoshnah*), to her pristine state.”

Here Rabbi Shim'on bar Yoḥai may be alluding to a goal and method of the *Zohar*: restoring the authority of tradition by formulating new-ancient mythical teachings and transmitting them through Talmudic figures. For other renderings and interpretations, see Soncino; *Sullam*; *MmD*; Berg, *Zohar*.

Rabbi Yose's teaching begins above at [note 336](#). The entire gathering of Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi El'azar, Rabbi Abba, and Rabbi Yose begins above at [note 19](#). After “kissed him on his head,” O2, O17, M5, the text preserved

in *OY*, and the Cremona and Mantua editions all read: “When they reached Rabbi Shim’on, they arranged words before him [i.e., they repeated to him what they had said].” This does not fit the context of the gathering, which from the beginning includes Rabbi Shim’on himself, so eventually the editors of the Constantinople edition (1736) placed the troublesome line in parentheses. Here, for the sake of narrative consistency, I have deleted it.

[411](#). ***This is the offering...*** The verse concludes: *gold, silver, and bronze*.

[412](#). **We have established this verse...** Previously, Rabbi Shim’on and the Companions had discussed the sefirotic significance of this verse, in particular, that *offering* alludes to *Shekhinah*. Now Rabbi El’azar wonders about the apparently contradictory wording of the passage, which applies to both the earthly Dwelling (“mystery below”) and *Shekhinah* (“mystery above”).

The context (Exodus 25:2-3) reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering. And this is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze*. The opening divine command, *have them take Me an offering*, is fine. But if this is the people’s offering to God, why does the verse then call it *My offering*? And if it is *My offering*, why does the next verse state: *This is the offering that you shall take from them*.

The phrase “everything, above and below” apparently means “whether the verse is interpreted spiritually or literally,” i.e., relating to “mystery above” or “mystery below.”

For various interpretations of Rabbi El’azar’s challenge to the verse, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 646 (adopted here); *MmD*. On *Shekhinah* as *offering*, and the command *have them take Me an offering*, see above, [notes 12](#), [18](#).

413. the matter is as follows... The people of Israel are commanded to take *Shekhinah* (*an offering*) from the angels themselves—the four archangels beneath Her: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, who are called *every man*. These angels raise *Shekhinah* to unite with Her royal partner, and thus She is called תרומה (*terumah*), understood here hyperliterally as ארמותא (*armuta*), “raising.” When Israel are virtuous, they are able to take Her from the angels and bring Her to dwell on earth, even though *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the *heart*) delights in the angels and is set upon them.

The angelic interpretation of *every man* is probably based on a midrashic reading of *the man Gabriel* (Daniel 9:21). See *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev 2; Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer 38*.

On *terumah* as “raising,” see above, [note 12](#). The full verse in Exodus reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take Me an offering; from every man whose heart impels him, you shall take My offering.*

414. How? At this time... How can *Shekhinah* be drawn down to earth? Now, when the Temple is no longer standing and its rituals have been eliminated, it is possible to attract *Shekhinah* by living virtuously and by praying sincerely.

In the original Dwelling (or Tabernacle) in the desert, *Shekhinah* was attracted by the various holy objects and rituals, and in particular by the colors *gold, silver, and bronze*, which embodied spiritual qualities and symbolized the angels and the *sefirot* above. These earthly colors overwhelmed the spiritual colors and conveyed them to the world. In this setting, Israel was able to *take Shekhinah* from Her camp of angels.

415. Gold—included in Gabriel... Gold symbolizes *Gevurah*, from which Gabriel draws his power.

Seven types of gold are mentioned in rabbinic sources. See JT *Yoma* 4:4, 41d; BT *Yoma* 44b; *Shemot Rabbah* 35:1; *Zohar* 2:73a (RR), 148a; 3:84a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-*

Qodesh, 39 (46–47). On the sefirotic symbolism of gold, see above, [notes 163, 242](#).

The context in Exodus (25:3–8) reads: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen and goat hair; reddened ram skins, tanned-leather skins, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense. Carnelian stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and the breast-piece. Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them.*

[416.](#) **Silver—above, included in Michael...** Silver symbolizes *Hesed*, linked with Michael. See above, [note 242](#).

[417.](#) **And bronze—above, emerging from gold...** Bronze apparently symbolizes *Hod*, which derives from *Gevurah* (symbolized by gold and fire). Consequently bronze shares the color of its fiery source. From this נחשת (*nehoshet*), *bronze*, of *Hod* emerge fiery נחשים (*nehashim*), “serpents,” which execute divine Judgment deriving from *Gevurah*, or *Din*.

On the fiery serpents, see below, [note 491](#). For other interpretations of the significance of bronze, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. Cf. above, [notes 243, 398](#).

[418.](#) **Blue—dwelling in this and that...** Blue symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who draws potent Judgment from the left side, inhabited by *Hod* (*bronze*) and *Din* (*gold*).

“No one prevails against it for life” apparently alludes to the danger of seeing blue in one’s dream. According to BT *Berakhot* 57b, “All kinds of colors bode well in a dream, except blue.” Previously, Rabbi El’azar had indicated that the color blue informs a dreamer that his soul is being judged and that his body may be sentenced to destruction. See above, [note 245](#).

The angel Boel draws the power of Judgment from *Shekhinah* and conveys divine wrath to the world, but when humans turn back to God he is transformed into Raphael (whose names means approximately “God heals”) and he heals compassionately.

On Boel, see above, [note 140](#). On the verse in Psalms (sometimes associated with *Shekhinah*), see *Zohar* 1:8a, 91a, 177a; 248b–249a; 2:251 (*Heikh*); 3:30b–31a, 119b, 176b–177a. On blue and *Shekhinah*, see above, [notes 166, 245](#).

[419](#). **Purple—gold and silver...** Purple symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who blends the qualities of *Gevurah* and *Ḥesed* (symbolized respectively by *gold* and *silver*). Michael and Gabriel (deriving respectively from *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*) blend in purple.

The verse in Job refers to God making peace among the warring elements of heaven, and is applied here to Michael and Gabriel. See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Devarim Rabbah* 5:12; *Tanḥuma, Vayiggash* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 13; *Derekh Erets, Pereq ha-Shalom* 8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8. Cf. ZH 15a (*MhN*). On the significance of purple, see above, [note 167](#).

[420](#). **And crimson—above...** Apparently alluding to *Netsaḥ*. This is included in Uriel, as was the color of *Hod* previously. Just as the sefirotic pair *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* lies between *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *purple*) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *blue*), so Uriel is tinged with these colors.

See above, [note 417](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:647.

421. Linen—above... The roof-covering of the Tabernacle comprised four separate layers: linen, goat hair, ram skins, and, uppermost, leather. Here, the word $\Psi\Psi$ (*shesh*), *linen*, suggests the number *shesh*, “six,” and so too the sixth of the lower *sefirot*, *Yesod*. This *sefirah* sustains the angel Raphael, just “as before” *Shekhinah* sustained him.

Silver and *gold* symbolize, respectively, *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, with which *Yesod* (and His angel, Raphael) are linked.

According to rabbinic tradition, the linen yarn used in the Tabernacle consisted of six strands. See BT *Yoma* 71b–72a, where $\Psi\Psi$ (*shesh*), *linen*, and $\eta\Psi\Psi$ (*shishah*), “six,” are associated. See above, [note 251](#).

On *Shekhinah* and Raphael, see above, [note 418](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:648; *MmD*.

422. Until here, mystery of seven pillars above... Apparently symbolizing the seven lower *sefirot*, which are protected by the shell of seven lower pillars, angelic powers beneath *Shekhinah*. Scholem suggests that the two septets are of angels and of colors.

423. And goat hair... As mentioned in [note 421](#), the roof-covering of the Tabernacle comprised four separate layers: linen, goat hair, ram skins, and, uppermost, leather. The goat hair covering the linen constitutes a “shell” protecting the divine kernel. “These seven” apparently refers to the seven lower *sefirot*, which are “kernel of kernel,” because they themselves are within the kernel of angelic powers around *Shekhinah*.

See above, [note 252](#). On the image of kernel and shell, see above, [p. 131](#), [n. 369](#); and [notes 84](#), [289–93](#).

424. Reddened ram skins... Symbolizing further powers protecting the divine kernel.

See above at [note 253](#). “Missiles” renders טיסין (*tisin*), apparently from the root טוס (*tus*), “to fly.” See *Zohar* 1:16a, 19b, 108b (*ST*), 218a–b; 2:7b; 3:229b (*RM*).

The full verse in Daniel (describing a heavenly being) reads: *His body was like topaz, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words was like the sound of a multitude.*

425. תחשים (Teḥashim), Tanned-leather, skins...
Symbolizing powers partially linked with holiness.

The exact meaning of *teḥashim* is uncertain. It may refer to yellow-orange tanned leather or to a specific animal (dolphin, dugong, narwhal, badger). Here, Rabbi El'azar associates *teḥashim* (singular: תחש [taḥash]) with a minor biblical figure named תחש (Taḥash), Tahash, one of the children born to Reumah, the concubine of Abraham's brother Nahor. Surprisingly, though, Rabbi El'azar indicates that Abraham, not Nahor, engendered Tahash. The context in Genesis (22:23–24) reads: *These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she too gave birth—to Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.* Perhaps Rabbi El'azar interprets *his concubine* to mean Abraham's (rather than Nahor's) concubine.

A further difficulty is that “the mother of Ishmael” should refer to Hagar, Abraham's actual concubine, not to Reumah. Here, Hagar and Reumah have coalesced into a single figure; consequently, Tahash and Reumah's other three sons are all “brothers of Ishmael.”

The final sentence apparently means that just as Esau derives from the holy realm of his father, Isaac, and branches into demonic paths, so too with Ishmael (and his brothers), born to Abraham.

For various reactions to the confusion regarding Reumah and attempts to explain it, see *Or ha-Hammah; Nitsotsei Orot*; Emden, *Mitpaḥat Sefarim*, 25; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem; *MmD*. On *taḥash*, see above, [notes 254–55](#).

426. Ishmael's mother gave birth to Tahash...
Abraham's concubine, Hagar (identified here with

Reumah), gave birth to Tahash. Abraham, who symbolizes the primordial light of *Hesed*, scattered light and seed in all directions, engendering Isaac in the realm of holiness as well as Ishmael, Tahash, and their brothers, who straddle the holy and unholy realms.

On the primordial light, see BT *Hagigah* 12a, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, one could gaze from one end of the universe to the other. When the Holy One foresaw the corruption of the generation of Flood and the generation of the Dispersion [i.e., of the Tower of Babel], He hid it away from them, as is said: *The light of the wicked is withheld* (Job 38:15). For whom did He hide it? For the righteous in the time to come."

Here the sweet steadiness of the light corresponds to the purity of Abraham, once Ishmael and his brothers had been generated. God hides the rarefied light away for "the righteous," which alludes here to *Yesod* (known as Righteous One) and *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness). Their union generates the fruit of souls, destined to enter the world.

On the primordial light, see above, [note 17](#). On Abraham symbolizing this light, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 2:3. On *Yesod* and *Shekhinah* as "the righteous," see *Zohar* 3:91b. On Righteous One and Righteousness, see *Zohar* 1:32a (*Tos*), 34a, 49a, 182b, 246a; 2:57a, 169b; 3:26a, 68a, 69a, 105a, 115b, 165a, 236b, 287a, 297a.

The phrase "became sweetly steady" renders אַחֲבַסָּם (*itbassam*), "was sweetened" or "... firmly established." The root בָּסַם (*bsm*) conveys both senses. See above, [note 338](#).

[427](#). For Abraham and Sarah formed souls and fruit... They imitated the divine couple by fashioning souls.

The verse in Genesis reads: *Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew and all the goods they had gotten and the persons they had acquired in Haran, and they set out on the way to the land of Canaan.* The clause וְהַנְּפֹשׁ אֲשֶׁר אָסוּ (*ve-ha-nefesh asher asu*), *and the persons they had acquired,*

refers to the slaves that Abraham and Sarah had obtained, but the Midrash interprets it hyperliterally. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 39:14: “*Ve-ha-nefesh asher asu, And the souls they had made, in Haran.* Rabbi El’azar said in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Zimra, ‘If all the nations assembled to create a single mosquito, they could not cast a soul into it, yet you say: *and the souls they had made?! Rather, these are converts. Then the verse should read: [and the souls] they had converted. Why they had made? To teach you that whoever draws a Gentile near is as though he created him.*’ Then the verse should read: *he [Abraham] had made. Why they had made? Rabbi Hunya said, ‘Abraham converted the men, and Sarah the women.’”*

Here in the *Zohar*, Rabbi El’azar focuses not on the conversion of residents of Haran, but rather on Abraham and Sarah forming actual souls for future converts (who derive from the Other Side). This creative act is usually reserved for the righteous in the Garden of Eden.

Abraham himself was the prototypical convert: born into an idolatrous family and culture, he came to recognize God. In BT *Sukkah* 49b, Rava describes him as “first of converts.” See above, [pp. 5-6](#), [n. 17](#).

On the midrashic interpretation of the verse in Genesis, see above, [note 45](#). On the formation of converts’ souls, see above, [p. 7](#), [n. 21](#). On Abraham and Sarah making souls for future converts, see *Zohar* 3:168a.

[428. And acacia wood...](#) The planks (or frames) of the Tabernacle were made of *acacia wood*, which symbolizes the angels known as seraphim. Rabbi El’azar indicates this association by hinting at a verbal analogy. In Exodus 26:15 (not quoted here), God says, *You shall make the planks for the Dwelling of acacia wood* עומדים (*omedim*), *upright* [literally *standing*]. This same verb, *omedim*, appears in Isaiah’s description of the seraphim: *Seraphim omedim, were standing, above it*. Since *acacia wood* and *seraphim* share the same verb, they are linked. See above, [note 256](#).

The context in Isaiah (6:1-2) reads: *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw my Lord, seated on a high and lofty throne, the hem of His robe filling the Temple. Seraphim were standing לו ממעל (mi-ma'al lo), above Him [or: in attendance on Him, or: above it, namely the throne].* Here, Rabbi El'azar interprets *mi-ma'al lo* as *above it*, that is, above the shell protecting the divine kernel.

429. Now, you might say... One might claim that the phrase לו ממעל (*mi-ma'al lo*) means *above Him*, not *above it*, corresponding to the previous verse: *I saw את אדני (et Adonai), my Lord.* In response, Rabbi El'azar focuses on the little word את (*et*), which grammatically is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. However, already in rabbinic times, Naḥum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that the presence of *et* in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, according to Rabbi El'azar, *et* amplifies the object of the verbal expression *I saw* to include the shell. Similarly, at the end of the verse (*the hem of his robe filling et the Temple*), *et* includes this shell. In the following verse, the clause *seraphim were standing mi-ma'al lo* means that they were standing *above it*, i.e., above that same shell.

On *et*, see BT *Pesaḥim* 22b, *Ḥagigah* 12a-b; *Zohar* 1:15b, 247a; 2:81b, 90a. The Masoretic text of Isaiah 6:1 reads את אדני (*et Adonai*), *my Lord*, rather than את יהוה (*et YHVH*), as quoted here by Rabbi El'azar.

430. Oil for lighting... oil of lighting... *Oil of lighting* refers to *Binah* (who encompasses the entire World of the Male, extending through *Yesod*). This realm is constantly filled and constantly flowing, whereas *oil for lighting* refers to *Shekhinah*, who is filled only when She unites with the higher *sefirot*. Yet the two oils flow from one source.

431. God created the two great lights... This verse is discussed by Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi in BT *Hullin* 60b: "It is written: *God made the two great lights*, and it is written [in the same verse]: *the great light... and the small*

light. The moon said before the blessed Holy One, ‘Master of the Universe! Can two kings possibly wear one crown? [i.e., How can both of us be *great*?]’ He answered, ‘Go, diminish yourself!’ She said before Him, ‘Master of the Universe! Because I have suggested something proper I should make myself smaller?’ He replied, ‘Go and rule by day and night.’ She said, ‘But what is the value of this? What good is a lamp at noon?’.... Seeing that her mind was uneasy [that she could not be consoled], the blessed Holy One said, ‘Bring an atonement for Me for making the moon smaller.’”

Here, Rabbi El’azar interprets the *two great lights* as upper world (*Binah* encompassing the World of the Male, or *oil of lighting*) and lower world (*Shekhinah*, or *oil for lighting*). Since the masculine upper world is known as *great*, when the female *Shekhinah* is joined with Him, She shares this description and is known as one of *the two great lights*. However, when their union is disrupted, He is *great* and She is *small*.

On the Talmudic passage, see above, [note 230](#); ZH 70d-71a (*ShS*). The full verse in Genesis reads: *God made the two great lights, the great light for dominion of day and the small light for dominion of night, and the stars. Here, the Zohar reads: God created....*

[432](#). one should rather be a tail to lions... See M *Avot* 4:15, in the name of Rabbi Matya son of Heresh: “Be a tail to lions, and not a head to foxes.” This maxim is often understood to mean: Associate with those greater than you, rather than those beneath you.

Here, Rabbi El’azar applies the Mishnaic saying to *the two great lights*. At first, *Shekhinah* was joined with World of the Male, and even though She was “the tail” of the *sefirot*, She shared the designation *great*. When She complained about Her status, God made Her *small*, placing Her as “the head” of lower realms. See ZH 70d-71a (*ShS*).

433. By this mystery, oil of lighting... The constant World of the Male corresponds to *oil of lighting* and rules by day. *Shekhinah*, who is intermittent, corresponds to *oil for lighting* and rules by night.

434. There are five spices... Five ingredients are specified for the anointing oil and five spices for the incense. See Exodus 30:23-25, 34-35. These two separate compounds are intimately related and are described as one in Exodus 25:6: *spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense*.

435. Carnelian stones...—all these are thirteen... The verse reads: *Carnelian stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece*. The twelve stones in the breastpiece plus the two carnelian stones for the ephod (considered here as one unit) make a total of thirteen. These constitute an adornment not only of the high priest but also of *Shekhinah* Herself, symbolized by the Dwelling. See above, [note 257](#).

436. We return to the original subject... To the beginning of the list of items donated for the Dwelling: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen...* (Exodus 25:3-4). See above at [note 415](#).

Gold often symbolizes *Din* (Judgment), while *silver* symbolizes *Hesed*, so *silver* should precede *gold*. Why, then, does the verse read: *gold, silver...*? Rabbi El'azar explains that here the Torah is referring to "supernal gold," namely *Binah*. She is identified with the seventh and final type of gold, whose preciousness is reflected in the fact that when anyone discovers gold, he hides it away. From *Binah's* supernal gold issue the other six kinds of gold, symbolizing the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*.

Earlier (above at [note 415](#)), Rabbi El'azar had taught that the seven types of gold originate in *Gevurah*. Here he begins on a higher level, *Binah*. On the seven types of gold, see above, [note 415](#).

On the rich alchemical symbolism of this passage, see Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 32–36, who says that it “reads like a mystical meditation using alchemical terminology.”

437. When is the one called *gold* called *gold*?... *Binah* is called *gold* when She radiates joy. When Judgment dominates Her, then Her color of gold changes to lower colors, reflecting that Judgment.

The phrase “joyous awe” recalls the biblical directive: *Rejoice in trembling* (Psalms 2:11).

438. Silver—below, mystery of the right arm... *Silver* symbolizes the divine right arm, *Hesed*, which is situated beneath *Binah*, pictured here as *the head of gold*.

The goal, as in alchemy, is to transmute silver into gold, restoring *Hesed* to *Binah*, or restoring an aspect of one’s original form. See Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 35, n. 58.

“Turns into” renders אִתְּהַדָּר (*ithaddar*), “returns, turns into, becomes.” See *ibid.*, 34, n. 57. The verses in Daniel are from his interpretation and description of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word aptly spoken*.

439. And bronze—issuing from *gold*... *Bronze* issues from *Binah* and becomes *Gevurah*, or *Din*, the divine left arm. This quality manifests Judgment and—relative to *Hesed* or *Binah*—is deficient.

440. Blue—left thigh... *Blue* and *crimson* symbolize, respectively, the divine left and right thighs, *Hod* and *Netsah*.

441. וְשֵׁשׁ (Ve-shesh), And linen... Symbolizing *Yesod*, who conveys the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*. Rabbi El’azar associates וְשֵׁשׁ (*shesh*), *linen*, with the homonym *shesh*—Aramaic שֵׁשׁ (*shit*)—“six.” All six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod* are included in the latter, who is therefore called *shesh*.

“Similarly below” apparently refers to six corresponding aspects within *Shekhinah*. On *shesh* as *linen* and

“six,” see above, [notes 251, 421](#).

442. here are seven of Jubilee... *Binah*, symbolized by Jubilee, constitutes seven *sefirot* (Herself plus *Hesed* through *Yesod*), corresponding to the first seven donations for the Dwelling: *gold, silver, bronze, blue, purple, crimson, linen*. *Shekhinah*, symbolized by Sabbatical, constitutes seven corresponding qualities (Herself plus six angelic powers). These six powers and the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod* total twelve, but when *Binah* (“seventh,” “head”), is included, that makes thirteen.

There is a “head standing on the whole body below,” and also a “head standing on all limbs of the body.” “The whole body below” and “all limbs of the body” apparently refer, respectively, to the angelic body of *Shekhinah* and the sefirotic limbs from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. Or vice versa. The gold of the higher head is concealed and imperceptible to the eye, befitting *Binah*.

The term זָהָב סָגוּר (*zahav sagur*), *hidden* [or: *shut up, precious, pure*] *gold*, appears in 1 Kings 6:20–21; 7:49–50; 10:21; and in Chronicles. See Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 39 (46–47). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *OY*; *Vital*; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

443. Lower gold is more revealed, [277a] and its name... The gold of the lower head is more revealed, befitting *Shekhinah*. This gold is greenish, as was Queen Esther, who symbolizes *Shekhinah*. The greenish *etrog* (citron) also symbolizes Her.

Compared to the supernal gold of *Binah*, the gold of the lower head is revealed, but it too is basically concealed until it settles upon the head of Gabriel.

In Esther 2:7, Esther is called הַדַּסָּה (*Hadassah*), which means “myrtle.” In BT *Megillah* 13a, Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Korḥah explains this name: “Esther was greenish [like a myrtle leaf], but a thread of grace was drawn upon her.”

On Esther being greenish, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 184; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 129–30; idem,

Sheqel ha-Qodesh, 39 (46); TZ 21, 56b. On the *etrog* symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see *Bahir* 117-18 (172-75); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 524; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 36; Nahmanides on Leviticus 23:40; *Zohar* 1:220b (standard edition); 2:186b; 3:24a-b, 38a; and the works of Moses de León cited above. On Gabriel and gold, cf. above, [note 415](#).

This long passage (beginning with “and its name” and extending below to “Well, that state of prophecy,” on [p. 360](#) before [n. 483](#)) does not appear here in the printed editions or in most manuscripts. It does appear in the manuscript recorded in *OY*, and is printed in *ZH* 42c-43b and in *Zohar* 2:277a-278b (*Tosafot*).

[444.](#) **a purging cover...** כַּפֹּרֶת (*Kapporet*), whose precise meaning is unclear. This was a solid slab of pure gold, placed above the ark. At each end of this gold cover, a cherub was hammered out. The two cherubim faced each other, with their heads bent slightly downward and their fully outstretched wings turned upward, sheltering the rest of the *kapporet* and the ark beneath. The divine voice was thought to issue from the space above the *kapporet* and between the two cherubim. On Yom Kippur the *kapporet* was the focal point of the purgation rite.

See Sarna, *Exodus*, 161. On the meaning of *kapporet*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:1014. Fox (*Five Books of Moses*) renders it *purgationcover*.

[445.](#) **Throughout this entire portion...** In the commands for constructing the Dwelling (or Tabernacle), Moses is usually told *You shall make* (frequently in Exodus 25-30). However, regarding the ark and the ephod (a splendid apron worn by the high priest), Scripture reads: *They shall make*, referring to Israelite artisans. Rabbi Shim'on explains that the ark (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) is supposed to contain Moses (symbolizing *Tif'eret*), so others were instructed to prepare it fittingly for him.

On the wording *they shall make*, see BT *Yoma* 3b, 72b; *Tanḥuma, Vayaqhel* 8; *Shemot Rabbah* 34:2; Naḥmanides on Exodus 25:10.

446. As for the ephod... This apron was intended for Aaron, the high priest, not for Moses.

Moses, linked with King *Tif'eret*, assumes the royal role. His brother, Aaron, is the king's best man and intimate friend, who performs certain rituals and facilitates the union of Moses and *Shekhinah*. He must be dressed appropriately.

Elsewhere, Moses is described as “שׁוֹשְׁבִינָא (*shoshvina*), best man (or intimate friend), of the King,” while Aaron is “*shoshvina*, bridesman, of *Matronita* (*Shekhinah*).” See *Zohar* 2:49b; 3:20a (*RM*), 53b, 177b, 180b, 275b (*RM*). Cf. 3:124a, 176b.

447. Look at what is written... If Moses was not supposed to be involved in Aaron's service, then why is he told to *clothe* and *gird* Aaron, and to prepare and place a turban on his head? Rabbi Shim'on explains that despite the fact that only Aaron could perform certain rituals, Moses had to prepare and sanctify him; thus, Aaron's ritual could be performed “only through Moses,” only with his help.

The two verses read in full: *You shall take the garments and clothe Aaron in the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastpiece, and you shall gird him with the band of the ephod. You shall put the turban on his head and you shall set the holy diadem on the turban.*

448. In this portion is recorded the creation... The account of the Dwelling alludes to the creation of the world because the former is patterned on the latter. “Habitation above” refers to the heavenly Temple.

On the correspondence between the Dwelling and Creation, see above, [note 18](#). On the relation between the heavenly and earthly Temples, see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 2, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: “The Temple

below was directly facing the Temple above.” See above, [note 337](#).

449. In the beginning... The account of Creation alludes to the Dwelling, and to Metatron, the chief angel and Prince of the World, who emanates from *Shekhinah* and inhabits a heavenly Dwelling.

The final phrase may mean that Metatron raises *Shekhinah* (the holy offering) to *Tif'eret* above and participates in rituals in his own Dwelling.

See *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:12, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “When the blessed Holy One told Israel to erect the Dwelling, He hinted to the angels that they too should construct a Dwelling. When it was erected below, it was erected above; and that is the Dwelling of the Youth named Metatron, in which he offers up the souls of the righteous to atone for Israel in the days of their exile.”

See above, [note 337](#). On the opening verse of Genesis, see, e.g., *Zohar* 1:15a-16a. On the “purging cover,” see above, [note 444](#). On Metatron, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:626-31; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 377-81.

450. ברא שית (Bara shit), Created six... The word בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*, is split into two words: ברא שית (*bara shit*), “created six,” alluding to the six *sefirot* gestating within *Binah*. The cover may allude to a particular *sefirah* (*Yesod*, the sixth of the lower *sefirot*, or *Binah*, who contains all six) or more generally to the spreading emanation.

Within the cover is מטטרון (*Metatron*), whose name is sometimes spelled with a י (*yod*): מיטטרון (*Mitatron*). This alternate spelling apparently alludes to Metatron as an embodiment or manifestation of *Shekhinah*, while the shorter spelling alludes to the transformation of Enoch (who is “linked below”) into Metatron (as described in the following note.)

For various interpretations of this passage, see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*, as שית ברא (*bara shit*), “created six,” see *Seder Rabbah di-Vreshit*, 1

(*Battei Midrashot*, 1:19); *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 1:1, pp. 11-12; *Zohar* 1:3b, 15b, 39b (*Heikh*), 56a. Cf. BT *Sukkah* 49a.

On the significance of the alternative spellings מטטרון (*Metatron*) and מיטטרון (*Mitatron*), see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §§389. 959-60; *TZ*, intro, 15a; *TZ* 21, 44a, 61a; *ZH* 39d; Margalioṭ, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 88-89; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 380; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 261.

451. Through awe of walking in truth on earth... Metatron is identified with the biblical figure Enoch. According to Genesis 5:24, *Enoch walked with God, and he was no more, for God took him*. This enigmatic wording probably reflects a fuller narrative that was expurgated. In postbiblical literature the statement was understood as alluding to Enoch's miraculous ascension alive to heaven, where he learned God's mysteries and was transformed into the angel Metatron. His journey is recorded in the pseudepigraphical Enoch literature.

Here, Rabbi Shim'on describes how Enoch recovered Adam's radiance. Following Adam's sin, this radiance had escaped earth, but it remained unsettled and incomplete, lacking "perfection below," which is attainable only through human action. So the radiance descended and gradually permeated the Garden, awaiting the birth of Enoch.

On Enoch and his transformation into Metatron, see 3 Enoch 4:1-10; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 5:24; *Aggadot Bereshit*, intro, 38; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 5:24; *Tosafot*, *Yevamot* 16b, s.v. *pasuq zeh*; *Zohar* 1:37b, 56b, 223b; 2:179a (*SdT*s); 3:83b (*Piq*); *ZH* 69b (*ShS*); Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:156-64, nn. 58-61; Margalioṭ, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 89-90; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 378-79; Idel, "Ḥanokh hu Metatron." On Enoch recovering Adam's radiance, see *ZH* 69a-b (*ShS*); Idel, "Ḥanokh hu Metatron," 155-56.

452. Messengers, heavenly angels, came... Angels enlightened him and gave him a book. Once the radiance

was perfected within Enoch, it sought to manifest itself in heaven by transforming Enoch into Metatron.

On Enoch's book, see *Zohar* 1:13a, 37b, 58b, 72b; 2:55a, 100a, 103b, 105b, 180b, 192b, 217a; 3:10b, 236b, 240a, 248b, 253b; *ZH* 2c (SO); Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:158, 163, nn. 60, 61; Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 80–83.

453. Afterward the radiance clothed itself... Within Enoch's body to be revealed in heaven in the form of Metatron. This embarrassed all the angels who had opposed the creation of human beings, since here was a human so virtuous that he was transformed into the head angel.

Metatron is often described as נער (*na'ar*), "youth, lad, servant, deputy." Here, Rabbi Shim'on alludes to the identification of Enoch with Metatron by citing the statement from Proverbs: חנוך לנער (*Ḥanokh la-na'ar*), *Train the youth*, which is understood to mean that *Ḥanokh* (Enoch) was transformed *la-na'ar, into the youth*, Metatron. The chief angel is continually rejuvenated (by the radiance "constantly inside him") and he carries out divine missions throughout the worlds. In time of Judgment, he assuages divine wrath.

The statement that Enoch's book is "concealed among the Companions" alludes to kabbalistic knowledge of this book and Zoharic quotations from it. (See the references in the preceding note.) The *Zohar's* Book of Enoch, though influenced by the pseudepigraphical Enoch literature, is not identical with any of this literature's extant volumes.

On the angels' opposition to the creation of human beings, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:5–6; BT *Sanhedrin* 38b. "Antagonized" renders עבדו קטגוריא (*avadu qategorya*), "leveled an accusation (against)."

On Metatron as *na'ar*, "youth, lad, servant," see 3 Enoch 4:10; BT *Yevamot* 16b; Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563. The full verse in Genesis reads: *Enoch walked with God, and he was no more, for God took him.* The full verse in Proverbs reads:

Train a youth according to his way [or: in the way he should go]; even when he is old, he will not swerve from it.

454. This image extended... The image of Metatron extended in the spreading of the כפורת (*kapporet*), *purging cover*, forming images of the two cherubim, male and female youths in passionate embrace. Here and below, Rabbi Shim'on refers or alludes not only to the cherubim in the Dwelling and the Temple, but also to the angelic or sefirotic cherubim.

In the opening verse of Genesis, *In the beginning God created* alludes to the spread of the purging cover. The rest of the verse את השמים ואת הארץ (*et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets*), *heaven and earth*, alludes to the male and female cherubim, since *heaven* and *earth* symbolize male and female, and the word *et* amplifies the meaning to include the cherubim.

See above, [note 450](#). On the word *et*, see above, [note 429](#). On the angelic cherubim, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:590–91. OY interprets the cherubim as *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

On the passionate embrace of the cherubim, see BT *Yoma* 54a, in the name of Rabbi Katina: “When Israel ascended [to Jerusalem] for the Festival, the curtain would be rolled open for them and the cherubim revealed, their bodies intertwined. They [the people] would be addressed: ‘Look! God’s love for you resembles the love of male and female.’”

455. בראשית (Be-reshit), In the beginning... Alluding to *Hokhmah*, which afterward generates the supernal cover. This cover is inscribed with three marks signifying the triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, corresponding respectively to three divine names. From this sefirotic triad issue three lower *sefirot*, *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, totaling six children of *Binah*.

The word בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*, is split into two words: ברא שית (*barashit*), “created six.” See above, [note 450](#).

The identification of ראשית (*reshit*), *beginning*, with *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) appears widely. See Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:242–45, 266–69; *Targum Yerushalmi* (frag.), 1:1; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1; Vol. 1, p. 109, n. 12.

456. This cover spread to the south and west... Emanation unfolds to the south (symbolizing *Hesed*) and the west (symbolizing *Shekhinah*). Their union generates two cherubim, a male and a female.

Hesed is also symbolized by the priest, who receives his sacrificial portion first, or “at the head.” *Shekhinah* is identified with the daughter of Abraham, the patriarch who symbolizes *Hesed*.

The word בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*, consists of ך ראשית (*bat, rosh, yod*), “daughter, head, *yod*,” alluding to *Shekhinah* (the daughter), *Hesed* (the priestly head), and *yod* (symbolizing the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, origin of the cover). Apparently, the shape of the letter ה (*he*) alludes to the cover (the horizontal line at the top of the letter) and the two cherubim (the two vertical lines extending down).

On the priest’s receiving his portion first, see BT *Nedarim* 62a; *Zohar* 1:147a; 2:225a. Cf. M *Yoma* 1:2; *Zohar* 1:47b.

On Abraham’s daughter, see BT *Bava Batra* 16b; *Bahir* 52 (78); Nahmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:36a (Vol. 4, p. 164, n. 87), 37a, 85b, 95a.

457. The cover turns from west to north... Emanation moves from the west (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) to the north (symbolizing *Gevurah*), yielding a cherubic couple who do not face one another. Since *Gevurah* (or *Din*) is characterized by Judgment, the female cherub *Shekhinah* remains concealed and subdued below.

Rabbi Shim’on reimagines the word בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*, as a combination of ש ראשית (*bat esh*), “daughter of fire,” (namely *Shekhinah*, who derives from *Gevurah*, symbolized by fire); ך (*yod*), the origin of the cover; and ר (*resh*), whose shape is an extended version of ך (*yod*).

The closing line, “and it appears as one, not two...,” apparently refers to the shape of the ך (resh), whose top horizontal line represents the cover, and whose single vertical line represents the male cherub. His female partner is not represented by any line because she is hidden below.

458. ך (resh) is all one spread, above and below... Perhaps meaning that the shape of the letter alludes to *Gevurah* above and *Shekhinah* below. In the *Zohar* the name *Elohim* alludes variously to one of several rungs: *Binah*, *Gevurah*, or *Shekhinah*. For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

459. The cover turns from west to east... Stimulating the union of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by west) and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by east). Now, *Shekhinah*, known as בת (bat), “daughter,” is crowned and fulfilled, and fittingly the letters of בת (bat) are incorporated in the word בראשית (be-reshit), *in the beginning*, signifying Her union with the male ראש (rosh), “head,” which appears in the middle of בראשית (be-reshit). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

460. Corresponding to these three times... Corresponding to the three spreadings of the cover, Israel celebrates three annual pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem. On *Pesah* the cover turns to the south and west—directions symbolizing *Hesed* (Abraham’s *sefirah*) and *Shekhinah* (the daughter). The union now is imperfect because Ishmael issues from the residue of Abraham, accusing and threatening Israel. Consequently, on the intermediate and last days of *Pesah* the prayer of *Hallel* (consisting of Psalms 113–18) is recited in an abbreviated form (omitting the first parts of Psalm 115 and Psalm 116).

See above, [note 456](#). On the connection between the festivals and the cherubim, see BT *Yoma* 54a, quoted above in [note 454](#). On the complete and incomplete *Hallel*, see BT *Ta’anit* 28b; *Yalqut Shim’oni*, Proverbs 960; *Zohar* 2:182b;

3:95b; TZ 13, 28b. On Abraham and Ishmael, see above, [notes 425-26](#). Ishmael may also signify medieval Islam.

461. From the day of Rosh Hashanah... During and immediately following the Days of Awe (until the beginning of *Sukkot*), *Shekhinah* (symbolized by west) is under the sway of *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by north and Isaac. From the residue of Isaac issues Esau, who threatens Israel. The union then is imperfect, so *Hallel* is not recited at all.

See above, [note 457](#). Esau can also signify medieval Christianity.

462. On Sukkot this daughter ascends... Now that Judgment has passed (along with the Days of Awe), *Shekhinah* ascends and joins with *Gevurah* (symbolized by Isaac). To celebrate their union and the subsiding of wrath, *Hallel* is recited completely during the entire festival of *Sukkot*.

463. On Shavu'ot the cover turns to the east and west... These two directions symbolize *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who unite passionately on the festival of *Shavu'ot*, commemorating God's marrying Israel at Mount Sinai and giving them the Torah. *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* are symbolized, respectively, by Written Torah and Oral Torah, which on this day are united and *perfect*.

464. In these three times the cover turns... On *Pesah*, *Shavu'ot*, and from Rosh Hashanah through *Sukkot*, the cover turns in the direction(s) associated with each holiday. The cover spreads above, returning to its source in the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, and afterward spreads below. Angelic cherubim shelter the cover, whose hiddenness is indicated by the omission of the letter ו (vav) in the Masoretic spelling כפרת (*kapporet*), *purging cover*. However, when radiance comes from above, the cherubim beat their wings and lift them, rejoicing in song.

Similarly below, in the Tabernacle, the cherubim are affected by the turning of the cover. "Three and one" apparently refers to the three directions south, north, and east (symbolizing *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*) and the fourth

direction, west (symbolizing *Shekhinah*). Upon the cherub standing on the right settles a spirit from *Hesed* (symbolized by south and the right side). The cherub standing on the left receives a female spirit (symbolized by west and the left), and then the two cherubs embrace.

“Two and no more” alludes to a rabbinic teaching that the construction of more than two cherubim is tantamount to idolatry. See *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 10; Rashi on Exodus 20:20.

On the cherubim and the purging cover, see above, [note 444](#). On the cherubim singing, see *Zohar* 3:67a. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *OY; Sullam; MmD*.

[465.](#) Above, since cleaving to the cover is unnecessary... Perhaps meaning something like the following: In the Tabernacle, the cherubim are fashioned out of the gold slab of the purging cover, so they cleave to it and turn along with it. But in the divine realm, the *sefirot* do not need to cleave to the sefirotic cover, so how does the cover turn along with them? Rabbi Shim'on explains that through this cover the *sefirot* unite, so in effect they do cleave to it.

For various attempts at interpretation, see *OY; Sullam; MmD*. On the sefirotic cover, see above, [note 450](#).

[466.](#) Like the cherubim—those above—they stand miraculously... In their miraculous nature, the cherubim in the Tabernacle resembled those in heaven. They were not immobile figures, but rather moved their wings, lifting them above at certain times and then lowering them to shield the cover. The wording in Exodus demonstrates this: *spreading wings, sheltering with their wings*. Otherwise the verse would read *with wings* [permanently] *spread, with sheltering wings*.

On the miraculous posture of the cherubim, see BT *Bava Batra* 99a; *Zohar* 1:228b; 2:152b, 176a; 3:59a–b, 67a. On the wording *spreading wings, sheltering with their*

wings, see *Zohar* 3:59a; cf. 1:228b. The full verse in Exodus reads: *The cherubim shall be spreading wings above, sheltering the cover with their wings, and their faces toward each other; toward the cover the faces of the cherubim shall be.*

467. Wherever supernal spirit comes... A divine spirit actualizes each earthly creature.

468. This alone... Perhaps only creatures can be animated by this spirit, not golden figures like the cherubim. But the example of Aaron's staff proves that even an inanimate piece of wood can be infused with spirit, so certainly the cherubim, modeled on the heavenly cherubim, could come alive.

469. Whenever Israel were virtuous... Israel's virtue stimulates the love of the cherubim, but their corruption causes the cherubim to turn away from one another. How, though, did anyone know what was happening with the cherubim within the Holy of Holies, which was entered only by the high priest only once a year, on Yom Kippur? Sages have differed in explaining this, but there were actually three phenomena within the Temple ritual that indicated the posture of the cherubim, and whether Israel urgently needed to turn back to God and mend their ways.

According to BT *Bava Batra* 99a, in the time of the Temple "whenever Israel fulfilled the will of the Omnipresent," the cherubim in the Holy of Holies faced one another, and "whenever [Israel] did not," the cherubim miraculously turned away from each other toward the Temple courts. Here, the cherubim's love implies God's love for Israel, and their turning away from one another indicates the unrequited nature of that love.

See Rashbam, ad loc.; *Zohar* 2:152b, 176a; 3:59b; and the erotic description of the cherubim in BT *Yoma* 54a (quoted above, [note 454](#)).

The expression "pillars of the world have differed" recurs in *Zohar* 3:231a: "Here primordial pillars of the

world have differed.” It apparently derives from the rabbinic formulation: “Fathers of the world have differed.” See, e.g., *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:15: “Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai said, ‘I am amazed that the fathers of the world [referring to Hillel and Shammai] have differed on this matter [namely the question of whether heaven or earth was created first].’”

470. Smoke of the sacrifice... Israel’s virtue (or lack thereof) determined how the sacrificial smoke rose to heaven. When it ascended on a straight path, angled in whatever direction, this indicated that God was delighted by Israel’s behavior—and that the cherubim were embracing.

On the ascent of the sacrificial smoke, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 35: “Ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the Temple: ...The wind never prevailed over the column of smoke. When the column of smoke went forth from the altar of the ascent offering, it rose straight up like a staff until it reached the sky. When the column of incense went forth from the golden altar, it entered straight into the chamber of the Holy of Holies.”

See above, [note 66](#). On the smoke ascending in various directions, see BT *Yoma* 21b. The phrase “in a wreath of straps” renders בעִיטְרָא דְקוּלְפִין (*be-itra de-qulfin*), “in a crown of a thick sticks [or: clubs].” The Talmudic term *qulfa* has also been understood as “strap,” e.g., in BT *Ketubbot* 65a. See Rosenthal, “La-Millon ha-Talmudi,” 50–54. For other interpretations, see *Sullam; MmD*.

471. By sacrifice on the altar... Israel’s virtue (or lack thereof) determined whether the sacrifice was consumed by a majestic lion or a lowly dog. Thereby it became clear whether the cherubim were embracing or turning away from one another.

On the image of the lion, see BT *Yoma* 21b: “Five things were reported about the fire of the pile of wood on the Temple altar: it crouched like a lion, it was as clear as

sunlight, its flame was of substance, it devoured wet wood like dry wood, and it caused no smoke to rise.”

On the lion and the dog, see *Zohar* 1:6b; 3:17a, 32b, 211a, 235a, 240a, 241a; Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 90.

472. The priest blessing the people... Israel's virtue (or lack thereof) determined how the priest's hands rose when he prepared to bless them. This was the third sign indicating the posture of the cherubim.

The ten fingers of a human's hands symbolize the ten *sefirot*. On the symbolism of the fingers, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:3; *Midrash Tadshe* 10 (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 3:174); *Bahir* 87 (124), 94 (138); Nahmanides on Exodus 17:12; 30:19; *Zohar* 1:20b-21a; 2:57a, 67a, 75b-77a, 208a; 3:143a (*IR*), 145a (*Piq*), 186a-b, 195b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 254; Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, 57; idem, *Otsar ha-Kavod*, 29b-c.

“The cherubim of this world” refers to the cherubim in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The cherubim “above” are the angelic cherubim beneath *Shekhinah*.

473. Moses' hands grew heavy... Soon after crossing the Red Sea, Israel challenged God by asking *Is YHVH among us or not?* Consequently, they were attacked by the Amalekites (as recorded in the very next verse). Moses directed Joshua to select warriors to battle Amalek, and according to Exodus 17:11, *when Moses would raise his hand, Israel prevailed; when he would let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.* However, Israel's unworthiness made Moses' hands heavy, so he could not keep them raised. As a remedy, *they took a stone and placed it beneath him and he sat upon it, while Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one from this side and one from that side, and his hands were steadfast till the sun came down* (ibid., 12).

Moses' sitting on a stone (rather than on a comfortable cushion) is interpreted here as sharing in Israel's distress

and accepting the punishment of suffering to atone for the people's lack of faith.

"Similarly, the tablets of stone" means that at Mount Sinai, Moses' hands were weakened by Israel's sinful worship of the Golden Calf; consequently he dropped the two tablets of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments, which grew too heavy for him. The weakness or strength of Moses' hands resembles the case of the priest blessing the people.

On the link between Israel's challenging question and the attack of Amalek, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 25:18; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 3:9; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 44; *Tanḥuma*, *Huqqat* 18; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 16; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:20; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 12-13; *Shemot Rabbah* 26:2; *Zohar* 2:64b-65a.

On Moses sharing Israel's distress by sitting on the stone, see *Mekhilta*, *Amaleq* (*Beshallah*) 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 17:12; BT *Ta'anit* 11a; *Tanḥuma*, *Beshallah* 27; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 12; *Zohar* 2:66a.

On the tablets of stone growing too heavy for Moses, see JT *Ta'anit* 4:6, 68c; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 45; *Tanḥuma*, *Ki Tissa* 26, 30; *Zohar* 2:195a-b.

Exodus 17:7 reads in full: *He called the name of the place Massah and Meribah ["Testing and Quarreling"], for the quarrel of the Children of Israel, and for their testing YHVH, saying, "Is YHVH among us or not?"*

474. By these mysteries, they knew... By the sacrificial smoke, the image consuming the sacrifice on the altar, and the raising of the priest's hands.

475. כרובים (Keruvim), Cherubim—רביין (ravyan), children... This fanciful etymology derives from BT *Sukkah* 5b: "What is כרוב (keruv), cherub? Rabbi Abbahu said, 'רביא (Ke-ravya), Like a child, for in Babylon they call a child רביא (ravya).'"

Just as Metatron (the Youth) is continually renewed in the renewal of the moon (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), so are the

cherubim. Their youthfulness is linked with his. *Shekhinah* is described as *a wife* [or: *woman*] of נעורים (*ne'urim*), *youth*, because She stands above the two youthful cherubim.

On the childlike cherubim, see *Zohar* 1:1b, 18b, 172a, 228b; 2:176a; 3:60b, 217b, 274a; ZH 86a (*MhN, Rut*). The plump childlike angels of Christian art conceivably derive from the Talmudic tradition but more likely from the Greco-Roman *Erotes*, “loves,” winged boys in the company of Aphrodite.

The verse from Hosea is related to Metatron (*a youth*) in *Zohar* 1:223b; 3:277a (*RM*). On Metatron as Youth, see above, [note 453](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

476. Cherubim—large face and small face... The male and female cherubim correspond to the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who manifest respectively a large face and a small face. *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) is renewed by the hidden large face of *Tif'eret*. The small face of *Shekhinah* is linked with the כפורת (*kapporet*), *purging cover*, below, and with *Tif'eret* above. Alternatively, “large face and small face” alludes to the sefirotic cherubim and the cherubim below.

In the verse from Genesis, *heaven and earth* refer respectively to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* above, while the two occurrences of את (*et*) allude to the two cherubim below. On *et*, see above, [notes 429, 454](#). For various interpretations of “large face and small face,” see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. Cf. BT *Sukkah* 5b.

477. joy of two כרובים (*keruvim*), cherubim... Their childlike joy is infectious. Even when Metatron (or *Shekhinah*) comes to execute Judgment upon the world, as he settles on the cherubim he turns youthful and joyous, and the world is bathed in Compassion.

On כרובים (*keruvim*), “cherubim,” and רבין (*ravyan*), “children,” see above, [note 475](#). On Metatron as a youth, see above, [note 453](#). For various opinions on the identity of

“the one settling upon them,” see *OY*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

478. Whoever is angry... This principle applies on earth and also above. When Metatron, coming to punish the world, settles upon the childlike cherubim, his anger subsides and he is renewed as a joyous youth.

No love compares to that for a child. The verse in Hosea may mean that God responded in love when Metatron was renewed as a youth. See above at [note 475](#). For another interpretation, see *OY*; *MmD*.

479. Joshua son of Nun, a youth... Joshua attended Moses in his tent and there he encountered *Shekhinah*. This tent (or Dwelling of Moses) is to be distinguished from the Dwelling (or Tabernacle), described below.

According to BT *Bava Batra* 75a, “The face of Moses was like that of the sun, the face of Joshua like that of the moon.” The moon symbolizes *Shekhinah*, whom Joshua (a youth) served, just as Metatron (the Youth) serves Her.

On the association between Joshua and Metatron, see *Zohar* 2:65b. The verse in Exodus 33 reads: *His attendant Joshua son of Nun, נַעַר (na'ar), a youth [or: lad, servant], would not depart from within the Tent.*

480. Once the Dwelling was constructed... Once the Tabernacle was built, the childlike cherubim fulfilled the role previously played by the Joshua, a youth, in Moses' tent. As soon as *Shekhinah* settled upon them, Judgment dissipated and youthful joyous love prevailed. Similarly, when the people of Israel act virtuously on earth, they stimulate the love of the cherubim and of the divine couple, and Judgment is eliminated.

On *Shekhinah* (or Her emanation, Metatron) settling on the cherubim, see above at [note 477](#). On Israel's effect on the cherubim, see BT *Bava Batra* 99a, where it is taught that in the time of the Temple “whenever Israel fulfilled the will of the Omnipresent,” the cherubim in the Holy of Holies faced one another, and “whenever [Israel] did not,”

the cherubim miraculously turned away from each other toward the Temple courts.

See above, [note 469](#), and the erotic description of the cherubim in BT *Yoma* 54a (above, [note 454](#)).

[481.](#) **Samuel...** The verse in Psalms lists Samuel along with Moses and Aaron: *Moses and Aaron among His priests, Samuel among those who call on His name*. Based on the parallelism between *Moses and Aaron* in the first phrase and *Samuel* in the second, Rabbi Yoḥanan taught that Samuel was equivalent to both of them. But how, then, can Samuel be described as a mere *youth*? Many rungs separate *youth* (which alludes to Metatron) from Moses and Aaron, who attained sefirotic rungs.

Rabbi Yoḥanan's statement appears in BT *Berakhot* 31b. See *Zohar* 1:21b; 3:19b.

[482.](#) **Rather, this verse is as follows...** The first part of the verse in Psalms implies that Moses was the greatest prophet and Aaron the greatest priest. On Aaron as prophet, see Exodus 7:1.

[483.](#) **But Zechariah was priest and prophet...** According to Chronicles, Zechariah the priest was inspired to admonish the people in the courtyard of the Temple and was then stoned to death by order of King Joash. Thus he was both priest and prophet. However, Rabbi Shim'on explains, his prophecy was only temporary: he had never prophesied before and now *the spirit of God* came upon him suddenly, after which he was killed.

The verse in Chronicles reads: *The spirit of God clothed Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest...* (2 Chronicles 24:20). On Zechariah as priest and prophet, see *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 6:3, 112a; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:51, both quoting Lamentations 2:20: *Priest and prophet are slain in the sanctuary of the Lord*. This Zechariah should not be confused with the prophet Zechariah (whose book appears in the Minor Prophets), although this confusion occurs in several rabbinic sources.

484. But what about Jeremiah... Who was a priest (see below) and was destined for prophecy from conception.

The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you; before you came out of the womb, I consecrated you; a prophet to the nations I appointed you.*

485. Moses... Samuel... In addition to being the greatest prophet, Moses briefly fulfilled priestly functions during the installation of Aaron and his sons (Leviticus 8). The prophet Samuel also played a priestly role. According to 1 Samuel 2:18, *Samuel was serving in the presence of YHVH, a youth girded in a linen ephod* [a priestly garment]. See 1 Samuel 3:1: *The youth Samuel was serving YHVH in Eli's presence.* In 1 Samuel 7:9, he offers a sacrifice.

On Moses and Samuel, see Jeremiah 15:1; *Midrash Shemu'el* 9:5; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:3; 25:6 (Buber's n. 24). Traditionally, Samuel is seen as a Levite, like Moses. See JT *Megillah* 1:10, 72c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:9.

The context in 1 Samuel 12 (17-18) reads: *Is it not wheat harvest today? I shall call upon YHVH and He will send thunder and rain.... Samuel called unto YHVH, and YHVH sent thunder and rain on that day, and the people stood in great awe of YHVH and Samuel.*

486. There are three... Only three individuals served as both prophet and priest. One might claim that Samuel did not continue as priest, and the third individual is Jeremiah, who is described as *of the priests*. But even though Jeremiah belonged to the priestly clan, he never served as a priest, whereas Samuel did in his youth. Moses also served once as priest: during the installation of Aaron and his sons (Leviticus 8).

See BT *Zevahim* 102a: "Moses served as priest only for the seven days of installation." The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, of the priests in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.*

487. Samuel attained youth... He attained the rung of Metatron the Youth and thereby resembled Moses and Aaron, although they ascended higher. From the rung of Metatron, one can climb further.

On Samuel and Metatron, see *Zohar* 2:164a. The verse reads: *The youth Samuel was serving YHVH in Eli's presence.*

488. Cherubim are gold... Rabbi Shim'on now returns to the theme of the Dwelling. The golden cherubim derive from sefirotic gold (*Binah* or *Gevurah*) and are not influenced by the silver of *Hesed*. Greenish gold alludes to *Shekhinah*, who rests upon them.

On sefirotic gold, see above, [notes 415](#), [436](#). On greenish gold, see above, [note 443](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

489. gold and silver intermingle... Left and right combine, mediated by bronze, which symbolizes *Tif'eret*. "All sides" apparently includes the lower left and right, namely *Hod* and *Netsah*.

On bronze symbolizing *Tif'eret*, see above, [notes 243](#), [398](#). Cf. [notes 417](#), [439](#). The full verse in Exodus reads: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze.*

490. Alternatively, gold, silver... The qualities of left and right are not mediated by bronze but rather turn into one another and combine. "Joy within Judgment" apparently alludes to *Binah*, which is the source of both joy and Judgment, and is symbolized by *gold*. Compassion is manifested in *Hesed*, symbolized by *silver*. Severe Judgment appears in *Din*, symbolized by *bronze*.

On *bronze* symbolizing *Din* (also known as *Gevurah*), see above, [note 439](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

491. Moses contemplated the making of the serpent... On one of the occasions when the Israelites complained to God, He sent הַנְּחָשִׁים הַשְּׂרָפִים (*ha-nehashim ha-serafim*), *the fiery serpents*, against them, and many of the

people died. After Moses prayed to God, he was instructed: *Make you שרף (saraf), a fiery one, and set it on a standard, and so then, whoever is bitten will see it and live* (Numbers 21:8). The following verse reads: *Moses made נחש נחשת (naḥash neḥoshet), a serpent of bronze, and set it on a standard.* Rabbi Shim'on wonders why Moses made a *serpent of bronze* (rather than a *fiery one*, conceived here as distinct from a *serpent*). He explains that Moses understood that the essence of the *fiery one* was the demonic נחש (naḥash), *serpent*, which derives from *Gevurah*, symbolized by נחשת (neḥoshet), *bronze*. *Gevurah* is also symbolized by gold, and the dross of gold represents the demonic serpent, a residue of the refining process of emanation. By making a *serpent of bronze*, Moses indicated that the *fiery one* derived from the *serpent*, and the latter from *Gevurah*.

Israel had sinned with their tongue by speaking against God and Moses, so they were fittingly punished by the serpent, who had slandered God in the Garden of Eden when he spoke enticingly to Eve.

Moses set the serpent on הניס (ha-nes), a *standard*, which Rabbi Shim'on understands as “a sign” above, indicating the divine source, *Gevurah*.

On Moses deciding to make a *serpent of bronze*, see JT *Rosh Hashanah* 3:8, 59a; and *Bereshit Rabbah* 31:8, which mentions the similarity in sound between *naḥash* (*serpent*) and *neḥoshet* (*bronze*).

On dross of gold and its kabbalistic and alchemical symbolism, see Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 38–40. On the serpent's slander, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:4; 20:1–2; *Devarim Rabbah* 5:10; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 19; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 45; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:22; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:9; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:12. Cf. *Zohar* 2:265a.

Numbers 21:5 reads in full: *The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread and*

there is no water, and our throat [or: very self] loathes the wretched bread." Numbers 21:9 reads in full: *Moses made a serpent of bronze and set it on a standard, and so then, if a serpent bit a man, he would look upon the serpent of bronze and live.*

492. Everywhere this serpent follows... The demonic serpent seeks to draw power from *Shekhinah*, *woman of valor*. Lilith, the female demon and *woman of whoredom*, tries vainly to imitate Her. *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the second ה (he) of the name יהוה (YHVH), which seems similar to Lilith's letter, ק (qof), but the latter is a poor imitation, like קופא (qofa), an ape, compared with humans.

On the serpent following the female, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 98:14: "The serpent is found among women."

The phrase *woman of valor* derives from Proverbs 31:10. *Woman of whoredom* derives from Hosea 1:2. On the two of them, see *Zohar* 1:38b (*Heikh*); 2:245a (*Heikh*).

The comparison of ape to human appears in rabbinic sources. See BT *Bava Batra* 58a, in the name of Rabbi Bana'ah: "Compared with Sarah, all others are like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Eve, Sarah was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with Adam, Eve was like an ape compared with a human. Compared with *Shekhinah*, Adam was like an ape compared with a human."

See *Zohar* 3:189a, 192a, 251b-252a; ZH 8c. On the letter qof, see also below, [notes 561](#), [803](#).

In Christian literature and art, the devil sometimes appears as an ape, and he is occasionally called *simia Dei*, "the ape of God." See Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature*, 120-29; Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, 13-22, 25-26, n. 39; Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 10:65.

In several medieval German dramas, Lilith imitates the Virgin Mary. See Rudwin, *Der Teufel in den deutschen geistlichen Spielen*, 141; Wright, *Medieval German Drama*, 163, n. 16. On Lilith, see above, [p. 13](#), [nn. 37-38](#).

493. Moses fashioned that *serpent*... In a way that indicated its origin in *Gevurah*, symbolized by bronze. This serpent caused Adam to sin, and consequently be expelled from the Garden, which resembled the heavenly Garden.

494. That light was treasured away... As described in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon in *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7: “With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, one could gaze and see from one end of the universe to the other. When the Holy One foresaw the corruption of the generation of Enosh and the generation of the Flood, He hid it away from them, as is written: *The light of the wicked is withheld* (Job 38:15). Where did He hide it? In the Garden of Eden: *Light is sown for the righteous, joy for the upright in heart* (Psalms 97:11).”

Here, Rabbi Yose points out that in the verse from Psalms the word *righteous* is unspecified, implying every righteous person, each of whom will be enlightened in the world that is coming.

On the hidden light, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:6; 41:3; BT *Hagigah* 12a; *Shemot Rabbah* 35:1; *Tanḥuma, Shemini*, 9; *Bahir* 97-98 (147); *Zohar* 1:7a, 31b-32a, 45b-46a, 47a, 59a, 121b (*MhN*), 131a, 203b; 2:35a, 78b, 127b, 147b, 166b-167a, 220a-b; 3:88a, 173b; *ZH* 85a-b (*MhN, Rut*). On the phrase “*the righteous*... unspecified,” cf. *Zohar* 1:245b.

495. If it were completely hidden... The primordial light animates the world, so it cannot be entirely hidden. Rather, it is sown away and daily emanates enough to sustain all life. Anyone studying Torah at night receives an additional ray.

On the continual and vital role of the primordial light, see *Zohar* 2:166b-167a. On the consequences of nighttime Torah study, see BT *Hagigah* 12b, in the name of Resh Lakish: “To one who engages in Torah by night, the blessed Holy One extends a thread of love by day, as is said: *By day YHVH ordains His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song*

is with me.” His song is the song of Torah. For Rabbi Yehudah, *His love* may suggest *Hesed*, often identified with the primordial light. See below at [note 782](#).

On engaging in Torah at night, see *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 13; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Talmud Torah* 3:13; *Zohar* 1:82b, 92a, 194b, 178b, 194b, 207b; 2:18b (*MhN*), 46a; 3:36a, 44b-45a, 65a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54. On the kabbalistic ritual of studying Torah at midnight, see above, [note 74](#).

On the connection between Torah and the hidden light, see *Bahir* 97-99 (147-49); *Zohar* 1:47a; 2:166b-167a; and the teaching attributed to the Ba’al Shem Tov (in *Shivhei ha-Besht*, ed. Mintz, 79): “With the light of the six days of Creation, one could see from one end of the world to the other. Where did the blessed Holy One hide it? He hid it in the Torah. And when it says [that God hid the light for] ‘the righteous,’ this means for the righteous who will one day come into the world [and not only as their reward in the afterlife]. Whoever is worthy of finding the hidden light in the Torah can gaze with it from one end of the world to the other.”

The name Rabbi Yehudah recalls Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon, the author of the midrashic teaching on the hidden light, quoted in the preceding note. For other remarks on the hidden light by Rabbi Yehudah, see *Zohar* 1:121b (*MhN*); 3:88a.

[496](#). **On the day when the Dwelling was made...** Moses could not enter the Tent because the primordial light appeared there in a *cloud*, in celebration of the wedding of *Shekhinah*.

Since the very first day, this light has never been fully revealed, but it performs the vital function of renewal, as echoed in the morning liturgy: “Lord of wonders, who renews in His goodness every day continually the act of Creation.”

On the wedding of *Shekhinah* (to Moses), see above, [note 284](#). On the creative and recreative power of the primordial light, see *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 3; *Zohar* 2:166b-167a, 220b; *ZH* 85a-b (*MhN, Rut*); Recanati on Genesis 2:3, 8c; Urbach, *The Sages*, 1:209-10. See Shim'on Lavi, *Ketem Paz*, 1:124c: "With the appearance of the light, the universe expanded. With its concealment, all things that exist were created according to their species.... This is the secret of the act of Creation. One who understands will understand."

The full verse in Exodus reads: *Moses could not come into the Tent of Meeting, for the cloud had settled upon it and the glory of YHVH filled the Dwelling.*

[497. Blue](#) The context in Exodus (25:38) reads: *This is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and crimson, linen and goat hair.... Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them.* The terms *blue, purple, and crimson* refer to dyed yarns.

[498. the making of the Dwelling corresponds...](#) Its structure corresponds to that of the cosmos. However, the Companions have revealed so little of this correspondence that no one can get a satisfying meaningful taste.

On the correspondence between the Dwelling and the heavenly realms (and all of Creation), see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 2; above, [note 18](#).

[499. take them up to the Holy Lamp...](#) To Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai, who prepares delicious teachings with secret ingredients deriving from the highest source, *Keter* (who is known as the Holy Ancient One). These servings are so fine that no one can improve them with seasoning, and so plentiful that some remains to be relished later.

On *בוצינא קדישא* (*Botsina Qaddisha*), "the Holy Lamp," as the title of Rabbi Shim'on, see above, [p. 159](#), [n. 58](#).

For the culinary metaphor, see *Zohar* 2:29a, 217b. Cf. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah*

4:13; *Zohar* 1:255b (*Hash*); *ZH* 37c; the parable in 2:176a-b; Vol.1, p. xxv.

The term the Holy Ancient One derives from *the Ancient of Days* (Daniel 7:9). In BT *Pesahim* 119a, secrets of Torah are referred to as “things hidden by the Ancient of Days.” See the rabbinic blessing in BT *Berakhot* 17a: “May your steps run to hear words of the Ancient of Days!” See above, [note 334](#).

The context in Kings describes a miracle performed by the prophet Elisha, who feeds a multitude with twenty loaves of barley bread and some fresh grain.

[500.](#) ***And YHVH gave Solomon wisdom...*** The apparently superfluous *and* implies that the divine court concurred with *YHVH* in granting wisdom to King Solomon.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 51:2, in the name of Rabbi El’azar: “Wherever it is said *And YHVH*, this implies: He and His court of judgment.” In Kabbalah this court symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who derives from *Din* (Judgment) and pronounces the divine decree, so the phrase *And YHVH* encompasses “He [the divine male, known as *YHVH*] and His court [*Shekhinah*].”

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:2; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:9; *Tanḥuma, Va’era* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va’era* 21; *Shemot Rabbah* 12:4; Rashi on Exodus 12:29; *Zohar* 1:15b, 64b, 105a, 107b, 159b, 192b, 198a, 240a; 2:37b, 46a, 227b; 3:149a. The hermeneutical significance of *and* was championed by Rabbi Akiva. See BT *Yevamot* 68b, *Sanhedrin* 51b.

Hiram was king of the two leading Phoenician city-states, Tyre and Sidon.

[501.](#) ***As He had promised him...*** According to 1 Kings 3, when God told Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted, Solomon requested understanding and discernment. God responded by promising him not only this, but also wealth and glory.

[502.](#) ***There was peace between Hiram and Solomon...*** The two rulers shared secrets and riddles, and

respected each other's intellect. "Hiram acknowledged all that Solomon said" apparently refers to the tradition that Solomon cured Hiram of the latter's extreme pride and self-deification.

See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8:5:3; *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:5; BT *Bava Batra* 75a; *Zohar* 3:61a; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:288, n. 36.

503. King Solomon reflected... He realized that God did not want him to reveal the essence of wisdom. Consequently, although he made the Torah more accessible with his wise sayings, parables, and poetry—opening doorways to its wisdom—these openings can be penetrated only by the wise. And even they stammer in the secrets, unable to convey what they strive to comprehend.

On the perfection of Solomon's generation, cf. *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: "When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full." See above, [note 336](#).

On Solomon making the Torah accessible (and providing it with "handles"), see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 8:1 (on 1:1).

504. this generation, in which Rabbi Shim'on dwells... On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on and his generation, see above, [note 410](#).

505. Happy is the person to whom such things happen... Referring either to Rabbi Shim'on or to himself for having seen such wonder.

506. What is written of Moses?... The column of cloud, signifying God's presence, stood at the door of Moses' tent and was witnessed by the Israelites. This was fitting for the greatest prophet and for his generation, who had witnessed God's revelation and miracles. In the current generation, the merit of Rabbi Shim'on stimulates miracles, such as the appearance of the column of cloud seen by Rabbi Yitshak.

On the relationship between Rabbi Shim'on and Moses, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 11-42.

According to rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shim'on together with his son, Rabbi El'azar, hid from the Roman authorities for thirteen years in a cave, where they were miraculously sustained. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 79:6; Vol. 4, p. 66, n. 291. On Rabbi Shim'on's being experienced in miracles, see BT *Me'ilah* 17b. For other miracles happening to him, see *Zohar* 3:64a, 107a, 201b.

507. Blue... was needed for the making of the Dwelling... The blue yarn woven into the Dwelling symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who abides there.

The essential ingredient of the dye תכלת (*tekhelet*), *blue* (or *bluish purple, violet*), is extracted from the glands of the חלזון (*hillazon*), the *Murex trunculus* snail, found off the Mediterranean coast. Here, Rabbi Yitshak transfers this small water creature to the Sea of Galilee (or Ginnosar), which he locates in the tribal territory of Zebulun.

According to Jacob's blessing of Zebulun, *Zebulun by the shore of seas will dwell, and he by a haven of ships, his flank upon Sidon* (Genesis 49:13), which conveys the tribe's territorial location along the Mediterranean. A midrashic tradition (*Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:17) understands *by the shore of seas* as referring to two seas, apparently the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee, suggesting that Zebulun's territory included a strip of land extending eastward to the latter body of water. Josephus similarly states (*Antiquities of the Jews* 5:1:22) that Zebulun's territory "included the land that lay as far as the Lake of Ginnosar and that which belonged to Carmel and the [Mediterranean] Sea."

However, according to various sources, the Sea of Galilee was in the territory of the tribe of Naphtali. See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 355; *Bereshit Rabbah* 98(99):17; BT *Bava Qamma* 81b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 18; David Luria's long discussion ad loc., n. 45; Emden, *Zoharei Ya'bets*, on *Zohar* 2:48b. According to Joshua 19:10-16, the

territory of Zebulun was landlocked, bordering on neither the Mediterranean nor the Sea of Galilee.

On *Shekhinah* and *tekhelet*, see above, [note 166](#). As indicated in Numbers 15:38, the dye *tekhelet* was traditionally used to color one thread of the tzitzit (as it is now again).

On the *hillazon*, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 354; BT *Shabbat* 26a, *Megillah* 6a; Emden, *Zoharei Ya'bets*, on *Zohar* 2:48b. For the linking of Zebulun, Sea of Galilee, and *hillazon*, see *Zohar* 2:48b; cf. 3:150a, 151a, 175b. For the context of the verse in Exodus, see above, [note 497](#).

508. Let there be a firmament... The second day of Creation symbolizes the second of the seven lower *sefirot*, *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), on the left. The quality of Judgment conflicts with *Hesed*, and this division is reflected by the creation of a *firmament* on the second day, dividing the upper waters from the lower waters. Hell, an extreme manifestation of harsh Judgment, also emerges on the second day; it is pictured as the dross of the fiery left side.

The color תכלת (*tekhelet*), “blue” (or “bluish purple, violet”), associated with *Shekhinah*, emerged on the second day, the day of Judgment, the quality from which *Shekhinah* derives. Here, blue is identified with another symbol of *Shekhinah*, the Throne of Judgment. See *Sifrei*, Numbers 115, in the name of Rabbi Me’ir: “Whoever fulfills the commandment of [wearing] the tzitzit is as though he greeted the face of *Shekhinah*, for the *tekhelet* [the color of the thread on the garment’s tassel] resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory.” See BT *Sotah* 17a; above, [notes 166, 245](#).

On the symbolic significance of the *firmament*, see *Zohar* 1:17a-18a, 33a, 46a. On the creation of Hell, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:6; BT *Pesahim* 54a; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 4; *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:25); *Zohar* 1:17a, 33a, 46a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 374; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 41 (49).

509. This day took water... Water symbolizes *Hesed*, on the right side, pictured as the first day of Creation; but this water was not revealed until the second day. This switch indicates the interplay between the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*.

510. The light of the first day... *Hesed* (identified with the first day) is symbolized by water, and *Gevurah* (identified with the second day) is symbolized by fire. Yet, on the first day light (linked with fire) was created, and on the second day water figures prominently. These switches imply peaceful cooperation between right and left, *Hesed* and *Gevurah*.

The phrase “all six lights” means all six *sefirot* from *Hesed* to *Yesod*.

511. The third day... Symbolizing *Tif'eret* (also known as Compassion), who balances and harmonizes the polar opposites *Hesed* (Love) and *Din* (Judgment). His color purple, which appeared in the Dwelling, is appropriately a blend.

In the account of Creation, the statement *God saw that it was good* (or a variant) is included in the description of each of the six days except for the second—the day on which the waters were divided and Hell was created. On the third day this statement appears twice, emphasizing the goodness of reconciliation between right and left.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:6: “Why is *that it was good* not written concerning the second day? Rabbi Yoḥanan said..., ‘Because on that day Hell was created...’ Rabbi Ḥanina said, ‘Because on that day conflict was created: *and let it divide water from water* (Genesis 1:6).’... Rabbi Shemu’el son of Naḥman said, ‘Because the work of the water was not completed. Therefore *that it was good* is written twice on the third day: once for the work of the water [see Genesis 1:9-10] and once for the work of the [third] day [ibid., 11-12].”

See BT *Pesaḥim* 54a; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 506; *Zohar* 1:18a, 33a, 46a; Moses de León,

Sheqel ha-Qodesh, 41 (49).

On purple, see above, [note 167](#), and the biblical context in [note 497](#).

512. This blue on the second day... Blue symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who derives from *Din*, symbolized by the second day. This color was tinged with red (symbolizing *Din*) and black (symbolizing the Other Side). *Din* is also symbolized by fire and gold, and is known by the name *Elohim*. “All is one color” apparently means that the gold of *Din* is a fiery red.

When the red of *Din* descends, it plunges into the sea of *Shekhinah* and its harsh Judgment is softened; thus red turns to blue, signifying the milder Judgment of *Shekhinah*, who shares *Din*'s name: *Elohim*.

513. Black... from the smelting of red... The black of the Other Side represents the dross, or refuse, of the red of *Din*, after the holy aspect of red has turned into the blue of *Shekhinah*.

The expression *other gods* appears frequently, most famously in the second of the Ten Commandments: *You shall have no other gods beside Me* (Exodus 20:3). Here it refers to the Other Side.

See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:489. On the symbolism of smelting and dross, see Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 38–40. On the relation between red and black, cf. BT *Hullin* 47b.

514. This black is so dark... This demonic color is so dark that it is invisible. Its darkness is identified with death, which “darkens the faces of creatures.”

See *Shemot Rabbah* 2:2: *And darkness over the face of the deep*—this is death, which darkens the faces of creatures.” See *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 4.

The Holy Lamp is Rabbi Shim'on; see above, [p. 159](#), [n. 58](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot be still, whose waters chum up mire and mud*. The full verse in Genesis reads: *The earth was waste and empty, and darkness over the face of the*

deep, and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters.

515. This is red and black... Signifying *Din* and the Other Side. On the lack of the clause *that it was good*, see above, [note 511](#).

516. But it is written: “Look, it was very good—this is the Angel of Death... Based on *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:10 (per Oxford MS 147, Paris MS 149, and *Yalqut Shim’oni*), in the name of Rabbi Shemu’el son of Rav Yitshak: “*Look, it was good—this is the Angel of Life; very—this is the Angel of Death.*”

According to this midrashic teaching, the Angel of Death is *very good* because he kills those who fail to accumulate good deeds. But if the Angel of Death is *very good*, then why is the clause *that it was good* missing on the second day—the day of *Din* on the left side, from which Hell and this angel both derive? See above, [note 511](#).

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, see *Zohar* 1:14a, 47a, 144b; 2:68b, 103a, 163a, 249a (*Heikh*), 264b (*Heikh*). Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:5. The verse in Genesis reads: *God saw all that He had made, and look, it was very good.*

517. surely the Angel of Death is very good... Because the awareness of mortality stimulates people to return to God.

518. Look, it was good—this is the Angel of Life... Rabbi Shim’on gradually offers a different explanation for why the Angel of Death is *very good*.

See above, [note 516](#). On Adam as king, see *Zohar* 2:208a; *ZH* 17d (*MhN*); and Genesis 1:28: *God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and conquer it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and every living creature that crawls upon the earth.”*

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: Besides, *see, this I have found, that God made the human being upright, but they have sought many schemes.*

519. The Garden of Eden... This earthly garden was planted with the complete name: *YHVH Elohim*, as indicated by the verse in Genesis. It corresponds to the heavenly Garden of Eden, and contains all the primordial forms of what exists in the world, including the dazzling form of the cherubim.

On the earthly and heavenly Gardens of Eden, see Naḥmanides on Genesis 3:22; idem, *Kitvei Ramban*, 2:295-99; *Zohar* 1:7a, 38b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 106b (*MhN*), 224b; 2:209b-210b, 211b-212a, 231b; 3:13a, 53a, 70b; *ZḤ* 18b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 350-51; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 27 (32), 59-62 (73-76); idem, *Seder Gan Eden*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:591-94, 749-51. Cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 1:4.

On *YHVH Elohim* as the “complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; cf. 12:15. On the cherubim, see above, [note 444](#). On the cherubim and the Garden of Eden, see Genesis 3:24.

520. This place is the abode of holy spirits... Before entering a human body, each soul exists in the Garden of Eden, where it is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body it will inhabit on earth. As the soul leaves the Garden, it removes the ethereal body and prepares to put on an earthly body. Eventually, when the soul returns to the Garden upon death, it regains the ethereal body.

On the ethereal body, see Naḥmanides on Genesis 49:33; *Zohar* 1:7a, 38b (*Heikh*), 81a (*ST*), 90b-91a, 115b (*MhN*), 131a, 217b, 219a, 220a, 224a-b, 227a-b, 233b; 2:11a, 13a-b, 96b, 141b, 156b-157a, 161b; 3:13a-b, 43a-b, 61b, 70b, 104a-b; *ZḤ* 10b-c (*MhN*), 90b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 390; idem, *Seder Gan Eden*, 133; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 215-45; idem, *Kabbalah*, 158-59; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 251-73; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:770-73. Cf. Rashi on BT *Ḥagigah* 12b, s.v. *ve-ruḥot u-nshamot*.

The image of a putrid drop derives from M *Avot* 3:1, in the name of Aqavya son of Mahalalel: “Reflect on three things and you will not come into the grip of sin. Know from where you came, and where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give account and reckoning. From where did you come? From a putrid drop. Where are you going? To a place of dust, worms, and maggots. And before whom are you destined to give account and reckoning? Before the King of kings, the blessed Holy One.”

521. When his time comes to go... At death, the spirit is stripped of its earthly body and clothed again in its original ethereal body in the Garden of Eden.

522. When the soul clothes herself... In this passage, נשמתא (*nishmeta*), “soul,” and רוּחָא (*ruḥa*), “spirit,” are identical, the former grammatically feminine, the latter masculine.

The Angel of Death, who strips the spirit of its earthly body, enables it to don the ethereal body. That is why this angel is *very good*. See above, [notes 516](#)–18. Cf. *Zohar* 2:163a.

523. The blessed Holy One renders kindness... Before the physical body is stripped away at death, a spiritual body is prepared. This latter body is apparently the ethereal body. Elsewhere, the *Zohar* describes another spiritual body, woven out of a person’s virtuous days or good deeds, which awaits the soul. See *Zohar* 1:224a–b; Vol. 3, p. 347, n. 249; *OY*.

The wicked who have not repented have no spiritual garment and are left naked. “Naked they came...” is a paraphrase of Job 1:21: *Naked I issued from my mother’s womb, and naked will I return there*. See *Zohar* 1:224a. On naked spirits and being naked of good deeds, see above, [p. 36, n. 105](#).

524. Some of them squeal and rise... The wicked who intended to turn back to God but never fulfilled this in

their lifetime are punished in Hell but then rise from there.

See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b-17a, in the name of the House of Shammai: “There are three groups at the Day of Judgment: one of the completely righteous, one of the completely wicked, and one of the intermediate. The completely righteous are written and sealed immediately for life; the completely wicked are written and sealed immediately for Hell...; the intermediate go down to Hell וּמִצְפָּפִין (*u-mtsaftsefin*), and squeal [or: chirp, twitter, squawk—on account of their punishment], and rise.”

See *Zohar* 3:178a; *ZH* 25d (*MhN*), 33d, 69a (*ShS*). On intending *teshuvah*, see BT *Gittin* 57b, *Qiddushin* 49b; *Zohar* 1:41a (*Heikh*); 3:220b; *ZH* 79c (*MhN*, *Rut*).

525. See how great is the compassion... If a wicked person contemplated *teshuvah* in his lifetime but never enacted it, he is stimulated to enact *teshuvah* in Hell and thereby gain redemption.

“Beams” renders גִּזְזִין (*gezizin*), “pieces, chunks; fists.” Cf. above, [note 287](#); [p. 118](#), [n. 334](#); *Zohar* 2:75a (*RR*), 165a; 3:259b. For various interpretations, see Soncino; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1457, n. 157 (followed here); *MmD*; Edri.

526. There is no good intention that is lost... On the contrary, God considers such an intention as an actual good deed. However, an evil intention is not considered an evil deed, except for the thought of idolatry, since that thought itself rejects the one God.

See *Tosefta Pe’ah* 1:4: “A good thought—the blessed Omnipresent One reckons it [for merit with, or as, a good deed]. An evil thought—the Omnipresent One does not reckon it.”

See BT *Qiddushin* 40a: “Rav Assi said, ‘Even if a person thinks of performing a *mitsvah* but is unavoidably prevented from doing so, Scripture considers him to have performed it. An evil thought is not reckoned by the blessed Holy One with [or as] a deed.’... But what about this verse: *So as to*

catch the house of Israel at their thoughts, [they who have fallen away from Me with all their idols] (Ezekiel 14:5)? Rav Aḥa son of Ya'akov said, 'That refers to idolatry, for a Master said: Idolatry is grave, since whoever rejects it, in effect acknowledges the whole Torah.'"

See JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 16b; BT *Berakhot* 6a, *Qiddushin* 39b; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 23; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:4; *Zohar* 2:250b (*Heikh*).

527. Those who have not considered *teshuvah*... They will suffer in Hell for generation after generation, whereas the wicked who have contemplated *teshuvah* will be raised from Hell.

According to M *Eduyyot* 2:10, the wicked are punished in Hell for twelve months. See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17a: "Transgressors of Israel who sin with their body and transgressors of the Gentiles who sin with their body descend to Hell and are punished there for twelve months. After twelve months their body is consumed, their soul burned, and the wind scatters them under the soles of the feet of the righteous.... But as for the heretics, informers, apostates, skeptics, those who rejected Torah and denied the resurrection of the dead, those who abandoned the ways of the community, those who *spread their terror in the land of the living* (Ezekiel 32:23), and those who sinned and made the masses sin...: these descend to Hell and are punished there for generation after generation.... Hell will be consumed, but they will not be consumed."

See *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13:4; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 3; *Zohar* 1:62b, 77b; 3:285b-286a.

528. Why are they punished by the fire of Hell?... The heat of their passion to sin kindles the fire of Hell.

529. One time, the evil impulse disappeared... According to BT *Yoma* 69b, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, the leaders of the Israelites prayed that the evil impulse be eliminated. The impulse to commit idolatry was handed over to them, and they cast it into a lead pot with a

lead cover, rendering it powerless. They prayed further and the sexual impulse was also handed over to them, but a prophet warned, “‘Realize that if you kill him, the world will be destroyed [because the desire to procreate will vanish].’ They imprisoned him for three days, and looked in the whole land of Israel for a fresh egg and could not find it. They said, ‘What should we do? If we kill him, the world will be destroyed.’... They blinded him and let him go. This helped inasmuch as he no longer entices a person to commit incest.”

Here the lead pot is replaced by “an iron signet ring in the hollow of the great abyss.” This hollow is the demonic dwelling. Once the evil impulse reappeared, passions were aroused again and the fire of Hell was rekindled.

530. Hell has seven entrances... The wicked are assigned to one of the seven habitations of Hell, corresponding to their sinfulness.

On the seven entrances to Hell, see *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 53; *Zohar* 1:237b; 3:285b; *ZH* 25b (*MhN*). On its seven habitations (or divisions), see BT *Sotah* 10b; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:6; *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 62b, 237b; 2:263a-68b (*Heikh*); 3:178a, 285b-286a; *ZH* 25b (*MhN*); *Massekhet Geihinnom* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:149); Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:20, n. 56. BT *Eruvin* 19a lists seven names for Hell.

531. In every single habitation there is an angel... Under the supervision of Dumah, the angel in charge of Hell.

דומה (*Dumah*), literally “silence,” is a name for the netherworld in the Bible. See Psalms 94:17: *Were not YHVH a help to me, my soul would have nearly dwelled in dumah*. Cf. Psalms 115:17. In rabbinic literature Dumah is the angel in charge of souls of the dead (BT *Berakhot* 18b, *Shabbat* 152b, *Sanhedrin* 94a). In the *Zohar* he retains this role but also oversees Hell. See 1:8a-b, 62b, 94a, 102a, 124a (*MhN*), 130b, 218b, 237b; 2:18a (*MhN*).

532. The fire of Hell reaches below from the fire of Hell above... Hell, in the depths of the earth, is fed by the fire of Hell above, which originates in the harsh Judgment of *Gevurah*.

On the two Hells, see *Zohar* 1:106b-107a (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 351-53; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 374; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 63. On the two corresponding Gardens of Eden, above, [note 519](#).

533. Boiling Excrement... Excrement is what remains after the sinners have been cleansed.

On punishment in boiling excrement, see BT *Eruvin* 21b, in the name of Aḥa son of Ulla: “Whoever mocks the words of the Sages is punished in boiling excrement.” See *Gittin* 57a; *Zohar* 1:190b; 2:252a (*Heikh*), 265b (*Heikh*). Cf. 3:238a.

534. And there are those wicked... See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17a (quoted above, [note 527](#)): “But as for the heretics, informers, apostates, skeptics, those who rejected Torah and denied the resurrection of the dead, those who abandoned the ways of the community... and those who sinned and made the masses sin...: these descend to Hell and are punished there for generation after generation.... Hell will be consumed, but they will not be consumed.”

“Those who corrupt their ways upon earth” refers to masturbators. The biblical expression השחית דרכו (*hishhit darko*), *corrupted his way* (see Genesis 6:12), is interpreted as an allusion to masturbation. See *Kallah Rabbati* 2, citing Genesis 38:9: שחית ארצה [*Shihet artsah*], *He* [Onan] *wasted* [his seed] *on the ground*. Cf. *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 22; *Bereshit Rabbah* 26:4, 31:7; Rashi on BT *Shabbat* 41a, s.v. *ke-illu mevi mabbul la-olam*. See *Zohar* 1:56b-57a, 62a, 69a; 3:158a.

According to the *Zohar*, masturbation is a heinous sin. See also 1:188a, 219b (Vol. 3, p. 328, n. 149); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 353; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1365-66. Cf. BT *Niddah* 13a: “Rabbi Yitshak and Rabbi

Ammi said, '[Whoever emits semen fruitlessly] is as though he sheds blood [since he wastes potential life].'"

535. On Sabbaths, festivals, and holidays, that fire subsides... Even in Hell, the Sabbath and holidays have their effect. However, the worst sinners (mentioned in the preceding paragraph) are not allowed to leave during these times. Those who desecrated Sabbaths and holidays in their lifetime are not allowed to observe or celebrate these days in Hell either and have no rest.

On the cessation of the torments of Hell on the Sabbath, see above, [note 70](#).

536. they observe Sabbath there against their will Rabbi Yose relies on the tradition in *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:5, where one of the dwellers in Hell reports: "Whoever does not observe the Sabbath willingly in your world observes it here against his will.... All week long we are punished and on the Sabbath we are allowed to rest."

See *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 33; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 23, 120a.

537. These are Gentiles... Rabbi Yehudah insists that the wicked in Hell who are forced to observe Sabbath are Gentiles, not Jews. The dweller in Hell mentioned in the preceding note is the wicked Tineus Rufus, the second-century Gentile governor of Palestine who was ordered by the Emperor Hadrian to crush the Jewish rebellion.

538. As for all those who desecrate Sabbaths... Although their other punishments subside on Sabbath, those who in their lifetime desecrated this holy day must endure the fire, which keeps burning for them alone, because by violating Sabbath they transgressed the entire Torah.

On Sabbath being equivalent to the whole Torah, see JT *Berakhot* 1:4, 3c; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 20; *Devarim Rabbah* 4:4; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 92; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 33; *Shemot Rabbah* 25:12; *Zohar* 2:47a, 89a, 92a; *ZḤ* 17b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 335; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 110.

539. All the wicked emerge... The other wicked in Hell (who in their lifetime did not desecrate Sabbath publicly) gaze at the souls of the Sabbath desecrators. Furthermore, an angel exhumes the decomposing corpses of these violators and they are publicly shamed.

The name Santriel probably stems from the rabbinic term סנטר (*santer*), which may derive from Greek *syntereo*, "to guard." See M *Bava Batra* 4:7.

On the midrashic reading of דראון (*dera'on*), see *Targum Yonatan* on the verse; *Zohar* 1:107a (*MhN*). Cf. *Zohar* 2:212a.

540. Sabbath is equivalent to the entire Torah... See above, [note 538](#).

On Torah as fire, see Deuteronomy 33:2: *From His right hand, a fiery law for them*. See Jeremiah 23:29: *Is not My word like fire?*

On the first verse, see *Zohar* 1:198a; 2:84a. On the second, see *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 20:1; BT *Berakhot* 22a; *Ta'anit* 4a, 7a; *Midrash Tehillim* 16:7; 29:2. See also BT *Bava Batra* 79a, and Rashbam, ad loc, s.v. *me-ha-esh yatsa'u*.

541. when Sabbath departs... From Hell, the corpse is returned to the grave, and then body and soul are each punished separately. Eventually, when the body decomposes fully, its punishments obviously cease, as do those of the soul, reflecting the limitation of God's anger. See below; *OY*; *MmD*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Yet He is compassionate, He purges iniquity and does not destroy, and often restrains His wrath and does not arouse all His rage*.

542. All wicked of the world... The sinner's body and spirit are both punished until the body decomposes. Then each spirit receives what it deserves, and the worst of the wicked are turned into ash to be trampled by the righteous.

See *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13:4: "Transgressors of Israel who sin with their body and transgressors of the Gentiles

who sin with their body descend to Hell and are punished there for twelve months. After twelve months their soul is consumed and their body burned; Hell disgorges them and they become ash, and the wind winnows them and scatters them under the soles of the feet of the righteous, as is said: *You will trample the wicked, for they will be ash under the soles of your feet on the day that I am preparing—says YHVH of Hosts (Malachi 3:21).*”

See above, [note 527](#). On the body and soul both being judged, see the parable in *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:5; BT *Sanhedrin* 91a-b. See also *Zohar* 1:65b, 79a, 98a (*MhN*), 130b, 201b, 218b, 227a; 2:199b; 3:53a, 126b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 393.

On the soul being punished as long as the body has not decomposed, see *Zohar* 2:214b. Cf. M *Sanhedrin* 6:6; and Rashi on *Sanhedrin* 46a, s.v. *nit'akkel ha-basar*. On the fate of the soul being dependent on the condition of the body in the grave, cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1.

543. the body should cling to the earth... As soon as the corpse decomposes, the punishment of both body and soul comes to an end; so it is preferable for the body to be buried without a coffin and in direct contact with the soil.

On the advantage of not being buried in a coffin, see *Zohar* 2:214b. On *hibbut ha-qever* (beating in the grave), administered by the Angel of Death or other heavenly or demonic beings, see 3 Enoch 28:10; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:150-52; 5:49; *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Margaliot, par. 30; *Zohar* 1:185a; 2:141b, 199b; 3:126b-127a.

544. Judgment subsides entirely... From both body and soul. The souls of the truly pious, however, ascend to heaven before the body decomposes. See *Zohar* 2:214b.

545. All those who die... The Angel of Death kills everyone except those who die in the land of Israel.

On the Angel of Death having no power in the land of Israel, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 89-90. On dying inside and outside of the land of Israel, see above, [pp. 295-99](#); *Zohar* 3:72b.

546. If so, what is so praiseworthy about Moses... Moses, Aaron, and Miriam are said to have died by a divine kiss, not by the Angel of Death. But if everyone who dies in the land of Israel likewise avoids the Angel of Death, then what is so special about those three individuals?

See BT *Bava Batra* 17a: "Over six the Angel of Death had no dominion: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses, Aaron, and Miriam... Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, because of them is written [that they died] *by the mouth of YHVH* (Numbers 33:38; Deuteronomy 34:5). But of Miriam is not written *by the mouth of YHVH*! Rabbi El'azar said, 'Miriam also died by a kiss..., but why is *by the mouth of YHVH* not

said of her? Because such an expression would be unseemly [describing *YHVH* kissing a woman].” See above, [p. 168, n. 81](#).

547. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam are more praiseworthy... They are the only ones who died outside the land of Israel and not by the hand of the Angel of Death. Those who die within the Holy Land are not subject to the Angel of Death.

God rules the entire world, but He designated seventy heavenly princes to govern the other nations, whereas only Israel is ruled directly by Him. In the *Zohar* these princes are sometimes pictured as demonic forces.

On God’s direct control of the land of Israel, see *Tanḥuma, Re’eh* 8; BT *Ta’anit* 10a; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 18:25; *Zohar* 1:61a, 84b, 108b; 2:141a-b, 209a; 3:189a. Cf. BT *Ketubbot* 110b: “Whoever lives in the land of Israel is like one who has a God; whoever lives outside the land of Israel is like one who has no God.” See Vol. 4, p. 432, n. 235. On the seventy princes, see above, [p. 10, n. 27](#).

548. Your dead will live... The verse is addressed to God. *Your dead* refers to those who have died in the Holy Land by the hand of God’s Angel of Mercy, not by the demonic Angel of Death, who is powerless there.

See BT *Ketubbot* 111a; *Zohar* 1:113a-b (*MhN*), 131a, 181b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 89-90.

On the demonic nature of the Angel of Death, see BT *Bava Batra* 16a, in the name of Resh Lakish: “Satan, the evil impulse, and the Angel of Death are one and the same.” The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Your dead will live, my corpses will arise. Awake and shout for joy, O dwellers of the dust! For Your dew is a dew of lights, and the earth will give birth to spirits of the dead.*

549. נבלתי (Nevelati), My corpses, will arise... In rabbinic literature the term נבלה (*nevelah*), “carcass, carrion, corpse,” sometimes refers to an animal who has died a natural death, but more often to one who has been

slaughtered improperly. Such a carcass is not only forbidden to be eaten, but capable of temporarily defiling anyone who touches it. Those who have died outside the Holy Land by the hand of the Angel of Death are called *nevelah* because they have been slaughtered demonically and now defile anyone who touches them.

See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 89-90; above, [note 299](#). The formulation “as carrion defiles by carrying...” is a paraphrase of M *Kelim* 1:2: “*Nevelah*, A carcass [i.e., an improperly slaughtered animal], and water of purification... defile a person by being carried, defiling clothes by contact.”

550. Any slaughter rendered unfit... Based on M *Hullin* 2:4, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a: “Any [animal] that becomes unfit by its [manner of] slaughter is נבלה (*nevelah*), carrion.” See the preceding note.

Here, Rabbi Yehudah explains that such carrion (and those who die outside the Holy Land) derive from the Other Side, who is נבלה (*nevalah*), “a disgrace,” and מנוול (*menuvval*), “repulsive.” Accordingly, they are named after him and called *nevelah*.

The verse in Samuel is addressed to David by Abigail, who denounces her husband, Nabal. It reads: *Please, let not my lord pay mind to this worthless man, to Nabal, for he is just like his name: his name is נבל (Nabal), and נבלה (nevalah), disgrace [or: folly, stupidity, baseness], is with him.*

The description “repulsive one” originates in BT *Sukkah* 52b, describing the evil impulse: “A scholar from the school of Rabbi Yishma’el taught, ‘If this repulsive one attacks you, drag him to the house of study. If he is of stone, he will dissolve; if of iron he will shatter.’”

On the demonic quality of *nevelah*, see TZ 21, 59a.

551. O dwellers of the dust... Here, this phrase alludes to Adam and Eve, and the three patriarchs and their wives (Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah), who lie sleeping in the Cave of Machpelah,

though they are not really dead. The verb *נָגַח* (*gv*), “to gasp, breathe one’s last,” is used in connection with the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which according to Rabbi Yehudah indicates that none of them actually died. According to the *Zohar*, the cave of Machpelah leads to the Garden of Eden.

On the sleepers of Hebron, see Rashi, BT *Menahot* 100a, s.v. *Matitya*; Maimonides on M *Tamid* 3:2; *Zohar* 3:70b–71a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 90.

For the appearance of the verb *gv*, “to gasp, breathe one’s last,” in connection with the three patriarchs, see Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 49:33. Cf. above, [note 301](#).

On the cave of Machpelah as an entrance to the Garden of Eden, see *Zohar* 1:81a (*ST*), 127a, 141b, 219a; *ZH* 79d (*MhN, Rut*).

[552](#). There is a place in civilization... The town of Luz, where the Angel of Death has no sway. Only when its residents venture outside the town are they vulnerable.

According to Judges 1:22–26, when the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were scouting Bethel (formerly called Luz), their patrols *saw a man leaving the city. They said to him, “Show us the way into the city, and we will treat you kindly.” He showed them the way into the city; they put the city to the sword, but they let the man and his family go. The man went to the land of the Hittites, and he built a city and named it Luz, and that is its name to this day.*

The secret entrance to Luz is identified in a midrashic tradition in the name of Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ḥama (*Bereshit Rabbah* 69:8): “*לֹז* (*Luz*), An almond tree, stood at the entrance of a cave; the almond tree was hollow, and through the almond tree one entered the cave, and through the cave the town.”

Regarding the second town of Luz in the land of the Hittites, another rabbinic tradition reports (BT *Sotah* 46b): “That is the Luz in which they dye the blue [for tzitzit]. That

is the Luz against which Sennacherib marched without disturbing it [i.e., plundering it and exiling its inhabitants], against which Nebuchadnezzar marched without destroying it. And even the Angel of Death has no permission to pass through it, but when the old people there become weary of life [literally “when their mind becomes loathsome to them”], they go outside the wall and die.”

The immortal city of Luz shares its name with the immortal bone of the human body supposed to be at the base of the spine. This bone, shaped like *luz* (an almond), is said to be indestructible, and from it God will one day resurrect decomposed bodies. See Vol. 3, p. 103, n. 120.

On Luz, see also Genesis 28:19; BT *Sukkah* 53a; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 16; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:186–87, n. 28. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 97a.

553. Why does that Destroying Angel have no power there?... What is so special about that place? Even in the land of Israel, which is directly under God’s control and holier than anywhere else, people die. And even if the man who built the second city of Luz demonstrated his worthiness by helping the Israelites conquer the original Luz, certainly there were other people of greater merit; why were none of them granted such a miracle?

On the man who built Luz, see the passage in Judges quoted in the preceding note.

554. I have not heard, and I will not speak Following the principle expressed by Rabbi Shim’on (in *Zohar* 1:5a): “I beg of you not to utter a word of Torah that you do not know and have not heard fittingly from a lofty tree [i.e., a recognized authority].” Here, Rabbi Yitshak’s remark sets the stage for Rabbi Shim’on.

See *Kallah Rabbati*, 2; *Zohar* 2:37a, 86b–87a, 153a; 3:76a–b, 207b, 240b; and BT *Berakhot* 27b, in the name of Rabbi Eli’ezer: “One who says something that he has not

heard from his teacher causes *Shekhinah* to depart from Israel.”

This conservative attitude contrasts with the *Zohar's* frequent emphasis on innovation. See Matt, “New-Ancient Words,” 194–204. Cf. Isaac of Acre, *Me'irat Einayim*, 118; and the striking formulations of Jacob ben Sheshet (*Ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittahon*, 364, 370): “It is a *mitsvah* for every wise person to innovate in Torah according to his capacity.... Do not think that this is far-fetched. If I had not invented it in my mind, I would say that it was transmitted to Moses at Sinai.”

555. if you say that previously... If you imagine that before the man built the second city of Luz, people did die in that spot—not so! Rather, that place has always been destined for immortality.

556. He created it by the mystery of letters... By combining the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, as indicated in *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:2, 5: “Twenty-two elemental letters. He engraved them, carved them, weighed them, and permuted and combined them, forming with them everything formed and everything destined to be formed.... Twenty-two elemental letters. He set them in a wheel with 231 gates, turning forward and backward.... How did He permute them? א (*Alef*) with them all, all of them with א (*alef*); ב (*bet*) with them all, all of them with ב (*bet*); and so with all the letters, turning round and round....”

These letters began to whirl and combine, initiating the process of creation “by engravings of the Holy Name,” which may allude to the combination of each letter of the alphabet with each of the letters of יהוה (YHVH). The letters emerged in reverse order, from ת (*tav*) to א (*alef*), and once the letter י (*yod*)—the first letter of יהוה (YHVH)—completed its creative turn, God said, “Enough!” The next letter, ט (*tet*), was stranded in the air above one particular spot on earth, which happened to be right where the man from Luz would some day found his new city. Since *tet* symbolizes life, that

location has been immune to the Angel of Death since the world began.

The numerical value of *tet* is nine, which can allude to the ninth *sefirah*, *Yesod*, the divine phallus and river of life. As indicated below, the association of *tet* with life is also linked to the fact that this letter begins the word טוב (*tov*), “good.” On the letter *tet*, see *Zohar* 1:3a, 21a, 30b; 2:230a; *ZH* 63b (*ShS*).

On the combination and permutation of letters, see BT *Berakhot* 55a, *Sanhedrin* 65b; Rashi on Job 28:23; *Zohar* 1:33b, 67b, 204a; 2:159a-160b (standard edition). On the letters of the alphabet appearing in reverse order at Creation, see *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva*, Version 2 (*Battei Midrashot* 2:396-404); *Zohar* 1:2b-3b; 205b; *ZH* 88c-d (*MhN, Rut*); *TZ*, intro, 16a; Vol. 1, p. 11, n. 80. On the phrase “by engravings of the Holy Name,” see *OY; MmD*.

The description of God saying דַּי (*dai*), “Enough!” derives from a rabbinic interpretation of the name שַׁדַּי (*Shaddai*). In BT *Hagigah* 12a, Resh Lakish interprets this name as alluding to God’s original command to limit the expansion of the universe: “I am the one שׁ (*she*), who, said to the world: ‘דַּי (*dai*), Enough!’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 5:8; *Tanḥuma, Hayyei Sarah* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 11; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 3.

On dreaming of the letter *tet*, see BT *Bava Qamma* 55a, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a: “One who sees ט (*tet*) in a dream should regard it as a good omen. Why?... Because Scripture inaugurated it with goodness, for from בְּרֵאשִׁית (*Be-reshit*), *In the beginning*, up to *God saw the light*, no *tet* occurs.” In other words, since the first ט (*tet*) in Scripture begins the word טוב (*tov*), *good* (Genesis 1:4), it is a good omen to see *tet* in a dream. See *Zohar* 1:30b, 230a; *ZH* 63b (*ShS*).

557. He threw a stone into the waters... At Creation, God engraved a stone with the divine name of seventy-two letters and threw it into the watery depths. This stone

found its way to Jerusalem, to the spot where the altar of the Temple would eventually be built. There this Foundation Stone sank, sealing the depths and ensuring that the waters would not rise and inundate the world. From this stone, the whole world was founded.

Cf. the tradition reported in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan (BT *Sukkah* 53a-b): “When David dug the hollows [beneath the site of the Temple], the abyss arose and threatened to drown the world... [David] inscribed the [Divine] Name on a potsherd and cast it into the abyss, and it subsided...”

See JT *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 29a; *Midrash Shemu’el* 26; Gaster, ed., *Sefer ha-Ma’asiyyot*, 113-14; *Zohar* 3:198b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:258, n. 70; Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah*, 177-89.

On the Foundation Stone, see M *Yoma* 5:2; *Tosefta Yoma* 2:14; JT *Yoma* 5:2, 42c; BT *Yoma* 54b; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 28:30; *Targum*, Song of Songs 4:12; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:4; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 35; *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 10; *Zohar* 1:71b-72a, 231a; 2:50a-b (*Mat*), 91b, 152a, 222a; *ZḤ* 76b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 333; Vol. 4, p. 526, n. 582.

On the name of seventy-two letters, see above, [note 113](#); Vol. 4, pp. 258-59, n. 216.

558. If it is so... If life dwells beneath the place where the letter *ṽ* (*tet*) was suspended in the air, why wasn’t the Temple built in that location, to channel life to those who resided there? Rabbi Shim’on explains that the single letter *tet* ensured life in one spot, whereas at the site of the Temple, all the letters of the alphabet appear, marking the origin and focal point of the entire world. These letters initially created the world and later the Temple, which resembles it.

559. the Holy Land gives life and atonement to her inhabitants in that world... Its gifts are intended for the

blissful world that is coming, which is Israel's goal and share, whereas the city of Luz offers life only in this world.

560. ט (Tet) is radiance of life... This letter's vibrant quality is indicated by its first appearance in the Torah, where it begins the word טוב (*tov*), *good*. In the realm of *tet*, the Angel of Death is powerless, though he lurks nearby. See above, [note 556](#).

561. the letter ק (qof)... Rabbi Shim'on may be contrasting the single leg of ק (*qof*)—which makes it unstable and unable to “settle at all anywhere”—with the flat base of ט (*tet*), which enables it to settle everywhere.

The letter *qof* alludes to the demonic realm, perhaps because it begins the words קליפה (*qelippah*), “husk,” קללה (*qelalah*), “curse,” or קוף (*qof*), “ape,” or conceivably because its numerical value (one hundred) is equivalent to מ, ס (*samekh, mem*), an abbreviation of סמאל (*Samma'el*), Samael, another name for Satan.

The demonic force, which generates evil and slander, is incompatible with the goodness of ט (*tet*). Consequently, whenever the letter *tet* appears in the Bible, the letter *qof* cannot immediately follow (within the same word).

Similarly, in Luz, which was under the sway of *tet*, the demonic Angel of Death was impotent. Anyone leaving the city, however, was vulnerable to him.

On the letter *qof*, see *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva (Battei Midrashot, 2:398)*; *Zohar 1:2b*; *2:180b*; *3:251b-252a*; *ZH 8c*; above, [note 492](#); below, [note 803](#).

562. In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava... According to this venerable source, ה (*het*) and ט (*tet*) imply חטאה (*hata'ah*), “sin,” which explains why these two letters do not appear in any of the names of the twelve tribes. Those names were engraved on the two carnelian stones of the high priest's ephod and on the twelve jewels of his breastpiece.

On Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder) see above, [pp. 163-64](#), [n. 69](#). His book is quoted frequently in the *Zohar*. On

otherwise unknown books such as this, see above, [p. 40](#), end of [n. 111](#).

On engraving the letters on the priestly gems, see Exodus 28:9-12, 17-21. On the missing letters, see JT *Yoma* 7:5, 44c; BT *Yoma* 73b; *Zohar* 1:3a; 2:230a; 3:188b. BT *Yoma* specifies *tet* and ט (*tsade*); JT *Yoma* specifies *het* and *tsade*, though a scribal gloss adds *tet*.

[563. engraved upon them](#) Upon various places in the Temple, or upon the “world of above and below.”

[564. In the Dwelling, letters were engraved...](#) Bezalel, the master craftsman of the Dwelling (or Tabernacle), knew how to combine the primordial letters of Creation, so the Dwelling reflected the perfection of God’s original act.

The first verse quoted from Exodus records God’s selection of Bezalel, so it pertains “above”; the second verse records Moses conveying God’s choice to the people, so it pertains “below.”

The name בצלאל (*Betsal’el*) means בצל אל (*be-tsel el*), “in the shadow [that is, protection] of God.” Rabbi Shim’on links Bezalel with *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), who sits in the shadow of *Binah*, known as אל עליון (*El Elyon*), “God Most High.”

Just as *Binah* includes all six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, so does the latter, conveying them all to *Shekhinah*. And just as *Binah* illumines above, so *Yesod* illumines *Shekhinah* below.

On Bezalel’s creativity, see BT *Berakhot* 55a: “Bezalel knew how to combine the letters by which heaven and earth were created.” On the letters of Creation, see above, [note 556](#). On the correspondence between the Dwelling and all of Creation, see above, [note 18](#).

On the meaning of Bezalel’s name, see BT *Berakhot* 55a. On Bezalel and *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 2:225a; 3:162b. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47-48](#), [n. 132](#). On *El Elyon* as *Binah*, see *Zohar* 1:87a. For other sefirotic

interpretations of *El Elyon*, see *OY; Sullam; MmD*. Cf. *Zohar* 2:222a.

The full verse in Exodus 31 reads: *See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah*. The name *El Elyon* appears in Genesis 14:18-20, 22; and Psalms 78:35.

565. Son of אורי (Uri), Uri... Bezalel symbolizes *Yesod*, who derives from the primordial light of *Hesed*.

On the primordial light, see Genesis 1:3; above, [notes 17, 29](#).

566. Son of חור (Hur), Hur... The name of Bezalel's grandfather alludes to a higher source, *Binah*, who symbolizes the Jubilee and represents freedom.

On *Binah* as Jubilee and Her liberating quality, see above, [pp. 135-36, n. 381](#). On Her designation as "total freedom," see *Zohar* 2:183a, 290b (*IZ*).

567. son of חוור (hivvar), white... The whitest of all, apparently alluding to the highest *sefirah*, *Keter*.

Bezalel, who symbolizes *Yesod*, belongs fittingly to the tribe of Judah, which symbolizes *Yesod's* partner, *Shekhinah*.

For other sefirotic interpretations of "white of all colors," see *OY; Sullam*. On Judah and *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:235b, 237a.

568. All colors bode well... Except for blue, the color of *Shekhinah* when She conveys Judgment. Essentially, She "is one," including various colors and qualities.

On the color blue, the divine throne, and *Shekhinah*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 115, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "Whoever fulfills the commandment of [wearing] the tzitzit is as though he greeted the face of *Shekhinah*, for the blue [the color of the thread on the garment's tassel] resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the sky, and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory."

See above, [notes 245-46, 508](#). On colors in a dream, see BT *Berakhot* 57b: "All kinds of colors bode well in a

dream, except blue.” See *Zohar* 1:51b; 2:135a, 139a; 3:175a (*Piq*).

569. When a person sees this color... By looking at the blue thread on the tzitzit (tassel) of one’s garment, a person remembers to fulfill the *mitsvot*.

On one of the occasions when the Israelites complained to God, He sent *fiery serpents*, against them, and many of the people died. After Moses prayed to God, he was instructed: *Make you a fiery one, and set it on a standard, and so then, whoever is bitten will see it and live* (Numbers 21:8). Moses made a bronze serpent, and the wounded were thereby healed.

Rabbi Shim’on explains that the Israelites were not healed by the serpent itself, but by feeling the awe of God, which inspired them to be devoted and vigilant. Yet, all this was caused by gazing at the serpent, the divine lash of chastisement. Similarly, when one gazes upon the blue thread on the tzitzit, this color inspires the awe of *Shekhinah*. Consequently, the color blue was woven into the Dwelling.

On the bronze serpent, see M *Rosh ha-Shanah* 3:8, which compares this miracle with Israel’s victory over Amalek: “*When Moses would raise his hand, Israel prevailed; [when he would let down his hand, Amalek prevailed]* (Exodus 17:11). Now, could the hands of Moses wage battle or break [the power of Israel in] battle? Rather, this tells you: as long as Israel gazed above and subjugated their heart to their Father in heaven, they prevailed; otherwise, they fell. You may say similarly [regarding] *Make you a fiery one, and set it on a standard, and so then, whoever is bitten will see it and live*. Now, did the serpent bring death or give life? Rather, when Israel gazed above and subjugated their heart to their Father in heaven, they were healed; otherwise, they would waste away.”

See above, [note 491](#). For the biblical context of *blue*, see above, [note 497](#).

[570.](#) **Blue is the throne of Judgment...** See above at [note 568](#).

[571.](#) **When the cherubim turn their faces...** When the cherubim in the Holy of Holies turn to face one another, *Shekhinah* turns from the blue of Judgment into a compassionate blend of white-greenish gold. White symbolizes *Hesed*; green signifies *Tif'eret*, also known as *Rahamim* (Compassion). Gold can symbolize *Binah*, source of both *Hesed* and *Tif'eret*.

The posture of the cherubim, the change of colors, and the dominance of Judgment or Compassion all depend on Israel's behavior. As the verse in Isaiah indicates, God is gloriously arrayed by Israel.

According to BT *Bava Batra* 99a, in the time of the Temple "whenever Israel fulfilled the will of the Omnipresent," the cherubim in the Holy of Holies faced one another, and "whenever [Israel] did not," the cherubim miraculously turned away from each other toward the Temple courts.

See above, [note 469](#). On greenish gold and *Shekhinah*, see above, [notes 443](#), 488. On gold and *Binah*, see above, [note 436](#). On changing colors, cf. BT *Yoma* 67a. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *He said to me, "You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory."*

[572.](#) **You shall make a table of pure gold** Actually, the context (Exodus 25:23-24) reads: *You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits its length and a cubit its width and a cubit and a half its height. You shall overlay it with pure gold, and make for it a golden rim all around.*

The wording *You shall make a table of pure gold* is either a playful paraphrase or a mistake, perhaps based on an ellipsis between one verse and the next: *You shall make a table... [of] pure gold*. It appears in numerous manuscripts, as well as *Or Yaqar* and the Cremona edition, whereas the Mantua edition (followed by nearly all others)

restored the verse to... *a table of acacia wood*. Later in this passage, the verse is cited normally.

573. When you have eaten and are satisfied... The full verse reads: *You will eat and be satisfied and bless YHVH your God for the good land that He has given you*. According to rabbinic tradition, this verse represents a command to recite the Grace after Meals and should be construed: *When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless YHVH your God...*

See *Mekhilta, Pisha* 16; *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:1; JT *Berakhot* 1:1, 2a; 3:3, 6b; BT *Berakhot* 21a; *Zohar* 1:207b.

574. For the sake of Israel... The existence of Israel is essential, and only for their sake is the rest of the world sustained.

575. Now that Israel are in exile... When Israel dwelled in the Holy Land, they were nourished first from above, and subsequently the other nations fed off of the remains. Now that Israel are in exile, the nations receive first (through their respective heavenly princes), and Israel must content themselves with the remnants. The phrase “for one, two” means that now the nations receive double the amount of sustenance, so that some will be left over for Israel.

See BT *Ta’anit* 10a: “The land of Israel drinks water directly from the rain, while the rest of the world drinks of the drippings [Munich MS: of the land of Israel].”

See Nahmanides on Deuteronomy 11:10-12; *Zohar* 1:84b, 108b; 2:22b; 3:209b, 265b; ZH 9d (*MhN*), 61b (*MhN, ShS*), 81a, 87d (both *MhN, Rut*)

576. a king who prepared a meal... See *Midrash Tehillim* 4:11 for a different parable of a royal meal involving dogs. On the metaphor of throwing a bone to a dog, see *Zohar* 2:111b; 3:63a-b (*Piq*), 197a; ZH 86b (*MhN, Rut*).

On Israel and God’s table, see BT *Berakhot* 3a, where Rabbi Yose son of Halafta encounters Elijah, who reveals to

him God's frequent lament: "What can be done for the father who has exiled his children? And woe to the children who have been banished from their father's table!"

[577.](#) ***In the face of my foes—those dogs...*** The other nations.

[578.](#) ***According to this mystery were Israel...*** As long as they fulfilled God's will, they received blessing directly from Him and the nations were sustained by the remnants.

[579.](#) ***Rabbi Ya'akov son of Idi and Rabbi Yeisa the Younger...*** The former is the name of a Palestinian *amora* who lived toward the end of the third century. Cf. *Zohar* 1:96b; Vol. 2, pp. 113-14, n. 880. On Rabbi Yeisa the Younger, see *Zohar* 1:162a; 2:79b; *ZH* 31a, 85c (*MhN, Rut*).

[580.](#) ***But to the sons of Barzillai...*** This figure had helped David when he had to flee during Absalom's revolt. Now, facing death, David instructs his son Solomon to treat Barzillai's sons well.

Rabbi Yeisa wonders why Barzillai's sons were not offered more than a seat at the royal table. Besides, it is improper for anyone to eat together with the king at the same table!

On Barzillai, see 2 Samuel 17:27-29; 19:32-40. The verse in Kings concludes: *for so they befriended me when I fled from your brother Absalom.*

[581.](#) ***I have heard nothing...and I will not speak*** See above, [note 554](#).

[582.](#) ***He said to Rabbi Ya'akov...*** The subject is Rabbi Hiyya, who soon poses the same question to Rabbi Yeisa.

[583.](#) ***from the honey of supernal oil...*** From the teachings of Rabbi Shim'on.

[584.](#) ***Who gives food to all flesh, for His love is forever...*** This psalm (known as the Great Hallel) contains twenty-six verses, all of which conclude with the refrain *for His love is forever*. The verse *Who gives food to all flesh...* is actually the penultimate verse of the Great Hallel, whose

conclusion is: *Praise the God of the heavens, for His love is forever.*

585. three rulers above... Corresponding to three organs in the human body: the brain, heart, and liver. According to medieval physiology (based on Galen), these are the three main organs. The liver receives the digested food and transforms it into “nutritive blood,” which flows through the veins, nourishing the peripheral organs. Some blood enters the right chamber of the heart, from where it passes through the lungs and the septum to the left chamber. There the blood mixes with pneuma (spirit), producing “vital blood,” which reaches the brain (and the rest of the body) via the arteries.

However, in the sefirotic realm the process is reversed: the divine brain (*Hokhmah* and *Binah*) receives the initial flow of emanation from *Keter* and conveys this to the heart (*Tif'eret*), who gives it to the liver (*Shekhinah*), who in turn feeds the lower worlds.

Rabbi Yeisa's description of these organs as “three rulers” apparently alludes to the fact that the initial letters of מוחא (*moḥa*), “brain,” לבא (*libba*), “heart,” and כבדא (*kavda*), “liver,” spell מלך (*melekh*), “king.” See Simeon ben Tsemah Duran, *Magen Avot* 5:19: “The experts in medicine agree that there are three major organs in the human being, namely והלב והמוח והכבד (*ha-moḥaḥ ha-lev ve-ha-kaved*), the brain, the heart, and the liver; their sign: מלך (*melekh*), king.”

On the three organs, see *Zohar* 1:138a (*MhN*); 3:224a-b; *ZH* 80a (*MhN, Rut*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:296-97; 3:1516, n. 50. On the brain as “king over all of the limbs,” see BT *Shabbat* 61a. On Galen's theory, see Siegel, *Galen's System of Physiology and Medicine*, 51, 87-91, 104-6, 113-15, 183-90; Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, 48-50.

586. On a human fast day... By fasting, one stimulates the sefirotic process according to the human pattern: liver, then heart, then brain. The person's own fat

and blood, together with his intention, are offered to *Shekhinah* (the liver), who offers it to *Tif'eret* (the heart), who offers it to *Hokhmah* and *Binah* (the brain), who rule over the entire sefirotic body. On a day of normal eating, the divine process unfolds in the reverse order (as described in the preceding note).

On offering one's own fat and blood to God by fasting, see BT *Berakhot* 17a; *Zohar* 2:20b (*MhN*); *ZH* 80a (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 127-28; idem, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 32a. Cf. *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 79; *Zohar* 2:62a; 3:9b.

587. At another time... Normally, the sefirotic process begins from above. Eventually, when *Shekhinah* (the liver) wishes to feed the world, She gives first to the human king of Israel (the heart below), whose table is stimulated and blessed. Anyone invited to the royal table partakes of the heavenly bounty, and this explains the great kindness shown by David to the sons of Barzillai.

588. Someone other than the king... One might imagine, then, that some people actually eat with the king at his own table. However, although the privileged few eat while the king is eating and from the royal food, they are seated separately. Still, they are designated as "members of the king's table."

589. At the king's table he would always eat... The subject is Mephibosheth, the crippled son of David's intimate friend, Jonathan. King David treated Mephibosheth like one of his own sons, showing kindness to the offspring of his deceased comrade.

From the wording of this verse, it seems that such privileged individuals did actually eat *at the king's table*. However, Rabbi Yeisa explains that this is an idiomatic phrase meaning "from the king's supply," indicating an accounting method in the palace.

On Mephibosheth, see 1 Samuel 20:14-16; 2 Samuel 9:1-13.

590. You are a boy... See *Zohar* 2:79b: “Rabbi Shim’on said to [Rabbi Yeisa], ‘You are still too young to enter the ranks of Reapers of the Field, yet all has been revealed to you!’”

Rabbi Yeisa began by asking why King David concluded the Great Hallel with the verse *Who gives food to all flesh, for His love is forever*. (See above at [note 584](#).) Although he never answers the question directly, his presentation demonstrates that all food issues from the divine realm. See *MmD*.

591. Surely in this fellowship... See *M Avot* 3:2, in the name of Rabbi Hananya son of Teradyon: “If two are sitting engaged in words of Torah, *Shekhinah* dwells between them.” According to Kabbalah, God yearns especially for new words of Torah.

592. an improvised meal... In this case, eaten outdoors. Still, it is a meal, and worthy of words of Torah, which God savors.

The verse in Ezekiel is from the prophet’s vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem, and describes the table for the Bread of the Presence. (See below, [note 598](#).) This verse figures in a famous teaching on the importance of speaking words of Torah at a meal. See *M Avot* 3:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim’on: “If three have eaten at one table without speaking over it words of Torah, it is as though they have eaten of sacrifices to the dead, as is said: *Surely all tables are full of filthy vomit, without the Omnipresent* (Isaiah 28:8) [i.e., without discussing God’s words]. But if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of Torah, it is as though they have eaten from the table of the Omnipresent, as is said: *He said to me, ‘This is the table that is before YHVH.’*”

The verse in Isaiah reads: *Surely all tables are full of filthy vomit, without מקום (maqom), a place [or: a space]*. The rendering *without the Omnipresent* reflects the rabbinic use of *maqom* as a designation of God, apparently denoting

immanence. See Urbach, *The Sages*, 1:66–79. On the phrase “sacrifices [offered] to the dead,” see Psalms 106:28.

593. *When you have eaten and are satisfied...* The wording seems to require that a person eat a full meal before he can bless and thank God. But shouldn't one offer a blessing even if he hasn't filled his stomach? Yet, if he should, why does the verse read *When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless*?

Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that if the eater focuses his attention on even a morsel and considers it his sustenance, then once he eats he is considered *satisfied*, because his will has been satisfied. Therefore, blessing is appropriate and required. Furthermore, such blessing delights God.

According to Jewish law, the minimum amount of food that requires a blessing after it is eaten is the size of an olive. See M *Berakhot* 7:2; BT *Berakhot* 20b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Berakhot* 1:1; *Zohar* 3:244b (RM). On the question of how much food is considered “satisfying,” see BT *Berakhot* 49b.

On the verse in Deuteronomy, see above, [note 573](#). The context in Psalms (145:15–16) reads: *The eyes of all look in hope to You, and You give them their food in its season, opening Your hand and satisfying רצון (ratson), the desire [or: wish, will], of every living thing.* The concluding clause can also be rendered: *and satisfying every living thing ratson, with favor [or: according to Your will].* Alter renders it: *and sating to their pleasure all living things.*

594. **Rabbi Ḥizkiyah opened with this verse after him...** With the same verse from Deuteronomy. The wording *and are satisfied* implies that a drunkard is permitted to recite Grace after Meals, although in general he is forbidden to pray. Why is he forbidden? Rabbi Ḥizkiyah skips the obvious answer—that genuine prayer requires sober, conscious intention—and explains the hidden reason: prayer ascends to the realm of *Binah*, who is

known as “the World that is Coming,” which lies beyond all physical pleasure. Therefore one should pray before eating, and anyone who has drunk excessively should not pray.

On a drunkard being permitted to recite Grace after Meals, based on the verse in Deuteronomy, see JT *Terumot* 1:6, 40d (in the name of Rabbi Issi); *Tosafot, Berakhot* 31b, s.v. *mi-kan*. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 49b (quoted below): “*When you have eaten—eating. And are satisfied—drinking.*”

On a drunkard being forbidden to pray in general, see JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a; *Terumot* 1:6, 40d; BT *Berakhot* 31a-b, *Eruvin* 64a.

On the nature of the world that is coming, see BT *Berakhot* 17a: “A pearl in the mouth of Rav: ‘In the world that is coming, there is no eating or drinking or procreation or business or jealousy or hatred or competition; rather, the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, basking in the radiance of *Shekhinah*.’”

On *Binah* as “the World that is Coming,” see above, [p. 22, n. 59](#). Cf. Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 374–75.

[595.](#) In Grace after Meals appears another aspect... Unlike prayer in general, Grace after Meals pertains to eating, drinking, and satisfaction. Thus it is associated with *Shekhinah*, who nourishes the lower worlds.

[596.](#) When you have eaten—eating... See BT *Berakhot* 49b: “*When you have eaten—eating. And are satisfied—drinking.*”

[597.](#) You shall bless נא (et)—et, precisely... The little word *et* alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is associated with eating and drinking and who nourishes the world.

On *et* symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 179](#). On the connection between *Shekhinah* and joy, see BT *Shabbat* 30b: “*Shekhinah* abides neither through sadness nor laziness nor frivolity nor levity nor talk nor idle chatter [or: vain pursuits], but only through the joy of *mitsvah*.”

On happiness and Grace after Meals, see *Rut Rabbah* 5:15.

598. *You shall make a table of acacia wood...* The Bread of the Presence was placed upon this table in the Dwelling (and later upon a similar table in the Temple). Each Sabbath twelve loaves were arranged in two rows on the table, where they remained until the following Sabbath, when they were replaced by twelve fresh loaves. According to M *Menaḥot* 11:7, the weekly ritual of replacement was performed with such precision that the table was never left empty: “Within [the sanctuary] was a table of gold on which the Bread of the Presence lay continually. Four priests entered, two bearing two rows [of bread] in their hands and two bearing two dishes [of frankincense] in their hands. Four preceded them, two to remove two rows and two to remove two dishes.... These withdrew [the old] and the others laid down [the new], the handbreadth of one coinciding with the handbreadth of the other, for it is written: [*You shall set on the table the Bread of the Presence,*] *before Me continuously* (Exodus 25:30).”

According to Rabbi Yeisa, this holy table conveys blessing and sustenance to all tables of the world. Therefore it must never be empty, since blessing does not appear in an empty place.

On the Bread of the Presence, see also Leviticus 24:5-9; 1 Samuel 21:4-7; Naḥmanides on Exodus 25:24; *Zohar* 1:88b; 2:136a, 154b-155a.

On blessing not appearing in an empty place, see Naḥmanides on Exodus 25:24; *Zohar* 1:88a-b, 240a, 250a; 2:63b, 67a, 87b-88a, 154b-155a, 157b; 3:34a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 270. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 40a: “Come and see how the character of the blessed Holy One differs from that of flesh and blood. In the case of flesh and blood, an empty vessel holds [more], but not a full one. However, the blessed Holy One is not so: a full vessel holds [more], but not an empty one.”

The context in Exodus (25:23-24) reads: *You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits its length and a cubit its*

width and a cubit and a half its height. You shall overlay it with pure gold, and make for it a golden rim all around.

599. Every person's table... Just as the table in the Dwelling (and in the Temple) must never be empty, so when a person recites Grace after Meals his table should remain in front of him with bread still upon it, in order to ensure the flow of blessing from above.

In the passage from Kings, the prophet Elisha performs a miracle for an anonymous poor woman, providing her with an abundant supply of oil—but only after she takes out the little oil that she already has and borrows many empty vessels from her neighbors.

On the need for the table not to be empty when one recites the Grace after Meals, see BT *Sanhedrin* 92a, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "Whoever does not leave bread on his table [when reciting the Grace after Meals] will never see a sign of blessing."

See *Zohar* 1:240a, 250a; 2:87b-88a, 155a, 157b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 270; *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 180:2; *Magen Avraham*, ad loc.; Emden, *Zohorei Ya'bits*, 48; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 28; idem, *Minhag Ashkenaz ha-Qadmon*, 267-70.

On the passage in Kings, see Nahmanides on Exodus 25:24; *Zohar* 1:88a, 2:87b, 157b; 3:34a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 270.

600. a table at which words of Torah have not been spoken... See M *Avot* 3:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on: "If three have eaten at one table without speaking over it words of Torah, it is as though they have eaten of sacrifices to the dead, as is said: *Surely all tables are full of filthy vomit, without the Omnipresent* (Isaiah 28:8) [i.e., without discussing God's words]. But if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of Torah, it is as if they have eaten from the table of the Omnipresent, as is said: *He said to me, 'This is the table that is before YHVH'* (Ezekiel

41:22).” On the rendering *without the Omnipresent*, see above, [note 592](#).

There is a holy table, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, and an impure table, symbolizing demonic forces. The holy table gathers in words of Torah spoken at earthly tables.

The phrase *before YHVH* alludes to the position of *Shekhinah*, who is situated *before* and below *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*). The alternative wording, *from before YHVH*, would apparently allude to a higher realm. See *Zohar* 2:165a, 170b; *Sullam*; *MmD*. Cf. *OY*.

601. There is another table... A demonic table, excluded from holiness. Those who eat without sharing words of Torah turn their table into this kind.

On the rendering *without the Omnipresent*, see above, [note 592](#). “A table of a false god” recalls the wording in *M Avot* 3:3 (quoted in the preceding note): “...it is as though they have eaten of sacrifices to the dead.”

602. Surya, the appointed prince... On this angel, see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §§ 117–20, 219; Rabbinovicz, *Diqduqei Soferim, Berakhot* 51a, p. 270, n. 100; *Zohar* 2:213b, 253a (*Heikh*); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 144–46.

603. A person's table is capable of purifying him... See *BT Berakhot* 55a, in the names of Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi El'azar: “As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel, and now a person's table atones for him.”

604. the Ancient of Days... This term appears in *Daniel* 7:9: *As I watched, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat—His garment like white snow, the hair of His head like clean fleece, His throne flames of fire, its wheels blazing fire.*

In Kabbalah this name designates the primordial *sefirah* of *Keter*. According to the *Zohar*, new interpretations of Torah are crowned in the presence of the Ancient of Days. See *Zohar* 1:4b; above, [note 334](#).

605. Father... used to cover it... Apparently, so that it would not appear empty. See above, [notes 598-99](#). For another interpretation, see *OY; MmD*.

606. where it is needed... Apparently referring to *Shekhinah*, whose union with *Tif'eret* is stimulated when a person speaks words of Torah at his table and provides food for the poor.

607. So, whoever knew him... The biblical passage describes what happens to Saul after Samuel has anointed him as the first king of Israel. The context (1 Samuel 10:10-11) reads: *They came there to Gibeah, and look, a band of prophets was coming toward him, and the spirit of YHVH seized him and he went into ecstasy [or: fell into a prophetic frenzy] in their midst. So, whoever knew him from times gone by, saw, and look, with the prophets he spoke in ecstasy, and each said to his fellow, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul too among the prophets?"*

Rabbi Ya'akov asks why Saul's acquaintances were surprised when he fell into a prophetic frenzy, given that he had already been chosen by God.

608. except to Moses... Only he fulfilled the roles of both king and prophet.

On Moses as king, see Deuteronomy 33:5: *He became a king in Jeshurun*, as interpreted in *Vayiqra Rabbah* 31:4; 32:2; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:6; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:20; *Tanḥuma, Beshallah* 2; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 15:13; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:6; 48:4; 52:1; Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 33:5; Maimonides, *Peirush ha-Mishnah, Shevu'ot* 2:2. See also BT *Zevaḥim* 102a.

On Moses as faithful, see Numbers 12:7: *Not so My servant Moses, in all My house he is faithful [or: trusted]*.

609. What about Samuel... In a sense he ruled over Israel, but only as a judge, not as a king. Otherwise, the Israelites would not have asked Samuel to appoint a king over them (as recounted in 1 Samuel 8). Since no one

besides Moses was both king and prophet, King Saul's acquaintances were surprised when he fell into prophetic ecstasy. (In fact, however, Saul's anointment was not yet publicly known.)

On Samuel as king, see BT *Temurah* 14b-15a; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:3.

610. Why did prophecy settle upon him... If only Moses was both king and prophet, how could King Saul attain a state of prophecy? Rabbi Ya'akov explains that before Saul was publicly proclaimed king, God invested him with the Holy Spirit so that his kingship would "settle upon a spirit of holy arousal." When he became king, he no longer had the gift of prophetic inspiration; instead he was endowed with discernment to judge his subjects fairly. When Saul encountered the band of prophets (prior to his public proclamation as king), prophetic ecstasy overcame him, but as soon as he left them "he had no prophecy."

On God confirming Saul's kingship even before he was publicly proclaimed king, see 1 Samuel 10:1-16.

611. all the more so, I... All the more so, I tremble.

612. You shall make a table... The table in the Dwelling and in the Temple (below on earth) held the Bread of the Presence. One might think that the bread is more important, since the table is beneath it, but actually the table symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who receives blessing from above, and the bread is the fruit issuing from Her, which is then conveyed to the world. On the Bread of the Presence, see above, [note 598](#).

613. The priests would gather the fruit... every Sabbath eve... Actually, the twelve loaves of the Bread of the Presence were replaced on the Sabbath day itself, although on Friday before Sabbath began a new dozen loaves were baked and the horizontal rods (separating the loaves and allowing the circulation of air) were removed. See Leviticus 24:8; M *Menaḥot* 11:2, 6; BT *Menaḥot* 97a; above, [note 598](#).

After the priests replaced the dozen loaves with new ones, they were allowed to eat the old loaves. This holy food conveyed blessing to whatever else they ate and protected them from the evil impulse, which normally thrives on food.

On the link between eating and the evil impulse, see BT *Berakhot* 32a; *Zohar* 1:110a (*MhN*). On the location of the evil impulse in the intestines, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 16.

The biblical quotation here is a conflation of two passages. Deuteronomy 8:12, 14 reads: *Lest you eat and be satiated... and your heart become haughty and you forget YHVH your God*. Proverbs 30:9 reads: *Lest I be satiated and deny, saying, "Who is YHVH?"*

614. This bread... The Bread of the Presence ensured that the accusing evil impulse would not interfere with the priests' holy service.

615. This table must be arranged on the north side... The table, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, was placed *on the north side* of the holy area within the Dwelling (and later, within the Temple). North symbolizes *Gevurah*, the left arm of the sefirotic body, which arouses joyously and passionately to embrace *Shekhinah* and initiate Her union with the Divine Male (centered in *Tif'eret*). *Gevurah*, the left arm, receives the flow of emanation from *Hesed*, the right arm.

616. Water is from the right... Water symbolizes *Hesed*, on the right. Immediately, the right channels its flow to *Gevurah*, on the left, conveying joy. The harsh quality of *Gevurah* is "included in," or tempered by, the sweet water of *Hesed*, and then the left stimulates *Shekhinah*.

The description here of the ritual washing of hands is unclear. The meaning may be that one first takes the vessel in his right hand and then transfers it to the left hand, which then pours the water on the right hand. One should not take the vessel first with the left hand and then transfer it "from left to right," since the flow of emanation "is

received from the right (*Hesed*) by the left (*Gevurah*).” Or, it is not that the water comes ultimately “from the left hand to the right,” since the vessel is first “received from the right hand by the left.”

Tishby translates this differently (*Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:915): “When a man takes some water to wash his hands, he first of all holds the vessel with his right hand in order to pour water over the left, and not vice versa....” He remarks that “in washing the hands, the initial pouring of the water from right to left points to the way in which *Gevurah* is aroused by influence from *Hesed*.”

Elsewhere, the *Zohar* insists that the left hand must pour water first on the right. By washing the right hand with the left, one subjugates left to right, making the left serve the right and thereby ensuring that *Hesed* will prevail over the harshness of *Gevurah*.

See *Zohar* 1:198b; *ZH* 86d (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 9; Joseph Caro, *Beit Yosef*, *Orah Hayyim* 4:8–11; idem, *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 4:10; *OY*; Vital; *MM*; *Sullam*; Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 68; Scholem.

The clause “water is found only on the left” means that since the flow of *Hesed* (on the right) passes to *Gevurah* (on the left), water is attributed to the latter, although it originates in *Hesed*. See below, [note 794](#).

The expression גבורות גשמים (*gevurot geshamim*), “the power of rain,” appears in *M Berakhot* 5:2. Here, it indicates the connection between water and *Gevurah*.

The table is placed *on the north side*, symbolizing *Gevurah*, because this side stimulates *Shekhinah* first and its fruitful emanation appears more abundantly than “from the other side,” namely *Hesed*. The verse from Song of Songs indicates that *Gevurah* (*His left hand*) initiates the contact between *Shekhinah* and *Tiferet*, followed by *Hesed* (*his right*).

[617](#). in a state of bodily cleanliness... The food on a person’s table derives from *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as “a pure table.” One should relieve himself before eating,

because otherwise the demonic Other Side will be attracted and nourished by the filth within his intestines, mingled with the new food.

On relieving oneself before eating, see BT *Berakhot* 23b; *Shabbat* 41a. On the link between filth and demonic forces, see *Zohar* 1:10b, 190b; 3:186b.

618. After a person has eaten... He should offer to the Other Side a portion, consisting of the water with which he washes off the remnants of food from his fingers.

According to BT *Hullin* 105a (in the name of Rabbi Yitshak son of Ashyan), “The first water [i.e., washing the hands before the meal] is מצוה (*mitsvah*), a meritorious act; and the last [water, i.e., washing after the meal] is חובה (*hovah*), an obligation.” Here, Rabbi Ya’akov plays with Hebrew *hovah*, “obligation,” and Aramaic *hovah*, “sin.” This dirty water is offered to the sinful Other Side to satisfy and appease him and prevent him from dominating.

Traditionally, a blessing is recited over washing the hands before a meal but not over washing after a meal. Here, Rabbi Ya’akov explains that any such blessing would be completely inappropriate, since this dirty water is intended for the accursed Other Side.

On the “last water” (or “fingerbowl water”), see also BT *Berakhot* 53b, *Eruvin* 17b, *Hullin* 105b-106a; *Zohar* 2:169a, 265a, 266b; 3:186b, 246a (RM), 273b (RM); *ZH* 87b-c (*MhN*, *Rut*); Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 62, 80-87.

On the theme of assuaging demonic powers by offering them a portion, see above, [p. 102](#), [n. 291](#).

619. it is good for a person... It is also healthy to relieve oneself before eating.

620. This table that stands in the Temple... On this table the Bread of the Presence was placed each week, ensuring a continual supply of food for Israel and the world. Therefore, the table never stood empty for even a moment. The table of the Other Side is characterized by

emptiness, and such emptiness must never appear on the holy table in the Temple. Similarly, when a person recites Grace after Meals, his table must not be empty. See above, [notes 598](#)–99.

621. Loaves on the table... The Bread of the Presence consisted of twelve loaves. The Hebrew term לחם הפנים (*leḥem ha-panim*), “Bread of the Presence,” means literally “Bread of the Faces,” alluding to higher sefirotic aspects, which shine upon *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the table) and, through Her, provide sustenance for the world. The word *panim*, “faces, presence,” also suggests that this bread is פנימאה מכלא (*penima’ah mikola*), “innermost of all.”

The higher sefirotic “faces” may represent *Tif’eret* and *Yesod*, each of which is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*), whose numerical value is six, thus totaling twelve. Alternatively, the faces represent the twelve sefirotic “boundaries” centered on *Tif’eret*, or else higher sefirotic aspects. For various interpretations, see *OY; Sullam; Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:916. On the twelve boundaries, see above, [pp. 75–76, n. 217](#).

622. Bread of the Faces—food of those faces... From the inner sefirotic faces issues sustenance, which settles upon *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the table) and, through Her, reaches the world.

According to a rabbinic tradition, when the Bread of the Presence was replaced each week with fresh hot loaves, miraculously the old loaves were still hot. This view is based on an interpretation of the verse in Samuel, which describes how when David was fleeing from King Saul, Ahimelech the priest gave him loaves of the Bread of the Presence: *The priest gave him what was consecrated, for there was no bread there except the Bread of the Presence, which is removed from before YHVH, to be replaced with hot bread on the day it is taken away.* The phrase לשום (*lasum*), to place [or: to be replaced with], hot bread is understood

as *to replace hot bread*, indicating that the old loaves were still hot.

See JT *Sheqalim* 6:4, 50a; BT *Yoma* 21a-b (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi).

623. Rabbi El'azar opened... The human being was created “in the mystery of wisdom,” that is, modeled on the *sefirot*, and was endowed with the capacity to discover wisdom and know God.

“The breath of life” renders נשמתא דחיי (*nishmeta de-ḥayyei*), which originates in Genesis 2:7: *He blew into his nostrils* נשמת חיים (*nishmat ḥayyim*), *the breath of life*. Here, *nishmeta*, “breath,” implies נשמה (*neshamah*), “soul,” the highest level of soul, by which a person perceives God.

Rabbi El'azar interprets *whom I created for My glory to mean whom I created to know My glory*.

On the verse in Ecclesiastes, see BT *Shabbat* 153a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 29; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:8; *Zohar* 3:187a.

On humanity being created in the mystery of wisdom, see, e.g., *Zohar* 1:140a-b, 186b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 268. Cf. Genesis 1:26-27.

624. this glory below... is restored above... *Shekhinah* is the *glory* below and the holy Throne of the higher *sefirot*. She is restored, or unified with the upper *sefirot*, by the virtuous deeds of humans on earth, who were created *for My glory*—in order to restore Her.

“Powerful pillars” refers to the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (or to all six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*), which are joined with *Shekhinah* through virtuous deeds on earth, referred to here as “ornaments and adornments from below.”

“The upper glory” represents the higher *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod* (all contained initially within *Binah*). Just as this higher realm contains aspects known as creation, formation, and making (as explained below), so does the human being. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:736.

625. Creation is on the left... “Creation” corresponds to *Gevurah*, on the left. “Formation” corresponds to *Ḥesed*, on the right. “Making” corresponds to *Tif’eret*, who mediates between them. Since the human being has to convey these qualities of the upper glory to *Shekhinah* (*My glory*, lower glory), God fashioned within him similar aspects, as indicated by the verse in Isaiah: *whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made*.

The three aspects within the human being that correspond to creation, formation, and making are apparently *nefesh* (soul), *ruah* (spirit), and *neshamah* (soul-breath). See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 39-40; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:737.

The discussion here (of creation, formation, and making) differs from the systematic kabbalistic theory of four worlds: Emanation, Creation, Formation, and Making. See Vol. 3, p. 74, n. 500.

626. How do we know... What is the biblical proof that the upper glory includes creation, formation, and making? Rabbi El’azar explains that the verse in Isaiah links *forming* with *light* (which symbolizes *Ḥesed*), *creating* with *darkness* (symbolizing *Gevurah*), and *making* with *peace* (symbolizing *Tif’eret*, who harmonizes the polar opposites *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*).

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Forming light and creating darkness, making peace and creating evil—I, YHVH, do all these*.

627. Similarly, the human... The three aspects of the human soul correspond to the three qualities of the upper glory. Consequently, *Shekhinah* (“this [lower] glory”) is restored and encompassed by *sefirot* above and by the human below.

628. Happy is the person... Happy is one who perfects the aspects of his soul, thereby imitating the sefirotic qualities and restoring *Shekhinah*.

The flow of emanation (“holy anointing oil”) issues from *Hokhmah* to *Binah* (who is known as “the World that is Coming”) and proceeds continuously from Her to the upper glory (the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*) and on to *Shekhinah*. Similarly, one whose deeds are pure is constantly blessed with that flow.

629. How does a person become worthy... One attains this bliss by providing for the poor and delighting them at his table. Then he will be receive the flow that derives from the upper realm of the *sefirot*, which lies *above* *YHVH*, that is, above *Tif'eret* (who is known as *YHVH*).

On the importance of providing for the poor, see *Zohar* 1:10b, 104a; 2:198a; 3:104a. The context in Isaiah (58:10, 14) reads: *If you offer your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light will shine in darkness, and your gloom be like noon.... Then you will delight* על יהוה (*al YHVH*), *in YHVH, and I will cause you to ride upon the heights of the earth, and feed you the inheritance of your father Jacob—for the mouth of YHVH has spoken.* The phrase על יהוה (*al YHVH*), *in* [or: *upon*] *YHVH*, is interpreted here hyperliterally: *above YHVH*. See *Zohar* 1:216a, 219a; 2:50b, 83a, 88a–b; 3:94b.

630. donkey-driver... ט"ע"א (*Tayya'a*), “Arab, Arab caravaner,” derived from the name of the Arabian tribe *Tayyi'*. In the *Zohar*, *tayya'a* usually indicates one of various wandering donkey-drivers encountered by the Companions on the road.

See above, [p. 2, n. 4](#). On the word טעין (*ta'ein*), “goading,” see above, [p. 4, n. 11](#).

631. We should engage and endeavor in words of Torah... Thereby adorning God.

On the importance of engaging in Torah while on a journey, see Deuteronomy 6:7; M *Avot* 3:7; BT *Eruvin* 54a, *Ta'anit* 10b; *Zohar* 1:7a, 58b, 69b–70a, 76a, 87a, 115b, 157a, 164a, 230a–b; 2:13a, 95a, 138b. Cf. M *Avot* 3:2–3, 6.

On God preceding a person on the way, see *Zohar* 1:49b-50a, 58b, 76a, 230a-b, 240b; 2:130b.

632. It is time to act for YHVH... On this verse, see *Sifrei Zuta* 27:1; M *Berakhot* 9:5; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14c-d; BT *Berakhot* 63a; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1, intro; *Zohar* 1:116b, 194a; 3:62b, 127b-128a (IR); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 19b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 44-48; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 185.

The dialogue between God and His celestial family builds on a rabbinic story related by Rav Yehudah in the name of Rav (in BT *Sanhedrin* 38b): “When the blessed Holy One sought to create the human being, He [first] created a company of ministering angels and asked them, ‘Is it your desire that we make the human being in our image?’ They responded, ‘Master of the Universe, what are his deeds?’ He replied, ‘Such and such are his deeds.’ They exclaimed, ‘Master of the Universe, *What is a human that You are mindful of him, a human being that You take note of him?*’ He stretched out His little finger among them and burned them. The same thing happened with a second company. The third company said to Him, ‘Master of the Universe, the former ones who spoke in Your presence—what did they accomplish? The entire world is Yours! Whatever You wish to do in Your world, do it.’ When He reached the members of the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersion [the Tower of Babel], whose deeds were corrupt, they [the angels] said to Him, ‘Master of the Universe, didn’t the first ones speak well?’ He responded, ‘*Till your old age, I am He; till you turn grey, I will carry you. [I have made and I will bear; I will carry and deliver]* (Isaiah 46:4).’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:5-6; 31:12; *Zohar* 1:57a-b.

633. power is weakened... God’s power is weakened by Israel’s neglect and violation of Torah. The righteous who remain committed to Torah must then strengthen God

through virtuous action. Thus, they *act for YHVH*, actualizing the divine potential.

On Israel's effect on God, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:33, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon: "When Israel enact the will of the Omnipresent, they strengthen heavenly power, as is said: *In God we generate strength* (Psalms 60:14). When Israel do not enact the will of the Omnipresent, they weaken, as it were, the great power above, as is written: *The Rock that bore you, יָשָׁן (teshi), you weakened* (Deuteronomy 32:18)."

The word *teshi* derives from the root נָשָׁח (*nshh*), "to forget," and the simple meaning of the verse in Deuteronomy is: *The Rock that bore you, you forgot*. However, according to this midrashic reading, the word means *you weakened*, based on the root שָׁשָׁן (*tshsh*), "to be weak."

On the radical idea of weakening God, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 319; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:12; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 25:1; *Zohar* 1:57b, 234b; 2:32b, 64a, 65b.

634. In many ways the path is paved... Rabbi Yose may be suggesting that the three of them correspond to the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who join with *Shekhinah*.

635. there is a time... The *time* above refers to *Shekhinah*, perhaps because She conducts the world according to a cosmic schedule, enabling each phenomenon to unfold in its proper time. Alternatively, She is called *time* because She changes constantly, influenced by various forces at various times.

There is another *time*, identified with the demonic realm (*other gods*), or specifically with the demonic female, Lilith. This other *time* is *a time to hate*, whereas *Shekhinah* is *a time to love*, as indicated by the verse in Deuteronomy: *You shall love וְאַתָּה (et) YHVH*, since *et* symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

Aaron is cautioned not to enter the sanctuary *at* [or: *with*] *just any time*, but rather only with *Shekhinah*, *a time*

above.

On *Shekhinah* as *time*, see *Zohar* 1:116b, 194a; 3:58a–b. The phrase *a time of favor* comes from Psalms 69:14 (quoted below): *As for me, may my prayer to You, O YHVH, come at a time of favor.*

On *Shekhinah* as *תא* (*et*), see above, [note 179](#). The donkey-driver is apparently playing with *עת* (*et*), *time*, and *תא* (*et*).

The expression *other gods* appears frequently, most famously in the second of the Ten Commandments: *You shall have no other gods beside Me* (Exodus 20:3). On the verse in Leviticus, see *Zohar* 1:80a (*ST*), 116b, 194a; 3:57b–58b. Cf. the kabbalistic interpretation of the following verse in Vol. 4, p. 254, n. 204.

636. when Israel engages in Torah... Such holy action adorns and perfects *Shekhinah*, the *time* of faith. The donkey-driver now explains that the wording in Psalms, *עת לעשות* (*et la'asot*), means not simply *It is time to act*, but, more profoundly, [*Shekhinah*] *is a time to actualize*: She needs to be actualized and completed because Israel has *violated Your Torah*. Her condition depends on those who are virtuous, since only they can perfect and raise Her. Such holy action is *ליהוה* (*la-YHVH*), *for YHVH*—or, it raises *Shekhinah la-YHVH*, *to YHVH*, namely to Her spouse, *Tif'eret* (who is known by this divine name). See *Zohar* 1:116b.

The donkey-driver elucidates the meaning of *la'asot* (*to make, act, actualize*) by drawing on a rabbinic interpretation of a verse from Genesis. The verse reads in full: *God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, for on it He ceased from all His work that God had created לעשות* (*la'asot*), *to make*. The difficult wording at the end of this verse stimulated the midrashic imagination. See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 17: “It is not written here: [*He ceased from all His work*] *that [God] had created and made*, but rather [*that God had created*] *to make*, for the Sabbath came first and their work [i.e., *all His work* of Creation] was not completed. Rabbi Benaya said, ‘This refers to the

demons, for He created their souls, and as He was creating their bodies, the Sabbath day was hallowed. He left them, and they remained soul without body.’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:5; 11:9; *Zohar* 1:14a, 47b-48a, 178a; 2:178b (*SdT*s); 3:142b (*IR*); *ZH* 32d-33a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 397; and *M Avot* 5:6: “Ten things were created on Friday eve at twilight: ...Some say, ‘Also the demons.’”

637. Happy is the generation in which Rabbi Shim'on dwells... On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on and his generation, see above, [note 410](#).

638. Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Hiyya dismounted... Until now, they had been riding on their donkeys, with the donkey-driver goading the animals from behind.

639. a time of favor... See *BT Berakhot* 8a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: “What is the meaning of the verse: *As for me, may my prayer to You, O YHVH, come at a time of favor?* When is *a time of favor?* When the congregation prays.”

Here the donkey-driver explains that by praying together the congregation adorns and enhances *Shekhinah* (known as *time*), preparing Her for union with *Tif'eret* and transforming Her into *a time of favor*. Such a time is propitious for presenting a request in prayer.

On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:105b, 116b; 2:253b; 3:49b, 129a (*IR*).

640. As for me, may my prayer...mystery of single unification... The word וָאֲנִי (*Va-ani*), *And* [or: *As for*] *me*, signifies both *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*. *Yesod* is symbolized by the letter ו (vav), whose numerical value is six, alluding to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod* itself. *Shekhinah* is known as אֲנִי (*ani*), *I* (or *me*), because through Her the divine personality reveals itself, declaring “I am.”

Shekhinah, known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom), is also symbolized by King David. Further, She is known as the Redeeming Angel and when She is joined with *Yesod*, who marries or

“redeems” Her, She is called Redemption. Finally, She is also called Prayer, since She conveys prayers to the higher *sefirot*.

In the daily morning liturgy, the blessing “Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who has redeemed Israel” immediately precedes the *Amidah*, the “standing” prayer—so central that it is known simply as Prayer. It is considered meritorious to join the blessing of Redemption to this prayer without any interruption or pause. Here, the joining of Redemption to Prayer is seen as the beginning of the union of *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*, and thus *a time of favor*—*time* alluding to *Shekhinah*, and *favor* alluding to *Yesod*, who transmits the flow of the higher *sefirot*, originating in *Keter* (who is known as *Ratson*, “Will, Favor”). In uttering this verse, the Psalmist King David sought to unify the divine couple.

On *Shekhinah* as *ani* (*I, me*), see above, [p. 25](#), [n. 69](#). On *Shekhinah* as the Redeeming Angel, see *Zohar* 1:228a-229a, 230a, 232a; 3:95b, 187a. On *Shekhinah* and *Yesod* sharing the quality of redemption, see *Zohar* 3:95b.

On the importance of joining Redemption to Prayer, see also BT *Berakhot* 4b, 9b, 10b. On its kabbalistic significance, see *Zohar* 1:132b, 205b, 228b; 2:128b, 138b, 200b, 216b; 3:195b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 78-79; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 75-76 (96). For various interpretations of this somewhat confusing passage, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

[641](#). Why was this verse designated for *minḥah* of Sabbath?... The verse in Psalms is recited before the Torah service on Sabbath afternoon. The donkey-driver explains that during the rest of the week the late afternoon is a time of strict Judgment, as darkness draws near, but on Sabbath afternoon Judgment is sweetened by Compassion, and *Keter* (who is known as *Ratson*, “Will, Favor”) prevails, so this verse of unification is fitting.

On afternoon as a time of Judgment and the special quality of Sabbath afternoon, see *Zohar* 1:95b, 132b, 182b,

230a; 2:21a (*MhN*), 36b, 88b; 3:64b, 129a (*IR*), 136a-b (*IR*), 288b (*IZ*), 293a (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 87; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:963-64.

642. Moses departed from the world... His soul ascended on Sabbath afternoon at *a time of favor* and was welcomed above, although there was sorrow below. In commemoration of the death of the man who received the Torah at Mount Sinai, Torah is not studied during the late Sabbath afternoon.

Following the *Amidah* on Sabbath afternoon, three verses from Psalms are recited, describing God's righteousness (see below). In the Sephardic liturgy the first of these is: *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; Your judgments, the great abyss; human and beast You deliver, O YHVH*. These verses are regarded as a form of צדוק הדין (*tsidduq ha-din*), "justification of judgment," an acceptance of the justice of divine judgment and of the divine decree of death (imposed on Moses).

On Moses dying on the Sabbath, see BT *Sotah* 13b. On the later tradition of his dying on Sabbath afternoon and "the justification of judgment," see Solomon ben Isaac, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, p. 313; Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, p. 111; *Tosafot*, *Menaḥot* 30a, s.v. *mi-kan*; Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 1:186-87; Radak on Joshua 3:2; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margalioṭ), par. 356 (and n. 2); *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 1018 (and n. 5); Zedekiah ben Abraham Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, par. 126; *Zohar* 2:88b-89a; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 220 (cf. 30); Israel al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, 2:192; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:167-68, n. 966; Scholem; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 32. Cf. *Zohar* 1:44b (*Heikh*); 2:253b (*Heikh*).

On houses of study being closed to mark the death of a sage, see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 22b. On their being closed on Sabbath to mark Moses' death, see *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 220; David Luria's notes, ad loc., v-

vii. Cf. Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarḥi, *Sefer ha-Manhig*, 1:187.

643. There are three who departed... According to the tradition mentioned above, Moses died on Sabbath afternoon. King David also died on the Sabbath, according to a tradition in the name of Rav (BT *Shabbat* 30a-b). Here, the donkey-driver adds Joseph to this distinguished pair.

King David symbolizes *Shekhinah* (also known as *Malkhut*, “Kingdom”). Joseph the Righteous symbolizes *Yesod* (known as Righteous One). Both of these are “included in Moses,” symbolizing *Tif’eret*, since He unites with *Shekhinah* via His extension, *Yesod*.

As explained in the preceding note, on Sabbath afternoon following the *Amidah* three verses from Psalms are recited, acknowledging God’s righteousness and the justice of the divine decree of death (imposed on Moses, David, and Joseph). In the Sephardic liturgy their order is: *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; Your judgments, the great abyss; human and beast You deliver, O YHVH* (Psalms 36:7); *Your righteousness, O God, reaches the heights, as You have done great things. O God, who is like You?* (ibid. 71:19); and *Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your Torah is truth.*

Here the donkey-driver links each verse with one of the biblical heroes who died on Sabbath afternoon. The first verse corresponds to the first of these: Joseph, symbolizing *Yesod*, who conveys the flow of the sefirotic *mountains*, namely *Hesed* through *Yesod* itself. The second verse corresponds to Moses, who attained *the heights* of *Tif’eret* and accomplished *great things* by grasping the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, on the right and left. The third verse corresponds to King David, who symbolizes *Shekhinah*, known as both צדק (*tsedeq*), *righteousness*, and עולם (*olam*), “world,” and indicated by the phrase צדק לעולם (*tsedeq le-olam*), *an everlasting righteousness*.

On the title Joseph the Righteous, see above, [pp. 47-48, n. 132](#). *Shekhinah* is known as “world” because She rules and nourishes the world. On King David and *olam*, “eternity,” see 2 Samuel 7:16.

644. Thus all was withdrawn... On Sabbath afternoon, Written Torah (symbolizing *Tif'eret*, the *sefirah* of Moses) and Oral Torah (symbolizing *Shekhinah*, the *sefirah* of David) withdrew. Consequently, the gates of Torah were locked, and each week at this time the gates of all houses of study are locked.

With the death of Joseph (symbolizing *Yesod*), the sources of *Yesod* dried up and the tribes of Israel (the descendants of Joseph and his brothers) were enslaved in Egyptian exile. The angels chanted Joseph's verse, justifying God's decree (and perhaps looking forward to deliverance): *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; Your judgments, the great abyss; human and beast You deliver, O YHVH.*

With the death of Moses (representing *Tif'eret*), the sun darkened. *Tif'eret* is symbolized by both the sun and Written Torah, and is pictured as the resplendent speculum. On this last image, see above, [note 62](#). On Moses and the sun, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 140: “The face of Moses was like the face of the sun; the face of Joshua was like the face of the moon.” See BT *Bava Batra* 75a.

With the death of David (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), the moon darkened. *Shekhinah* is symbolized by both the moon and Oral Torah.

On the link between Joseph's death and the beginning of Israel's enslavement in Egypt, see Exodus 1:6-11; *Tanḥuma*, *Shemot* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 4; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:4.

645. Ever since that time, dissension... The Mishnah, of course, was edited more than a millennium after King David, but the view here is that the Oral Torah was already developing in his time and that harmony

among the sages disappeared along with David. To mark the passing of these three biblical heroes on Sabbath afternoon, Torah is not studied at that time and its joy is absent.

When certain prominent figures (such as Rabbi Yehudah the Prince) died, or when tragic events occurred, a fast day was declared. All the more so, to mark the disappearance of Torah caused by the death of these three figures on Sabbath afternoon, it is fitting to lock the gates of Torah each week at that time. Then too, the verses from Psalms are recited, acknowledging the justice of the divine decree.

On a fast day being decreed upon the death of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince, see BT *Ketubbot* 104a. For similar instances, see the end of *Megillat Ta'anit*; JT *Mo'ed Qatan* 3:7, 83b. On a fast day being decreed over tragic events, see M *Ta'anit* 3:6; the end of *Megillat Ta'anit*.

646. *Wisdom strengthens the wise...* The donkey-driver paraphrases a rabbinic tradition about the angels' objection to Moses receiving the Torah. See BT *Shabbat* 88b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "When Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels said before the blessed Holy One, 'Master of the Universe! What is one born of woman doing here among us?' He answered, 'He has come to receive Torah.' They said, 'That precious treasure hidden by You for 974 generations before the world was created, You desire to give to flesh and blood! *What is a human that You are mindful of him, a human being that You take note of him?* (Psalms 8:5).' 'Answer them,' said the blessed Holy One to Moses. 'Master of the Universe,' he replied, 'I fear they could scorch me with the breath of their mouths.' He said, 'Grasp My throne of Glory, and answer them....'"

See *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20; *Ma'yan Hokhmah* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:58-61); *Zohar* 1:5a; 2:58a; 3:78b. On the verse in Ecclesiastes being applied to Moses, see *Qohelet Rabbah*

on 7:19. The Hebrew term rendered as “the wise” is singular, although it is usually construed in English as a collective.

647. *מעשרה (me-asarah), from ten, rulers...* The verse reads: *Wisdom strengthens the wise מעשרה (me-asarah), more than ten, rulers who are in the city.* But the preposition *me* can also mean “from,” which enables the donkey-driver to reinterpret the verse as: *Wisdom strengthens the wise me-asarah, from ten, rulers,* indicating the source of this strength—namely the Ten Commandments, or the ten utterances by which God created the world, both of which correspond to the ten *sefirot*. The utterances of Torah provide wisdom, guiding and fortifying a person both here and beyond.

On the ten utterances of Creation, see *M Avot* 5:1: “The world was created through ten utterances.” See below, [p. 575, n. 71](#). On the relation between these ten utterances and the Ten Commandments, see Vol. 4, p. 408, n. 141. According to a rabbinic tradition, the Ten Commandments include all 613 commandments of the Torah. See *ibid.*, p. 515, n. 543.

On *me-asarah* as meaning *from ten*, see *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:19.

648. ten types of wisdom... Corresponding to the ten *sefirot*, each of which is called by a divine name. These ten holy names are somehow interwoven in the Name of Twenty-two Letters, which is traditionally identified as *אנאqtam פסתם פספסים דיונסים (Anaqtam Pastam Paspasim Deyonsim)*. This incomprehensible name apparently derives, through various permutations, from the opening twenty-two letters of the priestly benediction (Numbers 6:24–26): *יאר יהוה יברכך יהוה וישמרך (Yevarekhekha YHVH veyishmerekha, ya'er YHVH), May YHVH bless you and protect you. May YHVH shine [His face upon you and be gracious to you. May YHVH lift up His face to you and grant you peace].*

On this name, see *Sefer Raziel*, 42b, 44b-45a; Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* 21:14; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 92-94. On the priestly blessing, cf. above, [note 77](#).

For various enumerations of the holiest divine names (“that cannot be erased”), see JT *Megillah* 1:8, 71d; BT *Shevu’ot* 35a; *Soferim* 4:1-2; *Sefer Torah* 4:1-2. The kabbalists listed ten such names, corresponding to the ten *sefirot*.

On the invisible delights awaiting the righteous in the world that is coming, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You].*”

[649](#). **A person’s table entitles him...** If one eats in a holy manner, this entitles him to feast in the world that is coming.

See above at [notes 599](#)-606, 617-22, 629. On the verse in Samuel, see above, [note 589](#). On the verse in Psalms, see above at [notes 577](#)-78.

[650](#). **Now, do souls have a table in that world?...** Yes, souls feast there on spiritual sustenance like the angels, whose food resembles the manna eaten by Israel in the desert, called *bread from heaven* (Exodus 16:4). This spiritual food emanates from the highest sefirotic realm through *Binah* (known as “the World that is Coming”) and eventually reaches the Garden of Eden, where souls of the righteous are clothed in garments resembling their earthly bodies.

On the angelic manna, see *Zohar* 2:61b; above, [p. 50, n. 143](#). On the connection between manna and dew, see Exodus 16:13-14; Numbers 11:9. On emanation as dew, see above, [note 199](#).

On the soul’s garment in the Garden of Eden, see above, [note 520](#).

651. On Sabbaths and festivals... Then the souls strip themselves of these garments and ascend to the celestial Garden of Eden.

The donkey-driver wonders why the verse reads *all flesh*, which sounds inappropriate for souls. He explains this based on the dynamics of the *sefirot*, in whose image the human being is created. In that realm, the highest divine spirit animates *Tif'eret* (known as spirit) and the highest divine soul animates *Binah* (known as soul). As emanation proceeds, a spirit of *Yesod* (known as source of life) enters *Shekhinah*—who contains all souls, embodies all of the *sefirot*, and is called Body. *Yesod*, who contains the entire flow of the higher *sefirot* is also called *all*, providing all that is needed by the body of *Shekhinah*, as implied by the verse in Ecclesiastes: *The abundance of earth* [symbolizing *Shekhinah*] *is in all*—namely, is contained in, and conveyed by, *Yesod*.

Just as the spirit of *Yesod* animates and controls the body of *Shekhinah*, so the human spirit animates and controls the human body. The expression *all flesh* refers to the human spirit, or soul, which resembles *Yesod* (called *all*) and totally animates the body (*flesh*).

The designation of *Shekhinah* as Body derives, at least in part, from a Talmudic teaching in the name of Rabbi Assi (BT *Yevamot* 62a): “The Son of David [i.e., the Messiah] will not come until all souls in the body have been depleted.” “The body” is the heavenly treasure-house of unborn souls. In the *Zohar* the treasure-house of unborn souls is located in the Garden of Eden, though it is sometimes identified with *Shekhinah*, who gives birth to the soul.

See 3 Enoch 43:3; Rashi on *Yevamot* 62a, s.v. *mi-shum*; idem on *Avodah Zarah* 5a, s.v. *ad she-yikhlu*; *Bahir* 126 (184); *Zohar* 1:28b (TZ), 119a, 181a; 2:95b, 161b, 174a, 253a (*Heikh*); 3:152a; ZH 10b-c (*MhN*), 60b, 69b (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 93; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:179–80; 2:696, 701–2; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 179–80, 226. Cf. above, [note 309](#).

On the soul's ascent, based on the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:115b–116a (*MhN*); 3:144b–145a (*IR*), 159b, 182b; *ZH* 18b (*MhN*). On the phrase “soul of soul,” see Vol. 2, p. 134, n. 131; Vol. 3, p. 501, n. 895.

On *Yesod* as *all*, see *Bahir* 14 (22); Naḥmanides on Genesis 24:1. On the verse in Ecclesiastes, see Naḥmanides on Genesis 24:1; *Zohar* 1:122a; 2:134b.

For various interpretations of *all flesh* here, see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. Cf. *ZH* 90b (*MhN*, *Rut*).

652. Ḥanin... יְחִנֵּךְ (*yoḥnekha*), be gracious to you... The name חֲנִיָּן (*Ḥanin*) and the first word of Rabbi Ḥiyya's blessing —*yoḥnekha*—both derive from the root חָנַן (*ḥnn*), “to be gracious.”

Rabbi Ḥiyya's blessing to the donkey-driver is based on Joseph's blessing to his brother Benjamin, whom he had not seen for many years: *May God יְחִנֵּךְ (*yoḥnekha*), be gracious to you, my son* (Genesis 43:29).

653. Kefar Ḥanin... This place (also called Kefar Ḥanan) is mentioned numerous times in rabbinic literature, almost always as the residence of Rabbi Ya'akov. See also *Zohar* 1:87b, 115a (*MhN*), 206b; 2:5a (*MhN*); *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

654. When you have eaten and are satisfied... The verse specifies that *you shall bless YHVH your God for the good land that He has given you*. Does this mean that if one resides outside of the land of Israel no blessing is necessary? Rabbi Yose begins to answer by explaining the significance of the Holy Land, which lies at the heart of the world. From the center of the Land itself, the whole world is nourished.

See *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 10: “The land of Israel sits in the center of the world, Jerusalem in the center of the land of Israel, the Temple in the center of Jerusalem, the sanctuary in the center of the Temple, the ark in the center of the sanctuary, and in front of the ark the Foundation Stone, from which the world was founded.”

See BT *Yoma* 54b, *Sanhedrin* 37a; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qedoshim* 10; Nahmanides on Leviticus 18:25; *Zohar* 1:226a; 2:184b, 193a; 3:65b, 161b. On the whole world being nourished from the site of the Temple, see *ZḤ* 87d (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. BT *Ta'anit* 10a (quoted above, [note 575](#)). On the Foundation Stone, see above, [note 557](#). On the verse in Deuteronomy, see above, [note 573](#).

655. there is no harsher desolation... The demonic force (symbolized by *fiery serpents and scorpions*) prevails in desolate places and especially in the Sinai Desert, where Israel wandered for forty years. Yet Israel broke the power of the Other Side, and if they had not sinned and provoked God so many times, the demonic force would have been totally eliminated.

On the demonic control over the desert (and the Sinai Desert in particular), see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 32:10; Nahmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:14b, 126a, 169b, 178b, 228a; 2:21a (*MhN*), 60a, 184a, 236b-237a; 3:63b. The verse in Deuteronomy describes God's miraculous protection of Israel.

656. What about Moses... How could he have died in the desert controlled by the Other Side? Rabbi Yose explains that Mount Abarim, where Moses died, was not under demonic power. The name העברים (*ha-avarim*), "Abarim," implies that various *avarim*, "opposing sides," (namely the various heavenly princes of the nations) quarreled over its possession. (A less likely explanation is that *avarim* implies עברה [*evrah*], "wrath.") However, none of these heavenly powers nor the Other Side was entrusted with Mount Abarim, which instead came under the control of Moses himself.

The description of Moses' burial in Deuteronomy reads: ויקבר אתו (*Va-yiqbor oto*), *He was buried, in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor, and no man has known his burial place to this day*. Rabbi Yose reads the clause *va-yiqbor oto* literally: *He buried him*, and he interprets the

anonymous subject *he* as referring to God, just as the anonymous subjects in the verses in Exodus and Leviticus refer to God, or specifically to *Shekhinah*. Although the verse in Deuteronomy states that *no man has known his burial place to this day*, the Companions do know the “place” that engaged in Moses’ burial: the realm of *Shekhinah*.

Moses was buried among (or near) the Israelites who died in the desert, in order to demonstrate that just as he will be revived at the end of days, so will all of them.

On Moses as faithful, see Numbers 12:7: *Not so My servant Moses, in all My house he is faithful* [or: *trusted*]. On Moses as Faithful Shepherd, see *Mekhilta, Beshallah* 6; *Sifrei Zuta* 27; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petihta* 24; *Ester Rabbah* 7:13; *Rut Rabbah, Petihta* 5. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 7.

On Moses’ death on Mount Abarim, see Numbers 27:12–14; Deuteronomy 32:48–52. On God as the subject of *He buried him*, see *M Sotah* 1:9; *Tosefta Sotah* 4:8; *Mekhilta, Beshallah, Petihta*; *Sifrei*, Numbers 106. On other instances of the anonymous subject *he*, see above, [p. 177, n. 105](#); above, [note 230](#).

On Moses being buried near the Israelites in order to ensure their future reward, see *Devarim Rabbah* 2:9; *Tanḥuma, Huqqat* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat* 32; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:13; *Zohar* 1:113b (*MhN*). Cf. *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 42; *Tanḥuma, Va’ethannan* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va’ethannan* 6; 3:280a (*RM*).

657. If that desert is the potency... If the demonic force controls and thrives on the Sinai Desert, why didn’t God command that the scapegoat (offered on Yom Kippur) be sent there, rather than to another mountain? After all, this goat is intended to occupy and assuage the Other Side so that he will not accuse Israel of sinning.

Rabbi Yose explains that Israel had broken the power of the Other Side in the Sinai Desert, whereas he still dominated the desolate area beneath the “towering mighty

rock”—namely the cliff from which the scapegoat was pushed to its death below. (See M *Yoma* 6:6.)

In the original ritual of Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:7–10), one goat is sacrificed as a purification offering to God, while a scapegoat bearing the sins of Israel is sent off into the desert for the demon Azazel. (Similarly in the Babylonian Akitu ritual, a goat—substituted for a human being—is offered to Ereshkigal, goddess of the Abyss.) According to *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 46, the goat of Yom Kippur is intended to preoccupy Satan: “They gave him a bribe on Yom Kippur so that he would not nullify Israel’s sacrifice.”

On the theme of assuaging demonic powers by offering them a portion, see above, [p. 102](#), [n. 291](#).

658. The dominion of mystery of faith... *Shekhinah* dwells at the site of the Holy of Holies, which lies at the center of the world, and even though the Temple has been destroyed and the Holy of Holies no longer exists, the entire world is still nourished for the sake of this central point and of God’s Presence there. Therefore, even if one dwells outside the Holy Land, it is still fitting to bless God *for the good land that He has given you*, since the power and merit of the Land ensure sustenance for all.

On the Holy of Holies as the center of the world, see above, [note 654](#).

659. One who delights at his table... If a person who is enjoying his meal recalls and cares about the holiness of the Land and the destroyed Temple, it is as if he actually rebuilt the Temple.

See BT *Berakhot* 48b, in the name of Rabbi Eli’ezer: “If one does not say ‘a desirable, good, and extensive land’ in the blessing of the Land and does not mention the kingdom of the house of David in the blessing ‘Who builds Jerusalem,’ he has not fulfilled his obligation.” Cf. BT *Rosh Hashanah* 30a.

660. The cup of blessing pertains only with three...

Traditionally, a cup of wine is held during Grace after Meals. Here, Rabbi Yose insists that the cup of blessing is used only if three have eaten together, because the cup symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is blessed by the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

According to BT *Berakhot* 51a, “One takes [the cup] with both his hands and places it in the right hand.” Here, right and left symbolize, respectively, *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, who embrace *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the cup). In order to stimulate and imitate this divine embrace, one person holds the cup in both hands and gives it to the one who will recite Grace after Meals, who receives it with both hands and then holds it in the right, since the blessing flows to *Shekhinah* primarily from *Ḥesed*.

On the question of whether one who eats alone should hold a cup of wine during Grace after Meals, see *Midrash Tehillim* 4:13 (and Buber’s n. 103); *Tosafot* on *Pesahim* 105b, s.v. *shema minah berakhah*; *ZH* 87c (*MhN*, *Rut*); *Zohar* 3:246a, 274a (both *RM*); *Tur*, *Orah Ḥayyim* 182; *Beit Yosef*, *Orah Ḥayyim* 182:1-2.

On the cup of blessing and exactly how it should be held, see BT *Berakhot* 51a-b; above, [note 241](#).

661. Ten things have been said... See BT *Berakhot* 51a: “Ten things have been said concerning the cup of blessing: ...it should be full;... one takes it with both his hands and places it in the right hand,... one fixes his eyes upon it.”

Here the “ten things” correspond to the ten *sefirot*, which are completed and perfected by *Shekhinah*. By gazing at the cup while reciting Grace after Meals, one stimulates the divine eyes to gaze upon *Shekhinah*.

In the verse in Deuteronomy, *upon her* means upon the land of Israel, which here symbolizes *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 1:107a, 199a, 250b; *ZH* 87c (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 105.

662. The cup of blessing is blessed... By reciting the blessing with devotion, one ensures that God will bless the cup (which symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the mystery of faith) and constantly provide food upon his table.

663. the table must not be empty... So as to ensure the flow of blessing from above.

In the passage from Kings, the prophet Elisha performs a miracle for an anonymous poor woman, providing her with an abundant supply of oil—but only after she takes out the little oil that she already has and borrows many empty vessels from her neighbors.

Similarly, the verses in Exodus and Daniel demonstrate that God grants wisdom to those who already possess it, not to those who are empty-headed. So too, the table of the Bread of the Presence never stood empty for even a moment, ensuring a continual supply of food for Israel and the world.

On the need for the table not to be empty when one recites the Grace after Meals, see BT *Sanhedrin* 92a, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: “Whoever does not leave bread on his table [when reciting the Grace after Meals] will never see a sign of blessing.”

See above, [notes 598–99](#). On the verses in Exodus and Daniel, see *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer*, 11, p. 218; BT *Berakhot* 55a; *Tanḥuma, Vayaqhel* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Miqqets* 9; *Leqah Tov*, Exodus 28:3; 31:6; *Zohar* 2:223a–b.

Cf. BT *Berakhot* 40a: “Come and see how the character of the blessed Holy One differs from that of flesh and blood. In the case of flesh and blood, an empty vessel holds [more], but not a full one. However, the blessed Holy One is not so: a full vessel holds [more], but not an empty one.”

[664. \[160b\]](#) The passage from the bottom of 157b to the middle of 159a belongs to *Ra'aya Meheimna* (which is not included in this translation). See Vol. 1, p. xv, n. 2.

The passage from the middle of 159a to the top of 160b begins with a discussion of the Tabernacle and then explores the creative potencies of certain letters of the alphabet. This passage is missing in numerous reliable manuscripts (including M5, N41, O2, and O17). Cordovero (*OY*) includes it, though he notes that it is missing in some versions. In the Cremona edition, this passage appears in *Parashat Be-reshit* rather than here in *Parashat Terumah*. The Mantua edition includes it here and then reads: “Until here we found in transcription.” See Soncino; Scholem; Wolfson, “Forms of Visionary Ascent,” 212, n. 17.

[665. *The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains...*](#) These curtains constitute the walls of the tent-like Tabernacle. The full verse reads: *The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains of twisted linen, and blue, purple, and crimson, with cherubim; of designer's work you shall make them.*

The terms *blue*, *purple*, and *crimson* refer to dyed yarns. On תכלת (*tekhelet*), *blue*, see above, [note 166](#).

[666. *Let us commence times of delight...*](#) The Aramaic phrase נפתח בעדנין (*niftah be-iddanin*), literally “Let us open times,” derives from the rabbinic expression בעידניה לפתח (*liftah be-iddaneih*), “to open his (set) time (for study),” his study session. See BT *Pesahim* 4a.

The translation here, “a time of delight,” reflects the possibility that *iddanin* also plays on the rabbinic Hebrew עֲדוּנִין (*iddunin*), “delights.”

667. recitation of *Shema*... The central prayer declaring God’s oneness. According to Kabbalah, by reciting the *Shema* with full intention one stimulates and effects sefirotic union.

Rabbi Yose realizes the mystical significance of the *Shema*, but he wonders why its opening words reappear in other verses in Deuteronomy.

On the symbolism of the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 1:12a, 18b; 2:43b (*Piq*), 133b, 216a-b; 3:162a, 195b, 203b-204a, 236b, 262b-263a, 264a-b, 268a; *ZH* 48a, 56d-58d (*QhM*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:971-74.

On the phrase “comes in order to be expounded,” see below, [note 943](#).

668. here the unity of supernal Wisdom... The opening line of the *Shema*—*Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*—alludes to the unity of the *sefirot*, which emanate from the primordial point of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom).

In the Masoretic text, the letter א (ayin) in the word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, is written large. Rabbi Yose indicates that the numerical value of *ayin*, seventy, hints at the seventy names of God, which correspond to the seven lower *sefirot*. The *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod* unite with the seventh, *Shekhinah*, who reveals the divine essence and is known as the Name. The word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, is now read as א ׁ ׁ (shem ayin), “name, seventy,” alluding to the union of *Shekhinah* with all seventy sefirotic aspects (or, the manifestation of all seventy aspects in *Shekhinah*). The *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod* (or *Shekhinah*) constitute a “supernal chariot” for the highest sefirotic realm.

On the large *ayin* in שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, see *Battei Midrashot*, 2:487; Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, *Peirushei Siddur ha-Tefillah*, 2:283; *Zohar* 3:236b, 258a (RM), 263a; *ZH* 57a; Hizzequni on Deuteronomy 6:4; *Ba'al ha-Turim*

and *Minḥat Shai* on Deuteronomy 6:4; below, [note 671](#). On the reading ׁ ׁׂ (shem ayin), see *Zohar* 2:216a.

On *Shekhinah* as God's name, see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 20:21. On the seventy names of God, see above, [p. 156, n. 47](#); Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, *Peirushei Siddur ha-Tefillah*, 2:283. Cf. the seventy-two names of God, described above, [note 113](#). On the connection between the number seventy and the *Shema*, see also *Zohar* 2:133b, 263a.

On the requirement to recite the opening line of the *Shema* with *kavvanah* (intention), see BT *Berakhot* 13b.

[669](#). **Afterward, Israel...** The second word of the *Shema* is *Israel*, who are included in the unification. In fact, though, *Israel* refers to *Tif'eret*, whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel) and who is also known as Israel the Elder. Here, at the core of the *sefirot*, "all conjoins," as *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* cleave to one another. The name *Israel* (referring to *Tif'eret Yisra'el*) includes three sefirotic aspects, symbolized by the three names in the opening line of the *Shema*: יהוה אלהינו יהוה (*YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*), *YHVH our God*, *YHVH*. These three names allude to *Ḥokhmah*, *Binah*, and *Tif'eret* (or alternatively to *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*).

In midrashic literature the title Israel the Elder refers to Israel the patriarch (Jacob), as opposed to Israel the people. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:11; *Zohar* 1:233a; 2:4a, 43a (*Piq*), 216a; 3:262b–263a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 42–43 (51).

Cf. BT *Pesaḥim* 56a (quoted above, [note 139](#)), where Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish teaches that Jacob's sons declared their true belief to their father with the words: *Hear, O Israel!* [i.e., Jacob]. *YHVH is our God, YHVH is one*.

On unifying the divine couple by reciting the *Shema*, see above at [notes 135–53](#). On the various sefirotic interpretations of *YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*, see below, [note 690](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:972–73.

Medieval Christian polemics asserted that these three divine names in the opening line of the *Shema* signify the Trinity. Here, instead, the *Zohar* presents a kabbalistic trinity. See *ibid.*, 973-74; Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 18-19; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 140-45; above at [note 141](#).

670. *Hear, O Israel in all other verses...* These other instances of the declaration *Hear, O Israel* do not refer to the union of the divine couple, yet these verses too are meant to be expounded. They allude to the rung of *Shekhinah*, who is known as שמע (*Shema*), *Hear*, and who is intimately connected with the people of *Israel*.

Rabbi Yose asks why the verse in Deuteronomy 27 employs the rare passive form נהיית (*nihyeita*), *you have become, a people*, rather than the common active form היית (*hayita*), *you became*. He explains that *nihyeita* echoes the prophet Daniel's self-description: נהייתי (*nihyeiti*), *I grew faint*. The Israelites become God's *people* only when their hearts are broken to serve Him.

On *Shekhinah* and the word *Shema, Hear*, see above, [note 668](#). The verse in Chronicles is spoken by King David to the officers of Israel. Rabbi Yose's interpretation here derives from BT *Sotah* 40a.

671. *Hear, O Israel! You are today crossing...* The word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, alludes to *Shekhinah*, the lower rung. (See above, [note 668](#).) Once Israel crossed the Jordan and entered the Holy Land, *Shekhinah* settled upon them. However, there is a significant difference between this *Hear, O Israel!* (as well as the identical wording in Deuteronomy 27:9) and *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*, which alludes to the unification of *Shekhinah* with the higher *sefirot*.

The expression "accepting upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven" refers to the recitation of the opening line of the *Shema*, by which one acknowledges the existence

of the one God and accepts the responsibility of serving Him. See M *Berakhot* 2:2.

As mentioned above ([note 668](#)), in the Masoretic text the letter א (ayin) in the word שמע (*shema*), *Hear*, is written large. Similarly, the letter ד (dalet) in the word אחד (*eḥad*), *one*, is written large. Together these two letters spell עד (*ed*), “witness,” alluding to the fact that by reciting this first line of the *Shema* one witnesses and testifies to the oneness of God. Here, Rabbi Yose applies the term witness to *Shekhinah*, who testifies before the Holy King that the person reciting the *Shema* has unified the divine name both in the sefirotic realm and on earth.

On the large dalet in אחד (*eḥad*), *one*, see *Battei Midrashot*, 2:484; *Zohar* 1:12a; *Ba’al ha-Turim* and *Minḥat Shai* on Deuteronomy 6:4. On the ayin and dalet forming עד (*ed*), “witness,” see Asher ben David, *Peirush Shelosh Esreh Middot*, 62; Jacob ben Jacob ha-Kohen, *Peirush ha-Otiyyot*, 208; *Zohar* 3:236b, 258a (RM); *ZH* 57a; Moses de León, *Or Zaru’a*, 252; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 75; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 79 (100–101); idem, *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 26; *Ba’al ha-Turim* on Deuteronomy 6:4; *Kolbo*, 122; David Abudarham, *Sefer Abudarham, Dinei Qeri’at Shema*, p. 80. Cf. above, [note 145](#).

[672.](#) יהוה אלהינו יהוה (**YHVH Eloheinu YHVH**)... These three divine names in the opening line of the *Shema* allude to three sefirot. See above, [note 669](#).

“Holy Lamp” is the title of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai. See above, [p. 159](#), [n. 58](#).

[673.](#) **Shekhinah comes...** She bestows Her presence upon one who has recited the *Shema* with devotion and thereby unified Her with the higher sefirot.

The seven blessings (traditionally recited at a wedding) correspond to the seven lower sefirot and the seventy divine names. See above, [note 668](#).

According to Rabbi Yose, the verse from Isaiah is spoken by *Shekhinah*, who declares: *You are My servant*,

Israel, in whom אתפאר (etpa'ar), *I glory*—i.e., by whom I have been united with תפארת (Tif'eret). See *Zohar* 1:169a.

674. You yourself were shown to know... In Egypt, Israel had succumbed to idolatry and forgotten the essence of faith, so Moses had to wean them from their false worship and beliefs, and gradually “show” them the truth, as one teaches a child. Once the people experienced God’s miracles—through the plagues delivered against the Egyptians, the parting of the Red Sea, the appearance of the manna, and water issuing from the rock—they understood “the way of the blessed Holy One.” Now they were prepared *to know*: to enter the profound mystery of faith, namely *that YHVH is Elohim*.

On Moses having to teach Israel about God gradually, see *Zohar* 2:5a (*Piq*). Cf. Exodus 3:13. For a different view, see *Zohar* 2:198b.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You yourself were shown to know that YHVH is God, there is none besides Him*. Here, N41, M5, and the Cremona edition conflate this verse with Deuteronomy 4:39: *Know today and take to your heart that YHVH is God in the heavens above and on the earth below, there is none else*. O2, O17, and OY read simply: *You yourself were shown to know that YHVH is God*. The Mantua edition reads: *You yourself were shown to know that YHVH is God....*

On the *Zohar*’s confusion of the forms מילף (meilaf), “to learn,” and אולף (olif), “to teach,” see Scholem, *Major Trends*, 388, n. 37; idem, *Kabbalah*, 227; Kaddari, *Diqduq ha-Lashon ha-Aramit shel ha-Zohar*, 78, n. 10. See *Targum Yonatan*, Isaiah 1:3; *Zohar* 3:164a, 190a; ZH 85d (*MhN, Rut*).

675. This is a small matter... One might think that the statement “*YHVH is Elohim (God)*” is obvious; but, on the contrary, this wording demonstrates a profound mystery, as Rabbi Ḥiyya proceeds to explain.

On *YHVH Elohim* as the “complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; cf. 12:15.

676. fathomers of qualities ידעי מדין (*Yade’ei middin*), “those who know *middin*,” apparently deriving from מודד (*mdd*), “to measure.” See Judges 5:10: *you who sit on middin*, where the word is variously rendered as “[extended, wide] carpets, blankets” or—based on דין (*din*), “judgment”—“the judgment seat.” See BT *Eruvin* 54b: “It was taught in the school of Rav Anan: What is the meaning of the verse... *you who sit on middin*?... You who render judgment in absolute truth.”

Here the expression apparently refers to kabbalists who know the מדות (*middot*), the divine “qualities, attributes,” namely the *sefirot*. It may also allude to those who know קומה שיעור (*shi’ur qomah*), “the measure of the [divine] stature.” See Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §952: “Whoever knows this שיעור (*shi’ur*), measure, of our Creator..., concealed from creatures, is assured of life in the world that is coming.” See above, [note 76](#).

677. He gazed into Torah and created the world... The Torah served as God’s blue-print for Creation, or His architect.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1, in the name of Rabbi Osha’ya: “*I was beside Him as אמון (amon), a nursling... אמון (amon)—אומן (umman), an artisan.* Torah says, ‘I was the artistic tool of the blessed Holy One.’ According to the custom of the world, when a mortal king builds a palace he does not build it by his own skill but rather by the skill of an architect. And the architect does not build it out of his own knowledge, but rather has parchments and tablets [with plans and diagrams] to know how to make the rooms and doors. Similarly, the blessed Holy One gazed into Torah and created the world.”

See M *Avot* 3:14; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba* 29; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 5; *Zohar* 1:5a, 47a,

134a-b; 2:200a; 3:35b, 152a, 178a; Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:242-45, 266-69.

The full verse in Proverbs (spoken by Wisdom) reads: *I was beside him as אָמוֹן (amon), a nursling [or: confidant, artisan]; I was a daily delight, playing before Him at all times.* The simple meaning of *amon* is obscure; it appears only one other time in the Bible, in Jeremiah 52:15. Cf. Song of Songs 7:2.

678. Now, did the blessed Holy One create the world by her?... According to rabbinic tradition, Torah preceded the world by two thousand years. By gazing into primordial Torah, God created all that exists. He was the master artisan, and Torah was *beside Him as an artisan.*

On Torah pre-existing the world by two thousand years, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:2; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 19:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:24; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11; *Midrash Shemu'el* 5:2; *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Yitro* 16; *Midrash Tehillim* 90:12; *Bahir* 4 (5); *Zohar* 2:49a, 84b, 99a; 3:128a (*IR*), 159a.

679. not a single thing was firmly established... The world cannot endure without Torah. Just as God created the world through her, so a human being sustains the world by studying and engaging in her.

On the vital role of Torah, see BT *Pesaḥim* 68b, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "Were it not for Torah [which must be studied day and night], heaven and earth would not endure, as is said: *Were it not for My covenant day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth* (Jeremiah 33:25)."

See also M *Avot* 1:2; BT *Shabbat* 119b; and *Shabbat* 88a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "Why is it written: *There was evening and there was morning, יום ה'ששי (yom ha-shishi), the sixth day* (Genesis 1:31)? Why the extra letter ה' (*he*)? This teaches that the blessed Holy One stipulated a condition with the works of Creation, saying to them: 'If Israel accepts the Torah [given at Mount Sinai on "the sixth

day” of the month Sivan], you will endure. If not, I will return you to *chaos and void* (Genesis 1:2).’”

680. his image and existence stood before Him... Before entering a human body, each soul is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body it will inhabit on earth.

The image of a treasure-house of souls derives from Rashi’s commentary on a Talmudic passage (BT *Yevamot* 62a) in which Rabbi Assi mentions a heavenly “body” containing all souls; Rashi refers to this body as אוצר (*otsar*), “a treasury, treasure-house.”

On the ethereal body, see above, [note 520](#). On the treasury of souls, see above, [note 651](#).

681. As they are about to descend... As each soul is about to enter this world, God summons an angel, who brings her before Him. She is then adjured to devote herself to exploring Torah and the mysterious divine reality.

On the adjuration of the soul, see BT *Niddah* 30b; *Zohar* 1:76b (*ST*), 233b; 3:13b. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You yourself were shown to know that YHVH is Elohim, God, there is none besides Him*. See above, [note 674](#).

682. What is to be known?... The essential mystery is that *YHVH is Elohim*—that the upper *sefirot*, concentrated in *Tif’eret* (known as *YHVH*), are unified with *Shekhinah* (known as *Elohim*). *Tif’eret* is symbolized by Written Torah, while *Shekhinah* is symbolized by Oral Torah.

Together, *YHVH Elohim* constitutes “the complete name.” (See above, [note 675](#).) The verse in Zechariah also alludes to the unity of *Tif’eret* (along with all the upper *sefirot*) and *Shekhinah*, since *YHVH* refers to *Tif’eret* and *His name* signifies *Shekhinah*.

The opening line of the *Shema* alludes to the unification of *Tif’eret* with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, while the following line (“Blessed be the name...”) alludes to the unification of *Shekhinah* (“the name”) with Her cohorts of angels. Once

each member of the divine couple is unified on its own, then the two unite with one another. See above at [notes 135-53](#).

On *Shekhinah* as God's name, see *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 20:21. The full verse in Zechariah reads: *YHVH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHVH will be one and His name one*. On the statement *YHVH is Elohim*, see also 1 Kings 18:39.

The passage beginning "*Hear, O Israel*" and extending below to "head of all" (at [note 694](#)) appears again in *Zohar* 3:264a-b.

683. Now, you might say... If the statement הוא האלהים יהוה (YHVH hu ha-Elohim), *YHVH is Elohim*, supposedly corresponds to *YHVH is one and His name one*, why are they not balanced? The former statement only contains the word *hu*, *He is*, once, whereas the latter contains the word אחד (eḥad), *one*, twice. If they truly correspond, then the former should read: *YHVH hu, He is, Elohim hu, He is*.

684. However, all is one... First *Tif'eret* unites with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, and *Shekhinah* unites with Her angels; only then, when each is united on its own, does the divine couple merge into one and *YHVH is Elohim*. See above, [note 682](#).

685. Totality of the whole Torah... Written Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*), while Oral Torah symbolizes *Shekhinah* (known as *Elohim*). Moreover, the entire Torah is pictured as God's name.

Written Torah contains God's word in general, while Oral Torah expands the general principles into numerous particulars. Both the general principle and its particulars are necessary, just as *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* are interdependent.

This reference to "general" and "particular" derives from a rabbinic hermeneutical rule concerning "a generalization that requires a specification" and "a specification that requires a generalization." For this

hermeneutical rule, see *Sifra*, intro, 9, 2b-c. Cf. *Zohar* 1:16b, 47b, 246b; 2:3a, 176a-b, 178a (*SdTs*); 3:264a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 335-36; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 107-8.

On Torah as God's Name, see Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 548; Nahmanides, introduction to Commentary on the Torah, 6-7; *Zohar* 2:60a, 87a, 90b, 124a; 3:13b, 19a, 21a, 35b-36a, 73a, 89b, 98b, 159a, 265b, 298b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 341-42; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 37-44; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1085-86; Idel, "Tefisat ha-Torah."

686. totality of Torah is totality of above and below... Encompassing *Tif'eret* (along with the higher *sefirot*) and *Shekhinah*. The former is "the upper world," signified by *YHVH*; the latter, "the lower world," signified by *Elohim*.

687. Where are the commandments of Torah... Where do they belong in the sefirotic whole?

Rabbi Hiyya explains by referring to two alternative versions of the Ten Commandments. The first version reads: זָכוֹר (*Zakhor*), *Remember, the Sabbath day to keep it holy* (Exodus 20:8). The second version reads: שָׁמוֹר (*Shamor*), *Observe, the Sabbath day to keep it holy* (Deuteronomy 5:12). According to rabbinic tradition, these two versions were spoken by God simultaneously.

For the kabbalist, *zakhor, remember*, suggests זָכָר (*zakhar*), "male," signifying the male divine potency (centered in *Tif'eret*), whereas the alternative formulation, *shamor, observe*, signifies the female, *Shekhinah*. Further, *zakhor, remember*, implies the 248 positive commandments of Torah (since time-bound positive commandments are generally incumbent only on men), while *shamor, observe*, implies the 365 negative commandments (incumbent on women as well), together totaling the 613 commandments of Torah.

On *remember* and *observe* being spoken simultaneously, see *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 7; *Mekhilta de-*

Rashbi, Exodus 20:8; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 5:12; JT *Nedarim* 3:2, 37d; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 27a.

See BT *Berakhot* 20b; *Bahir* 124 (182); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 496-97; Nahmanides on Exodus 20:8; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittahon*, 420; *Zohar* 1:5b, 47b, 48b, 164b, 199b, 248a; 2:70b, 91a, 92a-b (*Piq*), 138a, 165b; 3:81b, 92b (*Piq*), 115b, 224a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 118; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 110; Wolfson, introduction to *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 63-71.

688. evening prayer is obligatory... The Talmud (BT *Berakhot* 27b) records a dispute between Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Yehoshu'a concerning the evening prayer, the former declaring it obligatory, the latter declaring it optional. Eventually, Rabbi Yehoshu'a's view prevailed, but here Rabbi Yose offers an explanation for both opinions.

On the one hand, the evening prayer should be obligatory because of the requirement to recite the evening *Shema*, through which God's unity is proclaimed and actualized. The divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, are symbolized respectively by day and night.

On the other hand, the evening prayer should be optional because it resembles the sacrificial portions and fat that were not totally consumed by fire in the Temple during the day. These could be burnt on the altar throughout the night, but did not have to be; just as their burning was optional and had no fixed time, so with the evening prayer. See above, [note 64](#).

689. If in this unification... If in the opening line of *Shema*, the upper *sefirot* are united, including *Hesed* on the right (deriving from *Hokhmah*) and *Gevurah* on the left (deriving from *Binah*), then the following two paragraphs seem redundant: *You shall love...* pertains to *Hesed* (Love), and *It shall be...*, which includes a list of potential punishments, pertains to *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment).

Rabbi Yose explains that the opening line of the *Shema* describes the various divine qualities in general terms, while the following paragraphs offer greater detail.

On the opening line of the *Shema*, see above, [notes 668-69](#). On the sefirotic significance of the first two full paragraphs of the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 2:43b (*Piq*); 3:262b.

The full verse in Deuteronomy 6 reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might*. The full verse in Deuteronomy 11 reads: *It shall be, if you indeed heed My commands that I command you today, to love YHVH your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul*.

690. The unification corresponds to tefillin... The unification of the opening line of the *Shema* corresponds to the tefillin (phylacteries) worn on the head and on the arm (and hand).

Each of the tefillin contains four passages from the Torah (Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21) written on parchment. The *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head is divided into four compartments, each containing one of the four passages. In the *tefillah* of the arm all four passages are written on one piece of parchment in a single compartment. The first passage corresponds to the primordial point of *Hokhmah*; the second, to *Binah* (known as “the World that is Coming”). The third passage (the first full paragraph of the *Shema*) corresponds to *Hesed* on the right; the fourth passage (the second paragraph) corresponds to *Gevurah* on the left.

In the unification of the first line of the *Shema*, the three names—*YHVH Eloheinu YHVH*—correspond, respectively, to the supernal point of *Hokhmah*, *Binah* (known as “the World that is Coming”), and *Tif'eret* (who encompasses *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, right and left). Thus the “first unification” (i.e., the unification of the first line of the *Shema*) corresponds to the sefirotic significance of the tefillin, as conveyed by the last

line: “These are [equivalent to the *sefirot* symbolized by] tefillin of the head, and this is the first unification.”

On tefillin and their significance, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 4-6; *Zohar* 1:13b-14a, 147a; 2:43a-b (*Piq*); 3:140a (*IR*), 262a-263a, 269a-b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 235-40; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1161-65; Vol. 1, p. 96, n. 719.

691. Tefillin of the arm... As mentioned in the preceding note, in the *tefillah* of the arm (or hand) all four biblical passages are written on one piece of parchment in a single compartment. Rabbi Yose explains that this *tefillah* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who receives all of the higher *sefirot*, including *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, *Hesed*, and *Gevurah*, symbolized by the four passages.

The unification of *Shekhinah* (with Her cohorts of angels) is symbolized by the second line of the *Shema*: “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!” See above, [note 682](#).

692. ‘Blessed’—mystery of supernal point... Rabbi Yose now interprets this second line as referring to the full sefirotic spectrum. “Blessed” alludes to the supernal point of *Hokhmah*, source of the blessed flow of emanation. *Binah* (known as “the World that is Coming”) receives from *Hokhmah* and is called Blessing. She is also called Name or *Your great name*. “Glory” (or “Glorious”) alludes to *Tif’eret*, who combines right and left. All these flow into *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—“His kingdom”—who contains and nourishes all worlds. The penultimate word of the second line of the *Shema*—לְעוֹלָם (*le-olam*), “forever”—is understood here as “for the world.”

On *Hokhmah* as Blessed, see above, [note 183](#). On *Binah* as Your great name, see above, [p. 76](#), [n. 218](#). The full verse in Joshua reads: *When the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land hear [that Israel has fled from her enemies], they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?*

693. This is unity of tefillin... Unity of the upper *sefirot* (symbolized by tefillin of the head) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by tefillin of the arm).

Rabbi Yose reports that Rabbi Shim'on (the Holy Lamp) mentioned four ways of understanding the sefirotic unification of the *Shema*. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:972-93, 1006, n. 265. On Rabbi Shim'on's title, the Holy Lamp, see above, [p. 159](#), [n. 58](#).

694. Since right and left have been combined... Earlier, Rabbi Yose alluded to the idea that in the second occurrence of *YHVH* in the first line of the *Shema*, right and left are combined. (See above, [note 689](#) and also [note 669](#).) The first two lines of the *Shema* represent the sefirotic unification in a general way, both that of *YHVH* (*Tif'eret* along with the other upper *sefirot*, corresponding to tefillin of the head) and *His name* (*Shekhinah*, corresponding to tefillin of the arm). Once these two lines are completed (initiating the union of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*), it is necessary to describe the aspects of right and left in greater detail. Whereas the opening line of the *Shema* includes an allusion to the supernal point of *Hokhmah* (in the first occurrence of *YHVH*), the first full paragraph (*You shall love...*) pertains to *Hesed* (Love), symbolized by primordial light and constituting the head of all seven lower *sefirot*.

The expression *YHVH is one and His name is one* is from Zechariah 14:9. See above at [note 682](#).

695. You shall love—beginning of the right... This first full paragraph of the *Shema* refers to *Hesed*, the divine right arm, which arouses love. If a person loves God with genuine intention, this *sefirah* embraces him; his spirit draws the divine spirit.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might*.

The passage in Job (34:14-15) apparently means *If He would withdraw His spirit to Himself and gather to Himself*

His breath, all flesh would perish together and the human being return to the dust. See Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 382, 388, who deletes לבו (*libbo*), *his heart*.

696. with all your might...wealth The word מאד (*me'od*), often translated in this verse as *might*, is normally an adverb (“very”), not a noun. It may mean here [*You shall love YHVH*] *exceedingly* (literally *with all your veryness*). Since *me'od* can also mean “property,” in rabbinic exegesis ובכל מאדך (*uv-khol me'odekha*) was taken to mean “and with all your wealth, possessions, or substance.”

See M *Berakhot* 9:5; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 32; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; BT *Berakhot* 61b; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 77.

697. YHVH's utterance to my lord... In this verse the speaker, referring to the king as his lord or master, is apparently a court poet. Here, Rabbi Yose views the speaker as King David, who records *Tif'eret's* (YHVH's) words to *Shekhinah*, who is David's sefirotic rung (or *lord*). *Shekhinah* is invited to sit at the level of *Hesed*—*at My right hand*—where David joins Her.

See *Zohar* 1:50b, 243a; 3:242b (*IR*). The verse in Psalms reads: *Of David. A psalm. YHVH's utterance to my lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your foot-stool."*

698. Thirteen commandments here on the right... Pertaining to *Hesed* on the right.

The passage in Deuteronomy (6:5–9) reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. These words that I command you today shall be upon your heart. You shall retell them incisively to your children and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you go on the way and when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

The numerical value of אהבה (*ahavah*), “love,” is thirteen, and Rabbi Yose discovers in this passage thirteen aspects of how one should love God. According to Cordovero (*OY*), for example, *when you sit in your house* implies that one should not be troubled by household concerns.

On the word ושונתם (*ve-shinnantam*), *you shall retell them incisively*, see above, [note 264](#).

699. left is included in right... The quality of *Din* (Judgment) on the left is included within (and balanced by) *Hesed* (Love) on the right—necessarily so, because otherwise the harshness of Judgment would be destructive. This mingling is reflected by the fact that the second full paragraph of the *Shema*, which pertains to Judgment and punishment, begins with a reference to love and its rewards: *It shall be, if you indeed heed My commands that I command you today, to love YHVH your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, I will give the rain of your land in its season...* (Deuteronomy 11:13-14). In the passage in Leviticus, as well, the list of blessings precedes the curses. Thus, “when left arouses, right begins it first.”

If Israel acts virtuously, “left is included in right,” and *Hesed* dominates; if not, “right is included in left, and left dominates.” The key word is “if”: *if you indeed heed My commands; if by My laws you walk*.

See *OY*; *MmD*. On left being included in right, see *Zohar* 1:17a, 119b, 243a; 2:26b, 52b, 57a-b, 66a, 81a, 168b-169a, 223a, 231a; 3:17b-18a, 24a, 118b, 176a, 178b; *ZH* 44a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 254; Wolfson, “Left Contained in the Right.”

700. He opened... Rabbi Hiyya opens with the verse describing the tent-like walls of the Tabernacle. The *ten curtains* symbolize the ten *sefirot*, all unified within the cosmic *Dwelling*. Although the Tabernacle includes numerous components (pictured as limbs), all of these unite, demonstrating the oneness of the sefirotic body.

On the Dwelling as reflecting the structure of the *sefirot* and of the entire cosmos, see above, [note 18](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:872-74.

For the full text of Exodus 26:1, see above, [note 665](#). Exodus 26:6 reads in full: *You shall make fifty golden clasps, and you shall join the curtains to one another with the clasps, and the Dwelling will be one.*

[701.](#) In a human being are numerous members... The various unified limbs and organs of the human body correspond to the components of the Dwelling and of the sefirotic body above.

[702.](#) Commandments of Torah are all members and limbs... Torah is a living organism, composed of numerous limbs (commandments), which together constitute an androgynous being. Similarly with the Dwelling and with the *sefirot* above. Every Jew, as well, is one limb of the entire *people Israel*, and this *one nation* is pictured as a single *human*.

Just as the human body comprises 248 members and 365 sinews, so Torah comprises 248 positive commandments (corresponding to the male) and 365 negative commandments (corresponding to the female).

See BT *Makkot* 23b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:1; El'azar of Worms, *Peirushei Siddur ha-Tefillah*, 2:679; above, [note 687](#). On the 248 members of the human body (joints or bones covered with flesh and sinews), see M *Oholot* 1:8.

“One who omits” means “one who violates.” On Torah as a living organism or body, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37-39; *Zohar* 1:134b; 2:85b, 118a (RM), 165b; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 44-50; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1080-81; Idel, “Tefisat ha-Torah,” 49-84.

On the verse in Ezekiel, see BT *Yevamot* 60b-61a; Vol. 4, p. 484, n. 425.

[703.](#) Surely, the love... Rabbi Yitshak wonders why the verse reads *You shall love... with all your heart, with all*

your soul..., which seems to imply two types of love.

“The Compassionate One desires the heart” is a frequent version of the statement in BT *Sanhedrin* 106b: “The blessed Holy One desires the heart.” See Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *revuta*; Ibn Ezra (long) on Exodus 31:18; idem on Ecclesiastes 5:1; idem, *Yesod Mora* 7; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margalioṭ), 530, 590, 1013; *Zohar* 3:281b (RM).

704. Surely, heart and soul are two, uniting into one... Rabbi El’azar explains that these two become one, joined by the third element in the verse: wealth. The heart is the core.

Expounding the phrase *with all לבבך (levavekha), your heart*, Rabbi El’azar paraphrases a rabbinic interpretation. Why does the verse read *levavekha*, containing a double ב (*vet*), instead of לבך (*libbekha*) with one ב (*bet*)? The doubling of the letter signifies the two impulses within the human heart. See M *Berakhot* 9:5: “*With all לבבך (levavekha), your heart—with both your impulses: the good impulse and the evil impulse.*” Ideally, one should serve God not only with the good impulse but even with the evil impulse—by subduing it, or by sublimating and channeling one’s passions into virtuous action, thereby contributing the raw power of the evil impulse to the good.

On the two impulses, see *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:7; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 32; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 6:5; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; BT *Berakhot* 61a; *Zohar* 1:49b, 144b, 155b, 165b, 174b, 178b; 2:26b, 174a; 3:263b, 267a, 268a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 42–43, 101.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, מאדך ובכל (uv-khol me’odekha), and with all your might.* On “wealth” as the meaning of מאד (*me’od*), which is often translated as *might*, see above, [note 696](#).

“Unification” (in the phrase “unification of all”) renders יחודה (*yihuda*), following the reading of N41. Various other

manuscripts and the printed editions read יסודא (*yesoda*), “foundation.”

705. *ובכל נפשך (Uv-khol nafshekha), With all your soul...* Including all three aspects of the soul.

See *Tosefta Berakhot* 6:7; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:37. On *nefesh*, *ruah*, and *neshamah*, see above, [note 304](#).

706. *And with all your wealth...* On this translation, see above, [note 696](#).

707. *with the evil impulse...* By subduing this impulse.

708. *masters of qualities* מארי מדין (*Marei middin*), “masters of qualities (or attributes),” those who have mastered not only ethical but also divine qualities or attributes, namely the *sefirot*.

See above, [notes 76](#), [676](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:805, n. 215.

709. *who has ever seen a servant...* How can the evil impulse, created by God, work against His will by luring people to sin? The seemingly incongruous phrase “by his Master’s will” is immediately clarified.

710. *But actually, he is doing the will of his Master!...* By testing the human being and enabling him to demonstrate his virtue.

For another parable about harlotry, see *Zohar* 2:189a-b. The description of the harlot as “comely in appearance and beautiful in form” derives from *Targum Onqelos*, Genesis 29:17 (describing Rachel) and 39:6 (describing Joseph immediately before Potiphar’s wife attempts to seduce him).

711. *that harlot, does she deserve praise for this or not?...* Just as the harlot deserves praise for obeying the king and for enabling the son to prove his virtue, so the evil impulse deserves praise.

The verse in Genesis reads: *God saw all that He had made, and look, it was very good*. Here, Rabbi El’azar quotes a midrashic interpretation from *Bereshit Rabbah*:

“*Look, it was good*—this is the Angel of Life; *very*—this is the Angel of Death.” According to this midrashic source, the Angel of Death is *very good* because he kills those who fail to accumulate good deeds. According to *Zohar* 2:149b, he is *very good* because the awareness of mortality stimulates a person to return to God. Here, the Angel of Death is equivalent to the evil impulse, who is *very good* because it enables a person to withstand temptation and attain great reward.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:10 (per Oxford MS 147, Paris MS 149, and *Yalqut Shim’oni*), in the name of Rabbi Shemu’el son of Rav Yitshak. See *Zohar* 1:14a, 47a, 144b; 2:68b, 98a, 103a, 149b-150a, 249a (*Heikh*), 264b (*Heikh*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 806, n. 222. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:5.

On the equivalence of the Angel of Death and the evil impulse, see BT *Bava Batra* 16a, in the name of Resh Lakish: “Satan, the evil impulse, and the Angel of Death are one and the same.”

712. Happy are they who have encountered this accuser... And overcome his temptation, thereby demonstrating their virtue. Yet happy are they who have not encountered him and exposed themselves to such danger.

“The land of the living” is paradise. On the invisible delights awaiting the righteous in the world that is coming, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You].*”

713. What is the benefit for this accuser... The evil impulse is empowered if a person succumbs to temptation.

On “A wicked person is strengthened...,” see *Nitsotsei Zohar*; cf. Naḥmanides on Leviticus 26:6.

On the phrasing “has lured people, accused them, and killed them,” see the description of Satan’s actions in BT *Bava Batra* 16a: “He descends and leads astray, ascends and arouses wrath, obtains authorization and seizes the soul.” The *Zohar* sometimes paraphrases “ascends and arouses wrath” with “ascends and accuses.” See *Zohar* 1:190a; 2:33b, 196a.

[714.](#) **side of life...** The divine power.

[715.](#) **I have seen the face of *Shekhinah*...** According to rabbinic tradition, “whoever welcomes [literally, receives the face of] the wise is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.”

See *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Yitro)* 1. Cf. JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b: “Rabbi Shemu’el said in the name of Rabbi Zeira, ‘... Whoever receives the face of his teacher is considered as if he receives the face of *Shekhinah*.’... Rabbi Yishma’el taught... ‘One who receives the face of his friend is considered as if he receives the face of *Shekhinah*.’”

The *Zohar* transforms the rabbinic simile into an actual description of the righteous, who are here called the face of *Shekhinah*. She dwells within them. From another perspective, they adorn Her in preparation for Her union with the King.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:6; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:5; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 27; *Zohar* 1:9a, 94b; 2:5a (*MhN*), 38a, 50a, 94b; 3:6b, 148a, 298a; *ZH* 11c (*MhN*). Cf. Genesis 33:10 (quoted below): *For truly I have seen your face as one sees the face of Elohim.*

[716.](#) **Please, take my blessing...** These words are spoken by Jacob to his brother, Esau, at their reunion more than twenty years after Jacob fled. The previous night Jacob had wrestled with a nameless adversary, who according to midrashic tradition was Samael, Esau’s heavenly prince. Rabbi El’azar indicates that at first Jacob’s wrestling opponent appeared to him in the form of Esau, and it was

not until morning that Jacob realized he was actually Samael and then seized him.

According to a different rabbinic tradition, Jacob's opponent was not Samael but another angel, who demanded that Jacob release him at dawn because he was then scheduled to offer praise to God in heaven.

On Samael (or Esau's Prince) as Jacob's opponent, see *Tanḥuma*, *Vayishlah* 8; *Bereshit Rabbah* 77:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:6; *Zohar* 1:144a, 146a, 166a, 170a-b, 179a; 3:45a. Cf. Rashi on *Sukkah* 29a, s.v. *eloheha*.

On the angel demanding to be released at dawn, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:1-2; *Eikhah Rabbah* on 3:23; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 32:27; BT *Hullin* 91b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:6; *Pirḡei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 37. On the linking of these two motifs, see *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 32:30; *Zohar* 3:45a.

717. surely his dominion is only at night... Samael prevails at night, not during the day. The plural *nights* in the verse from Song of Songs alludes to both members of the demonic couple, Samael and Lilith.

Since Samael's dominion is at night, he demands of Jacob, *Let me go, for dawn is breaking*—not because it is time for him to offer song but rather because he must return to the demonic realm, the hollow of the great abyss, located in the North (the direction associated with harsh Judgment). There he remains confined until the following night, when the demonic forces again roam, wreaking havoc.

On the demonic nature of dogs, see above, [p. 142, n. 9](#). The context in Song of Songs (3:7-8) reads: *Behold the bed of Solomon! Sixty warriors surrounding her, of the warriors of Israel. All of them skilled with a sword, expert in war, each with his sword on his thigh because of terror in the night* [literally, *nights*].

718. Similarly, the exile of Israel... Which is dark and dismal as night. In rabbinic literature, Edom symbolizes the

Roman Empire; in medieval Jewish literature, it symbolizes Christian powers dominating the people of Israel.

On Israel's exile as night, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:1.

719. then he confirmed the blessings Then Samael was forced to confirm the blessings that Isaac had bestowed upon Jacob long before, even though Jacob had obtained these blessings deviously.

See Genesis 32:27, 30: *He said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking!" He replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." ... And there he blessed him.*

On the confirmation of the earlier blessings, see *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 32:27, 30; Rashi on Genesis 32:27 and Hosea 12:5; Nahmanides on Genesis 32:30; *Zohar* 1:144a, 171a; 3:45a.

720. What is written previously? For truly I have seen... When Jacob meets Esau, he insists that his long-lost brother accept a tribute from him. The full verse reads: *Jacob said, "No, please! If I have found favor in your eyes, then take this offering from my hand; for truly I have seen your face as one sees the face of Elohim, and you received me favorably."*

The rhetorical extravagance—*I have seen your face as one sees the face of Elohim*—alludes back to Jacob's reflection on his nocturnal wrestling (Genesis 32:31): *I have seen Elohim face-to-face and my life has been saved.* Here, Rabbi El'azar understands Jacob's words to Esau as indicating the resemblance and intimate link between Esau and Samael (who is identified with the demonic *elohim aḥerim*, *other gods*).

On the verse in Genesis 33, see Sarna, *Genesis*; Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*. On the revealing quality of one's face, see *Zohar* 1:96b; 3:6a, 157a, 298a; *ZH* 72a-b (*ShS*). The expression *elohim aḥerim*, *other gods*, appears frequently, most famously in the second of the Ten Commandments: *You shall have no other gods beside Me* (Exodus 20:3).

The verse in Genesis 33 appears after the account of Jacob's wrestling, not "previously," as stated here (according to the reading in various manuscripts, including M5, N41, O2, O17). The version preserved in *OY* and the early printed editions emend לעילא (*le-eila*), "previously," to לבהר (*le-vatar*), "afterward." Conceivably, "previously" means immediately preceding Genesis 33:11 (*Please, take my blessing...*), the verse with which Rabbi El'azar opened (and which he never interprets). See above at [note 716](#).

[721.](#) **your faces are like Her face...** See above, [note 715](#).

[722.](#) לשלמה (*Li-Shlomo*), **Of Solomon...** This phrase seems to indicate that King Solomon composed the psalm, but how could that be, since traditionally King David composed the entire book of Psalms? Rabbi El'azar explains that here *li-Shlomo* means *for Solomon*, i.e., King David uttered this psalm for his son Solomon after the prophet Nathan informed David that his son, rather than David himself, would build the Temple.

See Rashi and Radak on Psalms 127:1. Cf. *Midrash Tehillim* 72:6; *Tosafot, Bava Batra* 15a, s.v. *va-al yedei Shelomoh*. For the view that King Solomon composed this psalm, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10 (on 1:1); *Zohar* 2:226a; 3:221a.

[723.](#) לשלמה (*Li-Shlomo*), **For Solomon—for the King who possesses שלמה (*shelama*), peace...** This derives from a midrashic interpretation of the title המלך שלמה (*ha-melekh Shelomo*), *King Solomon*, which is read as המלך שהשלום שלו (*ha-melekh she-ha-shalom shello*), "the King who possesses peace," namely God.

In the *Zohar*, King Solomon symbolizes the masculine divine potency, gestating within *Binah* and then spanning the configuration of *Binah* (or *Hokhmah*) through *Yesod*. This potency (known as World of the Male) contains (or "possesses") *Yesod*, who is called "peace" because He mediates between the right and left poles of the *sefirot*, or because He unites *Tif'eret* with *Shekhinah*. See BT *Shabbat*

152a, where Rabbi Shim'on son of Halafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.”

On the phrase “the King who possesses peace,” see above, [notes 26, 340](#). On the World of the Male, see above, [p. 48, n. 132](#).

The description “a song and praise above all other songs...” is borrowed from a description of Song of Songs. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1).

724. all those seven pillars... The lower seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*, through whose power and emanation *Shekhinah* Herself (“this house”) is established. (Alternatively, these seven consist of *Hesed* through *Yesod* and the hidden *sefirah*, *Da'at*.) Above all of these stands “Master of the house” (apparently *Binah*), who empowers them. Thus, *unless* this royal master (“King who possesses peace”) *builds the house* of *Shekhinah*, *its builders* (namely the lower *sefirot*) *labor in vain*.

In one sense, the house of *Shekhinah* “stands,” or is established, upon the sefirotic pillars. In another sense, these *sefirot* “stand,” or are situated, above Her. On the image of seven cosmic pillars, see BT *Hagigah* 12b.

725. Unless YHVH watches over the city... *Unless* the royal master (“the King who possesses peace”) *watches over the city* (*Shekhinah*). *The watchman* is *Yesod*, known as Righteous One, the cosmic pillar, who protects *Shekhinah* from demonic forces.

See BT *Hagigah* 12b, in the name of Rabbi El'azar son of Shamu'a: “[The world] stands on one pillar, who is called Righteous One, as is said: וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*), *The righteous one is the foundation of the world* (Proverbs 10:25).” The simple sense of the verse in Proverbs is: *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47–48, n. 132](#).

726. As for the Dwelling made by Moses... Joshua, appropriately, guarded this Dwelling, since he is described as נער (*na'ar*), *a youth*—a term that alludes to the chief angel,

Metatron, who is known as *na'ar*, “youth, servant,” serving *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the Dwelling). Later, in the sanctuary at Shiloh, another *youth*, Samuel, served.

On Metatron as *na'ar*, see 3 Enoch 4:10; BT *Yevamot* 16b; above, [note 453](#); Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563. On the association between Joshua and Metatron, see above, [note 479](#); *Zohar* 2:65b.

727. However, the Temple was not so... This was guarded directly by God, unlike the Dwelling, which was guarded by a *youth*—just as *Shekhinah*, the sefirotic Dwelling, is guarded by Metatron the Youth.

Rabbi El'azar here associates the name מטטרון (*Metatron*) with the root נטר (*ntr*), “to guard, protect.” See the preceding note; and above, [note 87](#). On Metatron and the Dwelling, see also above, [note 337](#).

728. escorted him for three miles... Out of respect. According to Rav Sheshet (BT *Sotah* 46b), one should escort his teacher a distance of a parasang. A distinguished teacher, however, is to be escorted for three parasangs. (The Persian parasang equals about 3.5 modern miles. The term here in the *Zohar*, מילין [*milin*], “miles,” refers to the Roman mile, slightly shorter than the modern mile.)

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 18:5; *Bereshit Rabbah* 32:10; *Zohar* 1:51a, 87a, 96b, 150b, 217a, 240a; 2:14a, 187a; 3:8b. “Escorted him” renders אױפּוּה (*ozefuh*), which in normal Aramaic means “lent him”; but the Hebrew verb להלוות (*lehalvot*), “to lend,” is a homonym of *lehalvot*, “to escort,” and the *Zohar*—either playfully or mistakenly—employs the Aramaic verb לאױפּא (*le'ozafa*) in this sense. Cf. the English idiom “to lend an escort.” See Vol. 4, p. 209, n. 33.

On Psalms 91:11, see *Zohar* 3:262a.

729. The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains... On this verse, see above, [notes 665](#), [700](#).

730. They will say, ‘Only a wise and understanding people... The subject they refers to other peoples of the

world.

731. *For you are the fewest of all the peoples...* By reading the verse hyperliterally, Rabbi Yehudah reverses its meaning. Israel is fewer than *all the peoples* combined, but is more numerous than any one of them—in the sense that Israel maintains its purity by not intermarrying and thus exceeds every other nation in pedigreed population.

In medieval rabbinic parlance, “Ishmaelites” refers to Muslims, and “Edomites” to Christians.

732. *when the blessed Holy One comes to the synagogue...* God is glorified by the presence of a *multitude of people* in the synagogue.

“The anonymous King [i.e., with no name specified], Holy King Messiah” refers to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom). She is adorned by Israel’s prayers and thereby prepared to ascend above and unite with *Tif’eret*.

On the phrase “the anonymous King” and the identification with King Messiah, see above, [p. 195](#) and [n. 26](#). On *Shekhinah* as the Messiah, see *Zohar* 1:84a, 238a; 2:127b; 3:19b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 343; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 71–72 (90–91).

The phrase מקדש מעט (*miqdash me’at*), “a small sanctuary,” appears in Ezekiel 11:16. In rabbinic sources it is applied to the synagogue. See BT *Megillah* 29a, in the name of Rabbi Yitshak.

733. *And in the lack of people...* If God does not find people coming to the synagogue to pray, then the angelic retinue of *Shekhinah* is detached from Her and no longer adorns Her.

Rabbi Yehudah explains that Israel’s prayer and devotion stimulate the angels to praise God and adorn *Shekhinah*. If there is a *lack of people* below, then the angelic princely array is ruined, although the Divine King Himself is not harmed.

According to a rabbinic tradition, the angels do not sanctify God’s name in heaven until Israel sanctifies it on

earth. See BT *Hullin* 91b: “The ministering angels do not utter song above until Israel sings below.” See *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 90a (*ST*), 231a; 3:66a, 190b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 91.

734. Even if only ten... A minyan (quorum of ten) is sufficient to stimulate the appearance of the angels. *Shekhinah* is characterized by the number ten, corresponding to the ten *sefirot* or to Her ten powers.

On the symbolic significance of a minyan, see *Zohar* 3:126a. Cf. above, [note 93](#).

735. The Dwelling you shall make of ten curtains... The ten tent-like walls of the Tabernacle symbolize powers arraying *Shekhinah*.

Rabbi Yehudah focuses on the word עֶשֶׂר (*eser*), *ten*. Although this feminine adjective matches the feminine noun יְרִיעוֹת (*yeri'ot*), *curtains*, he wonders why the masculine form עֲשָׂרָה (*asarah*), *ten*, does not appear here instead, since the final letter of *asarah*—ה (*he*)—would allude to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by this letter. He explains that the lack of the *he* at the end of *eser* indicates that *Shekhinah* is not included in the number *ten*; rather, She is arrayed by ten powers symbolized by the *ten curtains*.

The verse in Kings describes a large bronze reservoir—called *the sea*—built by Solomon in the Temple, which rested on twelve bronze oxen, three facing outward in each direction. This *sea* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is arrayed by twelve angelic forces beneath Her. Here, the masculine number שְׁנַי עֲשָׂרָה (*shenei asar*), *twelve*—rather than the feminine number עֲשָׂרִים שְׁתַּיִם (*sheteim esreh*), *twelve*, with the letter ה (*he*) ending *esreh*—indicates that *Shekhinah* is not included in the number, since She stands above the twelve angelic forces, symbolized by the *twelve oxen*.

On the *sea*, see *Zohar* 1:154a, 241a. On the twelve angelic forces, see *Zohar* 149a–b (*ST*). The context in 1 Kings (7:23, 25) reads: *He made the sea of cast metal... standing upon twelve oxen: three facing north, three facing*

west, three facing south, and three facing east, with the sea set upon them above. On the verse in Exodus, see above, [notes 665, 700](#).

736. The Other Side is given a greater number...

The roof-covering of the Tabernacle comprised four separate layers: linen, goat hair, ram skins, and (uppermost) leather. The term עֲזִים (*izzim*), “goat hair, goats,” suggests שַׁעִיר (*sa’ir*), “goat, demon, satyr,” and the scapegoat sent to the demon Azazel (Leviticus 16). The goat hair covering the linen symbolizes demonic powers outside the divine realm that protect the inner, holy powers.

Rabbi Yehudah focuses here on the number of curtains (or strips) of goat hair specified in Exodus: עֲשֵׁתֵי עֶשְׂרֵה (*ashtei esreh*), *eleven*. This number exceeds the number of curtains comprising the walls of the Tabernacle (*ten curtains*), yet it is “diminished in count,” because the letter ע (*ayin*), which begins the number עֲשֵׁתֵי עֶשְׂרֵה (*ashtei esreh*), *eleven*, turns עֶשְׂרֵה שְׁתֵּי (*shetei esreh*), “twelve,” into *ashtei esreh, eleven*. This reduction befits the demonic realm, which is characterized by lack and deficiency.

Similarly, in the account of the rape of Tamar by her brother Amnon, the Masoretic text records Absalom’s euphemistic question as follows: הָאֲמִינוֹן (*Ha-Aminon*), *Has Aminon, your brother been with you?* Paradoxically, the additional letter י (*yod*) diminishes and impugns Amnon’s character.

Conversely, in the realm of Holiness, when “a letter is subtracted... it is an addition,” as in the phrase עֶשֶׂר יְרִיעוֹת (*eser yeri’ot*), *ten curtains*, which implies ten plus *Shekhinah*, as explained in the preceding note.

On the goat hair, see above, [note 252](#). On עֲשֵׁתֵי עֶשְׂרֵה (*ashtei esreh*), “eleven,” and שְׁתֵּי עֶשְׂרֵה (*shetei esreh*)—or שְׁתֵּי עֶשֶׂר (*shetei asar*)—“twelve,” see BT *Sanhedrin* 29a; Ibn Ezra on Numbers 7:72; Parḥon, *Maḥberet he-Arukh*, s.v. *’sht*; *Zohar* 2:214a–b, 233b. (The normal term for “twelve” is שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר)

[*sheneim asar*] in the masculine and שתיים עשרה [*sheteim esreh*] in the feminine. For *shetei esreh*, see Joshua 4:8.)

On the spelling אמינון (*Aminon*), see Ibn Ezra on Ecclesiastes 12:5; Radak, *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, s.v. *ish*; idem on 2 Samuel 13:20; 2 Kings 18:4; Jeremiah 29:22; Psalms 17:8.

737. *Wrapped in light...* See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayaqhel* 7: “Rabbi Shim’on son of Rabbi Yehotsadak asked Rabbi Shemu’el son of Naḥman, ‘Since you are a master of *aggadah*, tell me how the blessed Holy One created the world.’ He replied, ‘When the blessed Holy One wished to create the world, He enwrapped Himself in light and created the world, as is said: *Wrapped in light as in a garment*, and afterward: *spreading the heavens like a curtain*.’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:4 (and Theodor, ad loc.); Vol. 4, p. 189, n. 177.

738. *Light and dark were as one...* Light (and water) symbolizes *Ḥesed* on the right, while dark (and fire) symbolizes *Gevurah* on the left. God combined these two polar opposites, forming the heavens, which symbolize the harmonious *sefirah* of *Tif’eret*.

The word שמים (*shamayim*), “heavens,” is derived homiletically from אש (*esh*), “fire,” and מים (*mayim*), “water.” See *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:7, in the name of Rav: “The blessed Holy One took אש (*esh*), fire, and מים (*mayim*), water, mixed them with one another, and from them שמים (*shamayim*), heavens, were made.” See also BT *Ḥagigah* 12a.

Instead of “Light and dark were as one” (which is attested by numerous manuscripts and the early printed editions), *Derekh Emet* (ed. Ḥamiz) and later printed editions read: “Light and dark were not as one.” This fits the context well but is not necessary, since Rabbi Ḥiyya may be alluding to the underlying unity of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, about to be manifested. See *OY*.

739. When they were combined... The polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah* are stretched *like a curtain* into the elongated letter ו (vav). This letter is one of the elements of יהוה (YHVH) and its numerical value of six symbolizes *Tif'eret* together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*).

The vav, or *curtain*, of *Tif'eret* spreads further, forming ten powers of *Shekhinah*, which are symbolized by the *ten curtains* of the Dwelling. See above, [note 735](#).

740. Seven expanses... Seven רקיעין (*reqi'in*), “expanses, firmaments, heavens.” See BT *Hagigah* 12b: “Rabbi Yehudah said, ‘There are two רקיעים (*reqi'im*), firmaments [or: expanses, heavens]...’ Resh Lakish said, ‘Seven, namely וילון (*Vilon*), Curtain; רקיע (*Raqi'a*), Expanse; שחקים (*Sheḥaqim*), Heaven; זבול (*Zevul*), Loft; מעון (*Ma'on*), Dwelling; מכון (*Makhon*), Site [or: Foundation]; ערבות (*Aravot*), Clouds. *Vilon* performs no function at all except entering in the morning and leaving in the evening, and renewing each day the act of Creation.’”

Here in the *Zohar*, the seven expanses symbolize the seven lower *sefirot*, above whom presides the expanse of *Binah*, the Divine Mother. She cannot be identified by any specific color or quality, nor can She be perceived or contemplated, although She “is susceptible to discernment,” in the sense that questions can be posed regarding Her—though the answers to such questions are essentially incomplete. (See above, [note 2](#).) Although concealed, *Binah* illumines, animates, and conducts all the lower *sefirot*.

On the seven expanses, see also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:11; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:10; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 37; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 18; *Zohar* 1:32b, 85b–86a; 2:10b, 30b, 56b; 3:9b, 287a. On the eighth expanse, see *Zohar* 1:85b–86a, 162b; 2:172a.

741. From this expanse and beyond... No one can perceive the highest realms, beyond *Binah*.

The wording here paraphrases *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:8: “Ten *sefirot* בלימה (*belimah*) [perhaps meaning ‘of nothingness, without substance’]. Restrain your mouth from speaking and your mind [or: heart] from conceiving. If your mind races, return to the place....”

742. There are ten curtains... The *ten curtains* of the Dwelling symbolize ten powers of *Shekhinah* (see above, [notes 735, 739](#)). “The wise of heart” can know these and through them contemplate other mysteries, including certain aspects of the ten *sefirot* themselves.

“The place that every single one grasps” probably refers to *Shekhinah*. “Except for those two...” may refer to the two highest powers within *Shekhinah*, or to *Netsah* and *Hod*, who stand above *Shekhinah* to the right and left respectively. For various interpretations of this last phrase, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:350; *MmD*.

743. There are nine expanses... Rabbi Yose differs with the view that there are ten powers plus *Shekhinah*; rather, there are nine such entities and She Herself constitutes the tenth. Whereas Rabbi Yehudah had interpreted the word עשר (*eser*), *ten* (in the phrase *ten curtains*), as implying “besides *Shekhinah*,” Rabbi Yose points out that this would make *Shekhinah* the eleventh entity, which contradicts the spirit of *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:4: “Ten and not nine, ten and not eleven.”

This grouping of nine and one corresponds to the nine days from Rosh Hashanah up to Yom Kippur, with Yom Kippur itself being the tenth.

See above, [notes 735, 742](#). The nine expanses correspond to the nine heavenly spheres of medieval astronomy. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 3:1; idem, *Guide of the Perplexed* 2:9; *TZ*, intro, 4d.

744. the Dwelling consists of ten curtains... With *Shekhinah* Herself completing the number ten. This is one of

the mysteries revealed by Rabbi Shim'on, who is known as the Holy Lamp.

On the title Holy Lamp, see above, [p. 159](#), [n. 58](#). On the angelic ministers serving in various expanses, see *Seder Rabbah di-Vreshit*, 1 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:39–45); *Zohar* 2:201a–202b.

[745](#). There are seven expanses above... These three groups of seven are apparently the seven lower *sefirot*, the seven celestial palaces, and the seven heavens containing the stars and planets. In each of these groups, the seventh (counting from below to above) is “most worthy,” although beyond all seven lies an eighth, conducting them. In the sefirotic realm, the eighth expanse is *Binah*, who is described below.

For various interpretations of the three groups of seven, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On the seven heavens, see above, [note 740](#). On the seventh being the most precious (in numerous groups), see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:11; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:10; *Sefer Yetsirah* 4:12; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 18; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:11.

[746](#). Exalt Him who rides the clouds... The seventh and highest expanse (or “firmament, heaven”) is known as ערבות (*aravot*), *clouds*. In the sefirotic realm this would seem to correspond specifically to *Ḥesed* (seventh from the bottom), but here *aravot* implies *Tif'eret* (or the entire triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, and ultimately all seven *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Shekhinah*). *Tif'eret* (or its sefirotic constellation) is called *aravot* because it is מעורב (*me'orav*), “mixed,” that is, “blended” of *Ḥesed* on the right (or south) and *Gevurah* on the left (or north), which are symbolized respectively by water and fire. Riding upon *aravot*—upon the sefirotic “blend”—is *Binah*.

See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 96. On the expanse *aravot*, see above, [note 740](#). On the verse in Psalms, see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10; *Vayiqra*

Rabbah 29:11; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:10; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 18; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:11.

747. what about the two ערבות (*aravot*), willow stems... The word ערבות (*aravot*) also means “willows” and can refer to the two willow stems joined with the *lulav* (palm branch), which is used ritually on *Sukkot*. According to Kabbalah, these two *aravot* symbolize *Netsah* and *Hod*, the thighs of the divine body. How then, can *aravot* refer to *Tif'eret* (or to *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*), which constitutes the trunk of the body? Who would confuse the trunk and the thighs? The former is like a fruitful tree, while the latter is like a willow tree that yields only shade and no fruit.

On the *aravot* (willows, willow stems) and the verse in Psalms (*Exalt Him who rides the aravot*), see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:9; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 27:9. On the *aravot* (willows, willow stems) symbolizing *Netsah* and *Hod*, see *Zohar* 2:169b, 186b; 3:24b, 194a. On the fruitlessness of the willow, see *Zohar* 2:169b.

748. all is mystery of aravot of the lulav... There is no contradiction between these two symbolic correspondences, because *Netsah* and *Hod*, symbolized by the *aravot* (willows, willow stems) of the *lulav*, are themselves offshoots, respectively, of *Hesed* (symbolized by water) and *Gevurah* (symbolized by fire).

The seventh expanse, known as *aravot*, includes not only *Tif'eret* but also “all those other six” *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*. All of these seven constitute a chariot for *Binah* (“the blessed Holy One”), who thus *rides the aravot*.

Binah is the “hidden, concealed expanse standing over the living beings,” namely over *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif'eret*, and *Shekhinah*, who are identified with the four *hayyot*, “living beings,” depicted in Ezekiel’s description of the divine chariot-throne. (*Netsah* and *Hod* are subsumed under *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, as explained in the first paragraph of this note.) See Ezekiel 1:22: *An image above the heads of the living being: an expanse [or: firmament, heaven] like awesome*

ice. In this verse the noun חיה (*hayyah*), “living being, animal, creature,” appears in the singular, apparently to emphasize the unity of the ensemble. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 48.

749. And exult לפניו (*lefanav*), before Him... Rabbi Yose indicates that the verse is worded precisely: *And exult לפניו* (*lefanav*), *before Him*—namely before *Binah*, who is characterized by joy and should only be approached in joy and exultation. The alternative wording מלפניו (*mi-lefanav*), *from before Him*, would be inappropriate here, since this alludes to an even higher realm, *Hokhmah*, of whom nothing can be known and who is unapproachable.

On the distinction between *before* and *from before*, see above, [note 600](#). Cf. BT *Hagigah* 5b; Vol. 2, p. 409, n. 733.

750. the high priest... On Yom Kippur he would enter the Holy of Holies (symbolizing *Binah*) only in joy.

On the need to worship in joy, see BT *Berakhot* 31a. On the phrase “the place is determinative,” see *Sifra, Metsora* 3:10, 72b; BT *Sotah* 45a; *Zohar* 1:149b; 3:113b.

751. All gates have been locked... But the angels appointed over the gates of tears smash them open, and those tears flow to *Binah*, the Holy King.

See BT *Berakhot* 32b, in the name of Rabbi El’azar: “Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the gates of prayer have been locked.... Yet even though the gates of prayer have been locked, the gates of tears have not.”

See *Zohar* 1:132b; 2:12b, 245b (*Heikh*); *ZH* 80a (*MhN, Rut*). “Beams” renders גזיזין (*gezizin*), “pieces, chunks; fists.” See above, [note 525](#).

752. Then that place is distressed... *Shekhinah* Herself feels the sadness of that person crying in prayer. The upper world, *Binah* (who includes or constitutes the World of the Male), desires *Shekhinah*, and since *Binah* wishes to comfort Her and provide Her with whatever She wants or needs, *Binah* fulfills the tearful prayer of the person below, whose suffering is shared by *Shekhinah*.

In the Masoretic text of Isaiah, the word *lo* is spelled לֹא (*lo*), with an א (*alef*), meaning *not*, but it is traditionally read as לוֹ (*lo*), with a ו (*vav*), yielding the opposite sense: *In all their distress* לוֹ צָר (*lo tsar*), *He was distressed*.

See *Mekhilta*, *Pisha* 14; BT *Sotah* 31a; *Tanḥuma*, *Vayishlah* 10; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:5; *Zohar* 1:120b; 3:219b; Rashi, Radak, and *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc.

On the World of the Male, see above, [p. 48](#), [n. 132](#). On *matronita*, see the Glossary.

753. one who sits fasting on Sabbath... See BT *Berakhot* 31b: “Rabbi El’azar said in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Zimra, ‘If one sits fasting on Sabbath, [even] a decree of seventy years standing against him is torn up [i.e., annulled]. Yet even so, he is still punished for [ruining] the delight of Sabbath.’ What is his remedy? Rav Naḥman son of Yitshak said, ‘Let him sit fasting [on a weekday to atone] for this fast.’”

Rabbi Yose explains here that this person’s punishment is annulled because the expanse of *Binah*, manifesting joy, prevails on Sabbath.

See *Zohar* 2:207a-b; 3:89b, 105a-b.

754. Exalt... Give exaltation to *Binah*, who rides the lower *sefirot*. See above, [notes 746–48](#).

755. By His name Yah... The name יה (*Yah*) alludes to *Binah*, or to *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. The letter ך (*yod*) represents the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*, while the letter ה (*he*), a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. Thus, “in that place [namely *Binah*] this name is included.”

756. And exult before Him... Before *Binah*. See above, [note 749](#).

757. Rabbi El’azar said... He wonders why the verse does not read *Exalt Him who rides* על ערבות (*al aravot*), *upon aravot*, since *Binah* is above *Tiferet* and the *sefirot* surrounding Him (known as *aravot*). The wording בערבות (*ba-aravot*), *in aravot*, demands an explanation.

Furthermore, the phrase ביה שמו (*be-Yah shemo*), *by* [or: *in*] *His name Yah*, does not do justice to *Yah*, which is not simply *Binah's* name but Her essence. Rather, the verse should read ביה הוא (*Be-Yah hu*), *He is in Yah*.

According to the account above (at [note 728](#)), Rabbi El'azar had already departed from Rabbi Yose, Rabbi Yehudah, and Rabbi Hiyya. His sudden reappearance here is unexplained, exemplifying the very loose nature of the narrative framework. Cf. above, end of [note 410](#).

758. this verse refers to Concealed of all Concealed... Rabbi El'azar offers a different interpretation of the verse: *Exalt Him who rides* refers not to *Binah* but to the highest *sefirah*, *Keter*, who is most concealed and primordial. One might object that if *Keter* rides *in* (and not above) *aravot* (*Tif'eret* and the *sefirot* surrounding Him), then He is no longer totally concealed but rather somewhat (or potentially) revealed “in this place” of *aravot*. However, *Exalt Him*—acknowledge His transcendence and unknowability—because He rides *in aravot* ביה (*be-Yah*), *by* (*means of*) *Yah*, namely through *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, who issue from Him. *Yah* serves as the Name of the one who remains concealed and essentially unknown, *Keter*. Not that *Yah* is the essence of *Keter*, but rather it transmits something of His power, by means of a supernal curtain issuing from Him.

On the curtain, see *Zohar* 1:65a; 2:259a (*Heikh*); 3:128a (*IR*). For various interpretations of this passage, see *OY*; *Vital*; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

759. This is His Great Name... Technically, historically, and traditionally, יה (*Yah*) is an abbreviated (poetic) form of יהוה (*YHVH*); but here Rabbi El'azar insists that *Yah* is actually greater since it refers to *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, whereas יהוה (*YHVH*), although containing two additional letters, is “not as great as this” since it refers to the lower group of *sefirot* clustered around *Tif'eret*.

“With this Name we utter Amen” may refer to the formulation in the Kaddish (quoted at the beginning of the

next paragraph): “Amen. May His Great Name be blessed.”

The statement that אמן (*amen*) “derives from” the Great Name יה' (*Yah*) may imply that *amen* symbolizes the flow of emanation from the highest *sefirot*. See *Zohar* 3:285a-b. Alternatively, the meaning may be that the numerical value of *amen* (91) equals the sum of three possible expanded spellings of *Yah*: איה' (yod he), יהיה' (yod heh), יהיה' (yod hei).

The sense of “With this, Amen goes constantly...” is unclear. Perhaps this means that Amen always precedes the line “May His Great Name be blessed,” whereas the name *YHVH* is sometimes followed by Amen (as in the numerous blessings recited in prayer and rituals) and sometimes not.

For various interpretations of the entire paragraph, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. For the traditional view that *Yah* is an incomplete form of *YHVH*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 3:16; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 12, 51a; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tetse* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tetse* 18; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:10; 97:1; Rashi on Exodus 17:16; Isaiah 12:2; idem, *Sefer ha-Pardes*, 325–26; *Tosafot, Berakhot* 3a, s.v. *ve-onin*. Cf. above, [p. 77](#), [n. 219](#). On the Great Name, see also *ZH* 87d (*MhN, Rut*). On fewer letters paradoxically signifying more, and more letters signifying less, see above, [note 736](#).

[760](#). Amen. May His Great Name be blessed... The congregational response in the Kaddish. The Great Name *Yah*, symbolizing *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, includes the entire flow of emanation and the entire Torah.

The 613 commandments of Torah are divided into 248 positive commandments, corresponding to the World of the Male (extending from *Binah*, or *Hokhmah*, through *Yesod*), and 365 negative commandments, corresponding to the World of the Female (*Shekhinah*).

See above, [note 687](#). On the World of the Male, see above, [p. 48](#), [n. 132](#).

[761](#). All those commandments are members and limbs... Torah is a living organism, composed of numerous members and limbs (commandments). Just as the human

body comprises 248 members and 365 sinews, so Torah comprises 248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments (totaling 613). By contemplating (and fulfilling) the commandments, one understands the deep significance of the corresponding human limbs and sefirotic limbs. “If one omits [that is, violates] even a single commandment,” he causes a defect in the divine body.

See above, [note 702](#). On causing a defect above, see BT *Sanhedrin* 74a (in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai); *Zohar* 2:26b, 85b; 3:16b, 66a, 79a, 297a-b.

762. *to till it and tend it—these are offerings...* According to a rabbinic interpretation, *to till it and tend it* implies the obligation to bring sacrificial offerings. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 16:5: “[YHVH Elohim took the human and placed him in the Garden of Eden] *to till it and tend it—these are the offerings.*”

The conclusion of the first sentence (“and all is one”) apparently means that *to till it and tend it* includes the obligation to fulfill all the commandments of Torah. *To till it* implies the 248 positive commandments (corresponding to the 248 upper components of the World of the Male); *and tend it* implies the 365 negative commandments (corresponding to the 365 lower components of the World of the Female).

The reference to *Remember* and *Observe* alludes to two alternative versions of the Ten Commandments. The first version reads: זָכוֹר (*Zakhor*), *Remember, the Sabbath day to keep it holy* (Exodus 20:8). The second version reads: שָׁמוֹר (*Shamor*), *Observe, the Sabbath day to keep it holy* (Deuteronomy 5:12). According to rabbinic tradition, these two versions were spoken by God simultaneously.

For the kabbalist, *zakhor, remember*, suggests זָכָר (*zakhar*), “male,” signifying the male divine potency, whereas the alternative formulation, *shamor, observe*, signifies the female, *Shekhinah*. Further, *zakhor, remember*, implies the 248 positive commandments of Torah (since time-bound positive

commandments are generally incumbent only on men), while *shamor*, *observe*, implies the 365 negative commandments (incumbent on women as well), together totaling the 613. See above, [note 687](#).

“Fulfilling” renders *לְאַשְׁלַמָּה* (*le’ashlama*), “to complete, fulfill, perfect.” Here it apparently connotes fulfilling and completing all of the commandments, by which one perfects one’s own body and soul, the body of Torah, and the body of God.

On the question of how one can fulfill all 613 commandments, see *OY*; *MmD*. On *to till it and tend it*, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 41; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 2:15; *Zohar* 1:27a (*TZ*), 57b, 141b, 199b; 3:263a (*Piq*); *ZH* 18c (*MhN*).

[763](#). enable a person to fulfill his spirit and soul... “To fulfill” renders *לְאַשְׁלַמָּה* (*le’ashlama*), “to complete, fulfill, perfect.” See toward the end of the preceding note.

If just “engaging” in the study of Torah entitles one to such rewards, how much more so for one who actually performs the commandments! See *M Avot* 1:17, in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Gamliel: “Study is not the essence but doing.”

On studying and doing, see also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 41; *JT Pesahim* 3:7, 30b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:14; *BT Qiddushin* 40b; and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *talmud gadol*.

[764](#). Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Abba... There is some confusion in the printed text and the manuscripts regarding the names of the two rabbis, one of whom is later identified as Rabbi Yose. In an earlier version of this tale in *ZH* 86c-87d (*MhN, Rut*), the two figures are identified as Rabbi Bun and Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ḥanina.

On this story, see Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 89-104. On the custom of studying Torah at midnight, see above, [note 74](#).

[765](#). For a mitzvah is a lamp... Each commandment that a person fulfills generates illumination for him in the

world that is coming.

766. And Torah is light... By studying Torah, one attains divine light.

767. And reproofs of discipline... Criticism that one receives willingly from another person, or suffering that one receives willingly from God.

See *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 10; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 32; BT *Berakhot* 5a; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 1; *Shemot Rabbah* 1:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 94:2.

768. Alternatively, For a lamp is a mitzvah... The *lamp* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is primed by each *mitzvah*—and it is a *mitzvah* to prime and adorn Her. *Shekhinah* is known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom), and is often symbolized by King David. She is also symbolized by Oral Torah, and is illumined by *Tif'eret*, Written Torah.

On Oral Torah as a lamp, and the need of Oral Torah for Written Torah, see *Bahir* 99 (149); Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir*, 108, n. 3. On the need of Oral Torah for light, see *Tanḥuma, Noah* 3.

769. A lamp that is a mitzvah attained by women... The *mitzvah* of lighting the Sabbath lamp, or candles. Although women are not traditionally privileged to study Torah, men, who do study, illumine the *lamp* of *Shekhinah*. This divine lamp is prepared for Her illumination by women each Friday evening when they kindle the Sabbath lights.

“Preparing” and “adorning” both render תקונא (*tiqquna*), which can also mean “perfection.” The exact sense of this passage depends, of course, on how one chooses to construe the meaning of this word. See *OY*.

On women lighting the Sabbath lamp, see M *Shabbat* 2:6; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 9; JT *Berakhot* 2:6, 5b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:8; BT *Shabbat* 31b-32a; *Tanḥuma, Noah* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 1; *Zohar* 1:48b.

770. has not attained Torah He is not learned.

771. to hear Kaddish with the congregation... On the significance of participating in this prayer, see above,

[note 59](#).

772. Exchange him for another... Remarkably, Rabbi Abba suggests that the man's daughter should divorce her ignorant young husband. Or perhaps, the couple will engender a worthy son.

773. Meanwhile, he rose... Suddenly, the young husband appears, jumping once again.

774. I am young in days... In the biblical context, Job and three of his friends had been debating God's justice and the problem of human suffering, when a young bystander breaks in, identified as *Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite from the family of Ram* (Job 32:2). Appropriately, the anonymous young husband begins with Elihu's opening verse.

According to a rabbinic tradition, Elihu was a nephew (or another relative) of Abraham. See Targum, Job 32:2; *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 22:21; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Numbers 766. According to JT *Sotah* 5:5, 20d (attributed to Rabbi El'azar son of Azariah), Elihu was none other than Isaac, and the phrase *from the family of Ram* implies "son of Abram." See Rashi on Job 32:2; idem, *Bava Batra* 15b, s.v. *Elihu*; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 130–31.

Here the young husband indicates that Elihu was descended from the priestly prophet Ezekiel, based on the equivalence of Elihu's title *הַבּוּזִי* (*ha-Buzi*), *the Buzite*, and the name of Ezekiel's father, *בּוּזִי* (*Buzi*). See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 131.

The verse in Ezekiel reads: *The word of YHVH came to Ezekiel son of Buzi the priest...* Elihu's opening verse reads: *...and dared not declare my opinion to you*. The wording *and dared not declare my own opinion* (preserved in N41) reflects Job 32:10, 17.

775. Since it is written בּוּזִי (Buzi), Buzite... The title *Buzi* implies that Elihu humbled himself before those greater than him, and he shared this designation with Ezekiel son of *Buzi*. Ezekiel's father (or perhaps Ezekiel himself) was a

perfect אדם (*adam*), “human,” and therefore Ezekiel is addressed by God as *son of Adam*. Since Elihu attained the lofty title *Buzi*, he is described as *from the family of* רם (*ram*), literally “high.”

For the play on בוזי (*Buzi*) and מבוזי (*mevazzei*), “abases,” see *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba* 7. Cf. *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:12; *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 30:15, p. 161; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 130–31. On the significance of *adam*, see *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba* 7; *Zohar* 3:48a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 130–31.

776. לימים (*le-yamim*), **in days...** The wording *le-yamim*, literally *to days*, implies that Elihu diminished himself “toward,” or before, Job’s friends, who were older, more “advanced in days.”

777. **since I am a youth...** Like Elihu, the young husband restrained himself, but now he is eager to share his insights.

778. **For a mitsvah is a lamp...** Delving deeper into the same verse discussed by Rabbi Abba, the young man indicates that *a lamp* alludes to the Mishnah (the core of Oral Torah), a symbol of *Shekhinah*, who is ready to be kindled by *Tif’eret*, symbolized by Written Torah. As the light of a lamp grows, so Oral Torah expands, kindled by Written Torah.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *YHVH said to Moses, “Go up to Me to the mountain and be there, that I may give you the stone tablets והתורה והמצוה (ve-ha-torah ve-ha-mitsvah), and the teaching and the commandments, that I have written to instruct them.”*

According to BT *Berakhot* 5a (in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish), in this verse *ha-torah* refers to the Five Books of Moses (the Written Torah), while *ha-mitsvah* refers to the Mishnah. Various medieval sources interpret *ha-mitsvah* as referring more generally to Oral Torah. See Ibn Ezra (long and short) on Exodus 24:12; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, intro; *Midrash ha-Gadol* on Exodus 24:12;

Zohar 3:40b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 387. See also *Bahir* 99 (149), quoting the verse from Proverbs.

779. why is She called a lamp?... When *Shekhinah* is embraced by *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, the two arms of Her male partner, and receives all of His 248 limbs, then including Her two arms, She becomes נר (*ner*), *lamp*, which is numerically equivalent to 250.

780. And Torah is light... *Torah* symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who illumines the *lamp* of *Shekhinah* by conveying the primordial light of *Hesed* on the right side.

The verse in Deuteronomy mentions the divine *right hand* and alludes to the left, symbolized by fire. *Torah* embodies both of these qualities, *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, harmonizing them. The verse reads in full: *YHVH from Sinai appeared and from Seir He shone upon them; He radiated from Mount Paran and He came from myriads of holy ones; from His right hand, a fiery law for them.* See *Zohar* 1:198a, 243a; 2:81a, 84a-b, 135a, 206b, 223a; 3:176a.

On the connection between *Torah* and the primordial light, see above, [note 495](#).

781. This light is absorbed by 207 worlds... The word אור (*or*), “light,” is numerically equivalent to 207, alluding to the number of worlds hidden on the right side, all suffused by that light. These 207 worlds exist below *Binah* (who is a Throne for the highest sefirotic powers), along with 103 worlds on left, together totaling 310 worlds stored away for the righteous. The verse in Proverbs alludes to all these worlds with the word שׁ (yesh), *substance*, whose numerical value is 310. Perhaps here the two letters of שׁ (*yesh*) also allude to ימין (*yamin*), “right,” and שמאל (*semol*), “left.”

On the verse in Proverbs, see *M Avot* 5:19; *Uqtsin* 3:12; *BT Sanhedrin* 100a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana, nispaḥim, Vezot Haberakhah*, 451; *Zohar* 1:4b, 88a (ST), 156b (ST), 158a, 206a, 242b.

On the invisible delights awaiting the righteous in the world that is coming, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, *No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You].*”

782. ו” (*Yesh*), **substance—310 worlds...** All of these are concealed beneath *Binah*, who is known as “the World that is Coming.” The primordial light of *Ḥesed* generates light and power constantly—not only in the future world—since otherwise life would cease.

On primordial light in the world that is coming and on its continuous animating power, see above at [notes 494–96](#). Cf. the line in the morning liturgy: “Lord of wonders, who renews in His goodness every day continually the act of Creation.”

The declaration in Psalms—עולם חסד יבנה (*olam ḥesed yibbaneh*)—is usually understood to mean *Forever is love established*, but here the young husband offers a midrashic reading with a kabbalistic twist: *The world is built by love*, namely by the potent light of *Ḥesed*.

On this verse, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 9; *Sifra, Qedoshim* 10:11, 92d; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 4; JT *Yevamot* 11:1, 11d; BT *Sanhedrin* 58b; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 21; *Midrash Tehillim* 89:2; Asher ben David, *Peirush Shelosh Esreh Middot*, 61; *Zohar* 1:230b; 2:79a; 3:77a, 133b (*IR*), 145b, 259b. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15; Vol. 3, p. 392–93, n. 453.

On *Binah* as “the World that is Coming,” see above, [p. 22, n. 59](#).

783. This light was sown... God sowed the primordial light of *Ḥesed* in the garden of *Shekhinah*, arranging it there by the power of *Yesod*, known as Righteous One and pictured as the divine gardener.

The phrase גנתא דעדנוי (*ginta de-idnoi*), “garden of His delight,” plays on גן עדן (*gan eden*), “Garden of Eden,” or

“Garden of Delight.” The phrase “seed of truth” derives from Jeremiah 2:21, referring metaphorically to Israel’s original pristine nature.

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47-48](#), [n. 132](#). On *Yesod* as gardener, see *Zohar* 2:35a.

[784.](#) ***as a garden makes its sowings spring up...*** The light sown within *Shekhinah* yields fruit ceaselessly.

[785.](#) ***Of the time of exile...*** At such times, the river of *Yesod* no longer receives the flow of emanation from above and cannot enter the sea, or garden, of *Shekhinah*. Still, the flowing light that was originally sown in the garden continues to yield fruit, as aftergrowth.

On the verse in Job, see *Zohar* 1:6b, 67a; 2:42b (*Piq*); 3:150b.

[786.](#) ***Now, you might say...*** Israel’s exile prevents the consummation of the divine union, so the fruit generated in the garden of *Shekhinah* is not of the same quality as before; yet the sowing is still productive.

[787.](#) ***Torah too is constantly sown... generating offspring...*** For example, through new interpretations, whose fruitfulness nourishes the world. See *OY*; above, [note 780](#).

[788.](#) ***And reproofs of discipline...*** God empowers demonic forces to impose suffering upon humans as a form of reproof and discipline.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *He drove out the human and placed east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life.*

[789.](#) ***The beginning of this verse ...*** What connection is there between the beginning of the verse, which mentions *mitsvah* and *Torah*, and the end of the verse, which mentions *reproofs of discipline*?

The young husband explains by referring to two alternative versions of the Ten Commandments. The first version reads: זָכוֹר (*Zakhor*), *Remember, the Sabbath day to*

keep it holy (Exodus 20:8). The second version reads: שמור (*Shamor*), *Observe, the Sabbath day to keep it holy* (Deuteronomy 5:12). For the kabbalist, *zakhor, remember*, suggests זכר (*zakhar*), “male,” signifying the male divine potency (centered in *Tif’eret*), whereas the alternative formulation, *shamor, observe*, signifies the female, *Shekhinah*. Further, *zakhor, remember*, implies the 248 positive commandments of Torah (since time-bound positive commandments are generally incumbent only on men), while *shamor, observe*, implies the 365 negative commandments (incumbent on women as well), together totaling the 613 commandments of Torah. See above, [note 687](#).

Here the opening clause of the verse, *For a mitzvah is a lamp*, alludes to *Shekhinah* (as explained previously), who is “mystery of *Observe*” and associated with the negative commandments. The clause *and Torah is light* alludes to *Tif’eret* (as explained previously), who is “mystery of *Remember*” and associated with the positive commandments. All 613 commandments are safeguarded by the punishments decreed in the Torah, which constitute *reproofs of discipline*. Thus the verse reads harmoniously.

[790](#). **Concerning the mystery of this *light*...** The *light* emanating from *Hesed* (through *Tif’eret*) illumines the *lamp* of *Shekhinah*. Thus, Aaron, who symbolizes *Hesed*, is instructed to *light up the lamps*.

The verse in Numbers reads: *When you light up the lamps, opposite the front of the lamp stand shall the seven lamps give light*.

[791](#). **‘Let there be light!’ And there was light...** Why doesn’t the verse conclude *And it was so*, as with nearly all the other commands of Creation? Because, the young man explains, *Let there be light* refers to the primordial light of *Hesed* on the right, while *And there was light* refers to *Gevurah* on the left, which issued from *Hesed* and was also *light*.

On the wording *And there was light*, see *Bahir* 131 (190); Nahmanides on Genesis 1:3; *Zohar* 1:22b (TZ); 2:127b; TZ 30, 74a.

792. the first ויהי (va-yhi), and there was... The first occurrence of this word refers to the left side, which is characterized by harsh Judgment. From here originates the demonic force, which appears in the form of the Angel of Death and the evil impulse, darkening creatures' faces. Therefore, the word *va-yhi, and there was*, is not a sign of blessing, as indicated by the verse ויהי עשו (Va-yhi Esav), *Esau became* [or: *was*], *a skilled hunter*—which is interpreted to mean that Esau played the role of the evil impulse, seducing people to sin.

The word ויהי (va-yhi), *and there was* [or: *and it happened*] is apparently interpreted as וי היה (vai hayah), “there was woe,” or וי הי (vai, hi), “woe, wailing.” See BT *Megillah* 10b: “Rabbi Levi, or some say Rabbi Yonatan, said, ‘This matter is a tradition handed down to us from the Men of the Great Assembly: Wherever is said ויהי (Va-yhi), *And it happened*, this expresses suffering.’... Rav Ashi said, ‘*Va-yhi, And it happened*, sometimes expresses this and sometimes not, while ויהי בימי (Va-yhi bi-yimei), *And it happened in the days of*, always expresses suffering.’” See above, [note 285](#).

The full verse reads: *The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a simple man, dwelling in tents.* On Esau's hunting for human weakness and leading others astray, see *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 25:27. Cf. Vol. 2, p. 273, n. 113.

793. God saw the light... This third appearance of the word *light* (following the two in the previous verse) alludes to *Tif'eret*, the middle pillar, who mediates the conflict between *Hesed* on the right and *Gevurah* on the left. Thus the conclusion of this verse means that *God separated*—and mediated between—*the light* (*Hesed*) and *the darkness* (*Gevurah*).

On *Tif'eret* mediating the conflict, see *Zohar* 1:16b-17b, 19b; 2:24a.

794. Since there were five rungs... The five occurrences of the word *light* in the description of the first day of Creation (Genesis 1:3-5) allude to the five *sefirot* issuing from the primordial light of *Ḥesed* on the right: *Gevurah*, *Tif'eret*, *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod* (alternatively, *Ḥesed* through *Hod*). When these five rungs were included in *Gevurah* on the left, they were symbolized by *water* (originating on the right side), and so the word *water* appears five times in the description of the second day (Genesis 1:6-8). Then the forces of right and left were balanced by *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the *expanse*, so this word too appears five times in the description of the second day, indicating that all five rungs now existed harmoniously.

Cf. *Zohar* 1:18a (Vol. 1, p. 135, n. 213); above, [note 616](#).

795. By these three, mystery of image of Adam... The sefirotic configuration, which appeared in the form of אדם (*adam*), “a human,” proceeded from a seed of light in *Ḥokhmah*, which turned into water in the womb of *Binah*, and then expanded.

According to one medieval theory (attributed to Pythagoras and taught by Alcmaeon of Croton), sperm derives from the brain. See *Anatomia Magistri Nicolai Physici*, 85; *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 3:14; *Bahir* 104 (155); Isaac Caro, *Toledot Yitshaq*, Genesis 4:1; Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, 108-22; Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, 52-60; Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 35; Biale, *Eros and the Jews*, 106; idem, *Blood and Belief*, 89-90; Nuland, *The Mysteries Within*, 233-36; Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 269-71; above, [pp. 93-94](#), [n. 268](#); [pp. 260-61](#), [n. 200](#).

796. Similar to... a human... The human being originates from a drop of semen, pictured as light, which

turns into water in the mother's womb and then expands into a fetus.

The second paragraph ("Once the form of the image...") apparently reverts to the sefirotic *Adam*, who gestated into an *expanse* called *Heaven*—alluding to *Tif'eret*, the sefirotic core. See *MM*; *MmD*.

On seed as light, see Eliade, "Spirit, Light, and Seed." Genesis 1:6 reads in full: *God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water."*

797. Once the body was purified... Once the sefirotic body was refined, the moisture that remained turned into male and female demonic forces—Samael and Lilith—who seduce humans to sin and then accuse them.

On the image of smelting, see above, [note 513](#); Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 38-40. On muddy waters, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 48; *Zohar* 3:12a; *ZH* 30c-d.

798. מארת (*me'orot*), lights—deficient... In the opening words of God's command on the fourth day of Creation, the word מארת (*me'orot*), *lights*, is written without *vavs*, the vowel letters. Such variant spelling is common in the Bible and affects neither pronunciation nor the simple meaning of the words. As construed here by the young man, however, the deficient spelling alludes to a lack: the light of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) had diminished, and Her union with *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *vav*) was disrupted. The void was filled by demonic evil or "curse": מארה (*me'erah*). (The form מארת [*me'erat*] means "curse of," as in Proverbs 3:33.) Such evil attacks little children, infecting them with diphtheria.

As a sign that *Shekhinah* was restored to Her fullness, the word *me'orot*, *lights*, is spelled more completely (as in Genesis 1:15), indicating the reunion of the divine couple, as *Shekhinah* ascended to join *Tif'eret*, *the expanse of heaven*.

See JT *Ta'anit* 4:4, 68b: "On the fourth day [of the week, Wednesday] they would fast for infants, so that

diphtheria not enter their mouths. *God said, 'Let there be מארת (me'orot), lights'—spelled מארת (me'erat), curse.'*"

See BT *Pesaḥim* 112b, *Ta'anit* 27b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:1; *Soferim* 17:4; Rashi on Genesis 1:14; *Zohar* 1:1a, 12a, 19b, 33b-34a, 146a, 166a, 169a-b; 2:35b, 205a, 264b; 3:45a, 234a; *ZH* 69b-c (*ShS*). On diphtheria, see also BT *Berakhot* 8a; *Zohar* 2:267b. On the diminishment of the moon, see BT *Hullin* 60b quoted above, [note 230](#).

Genesis 1:15 reads in full: "*They shall be for lights in the expanse of heaven to shine upon the earth.*" And it was so. In the Masoretic text, the word למאורת (*li-m'orot*), for lights, is spelled with one ם (*vav*). See *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc.

799. As for what I said... A seed of light takes form and develops only in the female's womb. But what about these five rungs issuing from *Hesed* (*Gevurah* through *Yesod*), which formed the sefirotic image of *Adam*? Where did they take shape? If you say that this took place within the Divine Mother, *Binah*, who is known as "the World that is Coming," that cannot be, since no image was fashioned until the letters of Creation emerged from *Binah* and then assumed form. Moreover, *Binah* (known as *Elohim*) is the Artisan who fashioned everything externally, so how can you say that the fashioning occurred within Her?

On fashioning with letters, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:2; above, [note 556](#). For various interpretations of this whole passage (extending to the bottom of the page), see *OY*; *MM*; *Soncino*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

800. And if you say, 'In the lower Female'... Nor can one say that the sefirotic image of *Adam* formed within *Shekhinah*, the lower Female, since She only emerged later as part of the androgynous divine *Adam*.

On the androgynous nature of *Adam*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1: "Rabbi Yirmeyah son of El'azar said, 'When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him androgynous, as is said: *Male and female He created them* (Genesis 1:27).' Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥmani said,

‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces. Then He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.’”

See Plato, *Symposium* 189d-191d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:15 BT *Berakhot* 61a, *Eruvin* 18a; *Tanḥuma*, *Tazri’a* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri’a* 2; *Midrash Tehillim* 139:5; *Zohar* 1:2b, 13b, 34b-35a, 37b, 47a, 55b, 70b, 165a; 2:55a, 144b, 176b (*SdTs*), 178b (*SdTs*), 231a-b; 3:5a, 10b, 19a, 44b, 292b (*IZ*); Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 217.

801. this mystery of Primordial Adam... Primordial Adam was formed below *Binah*, outside the realm of the upper Male and Female (*Hokhmah* and *Binah*). The second supernal *Adam* was formed from the seed of the first, within *Shekhinah*.

Primordial Adam was formed by the letters issuing in a measured flow from *Binah* through the primordial light of *Hesed*.

On Primordial Adam and the various images of *Adam*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:295-98. Cf. above, [note 360](#). On “the second Adam,” see *TZ* 19, 42a; 69, 110a; *ZḤ* 94c (*Tiq*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:306, n. 135; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 40.

On the phrase “water intermingled with water,” see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 5:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 10:9; 27:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:4; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:2; *Tanḥuma*, *Vayaqhel* 6, *Emor* 9; *Pesiqta Rabbati*, add. 1:1; Vol. 1, pp. 318-19, n. 1565.

802. After the Female was adorned for Him... Once *Shekhinah* was separated from the male part of the androgynous Primordial Adam and they faced one another, He entered *Shekhinah*, and within Her was formed His likeness: the second supernal *Adam*.

Genesis 5:3 reads in full: *Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and he engendered in his likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth*. Here, Adam

represents Primordial Adam, while Adam's likeness, Seth, represents the second supernal *Adam*.

On the androgynous *Adam*, see above, [note 800](#). On adorning Adam's partner, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 18:1: "YHVH *Elohim* built the *rib* [or: *side*] (Genesis 2:22)... It was taught in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: 'He adorned her like a bride and brought her to him.'"

803. Similarly, below... With Adam, Eve, and their offspring. According to a rabbinic tradition, Cain was engendered by the sexual union of the serpent and Eve. See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21: "The serpent-rider [Samael] copulated with her and she conceived Cain. Afterward Adam copulated with her and she conceived Abel." Cf. BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a: "Rav Yosef taught: '... When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זוהמא (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust].'"

Here the young husband indicates that the serpent and Adam both united with Eve. The letter ק (*qof*)—which begins the name קין (*Qayin*), *Cain*—symbolizes the demonic power of the serpent, which bore fruit in Eve's womb with the help of Adam. The verse in Genesis now implies that *Adam knew Eve* carnally after the serpent had already copulated with her—or, he *knew* what the serpent had done—and he was not the prime male force engendering Cain. Rather, Eve, having been injected with the filthy refuse of the serpent, *conceived and bore Cain*.

On the serpent's role in engendering Cain, see also *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 4:1 (variants); *Zohar* 1:36b-37a, 52a, 54a-55a; 2:178a (*SdT*s), 231a; 3:76b; *ZH* 8c-9b, 63c (*ShS*); Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 38-53.

The letter ק (*qof*) may also allude to קוף (*qof*), "ape," symbolizing the demonic force. See above, [note 492](#). On the letter *qof*, see also *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:398); *Zohar* 1:2b; 2:180b; 3:251b-252a; *ZH* 8c; above, [note 561](#).

804. *She continued bearing...* Adam and Eve's second son, Abel, derived primarily from the divine male potency, not from the serpent. Yet here too, the verse does not read *he engendered*, because the accusing serpent had weakened Adam's power by copulating with Eve and engendering Cain. Still infected by the serpent's slime, Eve *continued bearing*, and Abel too was tainted.

On Abel's taint, see *Zohar* 1:55a. The verse in Genesis reads: *She continued bearing—his brother, Abel [or: She bore as well his brother, Abel], and Abel became a herder of sheep while Cain was a tiller of the soil.*

805. *As soon as refuse was purged...* After the births of Cain and Abel, the demonic filth faded, and the creative letters gave birth to Adam and Eve's third son, שׁת (*Shet*), *Seth*. The letters of his name signify the harmonious union of the divine couple: the three prongs of the שׁ (*shin*) symbolize *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, while the ת (*tav*), a feminine marker, symbolizes *Shekhinah*. *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, in perfect accord, generated the pure soul of Seth.

Now, Genesis states that Adam himself *engendered in his likeness*—whereas Cain and Abel were not fully *in his likeness* and were infected or tainted with the serpent's slime injected into Eve. Furthermore, Seth was named by Adam—unlike Cain (and presumably Abel), who were named by Eve when she still contained slime.

See BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 22; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:7; *Zohar* 1:55a; 2:111b, 231b; *ZH* 8c-9b. The full verse in Genesis reads: *Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and he engendered in his likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth.* According to Genesis 4:25, Eve named Seth.

806. *Letters revolved further...* Seth engendered אנוש (*Enosh*), Enosh, the letters of whose name derive from both Adam and Seth. The first letter, א (*alef*), is the first letter of אדם (*Adam*). The second letter, נ (*Nun*), is the letter following the third letter of אדם (*Adam*), מ (*mem*). The third letter, ו (*vav*),

is the second letter following the second letter of אדם (Adam), ד (dalet)—since the letter immediately following *dalet*, ה (he), had already been included in the name הבל (Hevel), Abel. The final letter of אנוש (Enosh), ש (shin), is the first letter of his father, ש (shet), Seth.

807. What is the difference... The young man associates the name אנוש (Enosh), Enosh, with the root אנש ('nsh), “to be sickly, weak.” Enosh did not possess power on his own but simply restored or enhanced the qualities of “the earlier ones,” apparently referring to Adam and Seth. In Psalms and Job, the term *enosh*, “a human,” reflects this lack of potency. Yet, the weak physical nature of Enosh (or his suffering from divine discipline) concealed a spiritual strength.

On the verse in Psalms, see BT *Sanhedrin* 38b (quoted above in [note 632](#)). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH delights in crushing him by disease. If you make his soul a guilt offering, he will see seed and prolong his days, and the delight of YHVH will prosper in his hand.*

808. Letters revolved further... Enosh engendered קינן (Qeinan), Kenan, who straightened the crookedness of his ancestor, קין (Qayin), Cain, as indicated by the additional נ (nun) in his name.

809. מהללאל (Mahalal'el), Mahalalel... Son of Kenan, who further enhanced the world. The first letter of his name is the last letter of Adam's. The next two letters, ה ל (he, lamed), are the first and last letters of his ancestor's name, הבל (Hevel), Abel. Since Abel was not wicked like Cain, only the middle letter of הבל (Hevel)—ב (vet)—was changed, being transformed into א (alef) and included in מהללאל (Mahalal'el).

810. the world became fragrantly firm... Humanity improved and the world stabilized, but the effect of Adam's sin was not completely overcome until Israel willingly received the Torah at Mount Sinai. Meanwhile, the suffering of the world was assuaged by Noah, who was born in the tenth generation from Adam. Noah the

Righteous symbolizes *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), and through him the lamp of *Shekhinah* and the light of *Tif'eret* were united.

On the purifying effect of the revelation at Mount Sinai, see BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a, in the name of Rav Yosef: “When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זוהמא (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust]. Israel, who stood at Mount Sinai—their filth ceased. Star-worshippers, who did not stand at Mount Sinai—their filth did not cease.”

See above, [note 803](#). On the elimination of the evil impulse at Sinai, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:15 (on 1:2); *Pesiqta Rabbati* 41; *Zohar* 1:52a-b; 2:183b, 193b; 3:97b (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 139 (and Wolfson’s note).

The expression “became fragrantly firm” renders איתבסם (*itbassam*), “was sweetened” or “... firmly established.” The root בסם (*bsm*) conveys both senses. See above, [note 338](#).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *He called his name נח (Noah), Noah, as to say, “This one ינוחמנו (yenaḥamenu), will console us, for our work and for the pain of our hands from the soil that YHVH cursed.”* See Genesis 3:17.

[811.](#) Now, Sirs, I am from Babylon... The young husband reveals why he appeared not to know much.

See above at [notes 771, 777](#). On the theme of coming from Babylon, see *Zohar* 2:174b; 3:158a. Cf. Vol. 3, p. 352, n. 269. On “lions of Torah,” see above, [page 138](#); Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod*, 48, 92.

[812.](#) Rabbi Yose raised his voice... On the name Rabbi Yose, see above, [note 764](#).

In BT *Pesaḥim* 119a, secrets of Torah are referred to as “things hidden by the Ancient of Days.” See the rabbinic blessing in BT *Berakhot* 17a: “May your steps run to hear words of the Ancient of Days!” See above, [note 334](#).

[813.](#) since I saw the suffering... The young husband had resolved not to speak any words of Torah for two months. Seeing that his new wife and father-in-law were

distressed over his apparent ignorance, he vowed not to have sexual relations with his wife (that is, not to follow “the way of the whole world”) until he mastered Grace after Meals (including apparently its mystical significance). Even though he could have had relations with her—either because he really was learned, or because she was his wife—he “did not want to go against their wishes.” Apparently this means that having vowed not to consummate the marriage, he did not want to break his word to them, since he could not display his true knowledge for two months.

See above at [notes 771, 777](#). On the phrase “as is the way of the whole world,” see Genesis 19:31: *like the way of all the earth*. “To go against their wishes” renders the idiom למעבר על דעתיהו (*le-mi’bar al da’taihu*), “to transgress their minds [or: their will, their opinion].”

814. Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Abba... On these names, see above, [note 764](#).

Dawn is approaching, and Rabbi Yose asks the young man to welcome or hasten its arrival with words of Torah.

815. He opened with Grace after Meals... The young husband demonstrates his mastery of the prayer that he supposedly did not know. See above at [note 771](#) and the earlier version of this story in ZH 86c-d (*MhN, Rut*).

When the Temple stood and Israel made pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they could actually *eat before YHVH* and *rejoice before YHVH*. But how can these verses possibly be fulfilled now?

The full verse in Deuteronomy 14 reads: *You shall eat before YHVH your God, in the place that He chooses to have His name dwell, the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, and the firstborn of your cattle and your sheep, so that you may learn to revere YHVH your God all the days.*

The full verse in Deuteronomy 27 reads: *You shall slaughter communion sacrifices and eat there, and rejoice before YHVH your God.*

816. Well, certainly so... One certainly can eat and rejoice *before* YHVH, even now.

First, the young husband analyzes the wording of the blessing over bread: “Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the world, הַמוֹצֵי (ha-motsi), who brings forth, bread from the earth.” He wonders why the word *ha-motsi* includes the prefix *ha*, which usually serves as a definite article but here functions as the relative pronoun “who.” Although this *ha* is syntactically correct, the young man questions the need for it here, quoting two biblical verses where verbs describing divine action lack the prefix *ha*.

He explains that the lack of the definite article *ha* is appropriate for the concealed world of *Binah*, which should not be announced and openly identified by “the.” On the other hand, *ha* is appropriate for *Shekhinah*, “the world that is more revealed.” Divine names such as הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל (ha-El ha-gadol), *the great God*—which designates *Hesed*—also appear with *ha*, apparently because they are more revealed than *Binah* Herself. In the case of *ha-motsi*, as soon as a person offers this blessing *Shekhinah* mysteriously appears, so the prefix *ha* is perfectly fitting—indicating that it is indeed possible to eat *before* YHVH.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On *motsi* and *ha-motsi* in the blessing over bread, see JT *Berakhot* 6:1, 10a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:7; BT *Berakhot* 38a-b; *Midrash Tehillim* 104:11; *ZH* 86d, 87b (both *MhN*, *Rut*). On the sefirotic significance of *ha-motsi*, see *Zohar* 1:2a; 3:98a (*Piq*), 231b, 272a-b (*RM*); *TZ* 22, 68a. The verse in Jeremiah 10 reads: עוֹשֶׂה (Oseh), *He makes, the earth by His power*.

817. here is included speaking words of Torah... The phrase *before* YHVH in the verse in Deuteronomy alludes to the identical phrase verse in Ezekiel, from the prophet’s vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem, describing the table for the Bread of the Presence. This verse figures in a famous teaching on the importance of speaking words of

Torah at a meal. See M *Avot* 3:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on: "If three have eaten at one table without speaking over it words of Torah, it is as though they have eaten of sacrifices to the dead, as is said: *Surely all tables are full of filthy vomit, without the Omnipresent* (Isaiah 28:8) [i.e., without discussing God's words]. But if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of Torah, it is as if they have eaten from the table of the Omnipresent, as is said: *He said to me, 'This is the table that is before YHVH.'*" See above, [notes 592, 598](#).

818. *Let me gulp down...* One day when Esau came back from hunting and saw that his brother, Jacob, had prepared a lentil stew, he said to him, *Let me gulp down some of this red red stuff, for I am famished*. Here, Esau represents the Other Side, which is characterized by gluttony. One who strives to eat in holiness must shun such behavior, which befits (and would attract) the demonic force.

See *Zohar* 3:246a (RM); ZH 87b (MhN, Rut). The full verse in Proverbs reads: *A righteous one eats to satisfy his appetite [or: soul], but the belly of the wicked is [or: will be] in want*—that is, the wicked are never satisfied and always crave more.

819. rather in words of Torah... See above, [note 817](#). On empowering God, see above, [note 633](#).

820. *You shall rejoice before YHVH—with the cup of blessing...* It is also possible to fulfill this verse now, by rejoicing over the cup of blessing, which is held during Grace after Meals.

"In a session of three" means when three adult males have eaten together, in which case the person leading Grace after Meals says, "Let us bless Him of whose bounty we have eaten and by whose goodness we live." The inclusion of the phrase "and by whose goodness we live" reflects a Provençal and Sephardic custom, whereas

according to Ashkenazic practice only the respondents recite these words.

The young man indicates that one should direct these words toward the Ancient of Ancients, the concealed and primordial realm of *Keter*. Therefore this line is formulated in the third person, “Let us bless Him of whose...,” rather than “Let us bless You....” In grammatical terminology, the third-person construction is known as נִסְתָּר (*nistar*), “concealed.”

On the cup of blessing, see BT *Berakhot* 51a-b; above, [notes 241](#), [660](#). On the formula to be said when three have eaten, see M *Berakhot* 7:3; BT *Berakhot* 50a. On the question of who says the phrase “and by whose goodness we live,” see ZH 87c (*MhN, Rut*); Vital; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 61, 119. For the full verse in Deuteronomy, see above, [note 815](#).

[821](#). ‘And by whose goodness’—not ‘from whose goodness’... The wording “by whose goodness” refers to *Hesed* on the right, who generates bounty and goodness. The alternative wording “from whose goodness” would refer to a lower *sefirah* (apparently *Yesod*), that derives “from” *Hesed* and conveys only some of its goodness. In Grace after Meals one should emphasize *Hesed* itself, “by whose goodness” the world is built and sustained.

On “by whose goodness” as opposed to “from whose goodness,” see BT *Berakhot* 50a; ZH 87c (*MhN, Rut*).

See Psalms 89:3 (as understood midrashically and kabbalistically): *The world is built by Hesed*. See above, [note 782](#).

[822](#). Why is it called goodness... *Hesed*, kindness?... Why is this *sefirah* called by both these names? The young man explains that “goodness” refers to when this *sefirah* is still self-contained and does not yet emanate below, whereas *Hesed* refers to when it flows and bestows its goodness upon all.

The verse in Psalm 23 includes both these aspects, first *goodness*, then *kindness*. Similarly, the opening formula of Grace after Meals refers to “goodness,” while the first complete blessing (according to a variant version) reads “who nourishes the whole world with kindness” and concludes “Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who nourishes all.”

For the variant wording “who nourishes the whole world with kindness,” see Mordekhai ben Hillel, *Sefer ha-Mordekhai, Berakhot* 217; Joseph Karo, *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Hayyim* 187:1.

823. This is called Blessing of the Right... The first blessing of Grace after Meals corresponds to *Hesed* on the right. The Grace has no place for harsh Judgment (on the left), which explains why the cup of blessing should be held in the right hand with no support by the left hand.

The second blessing focuses on the land of Israel, which symbolizes *Shekhinah* (the Land of the Living), who should be joined to *Hesed*, so that She can receive the flow of nourishment and convey it to the world. This Blessing of the Land refers to the covenant of circumcision and Torah, which symbolize, respectively, *Yesod* and *Tif'eret*, who are nourished by the goodness of *Hesed* and help to perfect it by conveying its bounty below. Women, who lack the sign of circumcision and are not commanded to study Torah, are therefore unable to recite Grace after Meals on behalf of others or to lead others in reciting it.

On how to hold the cup of blessing, see above, [note 241](#). On the need to include “covenant and Torah” in the second blessing of Grace after Meals, see BT *Berakhot* 48b-49a; *Tosafot, Berakhot* 20b, s.v. *nashim*. On the question of women reciting (or enabling others to fulfill their obligation to recite) Grace after Meals, see M *Berakhot* 3:3; 7:2; BT *Berakhot* 20b; *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *nashim*; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Berakhot* 5:1; *Zohar* 2:190a; 3:19b, 191a; *ZḤ* 87d (*MhN, Rut*); *Sha'arei*

Teshuvah (Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim), 345; Vital; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 128, n. 108.

824. One should conclude: 'for the land and for the food'... The conclusion of the second blessing of Grace after Meals alludes to both *Hesed* (source of “food” and sustenance) and *Shekhinah* (Land of the Living). By joining “the land and... the food” in this line, one unites these two rungs.

825. Spreading of goodness is הודאה (*hoda'ah*), Thanksgiving... This second blessing of Grace after Meals begins with the word נודה (*nodeh*), “We thank” (You), and is a prayer of *hoda'ah*, “thanksgiving,” thereby alluding to the *sefirah* of *Hod* (Splendor). *Hoda'ah*, “thanksgiving,” naturally relates to *Hesed*, for whose goodness thanks is offered. Because of this—or because *Hesed* spreads to *Hod*—by extension, *Hod* itself may be called *Hesed*.

On *Hod* and *hoda'ah*, see Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 46 (55); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 34b.

826. delights in Your right hand נצח (*netsah*), for eternity... The preceding paragraph suggests that *Hod* is associated with *Hesed* on the right side, or located there. Yet the verse in Psalms implies that the *sefirah* of *Netsah*, not *Hod*, is *in Your right hand*. The young man explains that every *sefirah* indicates its origin, and thus *Hod* alludes to *hoda'ah*, “thanksgiving,” and the cause of thanksgiving, namely the goodness and kindness of *Hesed* on the right, where *Hod* is rooted. He may also be implying that *Netsah* (which also means “victory”) alludes to *Gevurah* (Power) on the left.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *You will let me know the path of life: satiety of joys in Your presence, delights in Your right hand for eternity.*

827. Netsah is on the right... One might claim that *Netsah*, and not *Hod*, is linked with (and located on) the right side. However, the verse in Psalms reads: נעימות (*ne'imot*), *delights, in Your right hand*, and the verse in Samuel refers to King David as נעים (*ne'im*), *sweet, singer of Israel*. Since

David symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who tends toward the left side, both *ne'im* and *ne'imot* refer to the left, and the point of the verse in Psalms is that *ne'imot*—signifying *Netsah* on the left—is included *in Your right hand*, because “every left is included in mystery of right,” issuing from the right and eventually harmonizing with it.

In Grace after Meals the blessing of *hoda'ah*, “thanksgiving,” alludes to the origin of *Hod* in *Hesed*, and to the spreading of the goodness of *Hesed* through *Hod* to *Shekhinah* (Land of the Living).

Alternatively, the plural *ne'imot*, *delights*, may imply both *Netsah* and *Hod*. For various interpretations of this passage, see Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* 17:4; *OY* (where Cordovero revises his view); *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

On the question of *Netsah* and *Hod* and their placement on the left or the right, see Asher ben David, *Peirush Shem ha-Meforash*, 101; *Zohar* 1:21b; *ZH* 44a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 10–11, 46–48 (13–14, 55–59); idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 82–83, and Wolfson’s note on 82:17. On the left being included in the right, see above, [note 699](#).

[828](#). Why is there no left here?... In Grace after Meals, why is there no blessing that corresponds to *Gevurah* (or *Din*) on the left? Because if there were, the demonic force, which originates from this quality of harsh Judgment, would be aroused.

When Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, this symbolized the ceding of the Other Side’s share of holiness to Israel. Still, after each meal Israel offers the Other Side a portion consisting of the water with which one washes off the remnants of food from his fingers. This dirty water is offered to the Other Side to satisfy and appease him and prevent him from interfering with Israel’s attempt to consecrate the act of eating. If the left side were mentioned in Grace after Meals, this could arouse the Other Side. Thus he might obtain not only the share of fingerbowl

water but also a share of holiness above, like a firstborn who obtains a double share.

“Israel obtains above and Esau obtains below” also implies that Israel is destined for spiritual reward even if the Gentiles succeed in controlling this world.

On fingerbowl water, see above, [note 618](#). On the theme of assuaging demonic powers by offering them a portion, see above, [p. 102](#), [n. 291](#). On the firstborn receiving a double share, see Deuteronomy 21:17.

829. Once this Land of the Living is blessed... The first blessing of Grace after Meals corresponds to *Hesed*, and the second to *Shekhinah* (as well as *Hod*). Once these two blessings have been recited, and *Shekhinah* (Land of the Living) has thereby been blessed from *Hesed* on the right, the Grace continues with a plea for the people Israel and for the rebuilding of the Temple: “Have compassion, *YHVH* our God, upon Israel Your people and upon Jerusalem Your city ... and upon the great and holy House that bears Your name.... Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who in His compassion builds Jerusalem.”

830. On Sabbath—so that Judgment may not appear... In order to maintain the bliss of Sabbath, a special paragraph is added on this day to Grace after Meals: “May it be Your pleasure to strengthen us, *YHVH* our God, by Your commandments, and by the commandment of the seventh day, this great and holy Sabbath.... May there be no sorrow, grief, or sighing on our day of rest....”

The word רצה (*retseh*), “May it be Your pleasure,” alludes to *Netsah*, while ויהזלצינו (*ve-haḥalitseinu*), “and strengthen us,” alludes to *Hod* (or *hoda’ah*, “thanksgiving”). This paragraph is intended to ensure that both *Netsah* and *Hod* (on the left and the right) are suffused by *Hesed* and become manifest as חסדי דוד (*ḥasdei david*), *acts of love for David*—namely conveying love to *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), who is symbolized by King David.

Modim ([We] thank) is a prayer toward the end of the *Amidah*, and here it corresponds to *hoda'ah*, or *Hod*.

On *Retseh* and *Modim* (both in the *Amidah*) as respectively signifying *Netsah* and *Hod*, see Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 46 (55). On *hasdei david*, *acts of love for David*, as signifying *Netsah* and *Hod*, see *Zohar* 1:8a, 219a; 3:16a, 21a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 48 (59). For various interpretations, see *OY*; Vital; *MM*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

831. 'Grant peace'... This final blessing of the *Amidah* (or the Prayer) concludes: "Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who blesses His people Israel with peace," and is then followed by another paragraph, which concludes: "He who makes peace in His heights, may He in His compassion make peace for us and for all Israel, and say, 'Amen.'" This last line also appears near the end of Grace after Meals. Peace symbolizes *Yesod*, who unites the divine couple.

The fourth and final blessing of Grace after Meals features the phrase (and thus is known as) "who is good and does good." Here, this implies that all comes from *Hesed* on the right, who is called "goodness." (See above, [notes 821-22](#).) *Yesod*, who receives the flow from *Hesed*, is also referred to as "good" or "goodness," so the final blessing of Grace after Meals (like the final blessing of the *Amidah*) pertains to *Yesod*.

On "Grant peace" as signifying *Yesod*, see Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 46 (55).

832. One who recites Grace after Meals... The person who holds the cup of blessing and leads the others in Grace after Meals receives blessings first of all and is blessed with the entire flow of bounty stimulated by the Grace. The word *salvations* alludes to the powers of *Hesed* on the right, which provide protection from all demonic forces.

On the connection between the cup of blessing and the right (hand), see above, [notes 241](#), [823](#). The full verse in Psalms reads: *I raise the cup of salvations and invoke the*

name of YHVH. See BT *Berakhot* 51b; *Zohar* 1:1a, 250a; 3:187b, 245a-b (RM). The quotation *My own right hand brought me salvation* is a paraphrase of Isaiah 63:5: *My own arm brought me salvation*. Cf. Psalms 98:1: *His own right hand brought Him salvation*.

833. You shall make the planks for the Dwelling of acacia wood, upright... The planks (or frames) of the Tabernacle, made of *acacia wood*, symbolize the angels known as *seraphim*. The young husband demonstrates this association by verbal analogy: the word עומדים (*omedim*), *standing* or *upright*, describes both the *acacia wood* used for the planks and the *seraphim* seen by the prophet Isaiah.

The covering over the planks of the Tabernacle is like a wedding canopy for the union of *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*, while the planks themselves are like seraphim surrounding the canopy, so that *Shekhinah's* partner, "supernal Spirit," may enter and join Her there. Similarly, a bride on earth requires a beautiful canopy, decorated in honor of *Shekhinah*, the heavenly Bride.

On the analogy between *seraphim* and *acacia wood*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Shemot Rabbah* 33:4; 35:6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; *Zohar* 2:139a, 147b, 170a, 233b.

834. at every covenantal circumcision... Elijah appears at every circumcision, and a special chair must be prepared for him.

According to 2 Kings 2:11-12, the prophet Elijah did not die a normal death but was carried off to heaven in a chariot of fire. According to *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 29, when the Israelites neglected the commandment of circumcision, "Elijah, may his memory be a blessing, was passionately zealous and adjured the heavens not to send down dew or rain upon the earth. [Queen] Jezebel heard and sought to kill him. Elijah immediately prayed before the blessed Holy One. The blessed Holy One said to him, 'Are you better than your ancestors? Jacob fled [from Esau]

and escaped.... Moses fled [from Pharaoh] and escaped.... David fled [from Saul] and escaped....' Elijah immediately fled from the land of Israel and escaped [to Horeb].... The blessed Holy One appeared to him and said, '*What are you doing here, Elijah?*' (1 Kings 19:9). He answered, '*I have been very zealous [for YHVH, the God of Hosts, for the Children of Israel have abandoned Your covenant]*' (ibid., 10). The blessed Holy One said, 'You are always zealous! You were zealous in Shittim on account of sexual immorality [Numbers 25; Elijah is identified with the zealous Phinehas]..., and here, too, you are zealous. By your life! Israel will not enact the covenant of circumcision until you see it with your own eyes.' Because of this the sages ordained that a seat of honor be arranged for the Angel of the Covenant [Elijah; see Malachi 3:1]."

Traditionally at a circumcision the chair of Elijah is placed at the right of the *sandaq* (godfather) and left unoccupied. The *mohel* (circumciser) declares in the opening prayer: "This is the chair of Elijah, may his memory be a blessing."

See *Halakhot Gedolot* (according to *Shibbolei ha-Leqet* 376:6); *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Wistinetzki, par. 585; *Zohar* 1:13a, 93a, 209b; 2:190a; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah* 265:11; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:338, n. 103.

835. in honor of the bride—unidentified... In this sentence the identity of "the bride" is not specified, in order to imply both the earthly bride and the heavenly Bride. *Shekhinah* ascends toward Her partner through the power of seven sefirotic blessings flowing from above, while the earthly bride ascends toward the groom through the seven blessings recited beneath the wedding canopy. Only then is she called bride, and until then the couple cannot consummate their union.

BT *Ketubbot* 7b-8a records six wedding blessings, to which is added the blessing over the wine. See *Kallah Rabbati* 1:1. On the symbolism of the seven wedding

blessings, see *Zohar* 3:44b, 266b; *ZḤ* 88d-89a (*MhN*, *Rut*). On the bride being forbidden to her husband without the wedding blessings, see *Kallah* 1:1.

The seven wedding blessings are also linked with Grace after Meals (which the young husband has just expounded), since traditionally they are again recited at the conclusion of the Grace at the wedding feast.

836. Those seven blessings... *Shekhinah* inherits seven blessings from *Binah* via *Tif'eret*. It would seem that there are only six of these, namely the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. However, the seventh is *Binah* Herself, who sustains all those below. Similarly, there are six wedding blessings preceded by the blessing over the wine.

On the question of whether there are six or seven wedding blessings recited under the canopy, see the preceding note; Bezalel Ashkenazi, *Shitah Mequbbetset, Ketubbot* 8a (in the name of the disciples of Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi); Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 46.

837. Most blessings are over wine... Numerous ritual blessings are recited over wine. According to BT *Berakhot* 34b (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi), in the world that is coming the righteous will enjoy "wine preserved in its grapes since the six days of Creation." In the *Zohar*, this wine symbolizes both the deepest secrets of Torah and also the emanation stored within, or flowing from, *Binah*, who is known as "the World that is Coming." She is the source of joy.

The first of the seven wedding blessings is "Blessed are You, *YHVH* our God, King of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine." The wine symbolizes the flow from *Binah* to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the vine. The arousal of divine passion is initiated by *Gevurah* on the left; then *Hesed*, the right arm, embraces *Shekhinah*, and *Yesod* or *Tif'eret* (the Tree of Life) unites with Her.

On "wine preserved in its grapes," see *Zohar* 1:135b (*MhN*), 192a, 238b; 2:147a; 3:4a, 12b, 39b-40a, 93b, 100a (*RM*); *ZH* 28a-b, 64c (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 130. On *Binah* as "the World that is Coming," see above, [p. 22](#), [n. 59](#).

838. The second... The second of the seven wedding blessings is "Blessed are You, *YHVH* our God, King of the world, who has created all for His glory." The word "all" symbolizes *Yesod*, the divine phallus and site of the covenant

of circumcision, who conveys the entire flow of emanation, which courses through the various sefirotic limbs, to *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the vine and also known as “glory”). This flow originates in *Binah* and appears first in *Hesed* on the right before continuing to *Yesod*.

The fruitlessness of the left side is related to the impotence of the demonic realm, which is rooted in the left. See above, [pp. 60–61](#), [n. 176](#).

839. Afterward, left is embraced by right... The third wedding blessing is “Blessed are You, *YHVH* our God, King of the world, who creates *האדם* (*ha-adam*), the human being.” This blessing corresponds to *Tif’eret*, who harmonizes the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, and constitutes the trunk of the sefirotic body, “mystery of Adam.” *Tif’eret*, the middle pillar of the *sefirot*, is also symbolized by Jacob, who embodied the primordial beauty and power of Adam.

See BT *Bava Metsi’a* 84a: “The beauty of our father Jacob resembled the beauty of Adam.” See *Zohar* 1:35b, 142b, 145b–146a, 168a, 222a; 2:111a–b, 141b; *ZH* 37c, 65a (*ShS*).

840. The fourth is one pillar... The fourth wedding blessing, which describes how the human being is created in the divine image, corresponds to the divine right thigh.

The left thigh is linked with the fifth blessing: “May *העקרה* (*ha-aqarah*), the barren woman, greatly rejoice at the gathering of her children to her in joy. Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who causes Zion to rejoice in her children.” The young husband plays on *aqarah*, “barren woman,” and *עקרא* (*iqqara*), “essence.” The phrase *עקרא דביתא* (*iqqara de-veita*), “essence of the house,” is a related play on Psalms 113:9: He sets *עקרת הבית* (*aqeret ha-bayit*), *the barren woman of the house* [or: *the barren woman in her house*], as a happy mother of children. *Hallelujah!*

Here the “essence of the house” is *Shekhinah*, who delights in the ingathering of Her exiled children—but also constantly in the influx of new souls of Israel emanating

from the *sefirot* above Her. The two divine thighs (*Netsah* and *Hod*) join together and gather these souls, bringing them “between the knees” (which also symbolize *Netsah* and *Hod*). This sefirotic pair is the source of prophecy, and they provide joy to *Shekhinah*, “essence of the house.” They are also pictured as willow stems, which do not themselves yield fruit; yet by gathering new souls from above, they convey fruit (via *Yesod*) to *Shekhinah*. *Netsah* and *Hod* are also pictured as two testicles, conveying seed to *Yesod*.

On the two divine thighs, *Netsah* and *Hod*, and the question of which is on the right and which is on the left, see above, [notes 825-27](#). On the willow stems, see above, [note 747](#).

On *aqarah*, “barren,” and *iqqara*, “essence,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 71:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 20:2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:8, 11; *Zohar* 1:29a-b, 50a, 149b, 154a, 157b, 158b, 223a; 2:44a; Moses de León, *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 44.

841. The sixth: ‘companions and lovers’... The sixth wedding blessing is “Give abundant joy to companions and lovers [or according to another reading: to the beloved companions], as You gave joy to Your creation of yore in the Garden of Eden [namely to Adam and Eve]. Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who gives joy to groom and bride.”

Here the young husband identifies the “companions and lovers” with the realm of *Yesod*, or with *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*. *Yesod* is the cosmic pillar, called Righteous, while *Shekhinah* is known as Righteousness.

On *Yesod* as Righteous and as the cosmic pillar, see above, [note 725](#), and [pp. 47-48, n. 132](#). On *Shekhinah* as Righteousness, see above, [note 381](#). On Righteous and Righteousness, see *Zohar* 1:32a (*Tos*), 34a, 49a, 182b, 246a; 2:57a, 147b; 3:26a, 68a, 69a, 105a, 115b, 165a, 236b, 287a, 297a.

842. The seventh sustains all... The final wedding blessing is “Blessed are You, *YHVH* our God, King of the

world, who has created jubilation and happiness, groom and bride.... Blessed are You, *YHVH*, who causes the groom to rejoice with the bride." The version of this blessing in BT *Ketubbot* 8a (and in the standard liturgy) includes twelve synonyms of, or nouns related to, joy, rather than the ten listed here by the young husband, who wishes to parallel the ten *sefirot*.

This seventh blessing corresponds to *Binah*, who sustains all the *sefirot* beneath Her. She includes all "ten utterances," namely all ten *sefirot*, both those "above" (*Keter*, *Hokhmah*, and *Binah* Herself) and those "below" (*Hesed* through *Shekhinah*). All seven blessings and the entire sefirotic flow reach *Shekhinah*, perfecting Her.

In each wedding ceremony, Israel reenacts the sefirotic drama and stimulates it anew, since the groom and bride represent the divine couple.

On the "ten utterances," see M *Avot* 5:1: "The world was created through ten utterances." On these utterances and the ten *sefirot*, see above, [note 647](#). On the ten types of joy, see *ZH* 89a (*MhN*, *Rut*); *MM*.

[843](#). **Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Ḥiyya...** On these two names, see above, [note 764](#).

[844](#). **you were in the Dwelling of that Youth, Metatron...** The young husband represented or embodied the chief angel and Prince of the World, Metatron, who is known as Youth.

On Metatron as Youth, see above, [notes 453](#), [726](#). On the Dwelling (or Tabernacle) of Metatron, see *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:12, in the name of Rabbi Simon: "When the blessed Holy One told Israel to erect the Dwelling, He hinted to the angels that they too should construct a Dwelling. When it was erected below, it was erected above; and that is the Dwelling of the Youth named Metatron, in which he offers up the souls of the righteous to atone for Israel in the days of their exile." See above, [note 337](#).

On Metatron as teaching in, or heading, the heavenly Academy, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b; *Bereshit Rabbati* 5:24; *Sefer Hanokh* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:115–16); *Zohar* 1:4a, 24a (TZ); 3:186a, 197b; ZH 36b (ST); Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 134–35; Margaliot, *Mal’akhei Elyon*, 98–100.

Among the verses expounded by the young husband is a verse related to the Dwelling (above at [note 833](#)), and of course this section appears as part of the *Zohar’s* commentary on *Parashat Terumah*, which is entirely devoted to the Dwelling. On the phrase “for two days and one night,” see *MM*.

845. They arranged all those words... They related to Rabbi Shim’on everything that the youth had said.

The fact that Rav Safra never saw his son—or at least never saw him after infancy—is confirmed by the youth’s remark (above at [note 811](#)): “Now, Sirs, I am from Babylon, the son of Rav Safra, though I was not privileged to know my father.”

The phrase “that he would be privileged to see him” renders *דיזכי איהו ביה* (*de-yizkei ihu beih*), literally “that he himself would merit him,” meaning that he would be worthy of seeing him, be privileged to see him, or be privileged to see him grow up to become a lion of Torah. On “a lion of Torah,” see above, [note 811](#).

846. are all the children of Israel actually taught... According to BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b, God teaches schoolchildren (who have died). See above, [p. 15, n. 41](#).

847. Sometimes prophecy falls into the mouths of children... See BT *Bava Batra* 12b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “Ever since the day that the Temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from the prophets and given to fools and children.”

See *Zohar* 2:6b; ZH 9a (*MhN*).

848. there is an explicit verse... According to Kabbalah, the phrase *pupils of YHVH* alludes to *Netsah* and *Hod*, who receive from *Tif’eret*, known as *YHVH*. This pair of *sefirot*

are the source of prophecy, so the verse in Isaiah now implies that *all your children will be* on the rung of *Netsah* and *Hod*, known as *pupils of YHVH*, and thus they will be able to prophesy.

On *Netsah* and *Hod* as *pupils of YHVH*, see *Zohar* 3:61a, 90b, 91b; *ZH* 27d, 45b-c. The verse in Isaiah reads: *All your children will be* לְמוּדֵי (limmudei), *pupils of* [or: *taught by*], *YHVH*.

849. You shall make the planks... The planks (or frames) of the Tabernacle, made of *acacia wood*, symbolize the angels known as *seraphim*. Rabbi Yitshak demonstrates this association by verbal analogy: the word עֹמְדִים (omedim), *standing* or *upright*, describes both the *acacia wood* used for the planks and the *seraphim* seen by the prophet Isaiah.

See above, [note 833](#). The context in Isaiah (6:1-2) reads: *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw my Lord, seated on a high and lofty throne, the hem of His robe filling the Temple. Seraphim were standing* מִמַּעַל לוֹ (mi-ma'al lo), *above Him* [or: *in attendance on Him*, or: *above it*, namely the throne]. *Each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he flew.*

850. But all the host of heaven stand... This posture is not unique to the *seraphim*, as demonstrated by the verse in Zechariah, which describes angels in general as *those standing*.

On the angels having no joints (enabling them to bend their legs or sit), see *JT Berakhot* 1:1, 2c; *Shevu'ot* 6:4, 37a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:21; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 6:3; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 68; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 22, 114a; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:2; Rashi on Ezekiel 1:7. Cf. *BT Hagigah* 15a.

The verse in Zechariah reads: *If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, then you will govern My house and guard My courts, and I will let you move about among these standing here.* See *Zohar* 1:129b.

The verse in Kings, in which the prophet Micaiah reports his vision, reads: *I saw YHVH sitting upon His throne, with all the host of heaven standing by Him, on His right and on His left.*

851. מזמור לדוד (*Mizmor le-David*)... לדוד מזמור (*Le-David mizmor*)... These titles, whose precise meaning is unclear, alternate in Psalms. The interpretation implied here is a reversal of the rabbinic tradition in BT *Pesaḥim* 117a: “מזמור לדוד (*Le-David mizmor*), *To David, a psalm*, indicates that *Shekhinah* settled upon him [i.e., came *to David* and inspired him] and then he exclaimed a song. מזמור לדוד (*Mizmor le-David*), *A psalm, to David*, indicates that he exclaimed a song and then *Shekhinah* settled upon him.” (The preposition ל [*le*] can mean either “of or “to.”)

Here, according to Rabbi Yitshak, the wording *Mizmor le-David, A psalm of David*, indicates that *Shekhinah*—known as *mizmor, a psalm*—settled upon David and then he sang. The alternate wording—*Le-David mizmor, Of David, a psalm*—would indicate that David sang first, and then *Shekhinah* settled upon him.

See *Midrash Tehillim* 24:1, 3; Rashi on Psalms 23:1; Jacob bar Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 92; Todros Abulafia, *Sha’ar ha-Razim*, 48; *Zohar* 1:39b, 67a, 239a; 2:50a, 140a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 378–79.

852. why did *Shekhinah* precede?... In this psalm David sings of God providing for him, so it seems that he, and not *Shekhinah*, should come first and make his request. Rabbi Yitshak explains that *Shekhinah* came first to stimulate David’s prayer for sustenance, since She is eager to convey nourishment from above to the worlds below.

853. providing a person’s nourishment is as difficult... See BT *Pesaḥim* 118a, in the name of Rabbi El’azar ben Azariah: “Human sustenance is as difficult [to provide] as splitting the Red Sea, as is written: *Who gives food to all flesh* (Psalms 136:25), and near it: *To Him who cut the Red Sea into pieces* (ibid., 13).”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 97(98):3 (p. 1245); *Zohar* 1:207b; 2:52b; 3:292b (IZ); *ZH* 86d (*MhN, Rut*). “Two aspects” refers to two interpretations of this rabbinic tradition.

854. all actions of the blessed Holy One are according to justice... And therefore it is difficult for God to nourish the wicked and the sinners, who do not deserve His care.

On the world being based on justice and truth, see *M Avot* 1:18, in the name of Rabban Shim'on son of Gamliel: “The world stands on three things: on justice, on truth, and on peace.”

On God judging humanity constantly, see *Tosefta Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:13; *JT Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, 57a; *BT Rosh ha-Shanah* 16a; and the following paragraph.

The phrase “from the horns of buffalo...” appears in a description of God’s daytime schedule in *BT Avodah Zarah* 3b, in the name of Rav: “For the first three hours the blessed Holy One sits engaged in Torah. For the second [three hours] He sits and judges the whole world. Once He sees that the world deserves to be destroyed, He rises from the seat of Judgment and sits upon the seat of Compassion. For the third [three hours] He sits and feeds the whole world, from the horns of buffalo to the eggs of lice. For the fourth He sits and plays with Leviathan.” See *ZH* 86d (*MhN, Rut*).

855. But was splitting the Red Sea difficult for Him?... God can instantly and effortlessly accomplish whatever He wills.

The verse in *Nahum* alludes here to God drying up the waters of the Red Sea, while the verse in *Amos* alludes to God pouring the waters back upon the Egyptians.

856. when Israel approached the sea... The heavenly prince of Egypt challenged Israel’s worthiness for the miracle of splitting the Red Sea.

On the angelic challenge at the sea, see *Shemot Rabbah* 21:7 (where Samael accuses Israel); *Midrash Avkir*,

44 (where Uzza is the Prince of Egypt), 46; *Midrash Va-Yosha* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:39-40 [a variant of the passage in *Avkir*, 44], 46-47); *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Exodus 234 (where Samael accuses Israel), 241, 243; *Zohar* 2:56a; 3:101b; *ZH* 39d; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:7-9, nn. 40-42.

Rahab is a mythical monster of chaos, whose name (meaning "one who surges") alludes to the stormy sea. (See Isaiah 51:9; Psalms 89:11; Job 9:13; 26:12.) The name Rahab also appears as a poetic designation for Egypt in Psalms 87:4; cf. Isaiah 30:7. In rabbinic literature Rahab is identified as Prince of the Sea. (See BT *Bava Batra* 74b; *Tanḥuma*, *Ḥuqqat* 1; *Tanḥuma* [Buber], *Ḥuqqat* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:22.) On Rahab appearing at the Red Sea, see *Midrash Va-Yosha* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:46-47); *Sekhel Tov*, Exodus 14:21. These last two sources (along with the biblical poetic connection between Rahab and Egypt) may have influenced the *Zohar's* identification of Rahab as Prince of Egypt. See also Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 286-88.

857. merit of Abraham... God would not have split the sea for Israel had it not been for the merit of Abraham, who *rose early in the morning* to offer up his son Isaac.

See *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:24: "*It happened in the morning watch [that YHVH looked out over the camp of Egypt in a pillar of fire and cloud, and He panicked the camp of Egypt]*. The morning of our father Abraham had already preceded them [namely Israel at the sea]: *Abraham rose early in the morning.*" See *Mekhilta*, *Beshallah* 5; and below.

858. One did not draw near the other all night... The simple meaning of the verse is that the camps of Israel and Egypt *did not draw near* [each] *other all night*. Here, Rabbi Yitshak adopts a midrashic reading, according to which the subject is camps of angels.

See BT *Megillah* 10b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "What is the meaning of the verse *One did not draw near*

the other all night? The ministering angels [referred to as *one* and *the other* in Isaiah 6:3] wanted to sing, but the blessed Holy One said, ‘My handiwork is drowning in the sea, and you are singing?’”

See *Eikhah Rabbah*, *Petiḥta* 24; BT *Sanhedrin* 39b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Beshallah* 13; *Shemot Rabbah* 23:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 106:2; *Zohar* 1:57b; ZH 71d (*ShS*).

The full verse in Exodus reads: *It [namely the pillar of cloud] came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel, and there was the cloud and the dark, and it lit up the night, and one did not draw near the other all night.*

859. It happened in the morning watch... As indicated above ([note 857](#)), the merit of Abraham, who *rose early in the morning* to offer up Isaac, saved Israel at the Red Sea, where *in the morning watch* God *panicked the camp of Egypt* and drowned them in the waters after Israel had passed through safely.

Now Rabbi Yitṣhak adds another midrashic motif. The mention of the sea returning לַאֲיָתָנוּ (*le-eitano*), *to its powerful flow*, alludes to the water returning לְתַנְאוֹ (*li-tna'o*), “to its condition,” namely the condition that God had stipulated with the primordial waters at Creation: that they would split at just this moment at the Red Sea, fleeing before Israel, and then rush back, engulfing Pharaoh’s army.

Finally, *le-eitano, to its powerful flow*, also suggests *le-Eitan, for Ethan, the Ezrahite*, who is identified with Abraham; and the phrase *toward morning* underscores the association with Abraham rising *early in the morning*.

Rabbi Yitṣhak concludes by repeating that the splitting the sea was difficult for God because He had to overcome the accusations against Israel.

On *le-eitano, to its powerful flow*, and *li-tna'o, “to its condition,”* see *Bereshit Rabbah* 5:5; *Shemot Rabbah* 21:6; *Zohar* 2:49a, 56a, 198b.

On Abraham as Ethan the Ezrahite, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:1; BT *Bava Batra* 15a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:3; *Zohar*

1:230b; 2:110a. The word מִשְׁכִּיל (*maskil*) is a literary or musical term whose precise meaning is unclear. Ethan the Ezrahite is probably the Temple singer and musician mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:17, 19. See 1 Kings 5:11.

For the full text of Exodus 14:24, see above, [note 857](#). Exodus 14:27 reads in full: *Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned, toward morning, to its powerful flow, with the Egyptians fleeing toward it, and YHVH tossed the Egyptians into the sea.*

[860](#). couplings are as difficult... as splitting the Red Sea... At the sea the Egyptians drowned, while the Israelites were delivered. Similarly, sometimes a husband dies and God arranges the widow's remarriage, producing both weeping and singing. In a case where the second husband is wicked, this seems unjust and "difficult before the blessed Holy One." However, God's ways are mysterious and there are deep reasons for such events, often connected with the theory of reincarnation.

On the difficulties of divine matchmaking, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:4; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 8:1; BT *Sotah* 2a, *Sanhedrin* 22a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:4; *Zohar* 1:91b, 207b-208a, 229a.

On the connection between two husbands and the theory of reincarnation, see *Zohar* 1:73b, 91b; 3:78b, 283b; above, [pages 48-49](#), [52-62](#).

The full verse in Psalms reads: *God sets the lonely in homes, leads out captives in jubilation. But the rebellious dwell in a parched land.*

[861](#). 'before,' rather than 'from before'... Rabbi Yitshak focuses on the precise wording of the rabbinic tradition: "[Matchmaking] is as difficult before the blessed Holy One as splitting the Red Sea." The word "before" alludes to *Shekhinah*, who stands and serves before *Tif'eret*, known as the blessed Holy One. For Her, matchmaking as well as providing nourishment are indeed difficult, because these actions are not under Her control, but rather under

the control of *Tif'eret*, although She carries them out under His supervision. (*Shekhinah* is referred to here as “He.”)

This constitutes the second interpretation of why it is so difficult for God to provide nourishment. (See above, [note 853](#).) For the first interpretation, see above at [note 854](#).

For the wording “as difficult before the blessed Holy One,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:4; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 8:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:4. Actually, these sources speak only of matchmaking, whereas the rabbinic traditions about the difficulty of providing nourishment do not include the phrase “before [or: for] the blessed Holy One,” but read simply: “Providing nourishment for a person is as difficult as splitting the Red Sea.” See *Bereshit Rabbah* 97(98):3 (p. 1245); BT *Pesaḥim* 118a. On the significance of “before,” see above, [notes 600](#), [749](#).

[862](#). *That soul shall be cut off from before Me...* The context in Leviticus is a prohibition against any priest approaching the sacred donations of sacrificial animals while in a state of ritual impurity.

Whereas “before the blessed Holy One” refers to *Shekhinah*, *from before Me* refers to a higher realm, *Binah*, who is known as “the World that is Coming,” the source of all life. Alternatively, *from before Me* refers to *Yesod*, the ever-flowing river. Yet, these two interpretations are not contradictory (“all is one”), since *Yesod* conveys the joyous emanation from *Binah* to *Shekhinah*.

Binah is also known as *delightfulness of YHVH*, a description that appears in Psalms 27:4. See above, [note 20](#). On *Binah* as “the World that is Coming,” see above, [p. 22](#), [n. 59](#). On the wording *from before*, see above, [notes 600](#), [749](#).

[863](#). *Jonah rose to flee... from before YHVH...* It is impossible to flee from God; but according to a rabbinic tradition, Jonah fled from the land of Israel in order to escape the burden of prophesying against the wicked city of Nineveh, since *Shekhinah* manifests Herself only in the

Holy Land. But if so, the verses in the book of Jonah describing his flight should read *before YHVH* (referring to *Shekhinah*), not *from before YHVH* (referring to a higher realm).

Just as *Shekhinah* remained concealed within the Holy of Holies and did not reveal Herself outside the land of Israel, so a modest wife traditionally does not venture outside the home.

On Jonah's flight, see *Mekhilta, Pisha* 1, in the name of Rabbi El'azar son of Tsadok: "*Shekhinah* is not revealed outside the land [of Israel], for it is said: *Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from before YHVH* (Jonah 1:3). Was he fleeing *from before YHVH*? Has it not already been said: *Where can I go from Your spirit? [Where can I flee from Your presence?] If I ascend to heaven, You are there. [If I make my bed in Sheol, here You are]...* (Psalms 139:7-8). Rather, Jonah said, 'I will go outside the Land, where *Shekhinah* is not revealed.'" See *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 10; *Zohar* 1:84b-85a, 121a.

On *Shekhinah* concealing Herself, see *Zohar* 1:84b-85a, 116; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 359.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Your wife is like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your house, your children like olive shoots around your table.* See *Tanḥuma, Vayishlah* 6; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba* 18; *Midrash Tehillim* 128:3; *Zohar* 1:84b, 115b, 238a; 3:125b.

864. Well, certainly so: from before... This precise wording is appropriate because prophecy issues from a realm above (thus preceding and *from before*) *Shekhinah*, namely from the sefirotic pair of *Netsah* and *Hod*, who settle upon *Shekhinah* and convey prophetic inspiration through Her.

865. Therefore, couplings are difficult... 'before'... Because neither matchmaking nor providing nourishment are under the direct control of *Shekhinah*, both of these are difficult "before the blessed Holy One," namely for *Shekhinah*. (See above, [note 861](#).) Therefore King David began this psalm (relating to sustenance) by invoking the divine name

YHVH, which designates the higher *sefirah*, *Tif'eret*: *YHVH is my shepherd, I shall not lack*. There, the flow issuing from Eden (symbolizing *Hokhmah*) never ceases.

Shekhinah receives the flow from above and conveys it to the worlds below. Here She “preceded,” settling upon David and inspiring him to utter this psalm, in which he asked for nourishment. See above, [notes 851-52](#). The image of the river derives from Genesis 2:10: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden....*

[866](#). When this place receives nourishment... When *Shekhinah* receives the flow of sustenance from above and prepares to convey it to the angels beneath Her (and then to all the worlds below), the angels stir and cover their faces with their wings.

On the angels covering their faces, see Isaiah 6:2 (describing the seraphim): *Each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he flew*.

On three camps of angels dividing up *Holy, holy, holy...*, see BT *Hullin* 91b; *Zohar* 3:252a (RM); ZH 39b.

[867](#). all are linked with one another... All the camps of angels are interlinked, as were the planks of the Dwelling. Both the angels and the planks are described as *standing*. Each angel includes his own quality and that of his fellow angel.

In the Dwelling two tenons (or pegs) were cut into the bottom of each upright plank and were mortised into silver sockets. Here, Rabbi Yitshak may be picturing a different arrangement, in which the planks fit into one another, *each linked with her sister*. See Sarna, *Exodus*, 169; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., 19:419.

Exodus 26:17 reads in full: *Two tenons for the one plank, each מְשֻׁלָּבוֹת (meshullavot), aligned [or: parallel, joined, linked], with her sister; so shall you do for all the planks of the Dwelling*.

On both the planks and the angels *standing*, see above, [notes 833, 849](#). On the angels having no joints, see above, [note 850](#). On angels not sitting, see BT *Hagigah* 15a. On their being interlinked, see *Zohar* 2:56a–b; *ZH* 39b.

[868](#). **Similarly, of Torah...** Two who are studying together teach one another and become linked. Each obtains not only his own learning but the insight of the other, and each is doubly rewarded.

See *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer*, 13, p. 243; *Tanḥuma, Terumah* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Terumah* 1.

[869](#). **In meadows of grass...** These allude to the verdant *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, which issue from *Binah* and whose center is *Tif'eret*, symbolized by Jacob. Contrasted with these are *pastures of wilderness*, namely of the demonic realm.

[870](#). **Let the earth sprout grass—this is below...** *Earth* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, so it seems that the *grass* sprouted by Her is below the other *sefirot*. Rabbi Yitshak explains that the *grass* originates in the sefirotic *meadows*.

[871](#). **that river issuing from Eden...** The river of emanation issuing from *Hokhmah*. See above, [note 865](#).

[872](#). **He restores my soul—soul of David...** David the Psalmist is asking here not for the restoration of his own soul, but rather for that of his sefirotic rung, *Shekhinah*, who is known as “soul of David.”

On the phrase “soul of David,” see 1 Samuel 18:1; 2 Samuel 5:8; *Zohar* 1:101a, 206a, 240a; 2:27a; 3:45b, 182a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 348; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 43; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 61 (75).

[873](#). **YHVH will guide you always...** The verse reads: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy* נפשך (*nafshekha*), *your thirst* [or: *soul*], בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions, and invigorate your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters do not fail.*

The *Zohar* sometimes understands the rare word בצחצחות (*be-tsaḥtsaḥot*), *in parched regions*, to mean “with radiancies,” based on the root צחח (*tshḥ*), “to gleam.” See *Zohar* 1:113b-114a (*MhN*), 141a, 224b; 2:142b, 210b.

874. You shall make fifty bronze clasps... The full verse describes how the two halves of the second layer of the roof covering of the Dwelling are joined together: *You shall make fifty bronze clasps and bring the clasps through the loops, and you shall join the tent together, that it become one whole.*

875. as night dusked... “Dusked” renders the verb רמש (*remash*), an apparently Zoharic coinage based on רמשא (*ramsha*), “evening.”

See *Zohar* 1:34b; 2:36b, 173a, 188a, 208a; 3:21a-b, 52a, 113b, 149a-b, 166b; *ZH* 7d (*MhN*), 25d (*MhN*), 28b (*MhN*).

“A garden canopy” renders גנוא (*genana*), “bridal canopy,” apparently playing on, or intended to mean, גינרָא (*ginneta*), “garden.” The author may be imitating the midrashic pun involving the corresponding Hebrew terms in the context of the Dwelling. See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:1.

“The Sea of Tiberias” is the Sea of Galilee.

876. Great is YHVH... Great is our Lord... *YHVH* refers to a higher rung, *Tif'eret*, whereas אדונינו (*adoneinu*), *our Lord*, refers to a lower rung, *Shekhinah*, known as “Lord of the whole earth.” She manifests Her power by conducting the world.

877. Count the stars, if you can count them... The full verse, describing God speaking to Abraham, reads: *He took him outside and He said, “Look up to the heavens and count the stars, if you can count them.” And He said to him, “So shall be your seed.”*

878. The one who brings forth their array... The verse, referring to the stars and constellations, begins: *Lift your eyes on high and see: Who created these?*

Rabbi El'azar indicates that everything on earth is ruled by a star or planet, over which presides an angel serving God.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 10:6 (per Oxford MS 147), in the name of Rabbi Simon: "You cannot find a single blade of grass below that does not have a constellation [or: planet] in the sky, striking it and telling it: 'Grow!'"

See Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 2:10; *Zohar* 1:34a; 2:15b (*MhN*), 30b, 80b; 3:86a; *ZH* 8b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 181, 294; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 135.

879. they appear no longer in this world... As, presumably, with the two stars seen by Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba.

880. Book of Supernal Wisdom... A similar book appears in *Zohar* 1:99b-100b.

"The children of the East" were famous for their knowledge of astrology and magic. See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:23; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:3; *Tanḥuma, Huqqat* 6; Judah ben Barzillai, *Peirush Sefer Yetsirah*, 159; Naḥmanides, introduction to Commentary on the Torah, and on Deuteronomy 18:10; *Zohar* 1:99b, 133b, 223a-b. Nearly all these sources quote 1 Kings 5:10: *Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the children of the East*.

The expression כוכביא דשרביטא (*kokhevayya de-sharvita*), "stars of a scepter," plays on the rabbinic term כוכבא דשביט (*kokheva de-shaveit*), "a star that flies," a comet. See BT *Berakhot* 58b; *Zohar* 1:223b; 3:233a.

On the emergence of gold, see *Zohar* 1:249b-250a; 2:24a-b, 236b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 95 (121).

881. There are illnesses... Whose cure depends upon radiation from a dazzling mirror. The twentieth-century Hasidic rabbi Ḥayyim El'azar Shapira of Munkacs equates this with X-ray treatment.

See Vital; Hayyim El'azar Shapira, *Divrei Torah*, 1:62, p. 75; 9:31, pp. 57-58; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem.

On gazing into a mirror as a magical technique, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Avodat Kokhavim* 11:6. Cf. Nahmanides on Leviticus 18:19; Gikatilla, *Peirush ha-Merkavah*, 47.

“Poisoning” is a conjectural rendering of קסטרין (*qasterin*), a neologism whose meaning is uncertain. In *Zohar* 3:83b (*Piq*), קסטורא (*qastora*) is parallel with פסולת (*pesolet*), “dross.” In 2:31b, אקוסטורא (*aqustera*) apparently means toxic “slag,” probably deriving from קסטירא (*qastira*), which is based on Greek *kassiteros*, “tin.” See Vol. 4, p. 132, n. 230. Cf. *Zohar* 1:64b. For other interpretations, see *Derekh Emet*; *Sullam*; *Scholem*; *MmD*.

882. Book of King Solomon... This royal volume is cited frequently in the *Zohar*. Here, it probably alludes to the *Lapidario* (Lapidary), one of many books translated from Arabic sources under the patronage of King Alfonso the Wise of Castile, who reigned from 1252-1284. The *Lapidario* is based on the proposition that specific stars influence the magical properties of particular stones.

Alfonso the Wise was a devoted scholar and a renaissance figure, so his book is attributed here appropriately to Solomon the Wise. On the Book of King Solomon, see above, [p. 174](#), [n. 97](#); above, [note 255](#). On the numerous books attributed to Solomon, see *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:956-57. On Alfonso's *Lapidario*, see the introduction to Bahler and Gatto's edition: *The Lapidary of King Alfonso X the Learned*, 1-18.

The full verse in Genesis (describing the sun, moon, and stars) reads: *God placed them in the expanse of heaven to shine upon the earth.*

883. You shall make fifty bronze clasps... The full verse describes how the two halves of the second layer of the roof covering of the Dwelling are joined together: *You shall make fifty bronze clasps and bring the clasps through*

the loops, and you shall join the tent together, that it become one whole. This verse appears above at [note 874](#), introducing the story of Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba.

On the comparison of the clasps in the Dwelling to the stars, see BT *Shabbat* 98b-99a: "The clasps in the loops looked like stars in the sky."

See *Baraita di-Mlekhet ha-Mishkan* 2; JT *Megillah* 1:11, 72c; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Shemot Rabbah* 35:6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; *Zohar* 2:229a, 232a. For the clause "Whoever has never seen," see M *Sukkah* 5:1.

Exodus 26:6 reads in full: *You shall make fifty golden clasps, and you shall join the curtains to one another with the clasps, and the Dwelling will be one.*

884. There are stars in the sky... "The firmament where all stars are attached" refers to the second lowest of the seven firmaments (or heavens). See BT *Hagigah* 12b: "Rabbi Yehudah said, 'There are two רקיעים (*raqi'im*), firmaments [or: expanses, heavens]....' Resh Lakish said, 'Seven, namely וילון (*Vilon*), Curtain; רקיע (*Raqi'a*), Firmament; שחקים (*Sheḥaqim*), Heaven; זבול (*Zevul*), Loft; מעון (*Ma'on*), Dwelling; מכון (*Makhon*), Site [or: Foundation]; ערבות (*Aravot*), Clouds.... *Raqi'a*, Firmament, is the one in which sun and moon, stars and planets are set.'"

Here the hundred stars in the hundred windows complete the heavenly משכנא (*mashkena*), "Dwelling," which parallels the earthly Dwelling. On the stars as clasps, see the preceding note. On the heavenly Dwelling, see above, [note 337](#).

On the seven firmaments, see above, [note 740](#). On the windows of heaven, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 6; *Zohar* 1:140b; 3:113a, 184b; *ZH* 15c (*MhN*). "Openings" renders משקופין (*mashqofin*), on which see above, [note 338](#).

885. Stars in the night mingle... The countless stars in the nighttime sky mingle with the one hundred stars

emerging from the second firmament, and together (presumably) they all sparkle and rule over this world.

886. kings of the nations will rise against that side... Against the east, and these kings will plunder that region's riches and gold. "Similarly on the other side" refers to the south, as indicated above at [note 884](#).

On the angelic princes ruling over the nations, see above, [p. 10](#), [n. 27](#).

887. delivered His holy people from the power... of stars... See BT *Shabbat* 156a: "Israel is immune from planetary influence."

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 44:10; *Tanḥuma, Shofetim* 11; *Zohar* 1:78a, 90a-b; 3:148a, 281b (RM); *ZH* 72b (*ShS*).

Daniel 2:21 reads in full: *He changes times and seasons, removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to the discerning.* The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Not like these [namely the idols] is the share of Jacob, for He is the Former of all, and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; YHVH of Hosts is His name.*

888. a firmament above all these firmaments... Above the seven firmaments (listed above in [note 884](#)). This supreme firmament contains the seven windows described below and all the arrangements of the heavenly Dwelling.

On the eighth רקיע (*raqi'a*), "firmament" (or "expanse, heaven"), see *Zohar* 1:85b-86a, 162b; 2:164b. "Chamber of the Dwelling" renders אדרא דמשכנא (*iddera de-mashkena*). Cf. above, [notes 19](#), [47](#). See also *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 6, which lists seven heavenly windows including one called חדר (*heder*), "room, chamber."

889. Window of Radiance... The power of its star derives from the dross of holiness. However, such astral powers do not rule over the tribes of Israel.

On the window called Radiance, see *ZH* 15c (*MhN*). On the symbolism of smelting and dross, see Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 38-40; above, [notes 513](#), [797](#). On

Israel's immunity from the power of the stars, see above, [note 887](#).

890. When the children of Judah strayed... They began to believe that the power of the stars, rather than God, defeated their enemies. Jacob's blessing to his son Judah includes the verse *Judah, you, will your brothers acclaim—your hand on your enemies' nape—your father's sons will bow to you*. Members of this tribe eventually interpreted *your hand* as referring to the star called Hand emerging from the Window of Radiance.

On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 3:154a. The verse in Kings reads: *Judah did what was evil in the eyes of YHVH*. See Jeremiah 7:30: *For the children of Judah have done what was evil in My eyes*.

891. Sorcerers and magicians fear this place... Although they excel in drawing down astral powers, they are overwhelmed by this star.

See *ZH* 71c (*ShS*); *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 42, David Luria's marginal [note 5](#). On drawing down astral powers, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:29; *Zohar* 1:99b-100a; 2:69a, 112a (above, [p. 109](#), [n. 310](#)).

892. how do they know?... How do they know that this star is ruling? Rabbi El'azar explains that they know by a celestial sign. Yet now astrologers do not know "the essence," apparently meaning the significance and origin of this star's power, as described above at [note 889](#).

The reference to sorcerers "decreasing in the world" accords with the situation in Christian Europe, where sorcerers were hunted down. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:72.

893. Window of the Nail... Malevolent spirits emerge through this window, empowered by the parings of fingernails or toenails. Such parings were employed in sorcery.

On the significance and danger of nails, see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 18a, *Niddah* 17a; *Zohar* 1:20b-21a; 2:76a, 208a-b;

3:79–b, 248b; Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, *Peirush Qabbali li-Vreshit Rabbah*, 243–44; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 219–22.

894. Gleam of the Lamps... The word נגה (nogha), “gleam, brightness,” apparently refers to Venus, which is known in Hebrew as נגה (nogah), the “gleaming” morning star. See *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 6.

895. Cluster of Henna... The phrase appears in Song of Songs 1:14: *A cluster of henna is my love to me, in the vineyards of Engedi.*

896. drawing like a bucket... From the “window called Well.” The wise find it difficult to “reach a conclusion” about the true nature of this star, and fittingly its name is unknown.

897. The sixth window is ... called Gleam... On this name, see above, [note 894](#); *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 6; ZH 15c (MhN).

“Israel’s enemies” is a euphemism meaning Israel, to avoid saying that “Israel will be in distress.” In the verse from Daniel *holy ones of the Most High* refers to Israel.

898. its star will shine... On the Messianic symbolism of the star, see the interpretation of Numbers 24:17 (*A star marches from Jacob*) in JT *Ta’anit* 4:5, 68d; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:4; *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 2:2; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:20; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Devarim*, add. 6; Naḥmanides on the verse; *Zohar* 1:119a; 2:7b–8a; 3:212b. Cf. *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi* on the verse; Revelation 22:16.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *On that day the root of Jesse, standing as a banner for the peoples—nations will seek him and his abode will be glorious.*

899. He opened... Rabbi El’azar asks why the verse in Job speaks of אלוה (Eloah), *God*, as עושי (osai), *my Makers*, rather than עושי (osi), *my Maker*. He explains that the plural refers to the divine couple, *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, who together engender the human soul. Further, *Shekhinah* is known as the divine “court of judgment.”

The divine name אֱלֹהִים (*Eloah*) is now construed as אֵל (*El*), God, who comprises ו (vav) and ה (he). The letter vav, whose numerical value is six, alludes to *Tif'eret* together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). The letter he, a feminine marker, alludes to *Shekhinah*.

On the phrase “Him and His court (of judgment),” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 51:2, in the name of Rabbi El’azar: “Wherever it is said *And YHVH*, this implies: He and His court of judgment.” See above, [note 500](#).

On the verse in Job, see BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Zohar* 3:23a-b, 284a. On *Eloah*, see also *Zohar* 1:94a; 2:96b, 97b. On the apparently plural form *osai*, see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, §124k.

900. Who gives songs in the night... Referring to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by night), who constantly sings the praises of Her royal beloved. She is like a lamp whose flame is never still, yearning to receive further joyous illumination.

In the *Zohar* “the King who possesses peace” symbolizes the masculine divine potency, spanning the entire configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*. This potency contains (or “possesses”) *Yesod*, who is called “peace” because He mediates between the right and left poles of the *sefirot*, or because He unites *Tif'eret* with *Shekhinah*. See BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim’on son of Ḥalafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.” On “the King who possesses peace,” see above, [notes 26, 340](#).

901. All those stars... The stars and the angels appointed over them join *Shekhinah* in praising *Tif'eret*, the blessed Holy One.

On the three divisions (or watches) of the night, see BT *Berakhot* 3a-b. On the angels singing during these watches, see Rashi on BT *Berakhot* 3a, s.v. *i qa-savar*; *Zohar* 1:188b-189a, 231a; 2:195b-196a; ZH 5d-6a (*MhN*), 88a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 403; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 70-71 (88-89).

902. In the beginning of the night... As darkness falls, the demonic powers “demand the ways of the house of the King,” which apparently means that they seek to know what has been decreed above, so that they can execute judgment on earth.

See *OY*; *MmD*. For other interpretations, see *MM*; Soncino; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:518. On the verb “dusks,” see above, [note 875](#).

903. the flavor of death... Sleep, which according to BT *Berakhot* 57b, is “one-sixtieth of death.” Now that the impure powers have descended to earth, the angels are unimpeded and can rise higher to praise God through the three watches of the night.

On sleep being one-sixtieth of death, see *Zohar* 1:36a-b, 53b, 169b, 184b, 207a; 2:215b; 3:119a, 120b, 156b, 234b, 260a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 52-53.

904. Supernal angels... repulse the Other Side... By descending to earth and casting sleep (a taste of death) upon the world, the angels relegate the demonic (deathly) force to rule humanity. This frees the angels to approach God directly and praise Him.

On the Holy Land being protected from demonic forces, see above, [note 65](#).

905. Similarly, Israel below... By various stratagems, the people of Israel offer a portion to the Other Side, preoccupying it so that they can draw near to God unimpededly.

On assuaging demonic powers by offering them a portion, see above, [p. 102](#), [n. 291](#); [note 618](#); *OY*; *MmD*.

906. Granted, below... Naturally, here on earth demonic forces accuse humanity of sin and it is necessary to repel or preoccupy the Other Side; but what kind of demonic accusation exists above, preventing the angels from offering praise and requiring them to repulse the enemy?

Rabbi El'azar explains that above there is not accusation but rather a clash of impure spirit and holy spirits.

907. his castle קוסטרוי (*Qusteroi*), deriving from Latin *castrum* (pl. *castra*), "castle, fortress, military camp."

908. When holy angels come... They fear becoming defiled by the demonic power, but by casting sleep upon the world they distract that power and can enter holiness. See above at [note 904](#).

909. Look, they are all fire... The fiery angels, by nature, are not susceptible to defilement, so why would they fear the impure spirit?

Rabbi El'azar explains that there are two types of angels: the ones composed of spirit, who stand outside the highest heavenly palaces and serve as divine messengers, and the ones composed of fire, who stand within. The angels of spirit are impeded by the spirit of impurity, so they must act to thwart it, whereas the angels of fire repel impurity effortlessly.

According to rabbinic tradition, fire, which purifies the impure, is not susceptible to impurity. See BT *Berakhot* 22a, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Beteira.

The verse in Psalms reads: מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש ליהט (oseh mal'akhav ruhot, mesharetav esh lohet), whose simple meaning is: *He makes winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers*. Here, Rabbi El'azar adopts a midrashic reading that follows the precise order of the words: *He makes His angels spirits [or: winds], His ministers flaming fire*.

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4: "When they are sent by His word they are made into winds, and when they minister before Him they are made into fire, as is said: *He makes His angels winds, His ministers flaming fire*."

See *Tanḥuma, Hayyei Sarah* 3; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 2:4; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 77; *Zohar* 1:40b (*Heikh*), 81a

(*ST*), 101a, 144a; 2:10a, 98b, 229b; 3:126b, 152a; *ZH* 10a (*MhN*), 81b (*MhN, Rut*). On the angels who stand outside, see *Zohar* 1:231a.

910. There are three watches... During each of which certain camps of angels offer praise. Their master is *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), who is symbolized by King David and known as “lamp of David.” She glows continuously, glorifying Her royal spouse.

On the three watches of the night and their corresponding camps of angels, see above, [note 901](#). On *Shekhinah* as “lamp of David,” see above at [note 768](#). On the verse in Job, see above at [note 900](#).

911. Where is God, וְיָשִׁי (osai), my Makers?... The apparently plural form *osai*, literally *my Makers*, alludes to the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who engender the human soul, just as the human body is engendered by a husband and wife. Similarly the plural wording in Genesis, *Let us make a human in our image, according to our likeness*, alludes to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

See BT *Niddah* 31a: “There are three partners in [the creation of] a human being: the blessed Holy One, his father, and his mother.”

On *osai, my Makers*, see above, [note 899](#). On the androgynous nature of the spirit, see *Zohar* 1:85b, 91b. Cf. 2:99b. On the androgynous nature of Adam, see above, [note 800](#). On the sefirotic significance of the plural wording in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:13b, 34b, 47a; 2:55a; 3:35b. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:3.

912. Concerning the night... Rabbi El'azar poses a challenge to himself, and the argument seems to be as follows: “You have just said (above at [note 902](#)) that as night falls evil spirits begin to haunt the world. But how can this be? For we know that evil spirits emerge from the north (symbolizing harsh Judgment) and that the north wind prevails at midnight, so those evil spirits should rule then, not at the beginning of the night. Furthermore, as

night falls the south wind (associated with *Ḥesed*) prevails, so no evil spirit should appear then at all.”

On north as the realm of evil spirits, see *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 3, quoting Jeremiah 1:14: *From the north evil will be let loose*. See *Bahir* 109 (162); cf. *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:10.

913. if not for the south... Rabbi El’azar explains that as night falls the power of the south (symbolizing *Ḥesed*) restrains the demonic force, which otherwise would destroy the world. This demonic force does arouse then—but not with the full power of the north, rather with the power of the west, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, who is associated with the night and tends toward the left side. She gathers the world in sleep.

On the various winds and their prevailing times, see BT *Berakhot* 3b, *Yevamot* 72a, *Gittin* 31b; *Arukh*, s.v. *kinnor*; Rashi on BT *Berakhot* 3b, s.v. *kinnor*; idem on BT *Sanhedrin* 16a, s.v. *kinnor*; *ZH* 13a–c (*MhN*); Vital; *MM*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. On *Shekhinah* and the west, see BT *Bava Batra* 25b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi: “*Shekhinah* is in the west.”

914. Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba entered the house... They had been sitting that evening in a garden by the Sea of Galilee. (See above at [note 875](#).) Apparently, after entering the house they slept briefly and then rose precisely at midnight to study Torah.

On rising at midnight to study Torah, see BT *Berakhot* 3b: “Rabbi Shim’on the Ḥasid said, ‘There was a harp suspended above [King] David’s bed. As soon as midnight arrived, a north wind came and blew upon it, and it played by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn.’” See Psalms 119:62.

In the *Zohar* this legendary custom is expanded into a ritual. At midnight, God delights in the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden, and those who study Torah here below partake of this joy. Kabbalists are

expected to rise at midnight and adorn *Shekhinah* with words of Torah in preparation for Her union with *Tif'eret*. See above, [note 74](#).

915. how does He delight?... The arousal of delight involves both the divine couple and the souls of the righteous. At the moment of midnight the divine left hand (*Gevurah*) caresses *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). She, in turn, expresses Her affection toward Her divine partner by offering Him the virtuous deeds performed by the righteous during the day that has just ended.

The notion that passionate arousal begins on the left is often linked with Song of Songs 2:6: *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me*. See, e.g., above at [note 837](#). On Assembly of Israel as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 24](#), [n. 68](#).

916. One Name engraved with thirty-two letters... According to Vital (*Haggahot Maharḥu*), this name consists of the full spellings of אהיה (*Ehyeh*), יהוה (*YHVH*), and אדני (*Adonai*): אהיה (alef, he, yod, he), יהוה (yod, he, vav, he), אדני (alef, dalet, nun, yod). See *OY; Nitsotsei Orot*.

917. Hallelujah... The word הללויה (*haleluyah*) comprises two elements: the divine name יה (*Yah*) and the directive הללו (*halelu*), “praise!”

See BT *Pesaḥim* 117a, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi: “The book of Psalms was uttered with ten expressions of praise. ... The greatest of them all is הללויה (*haleluyah*), for it embraces Name and praise simultaneously.”

Perhaps הללויה (*haleluyah*) is “totality of the holy supernal Name” because הלל (*hallel*), “praise,” alludes to *Shekhinah*—who constantly offers praise to the blessed Holy One and is symbolized by the final letter ה (*he*) of יהוה (*YHVH*)—and the remaining letters of הללויה (*haleluyah*) consist of the rest of *YHVH*: י (*yod*), ה (*he*), ו (*vav*). See *Nitsotsei Orot; MmD*. For other interpretations, see *OY; Or ha-Ḥammah*, 201c; *Sullam*.

On the significance of *haleluyah*, see *Zohar* 1:178b, 232b; 3:101a, 120a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 64, 378; *Minḥat Shai* on the verse. The full verse in Psalms reads: *Hallelujah! I praise YHVH wholeheartedly, in the council of the upright and the assembly.*

918. אודה (*Odeh*), ***I praise...*** This psalm is a short acrostic, each half line beginning with a different letter of the alphabet in sequence. Rabbi El'azar refers to the acrostic format as “the mystery of the alphabet.” He distinguishes between this type of acrostic and a long acrostic, in which each full verse (or a number of sequential verses) begin with a different alphabetical letter in sequence (e.g., Psalms 34, 119, 145). The alphabetical letters of a long acrostic are “upper letters” deriving from *Binah*, “the upper world,” whereas the alphabetical letters of a short acrostic are “small letters” deriving from *Shekhinah*, “the lower world.”

“Thirty-two paths” refers to “thirty-two wondrous paths of Wisdom,” mentioned in *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1-2, which include the twenty-two letters of the alphabet and the ten *sefirot*.

On the small and large letters, see *Zohar* 1:3b, 159b; 2:132a-b, 180b, 205b, 228b; 3:2a, 220a; *ZH* 66c (*ShS*), 74c-d (*ShS*).

919. בכל לבב (*be-khol levav*), ***wholeheartedly...*** The normal spelling of the biblical word for “heart” is לב (*lev*), with one ב (*vet*); in the less common spelling, לבב (*levav*), the double ב (*vet*) symbolizes the two impulses.

See M *Berakhot* 9:5: “One must bless [God] for the evil just as he blesses for the good, as is said: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might* (Deuteronomy 6:5). *With all לבב (levavekha), your heart*—with both your impulses: the good impulse and the evil impulse. *With all your soul*—even though He takes your soul. *With all your might*—with all your wealth. Alternatively, *with all מאדך (me'odekha), your*

might—for whatever מדה (*middah*), measure, He metes out to you, הוה מודה לו במאד מאד (*heveh modeh lo bi-m'od me'od*), give Him thanks exceedingly.”

One should acknowledge, and be grateful for, both the good and the bad, which derive, respectively, from the side of the good impulse and the side of the evil impulse. Both originate ultimately from the divine source and are part of God’s plan.

On *be-khol levav*, see *Zohar* 1:178b. On serving God with the evil impulse, see above, [note 704](#). On the word מאד (*me'od*), often translated in Deuteronomy 6:5 as *might*, see above, [note 696](#). On the blessing “who is good and does good,” see BT *Berakhot* 60b; above, [note 831](#).

[920.](#) בסוד (*Be-sod*), ***In the council...In mystery...*** The word סוד (*sod*) means both “secret” (or “mystery”) and “council.” Rabbi El’azar adopts the meaning “mystery” and apparently reverses the order of the words: *In the upright, mystery*. Those who are *upright* know, contain, and constitute God’s *mystery*; by their devotion, God is mysteriously unified.

[921.](#) ***And the assembly...*** Referring to the masses of Israel, who offer praise alongside *the upright*.

According to rabbinic exegesis, the word עדה (*edah*), *assembly*, refers to a group of ten. Here, Rabbi El’azar applies this interpretation to the verse in Psalms, which thus refers to praising God in a minyan. The public acknowledgment of God’s miraculous acts glorifies Him.

On *edah* as signifying a group of ten, see M *Sanhedrin* 1:6; *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 3:7; *Sifrei*, Numbers 160. On *edah* as referring to a minyan, see BT *Berakhot* 6a. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 54b; *Midrash Tehillim* 107:5 (both quoting Psalms 107:32). On “publicizing the miracle,” see *Zohar* 2:41a (*Piq*).

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *I will display My greatness and My holiness, and make Myself known [or: I will be magnified and sanctified and made known] in the eyes of many nations, and they will know that I am YHVH.*

922. *Let every soul praise Yah...* Each soul issues from *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as a cosmic body containing all souls. What is the higher source where souls originate? The realm of Wisdom, known by the divine name *Yah*. Wisdom branches into thirty-two paths and is also known as Holy Spirit.

The designation of *Shekhinah* as Body derives, at least in part, from a Talmudic teaching in the name of Rabbi Assi (BT *Yevamot* 62a): “The Son of David [i.e., the Messiah] will not come until all souls in the body have been depleted.” “The body” is the heavenly treasure-house of unborn souls. In the *Zohar* the treasure-house of unborn souls is located in the Garden of Eden, though it is sometimes identified with *Shekhinah*, who gives birth to the soul. See above, [note 651](#).

According to *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1-2, the “thirty-two wondrous paths of Wisdom” include the twenty-two letters of the alphabet and the ten *sefirot*. The verse in Psalms reads: *Let כל הנשמה (kol ha-neshamah), all that has breath [or: every soul], praise Yah. Hallelujah!*

923. his eyes streamed... Rabbi Shim'on wept because he was revealing secrets that even Moses hesitated to disclose.

The entire precious flow of emanation is conveyed by one “key,” apparently referring to the link between *Hokhmah* and *Binah*. Even Moses did not reveal what is hidden in the spring issuing from this deep sefirotic realm until he was about to die. On that very day, Moses’ days were completed and fulfilled, and these days themselves “drew near” the secret spring.

On the relation between Rabbi Shim'on and Moses, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 11-42; above, [note 506](#). On the single key, see *Zohar* 1:3b; 2:110b-111a, 177a (*SdTs*); 3:250a. On days “drawing near,” see *Zohar* 1:224a. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *A hundred and twenty years old I am today. I can no longer sally forth and come in, and*

YHVH has said to me, "You shall not cross this Jordan." On the precise wording today, see Sifrei, Deuteronomy 2; BT Rosh Hashanah 11a, Sotah 13b.

The phrase "in radiant garments" is a conjectural rendering of בקזפיטן דקורדיטי (be-qazpitan de-qurditei). The neologism *qazpitan* may mean "ray." Cf. the neologistic phrase קסטיפא דשמשא (*qastipha de-shimsha*), which apparently means "ray of the sun" (*Zohar* 3:283b). See 1:167a, 201b (Vol. 3, p. 10, n. 69; pp. 235–36, n. 345); *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 189; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 345–48.

The word *qurditei* apparently derives from כרדוט (*kardut*), based on Greek *cheiridotos*, "a sleeved tunic." See *Targum Yonatan*, 1 Samuel 2:18; 2 Samuel 6:14; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 190; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *qanditei*; Vol. 4, p. 447, n. 295.

Cf. the Zoharic neologism קלדיטין (*qalditin*), based on the rabbinic term אקלידא (*aqlida*), which derives from Greek *kleida*, "key," a word that appears here right before this perplexing phrase. See *Zohar* 2:5a–b (*MhN*), 14a (*MhN*), 66b; *ZH* 12b (*MhN*). For various interpretations of this phrase, see *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

924. Moses did not die... Both Moses and Jacob are still alive in the heavenly paradise. Such immortality is granted to those "upon whom holy faith depends," that is, those whose virtue unifies the sefirotic realm of faith.

Jacob is called by two different names, each corresponding to one rung. The name יעקב (*Ya'aqov*), *Jacob*, can allude to *Shekhinah*, perhaps because She is the עקב (*aqev*), *heel*, i.e., the end of the flow of emanation. His new name, Israel, corresponds to *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), who harmonizes the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, and signifies perfection. See *Zohar* 1:145b, 147b–148b (*ST*), 174a, 176a, 177b, 210b; 3:210b.

On Moses' immortality, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 357; *Midrash Tannaim*, Deuteronomy 34:5; BT *Sotah* 13b; *Bava*

Batra 17a; Maimonides, *Peirush ha-Mishnah*, intro, p. 3; Moses de León, *She'elot u-Tshuvot*, 60. On Jacob's immortality, see BT *Ta'anit* 5b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Jacob our father did not die..., as is said: *Do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—do not be dismayed, O Israel! For I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity* (Jeremiah 30:10). The verse compares him to his seed; just as his seed is alive, so he too is alive." See above, [note 301](#).

"From our perspective" renders מסטרא דילן (*mi-sitra di-lan*), "from our side (or aspect)." See Maimonides, *Peirush ha-Mishnah*, intro, p. 3; *Zohar* 2:176a; 3:134b (*IR*), 141b (*IR*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 146; and Wolfson's note.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Moses, YHVH's servant, died there in the land of Moab by the word of YHVH*. The verses in Jeremiah read: *As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob; do not be dismayed, O Israel! For I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob will return and be calm and secure, with no one frightening him. As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—for I am with you!...* See Jeremiah 30:10-11.

[925](#). **From here: For I am with you...** Rabbi Yehudah offers a different proof for Jacob's immortality. He may be suggesting that the wording *I am with you* emphasizes that God took the initiative to unite with Jacob and keep him alive, whereas the alternative wording *you are with Me* could imply that Jacob died and his soul returned to its divine source.

See *Zohar* 1:249a; 3:199a. For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

[926](#). **Jacob will return...** Rabbi Abba had interpreted this to mean that Jacob would move on to be called by his new name, Israel. Rabbi Shim'on approves of this interpretation but also offers another: *Jacob will return* to his source in *Tif'eret*. Cf. *Zohar* 1:145b; 3:20b; Vital.

927. The Companions have established... That Jacob did not die, based on a verse in Jeremiah. See BT *Ta'anit* 5b (quoted above, [note 924](#)), in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Jacob our father did not die..., as is said: *Do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—do not be dismayed, O Israel! For I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity* (Jeremiah 30:10). The verse compares him to his seed; just as his seed is alive, so he too is alive."

928. The central bar... This verse describes the wooden structure of the Dwelling that holds the drapes.

See *Zohar* 1:1b, 148b (ST), 224a; 2:51b; 3:186a-b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 7; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 41-42 (49-51).

929. Happy are you, O land... On these verses, see *Zohar* 1:95b, 124b; and below at [notes 942-49](#).

930. There are three things... A father must circumcise his son, redeem his firstborn son (by offering a payment to a priest), and arrange for his son's marriage. God arranged for these three things regarding His son, Israel.

On a father's obligations toward his son, see BT *Qiddushin* 29a. On God performing these acts for Israel, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shelah* 26; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 17:1; *MmD*.

According to Joshua 5:5-7, the Israelite generation born during the years of wandering in the desert had not been circumcised. Therefore God commanded Joshua to circumcise them as they entered the land of Canaan.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *He redeemed you from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.* Genesis 1:27-28 read: *God created the human in His image; in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over fish of the sea and birds of the*

heavens and every living creature that crawls upon the earth." The verse in Exodus reads: *You yourselves saw what I did to Egypt, and I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me.*

931. All is fine... All that God has done for Israel is fine, but His greatest gift is Torah, the knowledge of which is more praiseworthy than anything.

The verse in Proverbs is spoken by Wisdom, identified here with Torah. It reads in full: *By me kings reign, and dignitaries decree justice.* See *Sifrei*, Numbers 119; JT *Pe'ah* 8:7, 21a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:1; BT *Yoma* 72b, and *Gittin* 62a (where the verse's *kings* are scholars enthroned by their learning).

932. When Rav Huna went up there... Rav Huna was a third-century Babylonian *amora*, who appears in *Midrash ha-Ne'lam*, from which this passage probably stems. See below, [note 941](#). The idiomatic phrase "went up there" is borrowed from the Babylonian Talmud, where it means "went to the land of Israel."

Bel (meaning "lord" or "master") is the proper name of Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. The rabbis wonder aloud why this name appears in the verse in Jeremiah, since elsewhere in the Bible the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar says that his god was named Belteshazzar.

For the phrase "went up there," see *Zohar* 3:72b (where the subject is Rav Hamnuna Sava); *ZH* 81c (*MhN, Rut*), where the subject is Rav Huna.

On Bel, Belshazzar, and Belteshazzar, see ABD. The full verse in Daniel reads: *Finally there came before me Daniel—whose name is Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and who is endowed with the spirit of the holy gods—and before him I related the dream.*

933. sustaining pillars... The venerable rabbis assembled there.

934. At the head of bustling streets she calls... The subject is Wisdom, personified as a woman and here

identified with Torah.

935. before Jacob appeared... Originally, when it was time for a person to die, he died suddenly without illness. Jacob requested that God provide illness as an opportunity to prepare for death.

In the verse from Genesis the deficient spelling *חלה* (*holeh*), *is ill*, enables the midrashic reading *halah*, *became ill*, emphasizing that this was the first time in history that anyone became ill.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:9; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 87a, *Sanhedrin* 107b; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 52; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥayyei Sarah* 5. On the phrase *סימנא בעלמא* (*simana be-alma*), "a sign (or paradigm) in the world," cf. *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15; Vol. 3, pp. 352–53, n. 272.

936. After he lay down... After Jacob died following his illness, everyone who became ill died, until King Hezekiah.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:9; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 52, and Luria's [note 29](#); *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*. The context in Isaiah (38:1–2) reads: *In those days Hezekiah became deathly ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him and said, "Thus says YHVH: Set your house in order, for you are going to die; you will not live." Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to YHVH.* The same passage appears in 2 Kings 20:1–2.

937. That day the sun went backward ten degrees... According to the biblical account, King Hezekiah asked Isaiah for a sign that he would be healed, and God made the shadow of the royal sundial recede ten steps. See 2 Kings 20:8–11; Isaiah 38:7–8.

Here, drawing on midrashic sources, Rav Huna relates that on the day of this miracle the Babylonian king Merodach-baladan (who usually slept each day for five hours, from approximately 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.) apparently slept instead for ten hours, yet when he awoke it seemed not like 8 P.M. but 10 A.M., since time had gone ten hours backward.

Mistakenly, he thought that he had slept an entire day, and became incensed at his retinue of soldiers.

The exclamation “In killing with a lance his centurions are conspiring!” is a conjectural rendering of קנטרוי אקטורטין בקטולא דקונטרא (be-qittula de-quntara qanteroi iqqatortin). *Quntara* apparently means “spear,” based on Greek *kontarion*, related to *kentron*, “a goad, sharp point.” Cf. קונטרה (*quntarah*), in JT *Megillah* 3:6, 74b, which apparently means “an iron-tipped staff”; and קנטר (*qantar*), “crowbar,” in M *Kelim* 14:3.

Qanteroi is apparently a variation on קינטרון (*qinteron*), “centurion.” Perhaps, Merodach-baladan is accusing his soldiers of trying to kill him after administering a sleeping potion. The wording of his exclamation here replaces (and reverses) the version in *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*: “He [Merodach-baladan] sought to kill all his soldiers.”

See Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *qantira*. For various other interpretations of this line, see *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *MmD*.

For the rabbinic sources, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:1–3; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:5; *Ester Rabbah* 3:1; BT *Sanhedrin* 96a; *Tanḥuma*, *Ki Tissa* 5. Cf. *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 52. On the relation between the miracle of the sundial and Merodach-baladan’s sleep that day, see *MM*; *MmD*.

938. Peace to Hezekiah... In the first version of his letter, Merodach-baladan addressed Hezekiah before addressing God. Then he reconsidered and changed the order of the salutation.

See the rabbinic sources cited toward the end of the preceding note; *Zohar* 1:202a. The three kings were Nebuchadnezzar, Evilmerodach, and Belshazzar. On the last two, see 2 Kings 25:27; Daniel 5:1.

“August cosmocrats” renders גזטירין רופינוס (*gaztirin rufinus*). The first word plays on a term appearing in the midrashic

sources of this passage: קוזמוקרטורין (*qozmoqratorin*), from Greek *cosmocrator*, “lord of the world.”

Rufinus derives from the Latin *rufus*, “redhaired.” The name Rufinus is shared by various early Christian saints, a fourth-century Roman minister, and Tineus Rufus, the second-century governor of Palestine ordered by Emperor Hadrian to crush the Jewish rebellion. In the *Zohar*, *rufinus* usually refers to a royal official. See 1:148b; 2:36b, 40a, 58b, 68a, 85a; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *rufinus*. For the medieval Castilian usage, see Corominas, *Diccionario*, s.v. *rufián*. Cf. Aramaic, רופילא (*rufila*), “high official.”

939. You are the head of gold... Daniel interprets King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, in which the king had seen a huge statue with a head of gold. In the following chapter Nebuchadnezzar constructs a statue entirely of gold. According to Rav Huna, the king sought to invest the statue (and apparently himself) with authority (“a lower coronet”), reflecting divine authority.

“Coronet” renders the neologism גזפירא (*gazpira*), whose meaning is uncertain. Cf. גזירפטא (*gezirpata*), “court-appointed officials who carry out judgment.” In *Zohar* 3:154a, the similar word קוזפירא (*quzpira*) probably means “authority.”

According to Daniel 2:32–33, the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream consisted of various materials: *The head of that statue was of fine gold; its breast and arms were of silver; its belly and thighs, of bronze; its legs were of iron, and its feet part iron and part clay.*

940. On that day he gathered all peoples... King Nebuchadnezzar animated the statue by placing in its mouth the diadem of the high priest, which he had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. This sacred object was engraved with the name *YHVH*, and by the power of that name the statue began speaking.

By relating this story, Rav Huna solves the dilemma of the rabbis, who had been wondering why the verse in

Jeremiah refers to the Babylonian god as Bel, whereas Nebuchadnezzar himself identifies his god's name as Belteshazzar. Apparently, the statute itself was named Bel, while the god's own name was Belteshazzar. Jeremiah mentions Bel specifically when he reports God's threat: *I will deal with Bel in Babylon, and I will take what he has swallowed out of his mouth*, which Rav Huna identifies as the high priest's diadem. See above, [note 932](#).

The story about Daniel and King Nebuchadnezzar's statute appears in *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:9. On animation of statues by means of the divine name, see Idel, *Golem*, 30–31. The phrase “speaking grandly” derives from Daniel's dream-vision (Daniel 7:8, 20).

[941. Rabbi Yehudah...](#) Identical with Rav Yudai, who welcomed Rav Huna to join the group's discussion. See above at [note 934](#).

“Cluster” renders קוטפ״א (*qutpaya*), apparently based on קטופא (*qetupha*), “bunch of grapes, cluster.” See *Zohar* 1:17b; 2:38a, 49b; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 190; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *qitpin*.

An early and reliable Vatican manuscript (V1) concludes this paragraph with “Until here,” marking the end of this long passage that begins “For we have learned: When Rav Huna went up there...” (above, [page 517](#)).

[942. Happy are you, O land...](#) According to Rabbi Yose, Moses was a *king* redeeming his people, and the Israelites ate the paschal lamb *at the proper time*—namely *in haste* as they went out from Egypt.

On the verse in Ecclesiastes, see *Zohar* 1:95b, 124b; above at [note 929](#). The phrase *of noble birth* renders בן חורין (*ben ḥorin*)—בן חורים (*ben ḥorim*) in the Masoretic text of Ecclesiastes—literally “son of free ones,” which matches Rabbi Yose's remark that Moses “liberated” Israel, literally “made them בני חורין (*benei ḥorin*), sons of free ones.”

The full verse in Exodus reads: *Thus shall you eat it: your hips girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff*

in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste [or: trepidation]. It is a passover offering to YHVH.

943. the words of King Solomon are all within... Every word in his three biblical books (Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes) alludes to the divine realm.

On the statement “The verse comes in order to be expounded,” see BT *Megillah* 2b, *Yevamot* 54b, *Qiddushin* 4a, *Sanhedrin* 55a; *Zohar* 2:29b-30a, 160b; 3:32a, 87b, 267a; *ZH* 25d (*MhN*), 86a-b (*MhN, Rut*); Gikatilla, *Sha’arei Orah*, 2a; Matt, “New-Ancient Words,” 198.

944. Happy are you, O ארץ (erets), land... The name of the land is unspecified, alluding to the ideal and spiritual land, *Shekhinah*. She appears under this same name in the verse from Lamentations. *Shekhinah* is one of the sefirotic crowns and partner of *Tif’eret*, who is known as *heaven*. The verse in Genesis alludes to the emanation of this divine couple (*earth and heaven*) from *Hokhmah* and *Binah* (*YHVH Elohim*).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created, on the day that YHVH Elohim made earth and heaven.*

945. when the blessed Holy One sought to destroy... Before destroying the Temple and the Holy Land, God first separated *Shekhinah* (the supernal Holy Land) from *Tif’eret*, depriving Her (and the land below) of the flow of blessing and thereby leading to destruction. The Temple is pictured as God’s *footstool*.

The verse in Lamentations reads: *He has cast down from heaven to earth the beauty [or: splendor] of Israel.* Here Rabbi Shim’on interprets this to mean *He has cast down earth from heaven...*, or (construing the concluding phrase as the subject): תפארת ישראל (Tif’eret Yisra’el), *The beauty of Israel, has cast down earth from heaven.* See *Zohar* 1:219a, 238a, 242b; 3:59b. On the Temple as God’s footstool, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:3.

“He first renders judgment above...” refers to God punishing the heavenly princes of the nations before He punishes their earthly subjects. Similarly *Shekhinah* (Israel’s divine prince, as it were) was removed from the realm of unity before the Temple’s destruction.

On the seventy heavenly princes, see above, [p. 10](#), [n. 27](#). On God punishing or defeating them before dealing with the nations, see *Mekhilta, Shirta 2*; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:14; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:22; *Tanḥuma, Bo 4, Beshallah 13, Mishpatim 18*; *Tanḥuma (Buber), Bo 6, 19*; *Shemot Rabbah* 9:9; 21:5; 23:15; *Midrash Tehillim* 82:3; *Zohar* 1:69a, 86a; 2:6b, 18a-b (*MhN*), 29a, 46b, 49a, 54b, 232b; 3:147a. The verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH will punish the host of the heights...*

[946.](#) **Happy are you, O erets, land...** The *land* of *Shekhinah* is nourished by King *Tif’eret*.

The phrase *of noble birth* renders בן חורין (*ben ḥorin*), literally “son of free ones,” which may allude here to *Tif’eret* as son of *Binah*, who is the source of freedom and liberation. Cf. above, [note 942](#).

[947.](#) **And whose princes feast...** Apparently alluding to Israel’s eventual reward and celebration in Messianic times, when they will be told all that *God has performed* and prepared for them.

[948.](#) **Woe to you, O erets, land...** Woe to *Shekhinah* in time of exile, when She is separated from the higher *sefirot* and can obtain sustenance only through Metatron, who is known as נער (*na’ar*), “youth, boy.” He conveys the flow of emanation only from the side of harsh Judgment on the left.

For a different kabbalistic interpretation of the verse in Ecclesiastes, see *Zohar* 1:124b-125a.

[949.](#) **And whose princes eat...** *Shekhinah*’s princely angels eat in the darkness preceding dawn—before the effulgence of *Hesed*, who rules the morning.

The clause “in that darkness before it dawns, before the one who reigns rules” can also be translated “in that

darkness before the one who reigns shines and rules.” The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *and whose princes יאכלו (yokhelu), eat [or: feast], in the morning.*

950. The central bar... The central wooden bar of the Dwelling symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who is identified with Jacob. *Tif'eret* harmonizes the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, and He spans the upper and lower *sefirot*.

In the verse in Genesis, the plural *tents* alludes to *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. The full verse reads: *The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was איש תם (ish tam), a simple man, dwelling in tents.* The word *tam* means “simple, innocent, plain, mild, quiet, sound, wholesome, complete, perfect.” *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc., renders it שלימים (*shelim*), “complete, perfect, consummate.”

The highest *sefirah*, *Keter*, is known as the Holy Ancient One. Characterized by pure compassion, He is described as אריך אנפין (*arikh anpin*), “long-suffering, slow to anger” (an expression deriving from Exodus 34:6). See Ibn Ezra (short), ad loc.; *Zohar* 3:129a–b (*IR*).

The configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod* is characterized by a tension between opposites: right and left, loving-kindness and judgment. Relative to the highest realm, this configuration is described as זעיר אנפין (*ze'eir anpin*), “short-tempered, irascible, impatient” (deriving from Proverbs 14:17). *Tif'eret*, in the center of this configuration, is also in a direct line with *Keter* and thus links the Holy Ancient One and the Short-Tempered One.

On the verse in Exodus, see above, [note 928](#). On Jacob as *ish tam*, a complete man, see *Zohar* 1:146a, 167b, 173b, 222a; 2:78b; 3:12b, 163a–b.

951. Hokhmah is totality of all... Within *Hokhmah* preexist all of the lower *sefirot*. *Hesed*, on the right, issues from *Hokhmah*; and *Gevurah*, on the left, from *Binah*. *Tif'eret*, symbolized by Jacob, balances and completes both sides. The three patriarchs symbolize the full triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, with Jacob as their consummation.

[952.](#) **Hokhmah struck its paths...** The thirty-two paths of *Hokhmah* represent the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the ten *sefirot*. *Hokhmah* emanated a flow through these thirty-two paths, which gathered to form the “one place” of *Binah*. Ten sefirotic crowns emerged from the thirty-two paths, leaving twenty-two. Then these twenty-two paths (or letters) reached *Binah* and were engraved on Her fifty gates, yielding a total of seventy-two, corresponding to the divine name of seventy-two letters (on which see below).

The subject of the last sentence (“These opened sideways...”) is apparently the twenty-two letters. The “twenty-two crowns of Compassion” include the thirteen attributes of Compassion listed in Exodus 34:6–7 (see the following note) and the abbreviated list of nine attributes listed in Numbers 14:18. The former pertain to the Holy Ancient One (*Keter*, the realm of total Compassion), while the latter pertain to the Short-Tempered One; but all twenty-two originate in “the Ancient of Days,” identical with the Holy Ancient One. See *Zohar* 3:139a (*IR*), 295a (*IZ*); above, [note 950](#).

On the paths of *Hokhmah*, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1–2. On the gates of *Binah*, see the statement attributed to Rav and Shemu’el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a), “Fifty gates of *binah* (understanding) were created in the world, and all were given to Moses except for one.” See Nahmanides, *Peirush al ha-Torah*, intro, 3–4; *Zohar* 1:3b. On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, [pp. 135–36](#), [n. 381](#).

The “seventy-two letters of the Holy Name” is apparently identical with the Name of Seventy-two Letters. This complex name consists of three verses (Exodus 14:19–21) whose letters are rearranged into seventy-two triads according to the following pattern: the first letter of the first verse, the last letter of the second verse, the first letter of the third verse (forming one triad); the second letter of the first verse, the penultimate letter of the second

verse, the second letter of the third verse (the second triad); etc. See above, [note 113](#); *Zohar* 2:51b-52a; Vol. 4, pp. 257-64 and nn. 216, 221-26.

“Dazzling rays” renders קרניטי זהירין (*qarnitei zehirin*). *Qarnitei* may derive from Latin *corona*, “crown,” or from קרנטא (*qarnata*), “horns,” meaning here “rays.” *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 187, defines *qarnitei* as “sparks.” Cf. *ZH* 21b (*MhN*). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *OY*; *MM*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:348-49; *MmD*.

953. Fifty engravings... forty-two holy letters... Fifty engravings emerge from the fifty gates of *Binah*, adorned with the Name of Forty-two Letters, by which God created the world. Eight more letters emerge, bringing the total to fifty. These eight compose the two first words of the thirteen attributes of Compassion: יהוה יהוה (*YHVH YHVH*)! *A compassionate and gracious God...* The eight letters of Compassion issue from the Holy Ancient One and unite with *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, who constitute the head of the Short-Tempered One.

On the Holy Ancient One and the Short-Tempered One, see above, [note 950](#). The Name of Forty-two Letters is mentioned in the name of Rav, though not recorded, in BT *Qiddushin* 71a. Hai Gaon indicates that it consists of the letter series אבגיחזן, קרעשטן, נגדיכש, בטרצתג, חקבטנע, יגלפזק, שקוצית which are also the initial letters of the forty-two words constituting the prayer *Anna be-Khoah* (Please, with the Strength [of Your Right Hand’s Greatness]). According to Jacob ben Meir Tam (Rabbenu Tam), this name consists of the first forty-two letters of the Torah, from the ב (*bet*) of בראשית (*Bereshit*), *In the beginning*, through the ב (*bet*) of בהו (*bohu*), *empty* (or *void*) (Genesis 1:2). See above, [note 77](#).

The biblical context in Exodus (34:6-7) reads: *YHVH, YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and faithfulness, keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, bearing crime, trespass, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting*

the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations.

954. Supernal *Hesed* emerged... *Hesed* emerged from *Hokhmah* on the right, and *Gevurah* from *Binah* on the left. *Tif'eret*, symbolized by Jacob, harmonized and consummated the two. See above, [note 950](#).

955. Therefore he is called Israel... Jacob's original name reflects a lower rung, apparently *Shekhinah*, while Israel (which he was renamed after wrestling with the angel) represents the completion and perfection of *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). Similarly King David symbolizes *Shekhinah*, last of the ten *sefirot*, whereas Jesse symbolizes a higher rung (*Yesod* or perhaps *Binah*).

The verse *We have no share in David...* was the rallying cry of the northern tribes of Israel when they broke away from King David. In a midrashic tradition attributed to Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai, *David* is understood as referring to the Kingdom of Heaven, while *Jesse's son* denotes the Kingdom of David. According to (or based on) this tradition, the word לאהלו (le-ohalav), *to his tent*, is creatively read as לאלהיו (le-lohav), *to his god*, namely to his own idol.

See *Midrash Shemu'el* 13:4; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, 1 Samuel 106; Rashi and Radak on Hosea 3:5; *Zohar* 3:69b. On *le-ohalav*, *to his tent*, and *le-lohav*, *to his god*, cf. *Tanḥuma*, *Beshallah* 16; *Minḥat Shai* on 1 Kings 12:16, Zechariah 2:12, 2 Chronicles 10:16.

On the names Jacob and Israel, see above, [note 924](#). On exile being caused by the denial of God, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:1. On Jesse and *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 1:29b.

956. in all those crowns... In all the *sefirot*, which preexisted in *Hokhmah*.

957. With the one called *Binah*... *Hokhmah* emanated to *Binah*, who then contained the entire flow.

On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see above, [note 952](#). The verse in Psalms reads: *How abundant are Your works, O*

YHVH! All of them You have made in wisdom. See above at [note 922](#).

[958](#). **All are evenly balanced** Because *Hesed* issues from *Binah*.

[959](#). **Who is *the heavens?* *Tif'eret*...** Whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, “Beauty of Israel,” which is linked with heaven in the verse in Lamentations: *He has cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel*. See above, [notes 944-45](#).

[960](#). ***the dust of the earth—Gevurah*** As opposed to *Hesed*, symbolized by water.

[961](#). **mountains of pure balsam** Lower *sefirot* (from *Netsah* through *Yesod* or *Shekhinah*), which all issue from *Binah*, who is known as “balsam.”

According to a rabbinic tradition, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. Here, the rivers turn into mountains.

On rivers of balsam, see JT *Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 62:2; BT *Ta'anit* 25a; *Zohar* 1:4b, 7a, 88a (ST), 176a; 2:127a-b, 146b; 3:181a. On mountains of balsam, see *Zohar* 1:35a; 2:15a (*MhN*), 83b, 87b, 200b-201a; 3:67a, 91a, 144b (*IR*). Cf. the reference to *mountains of spices* in Song of Songs 8:14.

[962](#). **other chariots below them** Angelic forces and realms beneath *Shekhinah*.

[963](#). **What is *the hollow of his hand?*...** This alludes to the spirit conveyed by *Hokhmah* to *Binah*.

The colorful quotation, of uncertain meaning, may refer to clusters of seed or emanation held by *Hokhmah* and then sown in *Binah*. For various interpretations, see *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

“A handful” renders שַׁעֲלָא (*sha'ala*), equivalent to שַׁעֲלוֹ (*sho'olo*), *the hollow of his hand*. “Vessel” renders קִיזְפָּא (*qizpa*), perhaps based on כּוּסְפָּא (*kuspa*), “residue,” which the medieval dictionary *Arukh* defines as “vessel.” See *Zohar* 3:181a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 189, s.v. *qazpita*; *Derekh*

Emet; Nitsotsei Orot. Cf. Vol. 1, p. 299, n. 1442; Vol. 3, pp. 10-11, nn. 69, 74. On the form of the saying, cf. below, [page 568](#).

964. בזרת (ba-zeret), with a span... The span of the hand (which includes five fingers) alludes to the flow of emanation issuing from the fifty gates of *Binah* and generating the *sefirot* below, who are clustered around *Tif'eret*, known as *the heavens*.

Rabbi Shim'on quotes the verse in Malachi in order to link the noun זרת (*zeret*), "span," with the verb זרה (*zrh*), "to spread." The verse reads: וזריתי (*ve-zeriti*), *I will spread, dung upon your faces, the dung of your festal offerings*. The word "scattering (in all directions)" renders אתפזרו (*itpazeru*), which assonates with *zeret* and *zeriti*.

965. בשליש (ba-shalish), in a measure... The term שליש (*shalish*) derives from שלוש (*shalosh*), "three," and means "a third (of a *se'ah* or another measure)." Here, Rabbi Shim'on identifies *shalish* with the "third" of the lower *sefirot*, *Tif'eret*, also known as Compassion. This central *sefirah* harmonizes and perfects the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*.

966. scales of equity... Alluding to *Netsah* and *Hod*, who balance right and left in the lower *sefirotic* regions.

On *scales of equity*, see *Zohar* 1:33b; 2:95b, 252a; *TZ*, *Haqdamah*, 17b; 5, 19b.

967. measure of the Creator of all Namely, שעור קומה (*shi'ur qomah*), "the measure of the [divine] stature," the depiction of God's bodily limbs.

See Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, § 952: "Whoever knows this measure of our Creator..., concealed from creatures, is assured of life in the world that is coming." See *Zohar* 1:36a, 132b; 2:56b; *TZ* 70, 128a-b; above, [note 76](#).

968. This implies that Jacob issued... Rabbi El'azar wonders how Jacob, symbolizing *Tif'eret* (known as Compassion), could have issued from Isaac, who symbolizes Judgment.

[969](#). **That alone?...** The interplay of opposites characterizes both the history of the patriarchs and the sefirotic realm above. For example, Isaac, symbolizing Judgment, issued from Abraham, who symbolizes *Hesed*.

[970](#). **Clearly there is no perfection...** The polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah* must be linked, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Jacob) must include both harmoniously. On the verse in Exodus, see above, [notes 928, 950](#).

[971](#). **All this is designated...** The dualistic depiction of right and left accords with our limited comprehension, whereas ultimately the divine is perfectly balanced and unified.

On the phrase “from our perspective,” see above, [note 924](#). On the verse in Malachi, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:11.

[972](#). **All those lamps shine from one...** All the *sefirot* shine from *Ein Sof* (or *Keter*). One must contemplate and maintain their unity.

[973](#). **I will make boys their princes...** When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, God was *enthroned on the cherubim* (in the Holy of Holies) and dwelled “completely.” However, in time of exile, God *mounted a cherub*—just one angelic cherub, signifying divine withdrawal.

Here the cherubim are identified as *boys*, based on BT *Sukkah* 5b: “What is כְּרוּב (*keruv*), cherub? Rabbi Abbahu said, ‘כְּרַבִּיא (*Ke-ravya*), Like a child, for in Babylon they call a child רַבִּיא (*ravya*).’” The verse in Isaiah now implies that in time of exile, God will not rule over Israel directly but will rather assign the angelic cherubim to govern them.

On various aspects of the cherubim, see above, [notes 444, 454, 466, 469, 472, 476](#). On the childlike cherubim, see above, [note 475](#). The verse in 1 Samuel reads: *They bore from there the Ark of the Covenant of YHVH of Hosts Enthroned on the Cherubim*.

[974](#). **Woe to the world...** According to BT *Bava Batra* 99a, in the time of the Temple “whenever Israel fulfilled the

will of the Omnipresent,” the cherubim in the Holy of Holies faced one another, and “whenever [Israel] did not,” the cherubim miraculously turned away from each other toward the Temple courts. Here, “when there is peace in the world” describes the ideal situation in which Israel fulfills God’s will.

See above, [note 469](#). Here the cherubim may also allude to the divine couple, *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, referred to immediately below. See above, [notes 454, 476](#). The full verse in Exodus reads: *The cherubim shall be spreading wings above, sheltering the cover with their wings, and their faces toward each other, toward the cover the faces of the cherubim shall be.*

[975. Your father’s nakedness...](#) In this verse the idiom לגלות ערוה (*legallot ervah*), “to expose nakedness,” means to initiate forbidden sexual relations. Here, conversely, “exposing nakedness” refers to disrupting the union between the divine parents, *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, by sinning. Jacob succeeded in uniting the *sefirot from end to end*. Ideally, the people of Israel also stimulate union above and glorify God by their praise and their praiseworthiness.

On “exposing nakedness” above, see *Zohar* 1:219a (Vol. 3, p. 323, n. 121); 2:84a (Vol. 4, p. 468, n. 364), 126b, 176b (*SdTs*), 177b (*SdTs*); 3:15b, 74a-75a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 348-49; OY; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1367-68; *MmD*.

On the verse in Exodus, see above, [note 970](#). The verse in Isaiah reads: *He [God] said to me, “You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory.”* Here, אַתְּפָאֵר (*etpa’ar*), *I glory*, alludes to תְּפָאֵרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל (*Tif’eret Yisra’el*), “Beauty (or Glory) of Israel.” Cf. above, [note 673](#).

[976. In ancient days...](#) It used to be that words of Torah were so precious that a person would pay silver just to hear them. But now, even if a person is offered silver to study Torah, he shows no interest.

The phrase “holy ones of the Highest” comes from Daniel 7:18, where it refers to the people of Israel. Here, it describes the few devotees of Torah.

977. *You shall set the purging cover...* The full verse reads: *You shall set the purging cover upon the Ark from above, and in the Ark you shall set the Testimony that I will give you.*

Purging cover renders כַּפֹּרֶת (*kapporet*), whose precise meaning is unclear. This was a solid slab of pure gold, placed above the ark. At each end of this gold cover, a cherub was hammered out. The two cherubim faced each other, with their heads bent slightly downward and their fully outstretched wings turned upward, sheltering the rest of the *kapporet* and the ark beneath. The divine voice was thought to issue from the space above the *kapporet* and between the two cherubim. On Yom Kippur the *kapporet* was the focal point of the purgation rite.

See above, [note 444](#); below, [pp. 545-46](#), [n. 3](#). This verse, which appears in numerous reliable manuscripts as well as the Cremona edition, is missing in the Mantua edition (and in all later editions based on Mantua), perhaps because the editors did not see how it connects with Rabbi Yitshak’s teaching.

978. וַיִּ (vavei), *Hooks of, the columns...* The full verse, describing the enclosure of the entire Dwelling, reads: *Its columns [or: posts], twenty, and their sockets, twenty, of bronze; hooks of the columns and their bands, of silver.*

Here, Rabbi Yitshak interprets the וַיִּ (*vavim*), “hooks,” as potencies joined to “knots of supernal pillars.” The potencies (perhaps those below the sefirotic realm, or perhaps *Netsah* and *Hod*) derive from “knots,” apparently the three sefirotic triads (or specifically the triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*). From the supernal hooks, all lower worlds are suspended.

The word ך (vav), “hook,” is spelled ך (vav), ך (vav), a letter whose numerical value is six. The phrase “six within six” refers to this spelling and alludes to the potencies, perhaps because each reflects (or includes) all six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. The sixfold potencies are nourished by the spinal column, symbolizing *Tif’eret* (who is Himself often designated by the letter vav).

In the quotation from the Book of Concealment—*vavim* above, *vavim* below...—the word *vavim* may mean “hooks” or “sixes,” and can also be construed as the plural of the letter ך (vav). This line apparently refers to the six *sefirot* and the hooks below, or to two sefirotic configurations. For various interpretations of the paragraph, see *OY*; *Vital*; *Derekh Emet*; *MM*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *MmD*.

Sifra di-Tsni’uta (The Book of Concealment) begins immediately after this section, although the apparent quotation here is not to be found in the extant text. On this phenomenon, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 96. On the meaning of the title *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*, see below, [page 587](#).

A number of early manuscripts (including C9, P2, V5, V7) have a gap between “Rabbi Yitshak said” (or “Rabbi Yitshak”) and “ך (vavei), *Hooks of, the columns...*”

979. What is Concealment of the Book?... Reversing the title of the Book of Concealment, to which this passage serves as a kind of preface. In *Idra Rabba* the Book of Concealment is often cited by this reversed title.

The Book of Concealment consists of five brief chapters, apparently corresponding to the five books of Torah. Their wisdom fills the world.

980. one who enters and emerges... The phrase derives from the famous description of four rabbis who “entered the orchard,” that is, who engaged in mystical contemplation of the divine realm. Only Rabbi Akiva “entered in peace and emerged in peace.” In the *Zohar*, “one who has entered and emerged” refers to a kabbalist who has entered the realm of mystery and emerged

unscathed, one who has plumbed the secrets and applied them. Here, “one who enters and emerges” may also imply that the devotee feels at home in the secret realm, “coming and going” freely.

For such a person, the cryptic contents of the Book of Concealment are invaluable, yielding great wisdom; but “for one who does not enter and emerge” (who has not fathomed the secrets), not so, as explained in the parable that follows.

On entering and emerging, see JT *Ḥagigah* 2:1, 77b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4 (and cf. *Tosefta Ḥagigah* 2:4; BT *Ḥagigah* 14b); *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 33:21; *Zohar* 1:44a (*Heikh*), 112a (*MhN*), 147b (referring to venturing into the demonic realm); 2:179a (*SdT*s), 213b; 3:127b (*IR*), 141a (*IR*), 144a (*IR*), 290a (*IZ*), 292a (*IZ*), 297a; *ZḤ* 2c (*SO*), 6c (*SO*), 19a (*MhN*), 105a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 345; Liebes, “Ha-Mashiaḥ shel ha-Zohar,” 153–56, and nn. 240–41; idem, *Studies in the Zohar*, 35, 97, 130–31; 178, nn. 110–11; Wolfson, “Forms of Visionary Ascent,” 211–12; Hellner-Eshed, *Ve-Nahar Yotse me-Eden*, 78–83.

981. in its natural form As raw kernels. The word בגופייהו (*be-gufaihu*) means “in their bodies, themselves,” as the wheat exists naturally.

982. He asked, ‘And what’s this made of?’ In F1 and Mantua, this sentence is preceded by: “He ate, and it tasted very good.” However, this statement does not appear in C9, M4, P2, V5, V7, OY, or Cremona, and is likely to be a scribal gloss. In some of these witnesses (C9, M4, V7, and Cremona) the previous two sentences are missing as well, apparently due to a scribal omission caused by homioarcton (“same beginning,” similarity of the beginnings of two words or phrases near each other). In this case the culprits are אמר ההוא בר נש (*amar ha-hu bar nash*), “The man asked,” and אמר (*amar*), “He asked.”

[983](#). **royal pastry...** טריקיי מלכין (*Teriqei malkin*). *Teriqei* plays on טריקטא (*teriqta*), which derives from Latin *tracta*, strips of dough “drawn out” in making pastry.

[984](#). **Surely I am king...** The cliff dweller feels no need to taste the ultimate confection since he has eaten the essential ingredient. But by fixating on the raw wheat, he misses out on the spectrum of delight. Similarly with one who knows only the general principles of wisdom (such as those contained in the Book of Concealment) and has not explored how these develop by contemplation and interpretation. The author is apparently alluding to interpretations of the Book of Concealment, such as those appearing in *Idra Rabba*. One who does not venture beyond the obscure principles of the Book of Concealment never discovers all the delicious meanings and insights that can unfold.

More broadly, the wheat may symbolize Torah. (As mentioned above in [note 979](#), the five chapters of the Book of Concealment may correspond to the five books of the Torah.) The four forms of wheat (kernels, bread, cake, and royal pastry) could then represent four levels of meaning: simple, midrashic, allegorical, and mystical. The man from the mountains claims to have mastered wheat, thinking that because he understands the simplest meaning of Torah he has attained the essence and does not have to delve any deeper. But such learning is superficial, because essence is inadequate unless it flowers into all it can be. Rather than reducing the unknown to the familiar, one should savor the variety of possible meanings.

Certain elements of this parable, including its polemical tone, apparently derive from a rabbinic parable directed against the Karaite rejection of Oral Torah. The midrashic author compares Torah to wheat, insisting on its creative transformation. See *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 2:

What is the difference between Scripture and Mishnah [i.e., the Written Torah and the Oral Torah]? They told a

parable. To what may this be compared? To a king of flesh-and-blood who had two servants, whom he loved completely. He gave each of them a measure of wheat and a bundle of flax. The wise one of them—what did he do? He took the flax and wove it into cloth. He took the wheat and made it into flour. He sifted it, ground it, kneaded it, and baked it, and then set it on the table and spread the cloth over it. He left it until the king arrived. The foolish of the two did nothing at all.

After some time, the king came to his palace and said to them, ‘My children, bring me what I gave to you.’ One brought out the [bread baked with] fine flour on the table covered with a cloth, and the other brought out the wheat in a box with the bundle of flax on top. Woe for that shame! Woe for that disgrace! You must admit: Which of them is more beloved? Obviously, he who laid out the table with the [bread baked of] fine flour on it.... When the blessed Holy One gave the Torah to Israel, he gave it to them as wheat from which to produce fine flour, and as flax from which to produce cloth.

This passage continues by mentioning כלל ופרט (*kelal u-frat*), “general and particular,” and similar hermeneutical rules. (See above, [note 685](#).) Note the reference in the *Zohar*’s parable to כללא (*kelala*), “general principle,” and what emerges from it.

“Deriving, diverging” renders דנפקי (*de-nafqei*), “that emerge.” The delicious particulars emerge or derive from the *kelala*, “general principle”; but the author may be playing here with the corresponding Hebrew idiom יוצא מן הכלל (*yotse min ha-kelal*), which means both “derives from the principle” and also “is an exception to, different from the general rule.”

According to a Hasidic reading, the parable indicates that one should serve God in all mundane activities by discovering the divine wisdom or essence that lies hidden

in everything. See Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, *Or ha-Me'ir, Ki Tissa* (Exodus 34:27), 26a-b.

The author of this parable may have been influenced by Maimonides' description of how habits prevent a person from experiencing pleasure and apprehending reality. See *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:31:

A person has in his nature a love of, and an inclination for, that to which he is habituated. Thus you can see that the people of the desert—notwithstanding the disorderliness of their life, the lack of pleasures, and the scarcity of food—dislike the towns, do not hanker after their pleasures, and prefer the bad circumstances to which they are accustomed to good ones to which they are not accustomed. Their souls accordingly would find no repose in living in palaces, in wearing silk clothes, and in the enjoyment of baths, ointments, and perfumes.

In a similar way, a person has love for, and the wish to defend, opinions to which he is habituated and in which he has been brought up and has a feeling of repulsion for opinions other than those. For this reason also a person is blind to the apprehension of the true realities and inclines toward the things to which he is habituated. This happened to the multitude with regard to the belief in His corporeality and many other divine subjects as we shall make clear. All this is due to people being habituated to, and brought up on, texts that it is an established usage to think highly of and to regard as true and whose external meaning is indicative of the corporeality of God and of other imaginings with no truth in them, for these have been set forth as parables and riddles.

In the parable here, instead of “מלכא (*malka*), king [of all these]” (attested in numerous manuscripts and Cremona), Mantua (and most subsequent editions) reads “מארי (*marei*), master [of all these].” The Talmudic phrase מרי הטיא (*marei hittayya*), “master of wheat,” refers to one who mastered or

memorized oral traditions. See BT *Berakhot* 64a; *Horayot* 14a; cf. *Bava Batra* 145b. On wheat signifying knowledge, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:7; BT *Berakhot* 40a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 20:6.

On the four levels of meaning in Torah, see above, [pp. 33-35](#), [nn. 95-103](#) and [n. 99](#). On tasting the meaning of Torah, see above, [note 499](#). Cf. *Zohar* 2:61b-62a. For a positive evaluation of eating the kernel of Torah, see *TZ* 69, 114b; *ZH* 118b (*Tiq*). On the contrast between raw wheat and fine bread, see *Tanḥuma, Tazri'a* 5.

For various approaches to this parable, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 96-97; Wolfson, "Beautiful Maiden Without Eyes," 171-72; Abrams, "Knowing the Maiden without Eyes," 72-73; Hellner-Eshed, *Ve-Nahar Yotse me-Eden*, 60-61.

*** ספרא דצניעותא (Sifra di-Tsni'uta), The Book of Concealment** This composition is an anonymous interpretation of the beginning of Genesis, consisting of five short chapters and composed cryptically in solemn cadences. Its six Aramaic pages embody the basic principles of Kabbalah in a highly condensed form, focusing on the process of emanation and the mysterious dynamics of divine being. In a sense, *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* forms a kind of Mishnah, which is explicated and expanded elsewhere in the *Zohar*, especially in *Idra Rabba* and *Idra Zuta*.

The enigmatic Book of Concealment requires such extensive interpretation that any detailed commentary threatens to overwhelm the text. Therefore I have first placed here the text itself, unencumbered by commentary, followed by the same text with commentary (beginning below, [page 545](#)). For the significance of the title, see below, [page 587](#).

1. ספרא דעניעותא (*Sifra di-Tsni'uta*), *The Book of Concealment* See the note above at the bottom of [page 535](#). On the title and context of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*, see below, [page 587](#).

On this unique composition, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:3-4; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 214; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 67-71, 95-101; idem, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 127-40; idem, "Mar'ish ha-Arets," 350-53; Klein, "The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*." For a description of Isaac Luria's authentic commentary on *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*, see Scholem, *Qabbalat ha-Ari*, 243-48.

2. a book balanced on scales A book describing the balance between divine qualities, between male and female.

The cosmic scales determine the nature of all existence, and the world could not endure until the opposite qualities of Compassion and Justice were harmonized. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15: "The blessed Holy One said, 'If I create the world by the quality of Compassion, its sins will abound; by the quality of Justice, the world will not endure. Rather, I will create it by both the quality of Justice and the quality of Compassion. Oh that it may endure!'"

On its way into the world, every human soul passes through the cosmic scales, and those that balance each other are destined to be married. In the process of emanation, the *sefirot* too were weighed.

On cosmic weighing, see Isaac the Blind, *Peirush Sefer Yetsirah*, 8: "He weighed them [i.e., the primordial letters of Creation] this opposite that so as to couple them to yield fruit, for no thing can emanate from another without weighing."

The phrase "balanced on scales" renders שקיל במתקלא (*sheqil be-matqala*). *Sheqil*, literally "weighed," can mean "balanced, equal," based on the Hebrew cognate שקל (*shql*). *Matqala*, literally "weight," can mean "weighing" and hence

“scales.” This phrase may also imply that the book is written in poetic meter, which is especially true of the beginning of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*. In *Zohar* 3:141a (*IR*), the initiates “who have entered and emerged” are themselves described as having been “balanced on the scales.”

See above, [pp. 7-8](#), [n. 22](#); Liebes, *Peraqim*, 327-32; idem, *Studies in the Zohar*, 67-71; idem, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 132-35. On the cosmic scales, see also Isaiah 40:12; *Sefer Yetsirah* 3:1; Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 1:3. On balancing and matching couples before birth, see above, [pp. 85-86](#), [n. 241](#).

3. until there was a balance... Until the male and female divine aspects were balanced and gazed upon one another, nothing could endure.

The image of not gazing face-to-face recalls a rabbinic description of the cherubim. According to BT *Bava Batra* 99a, in the time of the Temple “whenever Israel fulfilled the will of the Omnipresent,” the cherubim in the Holy of Holies faced one another, and “whenever [Israel] did not,” the cherubim miraculously turned away from each other toward the Temple courts.

See Rashbam, ad loc.; *Zohar* 2:152b; 3:59a-b; above, [p. 530](#), [n. 977](#). Cf. the erotic description of the cherubim in BT *Yoma* 54a (quoted above, [p. 351](#), [n. 454](#)). On not gazing face-to-face, see also *Zohar* 1:2b; 3:292b (*IZ*). On the significance of “face-to-face” in this passage, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 67-71, 105-7, 156. On Adam’s original androgynous nature and his “two faces,” see below, [note 65](#).

“A balance” renders מתקלא (*matqala*), “weight, weighing, scales.” See the preceding note. On the balance of male and female, see *Zohar* 3:290a (*IZ*).

4. the primordial kings died... Earlier worlds or emanations (pictured as “primordial kings”) were dominated by harsh Judgment, so after existing only momentarily they perished. Finally, the invisible, primal

divine configuration clothed itself in *sefirot* that displayed balance and harmony.

On the worlds that were previously destroyed, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:7, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: “The blessed Holy One kept creating worlds and destroying them until He created these [i.e., heaven and earth]. Then He declared, ‘These please Me, those do not.’”

Here in *Sifra di-Tsni’uta* the worlds that were destroyed are called “primordial kings,” based on a passage in Genesis (36:31–39), which begins: *These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned over the Children of Israel*. These kings do not constitute a dynasty since none of the successors to the throne is a son of his predecessor. In seven consecutive verses Genesis records *And [so-and-so] died*, and in the *Zohar* these royal deaths represent the destruction of unviable emanations tainted by harsh Judgment (which is identified as *Edom*). Only of the final, eighth king is a wife mentioned.

Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15. See *Zohar* 1:154b, 223b; 2:34b; 3:61a–b, 128a (*IR*), 135a–b (*IR*), 142a (*IR*), 292a–b (*IZ*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:276–77, 289–90; 2:458–59; Liebes, “Ha-Mashiaḥ shel ha-Zohar,” 219–21; idem, *Studies in the Zohar*, 65–68, 134–35, 155–56; idem, “Mar’ish ha-Arets,” 352; Idel, “Ha-Maḥashavah ha-Ra’ah shel ha-El.” Cf. above, [p. 99](#), [n. 283](#). On the link between the destroyed worlds and the demonic realm in the writings of Isaac ha-Kohen, see Scholem, “Qabbalot R. Ya’akov ve-R. Yitshaq,” 193–97. The theme of previous worlds that were destroyed inspired Isaac Luria’s theory of “the breaking of the vessels.”

The Church father Origen refers to previous worlds in responding to the following question posed by heretics: “If the world had its beginning in time, what was God doing before the world began?” Origen replies, “Not then for the first time did God begin to work when He made this visible world; but just as after its destruction there will be another

world, so also we believe that others existed before the present one came into being.” See Origen, *De Principiis*, 3:5:3.

“Bestowed” renders אַחְסִין (*aḥsin*), “be-queathed, bestowed.” For other possible meanings, see Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 137. “Weapons” renders זִיּוּנֵיהוֹן (*ziyyuneihon*); see *Zohar* 2:54a; 3:42b, 60a. For other possible meanings, see Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 137–38; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

5. This balance hangs... The cosmic scales inhabit a realm that exists on a different plane of being. Before any potential entity issues into being, it is weighed on this balance to determine whether it is harmonious, and whatever fails the test cannot endure. The phrase “those who were not” may refer to those who did not yet exist (but later did), or to those who failed the balancing test and perished.

The idiom of “rising upon” the scales apparently derives from the wording in Psalms 62:10: בְּמֵאזְנִים לְעֹלוֹת (*be-moznayim la’alot*), *to be weighed on* [literally, to go up in] *scales*, which probably refers either to an object rising on one of the pans of the scale as the other weighted pan falls, or to an object being lifted and placed on one of the pans. See *Zohar* 1:229a; above, [pp. 85–86](#), [n. 241](#); Vol. 3, pp. 380–81, n. 404.

See Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 134, 137; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

6. Secrecy within secrecy... Here begins a description of the head of the Holy Ancient One, who is the primal manifestation of *Ein Sof* through *Keter*. The skull is filled with the dew of emanation; a membrane of pure air covers the brain, while around the head fall strands of hair symmetrically.

On the head being filled with dew, see Song of Songs 5:2: *For my head is drenched* [literally, filled] *with dew*. On the divine dew and crystalline dew, see above, [pp. 260–61](#),

[n. 200](#). The image of hair as clean fleece derives from Daniel 7:9: *As I watched, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days sat—His garment like white snow, the hair of His head like clean fleece, His throne flames of fire, its wheels blazing fire.* In the *Zohar*, the Ancient of Days is equivalent to the Holy Ancient One.

On the membrane, see *Zohar* 3:128b (IR), 136a (IR). On the membrane surrounding the human brain, see Gershon ben Solomon, *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* 9, 26b; Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, *Peirush Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1, 13b-d.

On depictions of the divine anatomy in Jewish mysticism, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 16-18; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 15-55. On the sexual symbolism of hair, see Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 6:154.

7. Will of Wills is revealed... Prayer stimulates divine favor and revelation of the highest Will, which is identified with *Keter*, known as רעוא (ra'ava), "Will," or רעוא דרעוון (ra'ava de-ra'avan), "Will of Wills." The pure compassion of this high realm expresses itself as providential supervision.

"Supervision below by supervision of radiance above" apparently refers to two levels of providence, conveyed by the Holy Ancient One and a lower divine configuration known as the Short-Tempered One. When the Holy Ancient One gazes compassionately upon the Short-Tempered One, the latter is illumined by the former, and lower providence conveys the radiant compassion of higher providence. See *Zohar* 3:136a-137b (IR); Klein, "The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*."

The Holy Ancient One, characterized by pure compassion, is described as אריך אנפין (*Arikh Anpin*), "long-suffering, slow to anger, taking a long time for his nostrils to flare." This expression derives from Exodus 34:6: *YHVH, YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, אריך אפים (erekeh appayim), slow to anger [or: long-suffering], and abounding*

in kindness and faithfulness. See Ibn Ezra (short), ad loc.; *Zohar* 3:129a-b (IR); above, [pp. 152-53](#), [n. 38](#).

The configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod* is characterized by a tension between opposites: right and left, loving-kindness and judgment. Relative to the highest realm, this configuration is often described in the *Zohar* as זעיר אנפין (*Ze'eir Anpin*), “short-tempered” (deriving from Proverbs 14:17), or the Short-Tempered One. (For the possibility that *Ze'eir Anpin* refers to *Shekhinah*, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 105-7.)

On the manifestation of the Will of Wills, see *Zohar* 3:129a, 136a-b (both IR), 288b (IZ). On the open eye(s) of providence, see *Zohar* 3:129b-130a (IR). Cf. Psalms 121:4: *Look, He does not slumber nor does He sleep, the Guardian of Israel!*

8. two holes of an armoire... Referring to the nostrils of the Holy Ancient One, whose nose conveys the divine breath animating all. (See below.)

“Armoire” renders פֶּרְדָּשְׁקָא (*pardashqa*), apparently based on the rabbinic term פֶּרְדָּסְקִין (*pardisqin*), a corruption of Greek *purgiskos*, “cupboard, cabinet.” See M *Oholot* 6:7; *Tosefta Oholot* 7:13; Lieberman, *Tosefet Rishonim*, 3:115. On the word *pardisqin* in M *Oholot*, the early thirteenth-century Tosafist Samson of Sens explains to his readers what a cabinet is: “hollow columns in the wall of the house made of many windows and with doors.” Asher ben Yeḥiel explains that *pardisqin* are “windows like towers built into the wall.”

See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Tum'at Met* 25:4; Abraham ben David, ad loc.; *Zohar* 2:177a (*SdT*s), 178b (*SdT*s); 3:130b (IR), 262a, 289a (IZ), 294b (IZ); *Derekh Emet; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Nitsotsei Zohar*; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*.”

Some commentators understand *pardashqa* as “officer,” based on the rabbinic term פֶּרְדָּשְׁכָּא (*pardashkha*), “officer, official,” which may itself derive from Persian. This sense

could convey the image of a nose supervising commandingly. See BT *Shabbat* 94a; *Megillah* 12b; *Zohar* 1:148b; 2:8b, 36b; 3:144b (*IR*); *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *pardakhsh*; *Tosefot he-Arukh ha-Shalem*, 336, s.v. *pardakhsh*.

“Breath” renders רוחא (*ruḥa*), “wind, breath, spirit.” On the breath issuing from the nostrils of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 3:130a-b (*IR*), 289a (*IZ*). Cf. 3:137b-138a (*IR*), 294a (*IZ*). On the animating power of the divine breath, see Genesis 2:7: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the soil, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being.*

9. בראשית ברא (***Be-reshit bara***)... The opening verse of the Bible contains seven Hebrew words: *Be-reshit*, *In the beginning*, followed by six others, ואת השמים ואת הארץ ברא (*bara Elohim et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets*), *God created the heavens and the earth.*

The six words following *be-reshit* apparently symbolize the *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*, with *be-reshit* itself signifying their source above (*Hokhmah* or *Binah*). All seven (or the last six) of these sefirotic entities are suspended from the seven features of the skull mentioned in the preceding paragraph: the skull itself, crystalline dew, the membrane of air, strands of fleece-like hair, the forehead (expressing the Will), the open eye of providence, and the nostrils breathing life into all. The entities culminate in the glorious beard of the Holy Ancient One (described below in Chapter 2).

Elsewhere, the *Zohar* reads בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning*, as two words: ברא שית (*bara shit*), “created six,” alluding to the six *sefirot* (from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*) gestating within *Binah*. See above, [p. 348](#), [n. 450](#); Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

On the forehead as expressing the Will, see *Zohar* 3:129a (*IR*), 136b (*IR*); 288b (*IZ*), 293a (*IZ*). On a group of six with the seventh above them, see *Zohar* 3:47b; cf. 3:144b (*IR*).

On the beard as glorious, see BT *Shabbat* 152a, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Korḥah: "The glory of a face is the beard." See below at [notes 22-23](#); *Zohar* 2:122b; 3:130b-134b (*IR*), 139a-140b (*IR*), 289a-b, 295a-b (both *IZ*). On the divine beard, see Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 118-22.

10. The second earth is not included... The first *earth* appears in the opening verse of Genesis, discussed above: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*. The next verse begins with virtually the same word that concluded the first verse: וְהָאָרֶץ (*ve-ha-arets*), *And the earth, was waste and empty, with darkness over the face of the abyss and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters*. This second verse of Genesis contains fourteen Hebrew words—thirteen not counting "the second earth," namely the opening word, *ve-ha-arets*, and *the earth*. This word is not included in the total because the earth was cursed on account of Adam's sin.

The thirteen remaining words of this verse are linked to thirteen enhancements of the glorious beard of the Holy Ancient One, which correspond to the thirteen attributes of Compassion recorded in Exodus 34. These various groupings of thirteen recall the sum of the six words following בְּרֵאשִׁית (*Be-reshit*), *In the beginning*, and the seven features of the skull. See the preceding note; Klein, "The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*."

On the thirteen enhancements of the beard, see below at [notes 22-30](#); *Zohar* 3:130b-134b (*IR*), 289a-b (*IZ*). The thirteen attributes are derived from Exodus 34:6-7: *YHVH, YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and faithfulness, keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, bearing crime, trespass, and sin; yet He does not wholly acquit, inflicting the guilt of fathers upon sons and upon sons of sons, to the third and fourth generations.*

The full verse in Genesis 5 reads: *He called his name נח (Noah), Noah, as to say, "This one ינחמנו (yenaḥmenu), will console us, for our work and for the pain of our hands from the soil that YHVH cursed."* See Genesis 3:17. In Genesis 1:2 *wind* renders רוּחַ (*ruah*), "wind, spirit, breath."

11. Six thousand years... Alluding to the duration of the universe, which according to a rabbinic tradition will exist for this long. See BT *Sanhedrin* 97a, in the name of Rav Kattina: "For six thousand years the world exists and for one thousand it lies desolate, as is written: *YHVH alone will be exalted on that day* (Isaiah 2:11)."

For Rav Kattina, the verse from Isaiah implies that the world will be destroyed and *YHVH alone* will exist. The phrase *on that day* means "in that millennium," namely the seventh one, based on the notion that a divine day lasts for a thousand years. The proof-text for this equation appears in the following lines of the Talmudic passage, which compares the seventh millennium to the Sabbatical year of *shemittah*, "release," during which the land is allowed to lie fallow: "It has been taught in accordance with Rav Kattina: Just as the seventh year releases one year in seven [by letting the earth lie fallow], so the world releases one millennium in seven [by being fallow and desolate], as is written: *YHVH alone will be exalted on that day*. And it says: *A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day* (Psalms 92:1)—a day that is totally Sabbath [a period of total rest, ceasing, desolation]. And it says: *For a thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday gone by* (ibid. 90:4)."

Based on this rabbinic tradition, in early Kabbalah a theory of *shemittot* developed, according to which the world is destroyed every six millennia, lies in desolation for one millennium, and is then recreated anew and differently. Seven such cycles culminate in the *yovel*, the cosmic "Jubilee."

Here the six thousand years depend on "the first six," which refers to one of various sixes, all connected: the six

words following the opening word of Genesis (see above, [note 9](#)), the six primordial days of Creation, or the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, who are symbolized by those days. According to the kabbalistic theory of *Shemittot*, each period of six millennia is dominated by one of these six *sefirot*.

The “seventh above them” refers to one of various sevens, all linked: the seventh millennium (above the previous six), the word בראשית (*be-reshit*), *in the beginning* (above, or preceding, the following six words), or *Binah* (above the six *sefirot*). In the seventh millennium, when all ceases to exist, *Binah will be exalted*, or fortified, *alone*.

According to the biblical law of *shemittah*, every seventh year the land is allowed to lie fallow and at the end of that year all debts are canceled. See Leviticus 25:1-24; Deuteronomy 15:1-3.

On the kabbalistic theory of *Shemittot*, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 120-22; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 460-74; Pedaya, *Ha-Ramban*, 380-91, 432-33. On its significance here, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 123-26; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.” Certain kabbalists objected to the full-fledged theory, including Moses de León (*Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 92-95). Regarding the Talmudic formulation in *Sanhedrin*, see *Zohar* 1:128a (*MhN*); 2:10a; *ZH* 16d (*MhN*).

12. All will be destroyed in twelve hours... Since one divine day (of twenty-four hours) is equivalent to a millennium, “twelve hours” apparently refers to half a millennium, specifically the first half of the seventh millennium, during which all existence is destroyed, becoming once again *waste and empty*.

“Thirteen, He will raise them in Compassion” may mean that in the “thirteenth” hour, namely at the beginning of the second half of the seventh millennium, God will prepare the renewal of Creation. The number thirteen also alludes to the thirteen attributes of Compassion, the thirteen enhancements of the divine beard, and thirteen words of the second verse of Genesis, (not counting the

opening word). See above, [note 10](#); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 124; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

“All those six” refers to one or more of the following cluster: the six new millennia of the next cycle when the six lower *sefirot* emanate anew, symbolized by the six days of Creation and by the six words following the word בראשית (*bereshit*), *in the beginning*. See above, [notes 9, 11](#).

The opening verse of Genesis states that *God created*, and then the next verse says *The earth was waste and empty*. Here this is apparently construed as *The earth was*—it had existed already in a previous cosmic cycle, eventually becoming *waste and empty, with darkness [over the face of the abyss...]*, until finally only God existed.

On the significance of the verb *was* in the second verse of Genesis, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:15; *Bahir* 2 (2); *Zohar* 1:16a (Vol. 1, p. 118, n. 75); 2:34b (Vol. 4. pp. 153–54. n. 54).

On the twelve hours in which “all will be destroyed,” cf. the twelve-hour rise and fall of Adam, described in *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; B, 1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:1; BT *Sanhedrin* 38b. On the verse in Isaiah, see the preceding note.

[13. a long serpent...](#) The circular serpent represents the divine power that seeks to revert from the harmony of creation to primordial chaos. Every seven thousand years, the world is swallowed up and once again God is all that exists. Despite the demonic nature of the serpent, it inheres in the process of emanation, demonstrating that chaos and evil are linked with divine being.

“Tail in the head” alludes to the ancient mythological image of a serpent biting its tail, known as “uroboros,” from the Greek *ouroboros* (“devouring its tail”). Conceivably, “head behind the shoulders” may refer to the serpent arching itself backward until its mouth meets its tail, although normally the mythic serpent is pictured arching forward.

The image of the uroboros appears in ancient Egypt, Babylonia, and the Phoenician world; in Hellenistic magic and astrology; in India; and in Norse myth. It was often depicted as the cosmic Ocean surrounding the world or as the boundary of various dimensions of space and time. The uroboros could symbolize the outermost sphere of heaven or the recurrence of planetary revolutions, and it was also the celestial monster controlling solar and lunar eclipses.

The uroboros appears often in Gnostic texts, and is sometimes identified with the serpent of the Garden of Eden or with Leviathan. In alchemy it became a basic symbol, sometimes drawn around the Greek motto *Hen to pan* (All is One). Here, as in some earlier traditions (based ultimately on the phenomenon of the serpent shedding its skin), the uroboros represents an eternal cycle, the unity and renewal of life. According to alchemical texts, the dragon slays itself, weds itself, and impregnates itself.

While the uroboros figured prominently in alchemy, it also contributed to modern science. In the 1860s August Kekulé developed the hexagonal ring theory for the molecular structure of benzene, a theory that proved fundamental to organic chemistry. Years later, Kekulé described how he discovered the ring shape: "I was sitting there [in the study], working on my textbook, but it was not going well; my thoughts were on other matters. I turned my chair toward the fireplace and sank into half-sleep.... The atoms were fluttering before my eyes.... My mental eye, sharpened by repeated visions of this kind, now distinguished larger structures in numerous combinations: long chains, often combined more densely; everything in motion, twisting and turning like snakes. But look, what was that? One of the snakes had seized its own tail, and the figure whirled mockingly before my eyes. In a flash I awoke, and... I spent the rest of the night working out the consequences of the hypothesis."

On the uroboros, see below at [note 86](#); *Zohar* 3:205b; Leisegang, “The Mystery of the Serpent,” 24-41; Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 62, 281; idem, *Alchemical Studies*, 79; idem, *Collected Works*, 20:74; Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 5:4:33: 374-85; Neumann, *Origins and History of Consciousness*, 10-11, index, s.v. “uroboros”; idem, *The Great Mother*, index, s.v. “uroboros”; Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 50-54; Sheppard, “The Ouroboros and the Unity of Matter in Alchemy”; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:460, 467; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*, 13-14; Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 135-36; idem, “Mar’ish ha-Arets,” 352; Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 67-68, 271; Mastrocinque, *From Jewish Magic to Gnosticism*, 94-97, 106, 148-53, 162-63, 205. On Kekulé’s theory and reverie, see Rocke, “Hypothesis and Experiment in Kekulé’s Benzene Theory.” On his prior awareness of the uroboros, see Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 5:4:33: 385; Von Baeyer, *Taming the Atom*, 59-62.

On the serpent and the cosmic egg in Orphic cosmogony, see Leisegang, “The Mystery of the Serpent,” 16-24, 37. Cf. Liebes, *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism*, 65-92. On the serpent as the constellation Draco, see Kaplan, *Sefer Yetzirah*, 231-39; Vol. 4, p. 157-58, n. 65. On the serpent as the Milky Way, see Vol. 2, p. 215, n. 96. On the link between the demonic serpent and the divine realm, see *Zohar* 2:34a-35b.

“Enraged and furious” renders אַעבַר וְזַעִים (*i’abbar ve-za’eim*), apparently based on the phrase in Psalms 78:49: עֲבַרָה וְזַעִם (*evrah va-za’am*), *wrath and indignation*. Cf. Ezekiel 21:36; 22:31. The Aramaic word *i’abbar* can mean “pregnant,” which could refer to the uroboros. On the serpent’s pregnancy, see the alchemical formulation earlier in this note, and BT *Bekhorot* 8b and *Yalqut Shim’oni*, Genesis 31, both of which employ the term *i’abbar* or its equivalent מֵעַבַר (*mi’abbar*).

14. Once in a thousand short days... A normal divine day lasts a thousand years (see above, [note 11](#)), whereas a “short” divine day apparently lasts one year. Once every thousand years the serpent rears his head and, plowing through the waters, threatens to destroy the world; but God smashes its head and only in the seventh attempt does the serpent succeed.

“Plowshare” renders קולטרא (*qultera*), apparently borrowed from Rashi’s reference to the Old French *coltre*, “plowshare,” and applied here to the sea serpent’s fins plowing through the ocean.

See Rashi on 1 Samuel 13:20; Isaiah 2:4; Joel 4:10; BT *Shabbat* 123b, 157a (both s.v. *ve-yated*); *Ta’anit* 25b, s.v. *berekh*; *Bava Metsi’a* 80a, s.v. *ha-sokher*; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.” Cf. *Zohar* 3:288a (*IZ*); *Derekh Emet*; *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 189; *Ma’arikh*, s.v. *qltr*.

“Its smoking nodes” renders קיטרוי (*qitroi*), literally “its smoke” or “its knots.” “Smoke” fits the image of the fire-breathing dragon, while the meaning “knots, nodes” apparently refers to the two nodes described in medieval astronomy, namely the two points at which the orbit of a planet (or the moon) crosses the ecliptic. The point through which the heavenly body passes northward through the ecliptic is called the “ascending node,” while the southward crossing point is the “descending node.” These two nodes are often called the “dragon’s head” and the “dragon’s tail.” The lunar nodes are the only two places where a solar or lunar eclipse can occur. See Rumi, *Mathnawi*, 5:3582: “You are the sun imprisoned by a knot [i.e., eclipsed]. What a shame!”

On the two nodes, see *Baraita di-Shmu’el ha-Qatan*, 1; Ibn Ezra on Exodus 3:15 (long); Job 28:3; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Qiddush ha-Hodesh* 16:1; Radak on Isaiah 19:15; Kaplan, *Sefer Yetzirah*, 235–38; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

“A fin in its share” apparently alludes to an image of the sea monster recorded in *Seder Rabbah di-Vreshit*, 17 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:28): “The entire world stands on one fin of Leviathan.” See above, [p. 107](#), [n. 306](#). In the description of the serpent in *Zohar* 2:34b, Rabbi Shim’on says: “The Companions study the account of Creation and comprehend it, but few know how to allude thereby to the mystery of *the great sea serpent* (Ezekiel 29:3). Concerning this we have learned that the world unfolds solely on its fins.” See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 16-17.

“Its share” may allude to the portion offered to the demonic power in order to assuage it. On this theme, see above, [p. 102](#), [n. 291](#); [p. 421](#), [n. 657](#).

The image of smashing the sea serpent’s head belongs to a biblical myth of creation (based on ancient Near Eastern sources), in which God vanquishes the primordial forces of chaos.

15. There were two, reverting to one... According to a rabbinic myth, originally there were two serpents, male and female, but God reduced them to one. See BT *Bava Batra* 74b: “*God created the great sea serpents...* Rabbi Yoḥanan said, ‘This is *Leviathan the elusive snake* and *Leviathan the writhing snake*, as is said: *On that day YHVH will punish—with His fierce [or: great, mighty] sword— [Leviathan the elusive snake, Leviathan the writhing snake] (Isaiah 27:1).*’ Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav, ‘Everything that the blessed Holy One created in His world, He created male and female. Even *Leviathan the elusive snake* and *Leviathan the writhing snake* He created male and female, and if they mated with another, they would destroy the entire world. What did the blessed Holy One do? He castrated the male and killed the female, salting her for [the feast of] the righteous in the world to come, as is written: *He will slay the serpent of the sea* (ibid.).’”

In the verse in Psalms—*You smashed the heads of sea serpents on the waters*—the word תנינים (*tanninim*), *sea*

serpents, is spelled with both the first and second ם (yod). However, in Genesis 1:21, the word is spelled “deficiently,” without the second yod: *God created the great תנינים (tanninim), sea serpents*, alluding to the fact the Leviathan was left without his female partner. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:4; *Zohar* 2:34a-b; *Minḥat Shai* on the verse; above, [pp. 107-8](#), [nn. 306-7](#).

Here the phrase “two, reverting to one” alludes to the Talmudic legend and perhaps also to the situation in the seventh millennium, when all is destroyed and returned to undifferentiated oneness, God alone existing. See *Zohar* 3:47a; *ZH* 50b; Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 135-36.

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *An image above the heads of the living being: a firmament like awesome ice, spread out above their heads*. The noun חיה (ḥayyah), *living being* (or *animal, creature*) appears in the singular, apparently to emphasize the unity of the ensemble. (See Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 48.) Here, apparently, the verse demonstrates that a single being can have two heads.

16. “Let there be light!” ויהי (va-yhi), And there was... Emanation unfolds according to the divine command, which is immediately actualized. This is indicated specifically in Genesis—*va-yhi, and there was, light*—and more generally in the verse from Psalms: *For He spoke ויהי (va-yehi), and it came to be*.

Both forms of ויהי (va-yhi, va-yehi) include the three component letters of the name יהוה (YHVH), namely ם ך ך (yod, he, vav), with the addition of a second yod. The three letters yod, he, vav often signify the *sefirot* from *Keter* through *Yesod*, according to the following scheme: The initial letter, yod, symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, while its upper stroke symbolizes *Keter*. The *he*, often a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The *vav*, whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). Normally, the final

sefirah, Shekhinah, is symbolized by the second *he* in *YHVH*, but here instead of the second *he*, it is the second, or “final,” *yod*—of *יְהוָה* (*yod, he, vav, yod*)—that designates *Shekhinah*. This second *yod* is equivalent to the more common second *he*, given that both “were balanced on a single scale.”

For various interpretations, see *OY; MmD*; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.” On the sefirotic significance of the letters of the Divine Name, see above, [p. 158](#), [n. 55](#). On the name *יְהוָה* (*yod, he, vav, or YHV*), see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:13; *Zohar* 2:126b–127a; Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 31–33.

[17. The living beings darting back and forth...](#) The divine energy oscillates, perhaps between *Keter* and *Shekhinah*, or between *Hesed* and *Yesod*, or between *Hokhmah* and *Binah*. The primordial light of *Hesed* (described in Genesis as *good*) reaches *Yesod*, who is known as *righteous one* and also *good* (since He conveys all the goodness of emanation).

“This one goes up on the scale...” may mean that *Yesod* is weighed or determined on the cosmic scale, whereas an earlier entity (*Hesed* or perhaps *Keter*) exists “on its own” in a more primal state. For various interpretations, see *OY; Bei’ur ha-Gera; Sullam; MmD*; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

“Sister and relative” allude to *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) and *Binah* (Understanding), based on Proverbs 7:4: *Say to Wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call Understanding a relative*. This divine couple is symbolized by the letters *י* (*yod*) and *ה* (*he*), and their union forms the name *יה* (*Yah*).

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *The living beings darting back and forth like a flash of lightning*. On the verse in Isaiah, see *BT Yoma* 38b, *Hagigah* 12a; *Zohar* 1:30b, 33a, 60a, 82b; 2:11b, 128b; 3:16a, 110b. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [pp. 47–48](#), [n. 132](#). On the relation between *Hesed* and *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 1:3a, 21a, 30b; 2:230a.

18. Six emerge from the branch... From the union of י (yod) and ה (he), namely *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, emerge the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*—symbolized by the letter ו (vav), whose numerical value is six.

The “tongue speaking grandly” probably symbolizes the hidden *sefirah* of *Da’at*, which unites *Hokhmah* with *Binah* and lies concealed between them; its speech emanates the lower six *sefirot*. The three expressions of allegiance in the verse from Isaiah apply respectively to *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, and *Da’at*. This last *sefirah* manifests itself through *Tif’eret*, whose full name is *Tif’eret Yisra’el* (Beauty of Israel), referred to here as “*the name of Israel—really!*” The designation “sister” alludes to *Hokhmah* (see the preceding note).

On *Da’at*, see above, [p. 153, n. 40](#); [p. 155, n. 43](#). On *Da’at* as the tongue, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 171, n. 65; cf. Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*, 64, 182, n. 128. The phrase “speaking grandly” derives from Daniel’s dream-vision (Daniel 7:8, 20).

19. All are included in the concealed tongue... The entire potentiality of emanation is included in *Da’at* and intended for *Binah*, the Divine Mother. She opens Herself not only to Her partner *Hokhmah* (with whom She unites via *Da’at*), but also to *Tif’eret*, the son who issues from Her; so She is covered, or protected, by Father *Hokhmah* above and by *Tif’eret* below. No one should dare separate *Hokhmah* from *Binah*, exposing their nakedness and interrupting the divine flow.

The biblical idiom לגלות ערוה (*legallot ervah*), “to expose nakedness (or genitals),” means to initiate forbidden sexual relations. Here, conversely, the idiom apparently refers to disrupting the union of the divine couple, thereby exposing their nakedness. See above, [pp. 529–30, n. 975](#). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *OY*; *Bei’ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *MmD*; Klein, “The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni’uta*.”

20. Let there be lights... The two *lights* symbolize *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, the former dominating the latter. The

male unites with the female through *Yesod* (Foundation), the divine phallus, also known as Righteous One. From a higher perspective, though, it is *Hokhmah*, symbolized by the letter ם (*yod*), who illumines both *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, impregnating the latter.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *MmD*; Klein, "The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*." On the two lights, see *Zohar* 1:20a. The full verse in Genesis reads: *God said, "Let there be lights in the dome [or: expanse, firmament, vault] of heaven to divide the day from the night, and they will be for signs and for seasons, for days and years."* On the verse in Proverbs, see above, [pp. 47-48, n. 132](#).

21. ך״ (Yod) is unified alone... As *Hokhmah* withdraws, the light of *Shekhinah* fades and She darkens. However, *Binah* (the Divine Mother) is illumined through Her fifty gates. The key apparently symbolizes *Da'at*, who potentially includes all six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. Fitting into Mother's opening, this key links *Hokhmah* and *Binah*.

No one should dare to separate the divine couple, since this would ruin the harmonious balance and interrupt the flow of emanation.

On the waning of the moon and the diminishment of *Shekhinah*, see above, [pp. 271-72, n. 230](#). On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see above, [pp. 524-25, n. 952](#); [p. 526 at n. 957](#). On the divine key, see *Zohar* 1:3b; above, [pp. 514-15, n. 923](#). Cf. above, [pp. 94-95, nn. 270-71](#); [pp. 101-2, n. 290](#). On the act of exposing, see above, [note 19](#). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *OY* (who offers several); *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *MmD*; Klein, "The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*."

22. The beard of faith... The precious, glorious beard of the Holy Ancient One is not explicitly mentioned in the Song of Songs or in any prophetic book of the Bible. Its white hair branches into thirteen תקונין (*tiqqunin*), "enhancements," or locks, curls, curlicues.

On the glorious beard and its thirteen enhancements, see above, [notes 9-10](#). On its issuing from the ears, see *Zohar* 3:130b-131a (*IR*). On its not being mentioned, see *Zohar* 3:139a (*IR*). Conceivably, the description of the beloved in Song of Songs 5:13 alludes to the beard: *his cheeks like a bed of balsam, towers of mixed spices*.

The range of the word תקון (*tiqqun*) includes: “mending, improvement, correction, perfection, order, arrangement, array, adornment, enhancement.” “Mouth” renders בּוּסִיטָא (*bosita*), which apparently derives from Castilian *boca*, “mouth,” with the diminutive suffix *ita*. See *Zohar* 2:30b; 3:32b, 131a (*IR*, paraphrasing this passage); *Ma’arikh*, s.v. *bosita*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 134-35; Corominas, *Diccionario*, 1:603-4. Cf. *Zohar* 3:128b (*IR*); *Derekh Emet*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *besit*.

23. Of that Glory... The verse in Jeremiah, describing the Sinai Desert, is applied here to the glorious beard of the Holy Ancient One, which transcends other divine powers.

אָדָם (*Adam*), *human*, and אִישׁ (*ish*), *man*, represent two stages of divinity. *Adam*, *human*, alludes to the configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod* known as the Short-Tempered One. This realm is characterized by a tension between opposites: right and left, loving-kindness and judgment. Relative to the highest realm (the Holy Ancient One), this one is described as זַעִיר אַנְפִּין (*Ze’eir Anpin*), “short-tempered, impatient.” See above, [note 7](#). The configuration of *Adam* lies “outside” of the Holy Ancient One’s glory.

The second term—*ish*, *man*—represents specifically the divine aspect of Judgment (and retribution), as in Exodus 15:3: *YHVH is אִישׁ (ish), a man of war*. This aspect is certainly excluded from the realm of the Holy Ancient One, which is characterized by pure grace and loving-kindness.

On the contrast between the Holy Ancient One and *Adam*, see *Zohar* 3:136b (*IR*). On *Adam* being “outside,” see

Zohar 3:128b (IR). On *adam* and *ish*, see *Zohar* 3:48a-49a; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 110-19.

24. Into thirteen flows... The Holy Ancient One emanates thirteen flowing streams, corresponding to the thirteen enhancements (or locks) of His glorious beard and the thirteen qualities of Compassion. Of these thirteen streams, four remain adjoined and concealed within the pure realm of the Holy Ancient One, while nine water the body of the lower configuration, the Short-Tempered One, and adorn His beard with nine enhancements.

On the cluster of thirteens, see above, [note 10](#). According to rabbinic sources, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. See JT *Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 62:2; BT *Ta'anit* 25a; above, [p. 527](#), [n. 961](#). On thirteen springs issuing from *Keter*, see *Zohar* 3:131a (IR); Gikatilla, *Sod Shelosh Esreh Middot*, 219-25; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 99-103; Klein, "The Paradox of *Sifra di-Tsni'uta*."

"Adjoined" renders אסתמכו (*istemikhu*, or *istamekhu*), "supported, ordained," or perhaps here, based on the passive participle סמיק (*semikh*), "placed next to (one another), adjoined." The Toronto and Florence manuscripts and *OY* read אסתמרו (*istemiru*), "guarded," which would refer to the concealment of the four enhancements.

25. Before opening of the ears... The locks of the beard emerge and descend the face, skirting the mouth.

The description of the beard that begins here contains thirteen clauses, corresponding to the thirteen enhancements of the beard. These are identified in *Idra Rabba* (*Zohar* 3:131a-134b). See *OY* and the later printed editions.

26. A path emerging... A path without hair begins below the nostrils. Hair often signifies the power of harsh Judgment, so the lack of hair indicates the forgiveness expressed by the Holy Ancient One, whose nostrils do not flare in anger.

From below the lips, the hair of the beard circles to the top of the upper lip. A second path begins below the middle of the lower lip. Rising on both sides of the face, it traces the border of the hair covering the cheeks, which are referred to here as “an offering of spice,” based on the description of the beloved in Song of Songs 5:13: *his cheeks like a bed of spices* [or: *balsam*]. “The head above” refers to the top of the upper lip. The “two apples” of the cheeks are the round fleshy parts that appear especially in a smile, illumining the fragrant cheeks.

See *Zohar* 3:131a, 133a-b (both *IR*). On the “two holes of פֶּרְדָּשָׁקָא (*pardashqa*), an armoire,” see above, [note 8](#). On forgiveness and the nose, see *Zohar* 3:130b (*IR*). On hair and Judgment, see *Zohar* 1:217a, 241b; 3:48b-49a, 125b-126a, 127b, 131b-132a (*IR*), 140a (*IR*), 295b (*IZ*); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 119-26.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *A person's intelligence restrains his anger, and his splendor* [or: *glory, beauty*] *is forgiving transgression* [or: *offense*]. On the description of the cheeks in Song of Songs, see *Zohar* 3:139a, 141a (both *IR*).

[27. Flowing fortune of all...](#) The glorious beard flows down to the chest and hangs evenly, its hairs not protruding.

See *Zohar* 3:131a, 134a (both *IR*). “Flowing fortune” renders מַזְלָא (*mazzala*), whose range of meaning includes “constellation, planet, planetary influence, zodiacal sign, destiny, fortune, guardian angel.” In the *Zohar*, *mazzala* is associated with the root נוֹזַל (*nzl*), “to flow,” and often refers to the flow of emanation from *Binah*. However, in *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (and the *Idrot*) *mazzala* describes the higher source of emanation in the flowing beard of the Holy Ancient One, OR *Keter*.

See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a, in the name of Rava: “Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but on *mazzala*, destiny.” See *Targum*, Ecclesiastes 9:2; Ibn Ezra on

Job 28:1; *Zohar* 1:43b (*Heikh*), 115a, 137a, 156b, 159b, 160b, 180b-181a, 198a, 207b; 2:6a, 47b, 178b (*SdTs*), 252b (*Heikh*); 3:25b, 77b, 134a (*IR*), 289a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*), 295b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 193 (and Wolfson's note); idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 65 (82); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 12a, 37a-b, 74a, 95a.

28. Lips are free... Of hair. See *Zohar* 3:131a, 134a-b (both *IR*); above, [note 26](#).

The exclamation "Happy is one who is kissed...!" apparently refers to an ecstatic experience. On the divine kiss, see above, [p. 168, n. 81](#); [p. 381, n. 546](#).

29. In that fortune of all... Through the beard of the Holy Ancient One calmly wind thirteen streams of emanation, corresponding to the thirteen qualities of Compassion and the whole cluster of thirteens. According to rabbinic sources, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming.

See above, [note 24](#); *Zohar* 3:131a-b (*IR*), 289a-b (*IZ*). "Fortune" and "constellation" both render מזל (mazzala), which includes these and other meanings, as mentioned in [note 27](#).

30. When the seventh arrives... When the seventh month, Tishrei, arrives, the thirteen streams (or enhancements or qualities) appear in *Binah*, and gates of Compassion open to welcome those who turn to God at this opportune time. (The chant of the thirteen qualities of Compassion figures prominently in the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.)

On the connection between the thirteen attributes and repentance, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17b. According to *Rosh ha-Shanah* 18a, the phrase *when He may be found* refers specifically to the Ten Days of Repentance (from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Seek YHVH when He may be found, call to Him when He is near.*

The last sentence of this paragraph and the beginning of the next can also be construed a bit differently: “Of that time is written *Seek YHVH when He may be found. God said...*”

31. Let the earth sprout... The sprouting of the earth symbolizes the fruitful emanation issuing from *Binah*. She is identified with Yom Kippur, which is the subject of the verse in Leviticus.

For various interpretations, see *OY; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Sullam; MmD*. The verse in Genesis reads slightly differently: *God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, fruit trees bearing fruit of each kind, that has its seed within it upon the earth.” And it was so.*

The verse in Leviticus, describing Yom Kippur, reads: *A special Sabbath it is for you, and you shall humble yourselves: on the ninth of the month in the evening, from evening to evening, you shall keep your Sabbath.* The phrase תענו את נפשותיכם (*te'annu et nafshoteikhem*), which literally means *you shall deprive your throats*, has been rendered *you shall afflict* [or: *weaken, deprive, humble*] *yourselves*.

32. יהוה אלהים ” (YY Elohim)... The double name יהוה אלהים (*YHVH Elohim*)—or אלהים ” (YY Elohim)—signifies divine fullness and is known as the “complete name.” It can signify *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, but here (as in *Zohar 3:141b [IR]*) it apparently alludes to the Holy Ancient One and the Short-Tempered One. The name *YHVH* itself often symbolizes *Tif'eret* or the entire range of *sefirot*. Here, at this stage of emanation, the divine qualities have not been fully manifested, as indicated by the lack of the word יהי (*yehi*), *Let there be*. The first י (*yod*) of *yehi* symbolizes the Holy Ancient One, the ה (*he*) signifies *Binah*, and the second *yod* signifies the Short-Tempered One, who has not yet emerged.

For various interpretations, see *OY; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Sullam; MmD*. On *YHVH Elohim* as the “complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah 13:3*; cf. *12:15*. The verse in Deuteronomy reads: אדני יהוה (*Adonai YHVH*), *My Lord YHVH, You Yourself have*

begun... On the significance of *yehi*, cf. *Zohar* 1:16b, 232b; above, [note 16](#).

33. upper yod, lower yod... The two *yods* in the word ויִצַר (*va-yiytser*), and *He formed*, correspond to the two *yods* of יְהִי (*yehi*), *Let there be*. The perfection is not yet manifested fully and so remains incomplete. Once the name *yehi* is transplanted from the womb of *Binah* to a realm of manifestation, the full configuration of the Short-Tempered One emerges, including the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*.

This configuration, which forms the core of the sefirotic organism, is called *Adam*, and the description of Adam's creation in Genesis is here applied to the emanation of this sefirotic Adam. The context in Genesis reads: *And YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the soil, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being. YHVH Elohim planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and He placed there the human He had fashioned.*

On the primordial act of transplanting, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:1: "*YHVH Elohim planted a garden in Eden...* As is written: *The trees of YHVH are sated, cedars of Lebanon that He planted* (Psalms 104:16). Rabbi Hanina said, 'They resembled antennae of grasshoppers, and the blessed Holy One uprooted them, transplanting them in the Garden of Eden.'"

In Kabbalah, this image is applied to the emergence of the lower *sefirot* from the realm of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, where they began as saplings. See Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush Shir ha-Shirim*, 504; *Zohar* 1:31a, 35a-b, 37a, 45b, 162b; 2:127b; 3:4b, 217b; *Massekhet Atsilut*, 2.

On the two *yods* of ויִצַר (*va-yiytser*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:4; BT *Berakhot* 61a; *Zohar* 3:46b, 141b (*IR*); cf. 3:289a (*IZ*). On the sefirotic significance of *Adam*, see above, [note 23](#).

34. ה (He) between yod and yod... *Binah*, symbolized by the letter ה (*he*), mediates between the Holy Ancient One

and the Short-Tempered One, each of whom is symbolized by a ך (yod). The aspirated *he* also signifies the breath of the Ancient One animating the Short-Tempered One, who is fulfilled by *Binah* above and *Shekhinah* below, each symbolized by a *he*. The biblical exclamation אהה (Ahah), Ah, contains both of these *hes*.

On the upper and lower *hes*, see *Bahir* 20 (29); *Zohar* 1:17b, 62a; 2:179a (*SdTs*); 3:74b, 9b; *ZH* 82c (*MhN, Rut*). The verse in Jeremiah reads: אהה אדני יהוה (Ahah Adonai YHVH), Ah, Lord YHVH. The last Hebrew word in this phrase is traditionally assigned the vowels of the name אלהים (Elohim), “God,” and pronounced as such. The *Zohar* quotes the verse as אהה ך אלהים (Ahah YV Elohim), replacing *Adonai* with ך (YV)—an abbreviation of יהוה (YHVH)—and replacing YHVH with *Elohim*.

35. In a cluster of clusters... The three letters ך ה ן (yod, he, vav) signify three primordial potencies. The *yod* symbolizes the membrane surrounding the brain of the Holy Ancient One. The aspirated *he* represents the breath of the divine nostrils (“holes of an armoire”), animating the Short-Tempered One. The *vav* symbolizes בוצינא דקרדינותא (*botsina de-qardinuta*), “Lamp of Adamantine Darkness,” radiating from *Ein Sof* and delineating the stages of emanation. This lamp is also known as קו המדה (*Qav ha-Middah*), “the Line of Measure,” gauging the flow of emanation.

Instead of בוצינא (*botsina*), “lamp,” two early manuscripts (C9 and V7) read בוציצא (*botsitsa*), a Zoharic neologism influenced by the spelling and meaning of Hebrew ניצוץ (*nitsots*), “spark.” (In *Zohar* manuscripts the two spellings appear interchangeably.)

The word *qardinuta* recalls a phrase in BT *Pesahim* 7a: קורדניתא חיטי (*ḥittei qurdanaita*), “wheat from Kurdistan,” which, according to Rashi, is very hard. In the *Zohar* the hardness of the lamp (or spark) may allude to its phallic quality. In *Zohar* 1:15a, several witnesses record the variants קרדינותא (*qadrinuta*) or קדרוניתא (*qadrunita*), “darkness.” See *ZH* 2a, where

קַרְדְּנוּתָא דְסִיְהָרָא (*qardenuta de-sihara*) means “eclipse of the moon,” corresponding to Hebrew קַדְרוּת הַיָּרֵחַ (*qadrut ha-yareah*), “darkening of the moon.”

The Lamp of Adamantine Darkness is so potently brilliant that it overwhelms comprehension. Many mystics record similar paradoxical images: “a ray of divine darkness” (Dionysius, *Mystical Theology* 1:1); “the luminous darkness” (Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* 2:163); “the black light” (Iranian Sufism; see Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, 99–120). Prior to the *Zohar*, Azriel of Gerona and the author of *Ma’yan ha-Hokhmah* mention “the light darkened from shining.” See Verman, *The Books of Contemplation*, 59–60, 158–59; Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 336. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:59: “We are dazzled by His beauty, and He is hidden from us because of the intensity with which He becomes manifest, just as the sun is hidden to eyes too weak to apprehend it.”

On *botsina de-qardinuta*, see Vol. 1, pp. 107–8, n. 4 (which includes other possible renderings); *ZH* 57d–58a (*QhM*); *Zohar* 1:15a, 18b, 86b; 2:133b, 233a, 254b, 260a; 3:48b–49a, 135b (*IR*), 139a (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*), 295a–b (*IZ*). On the phallic quality of the hard lamp, see Wolfson, “Woman—the Feminine as Other in Theosophic Kabbalah,” 178–82; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 60–62, and index, s.v. “hardened spark”; Liebes, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 73–80.

“Vaporous wreath” renders קוּטְרָא (*qutra*), which can mean either “smoke” or “knot.” On the membrane and the armoire, see above, [notes 6, 8](#).

36. Letters spread... The letters י ה וּ (*yod, he, vav*) spread to the configuration of the Short-Tempered One, whose limbs constitute the divine torso extending to *Yesod*. The clean fleece represents the hair of the Holy Ancient One. As the fleece of His beard hangs, so do these letters; as the fleece reaches the Short-Tempered One, so do they, and He is called by holy names composed of them.

On hair as clean fleece, see Daniel 7:9; above, [note 6](#).

37. ׳ (Yod) of the Ancient One... The letter *yod*, symbolizing the Holy Ancient One, remains concealed, only hinting at the Name יהוה (YHVH), which has not yet issued.

The name of the aspirated ה (he) sounds like it begins and ends with *he* itself; thus it “is opened by another [*he*].” The two holes are the two divine nostrils conveying the breath. However, נוקבי (nuqbei), rendered here “holes,” also means “females,” alluding to *Binah* and *Shekhinah*, both symbolized by *he*.

The name of the letter ו (vav) is spelled ם (vav), so it too “is opened by another [*vav*].” The stream of emanation flows from one *vav* to another: from the primordial *vav*, symbolizing the Lamp of Darkness, to the *vav* of *my lover* (the Short-Tempered One), namely the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod* (the numerical value of *vav* being six.) The Lamp of Adamantine Darkness regulates the flow, covering and uncovering the opening above.

On the nostril holes, see above, [note 8](#). On the letter *vav* symbolizing the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness, see above, [note 35](#). On covering and uncovering the opening, cf. above, [note 21](#).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Your palate like fine wine—flowing to my lover smoothly, gliding over [or: trickling over, stirring] lips of sleepers.*

38. ן (Vav) above, ן (vav) below... As explained in the preceding note, the spelling ם (vav) contains two *vavs*, symbolizing two stages of emanation, and similarly with ה (heh). The name י (yod) is different, since its full name includes only one *yod*. Actually, though, this spelling alludes to a second *yod*, since the numerical value of the letters ו (vav) and ך (dalet)—which complete the spelling of י (yod)—equals ten, the value of the letter ׳ (yod).

Furthermore, the letters *vav* and *dalet* symbolize respectively the male and female, so the full spelling י (yod) foreshadows the union of the divine couple: the Short-

Tempered One and *Shekhinah*. All is present potentially in the Holy Ancient One, symbolized by the single *yod*. If *yod* departs from *vav* and *dalet*, this separation enables forces of Judgment to appear; they flash and hiss threateningly.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *MmD*. “When two are revealed in Torah” may refer to the spelling of ויצר (*va-yiytser*), and *He formed*. See above, [note 33](#). “To be elucidated” renders לאתפרשא (*le-itparsha*), which can also be translated “to be separated.”

“Phantoms” renders פוסמין (*pusmin*), perhaps based on Greek *phasma*, “phantom, apparition.” See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:2; Buber’s note in his edition, p. 101b; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *pizma*. “Ember” renders טפסא (*tifsa*), which in the *Zohar* can mean “glowing ember.” See *Zohar* 1:218a, 242a; 3:111a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 178–80; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *tifsa*; below, [note 64](#).

On the verse in Ezekiel, cf. above, [note 17](#); and *Zohar* 3:288b (*IZ*), which quotes both this verse and the verse in Numbers. The verse in Numbers is spoken by King Balak to Balaam. The verse in Obadiah, delivered against Edom, reads: *If you nest [or: raise your nest, lodge, soar] as high as the eagle, if you make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down—declares YHVH*. Cf. Jeremiah 49:16. Here all three verses apparently apply to the powers of harsh Judgment.

[39](#). The earth sprouted... The emanation issues fruitfully only when letters of the Divine Name are transplanted from the womb of *Binah* to a realm of manifestation; thereby emerges the configuration of the Short-Tempered One. The primordial air begins to issue and the spark of emanation appears.

On the sprouting of the earth, see above, [note 31](#). On the planting of the Name, see above, [note 33](#). On the primordial air and the spark, see *Zohar* 1:15a (Vol. 1, pp. 108–9, n. 11), 16b; 3:135b (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *The earth sprouted vegetation, plants yielding seed of each kind, and trees bearing fruit that has its seed within it of each kind. And God that saw that it was good.*

40. One skull expanding... Here begins a list of enhancements of the head of the Short-Tempered One. Whereas the head of the Holy Ancient One was filled with a crystalline dew, the dew filling the head of the Short-Tempered One is “of two colors,” reflecting the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. The three cavities of His brain (corresponding to *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, and *Da’at*) are infused with holy letters.

On the enhancements of the Short-Tempered One, see *Zohar* 3:135b-138b (*IR*), 292b-295b (*IZ*). Later printed editions divide this list of enhancements (or features) into seven clauses.

On the head being filled with dew, see Song of Songs 5:2: *For my head is drenched [literally filled] with dew.* See above, [note 6](#); [pp. 260-61](#), [n. 200](#).

Galen recognized four ventricles (or cavities) of the brain, but some medieval scholars distinguished only three. See Gershon ben Solomon, *Sha’ar ha-Shamayim* 9, 26-c; *Zohar* 3:136a, 140a, 142b (all *IR*), 262a, 292b-293a (*IZ*); Siegel, *Galen’s System of Physiology and Medicine*, 118-23; Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine*, 63; Gross, *Brain, Vision, Memory*, 28-35.

41. Black as a raven... His black hair hangs over the ears and their winding canals. When human sin abounds, this hair blocks the sound of prayer from entering either ear. The slender path is the part in the hair.

Song of Songs 5:11 reads: *His head finest gold, his locks wavy, black as a raven.*

42. A forehead that does not shine... Unless the Will of the Holy Ancient One shines upon the forehead of the Short-Tempered One, the latter remains unilluminated and conveys Judgment, reflecting (or causing) discord below.

See *Zohar* 2:122b; 3:129a (IR), 136b (IR), 288b (IZ), 293a (IZ).

43. Eyes of three colors... Conveying Judgment and frightening humanity. However, the pupils of the eye are bathed in the pure white of the sclera, symbolizing the compassionate flow from the Holy Ancient One conveyed by the milk of the Divine Mother.

The two verses from Isaiah both describe Jerusalem, which symbolizes *Shekhinah*. According to one verse, Jerusalem is *a tranquil abode*, while the other insists that she contains *justice*, which can be harsh and untranquil. However, here the phrase *a tranquil abode* is applied not to Jerusalem but to the Holy Ancient One, who is being addressed: *Your eyes will see Jerusalem, O tranquil abode*. Furthermore, the word עֵינַיך (*einekha*), *your eyes*, is read as if it were spelled without the second ם (*yod*): עֵינַך (*einekha*), *your eye*, alluding to the single all-seeing eye of the Holy Ancient One, who gazes upon *Shekhinah* and sweetens Her harshness.

According to *Zohar* 3:137a (IR), the three colors of the eyes are red, black, and green. See also *Derekh Erets Zuta* 9:13 (*Derekh Erets*, ed. Higger, 7:38); Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 60–61, 95; *Zohar* 1:97a–b (ST), 226a; 2:23b, 72b, 122b, 222b; 3:129b–130a, 136b–137b (both IR), 169a, 293b–294a (IZ).

The image of eyes bathed in milk is borrowed from Song of Songs 5:12: *His eyes are like doves by streams of water, bathing in milk, set by a brimming pool*. See *Zohar* 2:122b; 3:136b (IR), 289a (IZ).

The verse in Isaiah 1, moaning the lost glory of Jerusalem, reads: צִדְקָה (*Tsedeq*), *Righteousness* [or: *justice*], *lodged in her*. On *tsedeq* as *Din* (Judgment), see *Bahir* 50 (74); *Zohar* 3:85b, 198b.

In the other verse from Isaiah, the Masoretic spelling of עֵינַיך (*einekha*), *Your eyes*, includes both *yods*. The statement here that “it is spelled עֵינַך (*einekha*), *your eye*,” namely without the second *yod*, is playfully creative. Cf. above, [note](#)

[15](#) (on the spelling of תניינים [*tanninim*], *sea serpents*); and pp. 291–92, n. 284 (on the spelling of כלות משה [*kallot Mosheh*], *Moses consummated*); Vol. 2, p. 34, n. 256; p. 37, n. 289. On the single eye of the Holy Ancient One, see *Zohar* 3:129b–130a, 137b (both *IR*); cf. above at [note 7](#). On the juxtaposition of the two verses in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 3:137a–b (*IR*), 293b–294a (*IZ*).

44. The nose... The nose is the most distinctive feature of the face. In reaction to human sin, the nostrils of the Short-Tempered One flare.

On the significance of the nose, see M *Yevamot* 16:3: “Evidence [of the identity of a corpse] may not be given except from [proof provided by] the face together with the nose.” See Nahmanides on Leviticus 21:18; *Zohar* 2:122b; 3:130a–b (*IR*), 137b (*IR*), 294a (*IZ*). On three wrathful aspects (“flames”) of the nose, see *Zohar* 3:137b (*IR*).

45. A cavernous rung... The twisting canal of each ear, through which the Short-Tempered One hears human prayer and determines whether the person is worthy of favor. See above, [note 41](#).

46. I am YHVH, הוא (hu), that, is My name... The first-person pronoun אני (*ani*), *I*, alludes to a revealed rung, on which God says “I am” and through which He interacts with the world. Conversely, the third-person pronoun הוא (*hu*), *He* (or *that*), alludes to the concealed rung of *Keter*, or the Holy Ancient One, who cannot be identified directly. In grammatical terminology the third-person construction is known as נסתר (*nistar*), “concealed.”

In the Masoretic text, the verse in Psalms is written *He made us*, ולא אנחנו (*ve-lo anahnu*), *and not we ourselves*. According to a Masoretic note, however, the verse should be read *He made us* ולו אנחנו (*ve-lo anahnu*), *and we are His*. Here, the *Zohar* apparently adopts a different reading, suggested in *Bahir* 96 (141): ולא־אלף אנחנו (*ve-la-alef anahnu*), *and we belong to the alef*, namely to oneness. See Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir*, 105, n. 3; *Zohar* 1:120b; 3:183b.

On the pronoun *ani*, see above, [p. 25](#), [n. 69](#). On *hu* as designating *Keter*, see *Zohar* 1:49a; 3:129b (*IR*), 290a (*IZ*). Cf. above, [p. 137](#), [n. 385](#).

The verse in Job reads literally *He is in one*, meaning “He is one, unchangeable.” Cf. *Zohar* 1:241a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 98.

47. א ה (He, alef)... These cryptic lines begin by discussing the significance of the component letters of the pronoun אהו (*hu*): ה (*he*), ו (*vav*), א (*alef*). The middle diagonal stroke of the letter א (*alef*) resembles a ו (*vav*), so *alef* includes *vav*. The shape of the letter *vav* does not include *alef*, but one of the full spellings of the letter *vav* is וא (*vav*), which does include *alef*.

The letters *he* and *vav* can symbolize *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*, respectively, since *he* is a feminine marker and the numerical value of *vav* is six, alluding to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, whose core is *Tif'eret*. Ideally, these two *sefirot* join together and ascend to *alef*, the realm of oneness, which extends upward from *Binah*. *Binah* ascends to the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, symbolized by the letter ם (*yod*). The *yod* of *Hokhmah* ascends to the concealed *yod*, namely *Keter*, or the Holy Ancient One. The full spelling of the letter *yod* is םו (*yod*); the second and third letters of this name—ו (*vav*) and ם (*dalet*)—symbolize *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, respectively. Whereas the *yod* of *Hokhmah* includes these two sefirotic elements, the concealed *yod* of *Keter* is so subtle that it is “not joined by ם ו (*vav*, *dalet*).” It is vital, however, for *yod* to illumine these two elements, as indicated below.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On the shape of the *alef*, see *Zohar* 1:21a, 24a (*TZ*); 3:73a, 193b, 223b (*RM*); *ZH* 5c (*SO*); *TZ* 21, 47b Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 87–89 (111–12). On *dalet* symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 67](#), [n. 197](#).

48. When ם (yod) withdraws... Human sin can ruin the union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah* by causing the *yod* of *Hokhmah* to withdraw from the Divine Mother—who is symbolized by ה

(he) and includes within Herself the pair *vav* and *dalet*. The separation of *Hokhmah* from *Binah* exposes the nakedness of both of them.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Your father's nakedness and your mother's nakedness you shall not expose; she is your mother—you shall not expose her nakedness.* On the idiom of exposing nakedness, see above, [note 19](#).

The verse in Proverbs reads: *כי אם לבינה תקרא (ki im la-binah tiqra), if you indeed call to understanding, and give forth your voice [or: cry aloud, shout] to discernment.* A midrashic interpretation playfully changes the vowel beneath the א (alef) of אם (im), if, turning the word into אמ (em), mother, and transforming the sense of the first half of the verse: *כי אם לבינה תקרא (ki em la-binah tiqra), for you will call binah, understanding, "mother."* By adopting this midrashic reading, the *Zohar* demonstrates that *Binah* is the Divine Mother. See above, [p. 47](#), [n. 131](#).

49. Nine precious ones... Nine of the thirteen enhancements of the beard of the Holy Ancient One were conveyed to the beard of the Short-Tempered One. The divine beard is so precious that it is not explicitly mentioned in any of the biblical depictions of God. See above, [note 22](#).

The description of the beard that begins here contains nine clauses, corresponding to the nine enhancements of the beard of the Short-Tempered One. These are identified in *Idra Rabba* (*Zohar* 3:139a). See *OY* and the later printed editions. On the nine enhancements, see *Zohar* 3:139a-141a (*IR*), 295a-b (*IZ*). For the description of the thirteen enhancements of the beard of the Holy Ancient One, see above at [notes 22-30](#).

50. Strands upon strands... The locks of the beard emerge by the ears and descend the face, forming a moustache above the upper lips (or heads of the mouth). Beneath the two nostrils runs a path filled with tiny hair—

unlike the description of the Holy Ancient One, in which this path is hairless. The cheeks are covered with hair, the apples of the cheeks peeking through. See above, [note 26](#).

51. By one thread... The black body of the beard hangs down to the chest. The lips are free of hair. Short hairs cover the neck.

52. By these... By these nine enhancements, the Short-Tempered One becomes powerful. All nine are intimated in Psalms 118:5-9 by nine references to God and human beings, as explained in *Zohar* 3:139b (*IR*). The psalmist King David invoked the nine enhancements so that their potency would protect him from his enemies.

Psalms 118:10 reads in full: *All the nations surrounded me; with the name of YHVH I surely cut them down.*

53. The earth sprouted vegetation... This verse alludes to the emergence of the nine enhancements from the Holy Ancient One to the Short-Tempered One. These nine were uprooted from the higher realm (which is alluded to by the complete name *YHVH Elohim*) and transplanted in the Short-Tempered One, who by joining with *Shekhinah* attained the complete name as well.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*. For different attempts at identifying nine units in the verse from Genesis, see *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*. On the divine act of transplanting, see above, [note 33](#). On *YHVH Elohim* as the complete name, see above, [note 32](#).

The full verse in Genesis 2 reads: *YHVH Elohim planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and He placed there the human He had fashioned.*

54. Enhancements of the beard... The beard of the Holy Ancient One has thirteen enhancements, while the beard of the Short-Tempered One has nine. Their total symbolizes the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, conveying divine speech.

If a person dreams of holding the beard of a noble man, this signifies that the powers of the divine beard will defeat his enemies. The dream is an even better omen if the beard one is holding is that of the Holy Ancient One, whose *kindness* surpasses that of the Short-Tempered One. In time of need, the lower beard is illumined by the higher, and both become *abounding in kindness*.

On the total of thirteen and nine enhancements, see *Zohar* 3:139a, 146b (both *IR*). On *kindness* and *abounding in kindness*, see *Zohar* 3:140b (*IR*). On the verse in Exodus 34, see above, [note 10](#).

55. *Let the waters swarm...* This verse alludes to the emanation spreading from *Hokhmah* to *Binah*, both designated by the name יָהּ (Yah), which is apparently linked here with יָיָהּ (*hayyah*), *living (creature)* or “being.” The initial divine flow includes all stages of being and both good and evil.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*. On different levels of *hayyah*, see above, [p. 181](#), [n. 118](#). The full verse in Genesis reads: *God said, “Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living creatures, and let birds fly over the earth across the dome of the sky.”*

The material labeled *Davar Aher* (Another Interpretation), printed in the standard editions in separate columns (2:177b-178b), is a later expansion, which is not found in most manuscripts or in the Cremona edition.

56. *Let us make a human...* If the verse read אָדָם (ha-adam), *the human*, this would imply the Short-Tempered One, who is configured in sefirotic limbs. The wording אָדָם (adam), *a human*, without the definite article, implies the earthly Adam.

The higher *human*, the Short-Tempered One, “was made with a complete name,” that is, *YHVH Elohim*. See Genesis 2:7: *YHVH Elohim formed ha-adam, the human*. Eventually, the Short-Tempered One actualized both male and female potentialities by uniting with *Shekhinah*, a union

symbolized as well by the complete name. This divine consummation was reflected below by the union of Adam and Eve. Or, alternatively, the divine consummation was stimulated by the union of the human couple.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*. On the sefirotic significance of *adam*, see above, [notes 23, 33](#). On *YHVH Elohim* as the complete name, see above, [notes 32, 53](#). The verse in Genesis reads: *God said, "Let us make a human in our image, according to our likeness."* On the verse in Genesis 2, see above, [note 33](#).

57. The male extended... The configuration of the Short-Tempered One took shape, culminating in the phallus (symbolizing *Yesod*) and the mouth of the phallus (linked with or symbolizing *Shekhinah*). Their union restores the primordial worlds that had not endured on account of an imbalance of male and female. These worlds are pictured as the Edomite kings listed in Genesis 36. Of the eight kings named there, none is the descendant of his predecessor and only of the final one is a wife mentioned. Now that balance has been attained and harsh Judgment mitigated, the forces of Judgment can join in conducting the world.

On the extension of the male, see *Zohar* 3:142a-143a (*IR*), 296a-b (*IZ*). *Shekhinah* is known as עטרה (*atarah*), "crown, corona," which also designates the corona of the penis (including the mouth). On the implications of the name *atarah*, see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 342; Abrams, *Ha-Guf ha-Elohi*, index, s.v. *atarah*. On the significance of the corona, see above, [pp. 177-78, n. 106](#). On the primordial kings, see above, [note 4](#). On the contrast between male and female judgments, see *Zohar* 3:142b (*IR*); cf. 2:187a.

58. ך ׳ ם (Vav, yod, he)... The letter *vav* symbolizes *Tif'eret*, core of the Short-Tempered One, while *yod* symbolizes *Yesod*, who links *Tif'eret* with *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *he*).

The “chidings of smoke” convey harsh Judgment, which is sunk in the bosom of the Short-Tempered One, or perhaps of *Shekhinah*. The small *yod* (symbolizing *Yesod*) appears as the lower left leg of the letter ה (he); since this letter signifies *Shekhinah*, the *yod* appears “within Her.”

The Holy Ancient One sought to know whether the harshness of Judgment had been assuaged by the union of the divine couple. But before harshness could be sweetened (or as part of the process of isolating evil from good), the serpent seduced Eve and from their union issued Cain—whose name קין (*Qayin*) implies that he was a קינא (*qinna*), nest, of evil powers. The seduction of Eve symbolizes the demonic intrusion into *Shekhinah*.

According to a rabbinic tradition, Cain was engendered by the sexual union of the serpent and Eve. See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21: “The serpent-rider [Samael] copulated with her and she conceived Cain. Afterward Adam copulated with her and she conceived Abel.” Cf. BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a: “Rav Yosef taught: ‘...When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זוהמא (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust].’” See above, [p. 472](#), [n. 803](#). On קין (*Qayin*) and קינא (*qinna*), “nest,” see *Zohar* 1:54a.

On the whole paragraph, see *Zohar* 3:142a-143a (*IR*). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Derekh Emet*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*.

“Chidings” renders קונטורין (*quntorin*), apparently based on קינטורין (*qinturin*), “rebukes, reproaches.” Cf. *Zohar* 2:38a (Vol. 4, p. 178 at n. 140). Conceivably, *quntorin* could be rendered “hundredweights,” based on Latin *centenarium* and Greek *kentenaarion*, a unit of weight (one hundred Roman pounds). See *Bereshit Rabbah* 58:7; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 10:1; cf. above, [p. 519](#), [n. 937](#). For other interpretations, see *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*.

“Whirlwinds” renders קטפורין (*qatporin*), a Zoharic neologism. See *Zohar* 1:53b; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 351.

59. He invested this אָדָם (*adam*) with crowns... The Holy Ancient One generated crowns for the Short-Tempered One, who is identified as *adam*. These crowns include the right and left arms (*Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*) and legs (*Netsah* and *Hod*), which branch out in particular ways. *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the hand) conveys either *Ḥesed* or *Gevurah* to the worlds below.

The letters י ה ם (*yod, he, vav*) symbolize respectively *Hokhmah* (male), *Binah* (female), and *Tif'eret*, who includes *Shekhinah*. The verse in Genesis implies that the name *adam* encompasses both male and female, alluding here to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. The verse in Ezekiel describes the humanlike figure seen by the prophet.

The reference to “general” and “particular” derives from a rabbinic hermeneutical rule concerning “a generalization that requires a specification” and “a specification that requires a generalization.” For the rule, see *Sifra*, intro, 9, 2b-c. See the interpretation of this passage in *Zohar* 3:143a (*IR*). Cf. *Zohar* 1:16b, 47b, 246b; 2:3a, 161b, 176a-b; 3:264a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 335-36; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 107-8.

On the sefirotic significance of *adam*, see above, [notes 23, 33](#). On *adam* as male and female (based on the verse in Genesis), see above, [pp. 319-20, n. 362](#). On the letters *yod, he, vav*, see above, [note 16](#).

60. The Ancient One is hidden... The Holy Ancient One is concealed, whereas the Short-Tempered One is partially revealed, though His essence remains hidden. The revealed aspect corresponds to the name יהוה (*YHVH*), which is written in the Torah, although it is pronounced as אָדָנִי (*Adonai*). The clause “concealed, sealed by letters...” apparently refers to the Holy Ancient One, in whom originate the elemental letters י ה ם (*yod, he, vav*). These letters are “unsettled in their places” until they become fully manifested in the name *YHVH* in the Short-Tempered One. Just as the letters are unsettled, so all those above and

below are overwhelmed by the Holy Ancient One, whose being they cannot comprehend or determine.

Alternatively, the letters sealing the Holy Ancient One are those constituting the name אֶהְיֶה (*Ehyeh*), “I will be,” a name deriving from the revelation to Moses at the burning bush: אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*), *I will be who I will be* [or: *I am who I am*] (Exodus 3:14). The letters of *Ehyeh* are “unsettled in their places,” perhaps, because they refer to future revelation on a lower rung, unlike the name *YHVH*, in which God reveals Himself.

See *Zohar* 3:146b, 299a (*IZ*). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*.

61. Let the earth bring forth... The emanation continues and נִפְשׁ חַיִּים (*nefesh hayyah*), *living beings*, emerge below *Shekhinah*. These lower entities—collectively known as *beast*—originate (and are thus included) in the sefirotic category of *adam*. The wording of the verse in Leviticus—*from among you ... from beasts*—implies that *beasts* are included in *you*, namely in *adam*. This intimate link explains why animals are sacrificed to atone for human sin or to seek divine favor.

On the all-inclusive nature of *adam*, see *Zohar* 1:18b-19a, 44a (*Heikh*); 2:73a (*RR*), 74a, 80b; 3:48a-b. On the sefirotic significance of *adam*, see above, [notes 23](#), [33](#). On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:64b; 2:238b-239a; 3:26b, 48a, 91a, 147a.

The verse in Leviticus reads: *When a person from among you brings an offering to YHVH, מִן הַבְּהֵמָה (min ha-behemah), of [or: from] animals [or: beasts], from herd and from flock you shall bring your offering.* The verse can also be construed: *When a person from among you brings an offering min ha-behemah, of animals [or: beasts], to YHVH, from herd and from flock you shall bring your offering.* See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:145-46.

62. When Adam below descended... The first human contained both the holy *neshamah* (deriving from the right side) and *nefesh ḥayyah* (from the left). Whereas in Genesis 1:24 נִפְשׁ חַיָּה (*nefesh ḥayyah*) means *living beings*, here it is understood to mean “vital soul” or “animal soul,” referring to the force that sustains physical life but is also linked with beastly demonic forces.

See *Zohar* 3:48b; *ZH* 10c (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:708-10; Gottlieb, *Mehqarim*, 541-42; Ta Shma, “Ḥasidut Ashkenaz bi-Sfarad,” 184-85, n. 47.

63. Adam sinned, and the left spread... His sin empowered evil, situated on the left, and bodiless demons issued. When these mate, they generate numerous forces.

On demons being bodiless, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 17, which focuses on the difficult wording at the end of Genesis 2:3: *God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, for on it He ceased from all His work that God had created to make.* “It is not written here *that* [God] *had created and made*, but rather [*that God had created*] *to make*, for the Sabbath came first and their work [i.e., *all His work* of Creation] was not completed. Rabbi Benaya said, ‘This refers to the demons, for He created their souls, and as He was creating their bodies, the Sabbath day was hallowed. He left them, and they remained soul without body.’” Here, “those without a body” may also allude to the fact that these demons are excluded from the holy sefirotic body. See above, [pp. 410-11](#) and [n. 636](#); *Zohar* 3:48b, 142b-143b (*IR*).

The image of demons clinging and engendering new demons reflects the midrashic motif of Adam and Eve’s demonic offspring. See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 26, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “For 130 years Adam separated from his wife, Eve; for once Cain was killed, Adam said, ‘Why should I engender children if they become cursed?’ What did he do?... Female spirits approached him and heated themselves from him. As the blessed Holy One said

to David, ‘... *When he [Solomon] does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men* וּבִגְעֵי בְנֵי אָדָם (*uv-nig’ei venei adam*), *and with the afflictions of (the sons of) humankind [understood as of the children of Adam]*’ (2 Samuel 7:14)..., namely the demons.”

Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:11, in the name of the same Rabbi Simon: “Throughout all 130 years that Adam separated himself from Eve, male spirits heated themselves from her and she gave birth, while female spirits heated themselves from Adam and gave birth, as is written: *When he does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men and with the afflictions of venei adam*—namely children of Adam.” According to the *Zohar*, demonic spirits have sought to seduce humans ever since they left Eden.

See BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Be-reshit* 26; *Zohar* 1:19b, 34b, 47b-48a, 54a-55a, 169b; 2:179a (*SdTs*), 231b, 3:48b, 76b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:529-30; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 51.

“From a single womb” renders בְּקִיסְרָא חֲדָא (*be-qisra ḥada*), playing on the rabbinic phrase בְּכֶרֶס אֶחָד (*be-kheres eḥad*), “in one [issue of the] belly [i.e., in a single delivery].” See *Shemot Rabbah* 1:8, describing the miraculous fertility of the Israelite women in Egypt: “Every single one would give birth to six *be-kheres eḥad*, in one [issue of the] belly. Alternatively, each one would give birth to twelve.... Alternatively... sixty. And do not be surprised, for the scorpion, smallest of the reptiles, gives birth to sixty.” See *Mekilta, Pisha* 12.

Conceivably, *qisra* also alludes to the title Caesar, which according to Pliny the Elder derives from the Latin verb *caesum*, “to cut out,” because the first Caesar was cut from his mother’s belly (in what came to be called a Caesarean section). See Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* 7:47. On *qisra* and some of its variants, see Vol. 2, p. 260, n.15; Vol. 3, p. 196, n. 110; p. 325, n. 130; p. 481, n. 825; Vol. 4, p. 129, n. 220; p. 418, n. 177.

64. Twenty-two concealed letters... The ם (*yod*) of the concealed alphabet symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, while the revealed *yod* apparently symbolizes *Shekhinah*, also known as *Hokhmah tatta'ah*, “Lower Wisdom.” The two letters balance (or are simply weighed) “on scales of matrices,” apparently the cosmic scales that determine all forms.

On two alphabets, cf. above, [p. 227](#), [n. 106](#). On *yod* symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 16](#). “Matrices” renders טפסין (*tafsin* or *tifsin*), apparently based on טופסא (*tufsa*), “mold, form, matrix.”

For various interpretations of *tufsa* (or *tifsa*) here and elsewhere in the *Zohar*, see *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 179–80, s.v. *tufsa deshaqla, tifsa*; *OY*; *Derekh Emet*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *tifsa*; *Sullam*; *MmD*; above, [note 38](#).

65. From ם (*yod*) issue male and female... The primordial point of *Hokhmah* (symbolized by *yod*) generates the male and female couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, symbolized respectively by ם (*vav*) and ך (*dalet*). The full name of the letter ם (*yod*) includes these two letters, indicating that *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* exist potentially within *Hokhmah*.

The letters *dalet* and *vav* also spell the word ם (*du*), “two,” based on Greek *duo*. This word appears in a famous midrash describing the originally androgynous nature of Adam. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:1: “Rabbi Yishma'el son of Naḥman said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him androgynous, and sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.’ Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him ם פרצופין (*du partsufin*), with two faces, and sawed him and gave him two backs, a back for the male and a back for the female.’” See above, [p. 471](#), [n. 800](#); *Zohar* 3:10b.

“Pillar capitals” renders קפלין (*qaflin*), apparently based on קפל (*qefel*), “capital of a column,” from Greek *kephale*,

“head, capital of a column.” See *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *qfl*; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:8; BT *Bava Batra* 75b; *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *kefel migdalin*. In BT *Eruvin* 18a, the phrase דיו עצמודין (*deyo ammodin*), “two pillars,” appears in the same paragraph as Adam’s דיו פרצוף פנים (*deyo partsuf panim*), “two faces.”

66. ’ (Yod) alone is male... *Yod* symbolizes Father *Hokhmah*, while ה (*he*) symbolizes Mother *Binah*. This *he* was originally ד (*dalet*), before being impregnated by *Hokhmah*, after which *Binah* gave birth to *Tif’eret*, symbolized by ו (*vav*). This *vav* constitutes a new graphic element, or leg, transforming ד (*dalet*) into ה (*he*).

The full manifestation of *yod* (namely *Hokhmah*) includes both *he* and *vav* (namely *Binah* and *Tif’eret*). The *vav* actually includes both *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah* (the lower divine couple), and when these two unite, the *vav* “settles,” covering and fulfilling the Divine Mother.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei’ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On *dalet* becoming *he*, see above, [p. 160](#), [n. 60](#). On covering and uncovering the (nakedness of the) Mother, see above, [notes 19](#), [21](#).

67. The sons of God... According to rabbinic legend, this verse refers to the two fallen angels, Uzza and Aza’el, who opposed the creation of Adam and Eve, fell from heaven, and were attracted by *the daughters of humankind*. Here, these two angels are identified with the two spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, apparently based on the image of angels spying on human beings.

The human *daughters* are seen as demonic figures and identified with the two prostitutes who approached King Solomon, each claiming to be the mother of the same infant. Solomon’s wisdom enabled him to overwhelm these demonic forces, who previously could not be vanquished.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei’ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *MmD*. On the fallen angels, see above, [pp. 111–12](#), [n. 315](#); below at [notes 79–80](#); *Zohar* 3:60b, 144a (*IR*). On

the angelic nature of one of the spies, see *Tanḥuma, Shelah* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:1.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *The sons of God saw that the daughters of humankind were beautiful, and they took themselves wives, whomever they chose.* For the full biblical context, see below, [note 90](#). The verse in Joshua reads: *Joshua son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, observe the land and Jericho."* On this verse, see also Zohar 3:62b.

Rabbinic sources identify the two prostitutes as two (evil) spirits who appeared as women. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10 (on 1:1); *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:16; *Midrash Tehillim* 72:2. In his *Sod Yetsi'at Mitsrayim* (Schocken MS), Moses de León identifies Lilith and Na'amah as prostitutes, and similar characterizations appear in the *Zohar*. See *Zohar* 3:60b; above, [pp. 173–74](#), [n. 97](#).

68. In a castle of vaporous springs... The angels Uzza and Aza'el had been embracing in heavenly paradise, but after opposing the creation of Adam and Eve they were cast down to earth and inherited dust.

"In a castle of vaporous springs" is a conjectural rendering of *בְּקִיסְטְרָא דְּקִיטוּרֵי דְּפִיגָאן* (*be-qistera de-qiturei de-phigan*). *Qistera* probably derives from Latin *castrum* (pl. *castra*), "castle, fortress, military camp." *Qiturei* may reflect *קִיטְרָא* (*qitra*), "smoke." Cf. the phrase *קוּסְטְרָא דְּקוּטְרָא* (*qustera de-qutra*) in *Zohar* 1:30a (Vol. 1, p. 178, n. 579).

Pigan (here *phigan*) is apparently based on the rabbinic term *פִּיגֵי* (*pigei*, or *phigei*), "a spring," from Greek *pege*. See the description of the Garden of Eden in *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:2: "A river issues from Eden to water the garden (Genesis 2:10)... *כְּפִיגֵי* (*ke-phigei*), like a spring—situated in a garden, watering the whole garden."

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *MmD*.

The image of “inheriting dust” recalls the punishment of the serpent: *Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all beasts of the field. Upon your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life* (Genesis 3:14).

“A pint of grapes” alludes to the sin of Adam and Eve, since according to one view the Tree of Knowledge was actually a grapevine. See *Apocalypse of Abraham* 23:6; *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:7 (and Theodor’s note), 19:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:1; BT *Berakhot* 40a, *Sanhedrin* 70a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 20:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 42.

“A pint” renders קוסטא (*qusta*), which derives from Greek *xestes*, a measure of volume equal to about one pint. In *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:1, the phrase “one קיסטא (*qista*) of wine” appears in the same passage as the view that the forbidden fruit was grapes. Here, like Adam and Eve, Uzza and Aza’el are cast out of paradise; then they are crowned with a symbol of the first human sin.

69. to Me, precisely... The verse is spoken as the Israelites appear trapped at the Red Sea. Here *YHVH* signifies the Short-Tempered One (whose core is *Tif’eret*, known as *YHVH*). At this critical moment the people must not focus their prayer on this lower sefirotic configuration (*crying out to Me*); rather they should *journey further*, directing their prayer to the Holy Ancient One and His flowing beard. By redeeming Israel, this highest configuration manifested His compassion and glorified Himself.

“Flowing fortune” renders מולא (*mazzala*); see above, [note 27](#). The full verse in Exodus 14 reads: *YHVH said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel and have them journey forward [or: further]!”* See *Zohar* 2:47b-48a, 52b; Vol. 4, pp. 264-65 and nn. 233-34.

The full verse in Exodus 15 reads: *He said, “If you really heed the voice of YHVH your God, and do what is right in His eyes, and hearken to His commands and keep all His*

statutes, all the sickness that I imposed upon Egypt I will not impose upon you, for I am YHVH your healer." The Zohar's phrase "until here" may mean that until this point in the verse (*and keep all His statutes*), the focus is on fulfilling the directives of the Short-Tempered One; for one who does so ("for this one, precisely!"), the Holy Ancient One provides healing.

For various interpretations, see *OY; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Sullam; Rosenberg, Anatomy of God; Netivot Ya'ir; MmD*. On the Holy Ancient One as the source of healing, see *Zohar* 3:289a, 292b (both *IZ*).

70. הוי (Hoi), **Ah, sinful nation...** Israel's sin disturbs the letters of the Divine Name, as indicated by the exclamation הוי (Hoi), *Ah* (or *Alas*), which can be read as an anagram, permutation, or derangement of םהו (yod, he, vav). The seven phrases in the verse from Isaiah represent seven demonic rungs, corresponding to seven divine rungs represented by the letters.

The sequence of letters יוד (yod), הה (heh), םו (vav, he), םה (he, yod) alludes to the emergence of the *sefirot*. The seven elements are perhaps *yod, vav, dalet* (the full spelling of *yod*); *he, he* (the full spelling of *he*); *vav* and *he*. Cordovero understands the sequence as follows: יוד (Yod) symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, including the roots of the couple *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who are alluded to by the last two letters of the full spelling יוד (yod): םו (vav, dalet), which also spell םו (du), "two," namely the male and female partners. הה (Heh) symbolizes two aspects of *Binah*, while םו (vav, he) symbolizes *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. םה (He, yod) alludes to two aspects of *Shekhinah*.

The rest of this enigmatic passage could mean: *Vav* (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) generated *dalet* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), who turns into *he* when joined with Her partner. The letters of the word הוי (Hoi), *Ah*—*he, vav, yod*—signify respectively *Shekhinah* (and *Binah*), *Tif'eret*, and *Hokhmah*. *He* (symbolizing *Binah*) generated *vav* (symbolizing *Tif'eret*). "םו (Du) outside" could

refer to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who emerge from *Binah*. Instead of uniting the divine couple, Adam split them apart, destroying the harmony of male and female.

For various interpretations of the letter sequence, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*. On the letters *yod*, *he*, *vav*, see above, [note 16](#). On *du*, see above, [note 65](#). On *yod* symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see above, [notes 16](#), [64](#). On *dalet* becoming *he*, see above, [note 66](#); [p. 160](#), [n. 60](#). On Adam's sin, see above, [p. 317](#), [n. 357](#); Vol. 1, p. 298, n. 1438.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, seed of evildoers*, בניִם מִשְׁחִיתִים (*banim mashhitim*), *children who behave corruptly* [understood here as: *destructive children*].

[71](#). **ברא (Be-reshit bara), In the beginning created...** The opening verse of the Bible reads: ברא אלהים (Be-reshit bara Elohim), *In the beginning God created, heaven and earth*. According to *M Avot* 5:1, "The world was created through ten utterances." Only nine explicit commands appear in the opening chapter of Genesis, but rabbinic interpretation completes the decade by counting the word *be-reshit, in the beginning*, as a command in itself. Here, the reasoning is that if בראשית (*be-reshit*) constitutes an utterance, then half of that word—ברא (*bara*), *created*—is half an utterance.

Further, *reshit, beginning*, signifies primordial *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), the Father, while the Hebrew verb ברא (*bara*), *created*, suggests the Aramaic noun ברא (*bera*), "son," alluding to *Tif'eret*.

Hokhmah represents upper Eden, from which issues *Tif'eret* (lower Eden), who journeys to join *Shekhinah*, thereby expressing the Divine Name. The elements of the designation יהוה יה (*YHVH Yah*) refer respectively to *Tif'eret* (or the whole flow of emanation) and *Hokhmah*. Just as ברא (*bara*) forms half of בראשית (*be-reshit*), so יה (*Yah*) forms half of יהוה (*YHVH*).

On the ten utterances of Creation, see above, [p. 416](#), [n. 647](#); [p. 487](#), [n. 842](#); *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 31; B, 36; *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:1; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 32a; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 3 (and Luria's n. 73); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 506; *Zohar* 1:15a, 16b, 30a; 2:34b, 67a, 75b, 156b; 3:11b-12a. On concealed and revealed utterances, see BT *Shabbat* 104a; Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *ma'amar*; Maharsha, ad loc., s.v. *ma'amar satum*.

The identification of *reshit*, *beginning*, with *Hokhmah* appears widely. See Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:242-45, 266-69; *Targum Yerushalmi* (frag.), 1:1; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1; Vol. 1, p. 109, n. 12. On *bara*, *created*, and *bera*, "son," see *Zohar* 1:3b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 146-52 (also discussing Christological parallels). On upper and lower Eden, cf. *Zohar* 2:210b.

[72.](#) **אלהים את (Elohim et), God...** The name *Elohim* alludes to *Binah*, while *et* signifies *Shekhinah*. Similarly, *Adonai* signifies *Shekhinah*, while *Ehyeh* alludes to *Binah*. Thus the four opening words of the Torah—בראשית ברא אלהים את (*Be-reshit bara Elohim et*), *In the beginning God created*—allude respectively to *Hokhmah*, *Tif'eret*, *Binah*, and *Shekhinah*.

"Right and left" usually refers to *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, though here perhaps the author has in mind *Binah* and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized respectively by the first ה (*he*), toward the right, and the second ה (*he*) (toward the left) in the name יהוה (YHVH). For various interpretations, see *OY; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Sullam; MmD*.

On *Elohim* as a name of *Binah*, see *Zohar* 1:3b-4a, 29b. Grammatically, the word את (*et*) is very often an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. However, already in rabbinic times, Naḥum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that the presence of *et* in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, as often in the *Zohar*, את (*et*) alludes to *Shekhinah*, who comprises the totality of divine speech, the entire alphabet from א (*alef*) to ת (*tav*).

See BT *Pesahim* 22b, *Ḥagigah* 12a-b; *Zohar* 1:15b, 247a; 2:81b, 90a.

On *Adonai* as a name of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:34a. On *Ehyeh* as a name of *Binah*, see *Zohar* 3:33a, 108b (both *RM*).

73. [73.](#) השמים ואת (*Ha-shamayim ve-et*), **The heavens and...** The word *shamayim* (*heavens*) alludes to *Tif'eret*, while the word *et* amplifies the meaning of the verse to include the next *sefirah*, *Netsah*.

On *et*, see the preceding note. The verse in *Chronicles* reads: *Yours, O YHVH, are הגדולה והגבורה והתפארת והנצח וההוד (ha-gedullah ve-ha-gevurah ve-ha-tif'eret ve-ha-netsah ve-ha-hod), the greatness and the power and the beauty and the victory and the splendor—yes, all that is in heaven and on earth.* Quoted often in kabbalistic literature, this biblical list of divine qualities designates *Hesed* (also called *Gedullah*), *Gevurah*, *Tif'eret*, *Netsah*, *Hod*, *Yesod* (known as *all*), and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *earth*), who is joined with *Tif'eret* (*heaven*). See *Zohar* 1:235b, 241a-b; 2:40b.

74. [74.](#) הארץ (*Ha-arets*), **the earth...** Symbolizing *Shekhinah*, who is also known as God's *name* and *glory*.

The verse in *Psalms* reads: *YHVH, our Master, how magnificent Your name in all the earth!*

75. [75.](#) **Let there be a firmament...** The *firmament* apparently symbolizes *Da'at*, which separates between the Holy Ancient One (described as *the Holy of Holies*) and the Short-Tempered One (*the Holy*). Yet these two configurations are not completely separated.

The “mouth speaking grandly” may also symbolize *Da'at*. “Five kinds of water” apparently refers to five flows of emanation from *Hesed* through *Hod*, each associated with one of the verses mentioning חיים (*ḥayyim*), *life* [or: *living*]. The word מים (*mayim*) appears five times in the account of the second day of Creation, on which the *firmament* was formed. See above, [pp. 468–69](#), [n. 794](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*.

On the symbolic significance of the *firmament*, cf. above, [pp. 369–70](#), [n. 508](#). On *Da'at* as the mouth, see above, [p. 155](#), [n. 43](#). The verse in Genesis reads: *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide waters from waters*. The full verse in Exodus reads: *You shall set the curtain under the clasps and you shall bring there, within the curtain, the Ark of the Covenant, and the curtain shall divide for you between the Holy and the Holy of Holies*.

The phrase “a mouth speaking grandly” derives from Daniel’s dream-vision (Daniel 7:8, 20). See above, [note 18](#). The verse in Numbers reads: *They shall take for the impure person some of the ashes of the burnt purification offering and living [or: fresh, running, spring] water shall be put into it [or: put upon it, poured upon it] in a vessel*.

[76.](#) ה' (Yod, he)... These two letters symbolize *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, who form the transition from the upper *waters* of the Holy Ancient One to the lower *waters* of the Short-Tempered One. The “perfect waters” of the Holy Ancient One convey pure compassion, whereas the “imperfect waters” of the Short-Tempered One convey compassion mingled with judgment.

The full spelling of ה' (yod, he) is יהא (yod, he). The sequence ' יהא (alef, he, yod, yod) represents the name אהיה (Ehyeh), with the second *he* replaced by a *yod*. Cf. above, [note 16](#). For various interpretations of the whole sequence of letters, see *OY; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Sullam; Netivot Ya'ir; MmD*.

[77.](#) **YHVH said, “My breath shall not abide...** When the Holy Ancient One settles within the Short-Tempered One, He is known as *YHVH* (which often applies to the Short-Tempered One Himself). The highest configuration spoke the words of this verse, indicating that the divine breath exhaled through the nostrils of the Holy Ancient One would *not abide* in the Short-Tempered One—who is known as *ha-adam* (*the human*)—since this breath subsequently animates

those on earth, who no longer deserve to live hundreds of years, as did many of the antediluvians.

The naming of the divine subject indicates how important it is to report a saying in the name of its author. See BT *Megillah* 15a, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: “Whoever quotes a saying in the name of its originator brings deliverance to the world.” See *Avot* 6:6.

On the name *YHVH*, the Short-Tempered One, and the Holy Ancient One, see above, [note 60](#). On a verse spoken by the Holy Ancient One, cf. *Zohar* 3:130a (*IR*). On the nostrils as “two holes of an armoire,” see above, [note 8](#).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH* said, “רוּחִי (*Ruḥi*), *My spirit* [or: *breath*], *shall not abide in the human forever, for he too is flesh* [or: *for he is but flesh*]. *Let his days be a hundred and twenty years.*”

[78](#). *Let his days be a hundred and twenty years...* Because humans were unworthy, the animating breath from above was reduced, and thus their life span decreased.

“Perfect and imperfect” renders שלים ולא שלים (*shelim ve-la shelim*) and apparently alludes to two stages of the letter י (yod). The first stage symbolizes the Holy Ancient One (whose yod stands alone), while the second represents *Hokhmah* (or the entire configuration of the Short-Tempered One), whose yod is joined with the letters ו ד (vav, dalet), which symbolize *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* and complete the full spelling of the letter: יוד (yod). See above, [note 47](#).

Alternatively, *shelim ve-la shelim* means “complete and incomplete,” referring to the two spellings of the letter: the complete one (יוד) and the initial one (י).

The numerical value of yod is ten, whose square equals one hundred. The “two letters” vav and dalet together equal ten, which multiplied by two (for the “two” letters) equals twenty. Thus, the full name יוד (yod) yields a total of a *hundred and twenty*.

When the solitary yod of the Holy Ancient One is manifested in the Short-Tempered One, it multiplies or

“extends.” However, as a result of Adam’s sin the emanation became limited, and not only Adam’s life span but also his physical size was reduced, as indicated by the verse in Psalms: *You set Your palm upon me*.

See BT *Ḥagigah* 12a: “Rabbi El’azar said, ‘Adam extended from earth to heaven.... As soon as he sinned, the blessed Holy One placed His hand upon him and diminished him, as is said: *Behind and in front You formed me, and You set Your palm upon me.*’ Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rav, ‘Adam extended from one end of the world to the other.... As soon as he sinned, the blessed Holy One placed His hand upon him and diminished him, as is said: *You set Your palm upon me.*’”

According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:6, “Rabbi Aivu said, ‘His stature was reduced to one hundred cubits.’” This reduced number matches the number of “*yod* alone.”

See *Zohar* 1:53b, 142b (Vol. 2, p. 293, n. 258). The verse in Psalms reads: *Behind and in front* צרתני (*tsartani*)—apparently meaning *You encompassed me*. However, rabbinic sources understand the root צור (*tsur*) as a by-form of יצר (*ytsr*), “to form.” See Vol. 4, p. 285, n. 306.

For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *OY*; *Bei’ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya’ir*; *MmD*.

79. The Nephilim were on earth... The *Nephilim* (or fallen angels) fell below the unified world of emanation, outside the Garden of *Shekhinah*, into a world of multiplicity. This lower realm of “division” is alluded to by the conclusion of the verse in Genesis: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*.

On the fallen angels, see above, [note 67](#). The full verse in Genesis 6 reads: וְהַנְּפִילִים (*ve-ha-nefilim*), *The Nephilim* [or: *fallen ones*], *were on earth in those days—and afterward as well—when the sons of God came in to the daughters of humankind, who bore them children. These are the heroes*

of old, men of renown. For the full biblical context, see below, [note 90](#).

On the clause *from there it divides*, see *Zohar* 1:155a-b. On “the world of division (or separation),” see Vol. 4, p. 156, n. 61.

80. *Were on earth in those days...* The fallen angels (also known as *the sons of God*) roamed the world during the generation of the Flood. Much later, Joshua sent them as spies to Jericho. Their being “guarded” alludes to Joshua 2:4, where it is said that Rahab *took the two men and hid them*. Thereby these fallen angels were subjugated.

King Solomon managed to restore the female demons called *the daughters of humankind* and “include” them in the realm of holiness. These *daughters* are identified with the two prostitutes who approached the king, each claiming to be the mother of the same infant. Solomon’s wisdom enabled him to overwhelm these demonic forces.

The verse in Ecclesiastes describes some of the items amassed by King Solomon, including בני האדם שדה ושדות תענוגות (*ta’anugot benei ha-adam shiddah ve-shiddot*), *delights of the sons of humankind, concubine after concubine*. The phrase *shiddah ve-shiddot, concubine after concubine*, is interpreted midrashically as male and female שדים (*shedim*), “demons.” According to *Zohar* 1:19b, the *delights* are sexual thrills experienced by men in sleep, whose seminal emissions impregnate female demons, generating demonic offspring.

Here the feminine plural form תענוגות (*ta’anugot*), *delights*, alludes to the female demons, who were restored to the divine realm called *adam*. As opposed to them, the male demonic spirits—who would be called by the masculine term תענוגים (*ta’anugim*), “delights”—were cast down and excluded from Wisdom and the realm of *adam*.

The mention of demons and *benei ha-adam* (*sons* [or: *children*] *of adam*) reflects the midrashic discussion of Adam’s demonic offspring. See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 26, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “For 130 years Adam

separated from his wife, Eve; for once Cain was killed, Adam said, 'Why should I engender children if they become cursed?' What did he do? ... Female spirits approached him and heated themselves from him. As the blessed Holy One said to David, '... *When he [Solomon] does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men* וּבִגְעֵי בְנֵי אָדָם (*uv-nig'ei venei adam*), *and with the afflictions of (the sons of) humankind [understood as of the children of Adam]*' (2 Samuel 7:14)..., namely the demons."

Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:11, in the name of the same Rabbi Simon: "Throughout all 130 years that Adam separated himself from Eve, male spirits heated themselves from her and she gave birth, while female spirits heated themselves from Adam and gave birth, as is written: *When he does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men and with the afflictions of venei adam*—namely children of Adam." See above, [note 63](#).

Concerning Solomon, the book of Kings states: מְכַל הָאָדָם וַיִּזְכַּם (*va-yehkam mi-kol ha-adam*), *He became wiser than all humans*. Here, this verse is understood to mean that Solomon *became wise from the whole adam*, drawing Wisdom from the entire sefirotic organism.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*. On Joshua and Solomon, see above, [note 67](#). On Solomon and the fallen angels, see above, [pp. 110-13](#). On the sefirotic significance of *adam*, see above, [notes 23, 33](#).

On the midrashic reading of *shiddah ve-shiddot*, see BT *Gittin* 68a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:7; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:8. For the full verse in Genesis (including *the sons of God* and *the daughters of humankind*), see the preceding note.

[81](#). **YHVH gave [Solomon] wisdom...** This *wisdom* is conveyed by *Binah*, who is united with *Hokhmah* and symbolized by the letter ה (he).

For various interpretations, see *OY; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Sullam; Rosenberg, Anatomy of God; Netivot Ya'ir; MmD.*

82. *These are the heroes מעולם (me-olam), of old...* The world *olam* (which in biblical Hebrew means “eternity, old”) comes to mean “world,” and the same development occurs with Aramaic עלמא (*alma*). Here, the fallen heroic (or tragic) angels are traced to the divine world above. They are described as אנשי השם (*anshei ha-shem*), *men of renown*—literally, *men of the name*. The verse does not specify which name, but here it is assumed to be *Elohim*, by whose power the fallen heroes conduct themselves.

The name *Elohim* can signify various *sefirot* (*Binah, Gevurah, and Shekhinah*) as well as the angels, the heavenly princes ruling over nations, and even the demonic realm, which is referred to as אלהים אחרים (*elohim aherim*), *other gods* (Exodus 20:3). The name *YHVH*, on the other hand, refers only to the divine realm (known also as *adam*), from which the fallen angels are excluded. The wording *men of the name* is not intended to obscure the name *Elohim*, which is, after all, holy, though inferior to *YHVH*.

On the name *Elohim*, see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#). For the full verse in Genesis, see above, [note 79](#). On this verse, see *Zohar* 3:144a (*IR*). On the significance of *adam*, see above, [notes 23, 33](#). For various interpretations, see *OY; Bei'ur ha-Gera; Sullam; Rosenberg, Anatomy of God; Netivot Ya'ir; MmD.*

83. *Adam does not abide in splendor...* The full verse reads: וְאָדָם (*ve-adam*), *And the human, does not abide* [literally, *spend the night*] *in splendor; he is likened to beasts that are doomed*. Here, the meaning may be that the Short-Tempered One (known as *adam*) *does not abide in the splendor* of the Holy Ancient One—unless the divine breath is conveyed to Him.

In *Zohar* 3:143b-144a (*IR*), the verse is taken to mean that a corpse must not *spend the night* unburied, for this

would insult the dignity and *splendor* of the divine *adam*, in whose image the body was formed.

84. Thirteen kings of war with seven... A cryptic description incorporating elements from earlier chapters of the Book of Concealment. In the first chapter, earlier emanations that failed to endure are pictured as “primordial kings” who died; here, successful aspects of emanation are described as living kings. The “thirteen kings” symbolize the thirteen enhancements of the beard of the Holy Ancient One, while the “seven” represent the seven features of His skull (or head). The “seven kings” appearing on earth apparently correspond to the features of the head of the Short-Tempered One, which are manifested in *Shekhinah* (symbolized by “earth”). This divine configuration defeats Israel’s enemies in war. The “nine ascending rungs” represent the nine enhancements of His beard.

The reference to “five kings... unable to withstand four” recalls the biblical account about the battle of *four kings against the five* (Genesis 14:9), in which the four prevail. Here these “kings” apparently allude to sefirotic potencies.

In *Zohar* 3:175a-b, the last two sentences of this passage (“Four kings go forth... in their places”) are quoted (with slight variation) and interpreted as applying to the *mitsvah* of tzitzit (tassel), which includes four tassels “hanging from” four corners of the garment. “Seven runners” is interpreted there as referring to the minimum of seven windings of the blue thread around each section of tassel, which correspond to seven angels roaming the world and bearing witness to human behavior. Here in the Book of Concealment, the likely connotation of “seven runners” is the angels themselves.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei’ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya’ir*; *MmD*. On the “primordial kings” who died, see above, [note 4](#). On the thirteen enhancements of the beard of the Holy Ancient

One, see above, [note 10](#). On the seven features of His skull, see above, [note 9](#). On the features of the head of the Short-Tempered One, see above, [note 40](#). On the nine enhancements of His beard, see above, [notes 24, 49](#).

The phrase “stand in trepidation” renders קיימין בבהילו (*qayemin bi-vhilu*), which can also be translated “rise in haste.” See Daniel 3:24.

On *tsitsit*, see Numbers 15:38–40; BT *Menaḥot* 39a; above, [p. 278](#), [n. 245](#). On *tsitsit* as witnesses, see BT *Menaḥot* 44a. On the seven roaming angels, cf. Zechariah 4:10; above, [pp. 123–24](#), [n. 351](#). On the image of angels running and “not tarrying,” see Ezekiel 1:14: *The living beings darting back and forth like a flash of lightning*.

85. The sweetening tree sits within... The divine tree (*Tif'eret*), which sweetens harsh Judgment, stands in the middle of the *sefirot*. The birds in its branches may symbolize souls. Below the tree shelters *Shekhinah*, who is known as “the living being.”

Tif'eret includes twelve potencies, referred to here as “paths.” The “seven supports” may be various angelic powers. The phrase “on four corners” renders בארבע זיין (*be-arba zivyan*), a reading attested in numerous manuscripts and the early printed editions. The manuscript preserved in *OY* (as well as later editions of the *Zohar*) reads בארבע חיוון (*be-arba ḥeivan*), “with four living beings,” namely the four *ḥiyot* (*ḥayyot*), “living beings,” that appear in Ezekiel’s description of the heavenly throne, moving in all directions (Ezekiel 1:5–21).

The description of the tree derives from Daniel’s vision (especially Daniel 4:9). On the twelve potencies, see Vol. 4, p. 312, n. 399. On the image of seven cosmic pillars, see BT *Hagigah* 12b; cf. above, [p. 447](#), [n. 724](#). For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*.

86. The serpent racing in 370 leaps... Having briefly surveyed the powers of holiness, the author turns to the

demonic realm and depicts the primordial serpent invading the world.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *The voice of my beloved! Here he comes, leaping over mountains, bounding over hills.* In rabbinic literature this verse is applied to the divine *beloved*, who comes running toward Israel. Here the image describes the demonic serpent, who is rooted in the divine. See *Zohar* 3:60b.

On the significance of the number 370, see *Zohar* 1:4b; 2:14a-b (*MhN*); 3:128b, 133b, 135b (all *IR*). On the image of the uroboros (the serpent swallowing its tail), see above, [note 13](#).

The clause “its teeth piercing on two sides” can also be rendered “its teeth pierced on two sides,” alluding perhaps to the divine threat against *the great sea serpent* in Ezekiel 29:4: *I will put hooks in your jaws.* See the description of the serpent in *Zohar* 2:27b.

The clause “it is split” renders גִּסְטְרָא אֲתַעְבִּיד (*gistera it'avid*), probably based on a rabbinic idiomatic expression meaning “to split widthwise.” Here the author is playing on *gistera* and the preceding phrase תְּרֵין גִּיסָא (*terein gisa*), “two sides.” See BT *Sanhedrin* 52b; *Hullin* 21a, 32b, 37b, 124a; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *gasterei*; Rashi on *Hullin* 21a, s.v. *asa'ah gistera*; Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, 297a.

For various interpretations, see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*.

[87](#). תְּנוּךְ (***Hanokh***), ***Enoch, walked with God...*** The verse concludes: *and he was no more, for God took him.* This enigmatic wording probably reflects a fuller narrative that was expurgated. In postbiblical literature the statement was understood as alluding to Enoch's miraculous ascension alive to heaven, where he learned God's mysteries and was transformed into the angel Metatron. His journey is recorded in the pseudepigraphical Enoch literature.

Metatron is often described as נַעַר (*na'ar*), “youth, lad, servant.” Here the author alludes to the identification of Enoch with Metatron by citing the statement from Proverbs: הַנּוֹךְ לְנַעַר (*Hanokh la-na'ar*), *Train the youth*, which is understood to mean that *Hanokh* (Enoch) was transformed *la-na'ar*, *into the youth*, Metatron.

See above, [pp. 349–50](#), [nn. 451–53](#); Vol. 3, p. 342, nn. 222–23. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Train a youth according to his way [or: in the way he should go]; even when he is old, he will not swerve from it.*

88. With האלהים (*ha-Elohim*), *God...* The angel Metatron is closely linked with *Shekhinah*, who is also known as *Elohim* (whereas *YHVH* designates *Tif'eret*). When Enoch was taken by God and transformed into Metatron, he surrendered his earthly name and received a heavenly name (Metatron) associated with *Elohim* (or *Shekhinah*).

On the divine nature of Metatron's name, see BT *Sanhedrin* 38b (quoting Exodus 23:21). As several commentators note, מטטרון (*Metatron*) is numerically equivalent to שְׁדַי (*Shaddai*), a name often associated with *Shekhinah*. See Rashi on Exodus 23:21; Nahmanides on Exodus 23:20.

89. Three courts are four... The various courts of justice below correspond to divine or heavenly courts, though the exact sense and symbolism remain obscure.

Various courts of law are specified in rabbinic literature, including the Sanhedrin (consisting of seventy-one members), “the court of twenty-three” (for capital cases), and “the court of three” (for civil cases). These three courts were supplemented by a fourth one (consisting of three, five, or seven members), which was convened to intercalate the calendar.

“Harsh judgment” refers to the *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, known as *Din* (Judgment). “Balanced judgment” may refer to *Tif'eret*, who balances the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. “Mild judgment” describes *Shekhinah*. For various interpretations,

see *OY*; *Bei'ur ha-Gera*; *Sullam*; Rosenberg, *Anatomy of God*; *Netivot Ya'ir*; *MmD*.

On the court convened for intercalation, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Qiddush ha-Hodesh* 4:9–10. On mild and harsh Judgment, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:3; *Zohar* 1:137a, 180a, 201a; 3:231b. On the sefirotic symbolism of the courts, cf. *Zohar* 3:275b (*RM*). On three actually being four, cf. *Zohar* 3:292b (*IZ*).

The verse in Leviticus can also be construed as *You shall not commit perversion in justice—in measure, whether in weight or capacity*.

90. *When האדם (ha-adam), humankind, began to increase...* The context is the mythological fragment concerning the fallen angels (Genesis 6:1–4): *When humankind began to increase on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humankind were beautiful, and they took themselves wives, whomever they chose. YHVH said, “My spirit [or: breath] shall not abide in the human forever, for he too is flesh [or: for he is but flesh]. Let his days be a hundred and twenty years.” The Nephilim [or: fallen ones] were on earth in those days—and afterward as well—when the sons of God came in to the daughters of humankind, who bore them children. These are the heroes of old, men of renown.*

The author has alluded or referred several times to the Nephilim (see above at [notes 67, 79–80](#)). Here, he focuses on the opening clause of the biblical account, apparently understanding it as follows: When *ha-adam* (namely the sefirotic *adam*, the configuration of the Short-Tempered One) *began to increase* (that is, emanated further) *on the face of האדמה (ha-adamah), the earth* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*).

The phrase in verse 3—בשגם הוא (*be-shaggam hu*), *for he too is, flesh*—alludes to Moses, because the word בשגם (*be-shaggam*), *for... too*, shares two letters with, and is numerically equivalent to, משה (*Mosheh*), “Moses.” Moreover,

the continuation of the verse—*Let his days be a hundred and twenty years*—matches Moses' life span. He attained the central rung of *Tif'eret* and embodied the divine *adam*, uniting with *Shekhinah*.

On the fallen angels, see above, [notes 67, 79](#). On the sefirotic significance of *adam*, see above, [notes 23, 33](#). On *be-shaggam* as signifying Moses (who lived *a hundred and twenty years*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 26:6; BT *Hullin* 139b; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 32; *Zohar* 1:37b-38a; 2:238a. On Moses as the partner of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 223, n. 94](#).

[91](#). **Moses did not know...** Descending Mount Sinai, Moses was unaware that his face glowed from his encounter with God. The full verse reads: *When Moses came down from Mount Sinai—with the two tablets of the Covenant in Moses' hand as he came down from the mountain—Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because He had spoken with him.*

Here the author links this verse about Moses with a phrase from Genesis about the garments of Adam and Eve. The full verse there reads: *YHVH Elohim made כתנות עור (kotnot or), coats of skin, for Adam and his wife, and He clothed them.* The simple sense of *kotnot or* is “coats of animal skin, hides,” but a variant reading recorded in midrashic literature is *כתנות אור (kotnot or), coats of light*, suggesting Adam and Eve's original aura or garment of splendor. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:12: “In the Torah [scroll] of Rabbi Me'ir it was found written: ‘כתנות אור (kotnot or), garments of light’. These are the clothes of Adam...”

Elsewhere the *Zohar* teaches that as a result of eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve lost their lustrous *coats of light* and from then on were clothed in human *coats of skin*. Here, the author may be implying that Moses recovered the primordial luster.

On *kotnot or, coats of skin* (or *of light*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:6; 20:12 (and Theodor's note); *Zohar* 1:36b,

224a; 2:208b, 229b; 3:261b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 404; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 404, n. 87.

For Gnostic parallels, see Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4:40; *Apocryphon of John* 23:31–32; *Hypostasis of the Archons* 90:16; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1:5:5. For more on Adam's garments, see Vol. 4, p. 188, n. 173. On the verse in Exodus, see *Zohar* 3:132b (IR); Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 26–27.

92. קָרַן (*Qaran*), *Shone...* קֵרֶן (*qeren*), *the horn...* Linking the verb *qaran* (*shone*), describing Moses' face, with the noun from which it derives: *qeren* (horn, ray). The *qeren* symbolizes *Malkhut* (Kingdom), who bestows kingship and is linked with King David—who was himself anointed by the prophet Samuel with oil out of a horn, as described in the verse: *Samuel took qeren, the horn of, oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.*

Similarly, both references to *qeren* in Psalms allude to *Malkhut* (*Shekhinah*), who is the tenth *sefirah*. *Shekhinah* issues from *Binah*, the Divine Mother, who is also known as Jubilee. The original meaning of the word יוֹבֵל (*yovel*), “Jubilee,” is probably “ram,” pointing to the fact that the Jubilee year was inaugurated by blowing the ram's horn (Leviticus 25:9). In the verse in Joshua, the phrase בַּמְשׁוֹךְ בְּקֶרֶן הַיּוֹבֵל (*bi-mshokh be-qeren ha-yovel*) means literally *when they make a long blast with [or: draw out the sound of] the ram's horn*, but here it alludes to *Shekhinah* (known as *qeren, horn*) being generated and crowned by Her Mother, *Binah* (known as *yovel, Jubilee*). The author may be interpreting *bi-mshokh, when they draw out the sound*, as referring to the drawing of emanation from Mother to Daughter.

On anointing with the horn, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 10:8: “Kings are anointed only [with oil] out of a horn. Saul and Jehu were anointed out of a flask, so their kingdoms were transient; David and Solomon were anointed out of a horn, so their kingdom was everlasting.” See 1 Samuel 10:1; 1 Kings 1:39; 2 Kings 9:1–3; JT *Sheqalim* 6:2, 49d; BT

Megillah 14a, *Horayot* 12a; *Zohar* 1:96a; 2:123a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 71–72 (90).

On the term *yovel*, see Exodus 19:13; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 3:2169. On *Binah* as Jubilee, see above, [pp. 135–36](#), [n. 381](#). On the relation of Moses to *Binah*, see the statement attributed to Rav and Shemu’el (BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 21b, *Nedarim* 38a), “Fifty gates of *binah* (understanding) were created in the world, and all were given to Moses except for one.”

The verse in Psalm 89 reads: *By Your favor our horn is lifted*. Cf. vv. 17, 25. The full verse in Joshua (describing the impending battle of Jericho) reads: *When they make a long blast with the ram’s horn—as soon as you hear the sound of the horn—all the people shall give a mighty shout; and the wall of the city will collapse, and the people shall charge, every man straight ahead*. See *Zohar* 1:96a; 2:123a; 3:19b.

93. Qeren, horn... קרן וריוח (*qeren ve-revah*), principal and profit... The author moves to another meaning of *qeren*, “principal, capital.” *Shekhinah* contains the “principal” of emanation, which is invested and manifested through the generation of various worlds, thereby producing a gain. Eventually, when the animating breath is drawn back through the mouth of *Shekhinah*, all of ramified existence returns to its source.

Shekhinah is the horn that issues from Jubilee (namely *Binah*), who is also symbolized by the letter ה (he)—an aspirated letter whose sound resembles that of a breath. Through the breathing of *Binah*, all are animated, and in the cosmic Jubilee all will be drawn back to the Divine Mother, “to their [original] place”—just as in the biblical Jubilee year all property returns to its original owner.

The exclamation in Jeremiah—אהא (*Ahah*), *Ah*, *YHVH Elohim*—alludes to this process. The word *Ahah* contains two *hes*, one alluding to *Binah* and the other to *Shekhinah*. When the lower he (*Shekhinah*) returns to the upper he (*Binah*), conveying all existence back to God, then His name will be complete:

YHVH Elohim. As this name first appeared in the Torah when Creation was complete (Genesis 2:4), so it reappears in the Jubilee when God *alone* exists.

The view that emanation gains by becoming manifested on earth corresponds with the idea that the soul becomes complete by incarnating in a human body. See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 46-47 (translated in Matt, *Essential Kabbalah*, 148). Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* 4:8:5; Vol. 3, p. 425, n. 601.

On the phrase “principal and profit,” see *Zohar* 1:177a. Here the author may be playing on רֵוַח (*revah*), “principal,” and רוּחַ (*ruah*), “breath, spirit.”

On the cosmic Jubilee and the significance of *YHVH alone*, see above, [notes 11-12](#). On the cycle of creation, destruction, and renewal symbolized by the uroboros (the serpent swallowing its tail), see above, [note 13](#).

On “the complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3: “יהוה אלהים (*YHVH Elohim*)—[Scripture] mentions a complete name concerning a complete world.” See above, [notes 32, 53](#). On the exact wording of the verse in Jeremiah and the sefirotic significance of *Ahah*, see above, [note 34](#).

[94](#). Until here, sealed and crowned... Here ends *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment), whose subject matter is and remains concealed. Happy is one who emerges in peace, having explored its cryptic wisdom!

On (entering and) emerging, see above, [pp. 531-32](#), [n. 980](#).