



The **ספר הזוהר**  
**ZOHAR**

PRITZKER EDITION

**VII**  
*Leviticus*

*Translation and Commentary by*

**DANIEL C. MATT**

ספר הזוהר



*The* ספר הזוהר  
Z O H A R  
*Pritzker Edition*  
VOLUME SEVEN

*Translation and Commentary by*  
*Daniel C. Matt*

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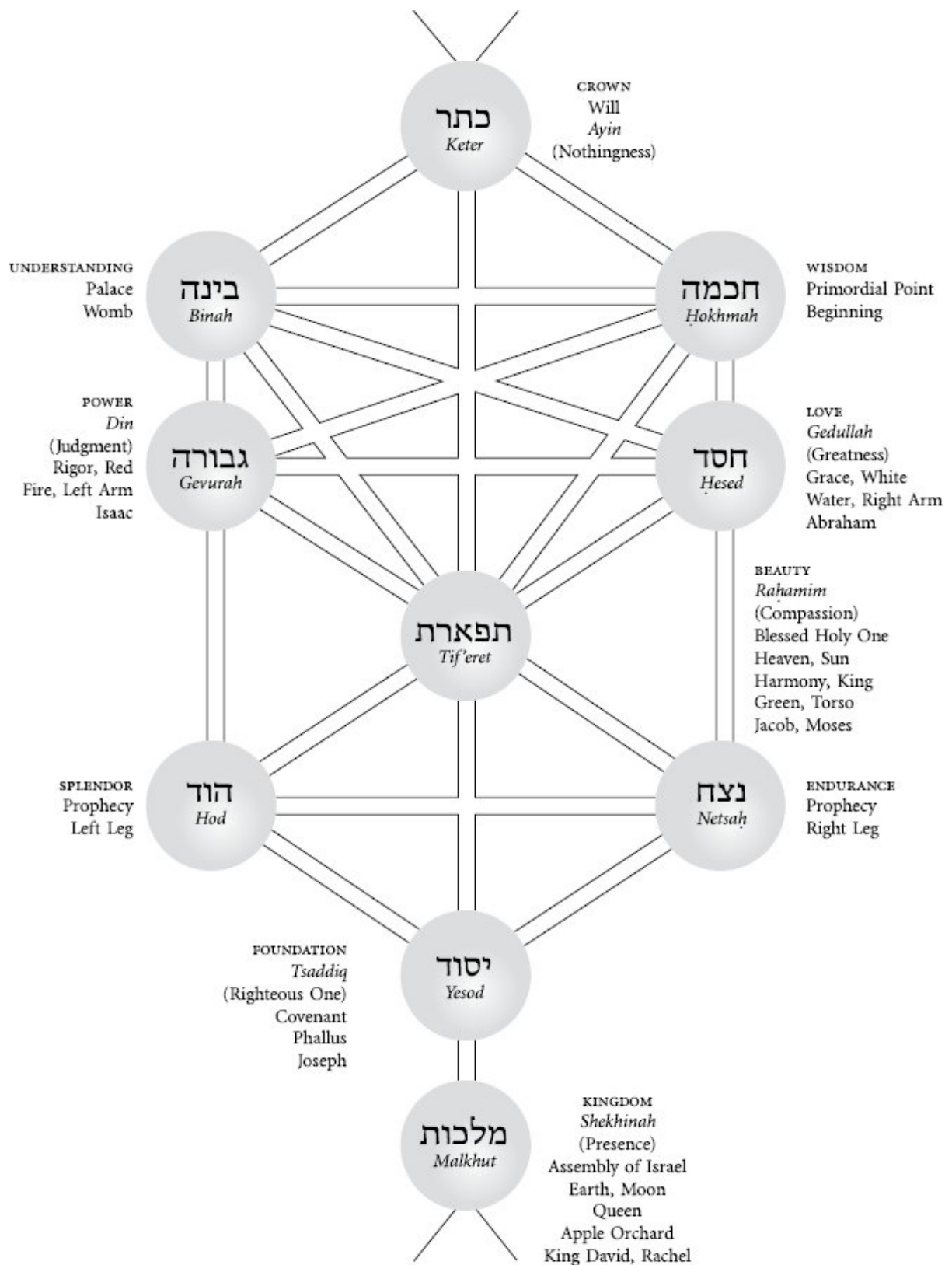
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*The Ten Sefirot*

## *Preface*

This volume covers more than half of the *Zohar's* commentary on the book of Leviticus. How does the *Zohar* deal with a biblical text devoted largely to animal offerings, grain offerings, and priestly ritual? Here these ancient laws and procedures are spiritualized—transformed into symbols of God's inner life. For example, the ascent offering, which was totally consumed on the altar, is known in Hebrew as *olah* (literally, “that which ascends”). In the *Zohar*, this symbolizes *Shekhinah*, last of the ten *sefirot* (divine potencies), who ascends to unite with Her beloved, the blessed Holy One.

The biblical narrative describes how two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, *offered alien fire before YHVH* and were immediately consumed in a divine blaze. Rabbinic tradition suggested various reasons why they were killed: they lacked the proper priestly garments, or had not ritually washed their hands and feet, or were drunk, or had refused to marry. For the *Zohar*, marriage enables one to imitate the divine union of male and female, and to stimulate that union above. By not marrying, Nadab and Abihu remained incomplete and unfulfilled. According to a related Zoharic passage, their ritual act failed because in their contemplation of the divine qualities they did not include *Shekhinah*. Without Her, God is incomplete.

One of the famous sayings attributed to the *Zohar* is “The blessed Holy One, Torah, and Israel are all one.” As Isaiah Tishby has demonstrated, this precise wording never appears in the *Zohar*. However, included in this volume is a

similar formulation: “There are three rungs, interlinked—the blessed Holy One, Torah, and Israel.”<sup>1</sup>

Also included in this volume is the remarkable image of the golden cord (or rope or chain), supposedly attached to the leg of the high priest before he entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. At this crucial moment, the priest undertook the mission of securing atonement for the entire people. If he proved unworthy or performed the ritual improperly, he might die in the inner sanctum. In case he did, his fellow priests could drag him out by the golden cord without having to enter themselves, which was normally forbidden. However, the high priest’s golden cord is never mentioned anywhere in the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, or any other extant source before the *Zohar*. Based on the *Zohar* (or on oral legend), this colorful motif entered Jewish folklore and became widely accepted; it also found its way into medieval art.<sup>2</sup>

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. For this, I thank her deeply.

I am grateful as well to Merav Carmeli, who continues to comb Aramaic manuscripts of the *Zohar*, preparing lists of variants. This precious material enables me to establish a critical Aramaic text, upon which this translation is based.

I want to thank Dr. Jonatan Benarroch for preparing digital copies and precise lists of numerous *Zohar* manuscripts. My learned daughter, Michaella Matt, has offered invaluable assistance by conducting research in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. As

with the preceding six volumes, Rabbi Joe Blair has composed the Index of Sources with meticulous care.

The critical Aramaic text corresponding to the first seven volumes of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* is available on the website of Stanford University Press. My brother, Rabbi Jonathan Matt, has kindly and meticulously edited a user-friendly version of this text.<sup>3</sup>

D.C.M.

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<sup>1.</sup> *Zohar* 3:73a. See below, [p. 490](#), [n. 431](#). The three elements of this saying can appear in various sequences.

<sup>2.</sup> See *Zohar* 3:67a; below, [p. 444](#), [n. 266](#).

<sup>3.</sup> The site is [www.sup.org/zohar](http://www.sup.org/zohar). For a description of the various online versions of the critical text, see the website. For my methodology in constructing this text, see the website and Volume 1, Translator's Introduction, xv-xviii.

THE ZOHAR



Parashat Va-Yiqra

“HE CALLED” (LEVITICUS 1:1-5:26)

[3b]<sup>1</sup> *He called to Moses, and YHVH spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying (Leviticus 1:1).*

**R**abbi Hiyya opened, “*I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!*” (Song of Songs 5:1). The beginning of this verse does not match its end, nor the end its beginning! It is written *I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk.* And then, *Eat, companions!* One who invites another does so when food is set before him; once he has already eaten, how can he invite another?<sup>2</sup>

“However, happy are Israel that the blessed Holy One wished to purify them and desired them from among all other nations. Having desired them, He sought to remove them from all accusers of the world.

“Come and see: After the Sanctuary was built below, on that very day another was erected with it, as is written: *The Dwelling was erected* (Exodus 40:17), unspecified. That day was joy of the blessed Holy One!<sup>3</sup>

“Once the Dwellings were dedicated, what is written? *Moses could not come into the Tent of Meeting...* (Exodus 40:35). When the blessed Holy One saw this, He said, ‘Now, it was erected by the hand of Moses, yet he is outside?’

Immediately, *He called to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1), saying to him, ‘Moses, how does one dedicate a house? With a meal’—as is said: *When a person from among you brings an offering to YHVH* (ibid., 2).<sup>4</sup>

*“I have come into my garden, my sister, bride.* We have already established this verse; but *I have come into my garden*—the Garden of Eden above. *My sister, bride*—Assembly of Israel. For on that day, couplings were coupled completely; couplings were coupled in that Garden of Eden, for all of them were blessed by the watering of the stream and each one joined his fellow. As is written: *I have plucked my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb [4a] with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk*—all of them were watered and saturated from the spring of the stream. *Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—all those below, and all those branches were blessed and nourished when these were blessed above. How are they all blessed and sweetened? By the aroma of the offering.<sup>5</sup>

“Come and see: When Assembly of Israel descended to make Her abode on earth, the blessed Holy One spoke this verse to Her, for blessings and joy appeared in all worlds, and She was sweetened, to exude blessings to all. For when these six are blessed, then all worlds are blessed below and blessed above, and then Israel is blessed from them all.”<sup>6</sup>

Alternatively, *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride.* Rabbi Yitshak said, “The blessed Holy One couples with Assembly of Israel only when these six are saturated by the flow of the ceaseless stream.”<sup>7</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, *“Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—all those trumpeters and howlers, who were all assuaged and blessed as one; for all enjoy the banquet of the King. And when do they all eat? When the King is delighted. Thus, the King delights, and delights *Matronita* first, and afterward they all eat and delight.”<sup>8</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, *“Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—those six whom we have mentioned, and of

whom is written *The king has brought me into his chambers. Let us delight and rejoice in you. Let us savor your lovemaking more than wine* (Song of Songs 1:4). *Drink and be drunk* from that wine which satiates all.”<sup>9</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “All those below, for once those six are blessed, all those below are blessed.”<sup>10</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on said, “All is fine, but mystery of the matter: *Eat, companions!*—above. *Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—below.”<sup>11</sup>

Rabbi El’azar asked him, “Who are those above, and who are those below?”

Rabbi Shim’on replied, “You are asking this? This is a lofty realm where they are in union, in joy, never parting from one another; these are called *companions*, as is written: *A river issues from Eden* (Genesis 2:10)—*Eden* and that *river* never part, and are in rapture, unity, joy.

“*Drink and be drunk, lovers!*—those below, who are called *lovers*, at certain times, as we have established.”<sup>12</sup>

“Come and see: Concerning those higher ones, ‘eating’ is mentioned and not ‘drinking.’ Why? Well, one who has jugs of wine needs to eat, and since preserved wine appears there, eating is applied to them. Whereas concerning those lower ones, drinking is mentioned, for all plants need watering from the deep stream. So for these, eating; and for those, drinking. These are *companions*, and those are *lovers*.”<sup>13</sup>

He said to him, “It would seem that *lovers* are in love! Why are they lower?”<sup>14</sup>

He replied, “Those who yearn for one another, but are not always together, are called *lovers*; whereas those who are always together, unconcealed and never parting, are called *companions*. So these are *companions*, and those are *lovers*; these are in rapture, in unity constantly, whereas those are in yearning intermittently. This is consummation of all, so that Assembly of Israel may be blessed, and then joy pervades all worlds.”<sup>15</sup>

Rabbi Hizkiyah applied this verse to sacrifices, for they are the banquet brought before the King, which the masters of Judgment also enjoy, and they are all assuaged, and joy prevails everywhere.<sup>16</sup>

Rabbi Aḥa applied the verse to the time when *Shekhinah* entered the Dwelling, when all were immersed in blessings and joy, and *Shekhinah* entered like a bride coming under the canopy. Then Israel was perfected below and united with [4b] the blessed Holy One on earth, as is said: *Have them make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them* (Exodus 25:8). Then those above and those below were sweetened.<sup>17</sup>

*He called to Moses* (Leviticus 1:1). Rabbi Yitṣhak opened, “*The blossoms have appeared in the land, [the time of pruning has arrived, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land]* (Song of Songs 2:12). We have already established this verse: *The blossoms have appeared in the land*; but this verse should be investigated. Since it is written *have appeared in the land, why is heard in our land?* One land would be enough!<sup>18</sup>

“However, *The blossoms have appeared in the land—the blossoms* are those saplings that the blessed Holy One uprooted and transplanted elsewhere, and they appeared as a sapling in flower.<sup>19</sup>

“*Have appeared in the land—for this land* is blessed by them fittingly. And who is She? Holy Land, supernal Land, Land of Israel, surely!<sup>20</sup>

“*The time of pruning has arrived—time to uproot the dominion of princes of the nations, so that they would not rule over Israel when the Dwelling was erected.*<sup>21</sup>

“*And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land—the land* below, which Israel inherited by the hand of Joshua. What is *the voice of התור* (*ha-tor*), *the turtledove*? The supernal תייר (*tayyar*), guide, who coupled with Her when Solomon built the Temple below. At that moment, the

blessed Holy One was adorned with His crowns, like a groom for his bride, as is written: *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]* (Song of Songs 3:11).<sup>22</sup>

“In the Book of *Aggadta* it says: ‘*The voice of התור (ha-tor), the turtledove—Oral Torah; for Written Torah is called simply Torah, while Oral Torah is called תור (tor), as is said: ויקרא (va-yiqra), He called (Leviticus 1:1); ויקר (va-yiqqar), He encountered (Numbers 23:4). One is perfection, whereas the other, not so.*’ As for me, I have established it as has been said, and so it is.<sup>23</sup>

“Come and see: When *Shekhinah* descended to the Dwelling, it is written כלה משה (*kallot Mosheh*), *Moses consummated* (Numbers 7:1)—כלה משה (*kallat Mosheh*), *the Bride of Moses*, surely! We have established this, but mystery of the matter: *kallat Mosheh, the Bride of Moses*, is Assembly of Israel. All is one entity, and this refers to the supernal King.<sup>24</sup>

“Once the Dwelling was erected, Moses returned outside, saying, ‘It is not proper to enter without permission.’ Immediately, *He called to Moses*. Who called? That bride. *He called—the one to whom the house belongs, She who controls the whole house.*<sup>25</sup>

“*And YHVH spoke to him (Leviticus 1:1)—the one who is named Voice of Moses, the one to whom Moses is connected.*”<sup>26</sup>

*He called to Moses.* Rabbi El’azar opened, “*Why have I come, when there is no man? Why have I called, when none responds? Is My arm too short, that it cannot redeem?...* (Isaiah 50:2). Happy are Israel, for wherever they are, the blessed Holy One is with them and takes pride in them, as is written: *Israel, in whom I glory* (Isaiah 49:3). Furthermore, Israel perfects faith on earth, and Israel is perfection of His Holy Name. When the people of Israel

below are perfected by their deeds, the Holy Name, as it were, is complete; but when they are not perfected below and are sentenced to exile, the Holy Name, as it were, is incomplete above. For we have learned: 'One ascended, the other descended—Israel above ascended higher and higher; Assembly of Israel descended below. They distanced themselves from one another; the Holy Name was left incomplete.' All because Assembly of Israel is in exile.<sup>27</sup>

"Yet although the people of Israel are in exile, the blessed Holy One is among them, and precedes them to the synagogue, exclaiming, *Turn back, O wayward children, I will heal your waywardness!* (Jeremiah 3:22). But there is no one whose spirit is aroused, so the blessed Holy One says, '*Why have I come, when there is no man? Why have I called, when none responds?—Why have I come early, and there is no man? Why have I called, and there is no one whose spirit is aroused?*'<sup>28</sup>

"Come and see: On the day that מִשְׁכָּנָא (*mashkena*), the Dwelling, was completed, the blessed Holy One came early and settled within. Immediately, *He called to Moses, and YHVH spoke to him* (Leviticus 1:1), informing him that Israel would sin before Him and this Tent of Meeting would אֶת־מִשְׁכָּנָא (*itmashkena*), be taken as pledge, for their sins and not endure, as is written: *YHVH spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting* (ibid.). *YHVH spoke to him*—and what did He say to him? מֵאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד (*Me-ohel mo'ed*), *concerning the Tent of Meeting*: that it would be taken as pledge for their sins and not endure permanently. However, the remedy for this: *When a person from among you brings an offering to YHVH* (ibid., 2)—here are offerings for you, protecting all."<sup>29</sup>

Rabbi Hizkiyah was in the presence of Rabbi Shim'on. He said to him, [5a] "That which is called קָרְבָּן (*qorban*) should be called קִירוּב (*qeiruv*), drawing near, or קְרִיבוּת (*qereivut*), nearness. Why *qorban*?"<sup>30</sup>



He replied, “This is well known to the Companions! *Qorban*, their drawing near—of those holy crowns, all drawing near as one, bound with one another, until all become one in perfect unity, perfecting the Holy Name fittingly, as is written: קרבן ליהוה (*qorban la-YHVH*), *their drawing near to YHVH* (Leviticus 1:2). The drawing near of those crowns is *to YHVH*—to perfect the Name, unifying it fittingly, so that Compassion fill all the worlds and this Name be adorned with its crowns, sweetening all. Therefore, *to YHVH*, and not *to Elohim*—*YHVH* we must arouse, not *Elohim*; we need Compassion, not Judgment!”<sup>31</sup>

He said, “Happy is my share, that I asked and gained these words! This is lucidity of the word! But look at what is written: זבחי (*Zivhei*), *The sacrifices of, Elohim are a broken spirit* (Psalms 51:19)—it is written *the sacrifices of Elohim*, not *the sacrifices of YHVH*!”<sup>32</sup>

He replied, “Certainly so! It is not written קרבן (*qorban*), *the drawing near of, Elohim*, but rather זבחי (*zivhei*), *the slaughterings of, Elohim*, and so their slaughtering is on the north, for this sacrificing is for the sake of *Elohim*—that side of *Gevurah*—so that the spirit of Judgment may be assuaged and broken, and Judgment be weakened, and Compassion overpower Judgment. Thus, *the sacrifices of Elohim*—to break the power and potency of harsh Judgment, as is written: *a broken spirit* (Psalms 51:19): so that this powerful *spirit* may be *broken*, and its power and potency not prevail. Then, a person should stand by the altar with *a broken spirit* and be ashamed of his deeds, so that this powerful spirit may be broken. All, so that Judgment may be assuaged and Compassion overwhelm Judgment.”<sup>33</sup>

When אדם (*adam*), *a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH* (Leviticus 1:2). Rabbi El’azar said, “This verse should have been written as follows: *When adam, a person, brings an offering to YHVH; why from among you?* Well, to exclude Adam, who already brought an offering when the world was created, as we have established, and

here is written *from among you*. This *adam* excludes another *adam*, who was not *from among you*.”<sup>34</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on said to him, “Well spoken, and so it is!”

Rabbi Abba opened, “A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah. Great is YHVH and highly praised in the city of our God, His holy mountain (Psalms 48:1-2). A song, a psalm—this song is praise surpassing all other praises that the sons of Korah were privileged to offer. A song, a psalm—praise upon praise, a praise separating into two praises. And the sons of Korah were privileged to offer it in praise of Assembly of Israel, uttering Her praise. What is it? As is written: *Great is YHVH and highly praised*. When is the blessed Holy One called *Great is YHVH and highly praised*? When Assembly of Israel is with Him, as is written: בעיר אלהינו (*be-ir Eloheinu*), *in the city of our God—with the city of our God*.”<sup>35</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah asked him, “Why is *our God* required here?”<sup>36</sup>

He replied, “Certainly so! This *city* is the revered deity and praise of Israel. What does this imply? That the King without the Queen is no king, nor is He *great* nor *highly praised*. Thus, whoever does not exist as male and female is deprived of all praise and is not in the category of ‘human.’ Moreover, he does not deserve to be blessed.”<sup>37</sup>

“It is written: *That man was the greatest of all the people of the East* (Job 1:3), and we have learned in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava that his spouse was his equal in revering the blessed Holy One, and on account of his wife he was called *great*. Here, too, *Great is YHVH and highly praised*. When and how is He *great*? The verse goes on to say, *in the city of our God, His holy mountain*. So this praise is on the second day.”<sup>38</sup>

“Now, you might ask, ‘Why isn’t *good* written of the second day?’ Well, because they are destined to separate. Mystery of the matter: *It is not good for the human to be*



*alone* (Genesis 2:18)—when he is *alone*, it is written *not good*. Thus, *good* is not written of the second day.<sup>39</sup>

“*Great is YHVH...*—as we have said.<sup>40</sup>

“*Beautiful in loftiness, joy of all the earth* (Psalms 48:3)—in praise of their coupling. *Beautiful*—the blessed Holy One, who is *loftiness, joy of all the earth*. Then, joy of all, and Assembly of Israel is blessed.<sup>41</sup>

“*God in her citadels is known as a refuge* (Psalms 48:4)—*Netsah* and *Hod*, [5b] for there all blessings are gathered, joy is gathered, issuing from there through the rung called Righteous One. From there blessings gather to sweeten this holy city, who is blessed from there.<sup>42</sup>

“*For look, the kings assembled* (Psalms 48:5)—all crowns of the King in one entirety. And these words ascend to another place.<sup>43</sup>

“Come and see: When a person mends his deeds by means of an offering, all is sweetened, drawn together, and bound with one another in complete unity, as is written: *When a person from among you brings near* (Leviticus 1:2). *When he brings near*—binding things fittingly.<sup>44</sup>

“Come and see: *When אדם (adam), a person, brings near*—excluding whoever is not married, for his offering is no offering, and blessings are not manifested through him either above or below. This is implied by what is written: *When adam, a person, brings near*—as opposed to this one, who is not *adam* and not in the category of *adam*, and *Shekhinah* does not settle upon him because he is defective and called ‘blemished,’ and one who is blemished is distanced from everything, especially from sacrificing an offering.<sup>45</sup>

“Nadab and Abihu demonstrate this, as is written: *Fire came out from before YHVH [and consumed them]* (Leviticus 10:2). Thus it is written: *When אדם (adam), a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH*. *Adam*—being male and female; this one is worthy of bringing an offering, this one and no other.”<sup>46</sup>

And Rabbi Abba said, “Although they have established the matter of Nadab and Abihu, so it is! But incense transcends all offerings above, since through it are blessed those above and those below; this is an offering surpassing all offerings, which they were not worthy of bringing since they were not married. They were not worthy of *Shekhinah*, much less of higher entities being blessed through them.<sup>47</sup>

“Now, you might say, ‘*Fire came out from before YHVH and consumed them—why?*’ Well, this may be compared to a man who comes before the *matronita* to inform her that he is bringing the king to her house to stay with her and rejoice with her. He then came before the king, who saw that this man was physically defective. The king said, ‘It is beneath my dignity that through this one I should come before the *matronita*.’ Meanwhile, the *matronita* had prepared her house for the king. Once she saw that the king was just about to come to her—were it not for that man, who caused the king to withdraw from her—she ordered that man to be put to death.<sup>48</sup>

“Similarly, when Nadab and Abihu entered with incense in their hands, *Matronita* rejoiced and prepared Herself to greet the King. Once the King saw that they were defective and blemished, He did not want to abide with Her through them, and He withdrew from Her. When *Matronita* saw that because of them the King had withdrawn from Her, immediately *Fire came out from before YHVH and consumed them*.<sup>49</sup>

“All this because they were not married. Holiness of the king vanishes from one who is defective and blemished, since it does not abide in defectiveness. Of this is written *When אדם (adam), a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH—adam shall bring it, but one who is not called adam shall not.*

“*Of animals* (Leviticus 1:2)—a generalization. *Of herd and of flock* (ibid.)—a specification: those that are fit for eating, whereas those unfit for eating may not be offered.

And those that are fit and those that are unfit ascend to another place.”<sup>50</sup>

*If his offering is an ascent offering from the herd* (Leviticus 1:3).<sup>51</sup>

written *For* מחשבתי (*maḥshevotai*), *My thoughts, are not—* without a ך (*vav*), deficiently.<sup>52</sup>

“Come and see: The Thought of the blessed Holy One is the highest, head of all. From that Thought spread ways and paths, so that the Holy Name may be manifested and established fittingly. From that Thought issues a flow for the Garden of Eden, watering all. From that Thought come into being Written Torah and Oral Torah; by that Thought exist those above and those below.<sup>53</sup>

“The thought of a human being is head of all. From that thought spread ways and paths, perverting his ways in this world and in the world that is coming. From that thought issues filth of the evil impulse, harming him and everyone. From that thought come into being transgressions, iniquities, and premeditated sins: idolatry, fornication, and bloodshed. Thus, *For* [6a] *My thoughts are not your thoughts.*<sup>54</sup>

“Therefore, first of all is written *If his offering is an ascent offering* מן הבקר (*min ha-baqar*), *from the herd* (Leviticus 1:3)—*from the herd*, and not *the herd*. And what is it? A bull from the herd, which is male.”<sup>55</sup>

Rabbi Yitṣḥak said, “*From the herd—unspecified*. Then it goes on to explain: *an unblemished male—not a female*, for a male is recognized above and a female is recognized below. Similarly, *from the flock, from the sheep or from the goats, for an ascent offering* (Leviticus 1:10). Whatever is brought as an ascent offering is entirely male and not female, for an ascent offering ascends upon the heart—

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways* (Isaiah 55:8). It is

above the heart, surely, and it is known what stands above the heart. Thus it ascends above, and all are male. Therefore, the verse opens first with the ascent offering, rather than any other offering; this is Thought, head of all.”[56](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If so, it should be offered in the place of Thought above. Why lower?”[57](#)

He had no answer.[58](#)

Rabbi Shim’on came, and said to him, “Head of all is Thought, and consummation of that Thought is a place called בקר (*boqer*), morning. What is that? Consummation of the body that sweetens the Female.”[59](#)

“Similarly, human thought is head of all; consummation of that thought is when an act is performed. When? In the morning, as is written: *Ah, those who devise iniquity [and plot evil on their beds]*, and the verse concludes: *at morning’s light they do it* (Micah 2:1). Thus, it ascends to that place of Thought, and in completing the action it draws near consummation of Thought.”[60](#)

Rabbi Aḥa was walking on the road, accompanied by Rabbi Yehudah. While they were going, Rabbi Yehudah said, “As for what we have learned: Virgin Israel, who is blessed by seven and is called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, Daughter of Seven, as we have established in many places, and a virgin inherits seven blessings—look at what is written: *And you, O son of man, raise a lament for Virgin Israel*, which is surely uttered for Her, for Assembly of Israel! And this is most difficult of all: *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel* (Amos 5:2). Now, that which all the Companions have said concerning this statement is fine. But if the passage had been spoken by way of consolation, we would agree; yet here lamentation and dirge are uttered, as demonstrated by the verse!”[61](#)

He replied, “Certainly so! This matter troubled me greatly, and I came before Rabbi Shim’on with a darkened

face. He said to me, 'From the look on your face, your heart is revealed!' [62](#)

"I said to him, 'Surely, for my heart and my face are equivalent.' [63](#)

"He said to me, 'Utter your word!'

"I said, 'It is written: *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel*. One who is angry with his wife, and she leaves him—she will never return. If so, woe to the children who have been cast out with her!' [64](#)

"He said to me, 'Are you not satisfied with what all the Companions have said?' [65](#)

"I said, 'They render the words compassionate, but it does not correspond.' [66](#)

"He said, 'Whatever the Companions say is fine and fitting, but woe to the generation when shepherds are nowhere to be found and the flock wanders, not knowing whether to go to the right or to the left! Surely this verse needs to be known, and all is revealed to those who see!' [67](#)

"Come and see: In all the exiles suffered by Israel, He set a time and termination; and in all of them, Israel turned back to the blessed Holy One and *Virgin Israel* returned to Her place at the time decreed. Yet now, in this last exile, it is not so, for She has not returned as on the other occasions—as demonstrated by this verse, for it is written *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel*. It is not written *Fallen, and I will not raise Virgin Israel*. [68](#)

"This may be compared to a king who became angry with the *matrona* and cast her out of his palace for a certain time. When that time arrived, the *matrona* immediately returned and came before the king. And so it happened once, twice, and thrice. Finally, she went far away from the king's palace and was cast out for a distant time. He said, "This time is not like the other times, that she should come before me; rather, I myself will go with my retinue to woo her." [69](#)

“When he reached her and saw her lying on the ground—who has seen the glory of the *matrona* at that [6b] time and the king pleading to her? Eventually, he grasped her in his hands and raised her and brought her to his palace, swearing to her that he would never part from her or be distant.

“Similarly, with the blessed Holy One. All those times when Assembly of Israel was in exile, when the time arrived She returned and came before the King. Yet now, in this exile, it is not so; rather, the blessed Holy One will grasp Her hand and raise Her and reconcile with Her and return Her to His palace.

“Come and see that it is so, for it is written *Fallen, not to rise again*, as in other times; but I myself will raise Her—I, *YHVH*, will raise Her booth; *I will raise the fallen booth of David* (Amos 9:11), Virgin Israel. *The fallen*—as is written: *Fallen, [not to rise again]*. This is the glory of Virgin Israel and Her praise.’<sup>70</sup>

“This I learned at that time.”<sup>71</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “You have surely spoken to my heart, and now it is tranquil. This is lucidity of the word, and it accords with a word that I recently gained: Rabbi Yose said, ‘The blessed Holy One will one day proclaim over Assembly of Israel, *Shake off the dust, arise; sit enthroned, O Jerusalem!* (Isaiah 52:2)—like someone grasping his friend’s hand and saying, “Shake yourself free and rise!” So will the blessed Holy One grasp Her and say, *Shake yourself free, arise!*”<sup>72</sup>

Rabbi Aḥa said to him, “Happy are all those members of the royal palace, who open with this expression, as is written: *Arise, shine, for your light has come!* (Isaiah 60:1)—see, the King is surely here! Then is the glory and joy of all, when the King reconciles with Her.<sup>73</sup>

“It is written: *Bathsheba came to the king in his chamber* (1 Kings 1:15). Similarly, all those times She came to the King and stood before Him, as is written: *She came*



*before the king and stood before the king* (ibid., 28). But this time, not so; rather, the King comes to Her to reconcile with Her, as is written: *See, your king is coming to you!* (Zechariah 9:9)—precisely, not You to Him. *Is coming to you*—to mollify You. *Is coming to you*—to raise You. *Is coming to you*—to restore You completely. *Is coming to you*—to bring You into His palace and unite with You eternally, as is said: *I will betroth you to Myself with faithfulness; I will betroth you forever* (Hosea 2:22, 21).<sup>74</sup>

As they were walking, they encountered Rabbi Abba. They said, “Here comes a master of wisdom; let us welcome *Shekhinah!*”<sup>75</sup>

When they approached him, he slid off his strapped quaestorian saddle, descending alongside them.<sup>76</sup>

He opened, saying, “*The voice of the shofar was growing stronger and stronger...* (Exodus 19:19). *The voice of the shofar*—here books of the ancients differ, though all harmonize on one element. *The voice of the shofar*—two: *voice*, one; *the shofar*, two. Examining precisely: it is not written *The shofar grew stronger*, but rather *the voice of the shofar*—a *voice* issuing from a *shofar*. It is surely called *shofar*, as is said: *A great shofar will be blown* (Isaiah 27:13); this is the *great shofar* by which slaves go forth to eternal freedom, as we have established.<sup>77</sup>

“Or, examining precisely, all is one, for it is written *the voice of the shofar*—a *voice* called *shofar*. And how do we know that it is called *voice*? As is written: *a mighty voice, unceasing* (Deuteronomy 5:19). This *voice* is called *shofar*, so it is written: *the voice of the shofar*.<sup>78</sup>

“*Was going* (Exodus 19:19)—where was it going? Now if you say, ‘To Mount Sinai,’ or ‘to Israel,’ then it should read *was descending*. However, Torah issues from here; and from this place, totality of all others, it was given. And when matters are contemplated, all is one.<sup>79</sup>

“Therefore, the first tablets were engraved from this place. This is mystery of the matter written: *חרות* (*harut*),

*engraved, upon the tablets* (Exodus 32:16)—Do not read חרות (*ḥarut*), *engraved*, but rather חירות (*ḥeirut*), *freedom*: real freedom, a place on which all freedom depends.<sup>80</sup>

“Come and see: You cannot find a single word in the Torah, over which the Companions differ—one saying this, and the other, that—which does not proceed entirely to one place, gathering into one spring, as is written: *was going*, corresponding to what is said: *All the streams go to the sea, yet the sea is not full* (Ecclesiastes 1:7), and it is written: *All goes to one place* (ibid. 3:20).<sup>81</sup>

“והזק מאד (*Ve-ḥazeq me’od*), *stronger and stronger* (Exodus 19:19)—as we have learned: ‘a vessel מחזיק (*maḥaziq*), holding, forty *seahs*.’<sup>82</sup>

“*Stronger and stronger*—you cannot find a single word in Torah that is weak or broken; rather, when you contemplate and know it, you will find it as strong as a hammer smashing rocks. And if it is weak, this comes from you, as we have established, for it is written: *For it is not an empty word*—מכם (*mi-kem*), *from you* (Deuteronomy 32:47). Thus it is written *stronger and stronger*.<sup>83</sup> [7a]

“*Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice* (Exodus 19:19). In this place are contained supernal matters. As we have established, *God would answer him with a voice*—with the voice of Moses, the voice joined by Moses. Here one should contemplate, for it is just the opposite, as is written: *God spoke* (ibid. 20:1), yet here is written *Moses would speak*!<sup>84</sup>

“Well, some say it is because of what is written: *They said to Moses, ‘Speak you with us that we may hear, and let not God speak with us’* (Exodus 20:16); thus, *Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice*—for no word of Torah derived from Moses’ mouth alone. This corresponds to what we have established: ‘The curses in the Repetition of Torah were uttered by Moses מפִּי עֲצְמוֹ (*mi-pi atsmo*), with his own mouth’—we have not learned ‘by himself,’ but rather ‘with his own mouth.’ The others were



uttered from the mouth of Power, whereas these were uttered 'with his own mouth,' with the mouth of the voice that he joined, which is called so. This is fine.<sup>85</sup>

"In the Book of *Aggadta* of the school of Rav, they say that although the Torah was uttered by the mouth of Power, all of it was uttered also by Moses' own mouth. Namely what? For example, the curses in the Repetition of Torah, which were subsequently included in Power, as is written: "*Moses would speak, and Elohim would answer him with a voice. Moses would speak—voice of Moses. And Elohim would answer him with a voice—Gevurah (Power), who acknowledged that voice, as is written: Elohim would answer him with a voice—with that voice of Moses.*"<sup>86</sup>

"Now, he who has opened with words of Torah, let us acknowledge him!"<sup>87</sup>

They said, "Let us sit, and he who opened, let him open further!" They sat down.

Rabbi Abba opened, saying, "*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 stranger shall eat of it* (Leviticus 22:13). Happy is the share of Israel above all other nations, for when the blessed Holy One created the world, He created it solely for the sake of Israel, so that they would receive the Torah on Mount Sinai and become completely pure and righteous before Him."<sup>88</sup>

"Come and see: When this world was consummated by Israel, corresponding to the pattern above, and that Tree was set in the earth, with its crown reaching to heaven, the blessed Holy One desired to draw down a holy soul from above to below, so that one would be united and linked with the other, as is written: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the soil, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life* (Genesis 2:7), so that the world would be interlinked and complete, as above, and he would perfect himself accordingly."<sup>89</sup>

“Therefore, He created him male and female, to be complete. When is a human being called complete, corresponding to the supernal pattern? When he clings to his mate in desire, as above, becoming whole in unity and in joy, and there issue from him and his female a son and a daughter. Then he is a complete human being, corresponding to the pattern above, becoming complete below like the supernal Holy Name, and then the supernal Holy Name is proclaimed over him.<sup>90</sup>

“But if a person does not want to complete the Holy Name below, it would be better for him to have never been born, for he has no share in the Holy Name. And when his soul leaves him she is not joined to it at all, since he diminished the image of his Lord—until his soul is linked and fully restored. As is said, *If the daughter of a priest becomes a widow or divorced, having no seed:*

*“If the daughter of a priest—the holy soul, who is called Daughter of the King, for we have established that the holy soul issues from the coupling of the King and *Matronita*; for just as the body below derives from male and female, so with the soul above.*<sup>91</sup>

*“Becomes a widow or divorced. A widow—of that body with which she coupled and which has died. Divorced—for she has been divorced from its share in the Holy Name.*

*“And why all this? Having no seed—because she has no seed by which to resemble what is above and be linked with the Holy Name.*<sup>92</sup>

*“And she returns to her father’s house. What is she returns? She returns, in an undefined manner; she returns to be restored as before. Then, she returns to her father’s house as in her youth—as originally.*<sup>93</sup>

*“Of her father’s bread she may eat—reveling in the delights of the King.*<sup>94</sup>

*“From now on, but no stranger shall eat of it. Who is a stranger? One who has not established the Holy Name below and has no share in it. Shall not eat of it—he has no*

share in supernal delight, to which 'eating' pertains, as is said: *Eat, companions!* (Song of Songs 5:1), supernal eating, delight [7b] of the blessed Holy One. This delight dwells where it dwells once the aroma of offering ascends.<sup>95</sup>

"Come and see: When food appears below, food appears above. This may be compared to a king for whom a meal has been prepared, though none has been prepared for his servants. Once it has been prepared for his servants, he eats his meal and they eat theirs, as is written: *I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey* (Song of Songs 5:1)—the King's meal. *Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!* (ibid.)—their meal, from the aroma of the offering, which is called *a pleasing aroma to YHVH* (Leviticus 1:9): *aroma* for His servants, *pleasing* for YHVH. *Pleasing* derives from the delight of the Ancient One. Thus the King's meal is delayed on account of His servants' meal. So the people of Israel sustain their Father in heaven. We have learned: Who eats of the King's meal? The souls of the righteous."<sup>96</sup>

He opened again, saying, "*Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers together!* (Psalms 133:1). Happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One did not assign them to a minister or to an agent, but rather they are linked with Him and He is linked with them! Out of love for them, the blessed Holy One called them servants, as is written: *For Mine are the Children of Israel as servants* (Leviticus 25:55). Afterward He called them children, as is written: *You are children of YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:1). Afterward He called them brothers, as is said: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions* (Psalms 122:8). And because He called them brothers, He wanted to place His abode among them and not withdraw from them; then it is written: *Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers together!*<sup>97</sup>

"The Holy Lamp said as follows: '*Look, how good and how pleasant [is the dwelling of brothers together!]*—as is

said: *A man who takes his sister...* (Leviticus 20:17).’ And in the Book of Rav Yeiva Sava: *A man*—the blessed Holy One. *Who takes his sister*—Assembly of Israel. Why all this? *It is* חסד (*hesed*)—*It is hesed*, surely, as we have established. Thus, *Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers together!*—the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel. ג (Gam), *Also*—to include Israel below, as we have said; for when Assembly of Israel is in brotherhood with the blessed Holy One, Israel dwells in brotherhood with Him, so it is written חסד ג (*gam yahad*), *also together*. And in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava: *Gam yahad, also together*—to include Righteous One along with Assembly of Israel, who are one coupling. And all is one matter.<sup>98</sup>

“We have learned in the portion of *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (Deuteronomy 6:4): What is *one*? Assembly of Israel together with the blessed Holy One. For Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘Coupling of male and female is called *one*. Why? Because male without female is called “half a body,” and half is not one; when two halves join together, they become one body, then called *one*.’<sup>99</sup>

“Now the blessed Holy One is not called *one*. Mystery of the matter: Assembly of Israel is in exile, and the blessed Holy One has ascended high above; the coupling has separated, and the Name is not complete and not called *one*. When is it called *one*? When *Matronita* is with the King and they couple as one, as is written: *The kingdom shall be YHVH’s* (Obadiah 1:21). Who is *kingdom*? Assembly of Israel, to whom kingdom is linked. Then, *on that day YHVH will be one and His name one* (Zechariah 14:9). Thus, *Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers together!*<sup>100</sup>

“*Like fine oil on the head* (Psalms 133:2). What is *fine oil*? Oil of holy anointing, issuing and flowing from the Holy Ancient One, found in that supernal river suckling the children, to kindle lamps. That oil flows upon the head of the King, and from His head to the glory of the holy beard,

flowing from there onto all those splendid garments in which the King is arrayed, as is written: *descending* פִּי מְדוּתָיו עַל (al pi middotav), *over the collar of his robes* (ibid.), literally! These are the crowns of the King, whose name appears in them.<sup>101</sup>

“Come and see: All the flow, all the radiance, and all the joy of the worlds descend to bless only through these holy crowns, which are the name of the Holy King. Thus, *descending al pi middotav, according to his attributes*, surely!—as is said: *al pi, according to, Aaron and his sons shall it be* (Numbers 4:27); similarly, *al pi middotav, according to his attributes*, it descends and flows upon all the worlds, providing blessings for all.<sup>102</sup>

“Come and see: This *fine oil* [8a] was not available until the worship below ascended and they encountered one another, as is written: *Oil and incense rejoice the heart* (Proverbs 27:9)—*oil* above, and *incense* below; then, joy of all.”<sup>103</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Aḥa raised their hands and thanked Rabbi Abba.

Rabbi Aḥa opened, “*Elohim came to Abimelech in a night-dream...* (Genesis 20:3), and it is written: *Elohim said to him in the dream, “I also know that with a pure heart [you have done this]...*” (ibid., 6). Regarding *Elohim came to Abimelech*, why does this expression appear in relation to the nations of the world and not to Israel?<sup>104</sup>

“Well, we have learned as follows: Every *Elohim* here refers to the power of the prince appointed over him. Similarly, *Elohim came to Balaam in the night* (Numbers 22:20)—that power appointed over him.<sup>105</sup>

“Now, you might say, ‘*Elohim said to him in the dream, [“I also know that with a pure heart you have done this”].*’ Well, certainly so! *I also know*—why *also* here? It comes to amplify the meaning: ‘Although it is known to one higher than me, *I also know.*’<sup>106</sup>

“*And I also have kept [you from sinning against Me]* (Genesis 20:6)—*also*, to amplify. *You from sinning, against Me*—מחטו (*me-ḥato*), *from sinning*, deficient, without an א (*alef*). What does this indicate, since sin does not pertain to him? However, we have learned as follows: By the sins of a nation below, damage is inflicted above. By the sins of a nation below, their power above is deposed from his rule, as is written: *I also have kept you*—‘although the matter depends on one above, *I also*,’ to include himself. מחטו (*Me-ḥato*), *From sinning, against me*—‘so that it would not be like מחט (*maḥat*), a needle, stuck in the flesh; so that by your sin you would not cause me to be deposed and be loathed, so that you not prick me with your needle,’ as is said: ואקץ (*va-aquts*), *and I loathed, them* (Leviticus 20:23), like קוצין (*qotsin*), thorns, clinging to the flesh.<sup>107</sup>

“What does this imply? That by sinning, people cause a defect above. What is that? As is said: *For your crimes, your mother was sent away* (Isaiah 50:1). Therefore, an offering is brought. What is קרבן (*qorban*), an offering? As we have said, for it is written: *For your crimes, your mother was sent away*—one’s sin causes separation; a *qorban*, offering, קריב (*qareiv*), draws near, the upper world and lower world, and all becomes one.”<sup>108</sup>

Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Yehudah thanked him.<sup>109</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, “*Serve YHVH with joy, come before Him with glad singing. Know that YHVH is God. He has made us, and we are His, His people and the flock He tends* (Psalms 100:2-3). *Serve YHVH with joy*—the worship that one offers to the blessed Holy One should be *with joy*, with gladness of the heart, so that his service may be perfect.<sup>110</sup>

“Now, you might say, ‘The ritual of an offering cannot be so, for when a person transgresses the commandment of his Lord, the commandment of Torah, and then returns to his Lord, how does he face Him? Surely with a broken spirit, in sorrow. Where is the *joy*? Where is the *glad*



*singing*? Rather, we have learned as follows: One who has sinned before his Lord and transgressed His commandments, and comes to bring an offering and to restore himself—with a sorrowful spirit, and if he weeps, that is best of all. Look, *joy* and *glad singing* are nowhere to be found!’[111](#)

“How, then, is this remedied? By the priests and Levites, who fulfill *joy* and *glad singing* on his behalf. *Joy* is established by the priest, for he is always far from Judgment, and a priest must have a more shining face, a more joyous face than all the people. Furthermore, his crown is decisive. *Glad singing*, by the Levites, and so it is, for the Levites are always responsible for song, as we have established.[112](#)

“These preside [8b] over it, and by them the worship of the blessed Holy One is perfected. The priest stands over it and directs words joyously and fervently, to unify the Holy Name fittingly. And the Levites, in song. Then is written *Know that YHVH is Elohim* (Psalms 100:3)—a *qorban*, offering, drawing Compassion close to Judgment, and all is sweetened.[113](#)

“Now that offerings no longer exist, one who sins before his Lord and then returns to Him—surely with a bitter soul, with sorrow, weeping, and a broken spirit—how can he demonstrate *joy* and *glad singing*, since he is lacking these? Well, they have established this is as follows: Praises offered to his Lord, joy of Torah, and singing of Torah—these constitute *joy* and *glad singing*.[114](#)

“Yet we have learned: ‘not while immersed in sorrow’—that one should not stand before his Lord in sorrow—but this one cannot do otherwise; what is his remedy?[115](#)

“Well, mystery of the matter: We have learned, ‘A person should always enter a distance of two doors....’—‘two doors, and then offer his prayer.’ These are two crowns.[116](#)

“Some teach as follows: *Joy* is Assembly of Israel. *Joy*, as has been established, for it is written: *You shall leave with joy and be led in peace...* (Isaiah 55:12). Israel is destined to leave exile with this *joy*. And who is that? Assembly of Israel. So, *Serve YHVH with joy* (Psalms 100:2), as is written: *בזאת (Be-zot), With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary* (Leviticus 16:3), and all is one.<sup>117</sup>

“*Come before Him with glad singing* (Psalms 100:2)—Her consummation, for *joy* is in the heart and *glad singing* in the mouth, and this is utter perfection. The perfection of this *joy* is recognized and known, and this is how a person is enhanced before his Lord. Then, *Know that YHVH is Elohim* (ibid., 3). All comes to one thing: that one must then unify the Holy Name fittingly, binding one to the other, so that all becomes one. This is service of the blessed Holy One!”<sup>118</sup>

Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Aḥa said to him, “Certainly so! Happy is the share of the righteous, who engage in Torah and know the ways of the blessed Holy One!”

They rose and followed Rabbi Abba for three miles.<sup>119</sup>

Rabbi Abba opened, saying, “*As for me, through Your great kindness I enter Your house, I bow at Your holy temple in awe of You* (Psalms 5:8). As they have established, a person should not enter the synagogue without first consulting Abraham and Isaac, for they instituted prayer to the blessed Holy One, as is written: *As for me, through Your great loving-kindness I enter Your house*—Abraham, as is written: *Loving-kindness to Abraham* (Micah 7:20). *I bow at Your holy temple in awe of You*—Isaac, as is written: *The Fear of Isaac was with me* (Genesis 31:42). One should include them first, and then enter the synagogue and offer his prayer. Then is written *He said to me, ‘You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory’* (Isaiah 49:3).”<sup>120</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “What difference does it make whether the ascent offering is *from the herd* or *from the flock* (Leviticus



*If his offering is an ascent offering from the herd* (Leviticus 1:3).<sup>121</sup>

1:10) or *from birds* (ibid., 14)? Is it all one, or are they different from one another? For they all become the same.<sup>122</sup>

“However, one whose hand can attain it offers *from the herd*, and if he cannot, *from the flock*, and if he cannot, *from birds*, as is written: [*If he is poor*] and his hand cannot attain (Leviticus 14:21). The blessed Holy One does not impose upon a person more than he can manage.”<sup>123</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Corresponding to the sin, so he would offer. A rich person, whose heart is arrogant, offers an ox, since his heart is more inclined to sin before his Lord. A person of moderate means offers *from the flock* because his heart is not so arrogant to sin before his Lord. A poor person, whose heart is not arrogant and whose will is lowliest of all, offers from the slightest of all. The offerings of all are recognized, each one individually, and the blessed Holy One renders judgment on every single one.”<sup>124</sup>

Rabbi El’azar asked his father, Rabbi Shim’on, “We have learned: ‘For three sins of the world, famine comes to the world...’ And all those sins are found only among the rich, because their hearts are arrogant, and not among the poor. What justice [9a] is there that the blessed Holy One kills the poor and sustains the rich? For now they will sin more!”<sup>125</sup>

He replied, “You have asked well, though the Companions have already established this. When the blessed Holy One wants to punish the wicked and eliminate them from the world, He gives them tranquility and recompenses them entirely—in order to eliminate them from the world!”<sup>126</sup>

“But come and see: Among all inhabitants of the world, none are as close to the King as those vessels that He uses.

And who are they? *A broken and crushed heart* (Psalms 51:19); *the crushed and lowly in spirit* (Isaiah 57:15)—these are the King’s vessels. When drought haunts the world and hunger overwhelms the poor, they weep and wail before the King, and the blessed Holy One draws them nearest of all, as is written: *For He has not spurned or scorned the suffering of the poor, and has not hidden His face from him; when he cried out to Him, He heard* (Psalms 22:25). Then the blessed Holy One reckons with the world and famine comes to the world. Woe to the wicked who cause this, when the King is aroused by the voice of the poor to examine the world! May the Merciful One save us from them and from their humiliation! Of then is written אשמע שמוע (*Shamo’a eshma*), *I will hear, hear, his outcry* (Exodus 22:22)—*shamo’a eshma, I will hear, hear*, twice: once for paying heed to their voice, and once for punishing those who brought this upon them, as is written: *I will hear, for I am compassionate* (ibid., 26); *My wrath will flare up [and I will kill you by the sword]* (ibid., 23). So when famine appears in the world, woe to the wicked rich, on account of the cries of the poor toward the blessed Holy One!<sup>127</sup>

“Come and see: The offering of the poor is the slightest of all, for his heart is broken. And even if he thinks of sinning, it is removed from him, because his suffering and that of his household is enough. Thus, each and every offering is unique, and all are recognized by the priests.”<sup>128</sup>

There was a rich man who offered two pigeons before the priest. When the priest saw him, he said, “This offering is not for you!”<sup>129</sup>

He came home sad. His brother said to him, “Why are you sad?”

He replied, “The priest did not sacrifice my offering.”

He asked him, “What was it?”

He replied, “Two pigeons.”

He said to him, “Aren’t those for a poor man and not for you? For look at what is written: *If he is poor and his hand*

*cannot attain...* (Leviticus 14:21)! Rather, bring your own offering.”<sup>130</sup>

He asked him, “What is that?”

He replied, “One ox.”

He said, “Well, if a single thought is so grave, I vow that I will not let a sinful thought arise in my mind!”<sup>131</sup>

From then on, what did he do? All day he engaged in business; at night he slept, and when he awoke he called his brother, who taught him words of Torah, and he studied until daybreak. So he learned Torah, and they called him Yehudah the Other.<sup>132</sup>

One day Rabbi Yeisa Sava encountered him and he was dividing his possessions, half for the poor and half for sailors to sell overseas. Then he sat down and studied Torah.

He opened, saying, “*Saul said to the Kenites, ‘Go, turn away, come down from amidst the Amalekites, [lest I sweep you away together with them, for you did kindness to all the Children of Israel when they came up from Egypt]’* (1 Samuel 15:6). *Saul said to the Kenites*. Who are הַקִּנִּי (ha-qeni), *the Kenites*? The descendants of Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, who made קִינָא (qinna), a nest, in the desert like a swallow, as is said: *and the swallow קֵן (qen), a nest, for herself* (Psalms 84:4)—in order to study Torah. For Torah does not require luxuries or business; rather, laboring in it day and night. Therefore, they journeyed to the desert outside Jericho, as is written: *The children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms...* (Judges 1:16).<sup>133</sup>

“*For you did kindness to all the Children of Israel* (1 Samuel 15:6)—because he hosted Moses in his house. And we have learned: because he taught one additional portion in the Torah, thereby doing *kindness to all the Children of Israel*.<sup>134</sup>

“Why does this matter appear here in the war with Amalek? Well, Saul said, ‘When Israel went out of Egypt, of

all the nations of the world not a single one attacked them, harassing them, except for Amalek. He perpetrated evil against Israel and waged war against them, whereas you greeted them in peace and did kindness to all of them. Therefore, it is beneath you to join them.’[135](#)

“Furthermore, what is written of Jethro? *Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took an ascent offering and sacrifices for God* (Exodus 18:12)—he brought an offering to *YHVH* and came to convert. What does this indicate? That an offering [9b] is esteemed by the blessed Holy One; because he brought an offering, it is written *Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God* (ibid.)—precisely! From here we learn that when anyone brings an offering with heartfelt devotion, the blessed Holy One appears before him.[136](#)

“Come and see: The offering of a poor person is esteemed before the blessed Holy One, because he brings two offerings: one, his own fat and blood; the other, that offering—for he has nothing to eat, yet he brings an offering. His offering is slightest of all: turtledoves or two young pigeons, or if not, a little flour, and he is forgiven. At that moment, a proclamation resounds: *For He has not spurned or scorned the suffering of the poor, and has not hidden His face from him; when he cried out to Him, He heard* (Psalms 22:25).”[137](#)

He said, “The offering of a poor person is most valuable of all, for that enabled me to obtain a share in Torah. Consequently, I divided up all my possessions among the poor, since they brought all this upon me.”[138](#)

“Just as a poor person burns up his own fat and blood, so that flour is heated with oil. Here we learn that anyone can bring a grain offering—a *grain offering on a griddle* (Leviticus 2:5) or a *grain offering in a pan* (ibid., 7)—for just as sin heated up his blood and fat with the fire of the evil impulse, inflaming all his limbs, so with this offering in exactly the same way. The essence of the offering

resembles the sin, and one should offer before the blessed Holy One the desire of his heart, spirit, and soul, for this is most precious of all to Him.<sup>139</sup>

“Happy is the share of the righteous, who bring an offering every day before the blessed Holy One! And what is that? Themselves and their souls, which they offer before Him. I myself want to bring this very offering, which the blessed Holy One desires. And yet the entire offering is preferable, so that all worlds may be blessed.”<sup>140</sup>

He opened again, saying, “*Blessed is YHVH from Zion, dwelling in Jerusalem. Hallelujah!* (Psalms 135:21). Now, is He *blessed from Zion*? Surely, He is *blessed* from the supernal deep stream! However, *Blessed is YHVH*—when the moon is illumined by radiance of the sun and they draw near one another, the light of one not withdrawing from the other. Sometimes, the moon is called by the name of the King, as is said: *And YHVH rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire* (Genesis 19:24). Not only this, but one agent is actually called by the name of the King.<sup>141</sup>

“Alternatively, *Blessed is YHVH from Zion*—from which place is it revealed that the blessed Holy One is *blessed*? The verse goes on to say: *from Zion*—from the place of *Zion* it is known that He is *blessed*. Why? Because it is written: *For there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life* (Psalms 133:3).”<sup>142</sup>

Rabbi Yeisa said to him, “Happy is your share, that you have attained all this! Happy are those who engage in Torah, for whoever engages in Torah is as though he is attached to the blessed Holy One, as is written: *You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!* (Deuteronomy 4:4).”

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters...’* (Genesis 1:6). Come and see: When the blessed Holy One created the world, He

*If his offering is a sacrifice of well-being* (Leviticus 3:1).[143](#)

created seven heavens above; He created seven earths; He created seven seas; He created seven rivers;

He created seven days; He created seven weeks; He created seven years seven times, seven thousand years that the world exists. The blessed Holy One is in the seventh of all.[144](#)

“Seven heavens above, and in each and every one: ministers, stars, and constellations, serving in each and every firmament—all dwelling one above the other, to receive the yoke of their Master’s kingdom. In all of those firmaments are various chariots and ministers, one upon another—some with six wings, some with four wings; some with four faces, some with two faces, some with one; some flaming fire, some water, some wind, as is written: *He makes His angels winds, His ministers flaming fire* (Psalms 104:4).[145](#)

“All those firmaments, one upon the other, are like skins of an onion, some below and some above. Every firmament moves and trembles from fear of their Master; at His command they move, and at His command they stand still. And above them all, the blessed Holy One, conveying all by His power and might.[146](#)

“Correspondingly, seven earths below, all in the inhabited realm, although [10a] some are higher and some are lower, and the land of Israel is highest of all, and Jerusalem is highest of habitation.[147](#)

“Our Companions who dwell in the south have seen in the books of the ancients and in the Book of Adam that those earths are divided as follows: they exist below corresponding to those firmaments above, one upon another, one upon another, and between each earth and the next is a firmament separating one from the other. So all those earths are distinguished by names, and in each of



them is a Garden of Eden and a Hell. In them are creatures, differing from one another, corresponding to the pattern above: some with two faces, some with four, some with one, and the appearance of these is unlike those.[148](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘But all inhabitants of the world issued from Adam! How did Adam descend to all those earths and engender children? And how many wives did he have?’ Well, Adam existed only in this highest world of all called *Tevel*, Firm Land, as is said: *He commanded His earth Tevel*. This *Tevel* is linked with the firmament above and joined with the supernal Name, as is written: *He judges Tevel with righteousness* (Psalms 9:9)—*with righteousness*, surely! So the children of Adam exist in this highest one called *Tevel*, and they are superior to all, corresponding to the pattern above.[149](#)

“How so? Just as above there are firmaments, with one firmament highest of all, above which is the throne of the blessed Holy One, as is said: *like the appearance of sapphire, image of a throne. And upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of a human being upon it above* (Ezekiel 1:26)—so here too in this *Tevel* is a king of all. And who is that? The human being, who is not to be found among all those lower ones.[150](#)

“And those lower ones, where did they come from? Well, from residual vapors of the earth, assisted by the firmament above, issue creatures differing from one another, some clothed in shells, like those worms found in the earth—some of them with red, black, or white shells, some of any color. All the creatures are like that, and they endure for only ten years or so.[151](#)

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava it is explained further that all the inhabited world revolves like a ball, some below and some above. All those creatures differ in their appearance, due to the difference of the atmosphere in every place, and they remain in existence like human beings. Consequently, there is a place in the inhabited

world where day shines for some, while for others it is dark—for these it is day, while for those it is night. And there is a place where it is entirely day, and night exists for only a brief time.<sup>152</sup>

“And that which is said in the books of the ancients and in the Book of Adam is correct, for it is written: *I praise You, for awesomely and wondrously am I made, wondrous are Your works, and my soul deeply knows it* (Psalms 139:14), and it is written: *How many are Your works, O YHVH! All of them You made in wisdom; the earth is filled with Your creatures* (ibid. 104:24). So all is fine. This mystery has been transmitted to the masters of wisdom and not to markers of boundaries, for it is a deep mystery of Torah.<sup>153</sup>

“Similarly, in the sea, which has numerous creatures differing from one another, as is written: *This sea, vast and broad of reach, [gliding creatures there beyond number, living beings small and great]. There ships go, [Leviathan whom You fashioned to play with]* (Psalms 104:25–26). All interdependent, all interlinked, and all corresponding to the pattern above. And in all those worlds, none rules but the human being, with the blessed Holy One over him.”

Rabbi Nehorai Sava sailed on the Great Sea, and the sea grew stormy and all those aboard the ship perished. A miracle happened to him and he descended through certain pathways in the heart of the sea and emerged beneath the sea into an inhabited land. He saw some of those creatures—all of them small—and they were praying, but he did not know what they were saying. A miracle happened to him and he ascended. He said, “Happy are the righteous, who engage in Torah and know concealed mysteries above and below! Woe to those who dispute their words and do not believe!”<sup>154</sup>

From that day on, when he came to the house of study and they were uttering a word of Torah, he would weep. They asked him, “Why are you weeping?”



He replied, "Because I transgressed believing in the Rabbis, and I fear the judgment of that world."[155](#)

*God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters..."* (Genesis 1:6). Rabbi Yehudah says, "Were it not for that firmament dividing *water from water*, there would be conflict in the world on account of them. But [10b] this *firmament* makes peace between them, and the world is established only on peace."[156](#)

"Come and see: The blessed Holy One is called Peace; He is peace, His name is Peace, and all is bound together in peace."[157](#)

Rabbi Abba said, "I see that the entire Holy Name is peace, and all is one, with paths diverging to this side and to that."[158](#)

"י (Yod) of the Holy Name is bound with three knots, for it is י (yod)—one tip above, one tip below, and one in the middle, since three knots are concatenated in it. One tip above, highest of the high, displaying the supernal Crown—head of all heads, presiding over all."[159](#)

"One tip in the middle, another head—for it is three heads, each one of them a head in itself; so the middle tip is another head emerging from the tip above, and it is head of all the other heads, by which the Holy Name is constructed. It is the head most concealed of all."[160](#)

"Another, lower head—a head to water the Garden, a spring of water, by which all plants are saturated."[161](#)

"This is י (yod) with three knots, so it is called a 'chain,' like a chain that is interlinked, and all is one.

"It has been taught in the Book of Enoch: When he was shown supernal mysteries and saw the Tree in the Garden of Eden, he was shown wisdom by sublime mystery, and he saw that all worlds are interconnected. He asked them, 'Upon what are they established?'[162](#)

"They replied, 'All are established upon י (yod), from which they were composed and linked together.'[163](#)



faces were male and female, corresponding to the pattern above: *vav, dalet*—and they are ו ד (*dalet, vav*) from below to above, and all is one matter. Thirteen attributes depend upon it, and thus יד (*yod*) includes ד ו (*vav, dalet*), as has been said and established.<sup>168</sup>

“Come and see: Ten names corresponding to ten letters. And in the Book of Rav Hamnuna: There are eight, and two rungs corresponding to two firmaments. The names change: ten, nine, eight, and seven.<sup>169</sup>

“First, יה (*Yah*), for יד (*yod*) includes ה (*he*), and *he* issues from *yod*. So *Hokhmah* is called *Yah*.<sup>170</sup>

“Second, יהוה (*YHVH*), pronounced *Elohim*, for that river is of Compassion, and since Judgments are aroused from it, it is spelled as Compassion and vowelized as *Elohim*—but it is not *Elohim*.<sup>171</sup> [11a]

“Third, אל (*El*), God, who is great, and this is called *the great God* (Jeremiah 32:18).<sup>172</sup>

“Fourth, אלהים (*Elohim*), God, in whom Judgments are aroused, and He is mighty *Gevurah*.<sup>173</sup>

“Fifth, יהוה (*YHVH*), totality of all complete faith, and this is perfect Compassion.<sup>174</sup>

“Sixth and seventh are called צבאות (*Tseva'ot*), Hosts.<sup>175</sup>

“Eighth, אל חי (*El hai*), Living God, as is said: *For there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life* (Psalms 133:3). This is Righteous One, whence all life issues, and He is called *YHVH*, as is said: *YHVH is righteous* (Psalms 11:5). This is the small ו (*vav*) of the Holy Name; thus, וו (*vav*), two.<sup>176</sup>

“Ninth, אדני (*Adonai*), My Lord, and this is holy *Malkhut*, whence דינין (*dinin*), Judgments, issue into the world. This is the last of all the names.<sup>177</sup>

“The name אהיה (*Ehyeh*), I am, is entirety and secrecy of beginning, as has been established: Supernal *Kitra* (Crown), head of all heads, its name concealed, unrevealed.<sup>178</sup>

“And in the Book of *Aggadta* ten names are written in another fashion, but we have not learned it so.”<sup>179</sup>

Rabbi Abba opened, “*Awake, north wind! Come, south wind!...* (Song of Songs 4:16). *Awake*, צפון (*tsafon*), *north wind!*—ascent offerings slaughtered בצפון (*ba-tsafon*), in the north, for they are thoughts בצפוני (*bi-tsfunei*), in recesses of, the heart; and where Judgment prevails, since thought occurs at night, when Judgment prevails. The north wind blows at midnight when people awaken and David’s harp plays itself and human thoughts are aroused.<sup>180</sup>

“*Come, south wind!*—שלמים (*shelamim*), peace offerings, slaughtered in the south, for they are שלמא (*shelama*), peace, of all, peace among those above and those below; שלימו (*shelimu*), completion, of directions of the world, completion from the aspect of faith. *Shelamim*, peace offerings—for they are peace among all; the owners eat of them and enjoy them, for these bring peace to them and to the whole world. Purification offerings and guilt offerings are eaten by the priests, for these are intended to atone for [the owners of the offering] and to remove their sins. Of all offerings, none are as beloved to the blessed Holy One as peace offerings, so that peace may prevail among those above and those below.<sup>181</sup>

“Highest of all—incense, which is most perfect of all, not offered for sin or guilt or transgression, but rather out of joy, as is said: *Oil and incense rejoice the heart* (Proverbs 27:9), as has been established. So incense is offered only when oil is offered, as is written: *Aaron shall burn upon it aromatic incense morning after morning; when he tends the lamps he shall burn it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight he shall burn it* (Exodus 30:7-8)—so that *oil and incense* may be as one.<sup>182</sup>

“Come and see: Peace offerings are entirely peace, and strife is not aroused in the world; but incense binds the bond of faith.”<sup>183</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “All those ten names are written, and we have learned: First, אהיה (*Ehyeh*), *I am* (Exodus 3:14),

supernal concealment—like someone saying, ‘I am who I am,’ without it being known who he is. *That I am* (ibid.)—ready to be revealed in those other crowns. For at first, concealed; then, beginning to be revealed, until reaching complete holy revelation.<sup>184</sup>

“So it is written concerning Moses: *Ehyeh, I am*, at first, concealment of all—‘I am who I am.’ Then, *that I am*—I am ready to be revealed. Then, the last *Ehyeh, I am* (Exodus 3:14); this is when Mother conceives, and He is still concealed. When is He revealed? When it is written *Go and gather the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘YHVH, God of your fathers, [has appeared to me, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, “I have surely taken account of you and what is being done to you in Egypt”]*’ (ibid., 16). This is consummation of all! ‘Here is revelation and binding of My name.’ So first of all, *Ehyeh, I am*.<sup>185</sup>

“Second, ך (Yah), for *Hokhmah* generates ך (he)—concealed within it, never separating from it, as has been established. *A river issues from Eden* (Genesis 2:10), similarly; and I learned from Father: ך (Yod), as has been said. Then, ך (Yah), never parting. *Yod* generates *he*, like this: ך ך (yod, he). Thus, *yod*, and the river that it emanates, flowing from it.<sup>186</sup>

“Below, two children, issuing from them. From the side of Father, *yod*, issues a Son, who is linked with *yod* and merges with that river. From the side of Mother, issues a Daughter, who is the lower river. This Son then proceeds, issuing from them, [11b] and He is ך (vav), who inherits Father and Mother. Linked to Him is faith of all, and that Daughter is nourished by Him from the inheritance that He receives.<sup>187</sup>

“Therefore, one who wishes to write the Holy Name: ך (Yod) first, one tip above, one tip in the middle, and one tip below, as has been said. Then ך ך (yod, he), never separating, like this—so that both of them will be totally complete: Father and Mother, Son and Daughter, like this—ך ך (yod, he). Here you have full perfection of faith.<sup>188</sup>

“Then faith spreads, and two children issue from this totality on their paths. The Son issues from both of them, and He is ו (vav) of the Holy Name. The Daughter issues from the side of Mother, and She is the last ה (he) of the Holy Name; She is completed only with vav, for She is nourished by Him. So one should write ו (vav) and then ה ו (vav, he), like this: ה ו (vav, he). Here is vav and the extension issuing from it, like the river issuing from י (yod), nourished by it; here is the Son, issuing from it below.[189](#)

“These words were established by Father and have been spoken. Having attained these words, I utter them, for such was Father’s pledge. And so should a person be careful with the Holy Name, writing it in this manner, fittingly. Otherwise, it is not considered a Holy Name, but rather defective. And whoever renders the Holy Name defective—better for him if he had never been created![190](#)

“Third, יהוה (YHVH), pronounced אלהים (Elohim), as has been said: Compassion, from which Judgment issues. This is that river flowing forth from Eden.[191](#)

“Fourth, אל גדול (El gadol), Great God, as has been said, and this is Gedullah.[192](#)

“Fifth, אלהים (Elohim), and this is always Gevurah.[193](#)

“Sixth, יהוה (YHVH): Compassion, total perfection, essence of all—bond of faith, joining all sides. This is Tif’eret Yisra’el.[194](#)

“Seventh and eighth, צבאות (Tseva’ot), Hosts. Thus, YHVH is close to all, joining all sides. Sometimes יהוה אלהים (YHVH Elohim), showing that Tif’eret is close to Gevurah; sometimes יהוה צבאות (YHVH Tseva’ot), showing that Tif’eret is close to Netsah and Hod, who are called Tseva’ot. As has been said, words of a faithful prophet are recognized from his mouth: when he said *Thus says YHVH Elohim*, or when he said *Thus says YHVH Tseva’ot*, they knew from where the words had come.[195](#)

“Ninth, שדי (Shaddai), who said to the world, די (Dai), Enough!’ For dai, enough, refers to satisfaction, which comes to the world only from Righteous One, who is



Foundation of the World, who said to the world, ‘Dai, Enough!’ [196](#)

“Tenth, אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*), My Lord, for דִּינָא (*Dina*), Judgment, of *Malkhuta* is Judgment surely! And this one is for waging wars of the King in the world; this is Lower *Gevurah* and Righteousness. [197](#)

“These are the ten names by which the blessed Holy One is called, all interlinked in complete union. These are the holy crowns of the King, by which He is recognized; they are His name and He is they. When they are all linked as one by the fragrance of incense, then it is called קִטְרֵת (*qetoret*)—binding, bound as one. Happy is the share of the righteous, who know the paths of Torah and know how to recognize the Glory of their Lord, as is written: *They will come and see My glory* (Isaiah 66:18)!” [198](#)

*If his offering is a sacrifice of well-being...* (Leviticus 3:1). [199](#)

Rabbi Shim'on says, “It is written: *ten, ten shekels per ladle by the sanctuary shekel*

(Numbers 7:86). *Ten, ten*—why does this appear? Well, *ten* for the act of Creation and *ten* for the giving of Torah: ten utterances in the act of Creation, ten utterances in the giving of Torah. What does this indicate? That the world was created only for the sake of Torah. For as long as Israel engages in Torah, the world endures; and whenever Israel neglects Torah, what is written? *Were it not for My covenant with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth* (Jeremiah 33:25).

“Come and see: Ten utterances in the act of Creation, as we have learned: ‘By ten utterances, the world was created.’ Ten utterances for the giving of Torah. [200](#)

“It is written: *I am YHVH your God* (Exodus 20:2), and it is written in the account of Creation: ‘*Let there be light!*’ *And there was light* (Genesis 1:3)—this is faith, for the blessed Holy One [12a] is called *light*, as is written: *YHVH is*

*my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?* (Psalms 27:1).[201](#)

“It is written: *You shall have no other gods beside Me* (Exodus 20:3), and it is written in the account of Creation: *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water* (Genesis 1:6). *Let there be a firmament*—Israel, who are the portion of the blessed Holy One, who are linked to the place called Heaven. This accords with the question that Rabbi Yeisa Sava once sent to Rabbi Ilai: ‘All the other nations God entrusted to empowered princes; where did He entrust Israel?’ He sent back this: ‘*God placed them in the firmament of heaven* (Genesis 1:17)’—a fine message![202](#)

“*In the midst of the waters* (Genesis 1:6)—amid words of Torah. *And let it divide water from water* (ibid.)—dividing the blessed Holy One, who is *a well of living water* (Song of Songs 4:15), from idolatry, which is *broken cisterns that can hold no water* (Jeremiah 2:13), for that is unfresh, foul water. So holy Israel divides *water from water*.[203](#)

“It is written: *You shall not take the name of YHVH your God in vain* (Exodus 20:7), and it is written in the account of Creation: *Let the waters under heaven be gathered to one place* (Genesis 1:9). Come and see: Whoever swears falsely by the Holy Name is considered to have separated Mother from Her location above, and holy crowns are not aligned, as is said: *A slanderer separates an intimate* (Proverbs 16:28)—and *an intimate* is none other than the blessed Holy One. It is written: *Let the waters under heaven be gathered to one place*—do not make a separation by swearing falsely. *To one place*—fittingly in the place of truth, not to another place, of falsehood. And what is falsehood? When water flows to another place, not its own.[204](#)

“It is written: *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy* (Exodus 20:8), and it is written in the account of Creation: *Let the earth sprout grass* (Genesis 1:11). When



does the Holy Land flourish and become adorned with Her crowns? You must say, on the Sabbath day, for then the Bride is joined with the King, to generate grasses and blessings for the world.[205](#)

“It is written: *Honor your father and your mother...* (Exodus 20:12), and it is written in the account of Creation: *Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven* (Genesis 1:14). What does this indicate? Well, these *lights* are *your father and your mother*. *Your father* is the sun; *your mother*, the moon. The sun is none other than the blessed Holy One, as is written: *For a sun and shield is YHVH of Hosts...* (Psalms 84:12); and the moon is none other than Assembly of Israel, as is written: *Your moon will not wane* (Isaiah 60:20). So all is one.[206](#)

“It is written: *You shall not murder* (Exodus 20:13), and it is written in the account of Creation: *Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living beings* (Genesis 1:20)—‘and as for you, you shall not kill a human being, who is called so,’ as is written: *and the human became a living being* (ibid. 2:7). ‘You shall not be like these fish, of which the big swallow the small.’[207](#)

“It is written: *You shall not commit adultery* (Exodus 20:13), and it is written in the account of Creation: *Let the earth bring forth living beings after their kind* (Genesis 1:24)—implying that a person should not act falsely with another woman who is not his mate. Thus it is written: *Let the earth bring forth living beings after their kind*—implying that a woman should give birth only from her own kind. And who is her own kind? Her mate.[208](#)

“It is written: *You shall not steal* (Exodus 20:13), and it is written in the account of Creation: *God said, ‘Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant’* (Genesis 1:29)—‘what I have given you and entrusted to you shall be yours, and you shall not steal what belongs to another.’[209](#)

“It is written: *You shall not bear false witness against your fellow* (Exodus 20:13), and it is written in the account

of Creation: *Let us make a human in our image, according to our likeness* (Genesis 1:26)—‘you shall not bear false witness against whoever is in the image of the King.’ Whoever bears false witness against his fellow is considered to have borne false witness above.<sup>210</sup>

“It is written: *You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife* (Exodus 20:14), and it is written in the account of Creation: *It is not good for the human to be alone* (Genesis 2:18)—‘here is your mate facing you, so *you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.*’<sup>211</sup>

“Thus, ten utterances for the act of Creation and ten utterances for the giving of Torah, corresponding to *ten, ten shekels per ladle* בשקל הקדש (*be-sheqel ha-qodesh*), *by the sanctuary shekel* (Numbers 7:86)—*be-sheqel ha-qodesh*, by the holy weight, they were weighed as one in a single balancing. Consequently, the world endures and peace prevails.<sup>212</sup>

“So, *If his offering is a sacrifice of שלמים* (*shelamim*), *well-being* (Leviticus 3:1)—to preserve the world בשלמא (*bi-shlama*), in peace. Furthermore, it atones for positive commandments and negative commandments, bringing peace to all.<sup>213</sup>

“It is written: *Dominion and fear are with Him; He makes peace in His heights* (Job 25:2). This verse has been established by the Companions, but *dominion* is [12b] Abraham, of whom is written *I will make your name great* (Genesis 12:2), and it is written: *You are a prince of God among us* (ibid. 23:6). *And fear*—Isaac, as is written: *The Fear of Isaac was with me* (ibid. 31:42). *He makes peace in His heights*—Jacob, as is written: *You give truth to Jacob* (Micah 7:20), and it is written: *Love truth and peace* (Zechariah 8:19), for *truth and peace* are interlinked.<sup>214</sup>

“So this is perfection of all, and *shelamim*, peace offerings, are שלימותא (*sheleimuta*), perfection, and שלמא (*shelama*), peace, of all. Whoever offers them increases peace in the whole world. Jacob makes peace, as we have said, for

he grasps this one and that one; and *shelamim* embrace positive commandments and negative commandments, on this side and on that side, so they are called *shelamim*. Mystery of the matter, as is written: *Jacob was איש תם (ish tam), a simple man* (Genesis 25:27), and we translate this גבר שלים (*gevar shelim*), a complete man—complete above and below.”[215](#)

Rabbi Aḥa said, “It is written: *If he offers it for thanksgiving...* (Leviticus 7:12). What does תודה (*todah*), *thanksgiving*, indicate? As is said: וְהִתְוַדָּה (ve-hitvaddah), *He shall confess, that עליה (aleha), concerning which, he has sinned* (ibid. 5:5)—*aleha, against her*, precisely! So חלות מצות (*ḥallot matsot*), *unleavened cakes* (ibid. 7:12)—this has already been established, and why מצה (*matsah*), unleavened bread, appears; and חלת (*ḥallot*), *cakes*, is written deficiently because *he has sinned against her*.”[216](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya taught, “It is written: *with זבח תודת שלמיו (zevah todah shelamav), his thanksgiving peace sacrifice* (Leviticus 7:13)—שלימו (*shelimu*), perfection, of all. *Shelamav, his peace offerings—two. Thanksgiving is known*.”[217](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said to him, “*Thanksgiving is known; shelamav, his peace offerings—why two?*”

He replied, “Two *vavs*: וּ (vav), namely שלימו (*shelimu*), perfection, of all.”[218](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “*His thanksgiving peace offerings—*for it brings peace to all and arouses Compassion in all worlds.”[219](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “What Rabbi Ḥiyya said is fine, for Assembly of Israel is blessed by those two, which are peace of all.”[220](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “*Leavened bread* (Leviticus 7:13), as is known—and as has been said: Corresponding to the sin, so he offers, in exactly the same manner.”[221](#)

“Come and see: חלת מצות (*Ḥallot matsot*), *unleavened cakes* (Leviticus 7:12), deficient, as has been said. *Mixed with oil*

*and unleavened wafers* (ibid.)—what does this allude to?”[222](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, “These are *the flame of the whirling sword...* (Genesis 3:24), for they all are appointed over the ways of human beings—those who transgress decrees of Torah. Therefore all is *mixed with oil*, to draw anointing oil from a high place downward so that all may be blessed as one by that holy anointing oil.[223](#)

“And this is wine for the libation—as has been established, *one-fourth of a hin* (Numbers 15:5). On one place depend wine and oil—and water for libation, and we have established these matters. Water—to saturate the Garden and all those plants; so there is water, and then there is water! Wine—there is a place that is good, and there is a place intended to punish, which is Judgment.[224](#)

“Consequently, one who sees it in a dream—for some it is good, and for some it is Judgment. If he is learned, it is written: *wine that gladdens the human heart* (Psalms 104:15), and it is written: *For your caresses are fine, deriving from wine* (Song of Songs 1:2)—this is preserved wine delighting all. If not, *Give beer to one who is perishing, and wine to the embittered* (Proverbs 31:6)—there is another wine, which is Judgment.[225](#)

“Therefore one should bring these items with his offering, so that Judgment will be removed and Compassion be aroused—wine is removed and wine appears—and so with all.[226](#)

“Oil should never be lacking from one's offering, except for the grain offering of jealousy, as is written: *He shall put no oil upon it...* (Numbers 5:15)—since here Compassion is not intended, for all is Judgment, as is written: *Her belly will swell and her thigh sag* (Numbers 5:27); *May YHVH make you [a curse and an imprecation in the midst of your people]* (ibid., 21). Thus, *This is the teaching of the sacrifice of shelamim.... If he offers it for thanksgiving...* (Leviticus 7:11-12).”[227](#)

Rabbi Hizkiyah was sitting before Rabbi Yitshak. They rose at midnight to study Torah. Rabbi Yitshak opened, saying, “*A song of ascents. Here, bless YHVH, all you servants of YHVH, who stand in the house of YHVH by night!*” (Psalms 134:1). This verse has already been established by the Companions and discussed, but this is praise of all those Scions of Faith. And who are they? Those who engage in Torah and know how to unify the Holy Name fittingly. The praise of those Scions of Faith—those who rise at midnight to study [13a] Torah and cleave to Assembly of Israel, praising the blessed Holy One with words of Torah.<sup>228</sup>

“Come and see: When a person rises at night to study Torah and the north wind stirs and the night is split, the Doe stands and praises the blessed Holy One. And when She rises, many thousands and myriads stand firmly with Her, all beginning to praise the Holy King.<sup>229</sup>

“One who is virtuous and rises at midnight to study Torah—the blessed Holy One listens to him, as has been established, for it is written: *You who dwell in the gardens, companions listen for your voice; let me hear!* (Song of Songs 8:13). All the multitude above and all those praisers who sing to their Master subside for the sake of the praise of those studying Torah, and they declare: ‘*Here, bless YHVH, all you servants of YHVH* (Psalms 134:1)—you, *bless YHVH; you, praise YHVH; you, crown the King!*’<sup>230</sup>

“And that Doe adorns Herself with that person before the King and says, ‘See the son with whom I have come before You, with whom I have been aroused before You!’ Who are they whose every praise is to the King? As is written: *who stand in the house of YHVH by night* (Psalms 134:1)—these are called *servants of YHVH*; these are worthy of blessing the King, as is written: *Lift up your hands toward holiness and bless YHVH* (ibid., 2); ‘you are worthy of conveying blessing to the Holy King.’<sup>231</sup>

“*Lift up your hands toward holiness.* What is *holiness*? A supernal place from which issues the spring of the deep



stream, as is written: *A river issues from Eden* (Genesis 2:10), and *Eden* is called supernal *holiness*. Thus it is written: *Lift up your hands toward holiness and bless YHVH*. And a person who does so and attains this—what do they proclaim over him? *YHVH will bless you from Zion* (Psalms 134:3)—‘you bless the blessed Holy One from the place called supernal *holiness*, and He will bless you from the place called *Zion*. You and *Matronita* will be blessed as one. Just as your coupling was as one, praising the King, so from the very place whence She is blessed, He will provide blessings for you,’ as is written: *YHVH will bless you from Zion*.<sup>232</sup>

“Furthermore, *and you will see the goodness of Jerusalem* (Psalms 128:5). What is *the goodness of Jerusalem*? The blessings flowing to Her from the King through that holy rung. So, *YHVH will bless you from Zion [and you will see the goodness of Jerusalem]*—all is one expression.<sup>233</sup>

“Furthermore, *You will see children of your children. [Peace upon Israel!]* (Psalms 128:6). *You will see children of your children*—fine. But what is, *Peace upon Israel*? What need is there here for *Israel*? Well, because he increases peace above; for when he attains all this, he increases peace above and below—*Peace upon Israel*, unspecified. *Peace* is the praise of those above and below, praise of all nations. And words of Torah increase peace in the world, as is written: *YHVH gives strength to His people, YHVH blesses His people with peace* (Psalms 29:11).”<sup>234</sup>

Rabbi Yose opened,  
“Before the day  
breathes and the  
shadows flee, I will hasten to the mountain of myrrh and to  
the hill of frankincense (Song of Songs 4:6). How greatly  
should humans beware of their sins—not to sin before their  
Lord! For every day a herald comes forth, declaring:

*If a soul sins* (Leviticus 5:1).<sup>235</sup>

‘Arouse your hearts in the presence of the Holy King! Awaken to beware of your sins! Inspect the holy soul that He infused in you from a supernal holy place!’<sup>236</sup>

“For we have learned: When the blessed Holy One draws out souls to descend into human beings, He admonishes each one with many declarations, with many quaestors, to keep His commandments. Furthermore, He passes her through one million eight thousand worlds, in which to delight and see the glory of those who engage in Torah. She emerges and stands before the King in a glorious garment in the image of this world. In a garment of supernal radiance, she gazes upon the glory of the King each day, and she is adorned with many crowns.<sup>237</sup>

“When the time comes to descend to the world, she inhabits the Garden of Eden for thirty days, to see the glory of the spirits of the righteous, and then ascends to her place; afterward, she descends to the world. [13b] The Holy King adorns her with seven crowns before she arrives and enters her place, dwelling in this world and delving into darkness. The Torah is astonished over her and says, ‘All this glory and all this perfection bestowed upon the soul by the Holy King—and she sins before Him! *If a soul sins*—how can it be that she sins?’”<sup>238</sup>

And Rabbi Yose said, “*If a soul sins*—let us return to the verse: *Before the day breathes* (Song of Songs 4:6)—advice for this soul to beware of her sins and return to be purify herself *before the day breathes*, before the day of this world exhales and that harsh day arrives when the King will demand justice, making her leave this world.<sup>239</sup>

“*And the shadows flee* (Song of Songs 4:6). This is a secret of the Companions, who say: When a person’s time comes to leave the world, his image is removed from him, as is written: *Before the day breathes*, before the day blows, to leave this world—and *the shadows flee*, the image is removed—let him return before his Lord.”<sup>240</sup>

Rabbi El'azar said, "A person has two images when he is alive, one large and one small, and they exist together—then he is fully alive. Thus it is written *and the shadows flee*. Then a person should examine his actions, mending himself before his Lord and confessing what he has done, for the blessed Holy One is called Compassionate and He accepts those who repent before Him.<sup>241</sup>

"This is *Before the day breathes and the shadows flee*—for once those *shadows* are removed from him and he is held in a neck-iron, it is still considered repentance, but not as fine as when he is fully alive. And King Solomon declared: *Remember your Creator in the days of your youth...* (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Thus, *Before the day breathes...*—for a person should rectify his actions; because when the day comes for him to depart from the world, the blessed Holy One wonders at him, saying, '*If a soul sins when she has heard a voice of adjuration!* (Leviticus 5:1)—look, I adjured her with an oath in My name not to betray Me, and I admonished her when she descended! *He being witness* (ibid.)—surely, the many times that I admonished her to keep My commandments.'<sup>242</sup>

"Consequently, since a person is a *witness*, when he returns to the King, *having seen or known* (Leviticus 5:1)—*having seen* those sins that he committed and having examined them; *or having known* clearly that he transgressed his Lord's command—*if he does not tell*: if he does not confess them before his Lord, then what is written when he leaves this world? *He shall bear his iniquity* (ibid.). And when *he shall bear his iniquity*, how can a door be opened for him? How can he stand before his Lord? Therefore it is written: *If a soul sins.*"<sup>243</sup>

Rabbi Abba opened,  
*If a soul sins* (Leviticus 5:21).<sup>244</sup> "All this has come upon us, yet we have not forgotten You, nor have we betrayed Your covenant (Psalms



44:18). כל זאת באתנו (*Kol zot ba'atnu*), *All this has come upon us*—the verse should read כל אלה באו עלינו (*Kol elleh ba'u aleinu*), *All these have come upon us*. However, all judgments above have come upon us, *yet we have not forgotten You*—we have not forgotten the words of Your Torah. From here we learn: Whoever forgets words of Torah and is unwilling to study it is like one who has forgotten the blessed Holy One, for the entire Torah is the name of the blessed Holy One.<sup>245</sup>

*“Nor have we betrayed Your covenant*—not betraying this sign of the holy covenant inscribed in a person, for whoever betrays it is like one who betrays the name of the King, for the name of the King is inscribed in a person.<sup>246</sup>

*“Another verse confirms this one, as is written: If we had forgotten the name of God and spread out our palms to an alien god (Psalms 44:21). If we had forgotten the name of God—as is said: Yet we have not forgotten You, namely Torah, which is the name of our God. And spread out our palms to an alien god—as is said: nor have we betrayed Your covenant. All is one matter.*

*“What is the betrayal here? That he spreads out his palms to another domain and betrays this covenant. So Torah is linked to this, for whoever maintains this is considered to have maintained the whole Torah, and whoever betrays this is considered to have betrayed the whole Torah.<sup>247</sup>*

*“Come and see: Before Abraham was circumcised, it is not said that he observed the Torah. Once he was circumcised, what is written? Because Abraham has listened to My voice and has kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, ותורתִי (*ve-torotai*), and My teachings (Genesis 26:5)—all because he was circumcised, marked with the holy mark, and he maintained it properly, Scripture regards him as if he kept the whole Torah. Similarly, concerning Isaac [14a] it is written: My covenant I will establish with Isaac (Genesis 17:21). Thus, Torah is called covenant.<sup>248</sup>*

“Come and see: Joseph, because he maintained this sign of covenant and refused to betray it, attained honor in this world and in the world that is coming. Furthermore, the blessed Holy One placed His name within him, as is written: *A testimony He ordained it* בִּיהוֹסֵף (*bi-Yhosef*), *in Joseph* (Psalms 81:6). He attained the blessing of this world and the blessing of the world that is coming.”[249](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “It is written: *His firstling bull is his glory...* (Deuteronomy 33:17)—Joseph attained a bull, which was the first offering.”[250](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said to him, “If so, why was he blessed with something of the left? It should have been of the right, for look at what is written: *and on the left a bull’s face* (Ezekiel 1:10)!”[251](#)

He replied, “So that he could protect against the sin of Jeroboam.”[252](#)

He said to him, “I have learned a mystery about this verse. For since Joseph maintained this covenant—for this covenant is joined to two rungs, and those two rungs above are given names; and we have learned in the passage of the red cow that this cow is one rung, and the cow’s mate is called ‘bull,’ and this is *His firstling bull is his glory* (Deuteronomy 33:17), surely! This is not like a bull of the world; rather, *wild ox’s antlers his horns* (ibid.)—he is superior to all others, and thus, *With them he gores peoples, all together, the ends of the earth* (ibid.).[253](#)

“This implies that whoever maintains this holy mark is linked with those two sublime rungs, protecting him completely, crowning him with supernal glory. Therefore, [Joseph] attained two kingdoms, one himself, and one his descendant—for when Solomon clung to foreign women, the kingdom was given to Jeroboam. Thus, covenant is most precious of all.”[254](#)

Therefore Rabbi Shim’on said, “A person who has a son is linked to *Shekhinah*, who is an opening to all supernal openings, an opening linked to the Holy Name.” For Rabbi

Shim'on has said, "The blood flowing from that child is preserved before the blessed Holy One, and when judgments are aroused in the world, the blessed Holy One gazes upon that blood and saves the world. Thus it is written: *Eight days old every male among you shall be circumcised...* (Genesis 17:12), and it is written: *and if in strength, eighty years* (Psalms 90:10), and all attains one balance."[255](#)

It has been taught: By that blood the world becomes worthy of being established in love and all worlds endure, as is written: *Were it not for My covenant with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth* (Jeremiah 33:25). *Were it not for My covenant—granted. Why with day and night?*[256](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Two crowns are joined as one, and they are an opening to all other crowns. And it has been taught: One is Judgment and one is Compassion, rendering one another sweetly firm, male and female. On the male side dwells *Hesed* (Love), on the female side dwells *Dina* (Judgment); so one is white and the other red, tempering one another. Thus they interlink, and all is fragrantly firm. This is *covenant* called *day and night*, grasping both of them.[257](#)

"For this, a person is called complete, as is written: *Walk in My presence and be complete* (Genesis 17:1). When is one called *complete*? When he attains both of them: *day and night*. And it is written: *By day YHVH ordains* יָסַדוּ (*hasdo*), *His love, and in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9). Abraham inherited both of them, but *Hesed* was not established in him completely until he was circumcised. Once he was circumcised, it became established in him and he attained both of them. As we have learned, for it is written: *He was sitting at the opening of the tent in the heat of the day* (Genesis 18:1). *The opening of the tent*—the tenth crown of the King, who is the opening to the entire holy Dwelling of the other crowns. And it is written: *Open*

for me the gates of righteousness (Psalms 118:19); and King David called it ‘an opening,’ as is written: *This is the gate to YHVH* (ibid., 20).<sup>258</sup>

“כחום (Ke-ḥom), *In the heat of, the day* (Genesis 18:1)—כנהירו (ki-nhiru) like the radiance, of *Hesed*, his inherited share. As he sat there, so he sat here. When were they established in him? When he was circumcised. Therefore it is written: *covenant with day and night*.<sup>259</sup>

“It has been taught: *YHVH will pass over the opening* (Exodus 12:23). What does this mean? That *Hesed* hovers over this opening, so that it will be fragrantly firm, and therefore, *He will not allow the Destroyer [to enter]* (ibid.).”<sup>260</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “But we have learned: A convert who has been circumcised and enters beneath the wings of *Shekhinah* is called גר צדק (ger tsedek), convert of righteousness, and nothing more.’ A convert of righteousness, surely—worthy of entering that [14b] crown of Righteousness. Yet you say that he attains both of them!”<sup>261</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on replied, “El’azar, my son, there is no comparison between one who comes from a holy root, from a stock of truth, and one who comes from evil filth, from a root of foul, fierce loathsomeness. Of Israel is written *I planted you as a noble vine, of entirely faithful seed* (Jeremiah 2:21). Of the nations of the world is written *whose flesh is the flesh of donkeys and whose emission is the emission of stallions* (Ezekiel 23:20).<sup>262</sup>

“Thus, holy Israel—faithful seed, stock that became fragrantly firm at Mount Sinai, where their filth ceased—all turn fragrant, all enter the holy covenant of *day and night*, becoming totally complete. But as for nations of the world, it is difficult to remove filth from them, even up to three generations. Therefore we have learned: ‘The best among the Gentiles...’ So a convert of righteousness, surely!”<sup>263</sup>

“For Rav Hamnuna Sava said, ‘Before they are circumcised, the nations of the world abide in lower

crowns, which are not holy, and impure spirit settles upon them. Once they have been circumcised, they abide in the holy crown, *Shekhinah*, who rules over all other, lower crowns, and the Holy Spirit settles upon them. As for Israel—holy sons of holy ones, whose stock and roots became fragrantly firm in complete holy faith—when their flesh is circumcised, they abide in all, as is written: *You, cleaving ביהוה אלהיכם (ba-YHVH Eloheikhem), to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!* (Deuteronomy 4:4).”[264](#)

*It shall be, when he sins and is guilty, he shall return that which he robbed or that which he withheld, or the deposit that was entrusted to him, or the lost object that he found* (Leviticus 5:23).

*waters of the Flood were over the earth* (Genesis 7:10), and it is written: *Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the Flood* (ibid. 9:11). It is written: *the waters of the Flood, not the waters of Noah*—yet it is written: *For this is like the waters of Noah to Me: As I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover [the earth].* זאת לי (Zot li), *This is... to Me*—the verse should read *those are... to Me.*[265](#)

“Well, it has been taught as follows: When the righteous abound in the world, the blessed Holy One delights and takes pride in them. For we have learned: When a righteous person appears in the world, peace appears—as it were, he casts peace above, and all worlds are blessed for his sake; he casts peace among the family above. How do we know this? As is written: *Or let him hold fast to My refuge, that he may make peace with Me; peace he will make with Me* (Isaiah 27:5). Why two ‘peaces’ here?

Rabbi Yose opened, *“For this is like the waters of Noah to Me: As I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth* (Isaiah 54:9). This verse is problematical. It is written: *The*

Well, *that he may make peace with Me*—settling male and female. *Peace he will make with Me*—that the Patriarchs may be blessed.”[266](#)

What is the difference between them? Rabbi Yose said, “When the Patriarchs are blessed, *Peace he will make with Me*, for *peace* precedes all, so *peace* comes first. *That he may make peace with Me*—why doesn’t *peace* come first here? Well, so that the serpent situated by the Female may first be removed, and then the Male will come to dwell in His place. Thus, *that he may make* appears first, and then *peace*.”[267](#)

It has been taught: When a righteous person inhabits the world, judgments are not aroused and do not prevail, because that righteous one is a sign in the world, and so the blessed Holy One desires to honor him and the world endures for his sake.[268](#)

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, “When the inhabitants of the world are found guilty before the blessed Holy One, He wishes to speak with that righteous person who exists in the world, so that he may plead for mercy on the world and He may be reconciled with them. What does the blessed Holy One do? He speaks with him about the wicked of the world, and proposes to favor him alone and destroy all of them. How does that righteous person conduct himself? He abandons himself and adopts the whole world, so that the blessed Holy One will be reconciled with them.

“How do we know this? From Moses. The blessed Holy One said to him, ‘Israel has sinned by that act. *Release Me, [that I may destroy them]*... (Deuteronomy 9:14).’ At that moment, Moses said, ‘If for the sake of my honor Israel will be annihilated from this world, then it is better for me to die, lest they say that I abandoned the whole world for my own glory.’ Immediately, *Moses implored [the presence of YHVH his God]* (Exodus 32:11). He exposed himself to death on several occasions for the sake of Israel, as is written:



*Now, if You would bear their sin! [And if not, please wipe me out from Your book that You have written] (ibid., 32). And it has been taught: He did not budge from there until the blessed Holy One forgave Israel, as is written: YHVH relented from the evil that He had threatened to do to His people (ibid., 14), and it is written: YHVH said, 'I have forgiven, according to your word' (Numbers 14:20).<sup>269</sup>*

*"Whereas of Noah is written God said to Noah, 'End of all flesh has come [15a] before Me, for the earth is filled with violence' (Genesis 6:13).*

*"Noah said to Him, 'And what will You do to me?'*

*"He replied, 'I am about to establish My covenant with you.... Make yourself an ark of cypress wood (Genesis 6:18,14).' And he did not plead for mercy on the world, and the waters fell, destroying the inhabitants of the world. Therefore, the waters of Noah (Isaiah 54:9), surely, for they were dependent on him, and he did not plead for mercy on the world."<sup>270</sup>*

Based on this, Rabbi Yose said, "What is the meaning of the verse *Noah, a man of the earth, was the first [to plant a vineyard]* (Genesis 9:20)? ויחל (*va-yahel*), *he was the first*—as is said: לא יחל (*Lo yahel*), *He shall not profane, his word* (Numbers 30:3), for he became profane.<sup>271</sup>

*"A man of the earth*—for on account of him the earth was destroyed, since he did not plead for mercy on it.

*"Alternatively, a man of the earth*—because for his sake it endured, after the earlier creatures were destroyed, as is written: *I will not again strike down all living things as I did* (Genesis 8:21).<sup>272</sup>

*"It has been taught: They are called the waters of Noah (Isaiah 54:9), named after him fittingly."<sup>273</sup>*

Rabbi Yose said, "זאת לי (*zot li*), *This is [the waters of Noah] to Me* (Isaiah 54:9)—what does this indicate? Well, the blessed Holy One said, *'The waters of Noah caused Me to reveal zot, this, in the world,'* as is written: *zot, This, is my covenant* (Isaiah 59:21); *zot, This, is the sign of the*

*covenant that I set.... My bow I have set in the clouds to be a sign of the covenant* (Genesis 9:12-13)—that is to say, ‘One should heed only the glory of My name, intimated by *zot, this*. And what caused this *to Me*? *The waters of Noah.*’[274](#)

“Consequently, it is a sign of a righteous and pious person that it not be revealed—that the world has no need of *zot, this*. Who is such a person? One who pleads for mercy on the world and is worthy of protecting it—like Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, in whose days the world had no need of this covenant, since he himself was a sign in the world; for there was no decree ordained above that he could not abolish. This corresponds to what is written: *He who rules humanity* (2 Samuel 23:3)—the blessed Holy One *rules humanity*; and who rules the blessed Holy One? As it were, *the righteous one* (ibid.), for the blessed Holy One decrees and he abolishes.[275](#)

“Like Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai. For one day he was sitting by the gateway of the gate of Lydda. Raising his eyes, he saw the sun shining and its light concealed three times. Then its light darkened, and in the sun appeared black and green.[276](#)

“He said to his son, Rabbi El’azar, ‘Follow me, and let us see; for a decree has surely been ordained above, and the blessed Holy One wishes to inform me. For certainly whatever is decreed above is suspended for thirty days, until the blessed Holy One informs the righteous, as is written: *Surely YHVH Elohim does nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets* (Amos 3:7).’

“As they were walking, they entered a certain vineyard. They saw a snake coming with its mouth open, flashing in the dust. Rabbi Shim’on was shaken; he fastened his hands to the snake’s head, and it calmed down, lowering its mouth. He saw its tongue moving.[277](#)

“He said, ‘Snake, snake, go and tell that Serpent that Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai is in the world!’[278](#)



“He thrust its head into a hole in the ground. He said, ‘I decree that just as the lower one has returned to its hole in the ground, so the upper one will return to its hollow of the great abyss.’<sup>279</sup>

“Rabbi Shim’on whispered in prayer. While they were praying, they heard a voice: ‘Slips of plucking, enter your places! A band of outlaws cannot abide in the world, for Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai has nullified them.’<sup>280</sup>

“‘Happy are you, Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, for your Master delights in your glory above all inhabitants of the world! Of Moses is written *Moses implored [the presence of YHVH his God]* (Exodus 32:11)—implying that he was seized with gout. Whereas you, Rabbi Shim’on, decree and the blessed Holy One fulfills; He decrees and you abolish!’<sup>281</sup>

“Meanwhile, they saw that the sun was shining and the blackness had disappeared. Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘Surely, the world has become fragrantly firm.’<sup>282</sup>

“He entered his house and expounded: ‘*For YHVH is righteous, loving righteous deeds; the upright behold His face* (Psalms 11:7). Why is *YHVH righteous, loving righteous deeds*? Because *the upright behold פנימו (faneimo), their faces*. What are *their faces*? The *faces* of inhabitants of the world—to plead for mercy on the world, for they are in need.’<sup>283</sup>

“Rabbi El’azar said to him, ‘If so, ישר יחזו פנימו (Yashar yeḥezu faneimo), *The upright behold their faces*—the verse should read יחזה (yeḥezeh), [*he*] *beholds, their faces*, or יחזו ישרים (yesharim yeḥezu), *The upright ones behold*. Why yashar yeḥezu, *The upright one, [they] behold?*’[284](#)

“He replied, ‘Supernal mystery! For those primordial days of the Ancient One, Concealed of all Concealed, and olden days of the Short-Tempered One, are called פנימו (faneimo), *their faces*, for they see directly what needs to be seen.’[285](#)

“‘It has been taught: When the blessed Holy One looks upon the world and sees that humanity’s deeds are worthy, then the Holy Ancient One is revealed in the Short-Tempered One, and all those faces gaze upon the concealed faces and are blessed. Why are they blessed? Because they gaze upon one another directly, faces upon faces, not turning to the right or the left, as is written: [15b] יחזו פנימו ישר (Yashar yeḥezu faneimo), *Straight their faces behold*—watering one another until all worlds are blessed and all worlds become as one, and then YHVH is one and His name one (Zechariah 14:9).’[286](#)

“‘But when sins of the world proliferate, the Holy Ancient One is concealed and they do not look at one another face-to-face. Then judgments are aroused in the world, a throne is cast down, and the Ancient of Days is veiled and not revealed, as is written: *As I watched, thrones were cast* (Daniel 7:9)—for those supernal crowns watering all the others do not stand firm. And who are they? The Patriarchs. *And the Ancient of Days sat* (ibid.)—*sat*, not revealing Himself. Then the wicked of the world turn Compassion into Judgment.’[287](#)

“It has been taught: From the side of Mother issue engraved guardians, clutching clubs of *Gevurah*, prevailing over Compassion, as is said: *banding together over YHVH* (Numbers 16:11)—*over YHVH*, precisely! Then the worlds are

found lacking, truly incomplete, and strife is aroused in them all.[288](#)

“But if inhabitants of the world rectify their actions below, then judgments are assuaged and disappear—and Compassion is aroused, overpowering that evil aroused by harsh Judgment. And when Compassion is awakened, joy and נִחֻמִּין (*niḥumin*), comfort, prevail, overwhelming that evil, as is written: וַיִּנָּחֵם יְהוָה עַל הָרָעָה (*Va-yinnaḥem YHVH al ha-ra’ah*), *YHVH relented from the evil* (Exodus 32:14)—*va-yinnaḥem, He was comforted*, because He prevailed עַל הָרָעָה (*al ha-ra’ah*), *over the evil*—and harsh Judgment is subdued and Compassion reigns.[289](#)

“It has been taught: When judgments are assuaged and Compassion prevails, every single crown returns to its status, all blessed as one. And when each and every one returns to its position and is blessed, Mother is sweetened by engraved keys returning to Her sides. Then She is called Complete Returning, and the world is pardoned, for Mother is in perfect joy, sitting in perfection, as is written: *a joyous mother of children* (Psalms 113:9). Then She is called *Yom ha-Kippurim*, Day of Atonement, and it is written: *to purify you of all your sins* (Leviticus 16:30); and in Her are opened fifty gates engraved on all sides.[290](#)

“It has been taught: It is written, *When he sins and is guilty* (Leviticus 5:23). Why *when he sins*, and then *and is guilty*? Well, it has been taught as follows: *When* יַחֲטָא (*yeheta*), *he sins*—one of those sins called חַטָּא (*het*), a sin, as is written: *any of the human* חַטָּאת (*hattot*), *sins* (Numbers 5:6). וְאָשָׁם (*ve-ashem*), *And is guilty*—as is said: הָאָשָׁם (*ha-asham*), *the reparation, restored shall be* *YHVH’s* (ibid., 8). *ve-ashem*—and he should mend, namely if he mends his deeds, *he shall restore that which he robbed* (Leviticus 5:23).”[291](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “This is implied by what is written: וְהָשִׁיב (*ve-heshiv*), *He shall restore*. It is not written וַיָּשׁוּב (*ve-yashuv*), *it shall return*, but rather *ve-heshiv, he shall restore—he shall restore*, precisely![292](#)

“It has been taught: In four cycles in the year, the voice ceases and judgments are aroused, and *teshuvah* is suspended until restoration is made. When judgments are aroused, a voice issues and four corners of the world ascend and descend. A herald proclaims, but no one is aroused. The blessed Holy One is ready: if they return, He returns; if not, all ceases and judgments are executed. Then, *He was grieved to the heart* (Genesis 6:6)—*He was grieved* in the outer chambers.”[293](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “We have learned: ‘Ever since the Temple was destroyed, not a day passes without evil anger.’ Why? Because of what we have learned: Rabbi Yudai said in the name of Rabbi Yeisa, ‘The blessed Holy One has sworn that He will not enter heavenly Jerusalem until He enters earthly Jerusalem.’ Therefore, anger appears in the world.”[294](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “It is written: *Your father’s nakedness and your mother’s nakedness you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:7). And we have learned: *She is your mother; you shall not expose her nakedness* (ibid.)—*She is your mother*, surely! If one exposes Her nakedness, to whom should he restore it? Surely, rectifying what he has exposed.[295](#)

“For it has been taught: When the evil impulse proliferates in a person, it does so through that nakedness alone, and all those sins cling to that nakedness. It is written: *You shall not expose*—when one mends what he has done, he should do so corresponding to what he exposed. This is called *teshuvah*.”[296](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “All sins of the world are interlinked until Mother is exposed on account of them; and when She is exposed, all the children are exposed on account of Her. And it is written: *You shall not take the mother off of the children* (Deuteronomy 22:6). When the world below is mended, all of them are mended until mending ascends to Mother, and She is mended and covered, from having been

uncovered. Thus it is written: *Happy is one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered* (Psalms 32:1). Then She is called *Teshuvah*—*Teshuvah*, surely! Then She is called *Yom ha-Kippurim*, as is written: *to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure* (Leviticus 16:30)."[297](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, [16a] “When is She called *Teshuvah*? When Mother is covered and abides in joy, as is written: *a joyous mother of children* (Psalms 113:9). She returns to Her vitality, and that which was closed returns to its place; they all return one by one, each one blessed, and then She is called *Teshuvah Shelimta*, Complete Returning, *Teshuvah* unspecified—Complete Returning, comprising all.”[298](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “When the whole world is bound as one, it is written: *For great over heaven* (Psalms 108:5)—*over heaven*, rising above the place called *heaven*.”[299](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Precisely, for it is written מעל (*me-al*), *over, heaven*. If it were written על (*al*), *over*, this would imply the place presiding over *heaven*. Since it is written *me-al, over, heaven*, it implies the place presiding high above. And what is that? Mother, namely the one called *Teshuvah*.”[300](#)

It has been taught: When deeds are worthy below and Mother is joyful, the Holy Ancient One is revealed and light returns to the Short-Tempered One. Then all is joyous, all is complete, all is blessed; Compassion appears and all worlds rejoice, as is written: ישוב (*Yashuv*), *He will return, and have Compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities* (Micah 7:19). Who *will return*? The Holy Ancient One *will return*, revealing Himself in the Short-Tempered One; *He will return* to be revealed, having previously been concealed—and all is called *Teshuvah*, Returning.[301](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “All is included; all, unspecified—and it is written: *so that YHVH ישוב* (*yashuv*), *may turn back, from His blazing wrath and show you compassion* (Deuteronomy 13:18).”[302](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “All, surely! This has already been established in the presence of Rabbi Shim’on.”

*He shall restore that which he robbed* (Leviticus 5:23). The Companions asked, “Why is it written concerning robbery, *He shall restore that which he robbed*—and no more—whereas for theft, one pays a penalty?” Well, this has already been established: The former treats upper fear the same as lower, whereas the thief confronts only lower fear, not upper fear.<sup>303</sup>

What is written previously? *If a soul sins* (Leviticus 5:1)—as we have said, Torah and the blessed Holy One are astonished at her and say, ‘*If a soul sins!...*’ And it is written: *If a soul commits a sacrilege...* (ibid., 15); *Or if a soul swears* (ibid., 4).<sup>304</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “It is written נפש (nefesh), a soul—not רוח (ruah), a spirit, or נשמה (neshamah), a soul-breath. Here, body and nefesh, for it is written: *It shall be, when he sins and is guilty, he shall restore that which he robbed* (Leviticus 5:23). One who wishes to mend his deeds, as we have said: *he shall restore*. What does this mean? Well, that he should rectify his actions so that he may restore the springs of water to their place, saturating the plants—from which, by his sin, he caused the flow to be withheld. Thus, *he shall restore that which he robbed* by his sins, as has been said.”<sup>305</sup>

Rabbi Abba was sitting before Rabbi Shim’on. His son, Rabbi El’azar, entered. Rabbi Shim’on said, “It is written: *The righteous one flourishes like a palm tree, like a cedar in Lebanon he grows. Planted in the house of YHVH.... They bear fruit still in old age...* (Psalms 92:13–15). Why *like a palm tree*? For look, of all the trees of the world, none is as slow to flower as a *palm tree*, which yields in seventy years! So why *like a palm tree*? Well, even though the verse testifies, none of the Companions wishes to reveal.<sup>306</sup>



“However, *The righteous one flourishes like a palm tree* refers to the exile of Babylon, for *Shekhinah* returned to Her place only after seventy years, as is written: *When Babylon’s seventy years are over, I will attend to you* (Jeremiah 29:10). This is *The righteous one flourishes like a palm tree*, growing male and female in seventy years. *Righteous one*—the blessed Holy One, as is written: *For YHVH is righteous, loving righteous deeds* (Psalms 11:7), and it is written: *Say of the righteous one that he is good* (Isaiah 3:10).<sup>[307](#)</sup>

“*Like a cedar in Lebanon he grows* (Psalms 92:13). *Like a cedar*—who is a cedar? The blessed Holy One, who sits upon the throne of Perfect Jacob.<sup>[308](#)</sup>

“*In Lebanon he grows—in Lebanon*, surely! This is Eden, of which is written *No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You]* (Isaiah 64:3). This *cedar* grows in that supernal place. This refers to the final exile, like the *cedar* that rises slowly, and from the time it rises until it stands erect is a day plus the beginning of the next day, until it provides shade in daylight.<sup>[309](#)</sup>

“The cedar rises only when enjoying water, as is said: *like cedars by the water* (Numbers 24:6). So, *Like a cedar in Lebanon he grows*—from there issues a spring and a river, watering. *A cedar*—the blessed Holy One: *choice as the cedars* (Song of Songs 5:15).<sup>[310](#)</sup>

“*Planted in the house of YHVH* (Psalms 92:14)—at the time of King Messiah.

“*In the courts of our God they flourish* (ibid.)—at the revival of the dead.

“*They bear fruit still in old age* (ibid., 15)—on the day when the world will be destroyed.<sup>[311](#)</sup>

“*Full of sap and fresh they are* (ibid.)—afterward; then, *the new heavens and the new earth* (Isaiah 66:22). And then, *Israel will rejoice in its Maker* (Psalms 149:2), and it is written: *YHVH will rejoice in His works* (ibid. 104:31). [16b] *To tell that YHVH is upright...* (ibid. 92:16).”



He opened again, saying, “A *perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates an intimate* (Proverbs 16:28). A *perverse man spreads strife*—as we have said, the wicked cause a defect above.[312](#)

“And a *slanderer separates* אלוף (*aluf*), an intimate—he *separates* אלופו (*alufo*), the Chief, of the world, namely the blessed Holy One.[313](#)

“Alternatively, A *perverse man* ישלח מדון (*yeshallah madon*), *spreads strife*. What is *yeshallah*? He drives away those plants. *Madon*—for they imbibe from the side of דינא (*dina*), Judgment.[314](#)

“And a *slanderer separates an intimate*—as we have said, they cause a defect above. *Separates*—for union no longer exists; he *separates Matronita* from the King, and the King from *Matronita*. So He is not called One, for He is called One only when they share one coupling. Woe to the wicked who perpetrate this! Happy are the righteous who sustain existence above, and happy are the masters of *teshuvah* who restore everything to its place![315](#)

“Therefore we have learned: ‘In the place where *ba’alei teshuvah*, masters of returning, dwell, the completely righteous cannot dwell.’ Why? Well, the former are established in a supernal place from which the Garden is watered. What is that? *Teshuvah*. So they are called *ba’alei teshuvah*, masters of returning. The latter are established in another place called Righteous One.[316](#)

“So the former dwell in a supernal place, and the latter dwell in a small place. Why? The former restore the water to its place, from the supernal site of the deep river to the place called Righteous One, and the completely righteous conduct it from the place where they dwell to this world. Thus, the former are higher, and the latter lower. Happy is the share of *ba’alei teshuvah*, masters of returning, and happy is the share of the righteous, through whom the world is sustained![317](#)

“As is written: *It shall be, when he sins and is guilty, [he shall return]...* (Leviticus 5:23). What is written previously? *Or if he finds something lost and dissembles about it and swears falsely* (ibid., 22). For on account of this, the blessed Holy One withdraws completely—as it were, He no longer exists, since Assembly of Israel is alienated from Her place, as is written: *Faith has lost* (Jeremiah 7:28). Who is *faith*? Assembly of Israel, as is said: *And your faithfulness in the nights* (Psalms 92:3). *Faith has lost*—as is said: *Why has the land lost?* (Jeremiah 9:11), and all is one. As has been established, אבדה (*avedah*), *has lost*—not נאבדה (*ne’evedet*) or אבודה (*avudah*), *is lost*. Similarly, *The righteous one* אבד (*avad*), *loses* (Isaiah 57:1)—it is not written אבוד (*avud*) or נאבד (*ne’evad*), *is lost*, but rather *avad, loses*. As is written: *Faith avedah, has lost*. Thus, *He shall return that which he robbed or the lost object* (Leviticus 5:23).”[318](#) [17a]

*If the anointed priest should sin, incurring guilt for the people* (Leviticus 4:3).[319](#)

Rabbi Abba opened, “*Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where do you pasture your sheep? ...If you do not*

*know, O fairest of women...*(Song of Songs 1:7-8). These verses have been established by the Companions as referring to the time when Moses was departing from the world, for he said, *Let YHVH, God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint [a man over the community], who will go out before them [and come in before them]...* (Numbers 27:16-17). But we have learned that this was said of the exile.[320](#)

“Come and see: This verse was spoken by Assembly of Israel to the Holy King: *Tell me, you whom my soul loves*—as is said: *Have you seen the one whom my soul loves?* (Song of Songs 3:3). It was spoken to the Holy King: *You whom my soul loves, where do you pasture your sheep?*[321](#)

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna it says: As long as Assembly of Israel is with the blessed Holy One, He is, as it were, complete, and He nourishes Himself and others—feeding Himself by sucking milk of supernal Mother, and from that sucking He provides for all the rest, suckling them. And we have learned that Rabbi Shim’on said as follows: As long as Assembly of Israel is with the blessed Holy One, He is joyous and complete; blessings abide in Him and issue from Him to all others. And whenever Assembly of Israel is not with the blessed Holy One, then, as it were, blessings are withheld from Him and from all others. Mystery of the matter: Wherever male and female are not found, blessings do not settle. Because of this, the blessed Holy One roars and weeps, as is written: *He roars mightily over His abode* (Jeremiah 25:30). And what does He say? ‘Woe, that I have destroyed My house...!’<sup>322</sup>

“When [17b] Assembly of Israel went into exile, She said before Him, ‘*Tell me, you whom my soul loves* (Song of Songs 1:7)—You, beloved of My soul, You in whom is all the love of My soul. אֵיכָה (*Eikhah*), *Where, do you pasture?* (ibid.) —אֵיךְ (*eikh*), how, will You nourish Yourself from the depth of the river that never ceases? How will You nourish Yourself from the radiance of supernal Eden?<sup>323</sup>

“אֵיכָה תִרְבִּיץ בְּצִהָרִים (*Eikhah tarbits ba-tsohorayim*), *Where do you sprinkle at noon?* (Song of Songs 1:7)—*eikh*, How, will You nourish all the others, who are constantly watered by You? I Myself was nourished by You every day and watered, and I watered all those below, and Israel was nourished through Me. But now, *lest I be as one enwrapped*—how can I be enwrapped without blessings, when those blessings are needed and yet lacking in My hands?<sup>324</sup>

“*Among the flocks of your fellows* (Song of Songs 1:7)—how I can I stand over them and not shepherd them and nourish them? *The flocks of your fellows*—Israel, children of the patriarchs, who are the holy Chariot above.’<sup>325</sup>

“The blessed Holy One said to Her, ‘Leave what is Mine, for that is too concealed to be known. But, לא תדעי לך, םא (Im lo tade’i lakh) *If you do not yourself know* (Song of Songs 1:8)—*lakh, yourself, for yourself*, then here is some advice. *O fairest of women* (ibid.)—as is said: *Ah, you are fair, my darling; ah, you are fair!* (ibid., 15). *Go follow the tracks of the sheep* (ibid., 8)—the righteous, who are trampled underfoot, and for whose sake You will have strength to endure.’[326](#)

“Furthermore, *and graze your kids by the shepherds’ tents* (Song of Songs 1:8)—schoolchildren, for whose sake the world endures, and who give strength to Assembly of Israel in exile. *Shepherds’ tents*—school, the house of study, where Torah is constantly found.[327](#)

“Alternatively, *If you do not know, O fairest of women....* When there are righteous ones and schoolchildren studying Torah, then Assembly of Israel can exist with them in exile; but if not, She and they, as it were, cannot exist in the world.

“If there are any virtuous people, they are seized first; and if not, those kids for whose sake the world endures are seized first, and the blessed Holy One plucks them from the world, even though they are without sin. Not only this, but He removes Assembly of Israel, and She goes into exile.[328](#)

“As is written: *If the anointed priest should sin, הַעֲמַת לְאִשְׁמַת (le-ashmat ha-am), because of the guilt of the people* (Leviticus 4:3)—on account of the people’s sins, which caused this: *because of the guilt of the people*, surely, not because of His own.

“יַחֲטֵא (Yeḥeta), *Should sin*—withholding His goodness, executing Judgment absolutely, as is said: *I and my son Solomon will be חַטָּאִים (ḥatta’im), lacking* (1 Kings 1:21).[329](#)

“*If the anointed priest*—the blessed Holy One, as we have said. *Should sin*—withholding from Assembly of Israel and from the world, not providing them sufficient blessing. And why is that? *לְאִשְׁמַת הַעֲמַת (Le-ashmat ha-am), because of the*

*guilt for the people, surely—on account of the sins of the world.”*[330](#)

*If the anointed priest should sin* (Leviticus 4:3). Rabbi Yitshak opened, “*Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel...* (Exodus 32:13). This verse should read *Remember Abraham and Isaac and Israel*. Why *Isaac*? Well, we have learned as follows: Everywhere left is included in right, within the totality of right; for right is always arranged to encompass left. Therefore it does not separate, so as to include him; thus, *Abraham, Isaac*, precisely, one totality. However, *and Israel*—with both of them, holding them with his wings, perfectly complete.[331](#)

“*To whom You swore by Yourself* (Exodus 32:13). The blessed Holy One swore an oath by the Patriarchs above, as is written: *to whom You swore* בך (*bakh*), *by Yourself*—by those above, by those with You; *bakh, in You*, precisely, those dwelling *in You*.[332](#)

“*And said to them, “I will multiply your seed [like the stars of heaven, and all this land] of which I spoke, [I will give to your seed]* (Exodus 32:13). *Of which I spoke*—the verse should read *of which You spoke*. However, the blessed Holy One said so to the patriarchs once and again.[333](#)

“*Of which* אמרתי (*amarti*), *I spoke*—‘which I desired with the passion of My soul,’ for אמירא (*amira*), speaking, is desire, as is written: יְהוָה אָמַר (*amar*), *intended, to dwell in a thick cloud* (1 Kings 8:12).[334](#)

“*And they will possess it* לְעוֹלָם (*le-olam*), *forever* (Exodus 32:13). What is *le-olam*? The supernal *olam*, world, to which She is joined and from which She is nourished. And if this *land* is not blessed and is banished, why is that? *Le-ashmat ha-am, because of the guilt of the people* (Leviticus 4:3).[335](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “*If the anointed priest should sin* (Leviticus 4:3)—the high priest below, for if he is prepared for service and a sin is found in him, it is *because of the*

*guilt of the people* (ibid.). Woe to those who rely on him! [18a] Similarly, a cantor who sins, in whom a sin is found—because the people were not found worthy before the blessed Holy One. Woe to those who rely on him!”[336](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “All the more so the priest, with whom all of Israel and those above and below are linked, waiting to be blessed through him. For we have learned: When the priest begins to intend words and to bring a supernal offering, all becomes joyous. Right begins to awaken, left is included in right, all is linked and united with one another, and all are blessed as one. Thus, through the priest, those above and below are blessed, as has been established. Therefore, an offering must be brought for him, so that his sin may be atoned for.”[337](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “Regarding what we have learned: that through the priest a person’s sin is atoned for when the former brings an offering—now that he himself has sinned, who brings an offering for him? Who atones for him? If you say that he brings an offering for himself—look, he has become corrupt and is not worthy of conveying blessing to those above and below! Those below cannot be blessed by him—certainly not those above!”[338](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “But look at what is written: *He shall atone for himself and for his household* (Leviticus 16:6)! Why does he need atonement? Because he has sinned. So let him atone for himself, as is written: *He shall atone for himself.*”[339](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “It is known to which place the high priest is linked, and to which place another priest is linked, as well as the one called ‘prefect.’ Therefore, another one brings his offering, raising it to the place where he is linked. After the priest has ascended to that place, [the high priest] is not prevented from ascending to his place, attaining atonement for his sin. So another one brings an offering; once he has done so and it proves insufficient, then all those above join to atone for his sin, and the Holy



King approves. Similarly, one who prays and errs—let another take his place.”[340](#)

Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba were sitting. Rabbi El’azar said, “On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I have seen that Father refuses to listen to anyone leading the prayers unless he has watched over him for three days to purify him. For Rabbi Shim’on has said as follows: ‘By the prayer of this person whom I have purified, the world is atoned for.’ All the more so with the blowing of the shofar, for he does not accept shofar blowing from anyone who has not mastered blowing according to the mysteries.”[341](#)

“For we have learned: Rabbi Yeisa Sava said, ‘These blowings proceed in order. The first comprises all. The second—one orderly, another orderly, powers between them. The third—one here, another there, power between them. Cutting off ascends, cluster descends; one harsh, another mild, as we have established. They are ten, and they are nine; one, totality of all.’”[342](#)

“On this day Isaac is crowned and he is head of the patriarchs. On this day is written: *Sinners in Zion are afraid* (Isaiah 33:14). On this day Isaac is bound, binding all, and Sarah wails, and the sound of the shofar is extremely strong. Happy is the share of one who passes through them and is saved from them!”[343](#)

Rabbi Abba said, “That is why on this day we read the portion of Isaac. On this day Isaac was bound below and tied to the one above. When was he tied? At the time when it is written *He bound Isaac his son and placed him on the altar* (Genesis 22:9).”[344](#)

Rabbi El’azar said, “On this day Isaac crowned Abraham, as is written: *Elohim נִסָּה (nissah), tested, Abraham* (Genesis 22:1). What is *nissah*? As is said: *To the peoples I will raise נִסִּי (nissi), My banner* (Isaiah 49:22); *He called its name YHVH is nissi, My Banner* (Exodus 17:16). What does this indicate? That the right was completed and



consummated, as is written: *Elohim nissah, elevated, Abraham*—*Elohim*, precisely! This is *The Fear of Isaac was with me* (Genesis 31:42).<sup>345</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “It is written: *For Elohim is the judge; He brings down one and lifts up another* (Psalms 75:8). *For Elohim is the judge*—Isaac. If Judgment did not pass through the place where Jacob abides, and if it were not rinsed there, then woe to the world upon encountering its Judgment! Mystery of the matter: *For by fire will YHVH execute judgment* (Isaiah 66:16). This is sweetening of the world. Once it enters the site of Jacob, and Jacob grasps [18b] it, fire subsides and coals cool.<sup>346</sup>

“This may be compared to a man who was angry and armed himself and stormed out to kill people. A certain wise man stood at the door, saying, ‘If I don’t grab him and overpower him, people will be murdered!’ As they were struggling with one another and clutching each other, his anger cooled down, and instead of going out to kill, he went out to rebuke. Who bore the anger and harsh judgment of that person? You must admit, the one who stood at the door.<sup>347</sup>

“Similarly, the blessed Holy One said to Israel, ‘My children, do not fear, for I am standing by the door! But brace yourselves on this day, and give Me strength. How? With the shofar.’ For if the sound of the shofar issues fittingly and is meditated upon here below, that sound ascends, arousing the patriarchs, who then stand in the dwelling of Jacob. So one should be vigilant with the shofar, being aware of that sound and concentrating on it.<sup>348</sup>

“Not a single sound of the shofar fails to ascend to a particular firmament, and all the legions of that firmament give room to that voice. What do they say? *YHVH utters His voice before His army...* (Joel 2:11). That voice stands in the firmament until another voice comes, and they station themselves as one and ascend coupled to another firmament. Thus we have learned: There is a voice

elevating a voice. And what is that? The sound of Israel blowing below.<sup>349</sup>

“When all those sounds below join and ascend to the highest firmament, inhabited by the Holy King, they are all adorned before the King. Then thrones are cast down, and the Throne of Jacob stands firmly established.<sup>350</sup>

“Concerning this I have found in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava, regarding those prayers: ‘The sound of the shofar is a voice generated from one’s spirit and soul, spreading through that shofar, worthy of ascending. On that day accusers stand poised above, and when that sound of the shofar rises, they are all repulsed by it and cannot endure.’<sup>351</sup>

“Happy is the share of the righteous who know how to direct their will and how to mend the world by the sound of the shofar on this day! Thus it is written: *Happy is the people who know the blast* (Psalms 89:16).<sup>352</sup>

“On this day the people should look to someone who is consummate, who knows the ways of the Holy King and the glory of the King—to offer supplication for them on this day and to convey the sound of the shofar through all worlds with devotion of the heart, with wisdom, with complete fervor, so that by him Judgment may be removed from the world. Woe to those whose agent is found unfitting, for on account of him the sins of the world are called to attention! As is written: *If the anointed priest should sin*—for he is the agent of all Israel—*incurring guilt for the people* (Leviticus 4:3), because Judgment befalls them.<sup>353</sup>

“But when the agent is fittingly worthy, happy are the people, for through him all judgments are removed from them! All the more so the priest, by whom those above and those below are blessed.”

Rabbi El’azar said, “Therefore, a priest and a Levite must be examined before ascending to service, to determine their ways and actions; otherwise, they may not ascend. Similarly with the Sanhedrin, to render judgment.

If he is found fitting, then the restrictions of the Temple are imposed on him; if not, he does not ascend to service. As is written: *For Levi he said: Your Thummim and Your Urim for Your devoted man* (Deuteronomy 33:8). Why did he deserve the Urim and Thummim and performing service? Scripture goes on to say: *whom You tested at Massah, [disputed with at the waters of Meribah;] who says of his father and mother, "I have not seen them"* (ibid., 8-9). Once he attains these rungs, then, *they shall teach Your laws to Jacob [and Your teaching to Israel]. They shall put incense in Your nose* (ibid., 10)—to soothe Your anger and to invite peace. *And whole offerings on Your altar* (ibid.)—so that all may be fragrant and blessings be found in all worlds. Then, *Bless, O YHVH, his abundance, [and his handiwork favor]* (ibid., 11).<sup>[354](#)</sup>

*If the whole community of Israel should err* (Leviticus 4:13).<sup>[355](#)</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on opened, *"You lolling women, rise, hear my voice!...* (Isaiah 32:9). How

carefully one should regard the glory of his Lord, so as to be a complete creature before Him. For when the blessed Holy One created the human being, [19a] He created him complete, as is written: *God made the human being right...* (Ecclesiastes 7:29). אָדָם (*Ha-adam*), *The human being*—male and female, the female included in the male; thus it is written *right*. Later, *but they have sought many schemes* (ibid.).<sup>[356](#)</sup>

“Come and see: From the hollow of the great supernal abyss, there manifested a certain female, spirit of all spirits. As has been established, her name was Lilith, and she originally existed along with Adam.<sup>[357](#)</sup>

“When Adam was created and his body completed, a thousand spirits from the left side arranged themselves around that body, each one wanting to enter it, but they could not, until finally the blessed Holy One rebuked them.

Adam was lying down—a body without a spirit, his appearance green—with all those spirits surrounding him.<sup>358</sup>

“At that moment a cloud descended and thrust away all those spirits. And when it is written *Let the earth bring forth a living soul* (Genesis 1:24), they have established that the Female was impregnated by the Male with the soul of Adam, and She generated the spirit to breathe into Adam—comprised of two sides fittingly, as is written: *He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became נִפְשׁ חַיָּה (nefesh ḥayyah), soul of a living being* (ibid. 2:7). One might have doubts about this, not knowing whether this ḥayyah, *living being*, is the lower ḥayyah or the ḥayyah called Israel, whether from the Male or from the Female. However, it is not written *nefesh ha-ḥayyah, soul of the living being*, but rather *nefesh ḥayyah, soul of a living being*—without the definite article, implying all.<sup>359</sup>

“When he rose, his female was fastened to his side, and the holy soul within him spread to this side and to that side, sufficing for both, for so it was comprised. Subsequently, the blessed Holy One sawed Adam and prepared his female, as is written: *YHVH Elohim built הַצֵּלַע (ha-tsela), the side [He had taken from the human into a woman]* (Genesis 2:22)—*ha-tsela, the side*, as we have already established, as is said: *וּלְצֵלַע (ul-tsela), and on the side of, the Dwelling* (Exodus 26:20). *And he brought her to the human* (Genesis, ibid.)—adorned like a bride for the canopy.<sup>360</sup>

“As soon as Lilith saw this, she fled, and she is in the cities of the sea, still intent on harming inhabitants of the world. And when the blessed Holy One eventually destroys wicked Rome, so that it becomes an eternal desolation, He will raise this Lilith and settle her in those ruins, since she is the ruin of the world, as is written: *There Lilith shall repose and find herself a resting place* (Isaiah 34:14).

“In the books of the ancients they say that she fled from Adam before this; but we have not learned so, for look, a

female was not with him! Rather, until this one arose with Adam fittingly, she coupled with him; and when this one was arranged with him fittingly, she fled to the sea, determined to harm humanity.<sup>361</sup>

“The remedy for this: When a man couples with his wife, he should focus his heart on the holiness of his Lord and say as follows: ‘One wrapped in a bedspread is looming. Loosened, loosened! Enter not, emerge not; not yours, not your portion! Return, return; the sea rages, its rolling waves calling you! I grasp the holy share, I am wrapped in holiness of the King.’<sup>362</sup>

“He should cover his head and his wife for an hour, and so every time until three days after conception, for any grafting that does not take root within three days will never take root. In the book that Ashmedai left for King Solomon, it says thirty days. And it says that after he completes the act, he should pour clear water around his bed—total protection.<sup>363</sup>

“Subsequently, whoever suckles the baby should not couple with a man unless the baby is asleep, and afterward she should not suckle him for an hour, the equivalent of walking two miles—or one mile if she cannot wait, due to the distress of the baby when he is crying. Thereby, one never has to fear her.<sup>364</sup>

“Happy are the righteous whom the blessed Holy One has taught deep mysteries of above and below! All through Torah, for whoever engages in Torah is adorned with crowns of the Holy Name, since Torah is the Holy Name; and whoever engages in Torah is inscribed and crowned with the Holy Name, and thus knows hidden ways and deep mysteries of above and below, and never fears.<sup>365</sup>

“Come and see: [19b] On that day they were commanded concerning a certain tree and they transgressed the command of their Lord. Because the woman sinned first and that serpent copulated with her, it is written: *He will rule over you* (Genesis 3:16). From here

on, whenever men are found guilty before the blessed Holy One, we have established that those women above are designated to rule over them on the side of harsh Judgment, as is written: *My people—their tyrants are children, and women rule over them* (Isaiah 3:12), surely![366](#)

“These are called *flame of the whirling sword* (Genesis 3:24)—not that they are *the whirling sword*, but rather the *flame* of that *sword* called *a sword avenging with vengeance of the covenant* (Leviticus 26:25); *YHVH has a sword, full of blood* (Isaiah 34:6). That *flame* is *whirling*—sometimes male, sometimes female, as has been established.[367](#)

“Woe to the world when those women rule the world! When the prophet saw Israel perverting their ways and immersed in sin before him, he said, ‘*You lolling women* (Isaiah 32:9)—how can you be still, how can you sit around, not prevailing in the world? *Rise!* (ibid.).’[368](#)

“Elsewhere we have established this verse, and it has been established by the Companions. However, it was uttered only as we find in the case of Deborah, as is written: *She was judging Israel at that time* (Judges 4:4). Concerning this we have learned: ‘Woe to the man whose wife says Grace at the table!’ Similarly with Deborah: *She was judging Israel*—woe to the generation that had no one to judge the people but a woman![369](#)

“Come and see: There were two women who existed in the world and uttered praise of the blessed Holy One such as all men of the world never equaled. Who are they? Deborah and Hannah. Hannah said, *There is no one holy like YHVH, for there is no one beside You* (1 Samuel 2:2)—and all those verses. For she opened the gate of faith for the world, for example: *He raises the poor from the dust*—opening of faith—to *seat among nobles* (ibid., 8), faith above, in the place where the patriarchs abide. Who are



nobles? The patriarchs, as is said: *Nobles of nations have gathered* (Psalms 47:10).<sup>370</sup>

“Alternatively, she prophesied of Samuel, who was destined to be linked with Moses and Aaron, as is written: *Moses and Aaron among His priests, Samuel among those invoking His name...* (Psalms 99:6).<sup>371</sup>

“*A throne of honor He bequeaths them* (1 Samuel 2:8). Who *bequeaths them*? Samuel, who bequeathed the glory of royalty to two kings.<sup>372</sup>

“Alternatively, the blessed Holy One, who bequeathed His throne to His servants.<sup>373</sup>

“Further, *יחזו מריבו (yehattu merivav), His adversaries will be shattered* (1 Samuel 2:10)—*מריבו (merivav), his adversaries*, spelled deficiently. What does this indicate? *מריבו (Merivav)*—we have learned: *מריב ו (meriv vav)*, one who quarrels with *vav*, who is the Holy King. Mystery of wisdom is uttered here, when judgments overwhelm Compassion, and Compassion is subdued. But when the blessed Holy One is blessed from the spring of the stream, then Compassion overpowers and judgments are subdued, as is written: *יחזו מריב ו (yehattu meriv vav), One who quarrels with vav will be shattered.*<sup>374</sup>

“*עליו (Alav), Upon him* (1 Samuel 2:10). What does this mean: *alav, upon him*? When dew of the Holy Ancient One settles upon Him, filling His head in the place called *heaven* (ibid.), then *He will thunder* (ibid.)—smashing the power and might of harsh judgments.<sup>375</sup>

“*He will therefore grant power to His king* (1 Samuel 2:10)—the blessed Holy One. *And raise the horn of His anointed* (ibid.)—Assembly of Israel, who is called *horn of Jubilee* (Joshua 6:5), as we have established. *His anointed*—as is said: *anointed of the God of Jacob* (2 Samuel 23:1); so *horn of His anointed*, as has been said.<sup>376</sup>

“Deborah, who came and offered praise of the Holy King: *יחזו מריבו (yehattu merivav), when You came forth from Seir...* (Judges 5:4)—teaching that the blessed Holy One invited the other



nations to receive the Torah. Now, was it not revealed before Him that they did not want it? However, so that they would have no excuse: if only He had given them the Torah, they would have kept it.<sup>377</sup>

“All those verses uttered by Deborah abide in mystery of wisdom—until the moment when she praised herself, and the spirit of prophecy departed from her; therefore, *Awake, awake* (Judges 5:12), twice. All this, when men were immersed in sin and not worthy of the Holy Spirit settling upon them.<sup>378</sup> [20a]

*“If the whole community of Israel should err* (Leviticus 4:13)—as we have established, erring in a ruling. However, *If the whole community of Israel should err*—the verse should read *If the community of Israel should err*; why *the whole community*? Well, these are those who are all found in Jerusalem, whence Torah issues to the whole people; and if those who are there err, all of Israel errs. As we have learned: Once they err there, the whole nation errs, being all drawn after them.<sup>379</sup>

*“And the matter be hidden from the eyes of the assembly* (Leviticus 4:13). *The eyes of the assembly* are the Sanhedrin, those who are appointed.”<sup>380</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose were walking on the road. As they were going along, Rabbi Yose said to Rabbi Ḥiyya, “Let us engage in words of the Ancient of Days.”<sup>381</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, *“My sin I acknowledged to You and my iniquity I did not conceal..* (Psalms 32:5). *My sin I acknowledged to You*—from here we learn that anyone who conceals his sins and does not declare them before the Holy King, pleading for mercy on them, is not allowed to open the door of *teshuvah*, because he is ashamed before Him. But if he declares them, the blessed Holy One has pity upon him, and Compassion overwhelms Judgment. All the

more so if he weeps, for all shut doors are then opened and his prayer is accepted.<sup>382</sup>

“So declaring one’s sins brings glory to the King, enabling Compassion to overwhelm Judgment. Thus it is written: *He who sacrifices תודה יכבדנוי (todah yekhabbedaneni), confession glorifies Me* (Psalms 50:23). Why יכבדנוי (yekhabbedaneni), *glorifies Me*? Two glorifications: one below and one above, one in this world and one in the world that is coming.<sup>383</sup>

“This verse is totally difficult. It is redundant, because *I will confess my transgressions* (Psalms 32:5) suffices; why *My sin I acknowledged to You* (ibid.), and then *I will confess my transgressions to YHVH*? Furthermore, *I will confess my transgressions to YHVH*—the verse should read *to You*.<sup>384</sup>

“However, David uttered all his words by the Holy Spirit, and he spoke to the Kingdom of Heaven, for She is the agent from those below to those above, and from those above to those below. Whoever seeks the King informs Her first, so *My sin I acknowledged to You*.<sup>385</sup>

“*And my iniquity I did not conceal* (Psalms 32:5)—from Righteous One of the world.<sup>386</sup>

“*I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to YHVH’* (ibid.)—the Holy King who possesses all peace. And the peace that one should bring before Him is conveyed by confession, for peace offerings are brought with confession, as is written: על זבח תודת שלמיו (al zevah todah shelamav), *with his confession peace sacrifice* (Leviticus 7:13).<sup>387</sup>

“*And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah* (Psalms 32:5)—high above, the place where the Holy Ancient One abides. Thus this verse is linked to all.<sup>388</sup>

“Similarly, one who brings his plea to the King should unify His Holy Name by aspiration, binding all as one, and in that bond his plea will appear.”<sup>389</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “Who is wise enough to bring his plea like King David, who guards the gate of the King?”<sup>390</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya replied, “Certainly! That is why Torah teaches us the ways of [20b] the Holy King, so that we may know how to follow Him, as is written: *After YHVH your God shall you go...* (Deuteronomy 13:5).”

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*Thus says YHVH: A voice is heard on a height—wailing, bitter weeping...* (Jeremiah 31:15). כֹּה (koh), *Thus, says YHVH*—as has been established, whenever a prophet begins to speak, his words are recognized, and here the blessed Holy One *says* about this koh, *thus*. And what does He say? *A voice is heard on a height*. We have learned as follows: On the night when the Temple was destroyed below and the people of Israel were exiled, with millstones round their necks and their hands bound tightly behind them, and Assembly of Israel was banished from the house of the King to follow them—when She descended, She said, ‘I will first go and cry over My dwelling and over My children and over My Husband.’<sup>391</sup>

“When She descended and saw Her place destroyed—blood of the pious streaming in it and the house burning—She raised Her voice, and those above and those below trembled, and the voice reached up to the place where the King dwells, and the King wanted to turn the world back into chaos. Then numerous camps and legions descended toward Her, but She would not receive them, as is written: *refusing to be comforted for her children* (Jeremiah 31:15), for She would not receive them. *Because* אֵינְנוּ (einenu), *He is no more* (ibid.)—because the Holy King had ascended far above and was absent, as is written: *because einenu, He is no more*; it is not written אֵינָם (einam), *they are no more*.”<sup>392</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya said to him, “*Why Rachel weeping for her children?*”<sup>393</sup>

He replied, “We have learned that this is Assembly of Israel and this is the Wife of Jacob surely, as is written: *Jacob loved Rachel* (Genesis 29:18). And it is written: *Rachel was barren* (ibid., 31); and there it is written: *He*

*settles the barren woman in her home as a joyous mother of children. Hallelujah!* (Psalms 113:9.[394](#))

“Alternatively, *Because* עִיִּנְנֻ (einennu), *He is not* (Jeremiah 31:15)—as is said: *Einennu, There is no one, greater [in this house than I]* (Genesis 39:9). *He is not*—for He has ascended above, distancing Himself from all. *He is not* united with Her; *He is not*—His Name no longer great.”[395](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “From what place did She begin to be exiled?”

He replied, “She began from the Temple, and then went around the whole Land. Afterward, when She left the Land, She rose above the desert and then sat there three days. She remembered Her legions and camps and those who sat with Her in the King’s house, and She exclaimed about Herself: *How does she sit alone?...* (Lamentations 1:1).”[396](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose wept.

Rabbi Yose said, “Israel was not exiled from the Land, nor was the Temple destroyed, until all of Israel were found guilty before the blessed Holy One. And they were not all found guilty until the leaders of the world were found guilty first, as is written: *O my people! Your guides lead astray...* (Isaiah 3:12). For once the heads of the people fall into sin, all the people are drawn after them.”[397](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “From here: *If the whole community of Israel should err* (Leviticus 4:13). How does this happen? Because *the matter be hidden from the eyes of the community* (ibid.), since the eyes of the people are their leaders, after whom all the people are drawn.”[398](#)

They walked on. As they were going, they saw a certain place lush with grass and a river flowing through. They sat down. While they were sitting, a bird flew by, chirping in front of them. Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Let’s get up from here, for there are surely mountain peckers around!”[399](#)

They got up and went. Turning their heads, they saw robbers chasing them. A miracle happened, and a cliff

appeared in front of them with a cave in it. They entered it and sat there that whole day and the whole night.

Rabbi Hiyya opened, saying, “*As for you, do not fear, My servant Jacob... for I will save you from afar* (Jeremiah 30:10). *For I will save you from afar*—the verse should read *from nearby*. It has been established that this phrase *from afar* corresponds with what is said: *They shall return from a faraway land*. However, *from afar*—as is said: *From afar, YHVH appeared to me* (Jeremiah 31:3), and it is written: *From afar she brings her food* (Proverbs 31:14). And who is that? Depth of the stream, whence that river flows forth.<sup>400</sup>

“*And Jacob will return* (Jeremiah 30:10). Since it is written *Do not fear, My servant Jacob, why and Jacob will return?* Well, as we have said: *For I will save you from afar*. For we have learned: The blessed Holy One has ascended far above, as is written: *Why, O YHVH, do You stand afar?* (Psalms 10:1); and from that place called *afar, I will save you, and Jacob will return*—to His place, to His throne, to couple with Assembly of Israel.<sup>401</sup>

“*And be calm* (Jeremiah 30:10)—*Yesod. And secure* (ibid.)—making His abode in Her. *With no one* מחריד (*maḥarid*), *frightening him* (ibid.)—from Isaac, as is said: *ויחרד יצחק* (*Va-yeherad Yitshaq*), *Isaac trembled* (Genesis 27:33). [21a] Of this is written *Fear of Isaac* (ibid. 31:42), and when that *Fear* is aroused, *Yesod* withdraws elsewhere, as is written: *Sinners in Zion are afraid* (Isaiah 33:14)—*in Zion*, precisely! Thus, *with no one frightening him*.<sup>402</sup>

“And now the blessed Holy One has saved us *from afar* and hidden us in this place in *calm* and tranquility, *with no one frightening* us at all! For when the blessed Holy One performs a miracle, He does so completely.”<sup>403</sup>

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*Barak said to her, ‘If you go with me, I will go...’* (Judges 4:8). What does this indicate? Well, Barak said, ‘Since the Holy Spirit has settled upon her, I will be saved because of her and no harm will befall me.’ Now if this one who relied on a

woman was saved because of her, how much more so we who have Torah with us, which is the name of the Holy King!"[404](#)

They sat the whole day. When night dusked, the moon shone into the cave. Two donkey-drivers passed by with their donkeys laden with food and drink for themselves. They rested on their load, and one said to the other, "Let's spend the night here. Look, we have food and drink—and for the donkeys—and we can go into this cave!"[405](#)

His companion said to him, "Not until this verse is settled."

He said, "Which one?"

He replied, "A certain word written: *I will thank You forever, for You have done, and I will wait for Your name, for it is good before Your devoted ones* (Psalms 52:11). Why *for You have done*, without saying what? And it is written: *for it is good before Your devoted ones*—and toward others it is not *good*?"[406](#)

He had no answer. He said, "Woe for the load, on account of which I have forsaken the blessed Holy One!"[407](#)

Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yose, who were sitting in the cave, rejoiced. Rabbi Hiyya said to Rabbi Yose, "Didn't I tell you that when the blessed Holy One performs a miracle, He does so completely?"[408](#)

They came out. As they were coming out, Rabbi Hiyya immediately opened, "*Peace, peace for the far and the near* (Isaiah 57:19). Two peaces here: one *for the far* and one *for the near*—and all is one, *for the far* who becomes *near*. Furthermore, *for the far*—a master of *teshuvah*: first he was *far* and now he is *near*. Furthermore, *the far*—when a person strays far from Torah, he is far from the blessed Holy One; and whoever draws near Torah is drawn near the blessed Holy One. Now join us and come into the cave!"[409](#)

Those donkey-drivers came and prostrated themselves before them. They unloaded their donkeys and prepared



food. Then they all went out to the mouth of the cave.<sup>410</sup>

One of the donkey-drivers said, “Let the masters of Torah explain to us this verse: *I will thank You לעולם (le-olam), forever, for You have done, and I will wait for Your name, for it is good before Your devoted ones* (Psalms 52:11). Why *for עשית (asita), You have done*, without saying what? And it is written: *for it is good before Your devoted ones*—and toward others it is not *good*?”

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “*For asita, You have made*, surely! And what *have You made? Le-olam, the world*. Because of this *world* that the blessed Holy One made and established, one thanks the blessed Holy One every day.<sup>411</sup>

“*Your name, for it is good before Your devoted ones*—certainly so! The name of the blessed Holy One *is good* before the righteous, not before the wicked who scorn it every day by not engaging in Torah.”<sup>412</sup>

He said to him, “That is fine, but I heard a word from behind *Shekhinah*, which I fear to reveal.”<sup>413</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose said to him, “Utter your word, for Torah is not bequeathed to one place alone.”<sup>414</sup>

He said to them, “One day I was traveling to Lydda. I entered the town and leaned myself against a wall. Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai was in that house, and I heard this verse from his mouth: ‘*I will thank You לעולם (le-olam), forever, for עשית (asita), You have done...* (Psalms 52:11). *I will thank You*—King David, peace be unto him, said this for the last *olam, world*, that He made, for King David is linked to that *world*, by which he inherited the kingdom.<sup>415</sup>

“*And I will wait for Your name, for it is good* (Psalms 52:11)—the blessed Holy One with *yesod*, the Foundation, of this *world*, who is called *good*. When is He called *good*? *Before חסידים (ḥasidekha), Your devoted ones*. Who are *ḥasidekha Your devoted ones*? Well, there is *חסד (ḥesed)*, and then there is *ḥesed*! These are called *faithful חסדי דוד (ḥasdei david), acts of love for David* (Isaiah 55:3); and when these *ḥasdei david, acts of love for David*, are filled with the goodness flowing from



the Ancient One, then *Yesod* is called *good*; then *it is good* for them. For when He is in that state, He sweetens this last *world* and all is blessed. Therefore, David waits for this rung that illumines this *world* to which he is linked.’<sup>416</sup>

“This is how I heard the words, but I don’t know what they mean.”

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose came and kissed him on his head.

Rabbi [21b] Ḥiyya said, “Who would cover your eyes with dust, Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai? For you are in your place, yet you make high mountains quake. Birds of heaven and all creatures delight in your words. Woe to the world when you depart from it!”<sup>417</sup>

That man opened again, saying, “I heard another word from him at that time, concerning the verse *Now hear, O our God, the prayer of Your servant and his pleas... for the sake of Adonai, My Lord* (Daniel 9:17). He said as follows: If this name were highest of all, it would be fine, for so they say: ‘Do it for the sake of the king.’ But it is known that this name is the site of the court, from which Judgment issues to the world. Who has seen anyone say to the king, ‘Do it for the sake of your servant,’ or ‘...for something less than yourself’?<sup>418</sup>

“However, so it should be, for this name establishes a house for the King and the Temple below; one is attached to the other since they are interlinked. When the Sanctuary below stands firm, this name above stands firm. This is like someone saying to the king, ‘Build this house and this palace so that the *matronita* will not have to dwell outside the palace.’ Here, too, *Let Your face shine upon Your desolate sanctuary, for the sake of Adonai* (Daniel 9:17)—so that She will not be outside Her dwelling.”<sup>419</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose were amazed and they rejoiced that night. After they had eaten, his fellow donkey-driver opened, saying, “I will tell you something that I was engaged in today—this verse: *A psalm of David, when he*

*was in the desert of Judea* (Psalms 63:1). David uttered this song when he was fleeing from his father-in-law. What did he say? *Elohim, You are my God; I will seek You. My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a parched and weary land with no water* (ibid., 2). *Elohim, You are my God*—for he was always attached to *Gevuran, Powers*.<sup>[420](#)</sup>

“*I will seek You*—now, how could David seek the blessed Holy One in a distant land, having been driven from the place where *Shekhinah* dwells? Well, even though he was driven away, he did not abandon his custom of seeking the blessed Holy One. And I have heard that *I will seek You* is like someone saying, ‘I would go to appear before You, but I cannot.’ So, *I would seek You*—‘but I am outside the place where *Shekhinah* dwells.’<sup>[421](#)</sup>

“*My soul thirsts for You*, ‘longing for You—and my body, to appear before You—but I cannot because I am *in a parched and weary land with no water*,’ referring to a place outside that of *Shekhinah*, where living waters are not found. Who are living waters? *Shekhinah*, of whom is written *a well of living waters* (Song of Songs 4:15). Thus it is written: *a parched and weary land with no water*.”<sup>[422](#)</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose said, “Surely this way is paved before us!”

They entered the cave and slept. At midnight they heard the sound of animals howling in the desert; they awoke.

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “It is time to assist Assembly of Israel, for She is praising the King.”<sup>[423](#)</sup>

They said, “Let each one say something from Torah that he has heard and knows.”

They all sat down.

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, “*For the leader. On the doe of dawn. A song of David* (Psalms 22:1). Who is *the doe of dawn*? Assembly of Israel, who is called *a loving doe, a graceful gazelle* (Proverbs 5:19). Is She *the doe of the dawn*, and not *of the day*? Well, *the doe* from the place

called *dawn*, as is said: *His appearing is as sure as dawn* (Hosea 6:3). King David said this of Assembly of Israel, for it was not uttered by Assembly of Israel Herself, as indicated by *On the doe of dawn*.[424](#)

“Come and see: When night enters, gates are shut, and those above and those below subside. The distant ones are aroused and go roaming throughout the world, pursuing human bodies and encircling their beds—and when they see the image of the King, they become afraid, for [those] have strengthened themselves in bed with words of the Holy Name.[425](#)

“Souls of humans ascend, each one fittingly, as has been established. Happy is the share of the righteous, whose souls ascend on high and are not detained in another, undesirable place![426](#)

“When the night is split, a herald stands proclaiming and gates open. Then a wind from the north side stirs and strikes [22a] the harp of David, which plays itself, praising the King, and the blessed Holy One delights with the righteous in the Garden of Eden.[427](#)

“Happy is the share of one who awakes at that time and engages in Torah. Whoever rises at that time is called a friend of the blessed Holy One and of Assembly of Israel. Furthermore, they are called brothers and companions, as is written: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions, let me say, ‘Peace be within you’* (Psalms 122:8). They are called friends, as is written: *Friends listen for your voice; let me hear!* (Song of Songs 8:13).[428](#)

“When day comes, a herald stands proclaiming and gates of the south are opened, stars and constellations awaken, gates of Compassion are opened, and the King sits, receiving praises. Then all those friends grasp the wings of Assembly of Israel, and their words come and settle in the lap of the King. Then the King commands, and all those members of His palace are inscribed in a book, and a thread of love is drawn upon them. By that thread

one is adorned with the crown of the King and feared by those above and below. Even when masters of Judgment prevail, they do not execute judgment upon him, because he is marked with the insignia of the King and known to be of the royal palace, making him immune to Judgment. Happy is the share of the righteous who engage in Torah, for as long as Israel is with the King, He yearns for words of Torah![429](#)

“Come and see mystery of the matter: Assembly of Israel does not stand before the King except with Torah. For as long as people of Israel in the Land engage in Torah, Assembly of Israel dwells with them; and when they neglect Torah, She cannot remain with them for even a moment. So when Assembly of Israel is aroused toward the King, Her power grows, and the King delights in greeting Her; but whenever Assembly of Israel comes toward the King lacking Torah, Her power, as it were, weakens. Woe to those who weaken power above! Thus, happy are those who engage in Torah, especially when Assembly of Israel needs it. Then, of such a person the blessed Holy One declares, *He said to me, ‘You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory’* (Isaiah 49:3).”[430](#)

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*An utterance concerning Dumah. One calls to me from Seir, ‘Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?’* (Isaiah 21:11). This verse has already been established by the Companions in various places, but *מִשָּׂא דוֹמָה* (*massa dumah*), *An utterance concerning Dumah*—all those times when Israel was in exile, the time and termination were known; yet the exile of Edom is *massa dumah, a burden of silence*, for unlike those others, it is neither known nor revealed.[431](#)

“The blessed Holy One says, *‘One calls to me from Seir—I have heard a voice amidst the exile of Seir, from those who are oppressed, those lying in the dust. And what do they say? Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of*

*the night?* They are demanding from Me about *Matronita*: What have I done with My *Matronita*?<sup>432</sup>

“Then the blessed Holy One gathers His family and says, ‘See My beloved children, who are oppressed in exile, yet they abandon their own distress and demand from Me about *Matronita*: ‘*Watchman*—You who are called *watchman*, where is the watching? Where is the watching over Your house? *What* מלילה (*mi-lailah*), *of the night?* What have You done with *night*? Is this how You watch over Her? *What* מליל (*mi-leil*), *of the night?* For sometimes She is called *lailah*, and sometimes She is called *leil*—as is written: *It is* ליל (*leil*), *a night of, watch for* YHVH, and it is written: *this* הלילה (*ha-lailah*), *night* (Exodus 12:42).<sup>433</sup>

“Then the blessed Holy One answers them, ‘My watching endures, for I am ready to welcome Her and be with Her,’ as is written: *The watchman said*—the one watching over the house—‘*Morning is coming, and also night*’ (Isaiah 21:12). At first, You ascended far above and removed that *morning* that is always present with Her. Now, *morning is coming*—He is ready to join *night*. *And also night*—She is ready. ‘But on account of you, they have been delayed. And if you want this—and why have they delayed?—*Return!* (ibid.), return in *teshuvah*. Then, *come!* (ibid.)—come to Me and we will all share one abode and all return to our place,’ as is written: ושב יהוה אלהיך את שבותך (*ve-shav YHVH Elohekha et shevutekha*), *YHVH your God will return with your captivity...*(Deuteronomy 30:3)—the verse does not read וְהָשִׁיב (*ve-heshiv*), *will restore*, [22b] but rather ושב (*ve-shav*), *will return*. Twice here, *will return, will return*—one for Assembly of Israel and one for the blessed Holy One, as is written: *He will return and gather you from all the nations* (ibid).<sup>434</sup>

That donkey-driver opened, saying, “*When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy* (Job 38:7). Come and see: When the blessed Holy One

comes to delight with the righteous in the Garden of Eden, all entities of the upper world and all those above and below are aroused toward Him, and all the trees of Eden begin praising Him, as is written: *Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy [before YHVH, for He comes]...* (1 Chronicles 16:33). Even birds of the earth all chirp praise before Him. Then a rooster flaps its wings and calls out praise to the Holy King and calls to human beings to engage in service of their Lord. Happy is the share of those who rise from their beds to engage in Torah![435](#)

“When morning comes, the gates of the south open and healing streams to the world; the east wind stirs and Compassion prevails. All those stars appointed under this morning open in praise, singing to the supernal King, as is written: *When the morning stars sang together*, כל בני אלהים ויריעו (va-yari’u kol benei Elohim), *and all the sons of Elohim shouted for joy*. What are *the sons of Elohim* doing here, summoning הרועה (teru’ah), a shout, at this time, since all judgments are eliminated when *Hesed* is aroused in the world? Well, va-yari’u kol benei Elohim, *and all the sons of Elohim were smashed*—the power of harsh judgments is broken and their strength is broken, as is said: רועה החרועה ארץ (Ro’ah hitro’a’ah arets), *The earth is burst asunder* (Isaiah 24:19).[436](#)

“All this because that morning is aroused in the world, and Abraham comes to plant a tamarisk in Beersheba (Genesis 21:33). This word I heard as follows: *in Beersheba*, surely! And it is written: *He invoked there the name of YHVH, eternal God* (ibid.).”[437](#)

His companion opened, saying, “*The morning was light, and the men were sent off...* (Genesis 44:3). What does this mean: *The morning was light*? I have learned as follows: What is בקר (boqer), *morning*? Well, when morning comes and judgments are eliminated and *Hesed* is about to awaken, all those deriving from this side מבקרי (mevaqqerei), visit, their place to prepare blessings for the world. This is boqer—אור בקר (boqer or), *morning is light*—for Compassion settles upon



the world and *Hesed* assumes its place; then, *morning is light*, and it is written: *God saw the light, that it was good* (Genesis 1:4).[438](#)

“Come and see: All is on specific rungs. Night, as is known. *Morning is light*, as is known—a rung always found with it. When? When the sun shines. Sun, as is known—a supernal rung, sweetening all and illumining all, as is said: *For a sun and shield is YHVH of Hosts* (Psalms 84:12). This *morning is light* shines from the sun, and this illumines night, so all depend on one another. When this *morning is light* arouses, all inhabitants of the world unite in joy and endure in the world. And now look, the day is shining! It is a favorable time to go on our way.”[439](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose blessed them and kissed them on their heads and sent them off.

Rabbi Ḥiyya said to Rabbi Yose, “Blessed is the Compassionate One who has paved the way before us! Surely, the blessed Holy One sent them to us. Happy are those who engage in Torah and do not slacken from it for a moment!”[440](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose emerged and went on their way. Rabbi Yose said, “Surely, the love in my heart is bound with those donkey-drivers.”

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “I’m not surprised at this, for in the days of Rabbi Shim’on even birds of heaven whisper wisdom, because his words are known above and below.”[441](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, “*YHVH said to Moses, ‘Here, you are about to lie with your fathers, [and this people will rise and go whoring after the alien gods of the land into the midst of which they are coming, and they will forsake Me and violate My covenant that I have made with them]’* (Deuteronomy 31:16). Come and see: As long as Moses remained alive in the world, he restrained Israel, so that they would not be found sinful before the blessed Holy One. Because Moses was among them, there will be no generation until King Messiah comes that sees the glory of

the blessed Holy One as they did, for they attained what other generations did not. As we have learned: 'A single handmaid at the Sea saw what the eye of Ezekiel the prophet did not see.' If they attained so much, all the more so the wives of Israel, all the more so their children, all the more so the men, all the more so the chieftains, all the more so the Sanhedrin, all the more so the prophets, all the much more so the supreme, faithful prophet Moses, who surpassed all!<sup>442</sup>

"Now if these donkey-drivers of the desert utter such wisdom, all the much more so sages of the generation who stand before Rabbi Shim'on, learning from him every [23a] day, all the much more so Rabbi Shim'on himself, who transcends all!

"After Moses died, what is written? *This people will rise [and go whoring after the alien gods]...* (Deuteronomy 31:16). Similarly, woe to the world when Rabbi Shim'on departs from it, for springs of wisdom will be stopped up, and a person will seek a word of wisdom and find no one speaking, and the whole world will stray in Torah because no one among them is aroused by wisdom! Of this we read: *If the whole community of Israel should err* (Leviticus 4:13) —*if they err* in Torah and do not know the way, why is this? Because *the matter be hidden from the eyes of the assembly*—for there is no one who knows how to reveal depths and ways. Woe to those generations! Woe to those who exist then in the world!"<sup>443</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, "The blessed Holy One will eventually reveal deep mysteries of Torah in the time of King Messiah, for *the earth will be filled with knowledge of YHVH as waters cover the sea* (Isaiah 11:9), and it is written: *No longer will a man teach his brother, or a man his neighbor, saying, 'Know YHVH,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest* (Jeremiah 31:34)." <sup>444</sup>

*When a chieftain sins* (Leviticus 4:22).<sup>445</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, "Why is this different from everywhere else,

where it is written *If*—as is said: *If the anointed priest should sin* (Leviticus 4:3); *If the whole community of Israel should err* (ibid., 13)—whereas here: *When a chieftain sins*, not *If a chieftain sins*? What does this indicate?<sup>446</sup>

"Well, these are not in a state of sin, for a priest guards himself constantly since the burden of his Lord lies upon him every day, and the burden of all Israel, and the burden of each one of them; so it was astonishing when he would sin, and therefore it is written *If*. Similarly, *If the whole community of Israel should err*—it would be astonishing if they would all be found committing the same sin, for if some would sin, others would not; so it is written *If*.<sup>447</sup>

"But here, *When a chieftain sins*, surely—because his heart is arrogant, and the people follow him and are under his command. So, *When a chieftain sins*, having violated one of the negative commandments; consequently, of him is not written *If*, since the matter is not in doubt."<sup>448</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, "*The chieftains brought the carnelian stones and the stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece* (Exodus 35:27). Why were these brought by the chieftains and by no one else? For look at what is written: *Everyone whose heart impels him shall bring it, an offering for YHVH* (Exodus 35:5), and it is written: *carnelian stones and stones for setting* (ibid., 9)!<sup>449</sup>

"Well, the blessed Holy One said, 'Although this freewill offering depends on everyone, leave these stones for the chieftains.' Why? Because they are placed on the heart of the priest. The blessed Holy One said, 'Let the chieftains, whose hearts are arrogant, come and bring these stones that are placed on the heart, and the heart will be atoned for.' And it is written: *They shall be upon Aaron's heart* (Exodus 28:30). Therefore, *the chieftains brought the*

*carnelian stones and the stones for setting, to atone for themselves. Thus, When a chieftain sins, surely.*[450](#)

*“And does one of the things that by the commands of YHVH should not be done (Leviticus 4:22)—as has been established: violating a negative commandment.*[451](#)

*“Or his sin is made known to him (Leviticus 4:23)—for since his heart is arrogant, he did not notice, and afterward it was made known to him and he repented.”*[452](#)

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yose were sitting one night, delving into Torah. Rabbi Yehudah said to Rabbi Yose, “I see that thirsting clarity of Torah is greater by night than by day. Why?”[453](#)

He replied, “Because clarity of Written Torah is Oral Torah, and Oral Torah prevails at night and is more stimulated then than by day. When She reigns, Torah is thirstily clear.”[454](#)

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*He did not say, ‘Where is God, my Maker, giving songs in the night?’ (Job 35:10). Come and see: When the north wind stirs and the night is split, as has been established, a flame licks out and strikes beneath the wings of the rooster, who flaps his wings and crows. When that flame touches him, flaring toward him, אסתחי (istakhi), he looks, upon it and trembles and cries; he looks and watches—for the sake of his Master’s glory, to perform His will—and he calls out to human beings. Therefore he is called שכוי (sekhvi), rooster—‘watching.’ And he is called גבר (gever), rooster, because he is aroused by a flame [23b] of גבורה (Gevurah) and comes from the side of Gevurah to arouse the world.*[455](#)

“Then those Scions of Faith rise and empower Assembly of Israel, and this is called ‘jubilation of Torah.’ Therefore David inherited the kingdom—he and his descendants forever, for generations upon generations.[456](#)

“When the rooster crows and people sleep in their beds, failing to awake, he crows again, saying what he

says, as has been established. He then flaps his wings and says, 'Woe to so-and-so, rebuked by his Lord, abandoned by his Lord, whose spirit has not been aroused and who has ignored the glory of his Lord!'<sup>457</sup>

"When the day shines, a herald proclaims of him, *He did not say, 'Where is God, my Maker, giving songs in the night?'* (Job 35:10)—to assist with those praises, all sharing in one assistance. *He did not say, 'Where is God, עושי (osai), my Makers'*—the verse should read עושני (oseni), *my Maker; why osai, my Makers?* Well, when a person rises at midnight and engages in jubilation of Torah—for it is jubilation only at night—and he is immersed in Torah, then when the day shines, the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel adorn him with a thread of love, to be safe from all, illumining him among those above and below."<sup>458</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, "I heard Rabbi Abba speak on this verse: *God, עושי (osai), my Makers*—the verse should read לִי עושה (oseh li), *who makes me*. Why *osai, my Makers?* Well, as you said: When he rises at midnight and engages in Torah, then when day shines, Abraham is aroused with his thread, of which is written *from a thread to a sandal strap* (Genesis 14:23); and the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel array him, making him daily into a new creature, as is written: *אלוה עושי (Eloah osai), God, my Makers*. As has been established, *אל ו ה (El vav he)*. *El, God*—Abraham, of whom is written *האל הגדול (ha-El ha-gadol), the great God* (Deuteronomy 10:17). *vav*—the blessed Holy One. *He*—Assembly of Israel. This is *אלוה (Eloah), God*, and these make a person and restore him every day. Thus it is written: *osai, my Makers*, as is said: *Israel will rejoice בעושי (be-osav), in its Makers* (Psalms 149:2)."<sup>459</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, "Certainly so, and all is one word."<sup>460</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, "*Or his sin that he has committed הודע (hoda), is made known, to him* (Leviticus 4:23). *Is made known to him*—by whom? The verse should

read *or* יָדָע (*yada*), *he knows*; why *is made known*? Well, the blessed Holy One commands Assembly of Israel to make known to a person the sin that he has committed. And how does She make it known to him? By Her punishments, as is said: *Heaven will expose his sin, and earth will rise up against him* (Job 20:27). *Hoda, Make known, to him*—like one commanding another.<sup>461</sup>

“For we have learned: When a person sins before the blessed Holy One and does not examine his sin to return in *teshuvah* before his Lord, but throws it over his shoulder, then his very soul ascends and testifies before the blessed Holy One. The King then commands Assembly of Israel, saying, ‘*Hoda, Make known, to him his sin that he has committed*—launch Your punishment upon him and make known to him his sin,’ as is said: *Hoda, Make known, to Jerusalem her abominations* (Ezekiel 16:2).<sup>462</sup>

“Once punishment comes upon him, his spirit awakens to return in *teshuvah* before his Lord and he is humbled to bring an offering—for one whose heart is arrogant sins and forgets his sin, ignoring it; but the blessed Holy One confronts him, commanding that the sin be made known to him so that it will not be forgotten.”

Rabbi Yose said, “Certainly so! How do we know? From David. Once he committed that act with Bathsheba, he ignored it. The blessed Holy One said to him, ‘You have forgotten it? I will remind you.’ Immediately, what is written? *Thus says YHVH, ‘You are the man!’* (2 Samuel 12:7) —‘who did not remember it. *You are the man* who forgot it.’ How did He make it known to him? By punishment.<sup>463</sup>

“Here too the blessed Holy One says, ‘הוֹדַע (*Hoda*), *Make known, to him, his sin that he has committed.*’ The word is fine, and so it is—not נֹדַע (*noda*), *is known, to him*, as is written: *Or noda, it is known, that it is a goring ox* (Exodus 21:36).<sup>464</sup>

“If one rises at night to study Torah, then Torah informs him of his sin—not by punishment, but like a mother telling



her child gently; and he does not forget, but returns in *teshuvah* before his Lord.<sup>465</sup>

“Now, you might say, ‘David, who rose at midnight—why was he attacked by punishment?’ Well, David is different, for he transgressed against that to which he was linked, and he required punishment; he was judged according to his transgression. He sinned against holy *Malkhuta*, Kingdom; he was driven from Jerusalem and deprived of the kingdom, until [24a] he was rectified fittingly and punished.”<sup>466</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Why did the blessed Holy One punish David through his son, as is written: *I am about to raise up evil against you from your own house* (2 Samuel 12:11)?”<sup>467</sup>

Rabbi Yose replied, “As has been established, because if someone else would rise against him, he would show [David] no mercy.”<sup>468</sup>

He said to him, “But Absalom sought to kill his father, carrying out various plots against him.”

He replied, “I have heard nothing further.”

He said, “I have heard that David sinned against Bathsheba, unspecified. The blessed Holy One said, ‘Let the son of *a daughter of an alien god* come and avenge Her’—for Absalom was the son of a beautiful captive from war. From here we learn: If one takes such a woman in battle and desires her, eventually *a wayward and rebellious son* will issue from her. Why? Because filth has not yet ceased from her, as has been established.”<sup>469</sup>

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by His mighty arm* (Isaiah 62:8). This verse has already been established, but come and see: Whenever a person sins before the blessed Holy One, there is a certain rung above corresponding to that sin, to judge the person, concurring in punishment. If he turns back in complete *teshuvah* before Him, his sin is removed and no punishment

reaches him. If he does not turn back, that sin is engraved on that rung. If he keeps sinning, then another rung confronts him, concurring with the first rung; then he needs greater *teshuvah*—otherwise, he adds rung to rung until reaching five rungs.<sup>470</sup>

“Once the right hand is set confronting him, concurring against him, left is ready to concur with right, merging with it. When left concurs with right, *teshuvah* no longer pertains, as has been established. Then, all concur in judgment against him, and Judgment befalls him.<sup>471</sup>

“When Judgment is complete, befalling a person, it is finalized, and fingers are configured five within five, right in left—showing that all concur in that judgment—and his hands are straightened, demonstrating the matter, without the person’s intention, unintentionally.<sup>472</sup>

“Thus it is written: *Your right hand, O YHVH, glorious in power. Your right hand, O YHVH, smashes the enemy* (Exodus 15:6), for left merged with right, completing Judgment; then, endurance of all. So when the blessed Holy One wishes to sustain all, it is written *YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by His mighty arm* (Isaiah 62:8).<sup>473</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, “*Fruit of a majestic tree, fronds of palms* (Leviticus 23:40). What is *fruit of a majestic tree*? An *etrog*. Now, does an *etrog* grow on a *majestic tree*? There are many thorns around it in every direction, and you say it is *fruit of a majestic tree*?<sup>474</sup>

“However, mystery of the matter: *YHVH Elohim built the side He had taken from אָדָם (ha-adam), the human, into a woman and He brought her to the human* (Genesis 2:22), and it is written: *bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh* (ibid., 23)—this is *fruit of a majestic tree*. And how do we know that *adam* is called a *tree*? As is written: For *ha-adam, the human, is a tree of the field* (Deuteronomy 20:19).<sup>475</sup>

“כַּפּוֹת (Kappot), *Fronds of, palms*—yielding in seventy years, adorned with seventy years. This אִכְפַּת (*ikhpat*), is

bound, and tied above and below; so it is called *kappot*, *fronds*—as is said: כפיתו (*kephitu*), *were bound* (Daniel 3:21)—attaining here and there, as is written: *yes, all that is in heaven and on earth* (1 Chronicles 29:11), precisely!”<sup>476</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “*Fruit of a majestic tree*—an altar, yielding fruit and vegetation on all sides. Why? Because all seventy years give it a share and it is blessed by them all. What does this indicate? That whoever sins against the altar sins against all, for it is bound with the one bound above, so one is linked with the other: *fruit of a majestic tree, fronds of palms*—not *and fronds of palms*.”<sup>477</sup>

“It is written: זאת משחת (*Zot mishḥat*), *This is the allotment of, Aaron and the allotment of his sons* (Leviticus 7:35). What does this indicate? Well, *zot, this*, is the altar, דאתמשח (*de-itmeshah*), that was anointed, by Aaron, as is written: ומשחת (*U-mashaḥta*), *You shall anoint, the altar...* (Exodus 40:10). ומשחת (*U-mishḥat*), *And the allotment of, his sons*—for אתמשח (*itmeshah*), it is anointed, increased, and blessed by them all.”<sup>478</sup>

“Come and see: On the Festival, the altar is circled once every day and seven times afterward. What does this indicate? Well, this may be compared to a king who invited guests and was occupied with them. The king had an only daughter; she said to him, ‘My master, the king, on account of the guests you ignore me!’”<sup>479</sup>

“He replied to her, ‘By your life, my daughter! Every day I will offer you a sweet delicacy equal to them all.’ [24b]”<sup>480</sup>

“Similarly, on every day of the Festival, Israel brings offerings for the nations of the world. The altar said to the Holy King, ‘They all have portions and shares, and what are You giving to Me?’”<sup>481</sup>

“He replied, ‘Every single day seven supernal varieties will encircle You, giving You seven portions daily.’”<sup>482</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “Seventy portions daily, corresponding to seventy bulls offered on the Festival.”<sup>483</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Seven every day, for She is blessed by them all; and at the end of seven days She is blessed from the place where anointing oil is found. Then seven times, corresponding to all those seven days, actualizing blessings for Her from the spring of the stream flowing constantly, never ceasing. Thus, She is blessed every day until seven days, when She is blessed from the spring of the stream. And so another time, seven times as one, and then blessings are actualized from the supernal place whence the spring gushes, never ceasing, as we have said.<sup>484</sup>

“Every day, a proclamation issues for Her, declaring, *While the barren one bears seven, and the mother of many dwindles* (1 Samuel 2:5). *While the barren one bears seven*—Assembly of Israel, who is blessed by seven every day, attaining a supernal count. *And the mother of many dwindles*—nations of the world, who on the first day attain a great amount, which then gradually diminishes daily. Thus the altar atones for the sins of Israel, purifying them and pouring out blessings for them from above to below.<sup>485</sup>

“*And a branch of a thickly-leaved tree* (Leviticus 23:40)—the Holy King, grasping two sides. Therefore, the myrtle is three, *a branch* becoming *thickly-leaved*, grasping all sides.<sup>486</sup>

“*And willows of the brook* (Leviticus 23:40)—two pillars, whence the flow issues to *fronds of palms*. *Fronde of palms*—attached above, attached below, as has been said. The *etrog* emerges from the thorns of trees; so it is. Similarly, *fronds of palms*, attached to them surely. All that issues to the world flows from here; from here it is nourished.”<sup>487</sup>

Rabbi Yose opened, “*Let me come to the altar of Elohim* (Psalms 43:4). Who is *the altar of Elohim*? The *altar* above, *the altar of Elohim* surely—namely the well of Isaac. And sometimes, *the altar of YHVH*, as is written: *He rose from before the altar of YHVH* (1 Kings 8:54). Thus worlds inherit

from here Judgment and Compassion, for She suckles from this side and from that side. The matter has already been established."[488](#)

When נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*), a soul, commits a sacrilege against any of YHVH'S sancta (Leviticus 5:15).[489](#)

and: *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling* (1 Samuel 25:29).[490](#)

"Happy are the righteous who have a supernal share in the blessed Holy One, a holy share in the sancta of the King, for they hallow themselves in the holiness of their Lord! Whoever sanctifies himself, the blessed Holy One sanctifies him, as is written: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy* (Leviticus 11:44). A person sanctifies himself from below, and he is sanctified from above. And when one is sanctified by the holiness of his Lord, he is clothed with a holy *neshamah*, heritage of the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel. Then he inherits all, and these are called 'sons of the blessed Holy One,' as is written: *You are sons of YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:1), as has been established.[491](#)

"Come and see: *Let the earth bring forth נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה* (*nefesh hayyah*), *the soul of a living being* (Genesis 1:24), and they have established: *the soul of a living being*, unspecified. From that share, King David inherited, and he was bound in a supernal bond and became heir to the kingdom. Thus, *the soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life*.[492](#)

"As has been established, *nefesh* is linked [25a] with *ruah*, and *ruah* with *neshamah*, and *neshamah* with the blessed Holy One. Happy is the share of one who inherits this supernal heritage![493](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, "*Nefesh, a soul*, surely! It is written: *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with YHVH your God,*

“Woe to the wicked whose souls do not prove worthy in this world and certainly not in the world that is coming! Of them is written *The soul of your enemies He will sling from the hollow of a sling*—for they go roaming through the world without finding a place to which to connect. They are defiled within the side of impurity, and a herald proclaims: *When a soul commits a sacrilege against any of YHVH’s sancta* (Leviticus 5:15)—for it cannot enter holiness nor be included. These are the demons of the world, cleaving to them and becoming defiled.”[494](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “When Assembly of Israel is crowned by the Holy King, She is crowned and called Bundle of Life, since all is bound to Her.”[495](#)

Rabbi El’azar said, “When *Shekhinah* journeys, She journeys with the Patriarchs, as is written: *The angel of Elohim who was going [before the camp of Israel moved]* (Exodus 14:19).”[496](#)

Rabbi Abba said, “All becomes one crown, so that She may be crowned as one, and the Holy Name is revealed in its colors. At that moment, this verse applies: *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men* (Song of Songs 2:3). And Israel saw a glorious supernal splendor journeying before them. This is what we have learned: *He brought you out of Egypt through His presence with His great power* (Deuteronomy 4:37)—the Patriarchs. So this Name smashes mountains and rocks, bringing benefit and harm. Happy is the share of Israel!”[497](#)

“Come and see: Why a goat for an offering, seeing that Rabbi Shim’on has said, אֵז (Ez), goat—its name proves decisive, indicating that it is an evil aspect and species’? Well, Rabbi Shim’on said as follows: ‘This must be offered, for if an impure spirit passes over a person or he is engaged with it, then a goat is his offering, corresponding to the manner of his sin.’”[498](#)



“And Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘We have learned: Some attain *neshamah*, some attain arousal of *ruah*, and some attain nothing but *nefesh*. One who attains no more and ascends no higher clings to that side, and when he sleeps, those evil aspects come and cling to him, informing him of matters of the world, some false and some true. Sometimes they toy with him, showing him falsehoods and tormenting him in his dream. This is why some of the Gentiles see true things in their dreams, because of that side to which they cling—and all those matters are in the near future.[499](#)

““Come and see: Among those evil species are rungs, one above the other. Their highest rung—those suspended in the air. The lowest rung—those toying with humans and tormenting them in their dreams, for they are all impudent as dogs. And there is a higher rung above them, including above and below, and these inform a person about things, some false and some true—and those true things are all in the near future.[500](#)

““Regarding the rung of those suspended in the air, who are the highest: someone who has attained no more than *nefesh*, and that *nefesh* seeks to be enhanced, to receive *ruah*—before gaining it, something of that *nefesh* emerges and spreads through the world, wishing to ascend yet not wishing, until encountering those in the air, who inform him of things, some near and some farther off. On that rung it moves, attached, in its dream, until acquiring *ruah*.[501](#)

““Once it obtains *ruah*, that *ruah* emerges, smashing mountains and rocks, ascending, spreading, and entering among supernal angels, where it knows what it knows and learns what it learns, and then returns to its place. Then the person is bound to holiness, until attaining *neshamah* and acquiring it.[502](#)

““Once he obtains *neshamah*, she ascends high above, and the gatekeepers do not hinder her. She moves and spreads, entering among the righteous who are bound in the Bundle

of Life, and there she gazes upon the delight of the King and basks in supernal splendor.<sup>503</sup>

“When the Doe is awakened by the north wind, she descends, and that virtuous one who has obtained her rises and grows mighty as a lion in Torah until morning comes. Then he goes with that Doe to appear before the King, to receive a certain thread. And what [25b] is it? The thread of Abraham, who obtained it, as is written: *from a thread* (Genesis 14:23). He derived no benefit from another, and said, *From a thread*; so he attained this thread, which is called “thread of Abraham.”<sup>504</sup>

“When that virtuous one comes with this Doe, then he is crowned before the King, and David says, *For the leader. On the doe of dawn* (Psalms 22:1)—Assembly of Israel. *The doe of dawn*—the song chanted by Assembly of Israel in exile: *My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?*... (ibid., 2).<sup>505</sup>

“Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘Happy are those who possess *neshamah*, who possess Torah, sons of holy worship! Woe to the wicked who fail to cleave to their Lord, who fail to attain Torah! For whoever fails to attain Torah attains neither *ruah* nor *neshamah* and cleaves to the side of evil species. Such a person has no share in the Holy King and possesses no share of holiness. Woe to him when he departs from this world, for he is recognized by those evil species—impudent ones, brazen as dogs, envoys of the fires of Hell, who show him no mercy!’<sup>506</sup>

“Come and see the difference between Israel and other nations. An Israelite, even if he attains only *nefesh*, stands poised on a rung to obtain *ruah*, and if he wishes, *neshamah*. But Gentiles never obtain—unless he is circumcised, when he obtains *nefesh instead of nefesh, nefesh* from another place.<sup>507</sup>

“If an Israelite—who occupies a higher rung—does not aspire to attain more, his punishment is severe. Woe to that wicked one who has forgotten the commandments of his

Lord and failed to engage in Torah, forgetting his Lord! Of him is written *Let sinners vanish from the earth...* (Psalms 104:35).[508](#)

“Come and see: There is a person who clings to this side on account of this *nefesh*, not being any worthier; and when that impure spirit passes by, it settles upon him and clings to him. Then the sin committed by this person derives from the side of that impure spirit—so his offering is a goat, since this is an animal that comes from that side, to atone for his sin.’[509](#)

“Rabbi El’azar, his son, said to him, ‘Look at what is written: *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* (Deuteronomy 21:23)—for the land is holy, and anything on which impure spirit settles must not appear in the Holy Land! Here, too, since this is an animal on which impure spirit settles and which comes from its side, why is it brought as an offering to a holy place?’[510](#)

“He replied, ‘You have asked well. But come and see what is written: *For YHVH your God is a consuming fire* (Deuteronomy 4:24)—a fire consuming fire; fire of the blessed Holy One consumes another fire.

“Come and see: There are angels who sing before the blessed Holy One, and they are nullified, when they complete that song, by a spark of the consuming fire. Below, the blessed Holy One has prepared fire of the altar, and this fire consumes and eliminates that entire side, which is nullified by the flame of this fire, so that none of it remains in the world. The person who brings his offering stands by it, and through the aroma ascending, that aspect of impure spirit settling upon him is removed and he attains atonement. Thus all is nullified and eliminated—no one withstands that fire.’”[511](#)

Rabbi Aḥa was walking on the way; Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yose were walking too, and they encountered one

another.

Rabbi Aḥa said, “Surely, we three are fit to welcome the face of *Shekhinah!*” They joined as one and walked on.<sup>512</sup>

Rabbi Aḥa said, “Let each one say a word linking Torah as we go.”<sup>513</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, “*Pour down, O heavens, from above! Let the skies flow with righteousness! Let the earth open and salvation sprout; let righteousness spring up with it...* (Isaiah 45:8). This verse is a mystery of wisdom, which I learned from the Holy Lamp. *Pour down, O heavens, from above*—what is *pour down*? As is said: *Let my teaching pour down like rain* (Deuteronomy 32:2), and it refers to the aspect of rain, nourishing all. Therefore, all eyes of the world look toward the blessed Holy One, for He is sustenance of all.<sup>514</sup>

“Now, you might say that the matter depends on this place called *heaven*. Yet we have learned that ‘the matter does not depend on merit’—and merit, as has been established, is צדקה (*tsedaqah*), *righteousness*, which is translated as זכותא (*zakhuta*), merit, and merit and *heaven* are the same thing. And here, *Pour down, O heavens!*<sup>515</sup>

“But if you say that it depends on this, it is written *from above—from above*, surely! From the Holy Ancient One [26a] it comes, not from that place; *from above*, precisely!<sup>516</sup>

“*Let the skies flow with צדק (tsedeq), righteousness*—for when *heaven* receives *from above*, from that supernal place above it, then *the skies flow with righteousness*. Who are שחקים (*sheḥaqim*), *the skies*? The place where manna is ground for the righteous. And who are they? *Netsah* and *Hod*, who surely grind manna. For whom? For the place called צדיק (*Tsaddiq*), Righteous One, for they grind the manna that comes from above, and all that goodness gathers within them, to be conveyed to the rung of *Tsaddiq*, Righteous One, so that *tsedeq, righteousness*, will be blessed with their flow. Thus they grind manna for צדיקים (*tsaddiqim*), the righteous.

Who are *tsaddiqim*? *Tsaddiq*, Righteous One, and *tsedeq*, *righteousness*, for when they couple as one, they are called *tsaddiqim*, the righteous. And these grind manna for the righteous, surely; so, *Let the skies flow with righteousness!*[517](#)

“Then, *let the earth open*—below. *And salvation sprout*—for inhabitants of the world. *Let צדקה (tsedaqah), righteousness, spring up with it*—all compassion and goodness abounding in the world, and food for humankind available in the world. Then, joy added to joy, and all worlds are blessed.”

Rabbi Aḥa said, “If I have come just to hear this, it is enough for me!”[518](#)

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*My heart is with Israel’s commanders, who volunteer among the people—bless YHVH!* (Judges 5:9). Come and see: Every heartfelt aspiration by which one seeks to pour forth blessings from above to below, unifying the Holy Name, should be sought in prayer to the blessed Holy One, as is written: *From the depths I call You, YHVH* (Psalms 130:1). For there lies depth of all, in supernal depths—sublime beginning of Father and Mother coupling.[519](#)

“Here, too, *My heart is לְחֻקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (le-ḥoqevei Yisra’el), with Israel’s commanders*. Who are *ḥoqevei Yisra’el*? It is not written חֻקֵי (ḥaqueti), *engraved by, Israel*, but rather *ḥoqevei, engravers of, Israel*—Father and Mother, who engrave Holy Israel, flowing from between them.[520](#)

“הַמְתַּנְדְּבִים (Ha-mitnaddevim), *who volunteer, among the people*—the patriarchs, who are called נְדִיבִים (nedivim), nobles, as is written: נְדִיבֵי (Nedivei), *Nobles of, nations have gathered...* (Psalms 47:10).[521](#)

“Then, *Bless YHVH*—drawing blessings from Him below, so that blessings may fill the world. For when blessings from above appear here, all is joyous, all is complete.”[522](#)

*Parashat Tsav*

“COMMAND” (LEVITICUS 6:1-8:36)

**R**abbi Aḥa opened,<sup>1</sup> saying, “*The fire on the altar shall be kept burning; it shall not go out. And the priest shall feed wood to it morning after morning* (Leviticus 6:5). *The fire on the altar shall be kept burning; it shall not go out. Why and the priest shall feed wood to it morning after morning?* And why the priest? Surely we have learned: Fire is always Judgment—whereas the priest comes from the right side and is far from Judgment, for the priest is never designated for Judgment. Yet here he must kindle Judgment in the world, as is written: *and [the priest] shall feed [wood] to it.*<sup>2</sup>

“Well, we have learned as follows: When a person is about to sin before his Lord, he kindles himself with the flame of the evil impulse, and the evil impulse comes from the side of impure spirit, [27b] so the impure spirit dwells in him. Sometimes the sacrifice is known to come from that side, and one must offer upon the altar that which resembles it. That impure spirit is not annihilated or nullified—whether among humans or from the side from which it comes—except by fire of the altar, for that fire eliminates impure spirit and evil species from the world. And the priest concentrates on this, preparing the fire to eliminate evil species from the world. Therefore, it must never be extinguished, nor its power and potency weakened, so that it can break the other, evil power, eradicating it from the world. Thus, *it shall not go out.*<sup>3</sup>



*“And he shall arrange (Leviticus 6:5)—the priest shall arrange fire upon it morning after morning, when his side prevails and awakens in the world, in order to assuage Judgment, so that judgments may be subdued and not aroused in the world. Thus we have learned: There is fire consuming fire—fire above consuming another fire, fire of the altar consuming another fire. So this fire shall never go out, and the priest arranges it every day.”*<sup>4</sup> [28b]

*A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar; it shall not go out (Leviticus 6:6).*

Rabbi Hiyya opened, *“Isaac said to Abraham his father, he said, ‘Father!’ He said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ He said, ‘Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for offering?’ (Genesis 22:7). Said, said—three times for Isaac. Said—once for Abraham. Why so here?*<sup>5</sup>

*“Well, three for the Account of Creation, corresponding to the three of Isaac; and one of Abraham, on the fourth. It is written Here I am, my son—Here I am in distress, as is written: Let there be מארת (me’orot), lights (Genesis 1:14), spelled deficiently.”*<sup>6</sup>

*“Now, you might say, ‘There are more instances of said.’ However, those were concealed in thought, whereas these are revealed out of darkness. Isaac said to Abraham (Genesis 22:7)—God said, ‘Let there be light’ (ibid. 1:3). He said, ‘Father!’—God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters’ (ibid., 6). He said, ‘Here is the fire’—God said, ‘Let the waters be gathered’ (ibid., 9).”*<sup>7</sup> [30a]

*“Come and see what is written: Behold, YHVH was passing by, and a great, mighty wind... (1 Kings 19:11). A great wind, as we have said, and it is written YHVH was not in the wind. After the wind—רעש (ra’ash), an earthquake (ibid.), and it is written A wind lifted me and I heard behind me קול רעש גדול (qol ra’ash gadol), a great rumbling sound (Ezekiel 3:12); thus the ra’ash follows the wind.”*<sup>8</sup>

*“After the earthquake, fire (1 Kings 19:12)—A river of fire was flowing and gushing from His presence (Daniel 7:10).”<sup>9</sup>*

Rabbi Yitshak said, “This corresponds to what is written: *The image of the living beings, their appearance, was like burning coals of fire; something with the appearance of torches it was, moving about among the living beings. The fire had a radiance and from it lightning flashed* (Ezekiel 1:13).

*“After the fire—קול (qol), a sound of, sheer silence (1 Kings 19:12). Qol, sound—the last qol, voice, which is silence, for She makes no noise on Her own, but rather is silent. When they gather about Her, She is heard throughout all worlds, and all tremble from Her.”<sup>10</sup>*

*“Sheer silence. Why is She sheer? Because She appears smallest of all.”<sup>11</sup>*

Rabbi Hiyya said, “*A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar; it shall not go out* (Leviticus 6:6)—fire of Isaac, as is written: *Here is the fire* (Genesis 22:7), namely *a perpetual fire*, existing constantly. *And the wood* (ibid.)—wood of Abraham, as is written: *wood morning after morning* (Leviticus 6:5).<sup>12</sup>

“We have learned: This fire of Isaac extends toward the altar. As it reaches there, one glowing coal shoots out to the east side, one coal to the west side, one coal to the north side, and one coal to the south side—to the four corners of the altar. And the priest circles it, around all four corners.<sup>13</sup>

“On the altar is a ramp with certain levels, the lowest level reaching down to the highest abyss through a certain hollow. When those glowing coals reach the four corners, one spark radiates, descending to the highest abyss.<sup>14</sup>

“In that place are legions upon legions, uttering ‘Holy’ in a loud supernal voice, and on another side they utter ‘Holy’ in a sweet supernal voice, and on another side they utter ‘Holy,’ and so on all four corners. Six billion forces

appear on each corner, under one chieftain, all wearing an ephod, standing ready to perform the ritual of the altar, corresponding to those below.<sup>15</sup>

“In another place appear rolling waves of water, roaring, descending certain levels, and there legions utter in a sweet voice, *Blessed be the glory of YHVH from His place!* (Ezekiel 3:12). All of them are immersed in song, not subsiding day or night, all offering praise sweetly.<sup>16</sup>

“In another place appear legions upon legions, standing in awe, trembling, and quivering, as is written: *They had radiance and they had dread* (Ezekiel 1:18). And they all gaze toward that supernal altar.<sup>17</sup>

“When the fire of Isaac reaches the altar, numerous sparks fly up and down on every single side, inflaming many fierce, powerful ones, warriors of the world. And were it not for the priest standing by the altar, arranging the wood, the world could not endure them.<sup>18</sup>

“From these shooting coals and sparks, the backs of the living beings are set aflame, as is written: *The image of the living beings, their appearance, was like burning coals of fire—something with the appearance of torches...* (Ezekiel 1:13). On the right side of those living beings, one wind stirs from above and settles upon that fire—which then flashes and is assuaged, glows and subsides in glorious radiance, illumining many legions standing on the right side. On the left side, another—strong—wind is aroused, smashing rocks, and it settles on that fire, which grows stronger and fiercer. Then that one on the left is clothed by the fire and flashes upon many legions standing on that side. And so on all four sides for four camps, all of whom are assuaged when the priest ascends to the altar.”<sup>19</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “There are two altars below and two above. One, innermost of all, [30b] upon which is offered inner fine incense, bond of faith, and the highest priest of all burns this incense in the bond of faith. This is called

Altar of Gold, and from here the bond of faith is tied and bound.

“And one—another altar, called Altar of Bronze, which is outside, and Michael the Great Prince sacrifices upon it an offering of the blessed Holy One.

“Below, the altar of gold and the altar of bronze—on one, incense; on the other, fat and sacrificial portions.<sup>20</sup>

“Thus it is written: *Oil and incense rejoice the heart* (Proverbs 27:9), and it is not written *Oil and fat and sacrificial portions rejoice the heart*. Although those assuage wrath and Judgment, still *oil and incense* are joy of all, and not from the aspect of Judgment and wrath.<sup>21</sup>

“This inner altar דקטרת דקה בדקותא (*di-qtoret daqqah be-daqquta*), of finest incense, in bond of faith, is called *voice of דממה דקה* (*demamah daqqah*), *sheer silence* (1 Kings 19:12), because it is the inner altar, bound in the bond of faith—whereas the other is called ‘the outer altar.’ The inner one is called Altar of  $\text{YHVH}$ ; the other is called *that was before YHVH*, as is written: *because the bronze altar that was before YHVH* (1 Kings 8:64).<sup>22</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “From here: *and whole offerings on מזבחך* (*mizbehekha*), *Your altars* (Deuteronomy 33:10)—two. And it is written: על מזבחותי לרצון (*al mizbehotai le-ratsoh*), *will find favor on My altars*.<sup>23</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “*Moses built an altar* (Exodus 17:15)—corresponding to that inner one, he built this, so it is written  $\text{YHVH My Banner}$  (ibid.). Why *My Banner*? Because it inscribed the insignia of the holy Covenant. For when Amalek came to remove the holy mark from them, this altar stood against them to avenge the Covenant; so it is described as *avenging with vengeance of the covenant* (Leviticus 26:25), and this confirmed the holy mark for Israel. Corresponding to Her, Moses built this altar, which was called  $\text{YHVH My Banner}$ , and this is the inner altar—*sound of sheer silence* (1 Kings 19:12).<sup>24</sup>

“Thus, *A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar; it shall not go out* (Leviticus 6:6)—a fire constantly present. What is it? Fire of Isaac, and then this name: *Adonai*. But when the priest arranges [wood] upon it, its name is sweetened and we call it by the name of Compassion, calling it by this name. Sometimes it assumes this pattern, and sometimes that pattern.”<sup>25</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on said, “Two of them—the inner poised over the outer, nourishing it, linked with one another.”<sup>26</sup>

*This is the offering of Aaron and his sons* (Leviticus 6:13)

Rabbi Hizkiyah opened, “*Righteous is YHVH in all His ways* (Psalms 145:17). We have

learned: How carefully should people consider the awe of their Lord and not stray from their paths, for every single day Judgment impends upon the world, because the world was created by, and is based upon, Judgment.<sup>27</sup>

“One should therefore be vigilant against sinning, for he does not know when Judgment may arrive, settling upon him. Sitting in his house, Judgment settles upon him; going outside, Judgment settles upon him—and he does not know if he will return home or not. Setting out on a journey, all the more so, for then Judgment goes with him, as is written: *Righteousness goes before him* (Psalms 85:14). Therefore one should hasten to ask for mercy from his Lord, to be saved from Judgment when it prevails in the world. For every single day Judgment prevails in the world, as is written: ואל (ve-El), *And God, rages every day* (Psalms 7:12).<sup>28</sup>

“Now it should be said: We have learned and the Companions have educed that *El* is always *Hesed*, as is said: האל הגדול (ha-El ha-gadol), *the great God* (Deuteronomy 10:17), and this is radiance of supernal Wisdom. Yet you say, *And El rages every day!* Scripture abandons all those names and grasps this? If so, words do not endure! Furthermore, it is

written אל גבור (*El gibbor*), *mighty God* (Isaiah 9:5). Either we should establish it as Judgment or as Compassion.<sup>29</sup>

“Well, I have heard as follows: The wicked turn Compassion into Judgment. For among all those supernal crowns of the Holy King, every single one is intertwined with its counterpart, so the wicked turn Compassion into Judgment.”<sup>30</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said to him, “Fine, concerning the expression *El gibbor, mighty God*. But what about *El rages every day*? Does this persist every single day, whether inhabitants of the world are virtuous or not? What does this mean?”<sup>31</sup>

He had no answer.

They came and asked Rabbi Shim'on. He said to them, “Surely, *El rages every day*—as the Companions have established: Sometimes it is Judgment, sometimes it is [31a] Compassion. If inhabitants of the world are virtuous, *El* endures as *Hesed*; if they are not virtuous, *El* endures by the name Judgment. Thus it persists every day.<sup>32</sup>

“But here is something fine: *El* is always radiance of supernal Wisdom, enduring vitally. Were it not for the awakening of *El*, the world would not exist for a moment in the face of harsh judgments aroused every day. As is written: *These are the generations of heaven and earth* בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created* (Genesis 2:4)—do not read *be-hibbare'am, when they were created*, but rather באברהם (*be-Avraham*), *by Abraham*: by the arousal of Abraham, they endure. When Abraham is aroused in the world, he thrusts away all those judgments appearing every day, and they cannot withstand him.<sup>33</sup>

“Thus it is written *El rages every day*. It is not written נועם (*niz'am*), *is enraged, every day*, but rather זועם (*zo'em*), *rages—rages every single day that Judgment appears and thrusts them away*; He endures and establishes the world sweetly, as is written: *By day YHVH ordains* חסדו (*hasdo*), *His love* (Psalms 42:9). Were it not for this, the world would not



exist for even a moment. Thus, all endures by virtue of Abraham.<sup>34</sup>

“As for the expression *El gibbor, mighty God* (Isaiah 9:5), this does not mean that it is *mighty*, but rather is a hint alluding to the Patriarchs and a hint alluding to supernal holy faith.<sup>35</sup>

“It is written: *Wonderful* (Isaiah 9:5)—supernal Wisdom, which is wondrous and concealed from all, as is written: *If a matter is too wondrous for you* (Deuteronomy 17:8).<sup>36</sup>

“*Counselor* (Isaiah 9:5)—supernal river flowing forth and never ceasing, counseling all and watering all.<sup>37</sup>

“*El, God* (ibid.)—Abraham, as has been established: הגדול האל (*ha-El ha-gadol*) (Deuteronomy 10:17).<sup>38</sup>

“*Gibbor, Mighty* (Isaiah 9:5)—Isaac, as is written: הגבור (*ha-gibbor*), *the mighty* (Deuteronomy 10:17).<sup>39</sup>

“*Eternal Father* (Isaiah 9:5)—Jacob, who grasps this side and that side, attaining perfection.<sup>40</sup>

“*Prince of Peace* (ibid.)—Righteous One, who is peace of the world, peace of the house, peace of *Matronita*.”<sup>41</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Hizkiyah came and kissed his hands. They wept, and said, “Happy is our share! Happy is the share of the world in which you dwell!”

Rabbi Shim'on said, “זה (*Zeh*), *This, is the offering of Aaron...* (Leviticus 6:13). Come and see: The wicked of the world cause the blessed Holy One to depart from Assembly of Israel, as is written: *A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates* אלון (*aluf*), *an intimate* (Proverbs 16:28). Who is *aluf, an intimate*? The blessed Holy One, who is אלופו (*alufo*), Chief, of the world, as is said: *You are aluf, the Companion of, my youth* (Jeremiah 3:4). Those wicked ones separate זאת (*zot*), this, from זה (*zeh*), *this*—who is peace of the house—and they form one coupling.<sup>42</sup>

“Holy Aaron and his sons come, and by them the two are drawn near one another, and *zeh* joins with *zot*, as is

written: *zeh, This, is the offering of Aaron and his sons.* They unite the supernal King with *Matronita*, and by them those above and below are blessed, and blessings appear throughout all worlds, and all is one without separation.<sup>43</sup>

“Now, you might ask, ‘Why is it not written *zot, This, is the offering,* drawing *zot* to Her place?’ Not so! For the priest begins from above, bringing union to Assembly of Israel—eventually reaching *zeh*, to couple with *zot*, drawing them together as one. Therefore, the priest completes the offering and brings about union. Happy is their share in this world and in the world that is coming!”<sup>44</sup>

Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yose were walking from Usha to Tiberias. Rabbi Hiyya said, “It is written: For *YHVH has chosen Zion...* ‘זאת (*zot*) *This, is My resting place forever...*’ (Psalms 132:13-14). Sometimes the Companions refer to this as masculine, since *Zion* is Compassion. Yet this verse refers to it as feminine.”<sup>45</sup>

Rabbi Yose replied, “We have heard as follows from the Supernal Lamp: ‘But when coupling is completely one, in order to show that Female is included within Him in one whole, it is referred to as feminine; for then blessings of *Matronita* appear, and She is not separate at all. Therefore it is written: *He desired her as His seat.* And it is written: *For YHVH has chosen בציון (be-tsiyyon), in Zion—in Zion,* precisely, the one within it, dwelling within; and it is not written לציון (*le-tsiyyon*), *to Zion.* All is one, whether this is referred to as masculine or feminine; all is one, occupying a single rung.”<sup>46</sup>

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, “*Of Zion it shall be said: A man and a man were born in it* (Psalms 87:5)—one of Judgment and one of Compassion. When they couple as one, in single union, then it is called *Zion.* *Zion* is known and found in Jerusalem, and one depends on the other.”<sup>47</sup>

“It is written: *You shall hallow yourselves [31b] and become holy* (Leviticus 11:44). If a person sanctifies himself

from below, they sanctify him from above; if a person defiles himself from below, they defile him from above. 'They sanctify him'—fine, for holiness of his Lord settles upon him. But 'they defile him'—from where? If you say 'From above'—is there defilement above?"<sup>48</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya replied, "This accords with what we have learned: By an action below is aroused an action above. If the act is in holiness, then holiness is aroused above and settles upon him, sanctifying him. And if he defiles himself below, a spirit of impurity is aroused above and comes to settle upon him, defiling him. For the matter depends upon action."<sup>49</sup>

"There is no good or evil, holiness or defilement, without its root and source above. By an action below is aroused an action above. That which depends on action is thereby aroused above and becomes action; and that which depends on words, by a word—when pronounced, so it is aroused above."<sup>50</sup>

"Now, you might say, 'What can a word arouse?' Well, it is written ודבר דבר (*ve-dabber davar*), *speaking a word* (Isaiah 58:13)—that *word* arouses another *word* above, called *word*: *The word of YHVH that came* (Hosea 1:1); *and the word of YHVH was rare* (1 Samuel 3:1); *By the word of YHVH the heavens were made* (Psalms 33:6). For we have learned: That word ascends and splits the heavens until it settles in its place, arousing what it arouses—if it is good, then good; if it is evil, then evil, as is written: *Keep yourself from every evil davar, word* (Deuteronomy 23:10).<sup>51</sup>

"There are four species in the *lulav*, which are seven. If you say that there are seven species—not so! Rather, there are four, branching into three others. And by their activation, seven others are aroused above to benefit the world in various aspects."<sup>52</sup>

"Although Assembly of Israel is one of the entirety, She is blessed by all of them, namely six. She is blessed by those six and from the stream of the spring flowing

ceaselessly, flowing upon Her, suckling the Daughter—for since She is the Daughter, Mother suckles Her. Upper world and lower are blessed by them through this arousal, for when Assembly of Israel is blessed by them, the whole world is blessed. Therefore the altar is circled, as has been said.<sup>53</sup>

“Furthermore, by this arousal all six of them are blessed with water to be satisfied. They all draw from the deepest wellspring of water, to pour it upon the world. Therefore all of the species must be moist, not withered, to draw blessings to the world, since all these trees are always moist and leafy, and their time of joy is now.<sup>54</sup>

“We have learned in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava that each of the powers appointed over these trees receives blessings of joy above only at this time, and their joy above and the joy of these trees below is at this time, and their arousal depends upon those holy ones of the King. When Israel waves them, all is aroused at once and the world is blessed—blessings poured upon the world.”<sup>55</sup>

*The voice of YHVH is over the waters; the God of glory thunders* (Psalms 29:3). Rabbi Yose said, “This is Abraham. *The voice of YHVH is in power* (ibid., 4)—Isaac. *The voice of YHVH is in majesty* (ibid.)—Jacob. *The voice of YHVH breaks cedars* (ibid., 5)—*Netsah*. *The voice of YHVH hews flames of fire* (ibid., 7)—*Hod*. *The voice of YHVH makes the wilderness shake* (ibid., 8)—Righteous One. *The voice of YHVH brings on the birth pangs of does* (ibid., 9)—Righteousness. All of them flourish by the water, saturated with water to grow, as is written: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10), and all of these stimulate blessings for the world from the saturation that they receive.<sup>56</sup>

“Come and see: These seven voices depend on word of the mouth on other days of the year; but now they depend only on action, and we need action, not words, because this time provides blessing for the whole year.<sup>57</sup>

“On the seventh day of the Festival, Judgment is concluded in the world and decrees go forth from the King’s palace. *Gevuran*, Powers, are aroused and concluded on this day, and willows of the brook depend upon them; and we must arouse powers for water and circle seven times to satiate this altar with the water of Isaac, filling the well of Isaac with water. When She is filled, the whole world is blessed with water.<sup>58</sup>

“On this day, we need powers for water, concluding them afterward, for [32a] on this day judgments conclude. Consequently, one must beat them on the ground and terminate their existence; for this day is arousal and conclusion, so we enact arousal and conclusion with the willows of the brook.”<sup>59</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Certainly so, and this is fine! As for willows of the brook, from the aspect of the brook issue powers, which on this day are aroused and conclude.<sup>60</sup>

“On this day, *Isaac returned and dug the wells of water* (Genesis 26:18)—spelled בארות (*be’erot*), *wells*. *Returned*—what does this mean? Ah, the first day of the month is beginning of Judgment over the whole world, and Isaac ascends his throne to judge the world. Then, on that day, *Isaac returned* to conclude Judgment—to arouse judgments and to conclude them.

“*And dug the wells of water*—to pour powers upon Assembly of Israel, for water, since water descends to the world by powers.<sup>61</sup>

“Since they are powers, they descend only by clouds, and on a cloudy day the spirits of the pillars of the world are calm only because the world needs water. Why is it so? Because the world was created by Judgment, and all must be so.<sup>62</sup>

“Thus, all depends upon action. So by the action and restoration performed fittingly by the priest below, those above and below are aroused to be perfected—perfected by him.”<sup>63</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “We have learned: ‘The willows resemble lips.’ On this day, what does that mean?”<sup>64</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya replied, “Although this comes in order to be expounded homiletically, so it is! For on this day, the matter depends upon the lips. On this day, the King orders decrees to be given to the bailiff, and judgments are concluded, and evil speech is sealed off from the world. Beginning and end occur on this day, as has been said.<sup>65</sup>

“Come and see: On this day, blessings of the other nations are completed and concluded, and they begin to be judged. And on this day, judgments of Israel are concluded, and they begin to be blessed. For on the following day, they are invited to delight with the King, receiving blessings from Him for the whole year, and in that joy, Israel alone appears with the King. One who sits with the king and is received by him can ask for whatever he wishes and it will be given. So Israel begins and the other nations conclude.<sup>66</sup>

“It is written: ‘*I have loved you,*’ says YHVH. *And you ask, ‘How have You loved us?’ [‘Is not Esau Jacob’s brother,’ declares YHVH, ‘yet I have loved Jacob,] and Esau I have hated, [and I have made his hills a desolation]* (Malachi 1:2-3). Now, you might say, ‘But we see Esau in tranquility, in dominion, in towering fortifications, ruling over the world—and yet you say, *I have made his hills a desolation?*’<sup>67</sup> However, everywhere it is so. When the Holy King issues a decree and records it, Scripture attests it as if it were enacted. Thus, *I have made*—‘I have placed it in My records.’ And so with all the goodness that He has decreed for Israel, as is written: *I, YHVH, have spoken and have done it* (Ezekiel 17:24).”<sup>68</sup>

תּוֹטָה (ve-zot), *And this, is the Torah of the guilt offering* (Leviticus 7:1); ve-zot, *And this, is the Torah of the grain offering* (ibid. 6:7); ve-zot, *And this, is the Torah of the sacrifice of well-being* (ibid. 7:11); ve-zot, *And this, is the Torah of the purification offering* (ibid. 6:18). Rabbi Yitshak



said, “This matter has already been established: If below, this is in all; if above, this is in all. One who engages in Torah obtains Her as his share entirely, and is joined to all sides, and does not need to offer sacrifices for his soul, as has been said.”<sup>69</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak opened, “*The priests did not ask, ‘Where is YHVH?’ Those who handle Torah did not know Me, and the shepherds rebelled against Me* (Jeremiah 2:8). *The priests*—those who serve as high priests, bringing holy entities to their places and effecting unification fittingly.<sup>70</sup>

“*Those who handle Torah. Who are those who handle Torah? Do not priests handle Torah?* Rather, these are the Levites who handle harps, which come from the side of Torah—which was given from their side, for Torah was given from the side of the Levites. They are appointed to sing praises to the Holy King, unifying Him completely, fittingly.<sup>71</sup>

“*And the shepherds rebelled against Me*—the people’s chiefs, who shepherd the people like a shepherd leading the flock.

“These are three rungs that must always be present at the offering, to find favor above and below, so that blessings spread throughout all worlds. The priest brings the offering and intends to unify the Holy Name fittingly, arousing his side. The Levites concentrate on song, arousing their side [32b] to merge with the side of the priest. Israel focuses heart and will on complete *teshuvah*, humbling itself before the Holy King. This one obtains all—and their sins are atoned, and joy prevails above and below.”<sup>72</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*Setting beams for His lofts in the waters* (Psalms 104:3). When the blessed Holy One created the world, He brought it forth from water and arranged it upon water. What did He do? He divided the waters in two, half below and half above, and from them generated

creations. Out of the lower half, He made and established this world, setting it upon this half and erecting it above, as is written: *For upon seas He founded her...* (ibid. 24:2). And the other half He raised above, placing upon it supernal ceilings, as is written: *Setting beams for His lofts in the waters...*<sup>73</sup>

“Between these two halves, He made a firmament, as is said: *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters...* (Genesis 1:6). Above He established and arranged supernal holy beings, from droplets of spirit distilled from the Mouth, as is written: *by the breath of His mouth all their array* (Psalms 33:6).<sup>74</sup>

“Among these He established and arranged those who offer praise by day, mingling with flames of fire. They are troops of soldiers—uttering song by day: praises in the morning and hymns in the evening. When night arrives, they all cease singing. Above them stand troops of fire of fierce flame; smelling consuming fire, they return to their places.<sup>75</sup>

“On the Other Side, abysses rise one above the other, and there is an upper abyss and a lower abyss. In all of them dwell masters of Judgment, from the side of harsh Judgment. Within the aspect of the lower abyss are those who burn with sparking, flaming fire—in charge of judgments of the world, to burn the wicked with fire flowing from the River of Fire. They are all fire, their appearance blazing fire, poised between above and below.<sup>76</sup>

“When smoke of the altar ascends, they are removed, leaving the rung on which they were standing to destroy and annihilate; and that flow of fierce fire from the River of Fire, mighty and supreme, returns to its place. They all enjoy the smoke of the altar, for it is aligned with the supernal Altar; so they enjoy it and approach here.<sup>77</sup>

“Another smoke ascends—as we have established, for each and every one. Aspiration of all, ascending above—

bringing pleasure to the Holy King, as we have established.<sup>78</sup>

“Upon the altar rose and appeared אוריאל (*Uri'el*), in the likeness of a mighty אריא (*arya*), lion, crouching over its prey. When the priests and Israel saw, they rejoiced, for they knew that [the offering] had been accepted in favor by the Holy King. Another fire, supernal and holy, descended to meet the lower fire; then the person would fear and tremble before his Lord and engage in complete *teshuvah*.<sup>79</sup>

“This may be compared to a king to whom was sent a gift that pleased him. He said to his servant, ‘Go and take this gift that they brought me.’ Similarly, the blessed Holy One said to Uriel, ‘Go and receive the gift that My children offer before Me.’

“How great is the joy among all, how great the sweetness of all! And the priest and the Levites and the one bringing the offering intend to offer it fittingly in complete unification.<sup>80</sup>

“Come and see: *A fire came out from before YHVH and consumed the ascent offering...* (Leviticus 9:24)—Uriel, who descended with the appearance of a flaming fire, reaching the altar to receive the gift, then appearing like a great lion, crouching over the sacrifice.<sup>81</sup>

“But when the people of Israel were not found worthy—or when the person bringing the sacrifice did not offer it properly and his offering was not accepted—they would see that [the smoke] did not rise in a straight path, and one wind arose from the hollow of the north, reaching the altar, and they would see the image of an impudent dog crouching over the sacrifice. Then they knew that it had not been accepted in favor.<sup>82</sup>

“This may be compared to a king to whom a gift was sent. The king saw that it was not worthy of being offered to him, so he said, ‘Take that gift out and give it to the dogs, since it is not worthy of being brought to me.’ Similarly, when a sacrifice is offered and not accepted in

favor, the gift is handed over to the dogs, and that is why they saw the image of a dog upon the altar.”

It is written: [33a] *A fire came out from before YHVH and consumed the ascent offering...* (Leviticus 9:24). Rabbi Yehudah said, “This is Uriel in a fiery flame on the altar, as has been said, crouching over the sacrifices. Then there was joy of all, for it had been accepted in favor, as is written: *The glory of YHVH appeared to all the community* (ibid., 23). Were it not for the disturbance of Aaron’s sons, since the day when Israel went out of Egypt there would not have been favor such as this, favor above and below.<sup>83</sup> [33b]

“Come and see: Although Aaron’s sons died at that time, it was fitting in several ways. First, it was not the time for incense, for incense ascends only at certain times, as is written: *Aaron shall burn upon it aromatic incense morning after morning; when he tends the lamps he shall burn it* (Exodus 30:7)—so that oil and incense may be as one—and it is written *And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight he shall burn it...* (ibid., 8).<sup>84</sup>

“At these times it is offered, not at any other time—except when plague prevails in the world, as happened when it is written *Moses said to Aaron, ‘Take the fire-pan... [and put in incense...] for the fury has gone forth from before YHVH’* (Numbers 17:11). Aaron’s sons did not offer it when oil and incense are as one.<sup>85</sup>

“Furthermore, they forced the hour in their father’s lifetime.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, they were not married and were defective, [34a] for one who is unmarried is defective and not worthy of conveying blessings. Upon him they do not settle, surely not by him upon others. Furthermore, we have learned that they were intoxicated with wine. Therefore, *Fire came out from before YHVH and consumed them* (Leviticus 10:2), for incense is most beloved of all, delight of those above and below, and it is written *Oil and incense rejoice the heart* (Proverbs 27:9).”<sup>87</sup>

“זאת משהת (Zot mishḥat), *This is the allotment of, Aaron and the allotment of his sons* (Leviticus 7:35). Rabbi Yose says, “Zot, This, surely—משוח משיחתא (meshuah meshiḥta), anointed with anointing, of Aaron. For Aaron brings anointing oil from above and conducts it below; by the hand of Aaron, She is anointed with holy anointing, becoming blessed. Thus, *Zot mishḥat, This is the anointing of, Aaron and the anointing of his sons, surely!*”<sup>88</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “*Elisha said to her, ‘What can I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?’* (2 Kings 4:2). From here we learn that blessing does not settle upon an empty table nor on anything empty.”<sup>89</sup>

“*She said, ‘Your maidservant has nothing at all in the house, except a flask of oil* (2 Kings 4:2). He replied, ‘Surely, this helps the miracle, for it is certainly in its place.’ From there blessings issue and settle, as is written: *They kept bringing [vessels] to her and she kept pouring* (ibid., 5)—unspecified.”<sup>90</sup>

Rabbi Yose says, “*ותעמוד השמן (va-ta’amod ha-shamen), And the oil stood* (ibid., 6). The verse should read *ויעמוד (va-ya’amod), and he stood*. However, *va-ta’amod, and she stood, surely—standing to conduct blessings.*”<sup>91</sup>

“*The oil* (ibid.)—as has been established, for it is written: *בקרן בן שמן (be-qeren ben shamen), on a horn, son of oil* (Isaiah 5:1), and it is written *Your name is oil poured* (Song of Songs 1:3), showing that from this oil flow blessings by the hand of the priest, who conducts them below, anointing *zot, this*, as is written: *Zot mishḥat, This is the anointing of, Aaron and the anointing of his sons*, and it is written *Like fine oil on the head...* (Psalms 133:2), as has been said.”<sup>92</sup>

*Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil...* (Leviticus 8:1). Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, “*For with You is the fountain of life. In Your light shall we see light* (Psalms 36:10). *For with You is the fountain of life*—supernal oil, flowing and never ceasing, existing within

Wisdom most sublime. As is written: *For with You—existing with You*, never parting from You, in complete love.<sup>93</sup>

*“The fountain of life—*for She is the fountain and spring of life, gushing life to a lofty tree, kindling lamps. So that tree is called Tree of Life, a tree planted and rooted by that fountain of life.<sup>94</sup>

*“Thus, in Your light shall we see light. In Your light—*the light treasured away for the righteous in the time to come, as is written: *God saw the light, that it was good* (Genesis 1:4). By that light, Israel is destined to shine [34b] in the world that is coming.<sup>95</sup>

*“Alternatively, For with You is the fountain of life—the* blessed Holy One, who is a lofty tree in the midst of the Garden, grasping all sides. How so? Because that *fountain of life* embraces Him, adorning Him with supernal crowns all around the Garden, like a mother crowning her son over all, as is written: *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]* (Song of Songs 3:11). Thus, *For with You is the fountain of life*, and so, *in Your light shall we see light.*”<sup>96</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, *“For with You is the fountain of life—the* High Priest above; corresponding to Him, the high priest below. Thus the Priest draws supernal holy anointing oil below and kindles lamps above. The High Priest is filled with the fullness of seven supernal days, crowned above all. Parallel to this, seven days of מלוואים (*millu'im*), ordination, for the priest below—so that all may correspond to the pattern above. They are therefore called ‘days of *millu'im*,’ days of אשלמוּתָא (*ashlamuta*), filling, so that the Priest may be completed by the other days, completing seven as one. They are called ‘the days of *millu'im*’ because the others are united with Him. What does this indicate? That when the Priest is aroused, all the others are aroused with Him.<sup>97</sup>



“Therefore it is written: *From the entrance of the Tent of Meeting [you shall not go out for seven days,] until the day of completion of the days of your ordination, because seven days [shall your ordination be]* (Leviticus 8:33), surely! Then the priest below is crowned entirely, corresponding to the pattern above; for when the priest below is aroused, all are aroused by him above, and blessings appear above and below.”<sup>98</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “Why was it Moses who anointed Aaron? Well, because he is the son of the place that is Fountain of Life. And it is written: *Who sent זרוע תפארתו (zero’a tif’arto), His glorious arm, to be at Moses’ right hand...* (Isaiah 63:12). Moses ministered all those seven days, so that all would abide with Aaron.”<sup>99</sup>

Rabbi Hizkiyah was sitting before Rabbi El’azar. He asked him, “How many lights were created before the world was created?”

He replied, “Seven, as follows: the light of Torah, the light of Hell, the light of the Garden of Eden, the light of the Throne of Glory, the light of the Temple, the light of *teshuvah*, and the light of Messiah. These were created before the world was created. Seven lights, lamps, were joined with Aaron, and he kindled lamps above and below.”<sup>100</sup>

Rabbi El’azar opened, “*All comes from the dust, and all returns to the dust* (Ecclesiastes 3:20). We have learned: ‘*All comes from the dust, even the globe of the sun.*’ Who is *dust*? The one resting beneath the holy Throne of Glory.”<sup>101</sup>

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava: *All comes from the dust*—the place that gathers and collects all. This teaches that paths branched to this side and that side, and then gathered to shine—like dust thrown in every direction. Thus, *All comes from the dust, and all returns to the dust*—surely *to the dust* of the holy Temple. And this dust is of

supernal dust, as is said: *It has dust of gold* (Job 28:6). As there is dust below, so likewise above.<sup>102</sup>

“We have established: *Dust*—dust of the Temple. For this world was created by ה (he). Thus, ‘even the globe of the sun,’ as is said: *These are the generations of heaven and earth* בַּהֲבַרְאָם (be-hibbare’am), when they were created (Genesis 2:4)—בַּהֲבַרְאָם (be-he bera’am), by he He created them. So, *All comes from the dust.*<sup>103</sup>

“It is written: *You are entirely beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you* (Song of Songs 4:7). *My love*—Assembly of Israel. *There is no flaw in you*—the Sanhedrin, corresponding to seventy-two names; seventy names; seventy souls who descended with Jacob, and the blessed Holy One above all. Therefore, we have learned: No investigation is made beyond the Sanhedrin.<sup>104</sup>

“It is written: *As for you, you will be for Me* מַמְלַכֶּת (mamlekheth), a kingdom of, priests (Exodus 19:6). Who is a kingdom of priests? As is said: *זֹאת מִשְׁחַת* (Zot mishhat), *This is the allotment of, Aaron* (Leviticus 7:35), for when Assembly of Israel is blessed by the priests, She is called by their name: *a kingdom of priests.*<sup>105</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Come and see: She is not called ‘מַמְלַכֻּת (mamlekhut), a kingdom of, priests,’ but rather מַמְלַכֶּת (mamlekheth)—for the priests אֲמַלְכֻהָ (amlekhaha), crowned Her as Queen, making Her Mistress over all. But She is not called *mamlekhut*, a kingdom of, priests, since from Heaven She is called מַלְכוּת (malkhut), Kingdom—מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם (malkhut shamayim), Kingdom of Heaven, surely! Here, *mamlekheth*, as has been said, for the priests crowned Her, joining Her to the King. Then She rules over all the King’s treasures and all the King’s weapons, [35a] ruling in realms above and below, ruling over the whole world.”<sup>106</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “It is written: *וְאֶגְדָּתוֹ* (Va-aguddato), *And His bond, He founds upon the earth* (Amos 9:6). When the King couples with Her, with all those holy crowns, in one gathering, then it is written *and His bond.*<sup>107</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “*Va-aguddato, And His bond*—as is said: *Take אגדת (aguddat), a bundle of, hyssop* (Exodus 12:22). What does this indicate? When they join as one and She is blessed by them, She reigns over all, shining above and below—all when the priest performs his service: offering a sacrifice, burning incense, and intending words to draw everything together as one. Then it is written: *And His bond He founds upon the earth.*”<sup>108</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “When Aaron moves, they all move with him until Assembly of Israel is blessed along with those above and below. Then, *Blessed is YHVH from Zion, dwelling in Jerusalem. Hallelujah!* (Psalms 135:21). *Blessed is His glorious name forever, and may His glory fill all the earth. Amen and amen* (ibid. 72:19).”<sup>109</sup>

Rabbi El’azar was going from Cappadocia to Lydda, accompanied by Rabbi Yeisa and Rabbi Hizkiyah.<sup>110</sup> Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, “*I have put My words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand...* (Isaiah 51:16). We have learned: If a person engages in words of Torah and his lips are astir with Torah, the blessed Holy One protects him and *Shekhinah* spreads Her wings over him, as is written: *I have put My words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand.* Furthermore, he sustains the world, and the blessed Holy One delights with him as if he had that day planted heaven and earth, as is written: *to plant heaven and establish earth* (ibid.).<sup>111</sup>

“*And to say to Zion: ‘You are My people!’* (Isaiah 51:16). From here we learn that Israel is called by the name *Zion*, for it is written: *And to say to Zion: ‘You are My people!’* And Assembly of Israel is destined to be called by the name *Zion*, as is written: *Zion will be redeemed by justice, and her repentant ones by righteousness* (ibid. 1:27).”<sup>112</sup>

He opened again, saying, “*Bind up the testimony, seal Torah among My disciples* (Isaiah 8:16). *Bind up the testimony*—testimony of David, as is written: *My testimony*

*that I will teach them* (Psalms 132:12). *Bind up*—a bond, like one who binds a bond in one place.<sup>113</sup>

“*Seal Torah בלמודי (be-limmudai), among My disciples. Seal Torah*—sealing of Torah and all the anointing flow coming from above. Where is it sealed? *Be-limmudai, Among My disciples*—for there the anointing oil is gathered between two pillars: a gathering place for all anointing oil flowing from above, to pour it into the mouth of the phallus, to empty it into this *testimony*. Then, all is bound in one faithful bond.<sup>114</sup>

“Come and see the difference between those who engage in Torah and faithful prophets. For those who engage in Torah are always preferable to prophets. Why? Because they stand on a higher rung than prophets. Those who engage in Torah stand above in a place called Torah, vitality of all faith, whereas prophets stand below in a place called *Netsah* and *Hod*. So those who engage in Torah are called preferable to prophets and superior to them. These stand above, and those stand below. And those who utter words by the Holy Spirit stand below all of them.<sup>115</sup>

“So happy are those who engage in Torah, for they are on the highest rung of all! Therefore, one who studies Torah has no need of sacrifices or ascent offerings, since Torah is more valuable than all and is the bond of all faith. Thus, *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace* (Proverbs 3:17), and it is written *Great peace have they who love Your Torah, and nothing can make them stumble* (Psalms 119:165).”<sup>116</sup>

As they were going along, they met a man who was coming with three sprigs of myrtle in his hand. They approached him and said, “What is this for?”<sup>117</sup>

He replied, “To restore the loss.”<sup>118</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Well spoken! Why these three?”<sup>119</sup>

He replied, “One for Abraham, one for Isaac, and one for Jacob. I bind them as one and smell them because it is written *As for fragrance, your oils are fine...* (Song of Songs

1:3), and because this fragrance revives the weakened soul by this faith, and blessings flow from above to below.”<sup>120</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Happy is the share [35b] of Israel in this world and in the world that is coming!”<sup>121</sup>

“Come and see: The world is sustained only by fragrance, and faith persists only by fragrance, and by this fragrance another fragrance is perceived—for when Sabbath departs, the bundle is undone, the additional soul ascends, and souls and spirits are left sad; this fragrance comes, and one draws near the other, rejoicing.”<sup>122</sup>

“Therefore, one needs breath after breath to receive the fragrance. Once fragrance is received, they draw near as one, rejoicing. In the same manner, the aroma of sacrifice: by this aroma, all draw near as one, and lamps blaze, rejoicing.”<sup>123</sup>

“Come and see: Two lamps—one above and one below. If a person kindles the lamp below and then extinguishes it, that rising smoke kindles the upper lamp. Similarly, smoke of the offering: this rising smoke kindles upper lamps, and they blaze as one, all drawn together by this aroma. So, *a pleasing aroma to YHVH* (Leviticus 1:9); *a fire offering to YHVH* (Exodus 29:18), as we have established.”<sup>124</sup>

“Thus, aroma of the offering sustains all, sustains the world. וקרבנא (*Ve-qorbana*), And the offering, is brought by the priest, דמקרב כלא (*di-mqarev kola*), who draws all together. Therefore, the days of אשלומו (*ashlamuta*), ordination, אשתלימו (*ishtelimu*), are completed, by him, so that all may draw near through his service, and joy and blessings may appear above and below.”<sup>125</sup>

“It is written: *YHVH, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will praise Your name. For You have done wonders, counsels from afar, faithful and true* (Isaiah 25:1). This verse has been established. *YHVH, You are my God*—for one should exalt the Holy Name, praising Him for everything. Whence is His praise? As has been established—and here, from the depth of all, as is written: *For You have done* פלא

(*pele*), *wonders*, as is written: *He has been named pele, Wonder* (Isaiah 9:5), as has been said.[126](#)

*“Counsels from afar. Counsels—*as is said: *Counselor* (Isaiah 9:5). *From afar—*as is written: *From afar, YHVH appeared to me* (Jeremiah 31:3), and it is written *From afar she brings her food* (Proverbs 31:14).[127](#)

*“Faithful and true—*as is said: *A faithful God without wrong* (Deuteronomy 32:4), and they have established that *faithfulness* is at night, as is said: *Your faithfulness in the nights* (Psalms 92:3), and it is written *New every morning; great is Your faithfulness* (Lamentations 3:23).[128](#)

*“The blessed Holy One will one day purify Israel from their sins, as is written: I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be pure; from all your impurities and from all your idols will I purify you* (Ezekiel 36:25).”



**Parashat Shemini**

“EIGHTH” (LEVITICUS 9:1-11:47)

**R**abbi Yitshak opened, “*When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy* (Job 38:7). Happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One has given them the holy Torah, delight of all, delight of the blessed Holy One—His stroll—as is written: *I was a delight day after day* (Proverbs 8:30)! Torah is the name of the blessed Holy One, and by Torah the world was created, as is written: *I was by Him as אַמון (amon), a nursling...* (ibid.)—do not read אַמון (amon), a nursling, but rather אומן (umman), an artisan.<sup>1</sup>

“By Torah, the human being was created, as is written: *God said, ‘Let us make a human’* (Genesis 1:26). The blessed Holy One said to Torah, ‘I wish to create a human.’<sup>2</sup>

“She replied, “This human is destined to provoke You. Unless You are patient with him, how will he endure in the world?”

He said to her, ‘You and I will sustain him in the world, for I am not called *slow to anger* for no reason.’”<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Hiyya said, “Written Torah and Oral Torah established him in the world, as is written: *Let us make a human in our image, according to our likeness* (Genesis 1:26).”<sup>4</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “From here: *that which כבר עשוהו (kevar asuhu), they have already done* (Ecclesiastes 2:12)—*asuhu, they have made him, surely!* This is in *image* and *likeness*—

*image* by the Male, *likeness* by the Female. Therefore Torah begins with ב (bet), as has been established.”<sup>5</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Why is ב (bet) open and closed? Well, when a person comes [36a] to conjoin with Torah, she is open to receive him and partner with him; but when a person closes his eyes to her and walks backward, then she is closed on the other side. He does not find an opening until he returns to join her face-to-face, never to be forgotten by him.”<sup>6</sup>

“So Torah opens herself to people, proclaiming to them, *To you, men, I call out...* (Proverbs 8:4); and it is written *At the bustling crossroads she calls, in the gateways of the city she utters her sayings* (Proverbs 1:21).”<sup>7</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “ב (Bet)—two roofs and one [line] joining them. What does this indicate? Well, one for heaven, and one for earth, and the blessed Holy One joining and supporting them.”<sup>8</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Three lights, supernal and holy, joined as one; and they are totality of Torah, creating an opening for all, an opening for faith, and these are ביתא (beita), a house, for all. So it is called ב (bet), for these are beita, a house. Therefore Torah begins with bet, for it is Torah and a remedy for the world.”<sup>9</sup>

“So one who engages in Torah is considered to be engaging in the Holy Name, as has been said, for the entire Torah is one holy supernal Name. Because of this, it opens with ב (bet), a holy Name, with three bonds of faith.”<sup>10</sup>

“Come and see: All those who engage in Torah cleave to the blessed Holy One and are adorned with crowns of Torah and are beloved above and below. The blessed Holy One extends His right hand to them. All the more so, those who engage in Torah also at night: as has been established, they participate with *Shekhinah* and join with Her as one. When morning comes, the blessed Holy One adorns them with a thread of love, to be recognized among those above and below. When Assembly of Israel and all those who

study Torah come to appear before the King, all those morning stars sing together, as is written: *When the morning stars sang together*, ויריעו כל בני אלהים (*va-yari'u kol benei Elohim*), and all the sons of Elohim shouted for joy (Job 38:7). What is *va-yari'u*? As is said: רועה התרועעה (*Ro'ah hitro'a'ah*), [*The earth*] is burst asunder (Isaiah 24:19), for those judgments are broken, all smashed in the presence of *morning*—for *morning* is aroused in the world, as is said: *Abraham rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3). Thus, ויריעו כל בני אלהים (*va-yari'u kol benei Elohim*), and all the sons of Elohim were smashed.”<sup>11</sup>

Rabbi El'azar was traveling on the road. He noticed Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir, whose donkey was braying. Rabbi Pinḥas said, “You have surely seen equilibrium of delight!”<sup>12</sup>

As soon as he emerged from behind the noontime overhang of a cliff, he saw Rabbi El'azar. He said, “Equilibrium of delight is surely complete!”<sup>13</sup>

Rabbi El'azar dismounted, and approached and kissed him.<sup>14</sup>

He said, “If you have an itinerary, let's go and join together. If not, then go your way.”<sup>15</sup>

He replied, “Indeed, I was going toward you, and since I've found you, I'll follow you and we'll join as one.”<sup>16</sup>

Rabbi Pinḥas opened, “*YHVH will bless you from Zion, and you will see the goodness of Jerusalem all the days of your life* (Psalms 128:5). Why *from Zion*? Because there blessings begin to appear, as is written: *For there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life* (Psalms 133:3). So, *YHVH will bless you from Zion*, since from there blessings issue to all.”<sup>17</sup>

“*And you will see the goodness of Jerusalem*—for thereby She is blessed: once Zion is filled with blessing, Jerusalem is blessed, imbued with Compassion. And when Jerusalem is blessed, the whole world is blessed.”<sup>18</sup>

*“All the days of your life—for the rainbow will not appear in your days, just as happened with your father. Thus, you will see the goodness of Jerusalem all the days of your life.”*<sup>19</sup>

*“You will see children of your children (Psalms 128:6)—sin-fearing, pious, holy. Then, Peace upon Israel! (ibid.). What does this mean? Well, like someone saying, ‘Peace upon the head of the king, that he may lack nothing!’ So, Peace upon Israel!—when righteous people exist in the world.”*<sup>20</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, *“The crown of elders is sons of sons, and the glory of sons, their fathers (Proverbs 17:6). Sons, we have already established; sons of sons—among other crowns of the King, as is said: All your sons will be disciples of YHVH (Isaiah 54:13), and it is written The precious sons of Zion (Lamentations 4:2), as has been said.”*<sup>21</sup>

*“And the glory of sons, their fathers—sons are only crowned by fathers. From here we learn that Sons are only crowned and saturated by the flow of the stream when Fathers are crowned and blessed, as is written: [36b] The glory of sons, their fathers.”*<sup>22</sup>

As they were going along, the time for prayer arrived; they dismounted and prayed. As they prayed, a snake wound itself around the leg of Rabbi Pinḥas’s donkey. It startled and brayed twice.<sup>23</sup>

After they finished praying, Rabbi Pinḥas said, “My animal is surely in pain because actually today I set out early, and while I was whispering Torah, it took me through a filthy place, so now it is being tormented.”<sup>24</sup>

They rose and saw a snake coiled around it. Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Snake, snake, go and slap your bind in sloping burrows!”<sup>25</sup>

At this, the snake dropped off and fell into many pieces.<sup>26</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Does the blessed Holy One deal so strictly with the righteous?”<sup>27</sup>

He replied, “Surely, the blessed Holy One deals strictly with the righteous, and He protects them, seeking to increase their holiness. Now see how my donkey, because it failed to guard my holiness, has suffered, and this snake was an agent. How many agents the blessed Holy One has! He accomplishes His mission by everything—even by beasts of the field, as is written: *I will unleash the beasts of the field among you and they shall bereave you of your children* (Leviticus 26:22); and even by גוי (goy), a Gentile, as is written: *YHVH will carry against you goy, a nation, from afar, from the end of the earth* (Deuteronomy 28:49).”<sup>28</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “And does He accomplish the mission by the hand of an Israelite?”

He replied, “Yes; for example, a wicked person by one who is righteous. But He does not accomplish the mission against a wicked person by an Israelite who is also wicked—except when [the latter] acts unintentionally, as is written: *And he who did not lie in wait, but God conveyed it to his hand* (Exodus 21:13). *And he who did not lie in wait*—precisely, for he intended nothing against him; surely, *God conveyed it to his hand*, to punish both of them.”<sup>29</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “How does the blessed Holy One accomplish the mission by this one or by a Gentile?”

He replied, “Hasn’t your father told you?”<sup>30</sup>

He said, “I haven’t asked him yet.”

He opened, saying, “*If He grants quiet, who can condemn? [If He hides His face, who will take note of him, whether a nation or a person?] (Job 34:29). If He grants quiet*—when the blessed Holy One grants quietness and tranquility to a person, who is permitted to condemn or accuse him? *If He hides His face, who will take note of him*—when He shuts His eyes from watching over him, who will watch over him to protect him? The ways of the blessed Holy One—as is written: *whether a nation or a person, whether to a whole nation or to an individual alone.*”<sup>31</sup>

“Come and see: When human actions are worthy below, the right hand of the blessed Holy One is aroused above. Then many compassionate ones are aroused—many protectors of the world, many protectors of people, on the right and on the left. Then the left is subdued and cannot prevail. But when human actions are unworthy below, the left is aroused, along with all those who come from its side, and they all become agents directed against humans. For those who transgress decrees of Torah are all marked on their faces and recognized by those aroused from the side of the left. Therefore, Gentiles and animals and all those who come from the side of the left are called ‘agents’ directed against those who are marked, who arouse them.<sup>32</sup>

“Israelites, even if their actions are unworthy, all come from the side of the right. And since the right has been subdued by their actions, they are overpowered by the left and all those who come from the side of the left. So agency is by Gentiles, animals, and the like, who are from the side of the left, and not by Israel—even though they are wicked, they come from the side of the right.<sup>33</sup>

“A wicked Israelite who falls into the hand of another wicked one, without the latter’s intention—this is so that both of them may be punished and be purified by their punishment.”<sup>34</sup>

Rabbi El’azar asked him, “How do we know?”<sup>35</sup>

He replied, “Come and see from Gibeah, for although they were wicked, the blessed Holy One did not want other wicked Israelites to be aroused against them. So a number of Israelites perished time after time until all the wicked who had been aroused against them were eliminated and there remained [37a] only the more virtuous, who could perform the deed truthfully. Even if they are virtuous, the matter is entrusted to whom it is entrusted only when worlds are evenly balanced: lower world corresponding to upper world; and at that time, worlds were imbalanced.<sup>36</sup>



“So, the wicked of Israel are not agents of the King directed against other wicked ones, since they do not come from the left side. This may be compared to people who offended the king. An officer was aroused against them to apprehend and punish them. A clever one among them went and mingled with the officer’s men. The officer raised his eyes and saw him, and said, ‘Who placed you among us? Aren’t you one of those who offended the king? You will surely be punished first!’ They took him and killed him.”<sup>37</sup>

“Similarly, Israelites come from the side of the right, and when these, by their sins, cause the right to be subdued, the left is aroused along with all those who come from its side. If one of Israel comes to mingle with them, they detect him and say, ‘Aren’t you one of those who come from the side of the right, which has been subdued by their sins? You are one of those who offended the King! Who placed you among us?’ Consequently, he is punished first.”<sup>38</sup>

“King Solomon cried out, *A time when a human holds power over a human to his harm* (Ecclesiastes 8:9)—*to his harm*, surely, since he is not an agent of the King and does not come from that side.”<sup>39</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Certainly so! For we have learned: There is right and there is left, Compassion and Judgment, Israel and other nations—Israel on the right and other nations on the left. Even if the people of Israel are wicked, they are humbled by the right and do not cling to the left nor ever mingle with it. Therefore it is written: *Save with Your right hand and answer me* (Psalms 60:7). When the right is elevated, the people of Israel, who cleave to it, are elevated and crowned with it. Then the left and all who come from its side are subdued, as is written: *Your right hand, O YHVH, glorious in power. Your right hand, O YHVH, smashes the enemy* (Exodus 15:6).”<sup>40</sup>

Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, “*It happened on the eighth day* (Leviticus 9:1). Who is *the eighth day*? Well, it is

written: *From the entrance of the Tent of Meeting [you shall not go out for seven days, until the day of completion of the days of your ordination,]* בי שבעת ימים ימלא את ידכם (*ki shiv'at yamim yemalle et yedkhem*), *because seven days He shall ordain you* (Leviticus 8:33). *Because seven days—the verse should read Because for seven days; why seven days He shall ordain?* Well, happy are the priests, who are adorned with crowns of the Holy King and anointed with holy anointing oil—for another oil is aroused, saturating all seven, which are anointed with that holy anointment, and all those seven lamps are thereby kindled. This anointing oil is totality of all seven, all of which are included in it.<sup>41</sup>

“We have learned: They are six, all included in this one, which is totality of them all. Thus, שבעת ימים ימלא (*shiv'at yamim yemalle*), *seven days shall ordain*, for they depend on this one. Consequently, Assembly of Israel is called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, Daughter of that Seven, for She is totality of six others.<sup>42</sup>

“Once this *seven* ordained the priests, crowning and anointing them completely, when they reached Assembly of Israel, who is the eighth, Aaron was commanded to offer a calf as a sacrifice—because it is the offspring of a cow—to atone for the other calf that Aaron made, thereby sinning against the cow, who is unblemished, consummation of the faithful of Israel. Thus, the priest becomes entirely complete, in eight garments of glory, complete in all crowns, complete above and below.<sup>43</sup>

“In everything one must manifest action. Therefore an action was performed with Aaron below, to arouse correspondingly above, so that all would be in one pattern. Then all worlds are blessed, and blessings appear through the priest. Here the priest was perfected fittingly.”<sup>44</sup>

He asked him, “Why is it written *a calf, a young of the herd, as an offense offering* (Leviticus 9:2)?”<sup>45</sup>

He replied, “Because of the sin that he had previously committed. *And a ram as an ascent offering* (*ibid.*). Why a

*ram*? Because of the ram of Isaac, which was a pure ascent offering; for this should be offered in order to complete all. This place draws from the side of Isaac, and this ram is offered as an ascent offering on account of the ram of Isaac—because She is an ascent offering. For an ascent offering ascends, and in order to crown Her completely: a calf and a ram, fittingly. Why a ram? To complete [37b] Her fittingly with the perfection of Isaac.<sup>46</sup>

“And the people of Israel, who sinned in this matter along with the priest, bring a similar offering, as is written: *and a bull and a ram* לְשִׁלְמִים (*li-shlamim*), *as peace offerings, to sacrifice before YHVH* (Leviticus 9:4)—one for their sin and one לְאִשְׁלֵמָא (*le-ashlema*), to complete, this place בְּשִׁלְמוֹ (*bi-shlimu*), with the perfection, of Isaac.<sup>47</sup>

“Why is it written concerning the priest *a calf as an offense offering* (Leviticus 9:2), whereas concerning Israel it is not written *a bull as an offense offering*? Well, Israel had already received punishment, and since they had been punished in various places, the blessed Holy One did not wish to mention their sin as before. So here it is not written *as an offense offering*, but rather לְשִׁלְמִים (*li-shlamim*), *as peace offerings*, demonstrating שְׁלָמָא (*shelama*), peace, for the blessed Holy One is at peace with Israel over this.<sup>48</sup>

“Aaron, however, was not punished, on account of Moses’ prayer, as is written: *With Aaron, YHVH was [greatly enough] incensed [to destroy him], and I interceded also in behalf of Aaron [at that time]* (Deuteronomy 9:20). Until now, his guilt hung over him; so it is written *a calf from the herd* לְחַטָּאת (*le-ḥattat*), *as an offense offering*—*le-ḥattat, for a sin, surely!*—*and a ram as an ascent offering* (Leviticus 9:2), so that his sin would be atoned for and he would be purified and perfected.<sup>49</sup>

“On that day those above and below were perfected, and peace spread everywhere—joy above and below. And were it not for the disturbance of Aaron’s sons on that day, since the time when Israel came up from the Sea there

would not have been such joy above and below. On that day the sin [of the Calf] was eliminated from the world and the priest and Israel were purified of it. That whole day, all those accusers above disappeared, and they went roaming all around Israel, unable to find an occasion among them—until the decisive moment when Nadab and Abihu rose and disturbed the joy of all, and wrath prevailed in the world, as is written: *The glory of YHVH appeared to all the community* (Leviticus 9:23); immediately, *The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, took each of them his fire-pan and put fire in it and placed incense upon it* (ibid. 10:1).<sup>50</sup>

“We have learned: That day was joy of Assembly of Israel, to be bound by the bond of faith, with all those holy bonds, for incense binds all as one and is thus called קטורת (*qetoret*). They came and linked all those others as one and left Her outside, not linking Her with them—and they linked something else. Therefore He warned the priests afterward, as is written: בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary* (Leviticus 16:3).<sup>51</sup>

“In various ways they disturbed the joy of Assembly of Israel on that day. First, they were not married and were not worthy of bringing an offering and for worlds to be blessed by them. Furthermore, the hour was not fitting. Furthermore, they forced the hour. Furthermore, their sentence had previously been decreed.<sup>52</sup>

“*They offered alien fire before YHVH* (Leviticus 10:1)—they surely bound something else with this bond and left Assembly of Israel outside.”<sup>53</sup>

Rabbi Pinḥas said to him, “Do not say that they left Her outside! Rather, Assembly of Israel was not linked by them; for wherever male and female are not found, Assembly of Israel does not abide at all. Therefore He warned the priests, as is written: בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary* (Leviticus 16:3)—that he should be male and female. Thus a priest should not enter the sanctuary until he is married, so that Assembly of Israel

will join in his bond; for one who is unmarried leaves Assembly of Israel outside, and She does not join with him. Therefore, on account of them, disturbance prevailed on this day.”<sup>54</sup>

It happened on the eighth day (Leviticus 9:1).<sup>55</sup> Rabbi Yose opened, “Like a lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens (Song of Songs 2:2). Like a lily—Assembly of Israel. As has been established, the blessed Holy One praises Assembly of Israel and His love is toward Her, to cleave to Her. Therefore, one who is married should praise the blessed Holy One and praise Assembly of Israel, for we have learned: In everything one must manifest action. Just as that person cleaves to his partner and his love is focused on her, so when he comes to serve before the Holy King he arouses another coupling, for the blessed Holy One desires to cleave to Assembly of Israel. Whoever arouses is blessed by the blessed Holy One and by Assembly of Israel, as has been said.<sup>56</sup>

“Thus, the praise offered by the blessed Holy One to Assembly of Israel: *Like a lily among the thorns*—which is the finest, transcending all—so is Assembly of Israel among all the legions, for She ascends [38a] and is crowned over all. Surely, *a lily among thorns*, and an etrog among thorns, showing the praise of Assembly of Israel above all.<sup>57</sup>

“Come and see: Assembly of Israel is blessed by the priest, and Israel is blessed by the priest, and the priest is blessed by the supernal Priest, as is written: *They shall set My name upon the Children of Israel, and I Myself will bless them* (Numbers 6:27).<sup>58</sup>

“It is written: *Remember Your compassion, O YHVH, and Your love, for they are from of old* (Psalms 25:6). *Remember Your compassion*—Jacob. *And Your love*—Abraham. *For they are* מעולם (*me-olam*), *from the world*—the

blessed Holy One took them *from the world* and raised them above, forming them into a holy Chariot to protect the world. Since they were *from the world*, He remembers them, protecting and having compassion upon the world. Similarly, the blessed Holy One takes the righteous from the world and raises them above to protect the world.<sup>59</sup>

“Now, you might ask, ‘Why is Isaac not mentioned here?’ Well, he was left to punish those who oppress his children, as is written: *Rouse* גבורתך (*gevuratekha*), *Your might* (Psalms 80:3), and it is written *YHVH will go forth* בגבור (*ka-gibbor*), *like a mighty one; like a warrior He will stir up zeal. He will shout—yes, roar—overpowering His enemies* (Isaiah 42:13). This is Isaac, removed here.”<sup>60</sup>

Rabbi Hiyya said, “As for them, *Remember Your compassion, O YHVH, and Your love—Jacob and Abraham, whom we need to protect us. But Isaac stands poised to wage war, so we do not want him to be with them.*<sup>61</sup>

“Alternatively, *For they are* מעולם (*me-olam*), *from the world—for when the blessed Holy One created the world, He took Isaac and created the world with him. He saw that it could not endure alone, so He took Abraham and established the world by him, as is written: These are the generations of heaven and earth* בהבראם (*be-hibbare’am*), *when they were created* (Genesis 2:4)—do not read *be-hibbare’am, when they were created*, but rather באברהם (*be-Avraham*), *by Abraham*. He saw that it needed greater stability, so He took Jacob and joined him with Isaac, stabilizing the world, as is written: *on the day that YHVH Elohim made earth and heaven* (ibid.). Thus, the world is established by Abraham and by Jacob, and so *for they are from the world.*”<sup>62</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*It happened on the eighth day* (Leviticus 9:1). After Aaron was completed by those seven days and crowned with them, the eighth day needed to be completed with the seven of completion by the priest.



Therefore, service on the eighth to be crowned with seven—and for the priest to be rectified on account of the sin he committed previously, as is written: *He said to Aaron, ‘Take you a calf’* (ibid., 2). As has been established, *a calf*, surely, to atone for that calf, as is written: *He made it into a molten calf* (Exodus 32:4).<sup>63</sup>

“בן בקר (*Ben baqar*), *A young of a bull* (Leviticus 9:2). Why *a young of a bull*, and not בן פרה (*ben parah*), *a young of a cow*? Well, he had to be rectified regarding a cow; so it was not fitting to offer Her from Her own. One who sends a gift to the king—do you see him taking something from the palace and giving it to the king? Rather, it must be from somewhere else, not from the palace.”<sup>64</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “From Her own to Her own is not fitting!”<sup>65</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah replied, “Therefore, *ben baqar, a young of a bull*, surely, and not *ben parah, a young of a cow*.”<sup>66</sup>

“*As a purification offering* (Leviticus 9:2)—to purify him for the sin that he committed.”<sup>67</sup>

“*And a ram as an ascent offering* תמימים (*temimim*), *both unblemished* (ibid.). *Temimim, both unblemished*—the verse should read תמים (*tamim*), *unblemished*. If you say that it refers to the calf and the ram—not so, for both of them are not offered up as an ascent offering, since it is written [*and a ram*] *as an ascent offering temimim*, whereas *a calf* is offered up *as a purification offering*. So why *temimim, both unblemished*, when it is written *a ram*?<sup>68</sup>

“Well, the ram of Isaac, to be offered to the Cow, mentioned twice in one verse, as is written: *Abraham raised his eyes and saw and, look, a ram was caught in the thicket by its horns, and Abraham went and took the ram—see, two!—and he offered him up as ascent offering* (Genesis 22:13). Thus, *a ram as an ascent offering, both unblemished*—two rams, for they are two. So, we have learned: גבורות (*Gevurot*), Powers,’ branching out to numerous others.”<sup>69</sup>

*“To the Children of Israel you shall speak, saying, ‘Take a he-goat as an offense offering’ (Leviticus 9:3). The verse should read a calf as an offense offering, as with the priest. However, Israel had already been punished, so of them is not written a calf as an offense offering, but rather a calf as an ascent offering. Why? Because all those who sinned by it—whether by word or deed or worship—had been punished. Even those who did nothing but entertain a desire in their hearts to worship it were punished, as is written: He made the Children of Israel drink it (Exodus 32:20). However, all those who entertained a desire—not to worship it, but deriving from it a tinge of delight—were purified here, offering it [38b] as an ascent offering, not as an offense offering.”*<sup>70</sup>

*“But why Take a he-goat as an offense offering? Well, because they had previously offered sacrifices to goat-demons ruling on high mountains. Thus, as an offense offering—they had to be purified of that sin. Furthermore, it was necessary for the renewal of the moon.”*<sup>71</sup>

*“And a bull (Leviticus 9:4)—שׂוֹר (shor), a bull, and not פָּר (par), a bull, because shor is שְׁלִים (shelim), showing שְׁלָמָא (shelama), peace, as is written: לְשָׁלָמִים (li-shlamim), as peace offerings.”*<sup>72</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, *“A bull and a ram come from the left side. A bull from the left side, as is written: and on the left a bull’s face (Ezekiel 1:10). A ram, because of the ram of Isaac. And they are offered as shelamim, peace offerings, לְאַשְׁלָמָא (le-ashlama), to complete, themselves in Assembly of Israel. Thus, a bull and a ram as peace offerings.”*<sup>73</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, *“All because Assembly of Israel is crowned and blessed by the priest through אֲשִׁלְמוּתָא (ashlamuta), completion. This day was joy of all—joy of Assembly of Israel with the blessed Holy One, joy of those above and below. For on the day when the priest was completed below, the Priest above, as it were, was completed—were it not for Nadab and Abihu, who aroused*

disturbance between *Matronita* and the King. Consequently, *Fire came out from before YHVH and consumed them... (Leviticus 10:2).*"<sup>74</sup>

*Moses said to Eleazar and Ithamar..., "Your heads you shall not dishevel nor your garments rend, lest you die, for YHVH's anointing oil is upon you" (Leviticus 10:6-7).*<sup>75</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, "We have learned: By actions below are aroused actions above, and an action below must be displayed like the action above."<sup>76</sup>

"Come and see: All joy above depends upon that holy oil, from which issue joy and blessings to all the lamps, and from which the supernal Priest is crowned with a flow of oil. Therefore the priest on whom the anointing oil has flowed, corresponding to the pattern above, must display joy and a radiant face more than all, and there must not appear any deficiency on his head or his clothing. Rather, he should be entirely perfect, corresponding to the pattern above; no defect at all should appear in him, so that he may not cause a defect in another place."<sup>77</sup>

"Come and see: If Eleazar and Ithamar had appeared defective at that moment in their garments or their heads, they would not have been saved, for the time was primed to execute Judgment. Of this we have learned: When a plague befalls the world, a person should not undertake anything, so that [powers of Judgment] not be aroused against him—unless he undertakes something good and can thereby postpone the time. For when the time of Judgment ripens in the world, whoever encounters it is plucked and removed from the world. Therefore it is written: *lest you die* (Leviticus 10:6)."<sup>78</sup>

*"Your brothers, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning (ibid.)—for they do not come from the side of the priests and will not be harmed."*<sup>79</sup>

Rabbi El'azar opened, "*Aaron took Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as a wife...* (Exodus 6:23). *Aaron took Elisheba*—all as it should be, all corresponding to the pattern above.<sup>80</sup>

"Come and see: Bathsheba was destined for David from the day that the world was created. Furthermore, Elisheba was destined for Aaron from the day that the world was created. What is the difference between them? Well, all is one; but there for Judgment, here for Compassion. When She joined with David—for Judgment, to wage wars, to spill blood. Here, with Aaron—for peace and joy, for a radiant face, and to be blessed. So there She is called בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, Daughter of Seven; here, אלישבע (*Elisheva*), Elisheba, for She is joined with *Hesed*. Come and see: *Bat Sheva*, Bathsheba—for Judgment, to inherit the kingdom and be empowered."<sup>81</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on said, "Concerning what we have learned: *The voice of the shofar* (Exodus 19:19)—that is fine. This is Jacob, who arose in Thought with the Patriarchs, and they issued as one from the shofar. For a shofar generates water, fire, and air as one, from which is formed a voice. So, supernal Mother generated the Patriarchs in one voice from Thought, and they culminated as one in one voice. That voice is called *the voice of the shofar*—Jacob, who includes the Patriarchs as one and is called *voice*."<sup>82</sup>

"There are two voices, for from a voice issues a voice—but one voice, called *the voice of the shofar*. From here issued other voices from that *shofar* through the coupling [39a] of Thought. There are seven voices issuing through the coupling of Thought with *the shofar*, and this *shofar* waters and saturates the Patriarchs first, and afterward the Children, and we have established the matter."<sup>83</sup>

"Come and see: *Aaron took Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab* (Exodus 6:23)—to sweeten Her, to delight Her,

to join Her with the King in perfect coupling, so that blessings would spread through all worlds through Aaron.<sup>84</sup>

“Therefore, the priest must appear with a radiant face, joyous, all corresponding to the pattern above, for through him blessings and joy appear. So judgment, wrath, and sorrow are distanced from him, so that he may not be disqualified from the place to which he is linked. Thus, *Your brothers, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning* (Leviticus 10:6)—and not the priest. Of them is written *Bless, O YHVH, his abundance, and his handiwork favor* (Deuteronomy 33:11).”<sup>85</sup>

*Drink no wine or beer, you and your sons with you, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, lest you die* (Leviticus 10:9).

Rabbi Yehudah said, “From this passage we infer that Nadab and Abihu were intoxicated, since He warns the priests about this.”<sup>86</sup>

Rabbi Hiyya opened, “*Wine that gladdens the human heart, making the face shine brighter than oil* (Psalms 104:15). If the priest has to rejoice and have a face more radiant than all, why is wine forbidden to him, since joy and radiance are both inherent to it?”<sup>87</sup>

“Well, wine begins with joy and ends in sorrow. Furthermore, wine comes from the side of the Levites, from the place where wine abides; for Torah and wine of Torah are from the side of *Gevurah*, whereas the side of the priest is clear, sparkling water.”<sup>88</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “Each one lends to his fellow, including all in one another. Wine begins with joy, since it comprises water; afterward, it reverts to its location, conveying sorrow and anger, executing Judgment—whereas the priest requires joy and radiance at both beginning and end.”<sup>89</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “From one place issue wine, oil, water, honey, and milk. Water and oil are taken and

inherited by the priests—oil more than anything, since it is joy first and last, as is written: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron* (Psalms 133:2). Wine, on the left, to raise the voice, to sing and not be silent; for wine is never silent, whereas oil is always soundless.<sup>90</sup>

“What is the difference between them? Well, oil, which is silent and always soundless, comes from the side of Thought, always soundless and unheard; so it is from the right. Wine, which is for raising the voice and is never silent, comes from the side of Mother, and the Levites inherit the left side and stand poised to raise their voices and stand in Judgment. Therefore it is written: *By their word shall be every dispute and every injury* (Deuteronomy 21:5).<sup>91</sup>

“Consequently, when the priest enters the Sanctuary to perform service, wine is forbidden to him, for his actions are secretly silent, and in silence he intends what he intends and unites whom he unites, drawing blessings to all worlds—all in silence. Furthermore, his actions are all in secret, and wine is a revealer of secrets, since its entire effect is to increase sound.”<sup>92</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yitshak were traveling from the village of Meron to Sepphoris, and with them was a boy with a donkey carrying honey-spiced wine.<sup>93</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Let us say a word of Torah as we go.”

Rabbi Yitshak opened, saying, *“Your palate is like fine wine—flowing to my beloved smoothly, stirring the lips of sleepers* (Song of Songs 7:10). *Like fine wine*—wine of Torah, which is fine; for wine of another is not fine. Wine of Torah is fine for all—fine for this world and fine for the world that is coming. This is the wine that pleases the blessed Holy One more than all, and thus whoever satiates himself from the wine of Torah will awaken in the world



that is coming and will be worthy of reviving when the blessed Holy One raises the righteous.”[94](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “*Stirring the lips of sleepers*—we have learned that even in that world they will be able to study Torah, as is written: *stirring the lips of sleepers*.”[95](#)

That boy said, “If it were written *Your palate is from fine wine*, I would agree; but it is written *like fine wine*, not *from fine wine*.”[96](#)

They gazed at him.

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Utter your word, my son, for you have spoken well!”

He said, “I have heard that one who engages in Torah and cleaves to her, and that word is heard in his mouth, not in a whisper [39b] but in a raised voice—for so should Torah be spoken, as is written: *At the bustling crossroads she calls, in the gateways of the city she utters her sayings* (Proverbs 1:21); *like fine wine*, like fine wine that is not silent but raises the voice—then when he departs from this world, *my lover goes straight* (Song of Songs 7:10), not deviating to the right or the left, with no one hindering him.”[97](#)

“*Stirring the lips of sleepers*—even in that world his lips are astir with Torah.”[98](#)

“I have heard further: *Your palate is like fine wine*—this verse was spoken to Assembly of Israel in praise of Her. If so, who is it that praises Her? If the blessed Holy One, why *flowing to my beloved smoothly*? The verse should read *flowing to me*.”[99](#)

“Well, surely the blessed Holy One praises Assembly of Israel! Just as She praises Him, as is written: *His palate is sweets, and all of him desirable* (Song of Songs 5:16), so the blessed Holy One praises Assembly of Israel, as is written: *Your palate is like fine wine*—*fine wine* is that preserved wine.”[100](#)

“*Flowing to my beloved*—Isaac, who is called ‘beloved from the womb.’”[101](#)

“למישרים (Le-meisharim), *smoothly*—as is said: *It was You who founded מישרים (meisharim), equity* (Psalms 99:4), including left within right. This is *meisharim*, for by the joy of that fine wine, left is included in right and all rejoice.<sup>102</sup>

“*Stirring the lips of sleepers*—for all are aroused with joy and blessings, and all worlds rejoice, roused to pour blessings below.”

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yitshak came and kissed him, rejoicing with him. They said to him, “What is your name?”

He replied, “Yeisa.”

They said, “You will be Rabbi Yeisa! You will endure longer in the world than our companion Rabbi Yeisa, who has departed from among us.”<sup>103</sup>

They said to him, “Who is your father?”

He replied, “He has taken leave of this world. Every day he used to teach me three words of Torah, and at night three words of wisdom of *aggadah*—and the words that I just told you I learned from my father. Now I live with a man who has removed me from Torah, and I work for him every day, and every day I go over those words that I learned from my father.”<sup>104</sup>

They said to him, “Does that man know any Torah?”

He replied, “No. He’s an old man, and he doesn’t know how to recite a blessing! And he has sons who he doesn’t put in school.”

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If that were not so, I would go into this village to talk to him about you; but now, it is forbidden for us to see his face. Drive off his donkey and come with us!”<sup>105</sup>

They went on. They said, “Who was your father?”

He replied, “Rabbi Zeira of the village of Ramin.”<sup>106</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah heard and wept, and said, “I was in his house, and I learned from him three things about the cup of blessing and two about the act of Creation!”<sup>107</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Now if we learned from this boy, his son, how much more so from him himself!”

They went on, holding his hand, until they saw a field where they sat down. They said to him, “Tell us one of those words that your father taught you about the act of Creation.”

He opened, saying, “*Elohim created the great sea serpents and every living being that crawls* (Genesis 1:21). *Elohim created*—every place of Judgment is called *Elohim*, and that supernal place, the place from which they issue, is called so here. Although it is Compassion, Judgments issue from it and depend upon it.<sup>108</sup>

“*The great sea serpents*—the Patriarchs, who are watered first and spread their roots over all.<sup>109</sup>

“*And כל נפש החיה (kol nefesh ha-ḥayyah), the whole soul of the living being, that crawls* (Genesis 1:21)—the soul that the supernal earth brought forth from that *ḥayyah, living being*, supreme above all, as is written: *Let the earth bring forth nefesh ḥayyah, a soul of a living being* (ibid., 24).<sup>110</sup>

“Alternatively, *nefesh ḥayyah, a soul of a living being*—soul of Adam, which it drew into itself.<sup>111</sup>

“*The living being that crawls* (Genesis 1:21)—the *living being* crawling on all sides above and below.<sup>112</sup>

“*Which the water swarmed forth* (ibid.)—in that supernal river, flowing forth and watering this Tree, so that it may spread its roots over all and provide nourishment for all.<sup>113</sup>

“Alternatively, *the living being that crawls*—King David, of whom is written *I shall not die but live!* (Psalms 118:17).<sup>114</sup>

“*And the winged fowl of each kind* (Genesis 1:21)—all those holy angels who exist to sanctify the name of their Master every single day, as is written: *Each one had six wings* (Isaiah 6:2), and some of whom fly through the world to perform their Master’s will, each one fittingly.”<sup>115</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Surely, so much is not fitting for this boy! But I see in him that he will be elevated to a place of eminence.”<sup>116</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, [40a] “Surely, *ha-hayyah*, *the living being, that crawls* is that *hayyah* supreme above all, since the other one is called *earth* here, as is written: *And let the fowl multiply in the earth* (Genesis 1:22)—surely, and not *in the water*, for that river flows forth and waters undivided until the place called *earth*, and from there on is written *From there it divides and becomes [four riverheads]* (ibid. 2:10). *And the fowl* (ibid. 1:22) depend upon this *earth*, from which they are watered, as is written: *And let the fowl multiply in the earth.*”<sup>117</sup>

They rose and went on. Rabbi Yehudah said, “Let us welcome him as our partner, and each of us will say a word.”

Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, “*Sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples* (Song of Songs 2:5). This verse has been discussed, and that is fine. However, Assembly of Israel utters this in exile. סמבוני (*Sammekhuni*), *Sustain me*. What is *sammekhuni*? Well, one who falls must ליה לאסמבא (*le-asmekha leih*), be supported, as is written: סומך יהוה (*Somekh YHVH*), *YHVH supports, all who fall* (Psalms 145:14). Thus, Assembly of Israel, who has fallen, needs to be supported, and She says, *Sammekhuni, Support me*. To whom does She say this? To Israel, Her children, who are in exile with Her.<sup>118</sup>

“With what? *With raisin cakes*—the Patriarchs, who are filled first with that fine preserved wine. And whoever knows how to unify the Holy Name, even when blessings are not found in the world, supports and sustains Assembly of Israel in exile.<sup>119</sup>

“*Refresh me with apples*—all is one, as we have said; but this is the mystery: A raisin cake draws wine in; an apple draws wine out and focuses the will. So, *raisin cakes* and *apples*—*raisin cakes* to satiate with wine; *apples* to focus the will, so that the wine may do no harm.<sup>120</sup>

“Why all this? *For I am faint with love* (Song of Songs 2:5). Whoever unifies the Holy Name must unite Judgment

with Compassion, blending them fittingly as one, so that all may be sweetened and harmonized. Both together support Assembly of Israel in exile.”[121](#)

Rabbi Yitshak opened, saying, “[*Where are their gods, the rock in whom they sheltered,*] *who ate the fat of their offerings, drank their libation wine? Let them arise and help you!* (Deuteronomy 32:38). Happy are the people of Israel, for they are holy and the blessed Holy One seeks to sanctify them! Come and see: Eternal life that holy Israel inherits depends entirely on the World that is Coming, since that is life for all, above and below, and it is the place where preserved wine rests—it is called Wine—and from there life and holiness issue to all.”[122](#)

“Wine of Israel, because of wine of another Israel, one depending on the other; for Israel above derives life from it, so He is called the Tree of Life—a tree from the place called Life, from which life issues. Therefore the blessed Holy One is blessed with wine, and the wine of Israel below follows this pattern.”[123](#)

“But when a Gentile—who is impure and defiles one who approaches him—approaches the wine of Israel, it becomes impure and forbidden; all the more so, wine that he makes himself. Do not say that this alone is so; rather, everything that Israel does below resembles the paradigm above—especially wine, which occupies a supernal place, on the model of preserved wine.”[124](#)

“Therefore, Israel drinks wine made fittingly, in holiness, corresponding to Israel above, who drinks—and is rooted in and blessed by—that supernal holy wine. They do not drink wine in impurity or from the side of impurity, for the spirit of impurity settles in it, and it is not from the side of Israel. If one drinks with them, his spirit is defiled, and whoever defiles his spirit defiles his share in the world that is coming, for the World that is Coming is preserved wine.”[125](#)

“So holy Israel must guard this above all, since it is linked to the place of the World that is Coming. Thus, the blessed Holy One is to be blessed with wine more than anything, for it rejoices the left side, which through that joy is included in the right, and all becomes right, and when all becomes right the Holy Name is in bliss and blessings spread throughout all worlds. By an action below is aroused an action above; so Israel prepares wine corresponding to wine.<sup>126</sup>

“Since it is preserved above, it must be preserved below, and all its preservation brings holiness to Israel. Whoever spoils it below on the side of impurity is defiled in this world and has no share in the world that is coming, the place where that preserved wine abides. He has not preserved it—he will not be preserved in the world that is coming. [40b] He has defiled it—he will be defiled in that world; he will have no share in that wine constituting the World that is Coming. Happy are Israel, who preserve what is preserved, who sanctify the King by this supernal preservation! Happy are they in this world and in the world that is coming!”<sup>127</sup>

The boy opened, saying, “*A king makes the land stand firm by justice, but a man of exactions ruins it* (Proverbs 29:4). Who is a *king*? The blessed Holy One. *By justice*—Jacob, who is totality of the patriarchs. *But a man of* תרומות (*terumot*), *exactions*—spelled תרומת (*terumat*), as is said: התרומה וזאת (*ve-zot ha-terumah*), *This is the offering* (Exodus 25:3).<sup>128</sup>

“Alternatively, *but a man of terumot*—Esau, who used to ask about *terumot*, offerings, and tithes every day but did nothing.<sup>129</sup>

“*But a man of terumot*—for He is not *justice*, since תרומה (*terumah*) is ‘elevation’ of Compassion, not coming with *justice*, as is said: *Some are swept away without justice* (Proverbs 13:23). Thus, *but a man of terumot ruins it*.<sup>130</sup>



“Now, you might say, ‘But King David was a *man of terumah!*’ Well, he was with Compassion. Furthermore, it is written חסדי דוד הנאמנים (*hasdei david ha-ne’emanim*), *faithful acts of love for David* (Isaiah 55:3)—as he clung to one, so he clung to the other.<sup>[131](#)</sup>

“Come and see: All his days, King David strove for this *terumah*, offering, to be linked with *justice*, so that they would couple as one—and the land would endure. Solomon came and united them as one, so the moon waxed full and the land stood firm. Zedekiah came and separated them, so the land was left without *justice*, the moon became defective, and the land was ruined—thus, *but a man of terumot ruins it*.<sup>[132](#)</sup>

“Come and see: Oil for the priests and wine for the Levites—not because they need wine, but rather from preserved wine, coming to their side to unite all as one, to delight all worlds, so that all will be right, merging as one, imbued with affection of all and love of the faithful.<sup>[133](#)</sup>

“For one who joins his aspiration to this becomes complete in this world and in the world that is coming, thereby cleaving all his days to *Teshuvah*—the place where wine and oil are found. Then he will not cling to this world, neither its riches nor its cravings. Concerning this, King Solomon cried out, *He who loves wine and oil will not grow rich* (Proverbs 21:17); for other riches are reserved for him, in which he will share, having a share in the world that is coming, the place where wine and oil abide—in this world and in the world that is coming. Whoever loves this place does not need wealth or pursue it. Happy are the righteous who strive for supernal wealth every day, as is written: *Gold and glass cannot equal her, nor can she be exchanged for golden vessels* (Job 28:17)—in this world. Afterward, *To endow those who love me with substance, their storehouses to fill* (Proverbs 8:21).<sup>[134](#)</sup>

He opened again, saying, “*YHVH said to Moses, ‘Go up to Me to the mountain and be there, that I may give you the*

*stone tablets* והמצוה והתורה (ve-ha-torah ve-ha-mitsvah), and the teaching and the commandments, that I have written to instruct them' (Exodus 24:12). *ve-ha-torah*—Written Torah. *ve-ha-mitsvah*—Oral Torah. *That I have written* להורותם (le-horotam), to instruct them—spelled להורתם (le-horotam), as is said: and to the chamber of הורתי (horati), the one who conceived me (Song of Songs 3:4).<sup>135</sup>

“Here one should contemplate: להורתם (le-horotam)—דמאי להורתם (le-horotam de-mai), to the one who conceived whom? If you say ‘The one who conceived Israel’—they aren’t mentioned in the whole verse! Rather, *the one who conceived torah* and *mitsvah*. And who is that? Preserved wine, for all writing of the supernal book abides there, and from there issues Torah, which is why we call it תורה שבכתב (Torah she-bi-khtav), Torah in Writing. Thus, *that I have written* להורתם (le-horotam), to instruct them—להורתם (le-horotam), to the one who conceived them, surely, as is said: and to the chamber of הורתי (horati), the one who conceived me (Song of Songs 3:4).<sup>136</sup>

“*Torah she-be-al peh* (Torah she-be-al peh), Oral Torah—another one, which is based *al peh*, on the mouth. What is the mouth? *Da’at* (Knowledge), which is the mouth of the book and the writing. This other Torah is called *Torah she-be-al peh*, Torah on the Mouth, for She is based on that mouth, which is *Torah she-bi-khtav*, Torah in Writing.<sup>137</sup>

“Thus, Moses was elevated entirely, above all other faithful prophets, as is written: *that I may give you* (Exodus 24:12)—*you*, precisely!<sup>138</sup>

“It is written: *Remove the dross from silver, and for the refiner a vessel emerges. Remove the wicked from the king’s presence, and his throne will be established in love* (Proverbs 25:4-5). Come and see: When the wicked abound in the world, the throne of the Holy King is established in Judgment, absorbing Judgment, and its flames burn the world. But when the wicked are eliminated from the world, then *his throne will be established in love—in love*, not in

Judgment. What does this imply? That the lower world depends upon the upper world, and the upper world accords with the conduct of the lower world.[139](#)

*“His throne will be established in love [41a]—one who wishes to bless Him, in love, not in Judgment. What does this imply? That when the priest enters the Temple, he should enter with love, which is water, and not having drunk wine—Gevurah. He should enter with water, not with wine.”*[140](#)

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yitshak came and kissed his head. From that day on, he never left Rabbi Yehudah’s household; and when he entered the house of study, Rabbi Yehudah would rise before him, saying, “I have learned a word from him, and it is fitting to treat him with respect.” Later he was esteemed among the Companions and they used to call him Rabbi Yeisa the Hammerhead, shattering rocks and shooting sparks in every direction. Rabbi El’azar would proclaim of him, *Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you* (Jeremiah 1:4).[141](#)

*YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “These are the living beings that you may eat of all the animals that are on the land”* (Leviticus 11:1-2). Why is Aaron mentioned here? Well, because he is always poised to distinguish between impure and pure, as is written: *and to divide between the impure and the pure* (ibid., 47).[142](#)

Rabbi Abba opened, *“Who is the man desiring life, loving many days to see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit* (Psalms 34:13-14). And it is written: *He who guards his mouth and his tongue guards his soul from troubles* (Proverbs 21:23).

*“Who is the man desiring life? What is life? Well, the life called World that is Coming, where life abides. Thus we have learned: Tree of Life—a tree from that life, a tree planted in that life. So it is written: Who is the man desiring life?”*[143](#)

*“Loving many days to see good. What are days? Well, the Name of the Holy King, joined to those supernal days, which are called days of heaven over the earth (Deuteronomy 11:21)—days of heaven, surely; over the earth, surely! One who desires to have a share in life above, and one who desires to cleave lovingly to those days, should guard his mouth from all—guarding his mouth from food and drink that defiles the soul and removes a person from that life and from those days, and guarding his mouth from words of evil, so as not to be defiled by them; he should keep far away from them and have no part in them.*[144](#)

“Come and see: Mouth and tongue—another, supernal place is called so. Therefore, a person should not spoil his mouth or tongue—and certainly not defile his soul and body, thereby defiling himself in the other world, as we have established.[145](#)

*“זאת החיה (Zot ha-ḥayyah), These are the living beings, that you may eat of all הבהמה (ha-behemah), the animals, that are on the land (Leviticus 11:2). The beginning of this verse does not match its end, nor the end its beginning! First, zot ha-ḥayyah, These are the living beings, and subsequently, of all ha-behemah, the animals.*[146](#)

“Well, the blessed Holy One said, ‘As long as the people of Israel preserve their souls and bodies, not defiling them, surely, zot ha-ḥayyah, This is the living being, that you will eat—they will be in a state of holiness, cleaving to My Name. By selecting the *behemah, animal*, that I have chosen for you to eat, you will not defile yourselves by them, and you will cleave to My Name. But whenever they do not preserve their souls and bodies from food and drink, they will cleave to another, impure place, defiling themselves.’ Thus it is written *Zot ha-ḥayyah, This is the living being, that you will eat*—surely, for She is mystery of the Holy Name, to which one should cleave.[147](#)

“Of all *ha-behemah*, the animals, that are on the land—because of the food from this *behemah*, animal, which is pure and will not defile you, you will have a share in My Name, cleaving to it.<sup>148</sup>

“Furthermore, *Zot ha-hayyah*, *This is the living being, that you may eat*. Concerning Pharaoh is written בּוֹזֵאת (Be-zot), *By this, shall you know that I am YHVH* (Exodus 7:17)—*zot, this*, is confronting you, to punish you. Here, too, *Zot ha-hayyah*, *This is the living being*, אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכְלוּ (*asher tokhelu*), *when you eat, of all the animals that are on the land—zot, this*, is confronting you, to punish you if you defile your souls. Why? Because souls come from Her, and if you defile what is Hers, *this* will confront you. Whether for good or for evil, She stands poised by you.”<sup>149</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “*Zot ha-hayyah*, *This is the living being, that you may eat of all the animals*—all those that are linked to this side you are permitted to eat, and all those that do not come [41b] from this side you are forbidden to eat; for there are animals linked to this side, and there are those that come from the other, impure side. Their sign is as written: *Everything that has hooves...* (Leviticus 11:3)—all of them distinctive, all of them designated by Scripture. Consequently, whoever eats of those that come from the impure side is thereby defiled, and he defiles his soul, which comes from the pure side.”<sup>150</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on said, “The summation of all: As there are ten Crowns of Faith above, so there are ten crowns of impure sorcery below, and all things on earth are attached either to this side or to the other side.”<sup>151</sup>

“Now, you might say, ‘What about the goat, upon which settles an impure spirit?’ Not so! For if an impure spirit settled upon it, we would be forbidden to eat it. Rather, they pass through them and manifest in front of them, yet do not settle within them; for as they settle, another spirit passes over them and they disengage from their bodies. So they appear in front of them and harass within them, yet do

not possess their bodies—which we are therefore permitted to eat.[152](#)

“Come and see: As soon as they come to possess them, a certain spirit passes; they raise their eyes, see those signs, and disengage from them—though manifesting in front of them—so we are not forbidden to eat them.[153](#)

“Whether cattle, beasts, birds, or fish of the sea—among all of them appear right and left, Compassion and Judgment. Whatever comes from the side of the right, the side of Compassion, we are permitted to eat; and all those coming from the side of the left, the side of Judgment, we are forbidden to eat—for all their bodies are impure and they all defile; an impure spirit settles within them, dwelling in them. Therefore, the holy spirit of Israel must not mingle with them nor be defiled by them, so that they may remain holy and be recognized above and below. Happy is their share, for the Holy King delights in them and seeks to purify and sanctify them above all, for they are linked to Him![154](#)

“Come and see what is written: *Israel, in whom I glory* (Isaiah 49:3). If the blessed Holy One glories in Israel, how can they defile themselves and cling to the side of impurity? Thus it is written: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I YHVH am holy; you shall not make yourselves detestable through beast and bird and all with which the soil teems, which I set apart for you to treat as impure* (Leviticus 11:44). One who is inherently in the image of the King should not depart from the ways of the King. Therefore, the blessed Holy One distinguished all those coming from this side and all those coming from the Other Side. Happy is their share! It is written: *All who see them will recognize that they are seed YHVH has blessed* (Isaiah 61:9)—*YHVH has blessed, really; YHVH has blessed, totally!*[155](#)

“Whoever eats of those forbidden foods clings to the Other Side and makes his soul and his body loathsome. An



impure spirit settles upon him, and he demonstrates that he has no share in the supernal King and does not come from His side nor cleave to Him. If he departs like this from the world, he is seized by all those linked to the side of impurity, who defile him—punishing him as a person loathed by his Lord, loathed in this world and loathed in the world that is coming.<sup>156</sup>

“Of this is written ונטמתם (*ve-nitmetem*), *becoming impure, through them* (Leviticus 11:43)—without an א (*alef*), for there is no remedy for his loathsomeness, and he never emerges from impurity. Woe to them, woe to their souls, for they will never cling to the Bundle of Life because they have been defiled! Woe to their bodies, of which is written *For their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be a horror to all flesh* (Isaiah 66:24). What is a horror? A stench. Who causes this? That side to which they clung.<sup>157</sup>

“The people of Israel comes from the right side—if they cling to the left side, they surely spoil this side. They spoil their bodies and spoil their souls; they are spoiled in this world and spoiled in the world that is coming—especially one who clings to the side of impurity—for all is connected with one another, and it is written *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* (Deuteronomy 14:2).<sup>158</sup>

Rabbi Yose opened, “*All a human’s toil is for his mouth, והנפש (ve-ha-nefesh), and the appetite, is not filled* (Ecclesiastes 6:7). I have contemplated the words of King Solomon, and all of them are linked with supernal Wisdom. *All a human’s toil is for his mouth*—this verse refers to the time when a person is judged [42a] in that world. All the judgment and all that he suffers in that world—vengeance of the world, wreaked upon him—is *for his mouth*, because of his mouth, which he did not guard, defiling his soul, not cleaving to the side of life, the right side.<sup>159</sup>

“והנפש (Ve-ha-nefesh), *And the soul, is not filled*—her judgment is never ever completed. Alternatively, she will never be fulfilled, ascending to her place, for she is defiled, clinging to the Other Side.”<sup>160</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Whoever is defiled by them is considered as if he worshiped idols, which are *an abhorrence to YHVH* (Deuteronomy 7:25), as is written: *You shall eat no abhorrent thing* (ibid. 14:3). One who worships idols leaves the side of life, the holy domain, and enters the other domain; similarly, one who defiles himself with these foods leaves the side of life and clings to the side of death, leaves the holy domain and enters the other domain. Moreover, he is defiled in this world and defiled in the world that is coming. Thus, ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), *becoming impure, through them* (Leviticus 11:43).<sup>161</sup>

“It is written: *You shall not make your souls impure through beast and bird and all with which the soil teems, which I set apart for you* לטמא (le-tamme), *to declare impure* (Leviticus 20:25). What is *le-tamme*? *To render other nations impure*, for they are impure and come from the side of impurity. Each one clings to his place.”<sup>162</sup>

Rabbi El’azar was sitting before his father, Rabbi Shim’on. He said to him, “Concerning what we have learned: The blessed Holy One will one day purify Israel—with what?”

He replied, “As is written: *I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be pure; from all your impurities and from all your idols will I purify you* (Ezekiel 36:25). Once they are purified, they will be sanctified. And the people of Israel, who cleave to the blessed Holy One, are called holy, as is written: *Holy is Israel to YHVH, the first fruits of His harvest...* (Jeremiah 2:3), and it is written *People of holiness shall you be to Me...* (Exodus 22:30). Happy are the people of Israel, of whom the blessed Holy One says, *Be holy, for I YHVH am holy* (Leviticus 11:44); for it is written *To Him you shall cleave* (Deuteronomy 10:20),

and it is written *He has not done so for any other nation, and the laws they know not. Hallelujah!* (Psalms 147:20).[163](#)

Parashat Tazri'a

“SHE YIELDS SEED” (LEVITICUS 12:1-13:59)

**R**abbi El'azar opened, “*On my bed at night, I sought him whom my soul loves—I sought him, but did not find him* (Song of Songs 3:1). על משכבי (*Al mishkavi*), *On my bed*—the verse should read במשכבי (*be-mishkavi*), *in my bed*. Why *al mishkavi*? Well, Assembly of Israel speaks before the blessed Holy One, pleading with Him about the exile, because She is dwelling among other nations with Her children and lying in the dust. And because She is lying in a foreign, impure land, She says, ‘*Al mishkavi at night—al mishkavi, about my lying*, I plead, for I am suffering pain in exile. So *I sought him whom my soul loves—to deliver Me.*’<sup>1</sup>

“*I sought him, but did not find him*—for it is not His way to unite [42b] with Me except in His palace.”<sup>2</sup>

“*I called him, but he did not answer me* (Song of Songs 5:6)—for I am dwelling among other nations, and only His children hear His voice, as is written: *Has a people heard God’s voice [speaking from the midst of the fire, as you yourself have heard, and still lived?]* (Deuteronomy 4:33).”<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “*Al mishkavi at night*—Assembly of Israel said, ‘*Al mishkavi, about my bed*, I complained before Him, that He should unite with Me, delighting Me and blessing Me with complete joy.’ For so we have learned: By the union of the King with Assembly of Israel, many

righteous ones obtain a holy inheritance and exist in the world.”<sup>4</sup>

Rabbi Abba was walking by a watercourse within the cave of Lydda, accompanied by Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Hiyya. Rabbi Yose said, “It is written: *A woman of strength is her husband’s crown, whereas a shameful one is like rot in his bones* (Proverbs 12:4). *A woman of strength—Assembly of Israel. A shameful one is like rot in his bones—*the other nations, whom the blessed Holy One cannot tolerate in the world, as is said: וַאֲקוּץ (va-aquts), *and I loathed, them* (Leviticus 20:23), like קוצין (qotsin), thorns, and thistles pricking a person unbearably.”<sup>5</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “*A woman of strength is her husband’s crown. A woman of strength—Assembly of Israel, who is mistress of many forces and camps throughout the world.*”<sup>6</sup>

“*Her husband’s crown—as is said: a crown of תפארת (tif’eret), glory* (Isaiah 62:3), and all is one.”<sup>7</sup>

“*A woman of strength—Assembly of Israel, for by uniting with the King, She generates many forces, many camps, and many righteous ones in the world, all called ‘sons of the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel,’ as is written: You are sons of YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 14:1).”<sup>8</sup>

While they were walking, Rabbi Abba said, “Let each one say a word about Assembly of Israel.”

He opened, saying, “*A woman of strength who can find? Her price is far beyond rubies* (Proverbs 31:10)—Assembly of Israel, who is *a woman of strength*, as we have said.

“*Who can find?—as is said: what will find you in the days to come* (Genesis 49:1). *Who can find?—to wage war against Her. Who can find?—who will succeed in being fully within Her, constantly with Her?*”<sup>9</sup>

“מכרה (Mikrah), *Her selling, is far beyond rubies—the verse should read מקחה (miqḥah), her purchase.* However, all those who do not cleave to Her completely and are not

wholehearted with Her—מכרה (*makherah*), She sells, them, delivering them into the hands of other nations, as is said: *The Children of Israel abandoned YHVH, and He sold them into the hand of Sisera* (1 Samuel 12:9). Then they are all far from those supernal holy rubies, in which they will have no share, as is written: *Mikhrāh, What is sold by Her, is far from rubies.*"<sup>10</sup>

Rabbi Hiyya opened with the following verse, saying, "*The heart of her husband trusts in her, and no booty will he lack* (Proverbs 31:11). *The heart of her husband trusts in her*—the blessed Holy One, who therefore appointed Her over the world, to be conducted by Her. All His weapons He has entrusted in Her hands, and all the warriors; so *no booty will he lack.*"<sup>11</sup>

Rabbi Yose opened with the following verse, saying, "*She repays him good and not evil all the days of her life* (Proverbs 31:12). *She repays him good*—She provides goodness for the world; She provides goodness for the palace of the King and its members. *And not evil*—for it is written: *and the tree of knowledge of good and evil* (Genesis 2:9).<sup>12</sup>

"*Good*—when? When those Days of Heaven shine upon Her, uniting with Her fittingly—those being *the days of her life*, for the Tree of Life sends Her life and shines upon Her. At that time, *She repays him good and not evil.*"<sup>13</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, "That is fine! All those verses were spoken for Assembly of Israel."

*When a woman yields seed*  
(Leviticus 12:2).<sup>14</sup>

We have learned: "If a woman yields seed first, she bears a male."<sup>15</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, "But we have learned that the blessed Holy One decrees whether that drop is male or female; yet you say, 'If a woman yields seed first, she bears a male?'"<sup>16</sup>



Rabbi Yose said, “Surely, the blessed Holy One distinguishes between a male drop and a female drop—and since He distinguishes, He decrees whether it is male or female.”<sup>17</sup>

Rabbi Aḥa said, “*And bears a male* (Leviticus 12:2). Now, as soon as she yields seed, does she give birth, as is written: *and [she] bears?* Rather, this verse should read *When a woman yields seed and there be a male; why When a woman yields seed and bears?*”<sup>18</sup>

Rabbi Yose replied, “From the day that a woman conceives, every day she gives birth! She can talk of nothing but her giving birth, and that it will be a boy; thus, *When a woman yields seed and bears a male.*”

*When a woman yields seed*  
(Leviticus 12:2).<sup>19</sup>

Rabbi Hizkiyah opened,  
“*How many are Your works, O YHVH! All of them You made in wisdom; the earth is filled with Your creatures* (Psalms 104:24). How many are the works of the King! This may be compared to a person who takes in his hand [43a] a conglomeration of seeds and sows them all at once, and subsequently each one emerges separately. Similarly, the blessed Holy One made His works in Wisdom, and Wisdom took all as one and sowed them; subsequently each one emerged in its time, as is written: *All of them You made in wisdom.*”<sup>20</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “*How many are Your works, O YHVH!* How many are the works of the Holy King, all concealed in Wisdom, as is written: *All of them in wisdom* (Psalms 104:24)—all included in Wisdom, issuing only by certain paths toward *Binah*, whence all is made and arranged, as is said: *ובתבונה (u-vi-tvunah), and by understanding, it is established* (Proverbs 24:3). Thus, *All of them in wisdom; You made, in Binah.*<sup>21</sup>

*“The earth is filled—Assembly of Israel, for from there She is filled with all, as is said: All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full... (Ecclesiastes 1:7). The earth is filled with Your creatures—for She generates them afterward, as is written: These are the generations of heaven and earth בהבראם (be-hibbare’am), when they were created (Genesis 2:4)—בה’ בראם (be-he bera’am), by he He created them. Thus, The earth is filled with Your creatures.*[22](#)

“Come and see: When a man comes to sanctify himself—to couple with his female with intention of holy aspiration—another, holy spirit is aroused above him, composed of male and female. The blessed Holy One signals to a certain angel who is appointed over the conception of human beings, and entrusts him with that spirit, informing him where to deposit it, as is written: *The night said, ‘A male is conceived’ (Job 3:3)—The night said to that minister, ‘A male is conceived by so-and-so.’* And the blessed Holy One commands that spirit with whatever He wishes, as has been established.[23](#)

“Then the spirit descends along with a certain image—the one assuming the form above. In that image, he is created; with that image, he goes through this world, as is written: *Only with an image does a human go about (Psalms 39:7).* As long as this image is with a person, he exists with his image in the world, for they are joined as one. And King Solomon warned people, saying, *Before the day breathes and the shadows flee... (Song of Songs 2:17)—two.*[24](#)

“In the Book of Sorcery of Ashmedai I found that one who knows how to perform sorcery on the left side and to cling there should stand by the light of a lamp, or in a place where his own images may be seen, and utter certain words and invite his images to those whom he has summoned, and say that they are willingly prepared for

their commands. Such a person has left the domain of his Lord and has yielded his pledge to the impure side.<sup>25</sup>

“By those incantations that he utters, inviting his images, two spirits manifest, and array themselves in his images in human form, and inform him how to harm and benefit at particular times. These are two spirits who were not comprised within a body, and now they are comprised within these images, arrayed in them, and they convey information to this person—one who has left the domain of his Lord and yielded his pledge to the impure side.<sup>26</sup>

“Come and see: A person is forbidden to throw away household utensils, or anything else in his house, and deposit it with the Other Side—which must not be done, for many wardens of judgment are waiting to receive that object, and from that moment on, no blessing settles upon it, since it belongs to the Other Side. All the more so, one who summons another—the Other Side—to dominate his supernal goodness, for it now belongs to the one that he summoned.<sup>27</sup>

“When a person’s days draw near, the supernal image that was given to him—that spirit who clung to it every day comes and takes it and is arrayed in it and goes away, and it never appears with that person again. Then he knows that he has been totally rejected.<sup>28</sup>

“Come and see: When the soul descends to be conducted into this world, it comes down to the earthly Garden of Eden and sees the glory of the spirits of the righteous, standing row upon row. Afterward, it goes to Hell and sees the wicked, who are crying ‘Woe! Woe!’ with no one taking pity on them. In every respect, it is provided testimony, and that holy image stands above it until it emerges into the world.<sup>29</sup> [43b]

“When it emerges into the world, that image is at its side, participating with it and growing with it, as has been said, for it is written: *Only with an image does a human go about* (Psalms 39:7). A person’s days participate with that

image and depend upon it, as is written: *For we are but yesterday, unknowing, for our days are a shadow upon earth* (Job 8:9)—*for our days are a shadow*, surely! From the day that a woman conceives until the day that she gives birth, no one knows how many and how exalted are the works of the blessed Holy One, as is written: *How many are Your works, O YHVH! All of them You made in wisdom; the earth is filled with Your creatures* (Psalms 104:24).<sup>30</sup>

“Come and see: All spirits of the world, when they emerge, emerge comprising male and female. Afterward, they diverge on their paths. If a person is worthy, later they couple as one—that is, he finds his mate—joining in one coupling entirely, of body and soul.<sup>31</sup>

“It is written: *Let the earth bring forth נִפְשׁ חַיָּה* (*nefesh ḥayyah*), *a living soul, according to its kind* (Genesis 1:24). As has been said, *Let the earth bring forth*, surely, for from Her they issue. *Nefesh ḥayyah, Soul of a living being*—as we have established, the spirit of Adam. This corresponds to what is written: *But from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden* (Genesis 3:3). *From the fruit of the tree*—the blessed Holy One. *In the middle of the garden*—in the middle of the Woman.<sup>32</sup>

“We have learned: This corresponds to *When a woman yields seed and bears a male* (Leviticus 12:2)—not comprising male and female, according to the ways of the world, for they were the cause.”<sup>33</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Not so! For all is male and female, comprised as one, separating afterward. But, *and bears a male*—comprised in one from the right side. *If she bears a female* (Leviticus 12:5)—comprised in one, female and male from the left side, for the left side dominates and male is subdued on the right, without power. Then the male issuing from the female, from the left side, is effeminate and is not called male. But a male issuing from the right is dominant, and a female issuing from there is subdued, since the left side does not rule. Thus it is written *and bears a male*.<sup>34</sup>

“How many thousands and myriads issue simultaneously into the world! Yet, from the day that She generates them, they are not called souls until they are stabilized in the body. And how long is that? Thirty-three days, as is written: *Thirty days and three..* (Leviticus 12:4).<sup>35</sup>

“*She shall be impure seven days* (Leviticus 12:2)—for during all seven days, they do not enter Her presence, joining Her; and for all these seven days, the spirit roams the body to find a place, and so it is written *it shall be seven days under its mother* (ibid. 22:27). On the eighth day, they become soul and body, appearing before *Matronita*, to be joined with Her and the Male as body and soul.<sup>36</sup>

“*Thirty days and three she shall remain in blood of purity* (Leviticus 12:4)—for the spirit to be stabilized in the body. What is the purpose of the three days? Well, for three days following circumcision, the child is in pain and the spirit does not settle in the body as on other days. So, *Thirty days and three she shall remain in blood of purity.*<sup>37</sup>

“First, *in blood of purity*, and afterward, *the days of her purity* (Leviticus 12:4). Well, *in blood of purity*—blood of circumcision, blood after blood from the child. The blessed Holy One preserves that blood all these days, as is written: *She shall remain* בְּדַמֵּי טְהוֹרָה (*bi-dmei tohorah*), *in blood of purity*—*tohorah, purity*, unspecified, for the final ה (*he*) is not pronounced; for you should not say ‘the purity of *Matronita*,’ but rather *purity*, unspecified. It is called *blood of purity*, pure blood.<sup>38</sup>

“*She shall touch no consecrated thing..* (Leviticus 12:4). Come and see: Every single day Assembly of Israel obtains food from the King’s palace for the spirits of humans and nourishes [44a] them in holiness—except for these, until those spirits are stabilized in the body. After thirty-three days She cares for them daily—and spirits are joined with body, like other inhabitants of the world. Just as She dwells only in a complete place, so all Her actions

follow this pattern until they are completed. *She shall touch no consecrated thing*—caring for them.<sup>39</sup>

*“If she bears a female*—as I established, for the left side dominates and the right is subdued. So, all is two for one; female is far from male, for spirit to join body, since the left is not stabilized like the right and is more agitated.”<sup>40</sup>

*When a woman yields seed*  
(Leviticus 12:2).<sup>41</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened,  
*“There is no one holy like YHVH, for there is no one beside You, and*

*there is no rock like our God* (1 Samuel 2:2). This verse is difficult: *There is no one holy like YHVH* implies that there is someone else *holy*, since it is written *like YHVH*. *And there is no rock like our God* implies that there is another *rock*.<sup>42</sup>

“Well, surely, *There is no one holy like YHVH*, for there are various holy ones. Holy ones above, as is written: [*This verdict*] *by order of the holy ones* (Daniel 4:14). Israel is holy, as is written: *You shall be holy* (Leviticus 19:2). All of them are holy, yet not holy *like YHVH*. Why? Because it is written *for there is no one בלתי (biltekha), beside You*. What does this mean? That the holiness of the blessed Holy One exists בלתי (*bilti*), without, their holiness, since He does not need theirs; but they are not holy *biltekha, without You*. This is *for there is no one biltekha*—their holiness does not exist *without You*.<sup>43</sup>

*“And there is no צור (tsur), rock, like our God*—as has been established, that the blessed Holy One צר צורה גו צורה (*tsar tsurah go tsurah*), designs a form within a form, perfecting it, blowing into it the spirit of life, bringing it forth into the world.<sup>44</sup>

“Alternatively, *And there is no rock like our God*—there is that which is called *rock*: *Look to the rock from which you were hewn* (Isaiah 51:1); *You shall strike the rock. Look, I am about to stand before you there on the rock* (Exodus 17:6). All of them are called *rock*, yet *there is no*



*rock like our God, who possesses power and dominion over all.*"[45](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya was sitting one night with Rabbi Abba. They rose at midnight to study Torah. As they were going out, they saw a star striking another star three times, masking its light. Just then, they heard two voices from two directions—one from the north above, and [44b] one below—and that voice proclaimed, 'Enter and gather to your places! Protection of the Female has been opened; the blessed Holy One is entering the Garden to stroll with the righteous there.' The voice passed and subsided.[46](#)

Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Ḥiyya returned, and said, "Surely, it is a time of favor for arousal of Assembly of Israel to unite with the Holy King!"[47](#)

Rabbi Abba said, "Surely, Assembly of Israel is drawn to the blessed Holy One only by song, by Her praising Him—until morning comes and the King extends to Her a thread of love. Mystery of the matter is: *The king extended to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand...* (Esther 5:2). Do not say that He extends it to Her alone, but rather to Her and to all those who join Her. Come, let us join as one!"[48](#)

They sat down. Rabbi Abba opened, "*YHVH Elohim said, 'It is not good for the human to be alone...* (Genesis 2:18). Why does the verse begin like this? Well, as has been said, for this reason *that it was good* is not written of the second day, because Adam was destined to be separated, so it is written *It is not good for* אָדָם (*ha-adam*), *the human, to be alone.*"[49](#)

"*It is not good for the human to be alone*—now, was he alone? Look at what is written: *Male and female He created them* (Genesis 5:2), and we have learned: 'Adam was created with two faces'! Yet you say, *It is not good for the human to be alone*. However, he did not engage with his female, and she was not a helper facing him, since she was

at his side and they were as one back-to-back. So, Adam was *alone*.

“*I will make him a helper כנגדו (ke-negdo), opposite him (Genesis 2:18). What is ke-negdo? Facing him, to cleave to one another, face-to-face. What did the blessed Holy One do? He sawed him, and took the female from him, as is written: He took one of his sides (ibid., 21). What is one? His female.*<sup>50</sup>

“*He brought her to the human (Genesis 2:22)—He adorned her like a bride and brought her so that she would be facing him, face-to-face. As long as the female was adjoined to his side, Adam was alone. Afterward, they climbed [into bed] as two and rose six as one.*<sup>51</sup>

“*Come and see: When she was adorned for Adam, the blessed Holy One blessed them, as is written: God blessed them... (Genesis 1:28), like a cantor blessing the bride with seven blessings. From here we learn that once a bride and groom are blessed with seven blessings, they cleave as one, like the paradigm above.*<sup>52</sup>

“*Therefore, one who comes to unite with another man’s wife spoils the Coupling—forming, as it were, two Powers above—for the coupling of Assembly of Israel is with the blessed Holy One alone, whether He is in Compassion or in Judgment. It is as if he betrays the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel, so the blessed Holy One does not provide him the opportunity of *teshuvah*, which remains suspended until he departs from the world, as is written: *This iniquity shall not be purged from you until you die (Isaiah 22:14). And when? When he enters that world in teshuvah and must receive his punishment.*”<sup>53</sup>*

Rabbi El’azar said, “*If one betrays Assembly of Israel, his teshuvah will not be accepted until he is punished in Hell; all the more so, if he betrays Assembly of Israel and the blessed Holy One; and all the more so, if he troubles the blessed Holy One to form the image of a bastard in another man’s wife, falsifying the royal solemnity.*”<sup>54</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, “*He who robs his father and his mother and says, ‘It is no crime,’ is partner to a destroyer* (Proverbs 28:24). *He who robs his father and his mother—his father is the blessed Holy One; his mother is Assembly of Israel. What is robs? As is said: That which was robbed from the poor is in your houses* (Isaiah 3:14). And what is that? One who covets another woman, who is not his mate.<sup>55</sup>

“There we have learned: ‘Whoever enjoys something of this world without a blessing robs, as it were, the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel, as is said: *He who robs his father and his mother and says, “It is no crime.”*’ ‘Whoever enjoys something of this world’—a generalization, including a woman. Whoever clings to a woman to enjoy her—if she is unmarried, and he enjoys her without a blessing—it is as if he robs the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel. Why? Because their coupling is by seven blessings. If this is so concerning an unmarried woman, all the more so with one who clings to another man’s wife, who abides in the pattern above by coupling of seven blessings.<sup>56</sup>

“*Is partner to a destroyer* (Proverbs 28:24)—Jeroboam, as has been established.<sup>57</sup>

“*And says, ‘It is no crime’* (ibid.)—for he says, ‘Look, she is unmarried! Why is it forbidden?’ Thus, he *robs his father and his mother*. Furthermore, he *is partner to a destroyer*. Who is *a destroyer*? One who spoils the image and arrangement above—all the more so, one who covets his friend’s wife and clings to her, [45a] spoiling more, and thus spoiled forever. *A destroyer*—spoiling above, spoiling below, and spoiling his soul, as is written: *a destroyer, and: destroying his soul—it is he who does it* (Proverbs 6:32).”<sup>58</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, “*He said, ‘Let me go, for dawn is rising!’ And he said, ‘I will not let you go unless you have blessed me’* (Genesis 32:27). *He said, ‘Let me go!’*—now,

was he bound in Jacob's hand? Well, happy are the righteous, for the blessed Holy One cares for their honor and never abandons them, as is written: *He will never let the righteous totter* (Psalms 55:23). Yet it is written: *and the socket of Jacob's thigh was wrenched* (Genesis 32:26). Well, he collected what was his, as has been said.<sup>59</sup>

"It is written: *He spent that night in the camp* (Genesis 32:22), and it is written: *He took them and brought them across the stream* (ibid., 24). What did Jacob have in mind to bring them across at night? Well, he saw the Accuser walking among his camps, and he said, 'I will bring them across the stream; perhaps he will not be there.'<sup>60</sup>

"What did he see? He saw his flame of fire flashing, flying through his camps. Jacob said, 'Better to move from here, so the stream will divide between us and there will be no disturbance.' Immediately, *He took them and brought them across the stream...*<sup>61</sup>

"*And Jacob was left alone* (Genesis 32:25). From here we learn: One who is alone in a house at night, or during the day in an isolated house (What is 'isolated'? Isolated from other houses.)—all the more so at night—or one who walks alone at night, can be harmed. Come and see: *And Jacob was left alone; then, and a man wrestled with him...* (ibid.).<sup>62</sup>

"*Until the rising of dawn* (Genesis 32:25). We have learned: He came from the side of Judgment, and his dominion was on the side of night. What is 'on the side of night'? To bring exile. As soon as light rose, his strength weakened and Jacob overpowered him. Jacob saw that he was a messenger and that he could not prevail against Jacob because light had risen and his power was broken, as is written: *When the morning stars sang together, בני אלהים ויריעו כל* (*va-yari'u kol benei Elohim*), *and all the sons of Elohim shouted for joy* (Job 38:7). What does *va-yari'u* mean? That all those coming from the side of Judgment were shattered. Then Jacob was empowered and seized him.<sup>63</sup>

“He said to him, ‘*Let me go, for dawn is rising!*’ Genesis 32:27). The time has come to sing praise to the blessed Holy One and to gather together.’ *He said, ‘I will not let you go unless you have blessed me’* (ibid.). *Unless ברכתני (berakhtani), you have blessed me*—the verse should read *unless תברכני (tevarekheni), you bless me*. Why *unless you have blessed me*? Well, Jacob said to him, ‘Surely, father bestowed to me those blessings that he wished to confer upon Esau, and I am afraid of you—will you acknowledge them or not, or will you denounce me on account of them?’<sup>64</sup>

“Immediately, he said to him, *Your name will no longer be יעקב (Ya‘aqov), Jacob* (Genesis 32:29). What was he telling him? Well, as follows: ‘You did not gain those blessings by crookedness or by your עוקבא (uqba), deceit. They were not by *uqba*, deceit; *but rather Israel* (ibid.)—*Israel*, surely, acknowledges them, and from Him they issued, for you are linked with Him. So I and all the legions acknowledge them.’<sup>65</sup>

“*For you have strived with divine beings and with human beings, and have prevailed* (Genesis 32:29). With אלהים (elohim), *divine beings*—all those coming from the side of harsh Judgment. *And human beings*—Esau and all his multitude. *And have prevailed*—you prevailed over them, and not they over you. Jacob did not let him go until he had acknowledged those blessings, as is written: *He blessed him there* (Genesis 32:30).<sup>66</sup>

“Come and see: When light rises, all those masters of Judgment are subdued and disappear, and Assembly of Israel converses with the blessed Holy One. That hour is a time of favor for all, and the King extends to Her and to all those who are with Her a scepter threaded with love, so that they may share in the fullness of the Holy King, as has been said.<sup>67</sup>

“Come and see: When the blessed Holy One is with Assembly of Israel, on those occasions when He is with Her

and She arouses desire toward Him first, drawing Him toward Her with great yearning, then She is filled from the right side, and many legions appear from the right side throughout all worlds. But when the blessed Holy One arouses love and desire first, and She [45b] is aroused afterward, not when He is aroused, then all is on the side of the Female, and the left is aroused, and many legions arise and are aroused on the left side throughout all worlds.<sup>68</sup>

“Similarly it is written: *When a woman yields seed and bears a male...* (Leviticus 12:2), for the lower world corresponds to the pattern above, one the paradigm of the other.<sup>69</sup>

“In all things, one should unite his desire above with the blessed Holy One, so that favor may prevail in the world. Happy is the share of the righteous, who know how to unite their desire with the Holy King! Of them is written *You, cleaving to YHVH your God, are alive every one of you today!* (Deuteronomy 4:4).”<sup>70</sup>

*If a person has on the skin of his body an inflammation or a rash or a shiny spot...* (Leviticus 13:2).<sup>71</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “אל תראוני” (*Al tir’uni*), *Do not look at me, for I am blackish...* (Song of Songs 1:6). This verse has been discussed, but

when the moon is concealed in exile, She says *Al tir’uni*—not that She commands to not look at Her, but rather since She sees how Israel yearns for Her, to see the light, She says *Al tir’uni*, *You cannot see me*—‘you are unable to see Me.’ Why? *For I am blackish*—‘for I am in darkness.’ Why שחרחורת (*sheḥarḥoret*), *blackish*? The verse should read שחורה (*sheḥorah*), *black*. Well, there are two darknesses. One, *because the sun has scorched me* (Song of Songs 1:6)—‘for the sun has withdrawn from Me, no longer illumining Me or gazing upon Me.’ And the other, ‘for *my mother’s sons were incensed at me* (ibid.).’<sup>72</sup>



“שזפתני” (*She-shezafatni*), *Because [the sun] has scorched me*—the verse should read שזפתני (*she-zafatni*), *because [the sun] has made me black as pitch*. But it offers a hint, for when the sun shines, it shines with six lights; and when it withdraws, all those six are withdrawn.<sup>73</sup>

“*My mother’s sons were incensed at me*—those coming from the side of harsh Judgment. נחרו (*Niḥaru*), *Were incensed, at me*—as is said: *My throat נחר (niḥar), is hoarse* (Psalms 69:4). As is written: *Our pursuers are at our necks* (Lamentations 5:5)—for when Israel went into exile, they went with their hands bound tightly behind them and millstones round their necks, so they could not open their mouths.<sup>74</sup>

“*They made me keeper of the vineyards* (Song of Songs 1:6)—‘going into exile to guard the other nations for the sake of Israel.’ *My own vineyard I did not keep* (ibid.)—‘for I cannot guard them. Previously, I kept *my own vineyard*, and through it the other vineyards were kept; now I keep the other vineyards for the sake of *my own vineyard*, that it may be kept among them.’”<sup>75</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose were traveling on the road. When they reached a certain field, they saw a biferous balsam tree on the right side of the road. Rabbi Yose said, “Enveloping smoke appears in our eyes! It is forbidden to behold joy since the day the Temple was destroyed.”<sup>76</sup>

He opened, saying, “*The earth and her fullness are YHVH’s, the world and those who dwell in her* (Psalms 24:1). Since he says *The earth and her fullness are YHVH’s*, why *the world and those who dwell in her*? Isn’t *the world* part of the earth? Well, this is what he is saying: הארץ (*Ha-arets*), *The earth, and her fullness are YHVH’s*—ארעא קדישא (*ar’a qaddisha*), the Holy Land, called ארץ (*Erets*), Land of, the Living. *The world and those who dwell in her*—the rest of the earth, all as is said: *He will judge the world in righteousness* (ibid. 9:9), since *the world* depends on *righteousness*, and all is one entity.”<sup>77</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “*The earth and her fullness. The earth, granted; but what is her fullness? Well, these are souls of the righteous.*”<sup>78</sup>

“*The world and those who dwell in her. The world—the earth below. And those who dwell in her—humanity.*”

Rabbi Yose said, “If so, how can we explain *For upon seas He founded her, and upon rivers set her firm* (Psalms 24:2)?”<sup>79</sup>

He replied, “Certainly so! Namely, Land of the Living—*upon seas He founded her, and upon rivers set her firm*, for they all issue from that supernal river flowing and gushing from Eden, and by them She is arrayed to be crowned by the Holy King and to nourish the worlds.”<sup>80</sup>

“Consequently, *Who shall ascend the mount of YHVH...? The clean of hands and the pure of heart, who has not borne נפשו (nafsho), his soul, falsely* (Psalms 24:3-4)—written נפשי (nafshi), *My soul*. What is *My soul and his soul*? Well, all is one entity, as is said: *YHVH has sworn by His soul* (Amos 6:8); *According to My heart and My soul he shall act* (1 Samuel 2:35). King David was joined with that heart, with that soul; so *he has not borne my soul falsely.*”<sup>81</sup>

As they were going along, they came upon a man whose face was full of lesions, who rose from beneath a tree. They gazed at him and saw [46a] that his face was red from those lesions. Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Who are you?”<sup>82</sup>

He replied, “A Jew.”

Rabbi Yose said, “He is a sinner, for otherwise his face would not be marked with these evil illnesses—and these are not called ‘chastenings of love.’”

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Certainly so, for chastenings of love are hidden from people.”<sup>83</sup>

“Come and see what is written: *If a person has on the skin of his body an inflammation or a rash or a shiny spot* (Leviticus 13:2)—look, three types here, all called a *scaly affliction*, as is written: *and it becomes a scaly affliction on the skin of his body* (ibid.)—סגירו (segiru), closing, completely

enclosed; and it is written *he shall be brought to the priest...* (ibid.). But of those which are visible externally, it is written *When the priest sees it, he shall declare him impure* (ibid., 3), for surely those that are externally visible in the presence of others come from the side of impurity and are not chastenings of love.”<sup>84</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “How do we know this?”<sup>85</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya replied, “Because it is written *Better open reproof* מאהבה מסותרת (*me-ahavah mesuttaret*), *than hidden love* (Proverbs 27:5)—if that *reproof* is *me-ahavah*, *from love*, it is *hidden* from people. Accordingly, one who reproves his fellow lovingly should conceal his words from others, so that his fellow may not be ashamed. And if his words are not loving, they are delivered openly, so that he will be ashamed in the presence of others.”<sup>86</sup>

“Similarly with the blessed Holy One: when He reproves a person, He always does so lovingly. First, He strikes his body internally. If he repents, good; if not, He strikes him beneath his clothes, and these are called ‘chastenings of love.’ If he repents, good; if not, He strikes him on his face openly, in front of all, so that they will look at him and know that he is a sinner, unloved by his Lord.”<sup>87</sup>

That man said to them, “Bound in single counsel, you have come upon me! You are surely of those who dwell in the house of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, who fear nothing. If my sons, who are following me, assail you—how could you speak openly?”<sup>88</sup>

They replied, “So it is with Torah, as is written: *At the bustling crossroads she calls, in the gateways of the city she utters her sayings* (Proverbs 1:21). If we were afraid of you regarding words of Torah, we would be ashamed before the blessed Holy One. Furthermore, Torah requires thirsting clarity.”<sup>89</sup>

The man opened, saying, “*Who is a God like You, forgiving iniquity...?* (Micah 7:18).” He raised his hands and

wept. Meanwhile, his sons arrived. The younger one said, “Heavenly help is here!”<sup>90</sup>

He opened, saying, “*I have seen all in the days of my mere breath: a righteous one perishes in his righteousness, and a wicked one prolongs his life in his evil* (Ecclesiastes 7:15). I studied this verse in the academy of Rabbi Dostai Sava, who said in the name of Rabbi Yeisa Sava: *I have seen all in the days of my mere breath*. Now, how could King Solomon, who was wiser than all, say this—that he saw everything when he journeyed through the darkness of the world? For whoever delves into the darkness of the world sees nothing and knows nothing.<sup>91</sup>

“Well, this is what he meant. In the days of King Solomon, the moon waxed full, and Solomon became wiser than all inhabitants of the world. Then he saw all and knew all. What did he see? He saw *all*, not withdrawing from the moon, illumining Her like the sun, as is written: *I have seen all in the days of my breath*. Who is *my breath*? The moon, who is comprised of all: water, fire, and spirit as one—like breath issuing from the mouth, comprised of all. He saw *all* with that breath of his, to which he was joined.<sup>92</sup>

“*A righteous one perishes in his righteousness*. Come and see: When the righteous abound in the world, this *all* never withdraws from the moon, and this *all* absorbs anointing oil from above, is filled and saturated joyously, so as to couple with the moon, attaining for Her sake. But when the wicked abound in the world and the moon darkens, then *a righteous one* אובד (*oved*), *perishes, in his righteousness*. It is not written *A righteous one* נאבד (*ne’evad*), *is lost*, but rather *A righteous one* *oved*, *loses*, for He is not reflected in the moon and does not absorb anointing oil and joy to fill Her and couple with Her. Thus, *a righteous one loses*. בצדקו (*Be-tsidqo*), *On account of his righteousness*—the moon, for since She is not present to couple with Him, He *loses*, not drawing from joy, as He had done.<sup>93</sup>

“Then the whole left side is aroused, and the wicked prolong their lives tranquilly [46b] in the world, as is written: *and a wicked one prolongs his life in his evil*. What is *in his evil*? Through the side to which he clings.<sup>94</sup>

“Furthermore, *A righteous one perishes in his righteousness*, for when the wicked abound in the world and Judgment depends upon their sins, *a righteous one perishes in his righteousness*—he is seized for their sins. Consequently, my father was seized for the sins of his townspeople, who were all impudent toward him, yet he never admonished them or put them to shame. And he restrained us from contending with the wicked, telling us, *For David. Do not challenge evildoers...* (Psalms 37:1).<sup>95</sup>

His father said, “Surely, the blessed Holy One has punished me with this, for I had the power to restrain them, and I didn’t put them to shame even secretly, nor openly.”<sup>96</sup>

His son opened again, saying, “וייצר יהוה אלהים (Va-yiytser YHVH Elohim), *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the earth...* (Genesis 2:7). וייצר יהוה אלהים (Va-yiytser YHVH Elohim), *YHVH Elohim formed*—with two יצרים (yitsrin), impulses: a good impulse and an evil impulse, one corresponding to water and one corresponding to fire.<sup>97</sup>

“YHVH Elohim—a complete name.<sup>98</sup>

“את האדם (Et ha-adam), *the human*—comprising male and female.<sup>99</sup>

“*Dust from the earth*—the Holy Land, whence he was created, site of the Temple.<sup>100</sup>

“*And blew into his nostrils נשמה (nishmat), the breath of, life*—the holy נשמתא (nishmeta), soul, drawn from supernal life.<sup>101</sup>

“*And the human became נפש חיה (nefesh hayyah), a living soul*—a human imbued with a holy נפשא (nafsha), soul, from the supernal hayyah, *living being*, which the earth brought forth, as is written: *Let the earth bring forth nefesh hayyah, a*

*living soul* (Genesis 1:24)—*a soul* of that supernal *ḥayyah*, *living being*.<sup>102</sup>

“Come and see: As long as this holy soul cleaves to a person, he is beloved of his Lord. Many guardians protect him on all sides, he is distinguished for good above and below, and holy *Shekhinah* settles upon him. But when he perverts his ways, *Shekhinah* withdraws from him and the holy soul no longer cleaves to him; from the side of the evil, mighty Serpent, a spirit is aroused—roaming through the world, settling only in a place vacated by supernal holiness. Then the person is defiled, blemished in his flesh, in his face, in everything.<sup>103</sup>

“Come and see: Because this *nefesh ḥayyah*, *soul of a living being*, is holy and exalted, when the Holy Land draws her in and absorbs her, she is called *neshamah*, soul-breath. It is she who ascends on high and speaks before the Holy King, entering all gates, with no one hindering her. So she is called ‘speaking spirit,’ since all the other souls are not permitted to speak before the King.<sup>104</sup>

“Consequently, Torah proclaims, *Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit* (Psalms 34:14). For if his lips and his tongue speak evil words, those words ascend on high. And as they ascend, all proclaim: ‘Keep away from the evil word of so-and-so! Clear a path for the evil Serpent!’ Then the holy soul is removed from him and can no longer speak, as is said: *I was dumb—in silence. I kept still, deprived of good* (Psalms 39:3). She ascends in shame, utterly distressed, and is not provided a place as before. Of this is written *He who guards his mouth and his tongue guards his soul from troubles* (Proverbs 21:23)—*his soul*, precisely: she who used to speak is reduced to silence on account of evil speech. Then the Serpent is ready, for all returns to its place.<sup>105</sup>

“When that evil word ascends by certain paths and settles before the mighty Serpent, numerous spirits are aroused in the world, and a spirit descends from that side



and finds the person who aroused it by the evil word—for the holy speaking spirit has been removed from him, so [the evil spirit] settles upon him, defiling him, and then he is infected with scaly affliction.<sup>106</sup>

“Just as a person is punished for an evil word, so he is punished for a good word that he has the opportunity to speak but does not speak, for he taints that speaking spirit. All the more so if people are following a crooked path and he is able to speak to them yet keeps silent, as I have said, for it is written: *I was dumb—in silence. I kept still, deprived of good, and my pain was intense* (Psalms 39:3), with afflictions, with defilement. This is what David said: [47a] ‘With this I will be afflicted, ואתפני (*ve-itypenei*), and I will be released, from it’—as is written: פנה (*Peneh*), *Turn, to me and grant me grace, [for alone and afflicted am I]* (Psalms 25:16), as is said: ויפן אהרן (*Va-yiphen Aharon*), *Aaron turned [to Miriam, and, look, she was stricken with scales]* (Numbers 12:10).”<sup>107</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose dismounted and kissed him. They joined as one all along the way. Rabbi Ḥiyya proclaimed for them, “*The path of the righteous is like gleaming light, shining ever brighter until full day* (Proverbs 4:18).”

*If a person has a scaly affliction, he shall be brought to the priest* (Leviticus 13:9).<sup>108</sup>

ones were pure and which were impure. He knew which ones were chastenings of love and which ones appeared in a person repulsive to his Lord, on whom He spat.<sup>109</sup>

“It is written: *Incline not my heart to an evil thing, to plot deeds of wickedness with evildoing men, and let me not taste their delicacies* (Psalms 141:4). According to a person’s ways, so he causes affliction in the world. *Incline*

Rabbi Yose said, “The Companions have already discussed all the types, and the priest recognized which

*not my heart to an evil thing, to plot wickedness*—from here we learn: One is led on the path one wishes to take.”<sup>110</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “This verse is difficult. Does the blessed Holy One lead a person astray into a way of sin and evildoing? If so, there is no justice in this world or in the world that is coming, and the Torah is imperfect, for it is written: *If you hearken; if you do not hearken.*”<sup>111</sup>

“However, David admonished his heart to lead him on the path of truth, as is said: וְהִשְׁבֹּתָ (Va-hashevota), *Bring back, to your heart* (Deuteronomy 4:39). What is *bring back*? Once, twice, thrice to come back to it, conduct it, and admonish it. He said to it as follows: *Incline not, O my heart, to an evil thing*—to his heart he said, *Incline not.*”<sup>112</sup>

“According to a person’s ways, so he causes affliction in the world, and Judgment prevails in the world. This is *scaly affliction*. The Companions have already discussed this, but *scaly affliction*, according to its translation.”<sup>113</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “What is ‘according to its translation’? סְגִירוֹ (Segiru), closing, for it closes and does not open, and is then called נֶגַע (nega), *affliction.*”<sup>114</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “For the Patriarchs are not supplied, much less the Children, corresponding to what is written: *When אָדָם (adam), a person, has scaly affliction* (Leviticus 13:9)—*adam*, really! From here it descends to whom it descends; *affliction* spreads to all from that *segiru*, closing.”<sup>115</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Surely this is mystery of the word that is written: *He has spurned His sanctuary* (Lamentations 2:7). Why? Because inhabitants of the world brought it about, as is written: *for he has defiled YHVH’s sanctuary* (Numbers 19:20)—*he has actually defiled it.*”<sup>116</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Why? Because the one who has withdrawn withdrew, and the mighty Serpent prevails, injecting slime and defiling the one it defiles—all because of sins of the world.”<sup>117</sup>

“It has been taught: When the Serpent begins to reveal itself, the supports and edifice are withdrawn and removed, and the mighty Serpent comes and injects slime, and then the Sanctuary becomes defiled. Who is the Sanctuary? As is written: *I put a scaly affliction in a house of the land you possess* (Leviticus 14:34). And it is written: *Now the serpent was most cunning of all the beasts of the field... and he said to the woman* (Genesis 3:1)—*to the actual woman*, within whom is found the site of the Sanctuary. Thus, *he has defiled YHVH’s sanctuary* by his sins, for the mighty Serpent is revealed.<sup>118</sup>

“What is the sin? Evil speech, for because of evil speech the Serpent appears, both above and below. And it is written: *YHVH sent against the people* הנחשים השרפים (*ha-nehashim ha-serafim*), *the fiery serpents* (Numbers 21:6). It is not written השרופים (*ha-serufim*), *the burnt*, or השורפים (*ha-sorefim*), *the burning*, but rather *ha-serafim, the fiery*. Who are *serafim*? As is written: *The heads of* תנינים (*taninim*), *sea serpents* (Psalms 74:13)—two, sometimes turning into one. And it is written: *Seraphim were standing* ממעל (*mi-ma’al*), *above, Him* (Isaiah 6:2)—*above Him*, surely, as is said: *to take their stand* על (*al*), *above, YHVH* (Job 1:6). Then *segiru*, closing, entirely, with no one to open.<sup>119</sup>

“Of this is written *Such is the way of an adulteress...* (Proverbs 30:20). What is an *adulteress*? *An adulteress, surely! She eats and wipes her mouth, and says, ‘I have done no wrong’* (ibid.).”<sup>120</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Deficiency of all occurs below only because it occurs above; and it occurs above only when it occurs below by sins of the world, for all depend on one another.”<sup>121</sup>

*If a man’s hair falls out, he is bald; he is pure* (Leviticus

Rabbi Hiyya opened, “*I saw that wisdom has an advantage over folly as light has an advantage*

13:40).

*over* *darkness*  
(Ecclesiastes 2:13). In

many places I have examined the words of King Solomon and have observed his great wisdom [47b] and how he concealed his words deep within the holy palace. This verse should be investigated. Why did he say *I saw*? Don't the other inhabitants of the world know and see this? Even someone who has never known or perceived wisdom all his days knows this: *that wisdom has an advantage over folly as light has an advantage over darkness*—yet he praises himself by saying *I saw!*<sup>122</sup>

“But it has been taught as follows: Who is as wise as Solomon, who is called by seven rungs, corresponding to the pattern above? Six days above, seventh above them; six days below, seventh above them; six steps to his throne, he upon the throne, as is written: *Solomon sat on the throne of YHVH as king* (1 Chronicles 29:23). Seven crowns of days above; correspondingly, seven names for Solomon, displaying his holy wisdom. Thus he is called by seven names: Solomon, Jedidiah, Agur, Bin Yake, Lemuel, Ithiel, Koheleth.<sup>123</sup>

“He uttered seven הבלים (*havalim*), breaths. What he saw, no other human saw; and when he gathered wisdom and climbed the rungs of wisdom, he was called קהלת (*Qohelet*), Gatherer. He uttered seven breaths corresponding to seven crowns above, and from each breath a voice was formed.<sup>124</sup>

“It has been taught in the name of Rabbi Shim'on: ‘A breath generates a voice by the spirit and water within it, and there is no voice without breath.’ And it has been taught: ‘By seven breaths those above and below exist.’ Rabbi Yitshak taught, ‘Come and see that the world endures by breath, for without breath issuing from the mouth, no person could exist for even a moment.’<sup>125</sup>

“Similarly, Solomon spoke his words, by which the world endures, with this breath by which the world endures. And this breath by which the world endures issues

from breaths above, as is written: הבל הבלים (*havel havalim*), *breath of breaths* (Ecclesiastes 1:2)—breath from breaths. All his words were so. Of breaths above is written *but on all issuing from YHVH's mouth does the human live* (Deuteronomy 8:3). What is *issuing from YHVH's mouth?* Breaths above.<sup>126</sup>

“It has been taught: *I saw that wisdom has an advantage* מן הסכלות (*min ha-sikhlut*), *over folly*—that is, *min ha-sikhlut, from folly*, precisely, wisdom derives benefit! For if there were no foolishness in the world, wisdom and its words would not be recognized.

“It has been taught: It is incumbent upon a person who studies wisdom to study some foolishness and know it, because thereby wisdom derives benefit—just as light derives benefit from darkness, for were it not for darkness, light would not be recognized and the world would gain no benefit from it.<sup>127</sup>

“It has been taught: *That wisdom has an advantage—wisdom*, unspecified. For Rabbi Shim'on said to Rabbi Abba, ‘Come and see mystery of the matter: Wisdom above does not illumine nor become illumined except through follies aroused from another place. Were it not for this, there would be no radiance or abundant excellence, and the benefit of Wisdom would not appear. On account of foolishness, it illumines more and is more illumined, as is written: *that wisdom has an advantage—wisdom, unspecified—from folly, unspecified.*’<sup>128</sup>

“Similarly below, if there were no foolishness in the world, there would be no wisdom. This is why, when the Companions learned secrets of wisdom from Rav Yeisa Sava, he would present them with a lesson of folly, by which wisdom would benefit. This corresponds to what is written: *More precious than wisdom and honor is a little folly* (Ecclesiastes 10:1)—because it enhances wisdom and makes it precious. Of this is written *my heart guiding with wisdom, while grasping folly* (ibid. 2:3).”<sup>129</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “יקר מחכמה ומכבוד” (*Yagar me-ḥokhmah u-mi-kavod*), *More precious than wisdom and honor*—that is, what constitutes the preciousness and beauty of wisdom, and the preciousness of supernal *kavod, glory? A little folly. A little foolishness displays and reveals the preciousness of wisdom and supernal glory better than any way in the world.*<sup>130</sup>

“*As light has an advantage מן החשך (min ha-ḥoshekh), from darkness (Ecclesiastes 2:13)—the benefit of light comes only from darkness. What always enhances white? Black. For were it not for black, white would not be recognized; because of black, white is elevated and glorified.*”<sup>131</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “This may be compared to sweet with bitter, for a person does not know the taste of sweet until he tastes bitter. What makes this sweet? You must admit, bitter. This corresponds to what is written: *One against the other God has set (Ecclesiastes 7:14). And it is written: [48a] It is good that you grasp this, and from the other as well do not withdraw your hand (ibid., 18).*”<sup>132</sup>

“It has been taught: A person is named according to various rungs—אדם (*adam*); גבר (*gever*), male; אנוש (*enosh*), human; יש (*ish*), man. The greatest of them all is *adam*, for it is written: *God created ha-adam, the human, in His image (Genesis 1:27); for in the image of God He made ha-adam, the human (ibid. 9:6)—and no other name is written.*”<sup>133</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If so, look at what is written: *When adam, a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH (Leviticus 1:2)—and it is not written: gever, male; enosh, human; ish, man! Who must bring an offering? One who is a sinner!*”<sup>134</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak replied, “Come and see: The offering is sustenance of the world, of those above and below—pleasure of the blessed Holy One. And who is worthy of offering before Him this pleasure? You must admit, *adam*, most precious of all.”<sup>135</sup>



He said to him, “But look at what is written: *When adam, a person, has on the skin of his body [an inflammation or a rash or a shiny spot and it becomes a scaly affliction on the skin of his body...]* (Leviticus 13:2)!”[136](#)

He replied, “This one the blessed Holy One desires to purify more than all, for one who occupies the highest rung of all should not remain like this. Therefore, of *adam* is written *He shall be brought to the priest* (Leviticus 13:9)—it is not written *he shall come*, but rather *he shall be brought*, for whoever sees him must bring him before the priest, so that the holy image may not remain like this. But it is written *If וְאִשׁ (ish), a man, or a woman has an affliction [on the head or in the beard]* (ibid., 29); *If ish, a man, or a woman has on the skin of their body [numerous white] shiny spots* (ibid., 38)—and it is not written *he shall be brought*.”[137](#)

He said to him, “But it is written וְהָאִשׁ (ve-ha-ish), *And the man, Moses was very humble* (Numbers 12:3); *Moreover, וְהָאִשׁ (ha-ish), the man, Moses [was very great in the land of Egypt]* (Exodus 11:3)! Why wasn’t he called *adam*?”[138](#)

He replied, “Because he was called ‘servant of the King,’ as is written: *Not so My servant Moses* (Numbers 12:7); *Moses, My servant* (Joshua 1:2). So, too, he is called *ish, man*, in relation to supernal *Adam*.”[139](#)

He said to him, “If so, look at what is written: *YHVH is ish, a man of, war* (Exodus 15:3), and it is not written *adam*!”[140](#)

He replied, “*The secret of YHVH is for those who revere Him* (Psalms 25:14).”[141](#)

He said to him, “If so, I am one of them entirely—yet here I have not been privileged!”[142](#)

He replied, “Go to Rabbi Abba, for I learned this from him on condition that I not reveal.”

He went to Rabbi Abba and found him expounding as follows: “When is there perfection above? When the blessed Holy One sits on His Throne; and until He sits on His Throne, there is no perfection—as is written: *And upon*

*the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of adam, a human being, upon it above* (Ezekiel 1:26). The word *adam* implies that this is totality and perfection of all."<sup>143</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Blessed is the Compassionate One, that I found you expounding this! If so, look at what is written: *YHVH is ish, a man of, war* (Exodus 15:3)!"<sup>144</sup>

He replied, "You are fine! Come and see: There, perfection of all was lacking, so He is called *ish, man*; but here, perfection of all, consummation of all, so He is called *adam*."<sup>145</sup>

[Rabbi Yehudah] exclaimed over him, "*Better for me the Torah of Your mouth than thousands in gold and silver* (Psalms 119:72)."

[Rabbi Yehudah] said to him, "It is further written: *Adam, Human, and beast [You deliver, O YHVH]* (Psalms 36:7), and not *ish, man, and beast*."<sup>146</sup>

He replied, "No? Look at what is written: *למאיש (le-me-ish), from man, to beast* (Exodus 11:7)! But as for the expression *adam and beast*, this is similar to *from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop in the wall* (1 Kings 5:13)—it is the style of Scripture to employ the highest of all and lowest of all. Here, too, highest of all and lowest of all."<sup>147</sup>

He said to him, "But it is written *וְאָדָם אֵין (ve-adam ayin), and there was no human, to till the soil* (Genesis 2:5)."<sup>148</sup>

He replied, "Come and see: Everything in the world is only for the sake of *adam*, all existing for him. Nothing appeared in the world—all was withheld—until the one called *adam* arrived, as is written: *No shrub of the field was yet on earth...* (Genesis 2:5), because the supernal image had not appeared, as is written: *and there was no adam*. Therefore, this image appeared only fittingly, as is written: *YHVH Elohim formed האדם (ha-adam), the human* (ibid., 7)—by a complete name, just as he is completion of all, consummation of all."<sup>149</sup>

“It has been taught: Adam was created on the sixth day, when the Throne was completed and called Throne, and it is written, *The throne had six steps* (1 Kings 10:19)—*adam* appeared, who is worthy of sitting on the Throne. And it has been taught: Once Adam was created, all was perfected, all above and below, and all was included in Adam.”<sup>150</sup>

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, “*The image of their face was פני אדם (penei adam), a human face* (Ezekiel 1:10)—totality of all, all included in this image.”<sup>151</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “But look at what is written: *and on the right [the four of them had] a lion’s face [and on the left the four of them had an ox’s face, and the four of them had an eagle’s face]* (ibid.)!”<sup>152</sup> [48b]

He replied, “They were a human face, and all aspects and images appeared in that image of *adam*—as we have learned: Its face was the face of an eagle...—not that it was an eagle, but rather it appeared in the image of *adam*, which includes all images.”<sup>153</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Come and see: Whoever is under the control of *adam* is called *ish*, for it is established on behalf of *adam* from another rung, which he occupied previously. For it has been taught in the supernal mystery of the Book of Concealment: When Adam was created, he descended in a holy supernal image, and two spirits descended with him from two sides, from the right and from the left, totality of *adam*. The spirit of the right is called holy *neshamah*, as is written: *He blew into his nostrils נשמה (nishmat), the breath of, life* (Genesis 2:7); and the spirit of the left is called נפש חיה (nefesh hayyah), *vital soul* (ibid.), and it gradually descended from above to below and did not settle calmly with the other.”<sup>154</sup>

“When Adam sinned, from that spirit were formed creatures, spreading through the world, whose bodies were not completed; and they joined this body of *adam*, both male

and female, propagating in the world. Those are called *afflictions of the children of Adam* (2 Samuel 7:14), as we have established.<sup>155</sup>

“It has been taught: Superior to those—who did not cling below and are suspended in the air, hearing what they hear from above, and from whom information is known below.<sup>156</sup>

“It has been taught: From the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness issue 325 sparks—engraved in and joined to the side of *Gevuran*, called *Gevurot*—and they converge as one, becoming one body. When these enter the Body, it is called *Ish*, Man—yet not *Ish*, for we have learned: *ish, a man, blameless and upright* (Job 1:8); *a righteous ish, man* (Genesis 6:9), whereas the *ish* here is described as *ish, a man of, war* (Exodus 15:3), entirely Judgment, and all is one.”<sup>157</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Why?”<sup>158</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak had no answer.

They came and asked Rabbi Shim'on. He replied, “This is difficult, for we have learned that it is written יקרא אשה לזאת (Le-zot yiqqare ishah), *This one shall be called Woman, for מאיש (me-ish), from man, was this one taken* (Genesis 2:23), and we have learned: Who is *ish*? זה (Zeh), This. And who is *Zeh*, This? חסד. Yet here you said that He is Judgment!<sup>159</sup>

“But it has been taught as follows: All attains equilibrium. Because lower judgments join and cling to the hair of this one, He is called Harsh Judgment; but when the hair of His head is removed, He is assuaged. Therefore He is called pure, for one is only called pure when he emerges from impurity, as is written: *Who can produce pure from impure?* (Job 14:4). And here is written: ואיש כי ימרט ראשו (ve-ish ki yimmaret rosho), *When a man's hair is plucked out, he is bald; he is pure* (Leviticus 13:40).<sup>160</sup>

“Come and see: The head of this *ish, man*, is the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness, and so the skull and head of this

one are completely red as a rose, and His hair red within red. From it dangle lower crowns below, arousing judgments in the world, and when His hair is removed and He becomes bald, He is completely assuaged by supernal *Hesed* and named after it.”[161](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If He is named after it, He should be *holy* and not *pure*.”[162](#)

He replied, “Not so! Someone is called *holy* only when his hair hangs, since holiness depends on hair, as is written: *He shall be holy, the hair of his head growing loose* (Numbers 6:5). But this one is called *pure* of the aspect of those dangling below Him; thus His hair is removed and He is purified.”[163](#)

“Come and see: Whoever derives from the side of Judgment, with judgments joined to him, is not purified until his hair is removed, and once it is removed, he is pure. Now, you might say this of *Adam*—not so! For He is perfection of all, and Compassion inheres in Him. Therefore, not so, for He is entirely holy, with holy ones joined to Him. But that one is Judgment, with judgments joined to Him, so He is not assuaged until His hair is removed.”[164](#)

“Come and see: The Levites, who come from the side of Judgment, are not purified until their hair is removed, as is written: *Thus you shall do to them to purify them: sprinkle on them expiation water and have them pass a razor over all their flesh* (Numbers 8:7). And in order for them to be further assuaged, the priest, who comes from the side of supernal *Hesed*, must elevate them, as is written: *Aaron shall make of the Levites an elevation offering before YHVH* (ibid., 11)—just as for this supernal *Ish*, for when He desires to be further assuaged, [49a] supernal *Hesed* is revealed in Him and He is assuaged and assuages below.”[165](#)

“This *Ish* is included in *Adam*, and when the blessed Holy One wishes to wage war, He does so by this *Ish*, as is written: *YHVH is ish, a man of, war* (Exodus 15:3). He does

not wage war against them until He removes the hair on His head, so that all those crowns clinging to His hair will be detached and broken, as is written: *On that day YHVH will shave with the razor that is hired beyond the Euphrates—with the king of Assyria—the hair of the head and the hair of the legs, and it shall clip off the beard as well* (Isaiah 7:20).<sup>166</sup>

“It has been taught: *Thus you shall do to them to purify them* (Numbers 8:7). What does this mean: *Thus you shall do to them?* Corresponding to the pattern above.<sup>167</sup>

“*Sprinkle on them expiation water* (ibid.)—residue of crystalline dew. For here, *expiation water*, which is residue of dew; and of the time to come is written *I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be pure* (Ezekiel 36:25).<sup>168</sup>

“*And wash their clothes* (Numbers 8:7)—just as the enhancements of this *Ish* are bathed in supernal *Hesed* and He is completely purified.<sup>169</sup>

“We have learned: Why is it written *with the razor* (Isaiah 7:20), and not *with the scissors*? Well, so that the hair will be removed at its roots and lower judgments be detached. When deeds below are rectified, the blessed Holy One intends to remove this hair and pluck it out, so that it will not grow and increase, as is written: *when his hair is plucked out* (Leviticus 13:40).”<sup>170</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “The greatest of all Levites was Korah, whom the blessed Holy One made below corresponding to the pattern above, calling him קרה (Qorah), Korah. When? When, on account of him, He made this *Ish* bald, as is written: *He is קרה (qereah), bald* (Leviticus 13:40).<sup>171</sup>

“When Korah saw his head hairless and saw Aaron bedecked with royal adornments, he felt belittled and was jealous of Aaron. The blessed Holy One said to him, ‘I made you corresponding to the pattern above. You do not wish to ascend among those above? Go down and be among those



below!’—as is written: *and they go down alive to Sheol* (Numbers 16:30). What is *to Sheol*? Hell, where the wicked cry out and no one has compassion on them. Yet they are destined to ascend and be revived when the blessed Holy One awakens His people and revives them, as is written: *YHVH kills and gives life, brings down to Sheol and raises up* (1 Samuel 2:6).<sup>172</sup>

*If the hair falls out from the rim of his face, [he is bald on the forehead]* (Leviticus 13:41). It has been taught: There is a face, and then there is a face! What is this face? This is the one called ‘face of wrath,’ and all those suspended from this face are impudent and harsh, merciless. When the hair is removed from the side of that face, all of them are removed and broken. For we have learned: All those suspended from the hair of the head are superior to the others and not impudent like them; whereas all those suspended from the aspect of the hair of that face are impudent and harsh. Therefore His face is inflamed like fire, because of the Spark of Adamantine Darkness. Of this is written *The face of YHVH has scattered them* (Lamentations 4:16); *The face of YHVH is against evildoers* (Psalms 34:17).<sup>173</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “What is *a reddish-white affliction* (Leviticus 13:42)? If the white is visible and the red has not disappeared, it is an actual affliction, as indicated by what is written: *reddish-white*.”<sup>174</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “Meaning that the white is visible only with the red, as white and red.”<sup>175</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Even though the white is visible, if the red has not disappeared, it is an affliction, as is written: *If your sins are like crimson, they will become white as snow* (Isaiah 1:18). And when it becomes completely white, Compassion appears and judgments are uprooted.”<sup>176</sup>

Rabbi Abba taught, “It is written נגע ה״א (*nega hi*), *She is an affliction* (Leviticus 13:22), and it is written נגע ה״א (*nega hu*), *He is an affliction* (ibid. 13:3)—one masculine and one

feminine! Well, when the Female is defiled because of sins of those below, it is written *She is an affliction*; and when the Male is not purified, it is written *He is an affliction*. The matter is recognized: judgments coming from one or from the other. And the offerings that must be brought are ascertained, as is written: *an unblemished male* (Leviticus 1:3), and it is written *an unblemished female he shall bring* (ibid. 4:32); for it is recognized whence judgments came—and whence sins, whether they clung to this one or to that.<sup>177</sup>

“Of this is written *The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit* (Psalms 51:19)—excluding other sacrifices, of which is not written *a broken spirit*, since they are for peace in the world and for joy of those above and below.”<sup>178</sup>

*If the priest sees it [and look, there is no white hair in it and it is not lower than the skin and it is faded, the priest shall confine him seven days] (Leviticus 13:21).*<sup>179</sup>

Rabbi Yose taught, “It is written: [49b] *O Listener to prayer, unto You all flesh shall come* (Psalms 65:3). *Listener to prayer*—the blessed Holy One.”

Rabbi Hizkiyah said, “*Listener to prayer*—the verse should read *Listener to prayers*; why *Listener to prayer*? Well, *prayer* is Assembly of Israel, as is written: ואני תפלה (*va-ani tefillah*), and *I am prayer* (Psalms 109:4). David was speaking on behalf of Assembly of Israel, and as for his saying *va-ani*, and *I*, all is one. This is *tefillah*, phylactery, of the hand, as is written: upon ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand* (Exodus 13:16).<sup>180</sup>

“*Unto You all flesh shall come*—when the body is in pain from sickness and afflictions, as is said: *If a person has on the skin of his body [an inflammation or a rash.... The priest shall examine] the affliction on the skin of his body* (Leviticus 13:2-3); *the raw flesh* (ibid., 15). Therefore it is

not written *all spirit shall come*, but rather *all flesh shall come*.<sup>181</sup>

“What is *unto You*? Well, as has been said: *he shall be brought to the priest* (Leviticus 13:9)—the blessed Holy One, as is written: *If the priest sees it* (ibid., 21). Come and see: In one place, *Aaron the priest* (ibid., 2), and in another place, *the priest* (ibid., 9), unspecified—this is the blessed Holy One.”<sup>182</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “But look at what is written: *If a person has a scaly affliction, he shall be brought to the priest* (Leviticus 13:9)—if so, this is the blessed Holy One!”<sup>183</sup>

He replied, “Yes, since all purity and holiness depend on Him.”<sup>184</sup>

He said, “If so, *he shall be brought*—the verse should read *he shall be raised*.”

He replied, “As is said: *Its poles shall be brought through the rings* (Exodus 27:7), bringing one into the other. Here, too, *he shall be brought*—bringing him into the [presence of the] Priest to purify him, once he turns back in *teshuvah*, and bringing the matter before Him.”<sup>185</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “We have learned as follows: צרעת נגוע (*Nega tsara'at*), *scaly affliction*—*nega*, *affliction*, is harsh Judgment prevailing in the world. *Tsara'at* (*scaly*)—סגירו (*segiru*), closing, as has been said: closing off supernal light, closing off supernal goodness, which no longer descends to the world.<sup>186</sup>

“כִּי תִהְיֶה בָאָדָם (*Ki tihyeh be-adam*), *If a person has* (Leviticus 13:9)—*be-adam*, *an adam*, unspecified. *He shall be brought to the priest* (ibid.)—the priest below, for he is qualified to open that ‘closing’ and kindle lamps, so that through him blessings may spread above and below, and that *affliction* may be removed and disappear, and radiance of Compassion may settle upon all. Thus, *he shall be brought to the priest*.”<sup>187</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “I see those inhabitants of the world who neither care nor know about the honor of their Lord. Of Israel is written [*I am YHVH your God,*] *who set you apart from the peoples to be Mine* (Leviticus 20:24), and it is written *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I YHVH am holy* (ibid. 11:44). If they distance themselves, where is their holiness? For their desire is far from Him. And Scripture proclaims: *Be not like a horse, like a mule, without sense* (Psalms 32:9). How are human beings distinguished from a horse and a mule? By sanctifying themselves, becoming complete and distinguished from all. Therefore, coupling of human beings is at certain times, to focus desire on cleaving to the blessed Holy One.[188](#)

“As they have educed, at midnight the blessed Holy One enters the Garden of Eden to delight with the righteous, and Assembly of Israel praises the blessed Holy One, and this is a favorable moment to cleave to them. The Companions who are engaged in Torah partner with Assembly of Israel, praising the Holy King, and they occupy themselves with Torah. For other people, then is a favorable time to sanctify themselves with holiness of the blessed Holy One and to focus desire on cleaving to Him. As for the Companions engaged in Torah, their coupling coincides with another coupling—namely from Sabbath to Sabbath—to focus desire on cleaving to the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel. For this is a time of favor, when all are blessed, those above and those below.[189](#)

“If humans distance themselves from Him, acting like animals, where is their holiness, making them holy? Where are the holy souls that they draw from above? King Solomon cried out, *Surely, without knowledge a soul is not good* (Proverbs 19:2). *Surely, without knowledge—who is knowledge?* The blessed Holy One. *A soul is not good*—the soul that they attract by their actions *is not good*, for souls are drawn down upon them from the Other Side, which is

*not good*, since they do not direct their heart to the blessed Holy One.

“If one is inflamed with the evil impulse, without focusing the heart’s desire on the blessed Holy One, then a soul that is not good is drawn down upon him from the side of the evil impulse, as is written: *Surely, without knowledge a soul is not good.*<sup>190</sup>

“*And he who hurries with his legs sins* (Proverbs 19:2): one who *hurries* and forces the time, without holy desire, *sins—sins* surely, completely.<sup>191</sup>

“Therefore afflictions befall human beings, testifying on their faces to impudence, demonstrating that the blessed Holy One rejects them and pays no attention to them—until they prove themselves worthy [50a] by rectifying their deeds as before, and they are blessed.<sup>192</sup>

“So afflictions are recognized by the priest—those deriving from the impure side and those deriving from the other side.<sup>193</sup>

“Similarly it is written: *When you come into the land of Canaan..., and I give a scaly affliction in a house of the land you possess* (Leviticus 14:34). Now, is this a fine reward to be found by those worthy of entering the land? However, as has been established, in order to find treasures hidden in their houses, thereby benefiting Israel.<sup>194</sup>

“But come and see: Happy are Israel, who cleave to the blessed Holy One! And the blessed Holy One loves Israel, as is written: *‘I have loved you,’ says YHVH* (Malachi 1:2). Out of His love, He brought them into the land of Israel to plant His holiness among them and make His abode with them, so that Israel would be holy above all inhabitants of the world.

“Come and see what is written: *All the women whose hearts moved them [with wisdom spun the goat hair]* (Exodus 35:26). While they were performing their work, they used to say, ‘This is for the Sanctuary; this is for the Dwelling; this is for the curtain.’ Similarly with all those

artisans, so that holiness would settle on their hands and their workmanship would be sanctified; when it attained its place, it did so in holiness.<sup>195</sup>

“Similarly with one who fashions something for idolatry or for the Other Side, which is unholy: once he mentions it over the piece of the work, an impure spirit settles upon it; and when the workmanship culminates, it does so in impurity.

“The Canaanites were idol worshipers, all clinging as one to the spirit of impurity, and they used to build edifices for their filthy abominations on the side of impurity. When they began building, they would recite an incantation; and as soon as it was uttered in their mouths, a spirit of impurity settled upon it. When the work culminated, it did so by the spirit of impurity.

“When Israel entered the land, the blessed Holy One wanted to purify them and sanctify the land—to clear a place for *Shekhinah*, so that She would not dwell in impurity. So, through that scaly affliction, they would demolish buildings of wood and stone.<sup>196</sup>

“Come and see: If this action was only for finding hidden treasures, they would have restored the stones afterward to their places, along with the dust. But Scripture states *They shall pull out the stones* (Leviticus 14:40), and *different mortar shall be taken* (ibid., 42)—so that the spirit of impurity would be eliminated, and the place would be cleared and sanctified as before. And Israel would be situated in holiness, in holy habitation, so that *Shekhinah* would dwell among them.<sup>197</sup>

“Therefore, when someone begins to construct a building, he should declare that he is building for the service of the blessed Holy One, for it is written: *Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness...* (Jeremiah 22:13). Then, heavenly help settles upon it, and the blessed Holy One arranges holiness on it and proclaims peace over it, as is written: *You will know that your tent is*



*at peace, [inspect your habitation and not sin]* (Job 5:24). What is ופקדת (u-faqadta), *inspect, your habitation*? This has already been established, but u-faqadta—למפקדא (le-mifqeda), to declare, a word orally when one is building, and then is written *and not sin*. Otherwise, he invites the Other Side to his house.<sup>198</sup>

“All the more so, one who builds with his intention directed in another way, for he thereby dedicates the house to be defiled by [the Other Side]. Then surely an impure spirit occupies it, and that person does not leave this world until he has been punished in that house, and whoever dwells in it can be harmed.<sup>199</sup>

“Now, you might say, ‘How is it known?’ If the one who built it or any of his household is harmed in that house, either physically or financially—he and two others after him. Then surely one should flee to the mountains and not dwell there. Let him live in a mud-plastered hut rather than dwelling there!<sup>200</sup>

“Therefore the blessed Holy One took pity on Israel, who knew nothing about all those houses, and He said, ‘You do not know, but I know, and I will mark them. An affliction dwells in the house; here is another, severe affliction, which will eject it and eliminate it from the world.’ Then, *The house shall be demolished* [—its stones and its timber and all of the mortar of the house...] (Leviticus 14:45). Since it is gone, why *The house shall be demolished*? Well, as long as that building stands, [50b] it belongs to [the Other Side], which can return.<sup>201</sup>

“This applies to the Holy Land; all the more so to other lands, where the spirit of impurity is more prevalent and a person can be harmed.”

Rabbi El’azar said, “All the more so since it calls the husks of its cohorts to manifest there, and even blows from a catapult cannot remove it from that house. So Scripture surely proclaims, *Woe to him who builds his house without*

*righteousness* (Jeremiah 22:13)—Woe they surely say every day in that house!”[202](#)

One day Rabbi Yose entered a certain house. He bumped into the doorpost and went inside. He heard a voice: “Gather, enter! Here is one of our opponents. Prepare and let us harm him before he leaves!”[203](#)

They replied, “We cannot unless he makes his abode here.”[204](#)

Rabbi Yose went out in fear. He said, “Surely, whoever transgresses the words of the Companions deserves to die.”[205](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya said to him, “But Gentiles and other people are living there safely!”

He replied, “They come from their side, but whoever fears sin can be harmed. And even they, if they prolong their stay, will not leave in peace.”[206](#)

He said, “But it is written *Their houses are safe from fear...* (Job 21:9)!”[207](#)

He replied, “Because it belonged to someone else and was built in righteousness.”[208](#)

*He whose house it is shall come and tell [the priest, saying,] “Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house”* (Leviticus 14:35). *Something like an affliction*—the verse should read *an affliction. Has appeared to me*—the verse should read *I have*, for it is written: *and I put a scaly affliction in a house of the land you possess* (ibid., 34), which will be visible to all. Why *something like an affliction*?[209](#)

Well, when this one enters, another is revealed, and they attack one another; thus, *has appeared to me*—the one concealed is revealed, and the one revealed is concealed; and afterward it appears in the image of that affliction of the house, while the other is concealed. So, וַיְהִיגִיד (ve-higgid), *and tell, the priest*—it is a word of wisdom.[210](#)

Then the priest comes, and they hurl the house and demolish it—stones, timber, and everything. Afterward is written: *You will build good houses* (Deuteronomy 8:12)—these are called *good*, for the previous ones were not *good* and not in the category of holiness and purity.<sup>211</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If so, how do we establish the verse *houses filled with all good, which you did not fill* (Deuteronomy 6:11)? If a spirit of impurity occupies them, how are they *filled with all good*?”<sup>212</sup>

Rabbi El’azar replied, “*Filled with all good*—with money, with silver and gold, as is said: *from the best of the land of Egypt* (Genesis 45:20). Now, all the houses of Egypt were filled with sorcery and idols, but this was said because of the wealth of the land. Here too.”<sup>213</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on said, “Surely it was for this: to sanctify the land and eliminate the impure spirit from the midst of Israel. And when the house was demolished, he found money inside for rebuilding and filling his house—so that he would not feel sorry over the house.”<sup>214</sup>

*If a man has [numerous white] shiny spots... (Leviticus 13:38).*<sup>215</sup>

appearance it is judged, by those hues.”<sup>216</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “Like a basket encompassing a bright shiny spot, we have learned the appearances; by

Rabbi Yitshak said, “There are those who study three hundred rules regarding a bright shiny spot, and I learned all of them from my father, except for: ‘One thorn—impure, one witness. Two—two witnesses and pure. From here on, even a hundred are like two, and two are like a hundred.’ This I learned afterward, as is written: *A single witness shall not rise up against a man ...by the word of two witnesses... [shall a case be established]* (Deuteronomy 19:15).”<sup>217</sup>

Rabbi Hizkiyah was sitting before Rabbi Shim'on. He said, "It is written: *a reddish-white affliction* (Leviticus 13:42); then it is an affliction since the white does not retain its hue."[218](#)

Rabbi Shim'on opened, "*If your sins are like crimson, they will become white as snow...* (Isaiah 1:18). Happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One wishes to purify them completely, so that they will not undergo judgment before Him—and so that masters of Judgment may have no power over them. For everything follows its own kind: red after red, white after white; right after right, left after left."[219](#)

"Of Esau is written *The first one came out ruddy* (Genesis 25:25), and therefore his own kind settles within him. [51a] Now, you might say, 'It is written *ruddy*, and of David is written *He was ruddy* (1 Samuel 16:12).' Well, this one clung to slag of gold, whereas that one clung to radiance of gold. Of him is written *ruddy, like a hairy mantle all over* (Genesis, *ibid.*)—issuing in dross of smelting. Of David is written *with fine eyes and goodly to look on* (1 Samuel, *ibid.*).[220](#)

"Come and see: Red at first, and look, white appears there! So purity is born, and it begins to be purified. White at first, and red appears there; so it begins to be defiled. It is written *The priest shall declare him impure...* (Leviticus 13:20), for red has been born there, rendering him impure. The priest knew all these colors, and sometimes when a color of purity would appear, he would confine the person to see if another color would emerge—and if not he would declare him pure, as is written: *The priest shall declare him pure...* (*ibid.*, 28)."[221](#)

Rabbi Yitshak and Rabbi Yehudah were walking on the way. Rabbi Yehudah said, "It is written: *The scaly affliction of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants...* (2 Kings 5:27). If he sinned, why should his children suffer?"[222](#)

He replied, “Elisha saw more than other prophets. He saw that no virtuous son would issue from Gehazi, so he cursed all of them.”[223](#)

“Furthermore, he said to him, ‘I served Elijah in a lofty manner, and I attained a double portion, having served him faithfully. But you, wicked one, have tainted me, swearing falsely and coveting. You have transgressed the whole Torah, and whoever does so dies in the world that is coming. However, since you have served me, your service will not be in vain: die in this world and not in the world that is coming.’”[224](#)

Rabbi Yeisa said, “Why a wool or linen garment (Leviticus 13:59)?”[225](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “It settles in all, dominating all. There is something like this: *She seeks out wool and flax* (Proverbs 31:13). Therefore, the power of that affliction, issuing from this supernal place, prevails over all, over two types: wool and linen. Thus, *This is the teaching about the scaly affliction of a wool or linen garment* (Leviticus 13:59).”[226](#)

Rabbi Yitshak was going to his father’s slope-sided domicile. He saw a man turning aside with a bundled load on his shoulders. He said to him, “Why is that box strapped to your shoulder?”[227](#)

He didn’t reply at all.[228](#)

[Rabbi Yitshak] followed him and saw him enter a cave. He went in after him and saw billowing smoke rising from underground, and the man entered a hole and disappeared. Rabbi Yitshak was frightened and went out to the mouth of the cave.

While he was sitting, Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Hizkiyah passed by. He saw them and told them what happened. Rabbi Yehudah said, “Blessed is the Compassionate One who delivered you! This cave belongs to the afflicted Serunyans. All the inhabitants of that town

are sorcerers, and they come to the desert for black snakes ten years old or more, to practice sorcery. Not being careful of them, they are stricken with scaly affliction, and all their kinds of sorcery are in this cave.”[229](#)

They went on. While they were walking, they met a man who was coming, and his son who was sick was bound on a donkey. They said to him, “Who are you?”

He replied, “A Jew, and this is my son.”

They said to him, “Why is he bound?”

He replied, “I live in a village of the Romans, and this son of mine used to study Torah every day and return to my house and go over those words. One day, my son came home to review his learning, and a spirit passed in front of him and harmed him, contorting his mouth and eyes and hands, and he cannot speak. So I am going to the cave of the afflicted Serunyans—maybe they can teach me some type of healing.”[230](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said to him, “In that house [51b]—do you know what happened previously?”

He replied, “I know that some time ago one person was harmed there, and they say that it was an illness, though some of them say it was the spirit of the house. Since then, various people have entered and were not harmed.”

He said, “Just as the Companions say. Woe to those who transgress their words!”[231](#)

Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, “*Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness...* (Jeremiah 22:13), for wherever there is *righteousness*, all spirits and demons of the world flee and disappear. Even so, whoever seizes the place first, possesses it.”[232](#)

Rabbi Hizkiyah said to him, “If so, the Holy Name is equivalent to the impure spirit!”[233](#)

He replied, “Not so! But the Holy Name does not dwell in an impure place. Therefore if the impure spirit seizes the place, the Holy Name does settle there, since it is not its place. And if [the Holy Name] possesses the place first, no



spirits or demons of the world can appear there, much less approach him.<sup>234</sup>

“When the scaly affliction descended, it purified the place and expelled the impure spirit from its place. Afterward, they demolished the house—stones, timber, and everything—and built it as before, but on the holy side, in righteousness, mentioning the Holy Name. Even so, with different mortar—and one should move the house two handbreadths away from its site, from its original foundation.<sup>235</sup>

“Now that nothing appears or descends to attack that impure spirit, expelling it from its place, what is the remedy? If he can leave, fine. If not, he should rebuild it as before with different stones, timber, and everything—moving it away from the original site and building it upon the Holy Name. Nevertheless, that spirit does not leave the original site, because holiness does not settle upon an impure place.”<sup>236</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Why should he go to all this trouble? Of this time is written *What is crooked cannot be straightened...* (Ecclesiastes 1:15). Ever since the day that the Temple was destroyed, there is no healing in the world; so one should be careful in order to be protected.”<sup>237</sup>

They said, “Let us go with this man and see.”<sup>238</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “We are forbidden. If he were going to a great, sin-fearing man—like Naaman to Elisha—we would follow him. But now that he is going to those remote from the world—remote from Torah, utterly loathsome—we are forbidden to appear before them. Blessed is the Compassionate One who delivered us from them! And this man is also forbidden.”<sup>239</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “But we have learned: ‘One may heal himself by anything except the wood of an *asherah...*’”<sup>240</sup>

He replied, “This is idolatry. Furthermore, look at what is written: *There shall not be found among you one who*

*passes his son or his daughter through fire, a diviner of divinations, [a soothsayer, or an augur or a sorcerer] (Deuteronomy 18:10)!"*[241](#)

They went on their way. That man went to the mouth of the cave, he and his son, and he untied him in the cave. As his father went out to tether the donkey, fiery smoke issued with a single head and killed him. Soon his father entered and found him dead; he took him with his donkey and went his way.[242](#)

One day later, he found Rabbi Yitshak, Rabbi Yehudah, and Rabbi Hizkiyah walking along. He wept before them and told them what had happened. Rabbi Yitshak said, "Didn't I tell you that it is forbidden to go there? Blessed is the Compassionate One, *all of whose deeds are true and whose ways are just* (Daniel 4:34)! Happy are the righteous who walk the path of truth in this world and in the world that is coming! Of them is written *The path of the righteous is like gleaming light, [shining ever brighter until full day]* (Proverbs 4:18)."

Rabbi El'azar said, "All of a person's actions should be for the Holy Name. What does this mean? To utter the Holy Name, since everything is for His service—and the Other Side should not settle on it, for he is always lying in wait for humans and can settle upon that deed."[243](#)

"Therefore, the warp or the woof would be defiled, and the impure spirit would settle [52a] upon it. Now if that is so in this case, how much more so if one declares his words to the Other Side, which must not be done. Thus it is written *Keep yourself from every evil davar, word* (Deuteronomy 23:10)."[244](#)

Rabbi El'azar was going to see his father-in-law, accompanied by Rabbi Abba. Rabbi Abba said, "Let us speak words of Torah as we go."[245](#)

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "*Say, please, that you are my sister, [so that it will go well with me on your account*

*and my soul will live because of you]* (Genesis 12:13). This verse is difficult. Could it be that Abraham, who was sin-fearing and beloved of the blessed Holy One, would speak so about his wife in order to be well treated? Well, even though Abraham was sin-fearing, he did not rely on his own merit and the blessed Holy One did not want to expend his merit—but rather the merit of his wife, on account of whom he would gain the money of other nations. For a person attains money through his wife, as is written: *House and wealth are inherited from fathers, and an insightful wife is from YHVH* (Proverbs 19:14). Whoever attains *an insightful wife* attains all. And it is written: *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and no gain will he lack* (Proverbs 31:11). On account of her, Abraham went to consume the gain of other nations, and he relied on her merit that they could not punish him or toy with her. Therefore he was not afraid at all to say *She is my sister* (Genesis 12:19).<sup>246</sup>

“Furthermore, he saw an angel walking before her, who said to him, ‘Abraham, do not fear for her. The blessed Holy One has sent me to extract the money of other nations for her and to protect her totally.’ So Abraham did not fear for his wife, only for himself, since he saw no angel with him, only with her. He said, ‘Look, she is protected, but I am not!’ Therefore he said, *Say, please, that you are my sister, so that it will go well with me on your account...*”<sup>247</sup>

“יִטַּב לִי” (*Yitav li*), *it will go well with me*—the verse should read יִטִּיבוּ לִי (*yeitivu li*), *they will do good for me*, since it is written *When the Egyptians see you and say, ‘She is his wife’* (Genesis 12:12); so it should read *yeitivu li, they will do good for me*. However, *yitav li, he will do good for me*—‘the one walking before you. The blessed Holy One *will do good for me* in this world with money, *and my soul will live* in that world *because of you*—for you will not stray from the proper way. For if, on account of you, I attain money in this world, and you stray from the path, then death awaits me in

that world. Rather, be vigilant, so that *my soul will live* in that world *because of you.*'[248](#)

“Because that angel was walking before her to protect her, what is written? *YHVH afflicted Pharaoh and his household with terrible plagues* נַל דְּבַר (*al devar*), *because of, Sarai* (Genesis 12:17)—*al devar, at the word of, Sarai*, surely, for she would say to the angel, ‘Strike!’ and he struck. So Abraham did not fear for her at all, since she was protected; his only fear was for himself, since he saw no such protection for him.[249](#)

“Come and see: Ten times Sarah commanded the angel to strike Pharaoh, and he was smitten with ten plagues. Sarah made a sign for her descendants after her in Egypt.”[250](#)

Rabbi Abba opened, “*As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt, I will show him wonders* (Micah 7:15). The blessed Holy One will some day enact redemption for His children as in the days when He sent [Moses] to bring forth Israel and displayed those plagues among the Egyptians, striking them for the sake of Israel.[251](#)

“Come and see: What is the difference between this redemption and the redemption from Egypt? The redemption from Egypt was from one king and one kingdom; here, from all kings of the world. Then the blessed Holy One will be glorified in all the world, and all will know His dominion, and all will be smitten with ultimate plagues, twice as much, because they will all refuse [to release] Israel. Then they will know the dominion of the blessed Holy One, as is written: *YHVH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHVH will be one and His name one* (Zechariah 14:9). Then they will all offer to bring Israel to the blessed Holy One, as is written: *They will bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to YHVH—on horses, in chariots and wagons, on mules [and camels—to My holy mountain Jerusalem...]* (Isaiah 66:20). Then the patriarchs will appear in joy to see the redemption of their

children as before, for it is written: *As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt, I will show him wonders.*"[252](#) [52b]

*Parashat Metsora*

“AFFLICTED WITH SCALES” (LEVITICUS 14:1-15:33)

**R**abbi Abba opened, “*Fear the sword, for wrath brings punishments of the sword, so you may know* שדון (*shaddun*) (Job 19:29)—*shaddun*, written שדין (*she-din*), *that there is judgment*. How carefully should people guard their ways, being in awe of the blessed Holy One, so as not to stray from the right path and transgress the words of Torah and forget her! For whoever does not delve into Torah or engage in her is rebuked by the blessed Holy One, distanced from Him. *Shekhinah* does not abide with him; those guardians who accompany him withdraw from him. Furthermore, they proclaim before him, ‘Keep away from so-and-so, who shows no respect for his Lord.’ Woe to him, for he is abandoned by those above and below; he has no share in the way of life!<sup>1</sup>

“But when he engages in serving his Lord and delves into Torah, numerous guardians appear before him to protect him and *Shekhinah* settles upon him. Furthermore, they proclaim before him, ‘Give honor to the image of the King! Give honor to the son of the King!’ He is protected in this world, he is protected in the world that is coming. Happy is his share!<sup>2</sup>

“Come and see: Through the evil speech uttered by the serpent to the woman, he caused death to be decreed upon Adam and the whole world. Of the evil tongue is written *Their tongue is a sharpened sword* (Psalms 57:5). Therefore, *Fear the sword*—the evil tongue.<sup>3</sup>



*“For wrath brings punishments of the sword. To what does this refer? The sword of YHVH, for we have learned: The blessed Holy One has a sword by which He punishes the wicked, as is written: YHVH has a sword, full of blood (Isaiah 34:6); My sword will devour flesh (Deuteronomy 32:42). Thus, Fear the sword, for wrath brings punishments of the sword, so you may know שדון (shaddun)—so you may know that like this אהדן (ittedan), he is judged. If anyone has a sword in his tongue, there awaits him a sword destroying all, as is written: זאת (Zot), This, shall be the teaching concerning המצורה (ha-metsora), the one afflicted with scales (Leviticus 14:2).”<sup>4</sup>*

*This shall be the teaching concerning the one afflicted with scales (Leviticus 14:2).<sup>5</sup>*

Rabbi El'azar opened,  
*“Like birds caught in an evil net, so humans are ensnared... (Ecclesiastes 9:12).*

Come and see: Human beings do not know or hear or consider the will of their Lord. A herald proclaims before them every day, yet there is no one who listens.<sup>6</sup>

“When evening dusks and gates are closed, the Hollow of the Great Abyss is aroused and numerous ravaging bands appear in the world. Then the blessed Holy One casts sleep upon all inhabitants of the world, upon all those possessing an arousal of life, and [the bands] roam the world, conveying to people false matters—some of them true—while they are bound in sleep.<sup>7</sup>

“When the north wind is aroused and the night is split, a herald proclaims and the blessed Holy One enters the Garden of Eden to delight with the righteous. Then a flame issues and strikes beneath the wings of the rooster, who cries, and all inhabitants of the world awaken in their beds—yet no one awakens his spirit for the service of his Lord.<sup>8</sup>

“When morning comes, a herald proclaims and all the cohorts and camps above praise the blessed Holy One, as is

written: *When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy* (Job 38:7). Then many gates open in every direction and the gate of Abraham opens toward Assembly of Israel, inviting all inhabitants of the world, as is written: *He planted a tamarisk at Beersheba* (Genesis 21:33)—yet no one awakens his spirit in the service of his Lord.<sup>9</sup>

“How [53a] will he face the King when Judgment is aroused against him and he has no merit to save him? Of then is written *Like birds caught in an evil net, so humans are ensnared*.<sup>10</sup>

“Before a person departs from this world, the soul suffers many chastisements along with the body before they are separated from one another—yet no one considers this. And even when the moment of separation arrives, the soul does not leave the body until *Shekhinah* is revealed. In joy and in love for *Shekhinah*, the soul leaves the body to meet Her. If she is virtuous, she bonds and cleaves to Her; if not, *Shekhinah* departs, and she is left behind, mourning over her separation from the body. As the saying goes, ‘A cat does not withdraw from the fire. Sharpen the knife and it follows.’<sup>11</sup>

“Afterward, [the soul] suffers many chastisements until she is drawn into Hell by the hand of Dumah. The body is punished in the grave until it returns to dust, and the soul in the fire of Hell through various punishments for as long as required until the time comes for her to be purified. Then she rises from Hell and is cleansed of her sins, like iron whitened in fire, and [angels] ascend with her until she enters the lower Garden of Eden, where she is bathed in the waters and perfumed with spices, as is said: *perfumed with myrrh and frankincense* (Song of Songs 3:6). Then they ascend with her until she is offered as a sacrifice on the altar, as is written: *This shall be the teaching concerning the one afflicted with scales on the day of his purification. He shall be brought to the priest* (Leviticus

14:2)—the supernal Priest above. This soul, who has not been so defiled in this world, can be restored in such a manner; otherwise, *What is crooked cannot be straightened...* (Ecclesiastes 1:15)."<sup>12</sup>

*This shall be the teaching concerning the one afflicted with scales* (Leviticus 14:2).<sup>13</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak opened, "*The sun rises and the sun sets, and to its place it strives, where it rises* (Ecclesiastes

1:5). This verse has been discussed, but we have established it as referring to the human soul. When she exists with a person in this world, then *the sun rises*. And *the sun sets*—when a person departs from this world; and [if] he is in a state of *teshuvah*, then *to its place it strives, where it rises*, if he is virtuous, as is said: *When the sun sets, he becomes clean, and after he may eat of the sacred donations* (Leviticus 22:7).<sup>14</sup>

"Come and see: The blessed Holy One grants pardon for all sins of the world except the evil tongue and defaming one's fellow, as has been established, for it is written: *This shall be the teaching concerning המצורה (ha-metsora), the one afflicted with scales—המוציא רע (ha-motsi ra), the one who utters evil.*"<sup>15</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "If anyone produces evil speech, all his limbs are defiled and he deserves to be confined, for that evil word rises and arouses an impure spirit upon him, defiling him. If one comes to defile himself, they defile him; by a word below, another word is aroused."<sup>16</sup>

He opened, saying, "*How has the faithful city become a harlot?...* (Isaiah 1:21). She who was faithful to her Husband has become *a harlot*. *She who was full of justice* (ibid.)—*justice* surely, the blessed Holy One. *Righteousness lodged in her* (ibid.)—the blessed Holy One. And because something else was aroused in her, the blessed Holy One departed from her and a spirit of murderers settled in her,

as is written: *but now murderers!* (ibid.). Now if this is so with Jerusalem, the Holy City, how much more so with other human beings, as is written: *This shall be the teaching concerning המצורע (ha-metsora), the one afflicted with scales.*"<sup>17</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, "זאת (zot), *This, shall be* (Leviticus 14:2)—surely, confronting him, to retaliate against that רע מוציא (motsi ra), one who utters evil."<sup>18</sup>

"*On the day of his purification he shall be brought to the priest* (ibid.). What does this imply? That if one has an evil tongue, his prayer does not come before the blessed Holy One, for an impure spirit has been aroused against him. Once he engages in genuine *teshuvah*, what is written? *On the day of his purification he shall be brought to the priest... and the priest shall see...* (Leviticus 14:2-3)."<sup>19</sup>

[*The priest shall command*] *that there be taken for him who is being purified two live pure birds and cedar wood and crimson yarn and hyssop* (Leviticus 14:4).<sup>20</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak and Rabbi Yose were in the presence of Rabbi Shim'on. One day they said to him, "*Cedar wood* is well known, as is said: *from the cedar in Lebanon* (1 Kings

5:13), for the cedar tree strikes roots only in Lebanon. But why *hyssop*, and what is it for?"<sup>21</sup>

He opened, saying, "[*The priest shall command*] *that there be taken for him who is being purified two live pure birds and cedar wood and crimson yarn [53b] and hyssop.* Come and see: If a person strives to serve his Lord and engages in Torah, the blessed Holy One settles upon him and *Shekhinah* associates with him. Once a person comes to defile himself, *Shekhinah* departs from him, the blessed Holy One moves far away from him, all aspects of his Lord's holiness distance themselves from him, and an impure spirit settles upon him along with all aspects of impurity. If

he comes to purify himself, they assist him. Once he is purified and engages in *teshuvah*, that which departed from him returns and settles upon him.<sup>22</sup>

“Come and see: [*The priest shall command*] *that there be taken for him who is being purified two live pure birds.* Since it says *two birds*, don’t we know that they are *live*? Well, this has been established; but חיות (*ḥayyot*), *live—ḥayyot, living beings*, really, as is said: *I saw the living beings* (Ezekiel 1:15), corresponding to the place from which faithful prophets imbibe.<sup>23</sup>

“*And cedar wood*—as has been said.<sup>24</sup>

“*And crimson yarn*—red side of *Gevurah*, who associated with him at first.<sup>25</sup>

“*And hyssop*—small ׀ (*vav*), who suckles Assembly of Israel. Therefore *cedar wood and hyssop* go together, so ׀ (*vav*) exists as one—one high and one small, and we call them upper ׀ (*vav*), lower ׀ (*vav*). All return to settle upon him, for he is purified. Corresponding to these, below them: *cedar wood and hyssop and crimson yarn*, appearing by these names and depending on these supernal ones.”<sup>26</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yitshak were walking on the way. They sat down in a certain field and prayed. After finishing prayer, they rose and went on. Rabbi Yehudah opened with words of Torah, saying, “*A tree of life is she to those who grasp her; and those who hold her are deemed happy* (Proverbs 3:18). *A tree of life*—Torah, who is a lofty, grand, and mighty tree. תורה (*Torah*)—why is it called *Torah*? Because אורי (*orei*), it shows, and reveals what was concealed and unknown.<sup>27</sup>

“*Life*—for all life above is contained in it and issues from it.<sup>28</sup>

“*To those who grasp her*—for whoever grasps Torah grasps all, above and below.

“*And those who support her are deemed happy.* Who are *those who support her*? Those who cast merchandise

into the bag of scholars, as has been established. *Those who support her* become worthy of engendering faithful prophets.<sup>29</sup>

“מאושר (Me’ushar), *are deemed happy*—do not read מאושר (me’ushar), but rather מראשו (me-rosho), from its head; they support Torah from its head to its end. *Me-rosho*, From its head—head of all, called ראש (rosh), head, as is written: *From eternity I was formed, מראש (me-rosh), from the beginning* (Proverbs 8:23). And *rosh*, head, is *Hokhmah*, who is head of the whole body, by which the body spreads to the consummation of six aspects.<sup>30</sup>

“*And those who support her*—as is said: *His thighs, pillars of שש (shesh), marble* (Song of Songs 5:15). Those who cast merchandise into the bag of scholars support Torah from the head to consummation of the body, and all of faith depends on them for support, and they merit sons worthy of becoming faithful prophets.”<sup>31</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak opened, “*He called to Moses, and YHVH spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying* (Leviticus 1:1). ויקרא (va-yiqra), *He called*—a small א (alef), why? Well, to show who it was who called: the one dwelling in the Sanctuary, who then invited Moses as one invites a guest.<sup>32</sup>

“Here, a small א (alef); there a large alef: אדם (Adam), *Seth, Enosh* (1 Chronicles 1:1)—*Adam*, perfection of all.<sup>33</sup>

“Come and see: What is the difference between Moses and Aaron? Which of them is superior? Well, Moses is superior: Moses is close friend of the King, Aaron is close friend of *Matronita*. This may be compared to a king who had a noble *matronita*. What did he do for her? He appointed for her a close friend to attend to her and to oversee her house. So when this friend enters the presence of the king, he never does so without the *matronita*, as is written: בזאת (Bezot), *With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary...* (Leviticus 16:3).<sup>34</sup>

“Moses is a close friend of the King, so he was invited as a guest and afterward *YHVH spoke to him* (Leviticus 1:1).



Aaron is a close friend of *Matronita*, and all his activity was intended to make peace between the King and *Matronita*, so that the King would be pleased with Her. Since he is Her close friend, he placed his abode with Her, to arrange the house and constantly inspect the matters of the house. Therefore he was perfected corresponding to the pattern above and was called 'high priest.' How do we know? As is written: *You are priest forever, relating to Melchizedek* (Psalms 110:4).<sup>35</sup>

"Consequently, whatever he needed, he took from the house of the King, and no one hindered him. So he stood ready to purify all those entering the house of *Matronita*, so that there would be no one [54a] impure among those in the palace. Thus it is written [*The priest shall command*] *that there be taken for him who is being purified two live pure birds.*"<sup>36</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, "*He who sits in heaven will laugh, YHVH will mock them* (Psalms 2:4). *He who sits in heaven* יֹשֵׁב (yish'ev), *will laugh*—the one coming from the side of wine: beaming at first and laughing, and afterward raging and banishing. As is written: יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם (yoshev ba-shamayim), *He who sits in heaven*, and it is not written שֹׁמֵי שָׁמַיִם (yoshev shamayim), *sitter of heaven. Will laugh*—beaming and laughing; so Judgment shines and smiles upon the wicked. But afterward, what is written? *Then will He speak to them in His wrath, and in His burning anger terrify them* (ibid., 5). Such is the way of the wicked: the blessed Holy One beams upon them in this world, shining His face upon them like wine that shines at first, but afterward rages and kills.<sup>37</sup>

"The blessed Holy One waits patiently for the wicked. If they return to Him, fine; if not, He eliminates them from the world that is coming and they have no share in it and are totally destroyed. If they approach to be purified, they are assisted; the blessed Holy One purifies them, bringing them close to Him and proclaiming 'Peace,' as is written:

*Peace, peace for the far and the near—says YHVH—and I will heal them (Isaiah 57:19)."*[38](#)

*When a woman has a flux of blood for many days, not in the time of her menstruation..., [all the days of the flux of her impurity she shall be as in the days of her menstruation...]* (Leviticus 15:25).[39](#)

*come, when your spoil will be divided in your midst! Why Behold, a day ba, has come?*[40](#)

“Well, it already *has come*, before the creation of the world, and it is a day by which He executes judgment upon the wicked, a day by which the blessed Holy One retaliates against those who have afflicted Israel. This day comes and stands before the blessed Holy One, demanding to execute judgment and to destroy nations, and it is granted authority, as is said: *I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem for war...* (Zechariah 14:2).”[41](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “The blessed Holy One has two days: one remains with Him, and one comes before Him, and with these He makes war on all. When this day comes to wage war, it joins with the other day, adding weapons to its weapons, waging war on all, against high and low, as is written: *Behold, YHVH of Hosts has a day against all that is proud and high, against all that is lifted up and low* (Isaiah 2:12).”[42](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, “*When a woman has a flux of blood for many days...* (Leviticus 15:25). This corresponds to what is written: *YHVH has a sword, full of blood, gorged with fat* (Isaiah 34:6)—*full of blood*, surely, as is written: *When a woman has a flux of blood for many days.*[43](#)

Rabbi Hiyya opened, “*Behold, a day of YHVH אב (ba), has come, when your spoil will be divided in your midst!* (Zechariah 14:1). This verse should read as follows: *Behold, a day of YHVH אב' (yavo), will*

*“Not in the time of her menstruation (Leviticus 15:25)—corresponding to what is written: YHVH has been eager to bring the evil upon us (Daniel 9:14). For we have learned: The blessed Holy One brings punishment to the world ahead of time.*<sup>44</sup>

*“Or when she has a flux beyond her menstruation (Leviticus 15:25)—corresponding to what is written: ויספתי (Ve-yasafti), I will go on, to chastise you (ibid. 26:18)—אוסף (Osif), I will increase, judgment upon judgment, adding blood to blood, more than is in that sword full of blood.*<sup>45</sup>

*“It is written: לא אוסף (Lo osif), I will not again, curse the ground on humankind’s account (Genesis 8:21). What is lo osif, I will not again? I will not give any תוספת (tosefet), increase, to that sword, but only as much as the world can endure. But it is written ויספתי (ve-yasafti), I will go on [to chastise you] (Leviticus 26:18)! Well, it is written to chastise, not to destroy. Thus it is written or when she has a flux beyond her menstruation.*<sup>46</sup>

*“All the days of the flux of her impurity (Leviticus 15:25). What is the flux of her impurity? Well, by their sins, the wicked defile themselves and defile another place—as is said: for he has defiled YHVH’s sanctuary (Numbers 19:20)—and an impure spirit has been aroused against them. If one comes to defile himself, they defile him surely!”<sup>47</sup>*

One night, Rabbi Hizkiyah was sitting before Rabbi El’azar. They rose at midnight to engage in Torah. Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, *“On a day of good fortune, enjoy the good, and on a day of evil, see: one against the other God has set... (Ecclesiastes 7:14). On a day of good fortune, enjoy the good—when the blessed Holy One lavishes love upon the world, a person should walk in the streets and show himself to all, for when the goodness of the blessed Holy One appears in the world, it appears in all, and He does good to all, spreading it throughout the world. So a person should show himself openly in public and do good, so that*

another goodness may settle upon him, as is written: *On a day of good fortune, הייה בטוב (heyeh be-tov), be in goodness—be in goodness, surely!*<sup>48</sup>

“*And on a day of evil, see*—it is not written *and on a day of evil, be in evil*, but rather *and on a day of evil, see*, for when Judgment looms over the world, a person should not appear on the street [54b] or walk alone in the world. For when Judgment prevails in the world, it prevails over all, and whoever meets or encounters it is doomed by that Judgment. Then it is written: *Some are swept away without justice* (Proverbs 13:23), for *justice* withdraws from Righteousness, and they do not settle with one another upon the world. So, *on a day of evil, see*—see and be vigilant, watch and examine on every side, and know that Judgment abides everywhere. Do not go out and do not show yourself in public, so that it will not settle upon you. Why? Because *one against the other God has set* (Ecclesiastes 7:14)—just as when goodness settles in the world, it settles upon all, so when Judgment settles in the world, it settles upon all, and whoever encounters it is seized.<sup>49</sup>

“Come and see: When Judgment prevails in the world, numerous swords dangle from that supernal sword. Raising their heads, they see that the supernal sword is red, full of blood on all sides; then numerous decrees and swords are aroused—as is said: *each with his sword on his thigh* (Song of Songs 3:8), and it is written *with a drawn sword in his hand* (Joshua 5:13). All of them are poised to execute judgment, and whoever encounters them is harmed.<sup>50</sup>

“It is written: *Look, please, your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown such great kindness [in what you have done for me in saving my life, but I cannot flee to the hills, lest the evil overtake me and I die]* (Genesis 19:19). Why? Because wherever Judgment prevails, it prevails over all—whether in town or in the desert or in the outskirts of town.”<sup>51</sup>

He opened again, 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 flame of Yah* (Song of Songs 8:6). *Set me as a seal*—Assembly of Israel says this to the blessed Holy One. *Set me as a seal*—what is the seal? The seal of the signet of truth.<sup>[52](#)</sup>

“*As a seal upon your heart*—the seal of tefillin that a person places on his heart.<sup>[53](#)</sup>

“*As a seal upon your arm*—the weak hand, for it is placed on that arm. Who is that? Isaac.<sup>[54](#)</sup>

“Assembly of Israel says, ‘*Set me as a seal.*’ The verse should read [*Set me*] *for a seal; why as a seal?* As the tefillin of the head, source of glory for the whole body. Therefore, tefillin on the arm and upon the heart, by which a person becomes complete, corresponding to the pattern above.<sup>[55](#)</sup>

“*For love is fierce as death.* What does this mean? Well, there is nothing as difficult in the world as the separation of soul from body when they must part. Such is the love of Assembly of Israel for the blessed Holy One, that they should never part. So, the phylactery of the hand, bound on the arm, fulfilling what is written: *His left hand beneath my head* (Song of Songs 2:6).<sup>[56](#)</sup>

“*Jealousy cruel as Sheol.* Of all the levels of Hell, there is none so cruel as Sheol, descending beneath them all—except for the level called Avadon. They combine with each other as one, and this is harsher than all on the wicked. Thus, *jealousy cruel as Sheol*, for jealousy exists only in love: out of love comes jealousy; and whoever is jealous of a beloved one finds this harder than the level called Sheol, the cruelest level of Hell.<sup>[57](#)</sup>

“*Its sparks are sparks of fire, a flame of Yah.* What is a *flame of Yah?* Fire issuing from a shofar, including air and water. From that flame, when it blazes in Assembly of Israel, She sets the world on fire through Her jealousy for

the blessed Holy One. When She is jealous for Him, woe to one who encounters that flame, for he will be burned!”<sup>58</sup>

He opened again, saying, “*Many waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away...* (Song of Songs 8:7). *Many waters*—the right arm, by which one should bind the knot of the phylactery on the left arm, fulfilling what is written: *his right embracing me* (ibid. 2:6).<sup>59</sup>

“Alternatively, *many waters*—the supernal river, from which issue streams in every direction, all of them flowing and channeled from there, as is said: *more than the sound of many waters* (Psalms 93:4), than that sound of *many waters* issuing and flowing from there.<sup>60</sup>

“*Nor rivers [sweep it away]*—as is said: *The rivers lifted up, O YHVH...* (Psalms 93:3).<sup>61</sup>

“*If a man offered all the wealth of his house for love*—with which Assembly of Israel loves the blessed Holy One—*בוז יבזו לו* (*boz yavuzu lo*), *they would utterly scorn him* (Song of Songs 8:7). *Yavuzu lo*, *They would scorn him*—the verse should read *יבז לו* (*yavuz lo*), *he would scorn him; why they would scorn him?* Well, *If a man offered*—the blessed Holy One. *All the wealth of his house*—as is said: *all precious and pleasant wealth* (Proverbs 24:4). *For love*—of Assembly of Israel for Him, and not to be bound with Him. *Boz yavuzu lo*, *They would utterly scorn it*—all those [55a] legions and all those camps above would scorn that *precious wealth*, for their only desire is for the moment when Assembly of Israel is bound with the blessed Holy One and crowned along with Him. Then all those legions and all those camps and all worlds are in joy, radiance, and blessing. Of this is said *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me* (Song of Songs 2:6).<sup>62</sup>

“One who puts on tefillin—when he places the phylactery of the hand, he should stretch out the left arm to receive Assembly of Israel, and bind the knot with the right in order to embrace Her, fulfilling what is written: *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me*, so that the



person may appear corresponding to the pattern above and be entirely adorned. Then a person is complete in supernal holiness, and the blessed Holy One proclaims over him: *Israel, in whom I glory* (Isaiah 49:3)."<sup>63</sup>

Rabbi Hizkiyah opened, saying, "*Hear, O YHVH, righteousness...* (Psalms 17:1). How beloved is Assembly of Israel before the blessed Holy One! For whenever She comes before Him, He is poised to face Her, as is written: *Hear, O YHVH, righteousness; heed my cry, listen to my prayer.* David said, 'I am linked with Assembly of Israel: just as She is present before You, so am I. Therefore, *Hear, O YHVH, righteousness* first, and then *heed my cry, listen to my prayer.*'"<sup>64</sup>

"*Not from deceitful lips* (ibid.). What does this mean? Well, we have learned as follows: Every single word that a person emits from his mouth ascends on high, splitting the heavens, entering where it enters, and there that word is tested, to see whether it is worthy or not. If it is a worthy word, it is brought before the Holy King to be fulfilled. If not, it is diverted to the Other Side, arousing an alien spirit."<sup>65</sup>

"Come and see: Of Joseph is written *They hurt his feet with shackles, his neck was put in iron* (Psalms 105:18). How long did *they hurt his feet with shackles*? As is written: *Until the time that his word came, the utterance of YHVH tested him* (ibid., 19). *Until the time that his word came*—whose word? Well, *until the time that Joseph's word came* and that word was tested, as is written: *the utterance, YHVH tested it.* Then, *The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples set him free* (ibid., 20)."<sup>66</sup>

Meanwhile, morning arrived. Rabbi El'azar said, "It is written: *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with YHVH your God* (1 Samuel 25:29). *The soul of my lord*—unspecified, as is said: *who has not borne his soul falsely* (Psalms 24:4). Now is the time for Assembly of Israel

to be bound and joined with Her Husband. Happy are the righteous who engage in Torah and come to join with the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel! Of them is written *Your father and your mother will rejoice; she who bore you will be glad* (Proverbs 23:25).<sup>67</sup>

Rabbi El'azar said, "*You shall set apart the Children of Israel from their impurity, [lest they die through their impurity] by defiling My Dwelling that is in their midst* (Leviticus 15:31). והזרתם (*Ve-hizzartem*), *You shall set apart*—like זר (*zar*), a stranger, who is strange to all and does not join with what is not his.<sup>68</sup>

"Come and see: When people are defiled below, they become defiled entirely, as has been said. But when an impure spirit is aroused—do you think so? Well, an impure spirit below arouses another impure spirit, which is given permission to descend to the world. What permission? That of holiness, which used to descend and strike it, but is no longer found and disappears; so then Judgment is revealed against the wicked, adding judgment to its judgment. Then two spirits appear in the world: one a spirit of Judgment and one a spirit of impurity."<sup>69</sup>

Rabbi El'azar said, "I must say a word that I learned from my father. Come and see: Here we learn from the affliction in a house. For when an impure spirit inhabits a house and the blessed Holy One wishes to purify it, He sends scaly affliction into the house to attack one another. That affliction does not depart from the house, even though the impure spirit has left the house, until the house has been demolished—stones, timber, and everything—and then the place is purified.<sup>70</sup>

"Similarly, one who is defiled and has aroused an impure spirit, which settles upon him—when the blessed Holy One wishes to purify the world, He arouses a spirit of harsh Judgment, which manifests in the world and settles upon that impure spirit and they attack one another until [55b] it is removed from the world. Yet that spirit of harsh

Judgment does not depart from its place until the place is demolished—limbs, bones, and everything. Then the world is purified and [impure spirits] are removed and the world is imbued with purity.<sup>71</sup>

“Of this we have learned: ‘If one comes to defile himself, they defile him surely.’ Woe to him when an impure spirit settles upon him, existing within him in the world, for he must surely know that the blessed Holy One wishes to eliminate him from the world! Happy are the righteous, who are all holy and appear in holiness before the Holy King, and the Holy Spirit settles upon them in this world and in the world that is coming!”<sup>72</sup>

As morning arrived, they rose and walked on. While they were walking, Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, “*Jacob went on his way, and angels of God met him* (Genesis 32:2). *Jacob went on his way*—for he was going to meet his father. Come and see: As long as Jacob was with Laban, the blessed Holy One did not speak with him nor appear to him. Now, you might say, ‘Look at what is written: *YHVH said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your birthplace”* (Genesis 31:3)!’ Well, this was at the end, when he was about to separate from Laban; and when he separated from him, those angels came to meet him and escorted him on the way.<sup>73</sup>

“Come and see: It is written ויפגעו בו (va-yifge’u vo), and [angels of God] met him. The verse should read ויפגעו לפניו (va-yifge’u le-fanav), and [angels of God] pleaded before him; why va-yifge’u vo, and [angels of God] met in him? Well, they came to merge ביה (beih), in him, and escorted him on the way. What does this mean: to merge in him? Well, they came from the side of *Gevurah*, as is written: *angels of Elohim*. Compassion and Judgment blended in him—from the other side, he saw angels of Compassion.<sup>74</sup>

“Come and see: At first, *This is a camp of Elohim!* (Genesis 32:3)—one. Afterward, *And he named that place* מהנאים (Maḥanayim), *Double Camps* (ibid.)—two. One from

the side of Judgment, and one from the side of Compassion; angels from this side, and angels from that side—so it is written *va-yifge'u vo, and [angels of God] met in him—in him, precisely!*<sup>75</sup>

“When *ראם* (*ra'am*), he saw them, Jacob said (Genesis 32:3). *Ra'am, he saw them*—the verse should read *ראה אותם* (*ra'ah otam*), *he saw them*; why *ra'am*? Well, he saw them merged as one, cleaving and joined to one another, so it is written *ra'am*. They all came to escort him and to save him from the hand of Esau.<sup>76</sup>

“Of Esau is written *The first one came out ruddy* (Genesis 25:25). *The first one came out*—now, if you say that Jacob was the first drop, not so! For it is written *The first one came out*, and not *He came out first*. Since Isaac came from the side of harsh Judgment, Esau came out red. For if Jacob were the firstborn—of that first drop—he would have come out like this: red. But he was the second drop, so he did not come out like this; for that drop was from the side of Compassion, from this side and that side.<sup>77</sup>

“The drop of Esau was unlike the drop of Jacob, for one was complete and the other was not. At that moment, Isaac [56a] focused on the conclusion of harsh Judgment—emitting on his side, in dazzling lights engraved in his limbs—so Esau was slag smelted from gold.<sup>78</sup>

“Therefore we have learned that a person should concentrate at that moment on the will of his Lord, so that he will generate holy children into the world. Now if you say that Isaac did not concentrate—not so! Rather, he concentrated on holiness and focused on the end of that place. Consequently, when that first drop issued, it was exactly at that point, so it is written *like a hairy mantle all over* (Genesis 25:25).<sup>79</sup>

“Come and see: David issued in the beauty of red and was joined with the holiness of his Lord. Therefore it is written *He was ruddy, with fine eyes and goodly to look on* (1 Samuel 16:12).<sup>80</sup>

“However, Jacob was firstborn, more so than Esau—not from the drop, but rather that the will was focused on the lofty, grand, and mighty tree; whereas Esau was in that place of end of all. Thus it is written *Behold, I make you least among the nations; you are utterly despised* (Obadiah 1:2).”[81](#)

Rabbi Yehudah used to teach as follows: “Esau is called *first*, as is written: *The first one came out ruddy...* (Genesis 25:25), and the blessed Holy One is called *first*, as is written: *I am the first, and with the last I am He* (Isaiah 41:4). One day, *the first* will exact retribution from *the first*—and build *the first*, as is written: *O Throne of Glory set on high from the first* (Jeremiah 17:12). Of the time to come, it is written *The first [shall say] to Zion, ‘Behold, here they are!’ And to Jerusalem I will send a herald* (Isaiah 41:27).”[82](#)

It has been taught: The walls of Jerusalem are destined to reach on high, approaching the King’s Throne of Glory, as is written: *On that day, Jerusalem will be called Throne of YHVH* (Jeremiah 3:17). Of then it is written *The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold* (Isaiah 30:26). Then, *on that day YHVH will be one and His name one* (Zechariah 14:9).[83](#)

*Parashat Aharei Mot*

“AFTER THE DEATH” (LEVITICUS 16:1-18:30)

*YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron’s two sons....*

*YHVH said to Moses, “Speak to Aaron your brother” (Leviticus 16:1-2).<sup>1</sup>*

**R**abbi Yehudah said, “Since it is written *YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of [Aaron’s two sons]...*, why again *YHVH said to Moses, ‘Speak to Aaron your brother’*? Surely, the first statement is sufficient.

“But we have learned as follows: It is written *He called to Moses, and YHVH spoke to him* (Leviticus 1:1), and similarly: *To Moses He said, ‘Go up to YHVH’* (Exodus 24:1). The matter has already been established, for here is one rung, and afterward another rung. Similarly here: one rung, and afterward another rung—for *YHVH spoke to Moses* is one rung, and afterward, *YHVH said to Moses, ‘Speak to Aaron your brother’* is another rung. All attains equilibrium, joined from a single root.”<sup>2</sup>

*After the death of Aaron’s two sons* (Leviticus 16:1).

written *Serve YHVH in joy, come before Him in glad singing* (ibid. 100:2). These verses contradict one another.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak opened, “*Serve YHVH in awe, and rejoice in trembling* (Psalms 2:11), and it is



“But it has been taught as follows: *Serve YHVH in awe*—for any service of his Lord that a person first learns should be *in awe*, fearing Him. Through fear of his Lord, he fulfills the commandments of Torah. Thus it is written *What does YHVH your God ask of you but to be in awe [of YHVH your God]... ?* (Deuteronomy 10:12).<sup>4</sup>

“*And rejoice in trembling*—for a person is forbidden to rejoice extremely in this world. This applies to mundane matters, but regarding words of Torah and commandments of Torah, one should rejoice. Subsequently, a person will find that he is fulfilling the commandments of Torah in joy, as is written: *Serve YHVH in joy.*”<sup>5</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “*Serve YHVH in awe.* [56b] Mystery of the matter: *Serve YHVH in awe*—what is *awe* here? Well, as we have established, for it is written *The awe of YHVH is the beginning of knowledge...* (Proverbs 1:7); *The beginning of wisdom is awe of YHVH* (Psalms 111:10)—so it is called.”<sup>6</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “*Serve YHVH in awe*—if one wishes to perform the service of his Lord, from where does he begin, from where should he intend the unifying devotion of his Lord? The verse goes on to say: *in awe*—the beginning, from below to above.”<sup>7</sup>

“Come and see: *Aaron’s sons* (Leviticus 16:1)—this has already been established and the matter has been discussed.”<sup>8</sup>

“Come and see: What is written here? *After the death* (ibid.), and then, *Speak to Aaron your brother* (ibid., 2). Well, from here the beginning of warning the priests about all of which they should beware.”<sup>9</sup>

Alternatively, *After the death of Aaron’s two sons.* Rabbi Yose said, “The verse should read *after the death of Nadab and Abihu.* Why *Aaron’s two sons*? Don’t we know they were his sons? Well, it has been taught as follows: Until now, they were not under their own authority, but rather under the authority of their father. Thus, *when they encroached upon the presence of YHVH and died* (Leviticus

16:1)—for they forced the hour in their father’s lifetime. It was all—and that sin they committed *when they offered alien fire* (Numbers 3:4). For it has been taught: In one place is written *when they offered alien fire*, and in another place is written *when they encroached [upon the presence of YHVH]*—it was this and that. So here is written *Aaron’s sons*, and it is written *when they encroached*.”<sup>10</sup>

It has been taught: Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “One day I was walking on the way, going to visit Rabbi Shim’on to learn from him the portion of Passover. I encountered a certain mountain, and I saw clefts and cavities in a rock, with two men inside.”<sup>11</sup>

“As I went along, I heard the voice of those men, who were saying, ‘*A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah. Great is YHVH and highly praised in the city of our God, His holy mountain* (Psalms 48:1-2). What is *A song, a psalm*? Well, so it has been taught in the name of Rabbi Shim’on: *A song* that is double, *a song* worthier than other songs. And since it is worthier than other songs, it is called ‘song’ twice. *A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day* (Psalms 92:1). And similarly: *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s* (Song of Songs 1:1)—a song transcending songs.”<sup>12</sup>

“*A song, a psalm*—a song of the blessed Holy One, sung by *the sons of Korah* over those sitting at the opening of Hell. Who are they? Their brothers, who are at the gates of Hell. Therefore, this song is recited on the second day.”<sup>13</sup>

“I approached them, and said, ‘What are you doing in this place?’

“They replied, ‘We are merchants, and two days a week we separate from the community and engage in Torah, because people don’t leave us alone every day.’

“I said, ‘Happy is your portion!’

“They opened again, saying, ‘Whenever the righteous depart, Judgment departs from the world, and the death of the righteous atones for the sins of the generation.

Therefore we read the portion of the sons of Aaron on Yom Kippur, so that it may bring atonement for the sins of Israel. The blessed Holy One said, "Turn your attention to the death of these righteous ones, and it will be considered as if you were bringing offerings to atone for yourselves." For we have learned: As long as the people of Israel are in exile and do not bring offerings on that day and cannot offer those two goats, they will have the memory of Aaron's two sons and thereby gain atonement.<sup>14</sup>

"For we have learned as follows: It is written *These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the [anointed] priests, and it is written the firstborn Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar* (Numbers 3:3, 2). The verse should read *and Eleazar and Ithamar*; why *Eleazar and Ithamar*? Well, Abihu was equivalent to his two brothers, and Nadab was equal to all of them.<sup>15</sup>

"And some teach the reverse: *The firstborn Nadab*—this one alone. *And Abihu*—alone. Each one considered himself equal to both of them, to Eleazar and Ithamar. However, Nadab and Abihu alone were equivalent to the seventy members of the Sanhedrin who officiated before Moses, and so their death atoned for Israel. Thus it is written *Your brothers, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning* (Leviticus 10:6).<sup>16</sup>

"Rabbi Shim'on said, "*The firstborn Nadab*—meaning the one who possesses all precious praise. What is his name? *Nadab. And Abihu*—all the more so, for these two had no equal in all of Israel."<sup>17</sup>

*YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons* (Leviticus 16:1).

*longer will Jacob be ashamed, no longer his face grow pale* (Isaiah 29:22). This verse is difficult for us. It should read

Rabbi [57a] Hizkiyah opened, "*Therefore, thus says YHVH to the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: No*

*Therefore, thus says YHVH, who redeemed Abraham. Why Thus says YHVH to the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham? Well, they have established the verse as follows, as has been said: Jacob redeemed Abraham, surely! When Abraham fell into the fire of the Chaldeans, his case was judged. [The angels] said, 'Look, Ishmael will issue from him!'*<sup>18</sup>

"The blessed Holy One replied, 'Well, Isaac, who will stretch out his neck on the altar.'<sup>19</sup>

"They said, 'Look, Esau will issue from him!'

"The blessed Holy One replied, 'Well, Jacob, who will issue from him, who is a complete throne and all of whose sons are perfect before Me.'<sup>20</sup>

"They said, 'Surely, for this merit he will be saved'—as is written: [*Jacob,*] *who redeemed Abraham.*

*"No longer will Jacob be ashamed, no longer his face grow pale. For when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will sanctify My name* (Isaiah 29:22-23). Who are *his children*? These are Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who cast themselves into the blazing fire to glorify My name.<sup>21</sup>

*"No longer will Jacob be ashamed.* What is Jacob doing here? After all, it is written *Now, among them were, of the sons of Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah* (Daniel 1:6). They are called *sons of Judah*, so the verse should read *No longer will Judah be ashamed.* Why *No longer will Jacob be ashamed?*<sup>22</sup>

"Well, we have learned as follows: As they were bound, to be cast into the fire, each one raised his voice and spoke before all those nations, kings, and officials. Hananiah said, '*YHVH is with me, I will not fear. What can a human do to me? YHVH is with me among my helpers, and I will see the defeat of my enemies. Better to shelter in YHVH than to trust in a human* (Psalms 118:6-8).'<sup>23</sup>

"Mishael opened, '*Do not fear, My servant Jacob—declares YHVH—for I am with you. For I will make an end of*

*all the nations where I have scattered you, but of you I will not make an end! I will discipline you in just measure, and will not leave you wholly unpunished (Jeremiah 46:28).'*

“At the moment they all heard the name of Jacob, they were astonished and laughed mockingly.<sup>24</sup>

“Azariah opened, saying, ‘Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one (Deuteronomy 6:4).'

“As is written: *This one will say, ‘I am YHVH’s’; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; another will write on his hand, ‘YHVH’s,’ and adopt the name of Israel (Isaiah 44:5). This one will say, ‘I am YHVH’s—Hananiah. Another will call himself by the name of Jacob—Mishael. Another will write on his hand, ‘YHVH’s,’ and adopt the name of Israel—Azariah.*<sup>25</sup>

“At that moment, the blessed Holy One gathered His entire celestial family and said to them, ‘With which of these words spoken by these three shall I save them?’<sup>26</sup>

“They opened, saying, ‘May they know that You alone, whose name is YHVH, are supreme over all the earth (Psalms 83:19).'

“At that moment, the blessed Holy One said, ‘By My Throne! With the word that all of them mocked, I will save them—*No longer will Jacob be ashamed, no longer his face grow pale.* Just as he stood by Abraham in the fire, so let him stand now by these.’ As is written: *Thus says YHVH to the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: No longer will Jacob be ashamed, no longer his face grow pale—from that shame of mockery.*<sup>28</sup>

“It has been taught: All those who laughed at this word were burned in that fire, killed by a sparkling flame. What saved these [three]? Their praying before the blessed Holy One and unifying His Name fittingly. Because they did so, they were saved from the blazing furnace. Aaron’s two sons offered alien fire, not unifying His Name fittingly, and they were consumed in fire.”<sup>29</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “*After the death of [Aaron’s two sons]* (Leviticus 16:1)—and it is written *and they died* (ibid.). Since it says *after the death of [Aaron’s two sons]*, don’t we know that *they died*? However, we have learned as follows: There were two deaths—one *before YHVH* (ibid.), and one that they had no children, for whoever attains no children is dead. Therefore, *After the death, and they died.*”<sup>30</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “Why is it written *Nadab and Abihu died before YHVH when they offered alien fire before YHVH in the Desert of Sinai, and they had no children, and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests* (Numbers 3:4). What does one have to do with the other: *they had no children, and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests*? Well, mystery of the matter is as I have said: *and they died*—because they had no children. Certainly so, but not like other inhabitants of the world, even though they were not married; for these died only a bodily death, not a death of their souls.”<sup>31</sup>

“How do we know? As is written: *Eleazar son of Aaron [57b] took himself one of the daughters of Putiel as a wife, and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their clans* (Exodus 6:25). *These*? But Phinehas was alone! And it is written: *These are the heads of [the fathers of the Levites]*. Thus, they died a bodily death, not a death of their souls.”<sup>32</sup>

Rabbi El’azar said, “Certainly, as implied by *these* and by *the heads*. Consequently it is written: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest* (Numbers 25:7), and similarly: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest was the priest in those days* (Judges 20:28). The verses should read *Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest*. But wherever Phinehas appears, it is written *son of Aaron the priest*, whereas regarding Eleazar, it is only written *Eleazar the priest*, as is written: *Before Eleazar the priest he shall stand* (Numbers 27:21); *Eleazar the priest said...* (ibid. 31:21). Thus, they died a bodily death, not a death of their souls.”<sup>33</sup>



“We have learned in the mystery of our Mishnah: ‘Two, a pair: פַּן הָאֵ (pan, ḥas).’ As has been said, a small ך (yod) among the letters of פִּינְחָס (Pinḥas), Phinehas, for yod combines two as one. This is mystery of the matter, as has been established.”<sup>34</sup>

Rabbi El’azar asked his father, “Surely they are two, and they were two—why didn’t they manifest as two?”<sup>35</sup>

He replied, “They each were half a body because they did not marry, so they were combined as one, as is written: *She bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of [the fathers of the Levites according to their clans]* (Exodus 6:25).<sup>36</sup>

“The ך (yod) of פִּינְחָס (Pinḥas), Phinehas, was given to him to connect the letters only when he acted zealously for the blessed Holy One and came to straighten what was contorted; for he saw Zimri inserting this covenant—holy sign—into another domain. By that which it was contorted originally, it was rectified here—by the later one. By an alien female it was contorted originally, as is written: *when they offered alien fire* (Numbers 3:4); and here it was rectified by an alien female, as is written: *and he has married the daughter of an alien god* (Malachi 2:11). Just as there, *alien fire*, so here, too, an *alien woman*.<sup>37</sup>

“What is revealed here? Well, originally they brought near what was far, as is written: *when they brought near alien fire before YHVH* (Numbers 3:4). Here, too, Zimri brought near what was far—the Name of the King he brought near to what was far. Immediately, *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest saw, and he rose from the midst of the community* (Numbers 25:7). Here, the earlier contortion was rectified; then ך (yod) was placed in his name, combining the letters as one, and he was promised *peace* (ibid., 12).<sup>38</sup>

“What is *peace*? The crown against which they sinned at first, as is written: *I hereby grant him My covenant of peace* (ibid.)—*My covenant*, really! In that crown they previously provoked a quarrel, and now that it is restored, *I*

*hereby grant him My covenant of peace—My covenant, really, will be with him. Therefore, in his name was placed a small yod, of the small letters, to demonstrate that what had been contorted earlier was now rectified, and reconciled with him.*"[39](#)

Rabbi El'azar came and kissed his hands, and said, "Blessed is the Compassionate One, that I asked about this matter and was not deprived of it!"

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, "On Yom Kippur this portion has been instituted to atone for Israel in exile, because the order of this day is arranged here and because the death of Aaron's sons atones for Israel."[40](#)

"From here we learn that if a person undergoes chastenings of his Lord, they serve as atonement for his sins, and whoever is distressed over chastenings of the righteous has his sins removed. Therefore on this day we read *After the death of Aaron's two sons*, so that the people may hear and feel distress for the loss of the righteous and gain atonement for their sins. When anyone feels sorrow over the loss of the righteous or sheds tears for them, the blessed Holy One proclaims for him, *Your iniquity is removed and your sin purged* (Isaiah 6:7). Furthermore, his children will not die in his lifetime, and of him is written *He will see seed and prolong his days, and the desire of YHVH will succeed in his hand* (Isaiah 53:10)."[41](#)

*YHVH said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron your brother, that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary..."* (Leviticus 16:2).[42](#)

(Ecclesiastes 1:7)." Rabbi Shim'on said, "I am amazed at the inhabitants of the world—that they have no eyes to see, no heart to ponder; they do not know or contemplate the

Rabbi Shim'on opened, "*All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place that the streams flow, there they flow again*

will of their Lord. How asleep they are, not awakening from their slumber before that day arrives when thick darkness will cover them and the owner of the deposit will demand [58a] reckoning from them!<sup>43</sup>

“Every day a herald proclaims to them: *How long, fools, will you love foolishness?* (Proverbs 1:22). *Whoever is a fool, let him turn aside here. Come, partake of my bread...* (ibid. 9:4-5). Yet no one inclines his ear and no one arouses his heart.<sup>44</sup>

“Come and see: Among generations to come, Torah is destined to be forgotten, and the wise-hearted will gather in the Holy Chamber, yet there will be no one who can close and open. Woe to that generation! From here on, there will be no generation like this one until King Messiah arrives and knowledge awakens in the world, as is written: *For they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest* (Jeremiah 31:34).<sup>45</sup>

“Come and see: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10). We have learned: What is the name of that river? As has been established, its name is Yuval, as is written: *spreading its roots by יובל (yuval), a stream* (Jeremiah 17:8). And in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava, its name is Life, because life issues from there to the world, and that is called Life of the King. We have established that the grand and mighty tree, containing food for all, is called the Tree of Life—a tree whose roots are planted in that Life. And all is fine.<sup>46</sup>

“It has been taught: That river gushes deep streams with anointing oil to water the Garden and to saturate trees and plants, as is written: *The trees of YHVH are sated, cedars of Lebanon that He planted* (Psalms 104:16). Those streams flow and gather in two pillars—those external ones we call Jachin and Boaz, which is fine.<sup>47</sup>

“From there all those streams flow forth, pouring into a certain level called Righteous One, as is written: *The righteous one is the foundation of the world* (Proverbs

10:25). And all of them proceed and gather in the place called Sea, which is the Sea of Wisdom, as is written: *All the streams flow into the sea...* (Ecclesiastes 1:7).<sup>48</sup>

“For if you say that they reach this place and cease, not returning—it is then written *To the place that the streams flow, there they return to flow* (Ecclesiastes 1:7), because that river never ceases. *They return*—where do they return? To those two pillars, *Netsah* and *Hod*. *To flow*—into this Righteous One, so that there will be blessing and joy.<sup>49</sup>

“This corresponds to the mystery we have learned: *Leviathan whom You formed to play with* (Psalms 104:26). So, *All of them look in hope to You, to give them their food in its time* (ibid., 27). Who is *its time*? The *time* of Righteous One—*Matronita*, who is called so. Therefore all of them await this *time*; all those below are nourished from this place. We have established this mystery: *The eyes of all look in hope to You, and You give them their food in its time* (ibid. 145:15), as we have established.<sup>50</sup>

“Come and see: When this *all* sweetens *its time*, who is blessed by Him, all worlds are in joy, all worlds in blessing; then peace prevails above and below. But when the wicked of the world tip the scale, and blessings of those streams are lacking there, and She sucks from the Other Side—then judgments are aroused in the world, and peace is nowhere to be found. When inhabitants of the world want to be blessed, they can do so only through the priest, so that he will arouse his Crown and *Matronita* will be blessed—and blessings will prevail through all worlds.<sup>51</sup>

“It has been taught: At the time when Moses was asking about this matter before the blessed Holy One, he said to Him, ‘If the inhabitants of the world return to You, by whom will they be blessed?’

“The blessed Holy One replied, ‘To Me you are speaking? *Speak to Aaron your brother* (Leviticus 16:2), for in his hands I have delivered blessings for those above and below.’”<sup>52</sup>

*YHVH said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron your brother, that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary"* (Leviticus 16:2).<sup>53</sup>

times when favor is not to be found, blessings are unavailable, and harsh judgments are aroused in the world. And times when Judgment is hanging in suspense.<sup>54</sup>

"Come and see: There are times in the year when favor is found, and times in the year when Judgment looms. There are times in the month when favor [58b] is found, and times in the month when judgments loom over all. There are times in the week when favor is found, and times in the week when judgments appear in the world. There are times in the day when favor is found and the world is fragrant, and times in the day when judgments loom—and even in the hour.<sup>55</sup>

"Thus it is written: [*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter [under heaven]* (Ecclesiastes 3:1), and similarly: [*As for me, may my prayer to You, O YHVH, come*] at a time of favor... (Psalms 69:14), and similarly: *Why, YHVH, do You stand far off, and hide in times of trouble?* (Psalms 10:1), and similarly: *From afar, YHVH appeared to me* (Jeremiah 31:3). And times when He is near, as is written: *Seek YHVH when He may be found, call to Him when He is near* (Isaiah 55:6); *YHVH is near to all who call Him* (Psalms 145:18). Therefore, *that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary.*"<sup>56</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on says, "We have established the expression *in its time* (Psalms 104:27), and it is certainly so. Here, the blessed Holy One came to warn Aaron not to commit the same sin that his sons committed. For this *time* is well known, so he should not err by joining a different *time* to the King, as is written: *that he not enter בכל עת* (ve-

Rabbi Abba said, "There are times before the blessed Holy One when favor is found, blessings are available, and one's request should be brought. And

*khol et*), *with all times, into the sanctuary*—meaning, even if he sees a time when conducting the world has been handed over to another, and [the world] has been placed in its hands, he must not grasp it, bringing it near holiness, since I and My Name are one. Thus, *that he not enter with all times* אל הקדש (*el ha-qodesh*), *into the holiness*.<sup>57</sup>

“If he wants to know with what he should enter the sanctuary—בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary* (Leviticus 16:3), for that is the *time* joined to My Name. With this one, inscribed in My Name, he should enter the sanctuary, but *that he not enter at all times*.”<sup>58</sup>

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, “It is written: *Everything He has made beautiful in its time* (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This utterance has been established by the Holy Lamp, and it is so, for it has been taught: *Everything He has made beautiful in its time*—את הכל (*et ha-kol*), *everything, surely, He has made beautiful* בעתו (*ve-itto*), *with its time, with one another, with no others interfering; with its time, really, not with another*. Therefore, a warning to Aaron: *that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary*. But with what shall he enter? בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this*—as we have established: *Be-zot, With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary*.”<sup>59</sup>

Rabbi El’azar was sitting before his father. He said to him, “It is written about the assembly of Korah, *They perished from the midst of the congregation* (Numbers 16:33). What is meant by *they perished*? Well, as is written: *I shall make that soul perish from the midst of her people* (Leviticus 23:30).”<sup>60</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on said, “It is different with the sons of Aaron, of whom ‘perishing’ is not written, whereas of Korah’s assembly it is. And it is written: *All of us perish!* (Numbers 17:27)—including those who offered aromatic incense, the two hundred and fifty, who surely perished; whereas these did not perish.”<sup>61</sup> He said to him, “It is



written: *that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary* (Leviticus 16:2), and it is written: *With this shall Aaron enter the sanctuary* (ibid., 3). Since He said *that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary*, why is it not written at which time he should enter?"<sup>62</sup>

He replied, "El'azar, this has already been explained, and it is one word, and the priests knew the time. But here He wanted to warn about how they had sinned, as has been said."<sup>63</sup>

He said to him, "I thought so myself, but in order to settle the matter I asked.

"Come and see: All sacrifices and ascent offerings are pleasurable to the blessed Holy One, but there was no pleasure as great as the incense, for incense is finest of all. Therefore it was offered within, within, silently, as has been said. And consequently, people were not punished for other sacrifices and ascent offerings as they were for incense—because the whole worship of the blessed Holy One אִתְּקֵטָר (*itqetar*), is bound, and joined here most of all, which is why it is called קֵטֶרֶת (*qetoret*), incense. As has been said, *Oil and incense rejoice the heart* (Proverbs 27:9)."<sup>64</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on opened and expounded, "*As for fragrance, your oils are fine; your name is oil poured—therefore, maidens love you* (Song of Songs 1:3). I have contemplated this verse, and this is what it means: *As for fragrance*—fragrance of incense, which is precious, excellent, and innermost of all. When that fragrance ascends to join anointing oil of the streams of the spring, they intermingle, bonding as one. Then those oils are fine for illumining, as is written: *As for fragrance, your oils are fine*. And then oil is poured from rung to rung, through those rungs called the Holy Name, as is written: *your name is oil poured*.<sup>65</sup>

"*Therefore, maidens love you*. What is עֲלָמוֹת (*alamot*), *maidens*? As we have established, עוֹלָמוֹת (*olamot*), *worlds*—real worlds!<sup>66</sup>

“Alternatively, *therefore, alamot, maidens, love you*—as is said: *Upon עלמות שיר (alamot shir), maidens of song* (Psalms 46:1), and all is one.<sup>67</sup>

“In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava it is written: What is *alamot, maidens*? As is said: *She rises while it is still night, and provides food for her household and a portion [59a] for her attendants* (Proverbs 31:15). *Her attendants*—these *alamot, maidens, love you*, blessing Your name and singing before You. From there, blessings spread among all those below, and above and below are blessed.<sup>68</sup>

“Alternatively, *therefore, עלמות (alamot), maidens, love you*—fine is the one who said *על מות (al mavet)*, [those] *over death, love you*, for by this element, masters of judgment are assuaged. Since this *קטרת אתקטר (qetoret itqetar)*, incense is bound, with oil above, it is more esteemed by the blessed Holy One than all sacrifices and ascent offerings.<sup>69</sup>

“Assembly of Israel says, ‘I am like incense, and You are like oil. *Draw me after you, let us run!...* (Song of Songs 1:4).’ *Let us run*—as is said: *therefore, maidens love you*. ‘I and all those cohorts, for all of them are joined with Me, so *draw me*, for they depend on Me.’<sup>70</sup>

“*The king has brought me into his chambers* (Song of Songs 1:4). ‘And if the King brings Me into His chambers, *let us delight and rejoice in you* (ibid.)—I and all of them.’<sup>71</sup>

“It has been taught: When Assembly of Israel is joyous and blessed, all those cohorts are joyous and blessed, and Judgment does not then prevail in the world. Thus it is written *Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult...* (Psalms 96:11).”<sup>72</sup>

*For in the cloud I appear over the cover* (Leviticus 16:2).<sup>73</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Happy are the righteous, whom the blessed Holy One delights to honor! We have learned: A king of flesh of blood—if anyone rides on his horse, he deserves to be killed. Yet

the blessed Holy One mounted Elijah on His, as is written: *Elijah ascended in a whirlwind to heaven...* (2 Kings 2:11). What is written here? *Lest he die, for in the cloud I appear over the cover* (Leviticus 16:2). Yet the blessed Holy One brought Moses into it, as is written: *Moses entered within the cloud* (Exodus 24:18)—*within the cloud*, really!<sup>74</sup>

“*For in the cloud I appear over the cover.* It has been taught: The place where those cherubim settled, as we have established: ‘The cherubim dwelled miraculously.’

“It has been taught: Three times daily a miracle occurred with their wings. When the holiness of the King was manifested upon them, they raised their wings on their own, spreading them and shielding the cover. Afterward, they folded their wings, resting them on their bodies, as is written: *The cherubim shall be spreading wings above* (Exodus 25:20)—*spreading*, not [*with wings*] *spread. Sheltering the cover with their wings* (ibid.)—not *with sheltering wings*. For they stood miraculously, rejoicing in *Shekhinah*.”<sup>75</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “What is this doing here: *For in the cloud I appear over the cover* (Leviticus 16:2)? And it is written: *בזאת (Be-zot), With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary* (ibid., 3). After all, the priest did not see when he entered! Well, the cloud descended, and when it descended it reached this cover, and the wings of the cherubim stirred and they fluttered them and uttered song.<sup>76</sup>

“What song did they sing? *For great is YHVH and highly praised, awesome is He over all gods* (Psalms 96:4). This, when they raised their wings; when they spread them, they would say, *For all gods of the peoples are useless, but YHVH has made the heavens* (ibid., 5). When they shielded the cover, they would say, *Before YHVH, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, render judgment upon the nations with equity* (Psalms 98:9).<sup>77</sup>

“The priest would hear their voices in the Temple, and then he set the incense in its place, focusing his intention so that all would be blessed. The sound of the cherubim’s wings ascended and descended as they chanted song; they sheltered the cover, and then raised them, as is written: *sheltering [the cover] with their wings* (Exodus 25:20)—*sheltering*, precisely! And how do we know that their sound was heard? As is written: *I heard the sound of their wings...* (Ezekiel 1:24).”<sup>78</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “*He will render judgment upon the nations במישרים (be-meisharim), with equity.* What is *be-meisharim, with equity*? As is said: מישרים (Meisharim), *Rightly, do they love you* (Song of Songs 1:4)—including both cherubim, male and female; *meisharim*, surely! Thus, *He will render judgment upon the nations with meisharim.* And it is written: *He would hear the voice being spoken to him from between the two cherubim, and He would speak to him* (Numbers 7:89).”<sup>79</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “From here we learn that wherever male and female are not found, one is not worthy to see the face of *Shekhinah*, as is written: ישרים (Yesharim), *The upright, will dwell in Your presence* (Psalms 140:14). And we have learned: It is written *Righteous and upright is He* (Deuteronomy 32:4)—male and female. Here, too, the cherubim—male and female—of whom is written *It was You who founded מישרים (meisharim), equity* (Psalms 99:4); *He will render judgment upon the nations במישרים (be-meisharim), with equity.* Thus, *their faces toward each other* (Exodus 25:20), as we have established.”<sup>80</sup> [59b]

It has been taught in the name of Rabbi Yose: Once the world was in need of rain, so Rabbi Yeisa, Rabbi Hizkiyah, and other Companions came before Rabbi Shim’on. They found him setting out to see Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir. When he saw them, he opened, saying, “*A song of ascents. Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers together!* (Psalms 133:1). What is *the dwelling of*

*brothers together?* As is said: *their faces, each toward his brother* (Exodus 25:20). When they were one-to-one, gazing face-to-face, it is written *Look, how good and how pleasant!* But when the male turns his face away from the female, woe to the world! Correspondingly, it is written: *Some are swept away without justice* (Proverbs 13:23)—*without justice, surely!* And it is written: *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne* (Psalms 89:15), for one does not proceed without the other, and when *justice* withdraws from *righteousness*, woe to the world! Of then is written *Some are swept away without justice.*<sup>81</sup>

“I see that now you have come because the male does not abide with the female.”

He said, “If for this you have come to me, go back, for I have seen today that all will be restored face-to-face. But if you have come for Torah, stay with me.”<sup>82</sup>

They replied, “We have come to the Master for all! Release one of us to bring the good news to our brothers, the other Companions, while we sit before our Master.”<sup>83</sup>

As they went along, he opened, saying, “*Black am I but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem* (Song of Songs 1:5). Assembly of Israel said before the blessed Holy One, ‘*Black am I from exile, but beautiful in commandments of Torah,*’ for even though the people of Israel is in exile, they do not forsake these.<sup>84</sup>

“*Like the tents of קדר (Qedar), Kedar*—for they are in the mountains and their faces always אַתְּקַדְרוּ (*itqaddaru*), are darkened. But even so, *like Solomon’s curtains*—like the appearance of heaven for purity, as is written: *Spreading the heavens like a curtain* (Psalms 104:2).<sup>85</sup>

“אל תראוני (*Al tir’uni*), *You cannot see me, for I am blackish* (Song of Songs 1:6). Why *am I blackish?* *Because the sun has scorched me* (*ibid.*)—for the sun has not gazed upon Me, illumining Me fittingly.<sup>86</sup>

“What does Israel say? *My mother’s sons were incensed at me* (*ibid.*). Who are *my mother’s sons?*



Empowered princes, shielding the other nations.<sup>87</sup>

“Alternatively, *my mother’s sons*, literally, as is said: *He has cast down earth from heaven...* (Lamentations 2:1). And when *He cast down earth from heaven, they made me keeper of the vineyards* (Song of Songs 1:6). Why? Because *my own vineyard I did not keep* (ibid.).<sup>88</sup>

“And we have learned: *My mother’s sons*, surely; they concurred against Me—that is, when *earth* was removed from *heaven*, as we have established, for it is written *His sister stationed herself afar* (Exodus 2:4).<sup>89</sup>

“Here it is surely said: *Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers* גַּם יַחַד (*gam yahad*), *also together!* We have already established this, as is written: *Yet even* גַּם זֹאת (*gam zot*), *this too* (Leviticus 26:44). *The dwelling of brothers*—inclusive. Since it is written *gam*, *also*—including all those above, for all dominion is found in that place.<sup>90</sup>

“Alternatively, *Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers gam yahad, also together!*—those Companions, when they sit as one, not separating from each other. At first they appear as men waging war, seeking to kill one another; afterward, they appear in love, in brotherhood. What does the blessed Holy One say? *Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers gam yahad, also together!*—*gam, also*, including *Shekhinah* with them. Furthermore, the blessed Holy One listens to their utterances and is pleased and delights with them, as is written: *Then those who revere YHVH spoke with one another; and YHVH listened attentively, and it was written in a book of remembrance before Him...* (Malachi 3:16).<sup>91</sup>

“And you, Companions who are here, just as you have been previously, so from now on: do not part from one another until the blessed Holy One delights with you and proclaims peace upon you—and for your sake, peace will prevail in the world, as is written: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions* (Psalms 122:8).”<sup>92</sup>



They went on until they reached the home of Rabbi Pinḥas. Rabbi Pinḥas came out and kissed him, and said, “I am privileged to kiss *Shekhinah*! Happy is my share!”<sup>93</sup>

He arranged for them wheeled canopied couches of closely woven ropes.<sup>94</sup> Rabbi Shim’on said, “Torah does not require this.” He removed them and they sat down.<sup>95</sup>

Rabbi Pinḥas said, “Before we eat, let us hear a word from the Luminary of Torah, for all words of Rabbi Shim’on are revealed—a man who speaks them without fear of those above or those below. He has no fear of those above, for the blessed Holy One confirms [60a] what he says. He has no fear of those below, for a lion is not afraid of a flock of sheep.”<sup>96</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on said to Rabbi El’azar, his son, “El’azar, stand erect and say a new word in the presence of Rabbi Pinḥas and the other Companions!”

Rabbi El’azar rose. He opened, saying, “*YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron’s two sons, when they encroached upon the presence of YHVH and died* (Leviticus 16:1). This verse should be investigated, for it seems superfluous, since afterward it is written *YHVH said to Moses, ‘Speak to Aaron your brother’* (ibid., 2). Here is where the portion begins, so why does this preceding verse read *YHVH spoke to Moses*? What did He say to him? And afterward, *YHVH said to Moses!*<sup>97</sup>

“Well, when the blessed Holy One presented aromatic incense to Aaron, He wanted no one but him to use it in his lifetime. Why? Because Aaron increased peace in the world. The blessed Holy One said to him, ‘You wish to increase peace in the world, and by your hand peace will increase above. Surely, aromatic incense will be delivered to your hand from now on, and during your lifetime no other person will use it.’ In their father’s lifetime, Nadab and Abihu offered prematurely what was not entrusted to them, and this is what caused them to err.”<sup>98</sup>

“It has been taught: Moses wondered what caused this error, and he was sad. What is written? *YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron’s two sons*. What did He say to him? בקרבתם (*Be-qorvatam*), *When they encroached upon, the presence of YHVH and died*. It is not written בהקריבם (*be-haqrivam*), *when they offered*, but rather *be-qorvatam, when they encroached upon*. The blessed Holy One said, ‘Moses, this was the cause, for they forced the hour in their father’s lifetime, and they erred’—corresponding to what is written: *which He had not commanded them* (Leviticus 10:1)—*them He had not commanded*.<sup>99</sup>

“Now if Aaron’s two sons brought all this upon themselves by forcing the hour in their father’s lifetime, then I—in the presence of my father and Rabbi Pinḥas and the other Companions—how much more so!”<sup>100</sup>

Rabbi Pinḥas came and kissed him and blessed him.

Rabbi Shim’on opened, saying, “*Here is 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 fear in the night* (Song of Songs 3:7-8). *Here is the bed of Solomon—what is the bed?* The King’s throne of glory, as is written: *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and no booty will he lack* (Proverbs 31:11).<sup>101</sup>

“שלשלמה (*She-li-shlomoh*), *Of Solomon—the King who possesses all שלמה (*shelama*), peace*.<sup>102</sup>

“*Sixty warriors surrounding her—clinging to Her sides, of harsh Judgment and called ‘sixty lashes of fire,’ in which that Youth is clothed. On his right, a flashing sword. On his left, fiercely burning coals attached to his coat of mail with seventy thousand flames of consuming fire. Those sixty are armed with heavy weapons from the mighty גבורין (*gevuran*) powers, of supernal *Gevurah* of the blessed Holy One, as is written: מגבורי (*mi-gibborei*) of the warriors of, Israel*.<sup>103</sup>

“It has been taught: What is written of this bed? *She rises while it is still night* (Proverbs 31:15)—when She

sucks from the side of Judgment. *And provides* טָרַף (*teref*), *prey, for her household* (ibid.). What is *teref*? As is said: וְטָרַף (*Ve-taraf*), *It tears apart, with none to deliver* (Micah 5:7). This corresponds to what is written: *all of them skilled with a sword, expert in war—ready to execute judgment anywhere, and called trumpeters and howlers.*[104](#)

*“Each with his sword on his thigh—as is said: Gird your sword on the thigh, O warrior* (Psalms 45:4).[105](#)

*“Because of fear in the night—we have already established this: ‘Because of the fear of Hell....’ However, מִפַּחַד (*mi-pahad*), from fear, in the night—that is, from where do they obtain all this? *Mi-pahad, from fear—from that place called Pahad* (Fear), as is said: *The Fear of Isaac was with me* (Genesis 31:42); *Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac* (ibid., 53).[106](#)*

*“In the night—when they are commissioned to execute judgment.*[107](#)

*“It has been taught: She ponders a field and acquires it... (Proverbs 31:16)—as is written: All beasts of the field play there* (Job 40:20). Thus it is written *This sea, vast and broad of reach.... There ships go... (Psalms 104:25–26)—as is said: She is like merchant ships, from afar she brings her food* (Proverbs 31:14)—*from afar, surely; from the brain of the head and from above the head. She brings her food—by means of Righteous One, when they couple as one; then, joy of all, as is written: Leviathan whom You fashioned to play with* (Psalms 104:26).[108](#)

*“It has been taught: One thousand five hundred shield-bearers, wielders of dominion, are linked to the side of those warriors. In the hands of the one called Youth are four huge keys. Sea serpents move beneath the ship [60b] of the mighty sea in four directions—one moving to this side, one moving to that side, one moving to the other side, and one moving to the back.*[109](#)

*“Four facial images appear in them, and when merging in one, it is written The image of their face was a human*

*face* (Ezekiel 1:10)—face of all; large face and small face merging above.[110](#)

“Two rise and roam, with two spades in their hands. A thousand mountains enter and rise daily from the flow of that sea, afterward uprooted from Her, rising to another sea. Countless are those clinging to Her hair.[111](#)

“Two sons suckle daily, called ‘spies of the land.’ This is the mystery of the Book of Concealment, as is written: *Joshua son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, [‘Go, observe the land and Jericho’]* (Joshua 2:1). These suck from beneath the sides of Her limbs.[112](#)

“Two daughters beneath Her feet, of whom is written *The sons of Elohim saw the daughters of humankind...* (Genesis 6:2). These cling to the toenails of that bed, and this is what we have learned: *Then two women, prostitutes, came to the king* (1 Kings 3:16)—*Then [they] came*, not previously. And when Israel below turn their backs on the blessed Holy One, what is written? *My people—their tyrants are children, and women rule over them* (Isaiah 3:12), surely![113](#)

“In the left hand, seventy branches growing among fish of the sea, all red as a rose, and above them one branch even redder. This one, ascending and descending; all of them hidden in Her hair.[114](#)

“When the Master of the Evil Tongue descends, he turns into a serpent, bounding over hills, leaping over rocks, until he finds prey to seize with his nails and consume. Then he calms down and his tongue turns to good. Happy are Israel who prepare prey for him! He returns to his place, entering the Hollow of the Great Abyss.[115](#)

“When spearmen and swordsmen ascend, they are countless, around those sixty supernal ones surrounding that bed. A million and a hundred billion stand in every direction, with this bed above. From it they are nourished—worshiping it, all rising before it.[116](#)

“Below them all issue countless thousands and myriads, descending and roaming the world until shofar blowers trumpet, and they gather. These cling to the filth of fingernails.<sup>[117](#)</sup>

“This bed encompasses them. The feet of this bed grasp the four directions of the world; all enter its entirety. Manifested above and manifested below—in *the heavens above and on the earth below* (Deuteronomy 4:39)—and thus it is written *Here* [is *the bed of Sohmon!*] (Song of Songs 3:7). Why *Here*? Because it is ready for all, above and below. This bed is distinguished of all—called *Adonai*, Master of all, distinguished among forces.<sup>[118](#)</sup>

“Therefore, one must focus on supernal matters, unifying the Holy Name from the place it should be unified. Thus we have learned that it is written *בזאת* (*Be-zot*), *With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary* (Leviticus 16:3)—with this he must draw holiness to its place. From this place one must revere the blessed Holy One. Thus it is written *Were they wise, they would contemplate זאת* (*zot*), *this*—and immediately *understand their final end* (Deuteronomy 32:29). That is, if people would consider how *zot, this*, is linked with all Her forces—and how those forces are all appointed before Her and joined in Her service to punish the wicked—they would immediately *understand their final end* and guard their actions, not sinning before the Holy King.”<sup>[119](#)</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on said further, “If a person succeeds in learning Torah and observes it, then *zot, this*, protects him and makes a covenant with him over his covenant, that it will not depart from him or from his children or from his children's children forever, as is written: *As for Me, zot, this, is My covenant with them...* (Isaiah 59:21).”<sup>[120](#)</sup>

They sat down to eat. While they were eating, Rabbi Shim'on said to the Companions, “Let each one say a word of Torah at the table in the presence of Rabbi Pinhas.”

Rabbi Hizkiyah opened, saying, “*YHVH Elohim has given me a tongue of disciples, to know how to speak timely words to the weary...* (Isaiah 50:4). Happy are Israel, in whom the blessed Holy One delights above all other nations, and to whom He has given [61a] a share in His Holy Name. How is the people of Israel linked to the Holy Name? Because they attain Torah, for whoever attains Torah attains the blessed Holy One.[121](#)

“We have learned in the presence of our Master: What is Holiness? Perfection of all, called supernal Wisdom. From this place issue streams and springs in all directions until reaching *זוֹת* (*zot*), this, whence Holy Spirit is aroused. When *zot* is blessed, She is called Holiness and Wisdom, and they call Her Spirit of Holiness—that is, spirit from that Holiness above. And when mysteries of Torah issue, aroused from Her, She is called Tongue of Holiness.[122](#)

“When that holy anointing oil flows to those two pillars called *טְעֵמָה*, Hosts, it gathers there; and when it issues from there through that level called *יְסוֹד* to this Small Wisdom, She is called *tongue of disciples*, emerging to arouse those holy ones of the Highest. Then is written *YHVH Elohim has given me a tongue of disciples, to know how to speak timely words to the weary.*[123](#)

“And the blessed Holy One has given this to the Holy Lamp, Rabbi Shim’on. Furthermore, He has raised him higher and higher; so all his words are spoken openly and not concealed. Of him is written *Mouth to mouth I speak with him; in a clear vision, not in riddles* (Numbers 12:8).[124](#)

Rabbi Yeisa opened, saying, “*YHVH gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him, and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon...* (1 Kings 5:26). *YHVH gave Solomon wisdom*—this is what we have learned: In the days of King Solomon, the moon waxed full.[125](#)

“*As He had promised him*—as is said: *Wisdom and knowledge are granted to you* (2 Chronicles 1:12).



*“And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon—* what is the connection between this and that? Well, we have learned as follows: *YHVH gave Solomon wisdom*, and how did he establish this wisdom? First by this—bringing Hiram down from that rung of which he boasted: *I sit in the seat of God* (Ezekiel 28:2). For we have learned: Hiram, king of Tyre, declared himself a god. Afterward, Solomon came and, by his wisdom, caused [Hiram] to give up this plan, and he conceded. Therefore, *there was peace between Hiram and Solomon.*[126](#)

“And we have learned: Rabbi Yitshak said in the name of Rabbi Yehudah that [Solomon] sent him a demon, who lowered him through the seven habitations of Hell and brought him up. Then he sent him letters every single day by [the demon’s] hand until he retracted and conceded to Solomon.[127](#)

“We have learned: Solomon inherited the moon in all its aspects, and thereby he ruled over all in his wisdom. And Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai rules in his generation over all inhabitants of the world, for all those who scale the rungs do so only if they are at peace with him.”[128](#)

Rabbi Yose opened, saying, *“My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your form, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet and your form beautiful* (Song of Songs 2:14). *My dove*—Assembly of Israel; for [just as a dove] never forsakes her mate, so Assembly of Israel does not forsake the blessed Holy One.[129](#)

*“In the clefts of the rock*—scholars, who find no tranquility in this world.[130](#)

*“In the covert of the cliff*—the modest among them, the pious among them, revering the blessed Holy One and from whom *Shekhinah* never departs.[131](#)

“Then the blessed Holy One asks, concerning Assembly of Israel, *Let me see your form, let me hear your voice; for*

*your voice is sweet*—for no voice is heard above except the voice of those engaging in Torah.<sup>132</sup>

“And we have learned: The image of all those engaged in Torah is engraved above before the blessed Holy One, and He converses with them every day and gazes upon them. That voice here ascends, splitting all those heavens until it rises before the blessed Holy One. Then is written *For your voice is sweet and your form beautiful*. And surely, the blessed Holy One has engraved the image of Rabbi Shim’on high above, and his voice ascends on high and is adorned with a holy crown, until the blessed Holy One is crowned with him in all worlds, glorying in him. Of him is written *He said to me, ‘You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory’* (Isaiah 49:3).”<sup>133</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, saying, “*That which is has already been called by name, and what is to be [already has been...]* (Ecclesiastes 3:15). *That which is has already [been]*—corresponding to what we have learned: Before the blessed Holy One created this world, He created worlds and destroyed them, until [61b] the blessed Holy One entertained the desire to create this world, and He consulted the Torah. Then He was arrayed in His adornments and adorned with His crowns, and He created this world. All that exists in this world was already in His presence, rising before Him, arranged before Him.”<sup>134</sup>

“It has been taught: All those inhabitants of the world, existing in every single generation, stood before Him in their images before they came into the world. And it has been taught as follows: Even all those souls of humanity are all engraved before Him in heaven, in the actual form that they will assume in this world; and everything that they learn in this world they knew before coming to the world.”<sup>135</sup>

“And it has been taught: This applies to the truly righteous. As for all those who are not found to be righteous in this world, even there they distance

themselves from the blessed Holy One and enter the Hollow of the Great Abyss. Forcing the time, they descend to the world. As for their souls, we have already learned that just as they are stiff-necked in this world, so they were before coming to the world. And the holy share that He gave them they throw away, and they are drawn into that Hollow of the Great Abyss, where they obtain their share, and, forcing the time, they descend to the world. If [such a one] becomes worthy later and returns to his Lord, he obtains his very own share, as is written: *That which is has already been called by name, and what is to be already has been.*[136](#)

*“Has already been called by name.* Come and see: The sons of Aaron had no equal in Israel except for Moses and Aaron, and they are called *the nobles of the Children of Israel* (Exodus 24:11); yet because they erred in the presence of the King, they died. Now, did the blessed Holy One wish to annihilate them? Surely we have learned in the mystery of our Mishnah that the blessed Holy One performs kindness to all, and even the wicked of the world He does not wish to annihilate. So would it enter your mind that these truly virtuous ones perished from the world? Where was their merit? Where was the merit of their fathers? Where, similarly, was the merit of Moses? How could they have perished?[137](#)

“Well, we have learned as follows from the Holy Lamp: The blessed Holy One felt concern for their honor, so their bodies were burnt within, yet their souls did not perish, as we have established.[138](#)

“Come and see: Before Aaron’s sons died, *Eleazar son of Aaron took himself one of the daughters of Putiel as a wife, [and she bore him Phinehas...]* (Exodus 6:25). Phinehas’s name was given, for he was destined to rectify this contortion, as is written: *and what is to be already has been.*[139](#)

“It has been taught: Before coming to the world, all the righteous of the world are arrayed with their names. And ever since the day that the blessed Holy One created the world, Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai had been poised before the blessed Holy One and present with Him. Happy is his share above and below! Of him is written *Your father and your mother will rejoice* (Proverbs 23:25)—*your father* is the blessed Holy One; *and your mother* is Assembly of Israel.”[140](#)

Rabbi Abba opened and expounded, “*While the king was on his couch, my nard yielded its fragrance* (Song of Songs 1:12). This verse has been established by the Companions: When the blessed Holy One appeared at Mount Sinai, ready to give the Torah to Israel, *my nard yielded its fragrance*—Israel emitted a fine fragrance, which endures and protects them for countless generations; this is *We will do and we will listen* (Exodus 24:7).[141](#)

“Alternatively, *While the king was on his couch*—while Moses ascended to receive the Torah from the blessed Holy One, which was engraved on two tablets of stone, Israel abandoned that fine fragrance adorning them and said of the Calf, *These are your gods, O Israel* (Exodus 32:4).[142](#)

“Now this verse is in mystery of wisdom. Come and see! It is written: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10). This river spreads on all sides when this Eden couples with it in perfect union—a coupling by that path that is not known above or below, as is written: *a path unknown to a bird of prey...* (Job 28:7)—and they are in rapture, never separating from one another. Then springs and streams issue, crowning the Holy Son with all those crowns, and then is written *upon the crown with which his mother crowned him* (Song of Songs 3:11). At that moment, this Son obtains the inheritance of His Father and Mother, and then revels in that joyous delight.[143](#)

“It has been taught: When the supernal King sits amidst royal delicacies, adorned with His crowns, it is written *While the king was on his couch, my nard yielded its fragrance*—*Yesod*, generating blessings so that the Holy King may couple [62a] with *Matronita* through this rung. Then blessings are conveyed through all worlds, and those above and those below are blessed.<sup>144</sup>

“And now the Holy Lamp is adorned with his crowns, and the Companions send forth praises from below to above, and He is crowned. Now blessings should be generated for all those Companions from above to below through this holy rung. Let Rabbi El’azar, his son, tell us some of those sublime words that he has learned from his father!”<sup>145</sup>

Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, “*He looked, and here: a well in the field... When all the flocks were gathered there...* (Genesis 29:2-3). These verses should be contemplated—they constitute a mystery of wisdom that I learned from my father. I learned as follows: *He looked, and here: a well in the field*. Who is a well? The one of whom is written *The well, dug by princes, delved by the people’s nobles* (Numbers 21:18).<sup>146</sup>

“*And there were three flocks of sheep lying beside it* (Genesis 29:2)—*Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, who lie beside Her and stand over Her, and from whom that well is filled with blessings.<sup>147</sup>

“*For from that well the flocks were watered* (ibid.)—for from that well those above and those below are nourished, and all of them are blessed as one.<sup>148</sup>

“*The stone on the mouth of the well was large* (ibid.)—harsh Judgment, standing over Her from the other side to suckle Her.<sup>149</sup>

“*When all the flocks were gathered there* (ibid., 3)—those six crowns of the King, all gathering in from the head of the King and pouring into Her. When they all join as one to pour into Her, it is written *They would roll the stone off*

*the mouth of the well* (ibid.)—rolling that harsh Judgment and removing it from *the mouth of the well*.<sup>150</sup>

“*And water the sheep* (ibid.)—pouring blessings from that well for those above and those below.<sup>151</sup>

“Afterward, *they would put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well* (ibid.)—that Judgment returns to its place, for it is needed in order to make the world fragrantly firm, to mend the world.<sup>152</sup>

“And now the blessed Holy One pours blessings upon you from the spring of the stream, and from you all members of the generation are blessed. Happy is your share in this world and in the world that is coming! Of you is written *All your children will be disciples of YHVH, and great will be the peace of your children* (Isaiah 54:13).”<sup>153</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on opened, “*Let the devout delight in glory; let them sing for joy on their couches...* (Psalms 149:5). It has been taught: The bond of faith is bound by thirteen attributes, so that blessings may be available for all; and the entire faith of the blessed Holy One is sealed in three. Consequently, Torah is crowned with thirteen principles, as we have established: ‘קל וחומר (*Qal va-homer*), A fortiori; גזירה זוה (*gezerah shavah*), verbal analogy; etc....’ Several times we have established this. The Holy Name is crowned with this.<sup>154</sup>

“Come and see: When Jacob wanted his sons to be blessed by the bond of faith, what is written? *All these are the tribes of Israel, twelve, וזאת (*ve-zot*), and this* (Genesis 49:28)—thirteen, since *Shekhinah* participated with them, so the blessings were fulfilled. This corresponds with what is written: *each according to his blessing, he blessed them* (ibid.). What is *according to his blessing*? According to the paradigm above, *according to the blessing* of every single attribute.<sup>155</sup>

“It has been taught: All those attributes ascend and are crowned, resting on a certain head, crowned there on the head of the King—the one called by the highest rung of devotion. And *the devout* inherit all that *glory* above, as is



written: *Let the devout delight in glory*—in this world. *Sing for joy on their couches*—in the world that is coming.<sup>156</sup>

*“Exultations of God in their throat* (Psalms 149:6)—for they know how to bind the bond of faith fittingly.<sup>157</sup>

*“Then, a double-edge sword in their hand* (ibid.). Who is *a double-edged sword? The sword of YHVH* (Isaiah 34:6), sword of the blessed Holy One. *Double-edged*—flashing with two judgments. Why? *To wreak vengeance upon the nations...* (Psalms 149:7).<sup>158</sup>

*“And here is Rabbi Pinḥas, crown of Ḥesed, supernal head! So ḥasidin, the devout, inherit glory* above—supernal bond, holy bond, bond of faith. Happy is our share in this world and in the world that is coming! Of this is said *This is the table that is before YHVH* (Ezekiel 41:22).”<sup>159</sup>

Rabbi Pinḥas rose and kissed him, and kissed Rabbi El’azar and all the Companions, and blessed them. Taking the cup, he recited the blessing.<sup>160</sup>

He opened, saying, *“You set out a table before me in the face of my foes; You refresh my head with oil, my cup overflows* (Psalms 23:5).”<sup>161</sup>

They rejoiced there that whole day—all the Companions were rejoicing [62b] in words of Torah, and great was the joy of Rabbi Shim’on. Rabbi Pinḥas grasped Rabbi El’azar and would not let go of him that whole day and through the night, rejoicing with him. He proclaimed over him: *“Then you will delight upon YHVH* (Isaiah 58:14). All this extreme joy that I share derives from his being with me. Of this is written *Happy the people who has it so!...* (Psalms 144:15). One day they will proclaim over me in that world: Happy is your share, Rabbi Pinḥas, that you attained all this! *Peace unto you, and peace unto him who helps you, for your God helps you!* (1 Chronicles 12:19).”<sup>162</sup>

They set out early on their way. Rabbi Pinḥas rose and grasped Rabbi El’azar and would not let him leave. Rabbi Pinḥas escorted Rabbi Shim’on, blessing him and all the Companions.<sup>163</sup>

As they went along, Rabbi Shim'on said to the Companions, "*It is time to act for YHVH* (Psalms 119:126)."[164](#)

Rabbi Abba came and asked, "It is written *Aaron shall place lots upon the two goats, one lot for YHVH and one lot for Azazel* (Leviticus 16:8). Why these lots? And was Aaron the one to place lots? And why this Torah portion? We have already learned before my Master the order of the Day [of Atonement], yet this I wish to know."

Rabbi Shim'on opened, saying, "*He took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes* (Genesis 42:24). Now, what prompted Joseph to take Simeon rather than another one of his brothers? Well, Joseph said, 'Everywhere Simeon and Levi are initiators of Judgment. When I left my father to go to my brothers, Simeon opened first in Judgment, as is written: *They said, a man to his brother, "Here comes that dream-master! Come now, let's kill him..."* (ibid. 37:19). Afterward in Shechem, *Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, [Dinah's brothers, each] took [his sword]...* (ibid. 34:25). Simeon and Levi abide in Judgment; better to take one from the other, so that no quarreling may be aroused among all the tribes.'[165](#)

"We have learned: What prompted Simeon to pair with Levi rather than with all the others? After all, his brother Reuben was close to him. Yes, but Simeon knew and saw that Levi came from the side of Judgment, and Simeon was linked with the side of harsher Judgment. He said, 'If they mingle with one another, they can destroy the world!' What did the blessed Holy One do? He took Levi as His own share, and said, 'From here on, let Simeon be accompanied by concatenation all alone.'[166](#)

"It has been taught: On the side of Mother, two dazzling, demonic guardians are attached to Her left hand. As we have established, they spy out the land every single day—corresponding to the mystery written: *two men as spies* (Joshua 2:1).[167](#)

“And it has been taught: Happy is the share of Israel above all peoples, for the blessed Holy One wishes to purify them and have compassion upon them! They are His allotted share, as is written: *Indeed, YHVH’s share is His people, Jacob His allotted possession* (Deuteronomy 32:9), and it is written *He set him atop the heights of the land* (ibid., 13)—*atop the heights of the land*, precisely, for they are linked high above! So out of His love for them, the blessed Holy One cleaves to them, as is written: *I have loved you* (Malachi 1:2), and it is written *Because of YHVH’s love for you* (Deuteronomy 7:8). And from His great love for them, He gave them one day in the year to purify them of their sins, as is written: *For on this day purgation will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure* (Leviticus 16:30). Therefore on this day the people of Israel are crowned and they overpower all those guardians and all those dazzling demons, for they are worthy in this world and worthy of the world that is coming, and no sin is found in them.[168](#)

“It has been taught: *Aaron shall place lots upon the two goats. Aaron shall place*—because he comes from the side of *Hesed*.[169](#)

“על (Al), *Upon, the two goats*—*al, above*, precisely, so that *Matronita* may be sweetened.[170](#)

“*One lot for YHVH and one lot for Azazel*—look, there are two goats; why is one *for YHVH*? Well, the blessed Holy One said, ‘Let one abide with Me and one go roaming the world, for if the two of them join together, the world will not be able to endure.’[171](#)

“This one sets out and finds Israel absorbed in various acts of worship, on various rungs, in various fine practices—he cannot overcome them. They are all at peace with one another; he cannot penetrate them by slander. He goes roaming through the world, and he finds Israel acting similarly. They send off that other goat with his burden of all Israel’s sins.[172](#)

“It has been taught: Numerous bands of dazzling demons join, under his control, appointed to spy out the land for all those [63a] who transgress the words of Torah. Yet on that day they find no opening above to speak against Israel.[173](#)

“When this goat reaches the mountain, what joy upon joy! They all are assuaged by it, and that guardian who set out retracts and declares the praises of Israel, the Accuser becoming the Advocate.[174](#)

“Come and see: Not this alone, but everywhere that the people of Israel wants to be purified of their sins, the blessed Holy One provides them a plan to bind the incriminators and appease them by those sacrifices and ascent offerings brought before the blessed Holy One, and then they cannot harm. And this day, more than all: just as the people of Israel assuages all, so they assuage all who have an opening—and all is an offering, a worship of the blessed Holy One.[175](#)

“It has been taught: At the time of which is written *Aaron shall take the two goats...* (Leviticus 16:7), those two above are aroused on that day, seeking to dominate and set out into the world. As soon as the priest brings forward these below, those above are brought forward. Then lots ascend on all sides: the priest places lots below, the Priest places lots above. Just as one is left for the blessed Holy One below, so too above, while one goes forth roaming the world, and one below is sent out to the higher desert—one bound to the other.[176](#)

“It is written: *Aaron shall lay his two hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the Children of Israel* (Leviticus 16:21). וּסְמַךְ אֶהָרֵן אֶת שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו (ve-samakh Aharon et shettei yadav), *Aaron shall lay his two hands*—so that the blessed Holy One אִסְתַּכֵּם עַל יָדָיו (istakkam al yedoi), would conform to his action.[177](#)

“*On the head of the live goat—the live*, precisely, to include that one above.[178](#)

“And confess עליו (*alav*), over it, all the iniquities of the Children of Israel—as is written: *He shall confess חטא עליה אשר (asher ḥata aleha), that concerning which, he has sinned (Leviticus 5:5), and as we have established, aleha implies that the person has been purified and the entire sin remains aleha, upon it. Here, too, and confess alav—after the priest has confessed on behalf of Israel, alav, that is, all of [the sins] remain alav, upon it.*”[179](#)

Rabbi Abba said to him, “If so, look at what is written: *They shall no longer offer their sacrifices לשעירים (la-se’irim), to the goats (Leviticus 17:7)!*”[180](#)

He replied, “Here it is different. For there they brought an offering *la-se’irim, to the goats*, so it is not written *They shall no longer offer שעירים (se’irim), goats, as their sacrifices*, but rather *la-se’irim, to the goats*, since there they offered worship and ascribed dominion *to the goats*. Here, *The goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities (Leviticus 16:22), and the sacrifice is offered only to the blessed Holy One.*[181](#)

“Come and see: By means of the offering, those above and those below are assuaged, and Judgment has no sway over Israel.

“It has been taught: *And send it off in the hand of עתי א״ש (ish itti), a readied man (Leviticus 16:21).* What is *ish itti, a readied man*? Mystery of the matter is as follows: [63b] Whatever is done, a person must be ready for that deed. There is a certain kind of person through whom blessing is fulfilled more than through others, because he is ready. And there is a person who is ready for curse to be fulfilled through him, and whatever he looks at is attacked by curse, blight, and terror. For example, Balaam, who is called ‘evil-eyed’ since he was ready for all evil and not ready for good. Even though he blessed, his blessing was no blessing and was not fulfilled; but when he cursed, whatever he uttered was fulfilled, even in one moment. Thus it is written העין סתום (*setum ha-ayin*), *whose eye is closed (Numbers 24:3).* Whatever his eye apprehended was cursed.[182](#)

“Come and see what is written: *He turned his face to the desert* (Numbers 24:1)—so that the one ruling there would be aroused from that direction and come slandering Israel. But what is written of the priests? *He that has a generous eye shall be blessed* (Proverbs 22:9), for he is ready for this, and blessing prevails by his gaze. Thus we have learned: A person should deviate from even a hundred paths in order to avoid encountering someone with an evil eye.<sup>183</sup>

“Here, too, *and send it off in the hand of a readied man*—ready for this and marked for this. The priest could recognize him: one eye larger than the other, hairy eyebrows, kohl-eyed, looking askance. Such a person is ready for this, fittingly, and thus it is written *in the hand of a readied man*.<sup>184</sup>

“In Giscala there was a man whose hands brought death wherever they struck, so people would not come near him. In Syria there was a man whose gaze, even if intended for good, turned everything evil. One day someone was walking in the street, his face beaming, when that man came and looked at him and his eye burst. So, for everything there is someone ready—for this or for that. Thus it is written *He that has a generous eye* יְבוֹרָךְ (*yevorakh*), *shall be blessed*—do not read *yevorakh, shall be blessed*, but rather יְבַרְךָ (*yevarekh*), *shall bless*.<sup>185</sup>

“It has been taught: When the person going to the desert arrived there with the goat, he would ascend a mountain and push it off with both his hands; so before it fell halfway down the mountain, its limbs were torn to pieces. That person would say: ‘So may [the sins of Your people, the House of Israel] be wiped out.’<sup>186</sup>

“Thereby the Accuser ascends and becomes the Advocate of Israel. Then the blessed Holy One takes all of Israel’s sins and all that is written in those decrees on high, recording human sins, and casts them in the same manner into the place called *depths of the sea*, as is written: *You*



*will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea* (Micah 7:19).<sup>187</sup>

“It has been taught: *From the community of the Children of Israel he shall take two he-goats for a purification offering* (Leviticus 16:5). *From the community*—so that it will be from all of them and atone for all of them, since all the sins of *the Children of Israel* dangle here and all are purged by this, [64a] and it is not sufficient from one person. From where were [the funds] taken? From those baskets in the Temple court, they would take the fee and acquire [the goats] with that money, which was from everyone.<sup>188</sup>

“The other goat, which remained for the blessed Holy One, is brought first as a purification offering, and we have established to which place it is joined. Then [the scapegoat] is brought forward in this manner, and all are assuaged and Israel is left innocent before the blessed Holy One of all the sins that they committed and perpetrated, as is written: *For on this day purgation will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure* (Leviticus 16:30).”<sup>189</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on said further, “It is written: *Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, ‘Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth-skinned man’* (Genesis 27:11). To what does this allude? Well, surely Esau is אִישׁ שַׁעִיר (*ish sa'ir*), a hairy man—from the one called *sa'ir*, goat-demon, since he comes from that side. *And I am* אִישׁ חֲלָק (*ish ḥalaq*), a smooth-skinned man—a man from the One who allotted empowered princes over the other nations, as is written: *for YHVH your God חֲלָק (ḥalaq), allotted, them [to all the peoples]* (Deuteronomy 4:19), and it is written *Indeed, YHVH's חֲלָק (ḥeleq), share, is His people, Jacob His allotted possession* (ibid. 32:9).<sup>190</sup>

“Furthermore, *ish ḥalaq, a smooth-skinned man*—from two goats, one remained; for I divided them: one לחולקיה (le-

*ḥulqeiḥ*), for his share, and one for the blessed Holy One. Why? So that it would carry on its shoulders all the sins of Jacob, as is written: *The goat shall bear upon it all* עֲוֹנוֹתָם (*avonotam*), *their iniquities* (Leviticus 16:22).<sup>191</sup>

“It has been taught: On this day many doors are opened facing Israel to receive their prayers. Happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One wishes to render them worthy and to purify them, as is written: *For on this day purgation will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins...* (Leviticus 16:30). On this day the priest is adorned with many crowns. On this day the service of the priest is the greatest and most precious of all: to everyone he gives a share in those offerings of the blessed Holy One. On this day *Ḥesed* is aroused in the world by the hand of the priest bringing offerings for the sins of the people—first for his own sins, then for the people’s sins. He brings ascent offerings for himself and for the people; we have already established these matters.”<sup>192</sup>

Having gone some distance, they sat in a field and prayed. A fiery cloud descended, surrounding them. Rabbi Shim’on said, “I see that the favor of the blessed Holy One is here. Let us remain seated.” They stayed and uttered words of Torah.<sup>193</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on opened, saying, “*Cold water to a thirsting throat—good news from a distant land* (Proverbs 25:25). I have contemplated the words of Solomon, and all of them were spoken in wisdom.

“Come and see: Three books of wisdom he issued to the world, all in wisdom—Song of Songs, *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom); Ecclesiastes, *Tevunah* (Understanding); Proverbs, *Da’at* (Knowledge). Corresponding to these three he produced three books: Song of Songs corresponding to *Ḥokhmah*, so it is; Ecclesiastes corresponding to *Tevunah*, so it is; Proverbs corresponding to *Da’at*—how is this demonstrated?<sup>194</sup>

“Well, all those verses comprise two aspects, beginning and end appearing as two facets. Yet when the verses are

examined, one is included in the other, and vice versa. So, it is equivalent to *Da'at*.<sup>195</sup>

“As for this verse, its beginning does not match its end, nor the end its beginning. Yet when I examine it, all is included in one another, whether from beginning to end, or from end to beginning. *Good news from a distant land—cold water to a thirsting throat. Cold water to a thirsting throat—good news from a distant land.* Both one and the other are gratification; just as this gratifies, so does that.”

While they were sitting, someone came and said, “Rabbi Shim'on's wife has been healed of her illness!” The Companions heard a voice proclaiming that the blessed Holy One had forgiven the sins of the generation.<sup>196</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on said, “Surely the verse has been fulfilled: *Good news from a distant land—just as gratifying as cold water to a thirsting throat.*” He said to them, “Let us rise and go on, for the blessed Holy One is generating miracles for us!”<sup>197</sup>

He opened, saying, “*Cold water to a thirsting soul—Torah, for whoever succeeds in studying Torah, satiating his soul with it, what is written of him? Good news from a distant land—the blessed Holy One proclaims many benefits to be bestowed upon him in this world and in the world that is coming. As is written: Good news—from where? From a distant land—from the place where previously the blessed Holy One was distant from him, from the place where previously He was at enmity with him, as is written: ארץ (Erets), Earth, will rise up against him (Job 20:27). From that place, [64b] he is greeted with peace, as is written: מארץ מרחק (me-erets merhaq), from a distant land. And it is written: From afar, YHVH appeared to me—‘I have loved you with eternal love; therefore have I conveyed kindness to you’ (Jeremiah 31:3).”<sup>198</sup>*

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*A psalm of Asaph. El, Elohim YHVH has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to*

*He shall go out to the altar that is before YHVH and purge it...* (Leviticus 16:18).[199](#)

*its setting. From Zion, perfection of beauty, God shone forth* (Psalms 50:1-2). It has been taught: There are 15,500,000 masters of

song chanting to the blessed Holy One when the day begins to shine, and 1,548 at noon, and 15,900,000 at the time called 'between the two evenings.'" [200](#)

Rabbi Yose said, "When the day begins to shine, all those trumpeters offer praise to greet the morning as it is aroused. They are all assuaged and Judgment subsides and they utter praises, as is written: *When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of Elohim shouted for joy* (Job 38:7). At that time, blissful faith is manifested in the world, and the blessed Holy One awakens Abraham, reviving him, delighting in him, granting him dominion over the world. How do we know that morning belongs to Abraham? Because of him is written *Abraham hastened early in the morning to the place where he had stood in the presence of YHVH* (Genesis 19:27). [201](#)

"At the time called 'between the two evenings,' all those 15,900,000 howlers are summoned and they sing then. That is the time when the blessed Holy One arouses Isaac, and he rises to judge the wicked who transgress the words of Torah. Seven rivers of fire flow forth, descending upon the heads of the wicked, and flaming fiery coals shoot out from above to below. Then Abraham returns to his place, the day fades, and the wicked in Hell cry out, *Woe unto us, for the day is fading, for shadows of evening are stretching!* (Jeremiah 6:4). At this time, one must be vigilant with the prayer of *minḥah*. [202](#)

"When night arrives, those 1,548 are summoned from outside the curtain, and they utter song. Then judgments below are aroused and go roaming through the world. These utter song until the night is split—a watch and a half.

After night is split, all those others assemble as one and utter praises, as is said: *They will herald the praises of YHVH* (Isaiah 60:6).<sup>203</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, "When favor is found, in the morning, they herald praises."<sup>204</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, "After the north wind is aroused at midnight and then moves on, they herald praises until morning comes and this morning is aroused. Then joy and blessings prevail in the world."<sup>205</sup>

It has been taught: Rabbi Abba said, "All is so, and above them are three officers. When this morning is aroused and praises are aroused, over all those 15,500,000 is appointed one official, named Heman, corresponding to the one below, under whom are appointed officers over them to arrange that song."<sup>206</sup>

"When the time of twilight is aroused, and all those 15,900,000 howlers sing, one official is appointed over them, named Jeduthun, corresponding to the one below, under whom are appointed officers over them to arrange that song, as is said: זמיר עריצים (*zimir aritsim*), *melodious pruning of tyrants* (Isaiah 25:5).<sup>207</sup>

"When night arrives, all those from outside the curtain are aroused. Then all subsides, no opening is found, and judgments below are aroused. All are assigned together, these over those, until the night is split. After night is split and they all gather, one official is appointed over them, gathering all the camps, as is said: מאסף (*me'asseph*), *the gatherer, for all the camps* (Numbers 10:25), and his name is Asaph, corresponding to the one below, under whom are all those appointed officers and heralds of praise.<sup>208</sup>

"Then, before morning comes, the Youth who suckles from his Mother's breast rises to purify them and enters to serve. When morning is aroused, then is a time of favor, when *Matronita* converses with the King, and the King extends from Himself a single [65a] thread of blessing,

spreading over *Matronita* and those joining Her. Who are they? Those engaging in Torah when the night is split.”[209](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, “Happy is the share of one who accompanies *Matronita* when She comes to greet the King, to converse with Him, and who is with Her when the King extends His right Hand to receive *Matronita*, as is written: *If I take wing with the dawn, and I dwell at the end of the sea* (Psalms 139:9). What is *the end of the sea*? This time is *the end of that sea*—for when [the night] is split, it was the beginning and Judgment, and now is Her *end*, when Her judgments vanish and She enters beneath the wings of the King along with all who join Her, as is written: *I dwell at the end of the sea.*[210](#)

“It has been taught: All those who engage in Torah when the night is split participate with *Shekhinah*. When morning comes and *Matronita* joins with the King, such a person is with Her together with the King, and the King spreads His wings over all of them, as is written: *By day YHVH directs His love, and in the night His song is with me...* (Psalms 42:9).[211](#)

“It has been taught: At that time the patriarchs encounter *Matronita* and hasten to converse with Her and join with Her. Through them, the blessed Holy One speaks with Her, calling to Her, to spread His wings over Her, as is written: *EI, Elohim YHVH has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting* (Psalms 50:1). *EI*—radiance of Wisdom, called *Hesed*. *Elohim*—*Gevurah*. *YHVH*—perfection of all, Compassion. Thus, *has spoken, and called the earth.*”[212](#)

Rabbi El'azar was sitting before Rabbi Shim'on, his father. He said to him, “We have learned: *Elohim* is always Judgment —*YHVH* is sometimes pronounced *Elohim*, for example: אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (Adonai Elohim), *my Lord God* (Genesis 15:2). Why is it pronounced *Elohim*, since those [letters] are always Compassion?”[213](#)



He replied, “It is written as follows in Scripture: *Know today and take to your heart that YHVH is Elohim* (Deuteronomy 4:39), and it is written *YHVH is Elohim* (1 Kings 18:39).”[214](#)

He said to him, “This I know, for where there is Judgment there is Compassion, and sometimes where there is Compassion there is Judgment.”[215](#)

He replied, “Come and see that it is so: *YHVH* is always Compassion, but when the wicked turn Compassion into Judgment, it is written *YHVH* yet pronounced *Elohim*.[216](#)

“But come and see mystery of the matter: There are three rungs, and each rung is independent, even though all is one, bound as one, not separating from one another.[217](#)

“Come and see: All those plants and all those burning lamps all shine and glow, are watered and blessed, from that flowing, gushing river, in which all is comprised, totality of all. This is called Mother of the Garden, above the garden, for Eden joins with Her, not parting from Her. Consequently, all springs issue, flow, and water in every direction, opening gateways in Her. So Compassion derives from Her, Compassion is opened in Her. Yet since we call Her Mother—Female—*Gevurah* and Judgment issue from Her. She is called Compassion in Her own right, yet from Her side judgments are aroused; so it is written as Compassion, yet vocalized as Judgment—letters in Compassion, yet Judgment drawn from Her side: *יְהוָה*. This is one rung.[218](#)

“Second rung: From the side of this, another rung emerges and is aroused, called *Gevurah*. This is called *Elohim*, with these letters, and it is one beginning of *Ze’eir Appin*, linked with it. Since they are linked with one another, it is written *YHVH is Elohim* (1 Kings 18:39), *that YHVH is Elohim* (Deuteronomy 4:39)—with these letters—and He is one. This is the second rung.[219](#)

“Third rung: *Tsedeq* (Righteousness), last crown; this is the Court of the King. It has been taught: *Adonai*—thus is it written and thus is it pronounced, and Assembly of Israel is

called so. This name is completed in this place, and these are three rungs, called by names of Judgment, and all join with one another inseparably, as we have established.”[220](#)

He said to him, “If it please my father, I have heard about what is written: אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*Ehyeh asher ehveh*), *I am that I am* (Exodus 3:14), and I do not fathom it.”[221](#)

He replied, “El’azar, my son, the Companions have already established this, and now all is bound in one entity. [65b] Mystery of the matter is as follows: אֶהְיֶה (*Ehyeh*), *I am*—totality of all, for when paths are concealed, not diverging, included in one place, then it is called *Ehyeh*, totality of all, hidden and not revealed. Once a beginning emerges and that river is impregnated, to channel all, then it is called אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*asher ehveh*), *that I am*, meaning: ‘Until here *I am*; *I am* ready to convey and give birth to all.’[222](#)

“*Ehyeh, I am*—meaning: ‘Now I am totality of all, generality with no particular.’ *Asher ehveh, that I am*—for Mother is impregnated and ready to receive all particulars and reveal the supernal Name.[223](#)

“Afterward, Moses wanted to know the details of the matter: Who is it? And He said, *Ehyeh, I am* (Exodus 3:14)—specifically; here it is not written *asher ehveh, that I am*.[224](#)

“I have found in the Book of King Solomon: אֲשֶׁר (*Asher*), *That*—in blissful bond of a supernal castle, companionship appears, as is said: בְּאוֹשְׁרִי (*Be-oshri*), *Happy am I! For daughters אשרוני (isheruni), call me happy*’ (Genesis 30:13). *Ehyeh, I am*—ready to give birth.[225](#)

“Come and see how it descends from rung to rung, revealing the blessed Holy One to Moses. First, *Ehyeh, I am*—totality of all, concealed one that is not revealed at all, as I have said. The sign is וְאֶהְיֶה (*va-ehveh*), *I was, by Him as a nursling* (Proverbs 8:30), and it is written *No human knows its worth, and it cannot be found [in the land of the living]* (Job 28:13). Afterward, He generated that river—supernal Mother—and She became pregnant, ready to give birth;

and He said, *asher ehyeh, that I am*, prepared to give birth and arrange all.[226](#)

“Afterward, She began to give birth, and it is not written *asher, that*, but only *Ehyeh, I am*, meaning: ‘Now all will issue and be arranged.’ Once all issued and was arranged, every single one in its place, He left all and said *YHVH*—the particular, which is existence. At that moment, Moses knew the mystery of the Holy Name—concealed and revealed—and he grasped what no other inhabitant of the world has grasped. Happy is his share!”[227](#)

Rabbi El’azar came and kissed his hands.

He said to him, “El’azar, from here on, be careful to write the Holy Name only fittingly, for whoever does not know how to write the Holy Name fittingly—binding the bond of faith, binding one with the other to unify the Holy Name—of him is written *For he has spurned the word of YHVH and His commandment he has violated. [That soul] shall surely be cut off...* (Numbers 15:31), even if he omits one rung or one bond from any of those letters.[228](#)

“Come and see: ך (Yod), at first—sum of all, concealed on all sides, paths unopened, totality of male and female, the tip above alluding to *Ayin* (Nothingness). After generating that river, flowing and gushing from Him, to be impregnated by Him—ה (he). Of this is written *A river issues from Eden* (Genesis 2:10)—*issues*, not *issued*. So She does not wish to part from Him, and thus: *my companion* (Song of Songs 1:9).[229](#)

“Now, you might say, ‘It is written *a river*—one—yet here are three.’ Certainly so! *Yod* generates three, and in three is all included. *Yod* issues that river and two children, whom Mother suckles; She conceives them and bears them.[230](#)

“Afterward, ה (he), like this: ה ך (yod, he), and those children below Father and Mother.[231](#)

“After giving birth, She brings forth the Son and places Him in front of Her, so one must write ם (vav). This one

obtains the inheritance of Father and Mother, inheriting two portions, and from Him the Daughter is nourished; so one must write afterward וָו (vav, he) as one: וְ (he). Just as the first וְ (he) is וְיָ (yod, he) as one, not to be separated, so here, וָו (vav, he) as one, not to be separated. We have already established these matters, and these words ascend to another place. Happy is the share of the righteous, who know supernal mysteries of the Holy King and are worthy to acclaim Him, as is written: *Surely the righteous will acclaim Your name, the upright will dwell in Your presence* (Psalms 140:14).<sup>232</sup>

It has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said, “*EI, Elohim YHVH has spoken, and called the earth* (Psalms 50:1)—consummation of all, consummation of holy Patriarchs. *Called the earth*—to be with Assembly of Israel in consummate joy. And from what place does He appear with Her? Scripture goes on to say: *From Zion, perfection of beauty, God shone forth* (Psalms 50:2).<sup>233</sup>

“Similarly, it has been taught: When the blessed Holy One wanted to create this world below, He fashioned it corresponding entirely to the pattern above. He made Jerusalem the center of the whole earth, with this place called Zion above her. From this place she is blessed, and in this place of Zion the world began to be built—from here it was built, as is written: *EI, Elohim YHVH has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting*. From which place? *From Zion, perfection of beauty*, [66a] *God shone forth*—that is, *From Zion*, which is perfection of the *beauty* of the world, *God shone forth*. Come and see: Jerusalem is blessed only *from Zion*, and Zion from above, and all are linked with one another.”<sup>234</sup>

It has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said, “*He shall go out to the altar that is before YHVH and purge it* (Leviticus 16:18)—*the altar*, unspecified. Just as is done below, so, as

it were, is it done above, and all are linked with one another.”[235](#)

And it has been taught: Just as on this day the priest purges below, so too above. And when the priest below arranges his service, so does the Priest above. Nothing, as it were, happens above until it happens below. From below, holiness begins to ascend to the supernal King, and all worlds become one in His presence.[236](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If Israel only knew why the blessed Holy One singles them out, reproving them more than all other nations, they would realize that the blessed Holy One abandons His due, not collecting even a hundredth from them.”[237](#)

“It has been taught: How many chariots, how many cohorts does the blessed Holy One possess! How many appointed chieftains are in His service! When He designated Israel in this world, He adorned them with holy crowns, corresponding to the pattern above; He settled them in the Holy Land so that they would be immersed in His service. He linked all supernal beings with Israel, and no joy enters His presence, no service is performed before Him above until Israel performs below.”[238](#)

“As long as Israel is engaged in the service of their Lord, so too above. When Israel neglects the service below, it is, as it were, suspended above, and service exists neither above nor below. Because the people of Israel neglected the service of the blessed Holy One when they dwelled in the Land, so it was above—all the more so afterward!”[239](#)

“The blessed Holy One says to Israel, ‘If you knew how many legions, how many cohorts are impeded because of you, you would realize that you do not deserve to exist in the world for even one moment!’ Even so, what is written? *Yet even this too—when they are in the land of their enemies, [I will not reject them or loathe them...]* (Leviticus 26:44). Thus, *he shall go out to the altar that is before YHVH and purge it* (ibid. 16:18). Afterward, *he shall go out and*

*sacrifice his ascent offering and the people's ascent offering...* (ibid., 24). *And purge it.* What does this indicate?"<sup>240</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, "To arouse *Hesed* above first."<sup>241</sup>

It has been taught: *He shall purge the Sanctuary of the impurities of the Children of Israel...* (Leviticus 16:16). What is meant by *He shall purge the Sanctuary*? Well, Rabbi El'azar said, "We have already learned: The wicked produce a defect above, arousing judgments and causing the Sanctuary to be defiled, and the mighty Serpent begins to reveal itself; then judgments are aroused in the world."<sup>242</sup>

"On this day, the high priest must purify all and arouse his holy crown, head of the King, thereby bringing the King to dwell with *Matronita*. When the head of the King moves, all moves, and He comes to couple with *Matronita*, arousing joy and blessings in the world. Consequently, all peace above and below depends on the priest, for if he arouses his crown, all is aroused and all becomes peaceful. Thus it is written *He shall purge the Sanctuary*—first purging the Sanctuary, to increase peace in the world and increase joy in the world. When joyous coupling occurs between the King and *Matronita*, all the attendants and all members of the palace are in joy—and the whole world rejoices, for all the sins that they have committed before the King are expiated, as is written: *From all your sins before YHVH, you will become pure* (Leviticus 16:30).<sup>243</sup>

"Therefore it is written: *No person shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes in to effect purgation in the Sanctuary until he goes out* (Leviticus 16:17)—when he enters to couple them. For when the King and *Matronita* couple, at that moment, *he shall effect purgation for himself and for his household* (ibid.)."<sup>244</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak opened, "*I will remember My covenant with Jacob and also My covenant with Isaac and also My*



It has been taught: *No person shall be in the Tent of Meeting* (Leviticus 16:17).<sup>245</sup>

*covenant with Abraham I will remember, and the land I will remember* (Leviticus 26:42). We have established this verse.

Come and see: When the people of Israel is in exile, the blessed Holy One, as it were, is with them in exile, for *Shekhinah* never departs from them.<sup>246</sup>

“Come and see: When the people of Israel was in the exile of Babylon, *Shekhinah* dwelled among them, and She returned with them from exile. For the sake of those righteous ones [66b] who remained in the Land, She remained in the Land and never departed from them.”<sup>247</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “For *Matronita* returned to the King, and all returned for the royal wedding celebration. Therefore they are called Men of the Great Assembly, surely!”<sup>248</sup>

“We have learned: Whenever the people of Israel is in exile, if they are worthy, the blessed Holy One hastens His compassion upon them, bringing them forth from exile. And if they are not worthy, He detains them in exile until the time that has been decreed. Even if that time comes and they are undeserving, the blessed Holy One cares deeply for the honor of His Name and does not forget them in exile, as is written: *I will remember my covenant with Jacob...—Patriarchs of all.*”<sup>249</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “Why is Jacob first here? Well, because Jacob is totality of the patriarchs, and he is the Holy Tree. Therefore, ׀ (*vav*) of the Holy Name adheres to him, and so we read: יַעֲקֹב (*Ya’aqov*), with a *vav*.”<sup>250</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “וּאֵל (*vav*) in its letters—thirteen attributes, for He obtains inheritance.”<sup>251</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “Why does ׀ (*vav*) include ׀ ׀ ׀ (*vav, alef, vav*)? Well, ׀ (*vav*)—sitting on the Throne, as is said: *Upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of a*

*human being upon it above* (Ezekiel 1:26). א (Alef)—concealed within it, unrevealed, corresponding to what is written: בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי (Bi nishba'ti), [*By that which is*] *within Me I swear, declares* YHVH (Genesis 22:16). So it is written, yet not pronounced. Last ו (vav)—entirety of first vav. Last vav, as we have established, is Yesod, who is consummation of the body and its entirety. Thus, letters are included with one another: ו (vav), beginning and consummation, as we have established.<sup>252</sup>

“It has been taught: There are two letters like this—וּאֵו (vav), as I have mentioned; נוּן (nun) as well. Although we have established the matter, נוּן (nun) can be explained as follows. The bent נ (nun)—*Matronita*. Adjacent to Her, ו (vav), who is *Yesod*, so that She may be blessed by Him. נ פשוטה (Nun peshutah), The straight *nun*—אֵת פִּשְׁטוּתָא (itpashetuta), extension, of *Tif'eret*. Thus, letters are included and united with one another.<sup>253</sup>

“Now, you might ask, ‘Why does ו (vav) turn its face away from the bent נ (nun) and turn toward the straight נ (nun)?’ Well, out of honor for the King, it turns its face toward Him.<sup>254</sup>

“It has been taught: מֶמֶם (mem) does not include another within itself, since מֶמֶם (mem) consists of open מֶ (mem), closed ׀ (mem). Open מֶ (mem), for the Male joins with Her; closed ׀ (mem)—*Jubilee*, for Her paths are closed, although they spread. And occasionally some apply to this what is said: *A locked garden is my sister bride; a locked fountain, a sealed spring* (Song of Songs 4:12).”<sup>255</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “When the blessed Holy One remembers Israel for the sake of His Name, *Matronita* returns to Her place. Then it is written: *No person shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes in to effect purgation in the Sanctuary* (Leviticus 16:17). Similarly, when the priest enters to unify the Holy Name and to effect purgation in the Sanctuary, coupling the King with *Matronita*, it is written *No person shall be in the Tent of Meeting...*”<sup>256</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah taught, “The priest stimulates peace in the world, above and below, for it has been taught: He enters one level—he washes his body. He leaves this one for another—he washes his body. He joins peace to both of them—he sanctifies his hands, and they are blessed as one. In everything, he must demonstrate action and must display his garments—wearing what corresponds to the action, focusing his intention until he arranges all as it should be, and those above and below are blessed.”[257](#)

It has been taught: ׀ (*Yod*) opens its engravings, letters on sides linked with *yod*. *Yod* moves to *yod*; *yod* attains *yod yod*, assembling within, focusing awareness. ה (*He*) joins with ו (*vav*). Supernal *he* grasps its gates in engraved array, joined with its rivers—1,570 concealed porticos. *He* ascends and is crowned fifty times for fifty gates, erect columns. When engraved with its crowns, the face of the King shines. *Vav* expands into seventy-two engravings. *He* adorns *vav* with 70,500 crowns, adorned with one crown, as is written: *upon the crown with which his mother crowned him* (Song of Songs 3:11).[258](#)

*Vav* is engraved with two heads: one head-tip above, one tip below. *Vav* descends to *vav*, graving of engravings within them, seventy facets of crowns from above to below. Within it fly cups and blossoms—these ascending, those descending, engraved in one another.[259](#)

*Yod* is linked with *he*, *he* with *vav*, *vav* with *vav*, *vav* with *he*, joining one another, as is said: *Yet firm remained his bow, agile were his forearms—by the hands of the Champion of Jacob* (Genesis 49:24), and it is written *Firm is your dwelling, and set in the cliff your nest* (Numbers 24:21).[260](#)

Then all is linked [67a] with one another—rivers opening, all faces beaming. Then all fall on their faces, tremble, and say, “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever.”[261](#)

A voice joins the priest, and he responds to them, saying *You will become pure* (Leviticus 16:30). Neither the

other priests nor the people say *You will become pure*, only the high priest, when that voice joins him.[262](#)

It has been taught: *From all your sins before YHVH, you will become pure* (Leviticus 16:30). Since it is written *from all your sins, why before YHVH?* Well, Rabbi Yitshak said, “*Before YHVH, precisely!* For it has been taught: From the beginning of the month books are opened and judges sit in judgment. Every single day courts are empowered to open proceedings, until the day called ‘the ninth of the month.’ On that day judgments all ascend to the Master of Judgment, and a supernal holy throne is prepared for the King. On that day Israel below should rejoice before their Lord, who is ready to sit over them on the holy Throne of Mercy, the Throne of Leniency.[263](#)

“All those books lie open before Him, inscribed before Him, as is written: *From all your sins before YHVH, you will become pure—before YHVH, precisely!* Those who recite the verse—until here they recite and no further. No one is permitted to say תטהרו (*titharu*), *you will become pure*, except the high priest, who performs the ritual and binds the Name by his mouth. Once it has been bound and blessed by his mouth, that voice descends and strikes him, and a word is illumined in the mouth of the priest and he says *titharu, you will become pure*.[264](#)

“He performs the ritual, and all the remaining ones above are blessed. Afterward he washes his body and sanctifies his hands to embark on another holy ritual, finally intending to enter the most precious place of all.[265](#)

“Three ranks surround him, consisting of his fellow priests and some of the rest of the people, all of them offering blessings before him and raising their hands over him in prayer. A golden knotted cord hangs from his leg.[266](#)

“He takes three steps, and they all stand where they are, not following him. He offers up incense. He takes another three steps, engraved in his heart, circling his

place. He takes another three steps, closes his eyes, and binds himself above. He enters the place that he enters, and hears the sound of the wings of the cherubim—singing and fluttering their wings, spreading them above. The sound of their wings subsides, and in silence they cleave together.[267](#)

“If the priest is worthy that those above are in a state of joy, so too at that moment issues a rapturous light, scented with fragrances of mountains of pure balsam above, and it spreads throughout that place. The fragrance enters his two nostrils, and his heart is calmed. Then all is silent, with no opening for accusation.[268](#)

“The priest opens his mouth in prayer, fervently, joyously, and offers his prayer. When he finishes, the cherubim raise their wings as before and sing. Then the priest knows that it is a time of favor, of joy for all, and the people know, as is written: *If your sins are like crimson, they will become white as snow...* (Isaiah 1:18). He backs away and utters his prayer.[269](#)

“Happy is the share of the priest, for through him there is joy upon joy on that day above and below. Of that moment is written *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH!* (Psalms 144:15).”

*It shall be a perpetual statute for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict your souls...* (Leviticus 16:29).[270](#)

—the verse should read *My soul desires You in the night; why My soul, I desire You?*

“*My spirit within me, I seek You at dawn*—the verse should read *seeks You at dawn*.[271](#)

Rabbi Hiyya opened, “(With) my soul I desire You in the night, (with) my spirit within me I seek You at dawn... (Isaiah 26:9). *My soul, I desire You in the night*

“However, it has been taught as follows: The blessed Holy One is the spirit and soul of all, and Israel says, ‘*My soul*’ and ‘*my spirit*.’ Thus, ‘*I desire You, to cleave to You, and I seek You at dawn to find Your favor.*’”<sup>272</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “Come and see: When a person is sleeping in his bed, his soul departs, ascends, and testifies to all that he has done the whole day. The body says to the soul, *My soul, I desire you in the night*; [67b] *my spirit within me, I seek you at dawn.*”<sup>273</sup>

“Alternatively, *My soul, I desire You in the night*—Assembly of Israel says before the blessed Holy One, ‘*My soul, I desire You in the night*: As long as I am in exile among the nations, satiating *my soul* with all their piping-hot bread, *I desire You*—so as to return to My place.’”<sup>274</sup>

“*My spirit within me, I seek You at dawn*—that is, ‘Even though they subject My children to all kinds of oppression, the Holy Spirit does not depart from Me, in order to seek You at dawn and keep Your commandments.’”<sup>275</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Israel says before the blessed Holy One, ‘As long as *my soul* is within me, *I desire You in the night*. Why *in the night*? Well, because this soul must desire You at that time.’”<sup>276</sup>

“*My spirit within me, I seek You at dawn*—‘when the Holy Spirit is aroused within me, *I seek You at dawn*, aroused to do Your will.’”<sup>277</sup>

“For when משפטיך (*mishpatekha*), *Your judgments, reach the earth* (Isaiah 26:9)—when משפט (*mishpat*), *Justice, descends to the earth, rendering the world fragrantly firm, then, inhabitants of the world learn righteousness* (ibid.), meaning: they are able to bear the Judgment of *righteousness*, and the world is not destroyed by it. When do *inhabitants of the world learn righteousness*? *When Your justice reaches the earth.*”<sup>278</sup>

Rabbi Hizkiyah said, “*My soul, I desire You in the night*—Assembly of Israel. *My spirit within me, I seek You at dawn*—the blessed Holy One.”<sup>279</sup>



Rabbi Abba was sitting before Rabbi Shim'on. At midnight, Rabbi Shim'on rose to study Torah. Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba rose with him.<sup>280</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on opened, saying, *'As a deer yearns for streams of water, so my soul yearns for You, O God* (Psalms 42:2). This verse has been established by the Companions. Happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One has given them holy souls from a holier place than for all other nations, so that they would carry out His commandments and delight in Torah. For whoever delights in Torah has no fear of anything, as is written: *Had not Your Torah been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction* (Psalms 119:92).<sup>281</sup>

“What is *delight*? Torah is called *delight*, as is written: *I was a delight day after day* (Proverbs 8:30). This corresponds to what we have learned: The blessed Holy One comes to delight with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. What is meant by ‘to delight’? To rejoice with them. For we have learned: Happy are the righteous, of whom is written *Then you will delight upon YHVH* (Isaiah 58:14), drawing delight from the saturation of the stream, as is said: *He will satiate your soul with radiances* (ibid., 11). The blessed Holy One, as it were, delights with them from that stream’s saturation in which the righteous revel; so He comes to delight with the righteous. Whoever engages in Torah is privileged to delight [68a] from that streaming saturation.<sup>282</sup>

“It has been taught: כַּאֵיל (Ke-ayyal), *As a deer, yearns for streams of water*—Assembly of Israel, as is said: אֵילוּתִי (Eyaluti), *My strength, hasten to my aid!* (Psalms 22:20).<sup>283</sup>

“*Yearns for streams of water*—surely, to be saturated by the flowing springs of the stream by means of Righteous One. תַּעֲרוּגָה (Ta'arog), *Yearns*—as is said: לַעֲרוּגוֹת (la-arugot), *to the beds of, spices* (Song of Songs 6:2).<sup>284</sup>

“*So my soul yearns for You, O God*—to be saturated by You in this world and in the world that is coming, from the

springs of the stream. Who are the springs? One spring is above, as is written: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden* (Genesis 2:10), and from there it flows and gushes, watering the Garden. All those streams flow forth, gathering in two springs called *Netsah* and *Hod*, who are called *streams of water*—on the level of Righteous One, from whom the flow proceeds, and the Garden is watered. Therefore, *deer and gazelle* are found together, Righteousness and Righteous One.<sup>285</sup>

“It has been taught: It is written *The voice of YHVH brings on the birth pangs of does and lays bare the forests* (Psalms 29:9)—these are *does of the field* (Song of Songs 2:7).<sup>286</sup>

“Alternatively, *brings on the birth pangs of אילות (ayyalot), does*—spelled deficiently: אילת (ayyelet), *doe*.<sup>287</sup>

“Alternatively, *does of the field*, as has been taught: At midnight, when the blessed Holy One enters the Garden of Eden to delight with the righteous, this *voice* issues and writhes all these does surrounding the holy Throne of Glory, as is written: *sixty warriors surrounding her* (Song of Songs 3:7).<sup>288</sup>

“Alternatively, יהולל (yeholel), *brings on the birth pangs of, does*—as is said: *His hand חוללה (holalah), brought forth, the elusive Serpent* (Job 26:13).<sup>289</sup>

“*And lays bare יערות (ye’arot), the forests* (Psalms 29:9)—as is said: *ביערת הדבש (be-ya’rat ha-devash), into the honeycomb* (1 Samuel 14:27), and it is written *I have eaten יערי (ya’ri), my honeycomb, with my honey* (Song of Songs 5:1)—and He nurses them like a mother nursing children.”<sup>290</sup>

Rabbi Abba said to him, “*My soul, I desire You in the night; my spirit within me, I seek You at dawn* (Isaiah 26:9). *I desire You*—the verse should read *desires You*. *I seek You at dawn*—the verse should read *seeks You at dawn*.”<sup>291</sup>

He replied, “This has already been established, as is written: *In whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the spirit of all human flesh* (Job 12:10).<sup>292</sup>

“Come and see: Soul and spirit join as one eternally. One participates with the other, and we have established this matter.[293](#)

“It has been taught: The perfect service that a person should offer the blessed Holy One is as we have learned: *You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might* (Deuteronomy 6:5)—loving the blessed Holy One with the love of his very soul. This is perfect love, love of his soul and his spirit. Just as these cleave to the body, and the body loves them, so should a person cleave to loving the blessed Holy One, clinging to Him with the love of his soul and his spirit. As it is written: *My soul, I desire You in the night—that is, my very soul, I desire You. My spirit within me, I seek You at dawn—to cleave to You with great love.*[294](#)

“*In the night*—for out of love for the blessed Holy One, a person should rise every night to engage in His service until morning is aroused and a thread of love is drawn upon him.[295](#)

“For it has been taught: Happy is the share of the person who loves the blessed Holy One with this love! These are the truly righteous, who love the blessed Holy One so, for the world is sustained for their sake, and they overpower harsh decrees above and below.[296](#)

“It has been taught: The righteous one who cleaves with his spirit and soul above to the Holy King, in fitting love, has dominion over the earth below, and whatever he decrees for the world is fulfilled. How do we know this? From Elijah, as is written: *As YHVH lives, before whom I stand, there will be no dew or rain these years except by my word* (1 Kings 17:1).[297](#)

“Come and see: When holy souls come from above to below and the righteous of the world draw them from the King and *Matronita*, there are few who, at the moment they descend, stand before the King and upon whom the King wishes to gaze. As has been established, when the breath

of the blessed Holy One blew into all the hosts of heaven, they were all generated into existence, as is written: *and by the breath of His mouth all their array* (Psalms 33:6). Some of them are held back until the blessed Holy One [68b] sends them down to those below.<sup>[298](#)</sup>

“It has been taught: Since the day that the world was created, they have been standing before the blessed Holy One and have been held back until the time would come to descend to earth—and these rule above and below. This corresponds to what is written: *As YHVH lives, before whom עמדתי (amadi), I stood* (1 Kings 17:1)—the verse does not read *before whom I stand*, but rather *before whom I stood*.<sup>[299](#)</sup>

“Afterward he returned to his place and ascended to his chamber, whereas those others do not ascend until they die, because what happened previously to the others did not happen to them. Therefore Elijah became a messenger, an angel above like those other ones and those who cleave most to the King.<sup>[300](#)</sup>

“I have found in the Primordial Book of Adam that all those holy spirits above perform a mission, and all come from one place, whereas souls of the righteous derive from two rungs merging into one, so they ascend higher and their rung is higher. So it is. All those who were concealed there descended and ascended in their lifetime, such as Enoch, to whom death is not applied. We have already established the matter of Elijah.<sup>[301](#)</sup>

“It has been taught: A hundred and twenty-five thousand rungs of the righteous arose in the Will before the world was created, and the blessed Holy One designates them for this world in every single generation, and they fly through the world and are bound in the bundle of life. Through them, the blessed Holy One will one day renew the world, and of them is written *the new heavens and the new earth...* (Isaiah 66:22).<sup>[302](#)</sup>

*“You shall afflict your souls* (Leviticus 16:29)—it says *your souls*, so that Israel may be found worthy before the Holy King and their aspiration may be toward the blessed Holy One, cleaving to Him, so that their sins may be forgiven.<sup>[303](#)</sup>

“Therefore, one who eats and drinks on the ninth, delighting his soul with food and drink, experiences on the tenth a double affliction of the soul, and so it is as if he afflicted himself on both the ninth and the tenth.<sup>[304](#)</sup>

“את נפשותיכם (*Et nafshoteikhem*), *Your souls*—to include all, body and soul, and to surrender on this day to atone for their sins.<sup>[305](#)</sup>

“It has been taught: *For on this day He will effect atonement for you* (Leviticus 16:30). *On this day*—the verse should read *This day*. However, *on this day*, precisely, for on it the Holy Ancient One reveals Himself to effect atonement for the sins of all.”<sup>[306](#)</sup>

Alternatively, *You shall afflict your souls*. Rabbi Abba opened, saying, “*There was a small city, and few people within it, and a great king came to it and surrounded it and built against it great siege works. And there was found within it a poor wise man, and he saved the city through his wisdom, but no one remembered that poor man* (Ecclesiastes 9:14-15). A *small city*—we have already established this; but a *small city*, as is said: *Ours is a mighty city; He makes victory our inner and outer wall* (Isaiah 26:1), and it is written *I will not enter the city* (Hosea 11:9). A *small city*—She is small, for She is last of all, lowest of all. Her walls are great, mighty, and holy; She is called Jerusalem, the holy city.<sup>[307](#)</sup>

“*And few people within it*—few are those who succeed in ascending to Her and dwelling in Her, as is said: *Who shall ascend the mount of YHVH, and who shall rise in His holy place?...* (Psalms 24:3-4). Thus, *and few people within it*.<sup>[308](#)</sup>

*“And a great king came to it—the blessed Holy One, coming to couple with Her and dwell with Her.*[309](#)

*“And surrounded it—as is said: I Myself—declares YHVH—will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory inside her (Zechariah 2:9).*

*“And built upon it great siege works—for He built Her fine and beautiful walls out of all kinds of precious stones, and brought in all the King’s glory. So She alone includes all crowns of the King, all adorning Her. Thus, and few people within it.*[310](#)

*“And there was found within it a poor wise man—this is the clean of hands and the pure of heart (Psalms 24:4). מסכן (Misken), Poor—as is said: ערי מסכנות (arei miskenot), store-cities (Exodus 1:11), adorned with mighty crowns, crowns of Torah, crowns of the King’s commands.*[311](#)

*“Wise—for he attains this wisdom more than anyone, contemplating the service of his Lord so as to attain Her and enter Her, as is written: ומלט (u-millat), And he saved, the city through his wisdom. U-millat—as is said: אמלטה (immaletah), Let me slip away, please, that I may see my brothers (1 Samuel 20:29); immaletah, Let me flee, there, please (Genesis 19:20). Here, too, u-millat, and he fled, [to] the city through his wisdom.*[312](#)

*“But no one remembered that poor man—no one remembered to fulfill the commandments of Torah, to engage in Torah like that poor man who became totally wise [69a] so as to attain Her.*

*“I said, ‘Better wisdom than weapons’ (Ecclesiastes 9:16)—for in that world none are permitted to enter except the truly righteous, those who engage in Torah day and night, and crown themselves with her commandments in this world to enter thereby into the world that is coming.*[313](#)

*“But the poor man’s wisdom is scorned and his words are unheard (ibid.)—for people do not regard him or want to associate with him or listen to his words. It has been taught: Whoever listens to the words of a righteous person*



in this world is considered as if he received from Mount Sinai. And even from any person one should listen to words of Torah. Whoever inclines his ear to him renders honor to the Holy King, renders honor to Torah. Of him is written *This day you have become a people to YHVH your God* (Deuteronomy 27:9).<sup>314</sup>

It has been taught: One day the Companions were walking with Rabbi Shim'on. Rabbi Shim'on said, "We see all these nations elevated and Israel lowest of them all. Why? Because the King has cast away *Matronita* and replaced Her with a slave-girl, as is written: *At three things the earth trembles, and four it cannot bear: a slave becoming a king and a scoundrel sated with food, a loathsome woman getting married, and a slave-girl dispossessing her mistress* (Proverbs 30:21–23). Who is a *slave-girl*? She is the alien crown, whose firstborn the blessed Holy One slew in Egypt, as is written: *the firstborn of the slave-girl who is behind the millstones* (Exodus 11:5). At first, she sat *behind the millstones*, and now this *slave-girl dispossesses her mistress*."<sup>315</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on wept, and said, "A king without a *matronita* is not called 'king.' If a king clings to his *matronita's* slave-girl, where is his glory? Mystery of the matter: A voice is destined to gladden *Matronita*, saying, '*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king is coming to you, צדיק ונושע (tsaddiq ve-nosha), righteous and having salvation, is he, poor and riding on an ass—on a donkey, foal of a she-ass* (Zechariah 9:9).' That is to say: *Tsaddiq, Righteous One, Himself is nosha, saved*—for until now He was riding in a place not His, in an alien place, nourishing it.<sup>316</sup>

"Thus it is written *poor and riding on an ass—poor*, unlike at first; *and riding on an ass*, as we have established: those lower crowns of the other nations, whose firstborn

the blessed Holy One slew in Egypt, as is written: *and every firstborn of the beasts* (Exodus 11:5).[317](#)

“We have already established this matter. As it were, צדיק ונושע הוא (*tsaddiq ve-nosha hu*), *Righteous One Himself is saved*—surely, more than all, for until now Righteous One dwelled without Righteousness, and now that they couple as one, *Righteous One Himself is saved*, since He no longer dwells on the Other Side.[318](#)

“It has been taught: It is written *The righteous one* אבד (*avad*), *perishes, and no one takes it to heart* (Isaiah 57:1). This verse is difficult: *The righteous one avad, loses*—the verse should read *The righteous one* נאבד (*ne’evad*), *is lost*; why *avad, loses*? Well, *loses*, really! What does He lose? He *loses Matronita*, and clings to another place called *slave-girl*.”[319](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said to Rabbi Shim’on, “If it pleases my Master, look at what we have learned about what is written: *The righteous one is the foundation of the world* (Proverbs 10:25). According to one authority, the earth stands upon seven pillars; while according to another, it stands upon this one. How can the statements be reconciled?”[320](#)

He replied, “All is one entity; for there are seven, and within them is one pillar called Righteous One, upon which they stand, and by this the world endures. And when the world endures upon it, it is as if it endures upon all those seven. Thus it is written *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*, and we have established this matter in various places.[321](#)

“It has been taught: This slave-girl is destined to rule over the Holy Land below, just as *Matronita* ruled at first, as is written: *Righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers!* (Isaiah 1:21). Now *a slave-girl dispossesses her mistress* entirely; but the blessed Holy One will one day restore *Matronita* as before, and then who will rejoice? You must say, the King and *Matronita*. The King will rejoice in restoring Her

and separating from the slave-girl, as I have said. *Matronita* will rejoice in returning to couple with the King, as is written: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!* (Zechariah 9:9).<sup>322</sup>

“Come and see what is written: *It shall be for you a perpetual statute* (Leviticus 16:29). *It shall be for you—why a perpetual statute?* Well, wherever a *perpetual statute* appears, it is called ‘Decree of the King,’ for He inserts all His edicts in this place and seals them as one seals everything under the threshold. חקת עולם (*Huqqat olam*), *A perpetual statute*—in this [69b] He inscribes וחקיק (*ve-ḥaqeiq*), and engraves, all His hidden treasures.<sup>323</sup>

“*In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month* (ibid.)—precisely, as we have established.<sup>324</sup>

“*You shall afflict your souls* (ibid.)—certainly so, as has been said: *your souls*, surely, for the matter depends upon the soul. Consequently, eating and drinking on the ninth more than on any other day. Although this matter has been explained in a different way, all is fine; both this and that are one, each in its place, and so it is.<sup>325</sup>

“It has been taught: On this day all joy, all radiance, and all leniency of the worlds depend on Supernal Mother, from whom all springs issue and flow. Then all those lamps shine, glowing in radiant joy until all is sweetened, and then all judgments are bathed in light, and Judgment is not inflicted. Therefore, *you shall afflict your souls.*”<sup>326</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “My Master has already established from the essence of our Mishnah that the people of Israel were not exiled from their land until they denied the blessed Holy One and said, ‘*We have no share in David, no portion in Jesse’s son* (2 Samuel 20:1),’ as has already been explained. But I have found another verse pertaining to this, as is written: *Look after your own house, O David* (1 Kings 12:16).”<sup>327</sup>

He replied, “Certainly so! She is called House of David, as is written: *O House of Jacob! Come, let us walk in the*

*light of YHVH* (Isaiah 2:5). *House of Jacob*—as is said: *I will glorify בית תפארתִי (beit tif'arti), My house of glory* (ibid. 60:7).<sup>[328](#)</sup>

*“In the light of YHVH. What is in the light of YHVH? As is written: A river issues from Eden to water the garden (Genesis 2:10). He planted this garden to delight Himself in it with the righteous dwelling there.”*<sup>[329](#)</sup>

*“It has been taught: It is written אַךְ (Akh), Yet, on the tenth of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement,... and you shall afflict your souls (Leviticus 23:27). And it is written It shall be a perpetual statute for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month... (ibid. 16:29). The expression *akh, yet*—why is it needed here?”*<sup>[330](#)</sup>

He replied, *“It comes to exclude. Since Scripture says You shall afflict your souls on the ninth of the month (Leviticus 23:32), it says afterward Akh, Yet, on the tenth—yet, the tenth, for the matter depends on the tenth.”*<sup>[331](#)</sup>

He said to him, “If so—*Akh, Surely, on the first day you shall remove leaven* (Exodus 12:15), and we have learned: ‘*Akh divides,*’ for on half of the day it is forbidden to eat leaven, and on half it is permitted. Here, too, *Akh, Yet, on the tenth*—say that on half of the day it is forbidden to do work, and on half it is permitted!”[332](#)

He replied, “Here, too, pertaining to *You shall afflict your souls*, for affliction prevails only from midday onward. This is fine: ‘*Akh divides,*’ applying to *You shall afflict your souls.*”[333](#)

Rabbi El’azar said, “It is written: *For on this day He will effect atonement for you, to purify you* (Leviticus 16:30). *He will effect atonement for you*—the verse should read *I will effect atonement for you*. However, *He will effect atonement for you*, to include Jubilee, who draws from its springs to water all sides on this day, saturating all and watering all. This is *for you*—meaning ‘for your sake,’ to purify you on this day, as is written: *before YHVH you will become pure* (ibid.), and Judgment will have no power over you.”[334](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “Happy are Israel, for the blessed Holy One desires them and seeks to purify them, so that they will be free of sins and become members of His palace, dwelling there. And in the time to come, *I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be pure* (Ezekiel 36:25).”[335](#)

Rabbi Yehudah opened, “*A song of ascents. From the depths I call You, YHVH* (Psalms 130:1). We have learned: When the blessed Holy One created the world, He wanted to create a human being. He consulted the Torah, who said before Him, ‘You want to create this human? He is bound to sin against You and provoke You. If You treat him as he deserves, the world cannot survive, and certainly not humanity.’

“He replied, ‘Is it for nothing that I am called *A compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger* (Exodus 34:6)?’[336](#)

“So before creating the world, the blessed Holy One created *teshuvah*. He said to *teshuvah*, ‘I want to create a human in the world, on condition that when they return to you from their sins you will be prepared to forgive their sins and grant them atonement.’[337](#)

“So at every moment *teshuvah* is available to people, and when they repent of their sins, this *teshuvah* returns to the blessed Holy One and makes atonement for all. Judgments are all subdued and assuaged, and the person is purified of his sin. When is he purified of his sin? When he enters this *teshuvah* fittingly.”

Rabbi Yitshak said, “If he returns to the supernal King and offers [70a] his prayer from the depth of his heart, as is written: *From the depths I call You, YHVH.*”[338](#)

Rabbi Abba said, “*From the depths*—there is a hidden place above, depth of the well, from which streams and springs issue in every direction. That deepest depth is called *Teshuvah*, and one who wishes to be purified of his sins must call to the blessed Holy One through this, as is written: *From the depths I call You, YHVH.*”[339](#)

“It has been taught: When a person sinned, he would bring his offering upon the altar and the priest would seek atonement for him and pray for him. Then Compassion was aroused, judgments were assuaged, and *Teshuvah* poured blessings through gushing springs; all the lamps were blessed as one, and the person was purified of his sin.”[340](#)

“Come and see: The blessed Holy One generated ten crowns, holy diadems above, with which He is crowned and clothed. He is they, and they are He—like a flame bound to a burning coal, inseparable.”[341](#)

“Corresponding to this are ten unholy crowns below, adhering to filth of a fingernail of one holy crown called



*Hokhmah* (Wisdom); so they are called *hokhmot* (wisdoms).<sup>342</sup>

“It has been taught: Ten types of these wisdoms descended to the world, and all of them were absorbed by Egypt, except for one that spread throughout the world. These are all types of sorcery, and from them the Egyptians became more skilled in sorcery than all other inhabitants of the world.<sup>343</sup>

“When the Egyptians sought to gather an assemblage by their sorcery for their purposes, they would go out in the open to high mountains and offer sacrifices and dig pits in the ground. They would pour some of the blood around a pit and collect the rest of it inside the pit, placing the flesh over it, and offer their sacrifices to those evil species—who gathered as one and were appeased by them on that mountain.<sup>344</sup>

“The people of Israel, who were subjugated by them, approached and learned from them and strayed after them, as is written: *Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall you do* (Leviticus 18:3), and it is written *They shall no longer slaughter their sacrifices to the goat-demons, after which they go whoring* (ibid. 17:7).<sup>345</sup>

“It has been taught: When they used to bring offerings to them out in the open—inviting them and offering blood and their sacrifices—all those evil species would gather and appear as goats, full of hair, and would reveal to them what they wanted to know.<sup>346</sup>

“Come and see: What is written of Isaac? *Jacob approached Isaac his father, and he felt him* (Genesis 27:22). He said, “This can be eliminated only by the dew of heaven flowing upon the earth.”<sup>347</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “*And the fat of the earth* (Genesis 27:28)—he blessed him totally. Why? Since he saw him so hairy, he said, ‘To remove this, he needs *the fat of the earth*, not the filth of the earth.’ For this filth is in the earth,

and when the dew of heaven and bounty of the earth join, this filth is eliminated.”<sup>348</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, “The last of those lower, unholy crowns corresponds to what is written: *or inquires of the dead* (Deuteronomy 18:11), and this is the tenth of all. For it has been taught: Rabbi Yitshak said in the name of Rabbi Yehudah, ‘Souls of the wicked are the demons of the world.’”<sup>349</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, “If so, the wicked are well off, becoming demons of the world! Where is the punishment of Hell? Where is the evil awaiting them in that world?”<sup>350</sup>

Rabbi Ḥiyya replied, “We have learned as follows and have established this matter: When souls of the wicked depart this world, many guardsmen are ready to receive them and carry them into Hell, where they are subjected to three punishments every day. Afterward they join them and go roaming through the world, misleading the wicked—those to whom *teshuvah* has been shut. Later they are returned to Hell, absorbed there, and so every day.”<sup>351</sup>

“After they go roaming with them through the world, they return to their graves and see worms of the body picking at flesh, and they mourn over it.”<sup>352</sup>

“Those sorcerers would go to cemeteries and perform their sorcery and make an image of a human and slaughter before it one goat. Afterward they put that goat into [70b] a certain grave, break that image into four quarters, and place them in the four corners of the grave. Then they perform their sorcery, and an assemblage of those evil species gathers and brings that soul, which enters the grave and speaks with them.”<sup>353</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Happy are the righteous in this world and in the world that is coming, for they are all holy! Their body is holy, their *nefesh* is holy, their *ruah* is holy, their *neshamah* is holy of holies—three rungs, corresponding to the pattern above. For it has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said, ‘It is written *Let the earth bring forth* וַיִּצְרַח אֱדָמָה (*nefesh hayyah*),

*a living soul* (Genesis 1:24)—supernal soul of supernal Adam.’[354](#)

“Come and see: There are three rungs, joining as one—*nefesh, ruah, neshamah*—and highest of them is *neshamah*. For Rabbi Yose has said, ‘All people have *nefesh*, though one *nefesh* is superior to another. If a person proves worthy of this *nefesh*, a certain crown is infused in him, called *ruah*, as is written: *until רוּחַ (ruah), spirit, is poured upon us from on high* (Isaiah 32:15). Then the person is aroused by another sublime arousal to contemplate the ways of the Holy King. If the person proves worthy of that *ruah*, he is adorned with a supernal holy crown encompassing all, called *neshamah*—called נִשְׁמַת אֱלֹהִים (*nishmat Eloah*), *soul of God* (Job 4:9).’[355](#)

“It has been taught in mystery of mysteries in the Book of King Solomon, concerning the verse *I praise the dead, who have already died* (Ecclesiastes 4:2): Since it is written *I praise the dead, why who have already died?* Well, *who have already died* in this world by serving their Lord.[356](#)

“And there it is written: The blessed Holy One has made three abodes for the righteous. One is attained by the righteous, who have not been eliminated from this world. When the world is in need and the living sit in distress, they pray for them and go and inform those Slumberers of Hebron—who awaken and enter the earthly Garden of Eden, where *ruhōt* of the righteous are adorned with crowns of light, and they consult with them and issue a decree, and the blessed Holy One fulfills their wish and has pity on the world.[357](#)

“Those souls of the righteous exist in this world to protect the living. This is called *nefesh*, which is not eliminated from this world—to observe and perceive and protect the generation. Thus the dead know the suffering of the world; and the punishment of the wicked is by this, as is written: הַנְּפֹשׁ הַזֵּאת (Ha-nefesh ha-hi), *That soul, shall be cut off from her people* (Genesis 17:14).[358](#)

“The second abode is the earthly Garden of Eden, in which the blessed Holy One has established sublime precious habitations—corresponding to the pattern of this world and to the pattern of the supernal world—and two types of palaces without number, and trees and grasses and fragrances wafting daily. In this place dwells the one called *ruah* of those righteous, and the abode of that *ruah* is located there. Every single *ruah* is clothed in a precious garment, corresponding to the pattern of this world and to the pattern of that supernal world.[359](#)

“The third abode—that supernal holy abode called Bundle of Life, where the supernal holy level called *neshamah* delights. This one attains reveling in sublime delight. Of her is written *Then you will delight upon YHVH...* (Isaiah 58:14).[360](#)

“It has been taught: When the world is in need and those righteous are worthy, that *nefesh*—existing in the world to protect the world—ascends and goes roaming through the world and informs *ruah*. *Ruah* ascends, is crowned, and informs *neshamah*; and *neshamah*, the blessed Holy One. Then the blessed Holy One has compassion on the world; then descending from above to below, *neshamah* informs *ruah*, and *ruah* informs *nefesh*.[361](#)

“Every single Sabbath and new moon, they all join and are crowned as one, uniting to come and bow before the supernal King, afterward returning to their places, as is written: *From new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to bow down before Me—says YHVH* (Isaiah 66:23).[362](#)

“When the world needs mercy, and the living inform *nefashot* of the righteous, weeping over the graves of those who are worthy of being informed—why? Because they set their aspiration to fuse *nefesh* to *nefesh*. [71a] Then *nefashot* of the righteous are aroused, and gather and go to the Slumberers of Hebron, informing them of the suffering of the world, and they all enter the opening of the Garden of

Eden and inform *ruah*. Those *ruhot*, who are crowned in the Garden of Eden, mingle with supernal angels, and all of them inform *neshamah*, and *neshamah* informs the blessed Holy One. All plead for mercy upon the living, and for their sake the blessed Holy One has compassion upon the world. Therefore Solomon said, *I praise the dead, who have already died.*"[363](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "I would be surprised if anyone other than us could inform the dead."[364](#)

Rabbi Abba replied, "Suffering informs them; Torah informs them. For when there is no one who knows how to do this, they bring a Torah out to near the graves, and [the souls of the righteous] are aroused over the Torah—over its having been exiled to that place. Then it informs them."[365](#)

Rabbi Yose said, "And they know that the world is in trouble, and the living are not worthy and do not know how to inform them. At that moment they all cry out over the Torah, who has been shamed and exiled to that place. If the people return in *teshuvah* and weep with all their heart, all [the souls of the righteous] gather and plead for mercy, informing the Slumberers of Hebron. But if they do not return wholeheartedly, weeping over the suffering of the world, woe to them, for all [the souls of the righteous] have gathered! Who caused the holy Torah to be exiled, without *teshuvah*? Then they all come to recount their sins. Therefore one should not go there without *teshuvah* and without fasting, to plead before them."[366](#)

Rabbi Ḥiyya said, "Without three fasts."

Rabbi Yose said, "Even one, on that day—but only if the world is plunged in great suffering. Then they all join to plead for mercy over the world."[367](#)

It has been taught: One day Rabbi Ḥizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa were traveling on the road. They came upon Giscala, which was in ruins. They sat down near a cemetery, and Rabbi Yeisa was holding a bundle of a torn Torah scroll.[368](#)

While they were sitting, a grave quivered in front of them and cried out, saying, “Woe, woe, for the world is in trouble! Look, the Torah is here, exiled! Or else the living have come to mock us and to heap shame upon us with their Torah.”[369](#)

Rabbi Hizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa trembled. Rabbi Hizkiyah said, “Who are you?”

He replied, “I am dead. But I was aroused by the Torah scroll. For one time the world was in trouble and the living came here to arouse us with a Torah scroll, and my companions and I hastened to the Slumberers of Hebron. When they joined the spirits of the righteous in the Garden of Eden, they discovered that the Torah scroll that the living had brought to us was unfit and falsified the name of the King, since there was an extra ו (vav) in the verse וַשׁוֹשׂוּתָא (ve-shosa’at shesa), *cleaving a cleft of, two hooves* (Deuteronomy 14:6). They said that since they falsified the name of the King, they would not return to them, and they thrust me and my companions out of the Academy.”[370](#)

“Finally, one elder who was among them went and brought the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava, and then Rabbi El’azar son of Rabbi Shim’on, who was buried with us, was aroused, and he went and pleaded for them in the Garden of Eden, and the world was healed. Then they allowed us [to return].”[371](#)

“But ever since the day that they removed Rabbi El’azar from this grave and he was placed by his father, there is no one who knows how to stand before the Slumberers of Hebron, for we have been afraid ever since that day. And now you have come to us along with a Torah scroll, and I said to myself that the world is in trouble; that is why I trembled, for I thought, ‘Who will hasten to inform those truly righteous ones, the Slumberers of Hebron?’”[372](#)

Rabbi Yeisa slipped away with that bundle of a Torah scroll.



Rabbi Hizkiyah said, “Heaven forbid, the world is not in trouble, and we did not come for that!”

Rabbi Hizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa rose and went on. They said, “Surely, when there are no righteous people in the world, the world endures only by virtue of the dead.”

Rabbi Yeisa said, “When the world is in need, why do we go to the dead? Is it not written [71b] *or inquires of the dead* (Deuteronomy 18:11)? So it is forbidden!”<sup>373</sup>

He replied, “You have not yet seen the wings of the Bird of Eden. *Or inquires of the dead*—precisely, who are the wicked of the world, of the other nations, who are always *dead*. But as for Israel, who are truly righteous, Solomon declared over them, *the dead, who have already died* (Ecclesiastes 4:2)—another time, not now. *Who have already died*—and now they are alive.<sup>374</sup>

“Furthermore, when other nations visit their dead, they come with sorcery to arouse evil species. But when the people of Israel does so, they come in great *teshuvah* before the blessed Holy One, with a broken heart, with fasting—and all so that those holy souls will plead before the blessed Holy One for mercy upon them.<sup>375</sup>

“Consequently we have learned: Even though a righteous person has departed from this world, he has not disappeared or vanished from all the worlds, since he exists in all those worlds more than in his lifetime. During his life he exists only in this world; afterward he exists in three worlds and is welcome there, as is written: *Therefore, maidens, love you* (Song of Songs 1:3)—do not read עלמות (*alamot*), *maidens*, but rather עולמות (*olamot*), *worlds*. Happy is their share!”<sup>376</sup>

It has been taught: It is written *The soul of my lord will be bound in the bundle of life with YHVH your God* (1 Samuel 25:29). נפש אדוני (*Nefesh adoni*), *The nefesh of my lord*—the verse should read נשמת אדוני (*nishmat adoni*), *the neshamah of my lord*. However, as we have said: Happy is the share of the

righteous, for all are bound with one another: *nefesh* with *ruah*, *ruah* with *neshamah*, and *neshamah* with the blessed Holy One. Thus *nefesh* is *bound in the bundle of life*.<sup>377</sup>

Rabbi El'azar said, "Concerning what you have said about the exile of a Torah scroll, even from one synagogue to another, and especially out to an open space—why out to another open space?"<sup>378</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah replied, "As we have said, so that they may be aroused over it and plead for mercy over the world."<sup>379</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, "When *Shekhinah* was exiled—similarly from here to there, until She said, '*If only I were given a wanderers' lodge in the desert*' (Jeremiah 9:1). Here, too, from synagogue to synagogue; afterward, out to an open space; afterward, *a wanderers' lodge in the desert*."<sup>380</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, "The Babylonians are afraid and will not do so—even from synagogue to synagogue, and certainly not this!"<sup>381</sup>

It has been taught: Rabbi Shim'on said, "In my days, inhabitants of the world do not need this."<sup>382</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, "The righteous shield the world in their lifetime and after their death—and after their death even more than in their life, as is written: *I will protect this city, delivering it for My sake and for the sake of My servant David* (Isaiah 37:35), whereas during his lifetime this is not written."<sup>383</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, "Why is it written uniquely here: *For My sake and for the sake of My servant David*—making one equivalent to the other? Because David proved worthy of being joined to the Holy Chariot, to the Patriarchs, so all is one. Blessed be He forever and ever."<sup>384</sup>

*Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall*

Rabbi Yitshak opened,  
*"That the name of YHVH may be recounted in Zion and His praise in*

*you do* (Leviticus 18:3).[385](#)

*Jerusalem* (Psalms 102:22). There we

learned: The Holy Name is concealed and revealed; and Torah, which is the supernal Holy Name, is concealed and revealed; and every verse in Torah and every portion in her is concealed and revealed.[386](#)

“For it has been taught in the name of Rabbi Yehudah: From the impudence of one righteous woman, many benefits emerged to the world. Who is that? Tamar, as is written: *She sat by the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah...* (Genesis 38:14).[387](#)

“Rabbi Abba said: This portion demonstrates that Torah is concealed and revealed. I have looked through the entire Torah and have not found a place called פתח עינים (*petah einayim*), *the entrance to Enaim*. But really, all is concealed, mystery of mysteries.[388](#)

“It has been taught: What prompted this righteous woman to engage in this act? Well, in her father-in-law’s house she learned the ways of the blessed Holy One: how He conducts this world with human beings. And because she knew, the blessed Holy One fulfilled this matter through her.[389](#)

“This corresponds to what we have learned: Bathsheba was destined since the six days of Creation to be the mother of King Solomon. Here, too, Tamar was destined for this since the day the world was created.[390](#)

“*She sat* בפתח עינים (*be-petah einayim*), *by the entrance to Enaim*. Who is *petah einayim*? As is said: *He was sitting* האהל פתח (*petah ha-ohel*), *at the opening of the tent* (Genesis 18:1); *YHVH will pass over* הפתח (*ha-petah*), *the entrance* (Exodus 12:23). And it is written פתחו (*Pithu*), *Open, for me the gates of righteousness* (Psalms 118:19).[391](#)

“*Einayim, eyes*—for all eyes of the world [72a] look to this opening.[392](#)

“*Which is on the road* תמונתה (*timnatah*), *to Timnah*. What is *timnatah*? As is said: ותמונתה (*u-tmunat*), *and the image of, YHVH*

*he beholds* (Numbers 12:8).[393](#)

“We have established as follows: Tamar fulfilled the matter below, bringing forth blossoms and sprouting branches in mystery of faith. *Judah still rules with God, and is faithful to the holy* (Hosea 12:1).[394](#)

“*Judah saw her and he took her for a whore* (Genesis 38:15)—as is said: *Such is the way of an adulteress* (Proverbs 30:20). *For she had covered her face* (Genesis, *ibid.*)—as we have established, for it is written: *she eats and wipes her mouth* (Proverbs, *ibid.*). She scorches the world with Her flames, and says, ‘*I have done no wrong*’ (*ibid.*). Why? *For she had covered her face*, and no one knows Her ways, to save himself from Her.[395](#)

“*He turned aside to her* אֶל הַדֶּרֶךְ (*el ha-derekh*), *by the road* (Genesis 38:16)—*el ha-derekh, by the way*, really, to join white with red.[396](#)

“*And said, הַבָּהּ (Havah), Come on, let me come in to you*’ (*ibid.*)—and we have established *havah* everywhere.[397](#)

“*For he did not know that she was* כַּלְתּוֹ (*khallato*), *his daughter-in-law* (*ibid.*)—*that she was khallato, the destruction*, of the world, and we translate this: ‘that she was destruction.’ Why didn’t He know? Because Her face shone to receive from Him, and She was ready to be sweetened and bestow compassion on the world.[398](#)

“*That she was khallato, his daughter-in-law*—alternatively, an actual כַּלָּה (*kallah*), bride, as is written: *With me from Lebanon, kallah, bride* (Song of Songs 4:8).[399](#)

“*And she said, ‘What will you give me for coming in to me?’* (Genesis 38:16). Now, the Bride seeks Her jewels.[400](#)

“*He said, ‘I myself will send a kid from the flock’* (*ibid.*, 17). This may be compared to a king who had a son from a certain slave-girl, and he walked around the king’s palace. The king wanted to marry a noble *matronita* and bring her into the palace. She said, ‘What will the king give me in his palace?’ The king replied, ‘From now on, I will expel the slave-girl’s son from my palace.’

“Here, too, *I myself will send a kid from the flock*—as we have established concerning *You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk* (Exodus 23:19). All those derive from the side of the firstborn of beasts. Therefore it is not written *I will give you a kid*, but rather *I will send*—I will expel him and send him away, so that he does not appear in My palace.<sup>401</sup>

“*She said, ‘Only if you give a pledge till you send it’* (Genesis 38:17)—signs of *Matronita*, blessed by the King in Her union.<sup>402</sup>

“*He said, ‘What pledge shall I give you?’ And she said, ‘Your seal and cord, and the staff in your hand’* (ibid., 18)—supernal bonds, jewels of the Bride, blessed by these three. For all is found in these three, all is blessed by these three—*Netsah, Hod, Yesod*. Immediately, *He gave them to her and he came in to her and she conceived by him* (ibid.).<sup>403</sup>

“*It happened כמשלש חדשים (ke-mishlosh ḥodashim), about three months later* (Genesis 38:24). What is *mishlosh ḥodashim*? After months tripled, and we have established ‘three months.’ Here, *ke-mishlosh ḥodashim*—that the fourth month had begun to arouse judgments in the world due to the sins of humanity, and She suckled from the Other Side.<sup>404</sup>

“Then, *Judah was told, saying, ‘Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the whore and what’s more, she’s conceived by her whoring’* (ibid.)—look, the Bride is located on the Other Side!<sup>405</sup>

“What is written? *Take her out to be burned* (ibid.)—as is written: *תפארת ישראל (Tif’eret Yisra’el), The beauty of Israel, has cast down earth from heaven* (Lamentations 2:1). *To be burned*—by flames of noon in exile.<sup>406</sup>

“What is written? *As she was being taken out* (Genesis 38:25)—to be drawn into exile.<sup>407</sup>

“*She sent a message to her father-in-law, saying, ‘By the man to whom these belong I have conceived’* (ibid.). It is not written *from whom (these come)*, but rather *by the*

*man to whom these belong—these signs belong to Him—I have conceived...*[408](#)

“Judah recognized, and said, ‘צדקה ממני’ (*Tsadeqah mi-menni*), *She is more in the right than I!*’ (Genesis 38:26)—*tsadeqah, she is righteous*, surely, and the name proves decisive.[409](#)

“Who brought upon Her this name? He goes on to say, ‘*Mi-menni, From me*—as is written: *YHVH is צדיק* (*tsaddiq*), *righteous, loving צדקות* (*tsedaqot*), *righteous deeds* (Psalms 11:7). *צדקה* (*Tsadeqah*), *She is righteous*—*צדק ה* (*Tsedeq he*), *Righteousness, he. From me* She received this name; *from me* She inherited this; *from me* this came.”[410](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “Why is it written in one place *her father-in-law* (Genesis 38:25), and in another place *Judah* (ibid., 15)?”

He replied, “All are linked with one another. *Her father-in-law* pertains to a supernal place.”[411](#)

Rabbi El’azar said, “This portion affirms supernal wisdom in various aspects. When words are contemplated, one perceives mysteries of the blessed Holy One’s ways and His judgments everywhere. She knew, and acted zealously in this matter, to fulfill the ways of the blessed Holy One, so that royal rulers would issue from her, destined to reign over the world. And Ruth acted similarly.”[412](#)

Rabbi Abba said, “This portion is linked to mysteries of the wisdom of Torah, and all is concealed and revealed. The entire Torah follows this pattern. Every single word in Torah includes a holy name, concealed and revealed. [72b] Therefore, concealment of Torah is inherited by holy ones of the Highest, while Torah is revealed to other inhabitants of the world.”[413](#)

“Similarly it is written: *That the name of YHVH may be recounted in Zion and His praise in Jerusalem* (Psalms 102:22)—for *in Zion*, in the Temple, it is permitted to pronounce the Holy Name fittingly, whereas outside, by His appellation. So all is concealed and revealed.”[414](#)



“It has been taught: Whoever omits a single letter from the Torah or adds a letter is like one who falsifies the supernal Holy Name.”[415](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, “The practice of the Egyptians was worshiping the slave-girl, as we have established. The practice of the Canaanites was worshiping that one called *the captive who is in the dungeon* (Exodus 12:29); so it is written *Cursed be Canaan, slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers!* (Genesis 9:25). Thus all of them pervert holy matters, indulging in sexual licentiousness. Therefore, *Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall you do, and not like the deeds of the land of Canaan...* (Leviticus 18:3).”[416](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “They enabled evil species to dominate the world, as is written: *You shall not defile your land* (Deuteronomy 21:23), and it is written *The land was defiled* (Leviticus 18:25).”[417](#)

*Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall you do...* (Leviticus 18:3).[418](#)

Rabbi Hiyya opened, “*To seize the corners of the land, that the wicked be shaken out of it* (Job 38:13). It has

been taught: One day the blessed Holy One will cleanse His land of all the impurity with which other nations have defiled her—like one who takes hold of his garment and shakes out filth from it—and all those who were buried in the Holy Land will be cast out. And He will purify another Holy Land, who, as it were, was nourishing other princes of the nations, absorbing their impurity, and conducting them. He will one day purify Her and expel them.”[419](#)

Rabbi Shim'on was purifying the streets of Tiberias—disinterring all who had died there and purifying the land.[420](#)

It has been taught: *You came and defiled My land, and made My heritage an abomination* (Jeremiah 2:7). Rabbi

Yehudah said, “Happy is the share of one who is privileged in his lifetime to dwell in the Holy Land! For whoever merits this succeeds in drawing down the dew of heaven above, which descends upon the earth. Whoever succeeds during his lifetime in joining this Holy Land succeeds afterward in joining the supernal Holy Land.

“Concerning all those who do not prove worthy in their lifetime and are brought there to be buried, it is written *You made My heritage an abomination*. His spirit departed in another, foreign dominion, whereas his body comes under the dominion of the Holy Land; as it were, he makes the holy profane and the profane holy.<sup>[421](#)</sup>

“Whoever is worthy of having his soul depart in the Holy Land succeeds in being bound beneath the wings of *Shekhinah*, as is written: *His land purges His people* (Deuteronomy 32:43). Furthermore, if he proves worthy in his lifetime, he succeeds in drawing upon himself the Holy Spirit continually; whereas whoever dwells in another dominion draws upon himself another, alien spirit.<sup>[422](#)</sup>

“It has been taught: When Rav Hamnuna Sava went up there, he was accompanied by twelve members of his academy. He said to them, ‘If I go on this way, I do so not for my own sake, but rather to restore the pledge to its owner. For we have learned: All those who do not attain this in their lifetime restore the pledge of their Master to another.’”<sup>[423](#)</sup>

Rabbi Yitshak said, “Consequently, whoever activates any of those evil species or an alien dominion in the Land defiles the Land. Woe to that person, woe to his soul! For the Holy Land does not receive him afterward. Of him is written *Let sinners vanish from the land*—in this world and in the world that is coming—and *the wicked be no more*, during the resurrection of the dead. Then, *Bless, O my soul, YHVH. Hallelujah!* (Psalms 104:35).”<sup>[424](#)</sup>

*My laws you shall do, and My statutes you shall keep—walking by them...* (Leviticus 18:4).<sup>425</sup>

delights among all nations! Out of His love for them, He has given them laws of truth, planted in their midst the Tree of Life, and ensconced *Shekhinah* among them. Why? Because Israel are inscribed with the holy insignia, and recognized as His, recognized as members of His palace.<sup>426</sup>

“Consequently, all those who are not inscribed with the holy insignia [73a] in their flesh are not His. All of them stem from the side of impurity, and it is forbidden to associate with them or to converse with them on matters of the blessed Holy One. It is forbidden to convey to them words of Torah, since the entire Torah is the Name of the blessed Holy One, and every letter of Torah is bound to the Holy Name. Whoever is not inscribed with the Holy Name in his flesh must not be informed of a word of Torah, and one must certainly not delve into it with him.”<sup>427</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on opened, “*This is the statute of the Passover offering: no foreigner shall eat of it* (Exodus 12:43). And it is written: *No uncircumcised man shall eat of it* (ibid., 48); *a settler or hired worker shall not eat of it* (ibid., 45); and it is written *and any man's slave—purchased with silver—you may circumcise; then may he eat of it* (ibid., 44). Now if the Paschal Lamb, which is merely meat to be eaten, is forbidden to be eaten by all these or to be shared with them until they have been circumcised, just because it alludes to a holy matter, then how much more so with Torah, which is Holy of Holies of Holiness, the supernal Name of the blessed Holy One!”<sup>428</sup>

Rabbi El'azar asked his father, Rabbi Shim'on, saying, “We have learned: It is forbidden to teach Torah to a Gentile. And the Companions of Babylonia have educated this well, as is written: *He tells His words to Jacob, His statutes and*

Rabbi Abba opened, “Happy is the share of Israel, in whom the blessed Holy One

*laws to Israel. He has not done so for any other nation* (Psalms 147:19–20). But since it says *He tells His words to Jacob, why His statutes and laws to Israel?*<sup>429</sup>

He replied, “El’azar, come and see: Happy are Israel, within whom the blessed Holy One has planted a supernal holy portion, as is written: *For good teaching I have given you* (Proverbs 4:2)—*you* and not other nations.<sup>430</sup>

“Because it is hidden, precious, sublime—His very Name—the entire Torah is concealed and revealed, in the mystery of His Name. Consequently, Israel exists on two rungs, concealed and revealed. For we have learned: There are three rungs, interlinked—the blessed Holy One, Torah, and Israel. Each one is rung upon rung, concealed and revealed. The blessed Holy One is rung upon rung, concealed and revealed. Torah, similarly: concealed and revealed. Israel, similarly, rung upon rung, as is written: *He tells His words to Jacob, His statutes and laws to Israel*—two rungs: *Jacob* and *Israel*, one revealed and one concealed.<sup>431</sup>

“What does this indicate? Well, whoever is circumcised, inscribed with the holy insignia, is granted some of the revealed elements of Torah—that is, he is informed of initial letters, headings of chapters. Restrictions of the commandments of Torah are placed upon him, and no more, until he attains another rung, as is written: *He tells His words to Jacob—to Jacob*, fine—but *His statutes and laws to Israel*, who occupies a higher rung. And it is written: *No longer will your name be called Jacob, [but Israel will be your name]* (Genesis 35:10). *His statutes and laws to Israel*—mysteries of Torah, decrees of Torah, secrets of Torah, which must only be revealed to one who occupies a higher rung fittingly.<sup>432</sup>

“Now if this is so for Israel, all the more so for other nations. If one conveys even a single little letter of Torah to anyone who is uncircumcised, it is as if he destroyed the world and betrayed the Name of the blessed Holy One, as is

written: *Were it not for My covenant with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth* (Jeremiah 33:25).[433](#)

“Come and see: It is written *This is the Torah that Moses set before the Children of Israel* (Deuteronomy 4:44)—*set before the Children of Israel*, but not before other nations. Thus, *Speak to the Children of Israel* (Exodus 31:13), *To the Children of Israel you shall say* (Leviticus 20:2), and so with all of them.

“May the fathers of the world, Hillel and Shammai, rest in peace, for so they said to Onkelos, not conveying to him a word of Torah until he was circumcised.[434](#)

“Come and see: The very first element of Torah transmitted to children is אֵלֶּף בֵּית (alef bet). This is something that inhabitants of the world cannot grasp in their mind nor evoke in their will—certainly not utter with their mouths. Even supernal angels, and the most supernal, cannot comprehend, for these are secrecy of the Holy Name.[435](#)

“Fourteen million and fifty thousand worlds all dangle from the tip of א (alef).[436](#)

“Seventy-two holy names, engraved in inscribed letters—sustaining above and below, heaven and earth, and the King’s Throne of Glory—are suspended from one side to the other of the extension of א (alef), sustenance of all worlds.[437](#)

“Supports of above and below in mystery of Wisdom, hidden paths, deep rivers, and Ten Utterances all issue from that lower tip beneath א (alef).[438](#)

“From here on, alef begins to extend into ב (bet), and the wisdom engraved here is incalculable.[439](#)

“Consequently [73b] we have learned: Sustenance of all and faith of all—to bind the bond of faith, one with another fittingly. One who is circumcised is bound in that bond of faith; of one who is not circumcised or bound, it is written *No stranger shall eat of the holy* (Leviticus 22:10); *No uncircumcised man shall eat of it* (Exodus 12:48)—for an impure spirit from his side has been aroused and comes to

intermingle with holiness. Blessed be the Compassionate One, who has separated Israel—His children, inscribed with the holy insignia—from them and their filth. Of Israel is written *I planted you as a noble vine, entirely seed of truth* (Jeremiah 2:21). Consequently, *You give truth to Jacob* (Micah 7:20), and not to another—Torah of truth to *seed of truth*.”[440](#)

Rabbi El'azar came and kissed his hands.

Rabbi Hizkiyah said, “It is written: *For YHVH will not abandon His people, for the sake of His great name, because YHVH resolved to make you His people* (1 Samuel 12:22). *For YHVH will not abandon His people*. Why? Because all are linked with one another. By what is Israel linked with the blessed Holy One? By that holy insignia inscribed in their flesh. Therefore, *YHVH will not abandon His people*. Why? *For the sake of His great name*, inscribed upon them.”[441](#)

“It has been taught: Torah is called ‘covenant’; this holy insignia is called ‘covenant’; and the blessed Holy One is called ‘covenant’—so all are linked with one another inseparably.”[442](#)

Rabbi Yeisa said to him, “Torah and Israel, fine—but how do we know that the blessed Holy One is called ‘covenant’?”[443](#)

He replied, “As is written: *He remembered for them His covenant* (Psalms 106:45); *God remembered His covenant* (Exodus 2:24)—this is well known and has been discussed.”[444](#)

“*My statutes you shall keep* (Leviticus 18:4). חקוֹתַי (Huqqotai), *My statutes*—laws of the King. מִשְׁפָּטַי (Mishpatai), *My judgments* (ibid.)—decrees of Torah.”[445](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, “All those laws from the place called *Tsedeq*, Righteousness, are called *huqqotai*, *My statutes*, and they are decrees of the King. Wherever they are called מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat), judgment, they are called ‘decisions of the



Holy King,' in a place where two portions are joined with one another. Thus it is written צדק ומשפט (*Tsedeq u-mishpat*), *Righteousness and judgment, are the foundation of Your throne* (Psalms 89:15), and they are Justice and Compassion. So, חק ומשפט (*hoq u-mishpat*), statute and judgment. Thus it is written חקיו ומשפטיו (*huqqav u-mishpatav*), *His statutes and judgments, to Israel* (ibid. 147:19)—and not to other nations.<sup>446</sup>

“Afterward, what is written? *He has not done so לכל גוי (le-khol goi), for any other nation* (ibid., 20). We have learned: Even though he is circumcised, if he does not carry out the commandments, he is like a *goi*, Gentile, in all respects, and it is forbidden to teach him words of Torah. Concerning this we have learned: *an altar of stones* (Exodus 20:22)—*an altar of stones*, really! For the hardness of his heart persists and his filth does not cease, so his circumcision was unsuccessful and did not benefit him. Thus it is written *for your sword you would brandish over it and profane it* (ibid.).<sup>447</sup>

“Therefore, *He has not done so for any goi, Gentile*—unspecified. *And the judgments they know not* (Psalms 147:20)—forever and ever. Even another element they are not given, not to mention mysteries of Torah and laws of Torah. And it is written: *Indeed, YHVH's share is His people, Jacob His allotted possession* (Deuteronomy 32:9). *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH!* (Psalms 144:15).”<sup>448</sup>

#### THE SECTION OF SEXUAL LICENTIOUSNESS<sup>449</sup>

**MATNITIN.**<sup>450</sup> Transmitting norms of dazzling beings. Four sharpened keys in four directions of the world, situated in their corners. One in four directions, and four in one direction, engraved in one color. In that color: blue, purple, crimson, white, and red—each blending into its fellow color, its own distinguished.<sup>451</sup>

Four heads, rising as one, fusing into one figure. One head rising out of a washing pool in which it bathes. Two does, identical in size, come up from that washing, as is written: *like a flock of ewes similar in size, coming up from washing...* (Song of Songs 4:2).[452](#)

In their hair, an appearance of a four-colored precious stone. Four wings covering the body, small hands beneath their wings, each engraved with five. Flying high above a palace comely in appearance and beautiful in form.[453](#)

One youth, a boy, emerges with a sharp sword turning into males and females, who carry the measure of an ephah between heaven and earth, sometimes carrying it throughout the world. All measures are thereby measured, as is written: *an ephah of equity...* (Leviticus 19:36).[454](#)

An appearance of crystal lies on one sword; on the head of that sword flashes red from the crystal. [74a] On two sides, from this one and from that, the sword appears deeply etched. One mighty warrior—a ladder extending through thirteen worlds—girded with that sword to wreak vengeance. Along with him are girded sixty others, all skilled in victorious combat, as is written: *Gird your sword on the thigh, O warrior, your glory and your grandeur* (Psalms 45:4), and it is written *all of them skilled with a sword, expert in war, each with his sword on his thigh* (Song of Songs 3:8). Their faces turn various visages. No one knows them except one worm who swims among fish of the sea; all rocks passing over them break apart.[455](#)

At that time, a voice issuing from those girded with swords cleaves eighteen magnificent mountains. No one inclines his ear; all those in the world are shuteyed and hard-hearted. No one notices that the structure is about to be destroyed. When deeds are unseemly, deviating from the correct way, the right withdraws and the left rules. Then nakedness appears.[456](#)

Woe to the wicked who bring this upon the world, for none above are blessed until those below are annihilated,

as is written: *And the wicked will be no more. Bless, O my soul, YHVH. Hallelujah!* (Psalms 104:35).[457](#)

*Your father's nakedness and your mother's nakedness you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:7).[458](#)

Rabbi Hiyya opened, *"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men...* (Song of Songs

2:3). This verse has been established by the Companions. But how beloved is Assembly of Israel to the blessed Holy One, that She praises Him like this! Here one should contemplate: Why does She praise Him by the image of an apple and not by something else—by colors or fragrance or taste?[459](#)

"However, since it is written *an apple*, She praises Him by all: by colors, by fragrance, by taste. Just as an apple is a cure for everything, so the blessed Holy One is a cure for everything. Just as an apple appears in colors, as we have established, so the blessed Holy One appears in supernal colors. Just as an apple tree has a more delicate fragrance than any other tree, so of the blessed Holy One is written *his fragrance like Lebanon* (Hosea 14:7). Just as an apple tastes sweet, so of the blessed Holy One is written *His palate is sweets, he is all delight* (Song of Songs 5:16).[460](#)

"And the blessed Holy One praises Assembly of Israel by comparing Her to a rose. We have already established why like a rose, and this has been discussed."[461](#)

Rabbi Yehudah said, "When the righteous abound in the world, Assembly of Israel emits a fine fragrance and is blessed by the Holy King and Her face shines. But when the wicked abound in the world, Assembly of Israel, as it were, does not emit fragrance, and She tastes of the bitter Other Side. Then it is written: *He has cast down earth from heaven* (Lamentations 2:1), and Her face is darkened."[462](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “When the righteous abound in the world, it is written *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me* (Song of Songs 2:6). And when the wicked abound in the world, it is written *He has withdrawn His right hand* (Lamentations 2:3).”[463](#)

Rabbi Hizkiyah said, “From here: *A slanderer separates an intimate* (Proverbs 16:28)—that is, separates the King from *Matronita*, as is written: *Your father’s nakedness and your mother’s nakedness you shall not expose.*”[464](#)

Rabbi El’azar was sitting before his father. He said to him, “If there is an advocate in the world, this affects *Matronita*; and if there is an accuser in the world, this affects *Matronita*. Why?”[465](#)

He replied, “This may be compared to a king who had a son by a *matronita*. Whenever that son performs the will of the king, the king makes his abode with the *matronita*. Whenever the son does not perform the will of the king, the king removes his abode from the *matronita*.

“So it is with the blessed Holy One and Assembly of Israel. Whenever Israel fulfills the will of the blessed Holy One, He makes His abode with Assembly of Israel. Whenever Israel does not fulfill the will of the blessed Holy One, He does not make His abode with Assembly of Israel. Why? Because Israel is the firstborn son of the blessed Holy One, as is written: *My son, My firstborn, is Israel* (Exodus 4:22). Mother is Assembly of Israel—*Do not forsake your mother’s teaching* (Proverbs 1:8).[466](#)

“Come and see: As long as the people of Israel are distant from the King’s palace, *Matronita*, as it were, is distanced with them. Why? Because *Matronita* did not immediately apply a pint to this son, striking him so that he would follow the straight path. For the King never strikes a person, but rather leaves everything in the hand of *Matronita*: to manage the palace and punish the son, guiding him on the straight way toward the King.[467](#) [74b]

“Mystery of the matter, as is written: *Words of King Lemuel, an utterance with which his mother admonished him* (Proverbs 31:1)—*his mother*, surely: Bathsheba, as has been said. It is written: *Proverbs of Solomon. A wise son delights a father, and a foolish son is his mother’s misery* (ibid. 10:1)—*his mother’s misery*, surely![468](#)

“See what is written: *A wise son delights a father*. As long as this son walks a straight path and is wise, *he delights a father*—generality: the Holy King above. *Delights a father*—unspecified. If this son follows a path of stumbling, what is written? *And a foolish son is his mother’s misery—his mother*, not *his father*. Mystery of the matter: *For your crimes, your mother was sent away* (Isaiah 50:1)—*your mother* is Assembly of Israel.[469](#)

“Come and see: There has never been such joy for the blessed Holy One as on the day when Solomon attained wisdom and uttered the Song of Songs. Then the face of *Matronita* shone and the King came to make His abode with Her, as is written: *The wisdom of Solomon excelled* (1 Kings 5:10). What is meant by *excelled*? That the beauty of *Matronita* rose and She excelled in Her rungs above all other rungs, because the King had made His abode with Her. Why all this? Because She generated this wise son for the world.[470](#)

“When She generated Solomon, She generated all of Israel, and all of them occupied high rungs, virtuous like Solomon, and the blessed Holy One delighted in them, and they in Him.[471](#)

“On the day that Solomon completed the House below, *Matronita* prepared a house for the King, and they made their abode as one, and Her face shone in complete joy. Then joy prevailed above and below. Why all this? Because it is written: *an utterance with which his mother admonished him*—for She guided him according to the will of the King.[472](#)

“And when this son, as I have said, does not conduct himself according to the will of the King, then there is nakedness of all—nakedness on all sides—for the King separates from *Matronita*, and *Matronita* is distanced from His palace, so there is nakedness of all. Is it not nakedness if the King is without *Matronita* and *Matronita* is without the King? Thus it is written *Your father’s nakedness and your mother’s nakedness you shall not expose. She is your mother—surely, dwelling with you—so, you shall not expose her nakedness.*”[473](#)

Rabbi Shim’on slapped his hands together and wept, “Woe if I speak and reveal the mystery! Woe if I do not speak, for the Companions will be deprived of this!”[474](#)

“אָהָא (*Ahah*), *Ah*, *YHVH Elohim*, *are You completely destroying [the remnant of Israel]*? (Ezekiel 11:13). What is meant by *Ahah*, *Ah*, and what is meant by *are You completely destroying*?[475](#)

“Well, when אָ (he) is banished from the King’s palace, another, supernal *he* withholds blessings because of Her, and then is written אָהָא (*Ahah*), *Ah*, *are You completely destroying*? Thus, if אָ (he) is deprived of blessings, the other *he* withholds them from all. Why? Because blessings are found only where male and female dwell.”[476](#)

“Concerning this is written *YHVH roars from on high, and from His holy habitation He utters His voice; He roars mightily over His abode* (Jeremiah 25:30)—*over His real abode, Matronita*. And what does He say? ‘Woe, that I have destroyed My house!’ ‘My house’—coupling with *Matronita*.[477](#)

“This is surely *Your father’s nakedness and your mother’s nakedness you shall not expose*, for on all sides there is nakedness. Then, *The heavens are clothed in blackness, and sackcloth is made their covering* (Isaiah 50:3)—the site of inheriting blessings of rivers’ springs, which had flowed and saturated fittingly.[478](#)

“We have learned: When the King separates from *Matronita* and blessings are not to be found, He is called וַי (vai:



vav yod), Woe. Why? For it has been taught: The head of יסוד (Yesod) is ׀ (yod), because Yesod is small ׀ (vav) and the blessed Holy One is upper vav, so it is written ׀׀ (vav), and the head of this Yesod is yod. When *Matronita* is distanced from the King and blessings are withheld from all and coupling does not exist at the head of Yesod, upper vav takes this head of Yesod, which is yod, and draws it to Himself. Then it is ׀׀ (vai: vav yod), Woe—woe for all, for those above and those below.<sup>479</sup>

“Concerning this we have learned: Since the day that Jerusalem was destroyed, blessings are not to be found in the worlds, and there is not a single day lacking curses, for blessings are withheld from each day.”<sup>480</sup>

He said to him, “If so, what is ׀׀ (oy), woe, or ׀׀׀ (hoy), alas?”<sup>481</sup>

He replied, “When the matter depends on *teshuvah*, and they do not return, upper ׀ (he) takes these, drawing ׀ (vav) and ׀ (yod) to Herself, [75a] because they are not returning—then it is called ׀׀׀ (hoy: he vav yod), alas.<sup>482</sup>

“׀׀ (oy)—when the King withdraws higher and higher, for humans cry out and He will not care for them; and that supernal Concealed One raises ׀ (vav) and ׀ (yod) to Himself, so that prayer will not be received. Then it is called ׀׀׀ (oy: alef vav yod), woe, for ׀ (alef) has raised ׀ (vav) and ׀ (yod) to itself. And then *teshuvah* is unavailable, so ׀ (he) withdraws from these letters, for the matter does not depend on *teshuvah*.<sup>483</sup>

“Surely, when sins of the world proliferated—and *teshuvah* was dangling at first, but they were unwilling—then ׀ (he) withdrew, and ׀ (alef) raised ׀ (vav) and ׀ (yod) to itself, and it was called ׀׀׀ (oy: alef vav yod), woe. And when the Temple was destroyed—and *teshuvah* withdrew, not effective—then they cried out, saying ׀׀ (oy), *Woe, unto us, for the day is fading* (Jeremiah 6:4). What is meant by *the day is fading*? The supernal day, called *Teshuvah*, who withdrew and disappeared and was nowhere to be found—that day who is known to extend its right hand to receive the wicked—and

now it was fading completely, no longer to be found. So they said וַיָּא (oy), *woe*, and not וַיָּה (hoy), *alas*.[484](#)

“*For shadows of evening are stretching* (Jeremiah 6:4)—for empowered princes of the other nations were inclining to dominate them.[485](#)

“It has been taught: *vav* ascended high above, and the Sanctuary was burned, the people exiled, *Matronita* banished, and the Temple destroyed. Afterward, when *vav* descended to His place, He gazed upon His house and found it destroyed; He sought *Matronita*, but She had gone far away; He saw His palace and found it burned; He sought the people, but they were exiled; He saw the blessings of depths of rivers, which had flowed, but they were stopped up. Then it is written: *YHVH Elohim called on that day for weeping and mourning* (Isaiah 22:12); and then *the heavens were clothed in blackness...* (ibid. 50:3).[486](#)

“Then *vav* and *yod* flow toward one another, and upper *he* conveys springs to the Other Side, and blessings are not to be found, for male and female do not appear together nor dwell as one. Then, *He roars mightily over His abode* (Jeremiah 25:30).”[487](#)

Rabbi Shim'on wept, Rabbi El'azar wept. Rabbi El'azar said, “Weeping is thrust into my heart on one side, and joy into my heart on the other, for I have heard words that I never knew until now. Happy is my share!”

*The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:8). Who is *your father's wife*?[488](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, “We have learned: All words of Torah are concealed and revealed, for the Holy Name is concealed and revealed; Torah, which is the Holy Name, is likewise concealed and revealed. Here, all that is revealed is well known; concealed—as we have established.[489](#)

“This verse is as follows. *The nakedness of your father's wife*—it has been taught: As long as *Matronita* is with the King and suckles you, She is called *your mother*. Now that She

has been exiled with you and distanced from the King, She is called *your father's wife*. She remains the wife of the Holy King, never divorced from Him; She is surely His wife, as is written: *Where is your mother's bill of divorce by which I sent her away?* (Isaiah 50:1). Rather, She is certainly wife of the King, even though exiled.<sup>490</sup>

“Consequently, He commanded about Her twice. Once, while She dwells with the King in single coupling and is called *your mother*, as is written: *Your mother's nakedness you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:7)—do not cause them to be far from one another, for Her to be sent away on account of your sin, as is written: *For your crimes, your mother was sent away* (Isaiah 50:1). And the other, when She is in exile with you, banished from the King's palace, and called Wife of the King. Even though She is far removed from Him, do not cause Her to withdraw from among you—or your enemies will dominate you and She will not protect you in exile—as is written: *The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not expose*. Why? Because *it is your father's nakedness* (Leviticus 18:8)—although She is far removed from the King, His watchfulness is constantly upon Her, so one must be vigilant regarding Her and not sin against Her.”<sup>491</sup>

Rabbi Shim'on opened, “*For YHVH your God walks about amid your camp, to rescue you and to deliver your enemies to you. And your camp shall be holy, so that He should not see among you anything indecent and turn back from you* (Deuteronomy 23:15). *For YHVH your God—Shekhinah*, who is present among Israel, especially in exile, to protect them constantly on all sides and from all other nations, so that they cannot destroy Israel.”<sup>492</sup>

“For it has been taught: The enemies of Israel cannot [75b] harm them until Israel weakens the power of *Shekhinah* in face of the appointed princes of other nations. Then their enemies can prevail over them, dominate them, and issue many evil decrees against them. But when they return

toward Her, She smashes the power and might of all those princes, and breaks the power and might of Israel's enemies, retaliating against them for everything.<sup>493</sup>

*“And your camp shall be holy—*for a person must not defile himself by his sins and violate the words of Torah. Otherwise, he becomes defiled, as is written: ונטמתם (*venitmetem*), *becoming impure, through them* (Leviticus 11:43)—without an א (*alef*). And it has been taught: All 248 members of the body are defiled when he is defiled—that is, when he wants to be defiled. So, *And your camp shall be holy*. What is *your camp*? Members of the body.<sup>494</sup>

*“So that He should not see among you* ערות דבר (*ervat davar*), *nakedness of a thing*. What is *ervat davar*, *nakedness of a thing*? Nakedness of this *davar*, *word*, as we have established. Otherwise, *He will turn back from you*, surely. Therefore, *the nakedness of your father's wife you shall not expose*. Why? Because *it is written it is your father's nakedness* (Leviticus 18:8), as we have established.<sup>495</sup>

“It has been taught: For three things the people of Israel are detained in exile: for bringing disgrace upon *Shekhinah* in exile, for turning their faces away from *Shekhinah*, and for defiling themselves in the presence of *Shekhinah*. All of these we have established in our Mishnah.”<sup>496</sup>

Rabbi Abba was traveling to Cappadocia, accompanied by Rabbi Yose. As they were going, they saw a man approaching who had a mark on his face.<sup>497</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “Let us turn off the road, for this one's face testifies to sexual licentiousness of the Torah, on account of which his face is stigmatized.”<sup>498</sup>

Rabbi Yose said to him, “If he has had this mark since childhood, what licentiousness inheres in him?”

He replied, “I see in his face, which testifies to licentiousness of Torah.”<sup>499</sup>

Rabbi Abba called to him, and said, “Tell me something. What is this mark on your face?”

He said to them, "I beg of you, don't punish me any more than what my sins have brought upon me!"

Rabbi Abba said, "How is that?"

He replied, "One day I was traveling on the road—me and my sister. We stayed at an inn and I got drunk, and all that night I embraced my sister. In the morning I got up, and the innkeeper was quarreling with another man. I got between them and they grappled me, one from this side and one from that, and this wound penetrated my brain. I was saved by a certain doctor who was staying with us."

He asked him, "Who was the doctor?"

He replied, "It was Rabbi Simlai."[500](#)

He said, "And what cure did he give you?"

He replied, "A cure for the soul. From that day on, I have engaged in *teshuvah*. And every day I look at my face in a mirror and I weep for that sin before the blessed Holy One, and with those tears I wash my face."[501](#)

Rabbi Abba said, "Were it not for your becoming deprived of *teshuvah*, I would remove that mark from your face. But I proclaim over you, *Your iniquity is removed and your sin purged* (Isaiah 6:7)."[502](#)

He said to him, "Rabbi, say it three times!"

He said it three times and the mark disappeared.

Rabbi Abba said, "Surely your Lord wished to remove it from you, for you were certainly engaged in *teshuvah*."

He said to him, "I vow that from this day onward I will engage in Torah day and night."

He asked him, "What is your name?"

He replied, "אלעזר (*El'azar*)."

He said, "Surely, the name was decisive, for God has helped and assisted you."[503](#)

Rabbi Abba sent him off with a blessing.

Another time, Rabbi Abba was going to visit Rabbi Shim'on. He entered [this man's] town and came upon him sitting and expounding *A brutish man does not know, nor does a fool understand this: when the wicked spring up like*

*grass, and all the workers of iniquity flourish—to be destroyed forever* (Psalms 92:7-8) [as follows] : “A *brutish man does not know*. How stupid are inhabitants of the world, not considering or knowing or exploring the ways of the blessed Holy One—the foundation of their existence in the world! What prevents them from knowing? Their stupidity, because they do not engage in Torah. For if they engaged in Torah, they would know the ways of the blessed Holy One.[504](#)

“*Nor does a fool understand this*—not contemplating or knowing [76a] the conduct of זאז (zot), *this*, in the world. For although She renders judgment upon the world, we see the judgments of *zot, this*, befalling those who are righteous and not the wicked sinners who transgress decrees of Torah—as is written: *when the wicked spring up like grass, and all the workers of iniquity flourish*. For they inherit this world in all its aspects, and judgments do not impact them in this world. If King David had not mentioned it at the end of verse, we would not know, as is written: *to be destroyed forever*—to be destroyed in that world, becoming dust beneath the feet of the righteous, as is written: *You will trample the wicked, for they will be dust under the soles of your feet* (Malachi 3:21).”[505](#)

He opened again, saying, “*My deceit rises up against me, testifying in my face* (Job 16:8). What does this indicate? Well, happy is the share of one who engages in Torah to know the ways of the blessed Holy One! For whoever engages in the Torah of the blessed Holy One engages, as it were, in His very Name. Just as the Name of the blessed Holy One enacts decrees, so does Torah.[506](#)

“Come and see: If a person transgresses decrees of Torah, Torah ascends and descends and makes marks on his face, so that those above and below will notice him; then they all pour curses upon his head. And it has been taught: All those *eyes of YHVH*—which go roaming through the world to perceive the ways of human beings—lift their



eyes and see the face of that person and notice [those marks]. They all open against him, 'Woe, woe! Woe to him in this world, woe to him in the world that is coming! Keep away from all around so-and-so, for his face testifies against him, and a spirit of impurity settles upon him.'[507](#)

"Throughout all the days that a mark testifies on his face, if he engenders a son, he draws a soul for him from the side of impurity. These are the wicked of the generation, the brazen-faced, whose Lord lets them be—to destroy them in the world that is coming."[508](#)

"We have learned: For a righteous and virtuous person who engages in Torah day and night, the blessed Holy One draws a thread of love, which marks his face, instilling fear in those above and below. Similarly, for one who transgresses decrees of Torah, a spirit of impurity is drawn forth, which marks his face and from which those above and below flee, all proclaiming: 'Keep away from around so-and-so. Woe to him! Woe to his soul!' Such a person draws a spirit of impurity that haunts him, and he transmits it to his son. In him the blessed Holy One has no share, and He lets him be—to destroy him in the world that is coming."[509](#)

Rabbi Abba said to him, "How do you know this? You have spoken well."

He replied, "So I have learned. And I learned that this evil inheritance is acquired by all his children unless they return to God, for nothing can withstand *teshuvah*. So I have learned, and this remedy was given to me one time when my face was marked. One day I was walking on the way and I met a certain virtuous man, by whom that mark was removed from me."[510](#)

He said to him, "What is your name?"

He replied, "El'azar—and that one I call El'azar the Other."[511](#)

He said to him, "Blessed is the Compassionate One, that I have seen you, and been privileged to see you so!

Happy is your share in this world and in the world that is coming! It is I who met you.”[512](#)

He prostrated himself before him, and brought him into his house and set before him a double measure of festive bread and meat from a third-born calf. After they ate, the man said to him, “Let me tell you something. I have a red cow, the mother of the calf whose flesh we’ve just eaten. One day, before she became pregnant and calved, I followed her to pasture in the wild. As I was leading her along, a certain man passed in front of me. He said to me, ‘What is the name of this cow?’[513](#)

“I said, ‘In my whole life, I’ve never given her a name.’

“He said to me, ‘She is called Bathsheba, mother of Solomon—if you attain atonement.’

“And when I turned my head, I didn’t see him. I laughed at that remark. [76b] But now that I’ve attained Torah, I’m troubled by that statement. Ever since the day Rabbi Simlai passed away from here, there’s been no one who can illumine Torah for us like him, and I’m afraid to speak a word of Torah that I haven’t learned; yet I glimpse that this remark is a word of wisdom, though I don’t understand.”[514](#)

He said to him, “It is surely a word of wisdom, and a supernal allusion above and below. But come and see: She is really called *בת שבע* (*Bat Sheva*), Bathsheba, Daughter of Seven, in mystery of wisdom. Therefore, everything related to her is described as seven: seven cows, seven burnings, seven sprinklings, seven washings, seven impure, seven pure, seven priests—including Moses and Aaron, for look at what is written: *YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron...* (Numbers 19:1-2)! That man who said ‘*Bat Sheva*’ spoke well, and all is a mystery of wisdom.”[515](#)

He replied, “Blessed is the Compassionate One, that I’ve heard this! Blessed is He, for He first greeted me with peace so as to attain this, as is written: *Peace, peace for the far and the near* (Isaiah 57:19). When I was *far*, the blessed Holy One greeted me with peace to be *near*.”[516](#)

Rabbi Abba proclaimed over him, "*Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that is yours!* (1 Samuel 25:6)."

*The nakedness of your father's sister you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:12).

*sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is* טִשָּׁה (*hesed*), *a disgrace, and they shall be cut off before the eyes of their people* (ibid. 20:17). There we learned: For 120 years Adam separated from his wife, not engendering; for after Cain killed Abel, Adam did not want to couple with his wife."[517](#)

Rabbi Hiyya opened, saying, "*A man who lies with his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and*

Rabbi Yose said, "At the moment when death was decreed upon him and upon the whole world, he said, 'Why should I engender for terror?' Immediately, he separated from his wife."[518](#)

"Two female spirits used to come and couple with him, and they bore offspring. Those offspring were the demons of the world, called *afflictions of the children of Adam* (2 Samuel 7:14). These lure human beings at doorways, wells, and toilets. Therefore, if a person places the Holy Name at his doorway—if שַׁדַּי (*Shaddai*) is inscribed in its supernal crowns—they all flee far away from him, corresponding to what is written: *No affliction will draw near your tent* (Psalms 91:10). What is *affliction*? *Afflictions of the children of Adam*.[519](#)

"It has been taught: When Adam descended in a supernal image, in a holy image, and those above and below saw him, they all approached him and crowned him king over this world. After the serpent copulated with Eve and injected her with slime, she later gave birth to Cain. From there were descended all generations of the wicked of the world, and the haunt of spirits and demons derives

from his aspects. Thus all spirits and demons are half human, below, and half angelic, above. Similarly, when those others were born from Adam, they were all like this: half from below and half from above.[520](#)

“After they were born from Adam, he engendered from those spirits daughters who resembled in beauty those above and those below. Thus it is written *The sons of Elohim saw that the daughters of Adam were beautiful, and they took themselves wives, whomever they chose* (Genesis 6:2)—all strayed after them.[521](#)

“There was a certain one, who came into the world from a spirit on the side of Cain, and they called him Tubal-cain. A certain female emerged with him, and human beings strayed after her, and she was called Na’amah. From her issued other spirits and demons, and these are suspended in the air, conveying information to those others below.[522](#)

“This Tubal-cain introduced weapons of war into the world, and this Na’amah trembles in excitement, clinging to her aspects. Still now she exists, dwelling amidst the raging waves of the great sea, and she emerges and toys with human beings—becoming inflamed by them in dreams through the lust of a man who clings to her. The lust she takes, nothing more, and from that lust she conceives and generates other species in the world. These that she bears to human males manifest to human females, who are impregnated by them and bear spirits.[523](#)

“They all go to Primordial Lilith, and she raises them. She goes out into the world, seeking [77a] her children, and when she sees human children, she clings to them to kill them, to be absorbed in the spirits of human children. She moves in that spirit, but three holy spirits confront her, flying in front of her and snatching that spirit from her and setting it before the blessed Holy One. There they learn in His presence.[524](#)

“Consequently, Torah warns people: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy* (Leviticus 11:44)—for if a person is holy, he need not fear her, and then the blessed Holy One designates these three holy angels that we have mentioned, and they protect that child and she cannot harm him. As is written: *No evil will befall you, nor affliction draw near your tent* (Psalms 91:10). *Why will no evil befall you? Because His angels He will command for you* (ibid., 11), and it is written *For Me he desired and I will deliver him* (ibid., 14). But if a person is not holy and draws a spirit from the side of impurity, then she comes and toys with that child. If she kills him, she is absorbed in that spirit, never leaving it.<sup>[525](#)</sup>

“Now, you might say, ‘Those others whom she kills—and whose spirits are snatched from her by those three holy ones confronting her—did not derive from the side of impurity; so why is she empowered to kill them?’<sup>[526](#)</sup>

“Well, this happens when a person does not sanctify himself, yet does not intend to defile himself and does not become defiled. Consequently, she can prevail over the body but not over the spirit.<sup>[527](#)</sup>

“Sometimes it happens that Na’amah goes out into the world to be inflamed by humans, and a man becomes linked lustfully with her, and he wakes from sleep and clasps his wife and lies with her, while his will is focused on that lust he had in his dream. Then the one he engenders stems from the side of Na’amah, since this occurred out of lust for her. When Lilith emerges and sees him, she realizes what has happened, so she bonds with him and raises him like those other children of Na’amah; she is with him often, and she does not kill him.<sup>[528](#)</sup>

“Such a person becomes impaired every new moon, and she never abandons her claim on him. For each time the moon is renewed in the world, Lilith emerges and visits all those whom she has raised and toys with them, and so that person becomes impaired at that time.<sup>[529](#)</sup>

“Happy are the righteous who sanctify themselves with the sanctity of the King. Of them 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).[530](#)

“These matters King Solomon discovered in the Book of King Ashmedai, and we find there 1,450 types of defilement contracted by humans, which Ashmedai revealed to King Solomon.[531](#)

“Woe to human beings, who are all closed-minded and shut-eyed, neither knowing nor listening nor caring how they exist in the world! Look, counsel and cure are right in front of them, yet they do not notice! For people cannot be saved except by counsel of Torah, in whose counsel is written *Should there be among you a man who becomes impure through a nocturnal mishap* (Deuteronomy 23:11)—*who becomes impure, precisely! Through a nocturnal mishap, precisely!* We have already established these matters. In the counsel of Torah is written *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I YHVH am holy* (Leviticus 11:44).[532](#)

“It has been taught: After Cain and Abel departed, Adam returned to his wife and was enveloped in another spirit and engendered Seth. From here were descended generations of the righteous in the world. The blessed Holy One lavished love upon the world, and along with each one his female was born, so that the world would be populated corresponding to the pattern above. This has been established in the secrecy of our Mishnah, as is written: *A man who takes his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is*  $\text{הסד}$  (*hesed*), *a disgrace* (Leviticus 20:17)—*it is hesed, love, surely!*[533](#)

“After *Hesed* appears, trunks emerge from below upward, branches spread, and what is near recedes afar. Then the branch grows and comes to join in one coupling with the tree. This is in the beginning, this is in secrecy of



the world, for it is written *I said, 'The world is built by hesed, love'* (Psalms 89:3). But from now on, human beings who are engaged in that *shall be cut off before the eyes of their people* (Leviticus 20:17).[534](#) [77b]

“It has been taught: *The nakedness of your father's sister* (Leviticus 18:12)—as revealed in concealment. It is written: *For the ways of YHVH are right; the righteous walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them* (Hosea 14:10). Happy is the share of the righteous, who know the ways of the blessed Holy One, walk in them, and are intimately familiar with them. Happy is their share![535](#)

“It has been taught: Upper ך (he) conceives in love and affection, for ך (yod) never parts from Her, as has been said. She brings forth ם (vav), who later appears before Her and is suckled by Her. When this vav issues, His mate issues with Him. *Hesed* comes and separates them, and trunks emerge from below upward, branches spread and proliferate, forming lower he. Her branches grow higher and higher until She couples with the supernal Tree and vav joins with he. Who causes this? *It is hesed* (Leviticus 20:17) surely, uniting them as one.[536](#)

“Yod with upper he—their union does not depend on *Hesed*; rather, their union and affection depend on מזלָא (Mazzala), Flux of Destiny, for they never separate.[537](#)

“Yod is linked with he; he with vav; vav with he; he with all—and all is one linkage, one entity, never separating from one another. Whoever causes division, as it were, destroys the world, and this is called ‘nakedness of all.’[538](#)

“Of the time to come—when the blessed Holy One will one day restore *Shekhinah* to Her place, so that all will be unified—it is written *On that day YHVH will be one and His name one* (Zechariah 14:9). You might say, ‘And now is He not one?’ No, for the wicked of the world cause Him not to be one, since *Matronita* is far removed from the King and they are not united. Supernal Mother is removed from the King and does not suckle Him, because the King without *Matronita*

is not adorned with Mother's crowns as before when He was joined with *Matronita* and [Mother] adorned Him with many radiancies of holy supernal crowns, as is written: *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* (Song of Songs 3:11)—when He coupled with *Matronita*, and then Supernal Mother crowned Him fittingly. Now that the King is not with *Matronita*, Supernal Mother takes away Her crowns and withholds from Him Her streaming springs, and He is disconnected; as it were, He is not one.<sup>539</sup>

“But when *Matronita* will return to the site of Her palace, and the King will unite with Her in single coupling, then all will join as one, inseparably, and of this is written *On that day YHVH will be one and His name one. On that day—when Matronita is restored to Her palace; then all will be one, inseparably. And then saviors will climb Mount Zion to execute judgment on Mount Esau, and the kingdom will be YHVH's* (Obadiah 1:21).<sup>540</sup>

“For it has been taught: Rabbi Shim'on said, ‘*Matronita* will not enter Her palace in joy until the kingdom of Esau is judged and She takes vengeance on it for causing all this. Afterward, She will couple with the King and joy will be complete. As is written: *Saviors will climb Mount Zion to execute judgment on Mount Esau—first. Afterward, and the kingdom will be YHVH's. Who is kingdom? Matronita, as is written: and the kingdom will be YHVH's. After they couple as one, what is written? YHVH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHVH will be one and His name one.*’”<sup>541</sup>

*The nakedness of your father's brother* לא תגלה (*lo tegalleh*), *you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:14). Rabbi Yehudah taught, “This is Israel below. *And your mother's sister* (ibid., 13)—Jerusalem below. For through these sins Israel יגלון (*yiglun*), would be exiled, among the nations and Jerusalem below would be destroyed. Concerning this we

have learned: The blessed Holy One manifested His love for Israel by calling them brothers, as is written: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions* (Psalms 122:8).<sup>542</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said, “If *my brothers*, why *my companions*; and if *my companions*, why *my brothers*? Well, it has been taught: One who never departs is called a companion, as is said: *Do not forsake your companion or your father’s companion* (Proverbs 27:10). This is the mystery of the word spoken by Rabbi Shim’on: Supernal Mother is called Companion, because the love of Father will never depart from Her. [78a] And Lower Mother is called Bride.<sup>543</sup>

“Sister, as we have established: *We have a little sister* (Song of Songs 8:8). This corresponds to our anonymous Mishnah, for it is written here: *the nakedness of your sister, your father’s daughter, or your mother’s daughter* (Leviticus 18:9). Since it says *your father’s daughter*, why *or your mother’s daughter*? Well, if She derives from the side of Father, She is called *Hokhmah* (Wisdom); and if from the side of Mother, She is called *Binah* (Understanding). In any case, whether from one or the other, She derives from Mother and Father, for ם (*yod*) never departs from ה (*he*). This is mystery of the matter: *born in the house or born outside* (ibid.). *Born in the house*—Father, as is written: *By wisdom a house is built* (Proverbs 24:3). *Or born outside*—from the side of Mother.”<sup>544</sup>

Rabbi Abba said, “*By wisdom a house is built*. Who is a *house* built *by wisdom*? You must say this is the river issuing from Eden, and therefore *born in the house*. *Or born outside*—when She issues from ׃ (*vav*), as is written: *bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh* (Genesis 2:23), and it is written *He took one of his sides* (ibid., 21). This is *born outside*—from the place where the Short-Tempered One is found, as has been said.”<sup>545</sup>

Concerning this, Rabbi Yehudah said, “The people of Israel are called ‘brothers of the blessed Holy One,’

because His love for them never departs. Jerusalem below is called *your mother's sister* (Leviticus 18:13), as is written: *Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound together* (Psalms 122: 3). What is meant by *that is bound together*? That the blessed Holy One unites with Her from six sides, with all aspects of the King, through the rung of Righteous One, in whom are included all crowns of the King. This is *that is bound together.*"[546](#)

Rabbi Yitshak said, "*There tribes ascend* (Psalms 122:4). Who are *tribes*? Twelve boundaries spreading out from that great and mighty Tree, inherited from the side of Father and Mother, as is written: *the tribes of Yah*. Giving testimony, offered by the Holy Son, as is written: *the tribes of Yah, a testimony to Israel* (ibid.). These are deep rivers flowing and drawn from *Yah*.[547](#)

"Why all this? *To praise the name of YHVH* (ibid.). Consequently, *There stand thrones of judgment, thrones of the house of David* (ibid., 5)—to inherit the Holy Kingdom, he and his sons, for all generations. This is the song uttered by David over the supernal holy Kingdom."[548](#)

Rabbi Hizkiyah said, "All in supernal mystery, to show that one who causes a defect below causes a defect above. For we have learned: 'The conjugal duty of the wise is from Sabbath to Sabbath,' since they know the mystery of the matter and can focus their heart, perfecting their will, and the children they engender are called 'children of the King.' But if they cause a defect below, they cause a defect, as it were, in the Bride above. Then it is written: *The nakedness of כלתך (kallatekha), your bride, you shall not expose* (Leviticus 18:15). This pertains to those who know the ways of Torah; as for rest of the people, that which is revealed: *kallatekha, your daughter-in-law*, simply. For by this sin, *Shekhinah* departs from them."[549](#)

It has been taught: The Holy Name is engraved in well-known ways, in inscribed letters of twenty-two: ך (Yod) with א (alef), *alef with yod*; ך (bet), *bet with yod*; ך (yod) with א (alef) *bet*;

ה (he) with ג (gimel), yod with he; yod with gimel, he with yod; gimel with he, he with ד (dalet). All engraved with yod; yod elevates them.[550](#)

He is included in yod, issuing from it; then they crown the Patriarchs. He is opened by its streams, and crowns the head of ו (vav), where the Patriarchs abide. vav includes six letters, all included in yod.[551](#)

Yod is engraved with its gravings and ascends to be crowned with twelve other letters. From it issued Ten Utterances, engraved, and all those paths of the supernal way, most precious of all.[552](#)

Then another he is comprised of them all, engraved by an extended concealed aspect, to give birth below.[553](#)

All are engraved in forty-two letters, all of which we have explained in our Mishnah, ascending to the head of the King. Seven complete Sabbaths, separating into seventy letters, totaling seventy-two, ascending to the letter vav, inscribed in the portion ויהי בשלח פרעה (Va-yhi be-shallah Par'oh), *When Pharaoh sent off* (Exodus 13:17–17:16), in the verse when *Shekhinah* journeyed. Seven inscriptions are inscribed therein, seven ascend [78b] from it by inscribed deeds.[554](#)

It has been taught: Letters ascended in known inscriptions and paths concealed—except from the truly virtuous, pillars of the world.

Rabbi Shim'on said to Rabbi El'azar, "Come and see: These twenty-two letters engraved in Torah are all divided among these Ten Utterances. Each and every one of these utterances, which are crowns of the King, is engraved with certain letters. Consequently the Holy Name is concealed by other letters. Every utterance lends its letters to the utterance above, since one is included in the other. So we engrave the Holy Name with other letters, since every single one is concealed by another until all are connected as one.[555](#)

“One who wishes to know permutations of holy names should know those letters inscribed on each and every crown; then he will know and fathom all. I myself engraved them—all those letters inscribed specifically on each and every crown—from the supernal book of Solomon. Thereby we succeeded, and the Companions have engraved them; and this is fine, since every crown lends its letters to its fellow, as we have established. Sometimes only its own letters are needed, those inscribed in it. All of them are known to the Companions, and we have established them.[556](#)

“Happy are the righteous in this world and in the world that is coming, for the blessed Holy One desires to honor them and reveals to them supernal mysteries of His Holy Name that He does not reveal to supernal holy ones! Thereby Moses was able to be crowned among holy ones, none of whom could come near him with blazing flame and coals of fire. Otherwise, what did he possess to stand among them? But happy is the share of Moses, for when He began to speak with him, he sought to know His holy names—concealed and revealed, each one fittingly. Then he grasped and knew more than all inhabitants of the world.

“Come and see: When Moses ascended into the glorious cloud, he entered among holy ones. A certain angel accosted him with flames of fire, flashing eyes, his wings blazing, intent on swallowing him up—that angel was named Gazriel. Then Moses invoked a certain holy name engraved with twelve letters, and [the angel] shook and trembled, until Moses ascended among them, and so with every single one. Happy is his share! We have already established these matters.[557](#)

“It has been taught: Among the adornments of *Matronita*, we have established some of these prohibitions of sexual licentiousness, although they are both revealed and concealed. There, *her son’s daughter or her daughter’s*



*daughter* (Leviticus 18:17), for the world needs them, and they are essential to civilization, as we have established. One who exposes a single nakedness of these—woe to him, woe to his soul, for thereby he has exposed other nakednesses above![558](#)

“It has been taught: The final statement of the Ten Utterances in Torah is *You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife* (Exodus 20:14), for this is totality of them all, and one who covets another woman is considered to have violated the entire Torah. However, there is nothing that withstands *teshuvah*, especially if one receives his punishment, like King David.”[559](#)

Rabbi Yose said, “We have learned: For whoever has sinned and then abandoned that sin, *teshuvah* is effective for him. Otherwise, he does not attain *teshuvah* and it avails him nothing. If so, why didn’t David separate from Bathsheba afterward?”[560](#)

He replied, “Bathsheba was his, and he took what was his, and her husband had died. For it has been taught: ‘Bathsheba was destined for King David since the day that the world was created.’ And what delayed him? His marrying the daughter of King Saul—and that same day, Uriah married her through supplication, even though she wasn’t his. Afterward, David came and took what was his; and because David forced the time in the presence of the blessed Holy One, by killing Uriah and acting so, He was displeased and punished David. For the blessed Holy One wanted to return her to David, to establish for him the holy kingdom, upon her. And when he desired, he desired what was his.”[561](#)

It has been taught: Rabbi Yose said, “Why is it written *I am YHVH* (Leviticus 18:2)? *I am YHVH*, who intends to bestow a good reward on the righteous in the time to come; *I am YHVH*, who intends to exact retribution from the wicked in the time to come—those of whom is written *who rebel against Me* (Isaiah 66:24).[562](#)

“*I am YHVH, and it is written I put to death and I bring to life* (Deuteronomy 32:39). Although [79a] I am in the Attribute of Compassion, the wicked turn that into the Attribute of Judgment. For it has been taught: The complete name—*YHVH Elohim*. If they prove worthy, *YHVH*; if not, *Elohim*.”[563](#)

Rabbi Shim'on said, “The wicked cause a defect above. What is the defect? As we have established, a real defect, and this has been discussed.”[564](#)

It has been taught: *Do not approach a woman in her menstrual impurity to expose her nakedness* (Leviticus 18:19).[565](#)

Rabbi Yehudah taught, “The generation in which Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai dwells are all virtuous, all devout, and sin-fearing, and *Shekhinah* dwells among them, which is not so in other generations. Consequently, words are elucidated and not concealed. For other generations are not so: they cannot reveal words of supernal mysteries, and those who know are afraid. For when Rabbi Shim'on uttered the mystery of this verse, the eyes of all the Companions streamed tears, and all the words that he spoke were clear in their eyes—as is written: *Mouth to mouth I speak with him; in a clear vision, not in riddles* (Numbers 12:8).[566](#)

“For one day Rabbi Yeisa posed the following: ‘An egg of truth, emerging from a bird abiding in fire, splitting into four. Two of them ascend, one descends, and one spreads a sprawl of the great sea.’[567](#)

“Rabbi Abba said, ‘In the presence of Rabbi Shim'on, you have made the holy profane, for of him is written *Mouth to mouth I speak with him*.’[568](#)

“Rabbi Shim'on said to him, ‘Before the egg splits, you will depart from the world.’ And so it happened, in the Assembly of Rabbi Shim'on.[569](#)

“It has been taught: In the days of Rabbi Shim'on, a person would say to his fellow, ‘Open your mouth and let your

words shine!’ After Rabbi Shim’on passed away, they would say, ‘*Do not let your mouth make your flesh sin* (Ecclesiastes 5:5).’<sup>570</sup>

“It has been taught: Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘If the inhabitants of the world contemplated what is written in the Torah, they would not provoke their Lord.’

“It has been taught: When harsh judgments are aroused to descend into the world, here is written *The secret of YHVH is for those who revere Him* (Psalms 25:14). This has been said in the Holy Assembly; here I must reveal, for it pertains to this place.<sup>571</sup>

“For we have learned: When the mighty Serpent above is aroused through sins of the world, he dwells and conjoins with the Female, injecting slime into Her. The Male separates from Her because She is defiled and called impure, and it is not fitting for the Male to approach Her, for woe if He becomes defiled with Her while She is defiled!<sup>572</sup>

“It has been taught: One hundred twenty-five species of impurity descended to the world, adhering to the side of the mighty Serpent, and twenty-seven chiefs among them attach themselves to females, clinging to them. Woe to one who approaches her, for whoever does so exposes a defect above! For by this sin, the mighty Serpent is aroused and spews slime in a place where there should be none, joining with the Female—and hair of the Male grows, and the Female is defiled and Her hair grows and Her nails increase. Then judgments begin to be aroused in the world and all is defiled, as is written: *for he has defiled YHVH’s sanctuary* (Numbers 19:20)—*YHVH’s sanctuary* is defiled by the sins of humanity.<sup>573</sup>

“It has been taught: Why is it written *And enmity I will set between you and the woman* (Genesis 3:15)? Twenty-four species of impurity are injected by the Serpent into the Female when he joins with Her, according to the numerical value of *ואיבה* (*ve-eivah*), *and enmity*. Twenty-four judgments

are aroused above, and twenty-four below. Hair grows, nails increase, and then judgments are aroused entirely.<sup>574</sup>

“And it has been taught: When a woman wants to be purified, she must cut the hair that grew during the days of impurity and cut her nails—all that filth within them. For it has been taught in the mysteries of impurity: The filth of nails arouses another filth, so they require hiding. And whoever eliminates them completely stimulates, as it were, *Hesed* in the world.<sup>575</sup>

“For it has been taught: A person should not provide a token of remembrance for evil species. For we have learned: One thousand four hundred and five evil species adhere to that filth injected by the mighty Serpent, and all of them are aroused by that filth of nails. One who wants to, can even perform sorcery with them on people, due to those dangling from them. Whoever eliminates [79b] them increases, as it were, *Hesed* in the world, and evil species are nowhere to be found. One should remove that filth and the nails marked by it; for it has been taught: Whoever steps on them with his foot or his shoe can be harmed. If that is so with this remnant of a remnant of filth above, then how much more so with a woman who receives from, and is joined with, the Serpent injecting filth! Woe to the world that receives from her at that time!<sup>576</sup>

“Therefore Rabbi Shim’on said, “The blessed Holy One said, “Bring an atonement *עלי* (*alai*), for Me, on the new moon.” *Alai*, above Me, surely, so that the Serpent will be eliminated, and the one who needs to will be sweetened. *Alai*, above Me, as is written: *Seraphim were standing מעל* (*mi-ma’al*), above, Him (Isaiah 6:2). Thus of Korah is written *banding together על* (*al*), over, *YHVH* (Numbers 16:11)—for through them would be aroused the one who would be aroused, who comes from their side.<sup>577</sup>

“Here, too, “Bring an atonement *alai*, above Me”—“above Me,” really, so that the Serpent will be assuaged and removed, no longer found in the place it

occupies. Why all this? “Because I diminished the moon, and the one who should not dominate Her does so.” Therefore it is written *Do not approach a woman in her menstrual impurity to expose her nakedness* (Leviticus 18:19).<sup>578</sup>

“Happy is the generation in which Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai dwells! Happy is its share among those above and those below! Of him is written *Happy are you, O land, whose king is a free man* (Ecclesiastes 10:17). What is a *free man*? One who lifts his head to reveal and explain things, and does not fear—like one who is free and says what he wants without fear.<sup>579</sup>

“What is meant by *king*? This is Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, master of Torah, master of wisdom. For when Rabbi Abba and the Companions saw Rabbi Shim’on, they would run after him, saying, *They will follow YHVH, who will roar like a lion* (Hosea 11:10).”<sup>580</sup>

Rabbi Shim’on said, “It is written: *From new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, [all flesh shall come to bow down before Me—says YHVH]* (Isaiah 66:23). Why is one equivalent to the other? Well, all attain a single rung, one coupling with the other. And joy of one in the other exists only when the Holy Ancient One reveals Himself; then, joy of all.<sup>581</sup>

“We have learned: It is written *A psalm, a song ליום השבת (le-yom ha-shabbat), for the Sabbath day* (Psalms 92:1)—*le-yom ha-shabbat, by the Sabbath day*, really: praise offered by the blessed Holy One. Then joy prevails and a soul is added, for the Holy Ancient One is about to be revealed and coupling awaits.<sup>582</sup>

“So too at the renewal of the moon, for the sun illumines her with radiant joy of the Ancient One above. Consequently, this offering is above, so that all may be assuaged and joy may prevail in the world. Thus, ‘Bring an atonement *alai*, above Me,’ worded precisely!<sup>583</sup>

“It has been taught: It is written *The ascent offering from one Sabbath to the next*, על (al), *besides, the perpetual ascent offering* (Numbers 28:10)—for one should aim his heart high above, more than on other days; so *al, above, the perpetual ascent offering*, precisely!<sup>584</sup>

“It has been taught: Concerning Hannah is written *She prayed* על (al), *to, YHVH, weeping bitterly* (1 Samuel 1:10)—*al, above, YHVH*, precisely, because children depend on the Holy מזל (Mazzala), Flux of Destiny, as we have established.<sup>585</sup>

“You cannot find a single word in Torah, or even a tiny letter, that does not allude to supernal wisdom. From each one תלין תלי תלין (taleyān tillei tillin), *dangle mounds upon mounds*, of aspects of supernal wisdom, as is written: *his locks* תלתלים (taltallim), *luxuriant* (Song of Songs 5:11).<sup>586</sup>

Rabbi Yose found Rabbi Abba sitting and reciting this verse: “*Cast your burden* על (al), *upon, YHVH* (Psalms 55:23)—*al, above*, precisely, for sustenance depends on מזל (Mazzala), the Flux of Destiny.”<sup>587</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah—who used to recite על זאת (Al zot), *For this, let every devout one pray to You* לעת מצא (le-et metso), *in a time of finding* (Psalms 32:6)—said: “*Al zot, above this*, surely! *Le-et metso, in a time of finding*—they have already established this; but *le-et metso*, as is written: *Seek YHVH* בהמצאו (be-himmatse’o), *when He may be found* (Isaiah 55:6).<sup>588</sup>

“Alternatively, *le-et metso, for a time of finding*—when rivers flow forth and the Patriarchs are supplied and all are blessed.<sup>589</sup>

“*Only that the rush of mighty waters* (Psalms 32:6). Who is *the rush of mighty waters*? Depth of springs and rivers. For who can attain it? Who is worthy of approaching and ascending there? As is written: *Only the rush of mighty waters—that they will not reach* (ibid.), for they are not worthy or capable.”<sup>590</sup>



Rabbi Yitshak said, “It is written: *One thing I ask of YHVH, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of YHVH all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of YHVH and to reflect in His temple* (Psalms 27:4). Happy are the righteous, for whom many supernal treasures are hidden away in that world, and the blessed Holy One delights in them in those worlds, as we have established. As for *the beauty of YHVH*, this has been discussed.”[591](#)

Rabbi Hizkiyah said, “From here: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what He will do for one who awaits Him* (Isaiah 64:3). *He will do*—the verse should read *You will do*. But *He will do*, surely—corresponding to הִנְנִי יוֹסִיף (Hineni yosif), *I hereby, He will add, fifteen years to your life* (Isaiah 38:5), and corresponding to *She prayed* נָלַ (al), *above, YHVH* (1 Samuel 1:10), and all is one.”[592](#)

“Happy is the share of the righteous in this world and in the world [80a] that is coming. Of them is written *Let all who shelter in You rejoice, ever jubilant as You protect them, and let those who love Your name exult in You* (Psalms 5:12). And it is written: *Surely the righteous will acclaim Your name, the upright will dwell in Your presence* (ibid. 140:14), and: *Those who know Your name will trust in You, for You have not abandoned Your seekers, O YHVH* (ibid. 9:11). *Blessed be YHVH forever! Amen and amen* (ibid. 89:53).”

REFERENCE MATTER

## **Abbreviations**

<i>ABD</i>	David Noel Freedman, ed., <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
add.	addendum
Add.	Additional
<i>Arukh</i>	Nathan ben Yeḥiel of Rome, <i>Sefer he-Arukh</i>
<i>Arukh ha-Shalem</i>	Nathan ben Yeḥiel 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-Millim ha-Zarot</i>	Boaz Huss, ed. <i>Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot she-be-Sefer ha-Zohar</i>
BT	Babylonian Talmud
C9	MS Add. 1023, University Library, Cambridge
C.E.	Common Era
Cremona	Cremona edition of the <i>Zohar</i>
<i>Derekh Emet</i>	<i>Derekh Emet</i> , in <i>Sefer ha-Zohar</i> , ed. Reuven Margalioṭ
<i>Derekh Emet</i> (ed. Ḥamiz)	Joseph Ḥamiz, ed., <i>Derekh Emet</i>
diss.	dissertation
ed.	editor (plural, eds.); edition; edited by

Edri	Yehuda Edri, trans., <i>Sefer ha-Zohar</i>
esp.	especially
fasc.	fascicle
frag.	fragmentary
<i>Haggahot Maharḥu</i>	Ḥayyim Vital, <i>Haggahot Maharḥu</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>
L27	MS Gaster 747, British Library, London
JT	Jerusalem Talmud
M	Mishnah
M5	MS Hebr. 20, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
M8	MS Hebr. 218, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
M9	MS Hebr. 219, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
<i>Ma'arikh</i>	Menaḥem 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>Matoq mi-Devash</i>	Daniel Frisch, <i>Peirush Matoq mi-Devash</i>
<i>MhN</i>	<i>Midrash ha-Ne'lam</i>
<i>Miqdash Melekh</i>	Shalom Buzaglo, <i>Miqdash Melekh</i>
MS	manuscript
n. (plural, nn.)	note(s)
N10	MS 1660, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

N38	MS 1927, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
n.d.	no date
<i>Nefesh David</i>	David Luria, <i>Nefesh David</i>
<i>Nitsotsei Orot</i>	Ḥayyim Joseph David Azulai, <i>Nitsotsei Orot</i>
<i>Nitsotsei Zohar</i>	Reuven Margalioṭ, <i>Nitsotsei Zohar</i>
n.p.	no publisher
<i>Or Yaqar</i>	Moses Cordovero, <i>Or Yaqar</i>
P2	MS héb. 779, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris
P3	MS héb. 780, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris
par.	paragraph
<i>Pereq Shirah</i>	Malachi Beit-Arié, ed., <i>Pereq Shirah</i>
<i>Piq</i>	<i>Piqqudin</i>
pl.	plural
Pr13	MS 351, Biblioteca Palatina, Parma
<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>SdT</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...</i>

	<i>ha-Sullam</i>
T1	MS Friedberg 5-015, University of Toronto Library
<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>
V3	MS ebr. 199, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V5	MS ebr. 206, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V6	MS ebr. 207, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V7	MS ebr. 208, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V17	MS Neofiti 24, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican
V22	MS ebr. 186, 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>
Zacuto	Moses Zacuto, in <i>Miqdash Melekh</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*.

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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, aggadta** “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.

**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.

***halakhah*** “Practice, law,” from the root הלך (*hlkh*), “to walk”: the way that one should follow.

***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 Hadash*.

***hasid***, pl. ***hasidim*** “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 and demonic 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 as *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 Hadash*. *Midrash ha-Ne'lam* on Song of Songs, Ruth, and Lamentations is printed in *Zohar Hadash*. 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.

**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.

**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*.

***Omer*** “Sheaf” of newly harvested barley; the seven-week period of ceremonially counting days, during the harvest season between the second day of *Pesah* and the eve of *Shavu’ot*.

***Oral Torah*** The rabbinic interpretation of the Written Torah (the Five Books of Moses); in Kabbalah, a symbol of *Shekhinah*.

***Other Side*** Aramaic, סטרא אחרא (*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 sentences.

***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*).

***Qav ha-Middah*** “The Standard of Measure”; a detailed description of the process of divine emanation, delivered by Rabbi Shim’on. *Zohar Ĥadash* 56d–58d.

***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 *Ĥesed* 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** “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.

**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.

***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.

**tallit** A prayer shawl with a tzitzit on each corner.

**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 Ḥadash* 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 Ḥadash*.

***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** “Tassel,” one of four affixed to the hem of a garment, and later of 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 *Tif’eret*.

**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*.

**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*.

## **Bibliography**

This bibliography includes works cited and utilized by the translator for this volume, except for standard rabbinic texts and most reference works. A more complete bibliography appears in Volume 1. Readers seeking further resources on the *Zohar* can consult *The Library of Gershom Scholem on Jewish Mysticism: Catalogue*, edited by Joseph Dan, Esther Liebes, and Shmuel Reem; and Don Karr, "Notes on the *Zohar* in English."

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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. [3b] In the standard printed editions of the *Zohar* (based on the Mantua edition), the portion *Va-Yiqra* opens with several pages devoted to letter mysticism (3:2a-3b). Since that material does not appear in numerous manuscripts (including L27, M9, N10, N38, P2, P3, Pr 13, R1, T1, V3, V5, V6, V17, V22), nor in the Cremona edition, it is omitted here.

2. ***I have come into my garden...*** According to Rabbi Ḥiyya, the verse appears to be out of order. How can the speaker first announce that he has eaten and drunk, and then invite others to join him? This seems improper.

According to midrashic interpretation, this verse is spoken by God to Israel (His *bride*), and it refers to the Dwelling (*my garden*) and the incense, sacrifices, and libations. See *Sifrei Zuta*, 7:17; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:6; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 17b-18a; *Tanḥuma, Naso* 16, 20; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 24; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:2; Rashi on Song of Songs 5:1; *Zohar* 1:164a, 239b, 248a; 3:7a-b, 202a, 226a-b, 241a-242a.

The conclusion of the verse in Song of Songs can be construed either as *Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!* or as *Eat, companions, drink, and be drunk with love!*

3. **another was erected with it...** As the Dwelling was erected on earth, a higher Dwelling was also erected—namely *Shekhinah*, the partner of *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One). This parallel act is alluded to by the fact that the verse in Exodus employs the passive form *was erected*, without specifying who erected the Dwelling, thereby leaving open the possibility that another Dwelling *was erected* simultaneously.

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.”

In the *Zohar*, the heavenly Dwelling is *Shekhinah* Herself, who is served by the chief angel, Metatron. See *Tanḥuma, Naso* 18; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 22b; *Zohar* 1:35a; 2:143a, 159a (standard edition), 164a, 169b, 235b, 238a-b, 239b-242b; Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 40:17. 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 נַעַר (*na'ar*), “youth, lad, (heavenly) servant,” see 3 Enoch 4:10; BT *Yevamot* 16b; Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563.

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.”

**4. Moses could not come...** The full verse (near the end of 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.* Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that God immediately invited Moses to participate in dedicating the Dwelling by instructing the Israelites about the sacrifices, which are considered a divine meal.

See *Tanḥuma, Vayiqra* 1, 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayiqra* 1. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: When a person from among you brings an offering to YHVH, 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 of animals [or: beasts] to YHVH, from herd and from flock you shall bring your offering.* See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:145-46.

**5. We have already established this verse...** Alluding to the midrashic interpretation mentioned above, [note 2](#). Rabbi Ḥiyya now offers a deeper meaning: the blessed Holy

One (namely *Tif'eret*) enters the heavenly Garden of Eden to unite with *Shekhinah*, who is called Assembly of Israel. On the day that the Dwelling was erected, not only did this divine couple unite, but all six lower *sefirot* (*Hesed* through *Yesod*) united with one another, having been watered by the stream issuing from *Binah*. Then “all those below,” namely the angels and the lower worlds, were nourished as well. The aroma of the offering below stimulates the flow of blessing above.

Now the progression of the verse makes sense. The initial eating and drinking (*I have eaten, I have drunk*) symbolizes the nourishment of the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* to *Yesod* (symbolized by the six spices and foods listed in the verse), which must precede the nourishment of the angels and the worlds below (*companions* and *lovers*).

In rabbinic literature the phrase כנסת ישראל (*Keneset Yisra'el*), “Assembly of Israel,” nearly always 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*. See BT *Berakhot* 35b; below, [p. 404](#), [n. 140](#).

On the sefirotic referents of the six spices and foods mentioned in the verse, see *Zohar* 3:3b-4a (RM).

**6. When Assembly of Israel descended...** When *Shekhinah* descended to abide in the Dwelling, *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One) sang this verse to Her. Once the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* to *Yesod* are nourished by the flow from above, then all below are blessed.

On *Shekhinah* abiding in the Dwelling, see *Seder Olam Rabbah* 7; *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:7; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 18b;

*Tanḥuma, Pequdei 6, Naso 16, 22; Tanḥuma (Buber), Naso 24; Bemidbar Rabbah 12:6; 13:2.*

**7. Rabbi Yitshak said...** He emphasizes that *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* unite only after the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod* have been nourished by the stream issuing from *Binah*. See Vital.

**8. Rabbi Yehudah said...** Differing with Rabbi Ḥiyya, he applies the end of the verse to powers of Judgment, who are assuaged once the divine couple delight.

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.

**9. Rabbi Abba said...** He offers a third interpretation of *Eat, companions!...*, applying it to the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*. Apparently, he reads the verse from Song of Songs as if it were spoken by *Tif'eret* (the core of these six *sefirot*), who delights (together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him) in the wine of emanation flowing from *Binah* (*the king*).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Draw me after you, let us run! The king has brought me into his chambers. Let us delight and rejoice in you. Let us savor your lovemaking more than wine. Rightly do they love you.*

**10. Rabbi El'azar said...** He agrees with the original view of Rabbi Ḥiyya, that *Eat, companions!...* applies to the angels and the lower worlds. See above, [note 5](#).

**11. Rabbi Shim'on said...** According to the Master, all these interpretations are valid, since each biblical verse is multivalent. However, he proceeds to reveal the deepest meaning.

**12. This is a lofty realm...** Rabbi Shim'on distinguishes between *companions* and *lovers*. The first term refers to *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, who are constant *companions*, never parting. The Divine Mother, *Binah*, is symbolized by a *river*, which *issues* continually from *Ḥokhmah*, who is Himself pictured as *Eden*. The term *lovers* refers to the lower divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who unite only at certain times (such as Sabbath, festivals, and

during particular moments of prayer) or under certain conditions (namely when Israel stimulates their union through virtuous action). The appropriateness of the term *lovers* is explained more fully below.

On the perpetual union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, see *Zohar* 2:11b, 50b, 55a, 56a; 3:11a, 61b, 65a-b, 77b-78a, 102a, 120a, 267b. On the contrast between the two sefirotic couples, see *Zohar* 3:290b (*IZ*). On the verse in Genesis, see Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 229-51.

**13. Concerning those higher ones, 'eating'...** The conclusion of the verse reads: *Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!* Rabbi Shim'on explains that the higher couple (*Hokhmah* and *Binah*, who are *companions*) are filled with the wine of emanation, which must be balanced by 'eating.' On the other hand, the lower couple (*Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who are *lovers*) require watering by the stream issuing from *Binah*, so 'drinking' pertains to them.

The phrase "preserved wine" derives from a passage in BT *Berakhot* 34b (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi), describing how in the world-to-come 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 the vintage emanation stored within (and flowing from) *Binah*. See *Zohar* 1:135b (*MhN*), 192a, 238b; 2:147a, 169b; 3:12b, 39b-40a, 93b, 100a (*Piq*); *ZH* 28a-b, 64c (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 130, 319.

**14. Why are they lower?** Rabbi El'azar wonders why the term *lovers* applies to the lower divine couple and how *companions* can be higher than *lovers*.

**15. Those who yearn for one another...** *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* are not always united, and when separated they yearn passionately for one another as *lovers*. On the other hand, *Hokhmah* and *Binah* are eternally joined and constant *companions*. (See above, [note 12](#).) The conclusion of the verse alludes to both divine couples, and once the flow of

emanation from above reaches *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel), She conveys joy and nourishment to all the lower worlds.

**16. Rabbi Hizkiyah...** Following midrashic sources, he applies the verse in Song of Songs to the sacrifices (including incense and libations). The full verse reads: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!*

See *Seder Olam Rabbah* 7; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 17b-18a; *Tanḥuma, Naso* 20; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:2; Rashi on Song of Songs 5:1; above, [note 2](#). On the masters of Judgment, see above, [note 8](#).

**17. Rabbi Aḥa...** He agrees with the interpretation of Rabbi Ḥiyya. See above, [notes 5-6](#).

**18. The blossoms have appeared in the land...** Why, Rabbi Yitshak wonders, is the word *land* repeated? The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *The blossoms have appeared on the earth [or: in the land], the time of pruning [or: singing] has arrived, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.*

**19. the blossoms are those saplings...** Namely, the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod*, which began as saplings in the higher sefirotic realm and were subsequently transplanted to their normal position below *Binah*.

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 Ḥanina 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 le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 504; *Zohar* 1:31a, 35a-b, 37a, 45b, 162b; 2:127b, 177a (*SdTs*); 3:217b; *Massekhet Atsilut*, 2.



**20. Have appeared in the land...** These sefirotic blossoms conveyed blessings to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *the land* and the Land of Israel.

**21. The time of pruning...** The heavenly princes of other nations had to be uprooted before the Dwelling (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) could be erected.

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; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 24; *Tanḥuma, Re'eh* 8; *Leqah Tov*, Genesis 9:19; *Zohar* 1:46b, 61a, 84b, 108b, 113a (*MhN*), 149b, 177a; 2:16b (*MhN*), 33a, 46b, 95b-96a, 126b, 151b, 186b-187a, 209a-b, 232b; 3:260b-261a, 298b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:204-5, n. 91.

On *the time of pruning* as alluding to the pruning of Israel's enemies, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:9; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:12-13; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 74a-b.

According to midrashic literature, once the Dwelling was erected, demons ceased from the world. See *Tanḥuma, Naso* 23; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 27; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 21b; *Midrash Tehillim* 91:5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:3, 9. Cf. *Zohar* 2:239b-241a.

**22. And the voice... in our land...** This second *land* is the actual land of Israel, distinguished from the divine *land*, *Shekhinah*.

The play on תור (*tor*), *turtledove*, and תייר (*tayyar*), "guide," derives from midrashic sources, where the *tayyar* is identified alternatively as Moses, Joshua, King Cyrus, or the Messiah. Here, the *tayyar* is *Tif'eret* (often symbolized by Moses), who unites with *Shekhinah* when the Temple is built. At their wedding, *Tif'eret* (symbolized here by King Solomon) was adorned with crowns by His Mother, *Binah*.

On *tor* and *tayyar*, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:9; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:12-13; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 74a-75a. On the verse in Song of Songs, see M *Ta'anit* 4:8; *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:15, 44c; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 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, 100b, 134a; 3:34b, 61b, 77b, 95a, 98a.

**23. In the Book of *Aggadta*...** Rabbi Yitshak had interpreted התור (*ha-tor*), *the turtledove*, as referring to *Tif'eret*, but according to this legendary source *tor* refers to *Shekhinah*, who is known as Oral Torah, whereas *Tif'eret* is known as Written Torah, or simply תורה (*torah*). *Shekhinah* has no light of Her own, only what She receives from the higher *sefirot*, and this lack is signified by the lack of the letter ה (*he*) at the end of תור (*tor*). Similarly, the word ויקרא (*va-yiqra*), *He called*, alludes to *Tif'eret*, whereas the shorter word ויקר (*va-yiqqar*), *He encountered*—lacking the א (*alef*)—alludes to *Shekhinah*. However, Rabbi Yitshak insists that his interpretation is the correct one.

On the contrast between *va-yiqra* (in Leviticus, pertaining to Moses) and *va-yiqqar* (in Numbers, pertaining to Balaam), see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 1:13; *Battei Midrashot* 2:478; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 6, p. 121; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 26, p. 142; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 10, p. 191; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlah* 24. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 52:5; *Zohar* 2:195a. On the term *Aggadta*, see the Glossary.

**24. כלת משה (*kallot Mosheh*), *Moses consummated*...** The verse in Numbers reads: *It happened on the day משה כלות (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 Yitshak adopts this reading but reassigns the roles: the bride is *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who is married to Moses, known as *husband of Elohim*



(namely husband of *Shekhinah*). Furthermore, Moses symbolizes *Tif'eret* ("the supernal King").

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, 18a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; Rashi on Numbers 7:1; Meir Abulafia, *Masoret Seyag la-Torah*, s.v. *klh*; *Zohar* 1:236b; 2:5b (*MhN*), 140b, 145a, 235a; 3:148a, 226b (*RM*), 254a (*RM*); *Minḥat Shai* on Numbers 7:1. On Moses as *husband of Elohim*, see Vol. 5, p. 223, n. 94.

For other instances of a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar's* reading, see *Zohar* 1:32a-b, 58b, 83b, 84a, 93b, 106b, 122b (*MhN*), 151a; 2:3b, 40a, 41b (*Piq*), 82a, 83a, 124b, 167b, 176b (*SdT*s), 177b (*SdT*s), 182b, 246b (*Heikh*); 3:6a, 30a-b, 34a, 40b, 42b, 57b, 68a, 74b-75a, 76b, 80b, 86a-b, 129a (*IR*), 184a, 202b, 203b, 207a; *Minḥat Shai*, passim (e.g., on Numbers 7:1); Emden, *Mitpaḥat Sefarim*, 27-34, 73-74; Rosenfeld, *Mishpaḥat Soferim*. On this phenomenon, see *Zohar* 3:254a (*RM*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:55-56; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 50, 131-32, n. 125; Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory*, 389-90.

On the same phenomenon in rabbinic literature, see also Rashi on BT *Zevaḥim* 118b, s.v. *ve-lo*; *Tosafot, Shabbat* 55b, s.v. *ma'aviram*; *Niddah* 33a, s.v. *ve-ha-nissa*; *Sha'arei Teshuvah (Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim)*, 39; Malachi ben Jacob ha-Kohen, *Yad Mal'akhi* 1:283; Aptowitzer, *Das Schriftwort in der rabbinischen Literatur*; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, 23:113; Maori, "Rabbinic Midrash as Evidence for Textual Variants in the Hebrew Bible"; Rosenthal, "Al Derekh Tippulam shel Ḥazal be-Hillufei Nussah ba-Miqra."

**25. It is not proper to enter...** Just as the groom does not enter the bridal chamber without the bride's permission, so Moses did not enter the Dwelling until *Shekhinah* invited him in.

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:6; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 17b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:2; *Zohar* 1:239a. Cf. above, [note 4](#). On *Shekhinah* as the subject of *He called*, see below, [p. 340](#), [n. 32](#).

**26. And YHVH spoke to him...** The full verse reads: *He called to Moses, and YHVH spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying*. According to Rabbi Yitshak, the subject of *He called* is *Shekhinah*, whereas the subject of *YHVH spoke* is *Tif'eret*, known as Voice of Moses. Moses was invited to ascend from one rung to the other.

**27. Why have I come...** When Israel acts virtuously, they manifest the faith of God on earth and spread the awareness of His Name. Furthermore, *Shekhinah* is thereby united with *Tif'eret* and the other *sefirot*. She is symbolized by the last letter of the name יהוה (YHVH), while the other *sefirot* are symbolized by the first three letters. When Israel acts badly, the divine couple is separated: *Tif'eret* (whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, "Beauty of Israel") withdraws above, and *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) descends into exile along with Her people.

According to Kabbalah, the name YHVH symbolizes the entire sefirotic spectrum. The ׀ (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, while its upper tip 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); 2:123b, 126b-127a, 219b; 3:10b, 65b, 66b, 91b-92a, 267b; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Or*, 44a-45b. On God's name being incomplete, see *Zohar* 3:7b. Cf. Vol. 6, p. 106, n. 2.

On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see *Mekhilta, Pisha* 14, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: "Wherever Israel went in exile, *Shekhinah*, as it were, went into exile with them. When they were exiled to Egypt, *Shekhinah* went into exile with them

When they were exiled to Babylon, *Shekhinah* went into exile with them.... And when in the future they return, *Shekhinah*, as it were, will return with them.”

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 84; JT *Ta’anit* 1:1, 64a; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:54; BT *Megillah* 29a; *Zohar* 1:68b-69a, 120b, 134a, 149a, 159b, 182a, 210a, 211a, 237a; 2:2a-b, 41b (*Piq*), 82a, 189b, 191a, 216b; 3:6a-b, 17a-b, 66a, 74a-75a, 90b, 102b, 114b-115a, 197b, 297b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 122-23; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 73-74 (92-93); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:382-85.

The full verse in Isaiah 49 reads: *He said to me, “You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory.”*

**28. precedes them to the synagogue...** See BT *Berakhot* 6a, 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 have I called, when none responds?* [... *By My rebuke, I dry up the sea*] (Isaiah 50:2).” According to Rabbi Yoḥanan, the wording *none responds* implies a minyan, since various liturgical congregational responses require such a quorum. See *Zohar* 1:201a; 2:131a-b; 3:126a.

**29. משכנא (*mashkena*), the Dwelling...** Rabbi El’azar plays with this word and אֶת־מִשְׁכְּנָא (*itmashkena*), “taken as pledge.” The temporary Dwelling and the Temple in Jerusalem (which later replaced it) are, in effect, a pledge offered by the people Israel as a guarantee of their loyalty and devotion. See *Shemot Rabbah* 31:10: “If they sin, the Temple will be seized [and destroyed] on their account, as is said: *I will place מִשְׁכְּנִי (*mishkani*), My Dwelling, in your midst* (Leviticus 26:11)—do not read *mishkani, My Dwelling*, but rather מִשְׁכְּוֹנִי (*mashkoni*), *My pledge*.”

God informed Moses about this arrangement, but He also provided a means for Israel to prevent the destruction of the Temple, at least temporarily, by bringing sacrificial offerings as atonement.

On משכן (*mishkan*), “Dwelling,” and משכון (*mashkon*), “pledge,” see *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 11, *Vayaqhel* 9, *Pequdei* 2, 4-5; *Naso* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pequdei* 2, *Naso* 21; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:14; *Shemot Rabbah* 31:10; 35:4; 51:3, 5; *Zohar* 3:114a. On the protective effect of the sacrificial offerings, see BT *Bava Qamma* 82b. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 4](#).

[30.](#) קרבן (*qorban*)... “Offering,” based on the root קרב (*qrḇ*), “to draw near.” Rabbi Ḥizkiyah wonders why the word is spelled with the final letter ן (*nun*).

[31.](#) **This is well known to the Companions...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that the final letter of קרבן (*qorban*) serves as a pronominal suffix meaning “their.” He construes the word as identical with קירובן (*qeiruvan*), “their drawing near,” referring to the unification of the *sefirot*, which is effected by the sacrificial offering. Thereby, the Name *YHVH* (which symbolizes all the *sefirot*) is completed and perfected.

The verse in Leviticus specifies that the offering must be brought (and intended specifically) ליהוה (*la-YHVH*), *to* [or: *for*] *YHVH*, the name that signifies Compassion, and not *to* [or: *for*] *Elohim*, the name that signifies Judgment. Sacrifice and prayer must focus on, and stimulate, Compassion, not harsh Judgment.

On the mystical meaning of *qorban*, see *Bahir* 78 (109); *Zohar* 1:89b (*ST*), 239b; 3:5b, 8a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:878-90. Cf. Naḥmanides on Leviticus 1:9. On the Name *YHVH* symbolizing the entirety of the *sefirot*, see above, [note 27](#). On *YHVH* and *Elohim* signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 26; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15; 14:1; 33:3; 73:3; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:2; BT *Berakhot* 60b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 43; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 167a; *Midrash Tehillim* 56:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:6; 6:1-3; 30:13.

On sacrifices being directed exclusively *to YHVH*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 143; BT *Menaḥot* 110a; Naḥmanides on

Leviticus 1:9; *Zohar* 1:247b; 2:108a *ZH* 3d (*MhN*), 18c (*MhN*), 19c (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 287. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 4](#).

**32. The sacrifices of Elohim...** If sacrificial offerings must be intended solely *for YHVH*, then why does the verse in Psalms speak of *the sacrifices of Elohim*? The full verse reads: *The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not spurn.*

**33. Certainly so...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that the term קרבן (*qorban*), which connotes the “drawing near” of the *sefirot*, is associated only with the name *YHVH*, whereas the term זבחים (*zevachim*), “sacrifices” (literally “slaughtering”) is associated with the name *Elohim*. The sense of “slaughtering” implies the breaking of harsh Judgment (signified by *Elohim*) and its being overwhelmed by Compassion (signified by *YHVH*). When a person breaks his own rebellious spirit and offers a sacrifice on the altar, he thereby empowers Compassion and helps to overcome the spirit of harsh Judgment.

According to *M Zevachim* 5, “offerings of greatest holiness” (such as the ascent offering) must be slaughtered on the north side of the altar, whereas “offerings of lesser holiness” (such as individual peace offerings) may be slaughtered anywhere in the Temple Courtyard. Here, Rabbi Shim'on associates north with *Din* (Judgment). See *Zohar* 2:238b-239a; 3:11a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 263. On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 2:108a.

**34. When אדם (adam), a person...** The full verse reads: *When אדם (adam), a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH, of animals—from herd and from flock—you shall bring your offering.* Rabbi El'azar indicates that the wording *from among you* is intended to exclude Adam, who was not born in the normal human fashion but rather was created directly by God. According to one rabbinic tradition, his offering was not a normal animal but rather a unicorn-bull. The wording *adam, a person, from among you*



“excludes another *adam*” (namely, Adam), who was unique and brought a unique offering.

On the exclusionary sense of *from among you* in this verse, see *Sifra, Nedavah* 2:3, 4c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:9; JT *Sheqalim* 1:5, 46b; BT *Eruvin* 69b, *Sukkah* 30a, *Hullin* 5a, 13b; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 7, p. 34; *Tanḥuma, Tazri’a* 9, *Beḥuqqotai* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri’a* 13, *Beḥuqqotai* 8. On the sense of *adam* in this verse, see also *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:7–8; *Tanḥuma, Vayiqra* 8, *Tsav* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tsav* 2.

On Adam’s offering a unicorn-bull, see BT *Shabbat* 28b, *Avodah Zarah* 8a, *Hullin* 60a; *Midrash Tehillim* 39:3. Cf. *Tosefta Hullin* 3:20; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 8:20; *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:8; 34:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:7, 10; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 31; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 4:8. On the verse from Leviticus, see above, [note 4](#).

**35. A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah...** Rabbi Abba interprets *A song, a psalm* as implying a double praise, offered to *Shekhinah*, who is called Assembly of Israel. *Tif’eret* (known as *YHVH* and as the blessed Holy One) is considered *great and highly praised* only when He is accompanied by *Shekhinah*, who is known as *the city*. The preposition  $\beth$  (*be*) can mean *with* as well as *in*.

See *Zohar* 2:235a; *ZH* 44a, 51c–d. On the wording *A song, a psalm*, see *Zohar* 3:56b; cf. *Midrash Tehillim* 92:1.

According to Numbers 26:11, the sons of Korah did not die along with their father and his fellow rebels. Their descendants later played a prominent role in the Temple cult, apparently serving as a guild of Temple singers or musicians. Eleven psalms are associated with them. See 2 Chronicles 20:19.

**36. Why is our God required here?...** The designation *the city* is enough to indicate *Shekhinah*. Why does the verse need to add *our God*, which also refers to Her?

**37. Certainly so...** The description *our God* indicates that *Shekhinah* (*the city*) is to be revered. Without Queen *Shekhinah*, King *Tif'eret* would be neither *great* nor *highly praised*. Similarly, each human being must find his mate; otherwise he is incomplete and not fully human.

See BT *Yevamot* 62b-63a: "Rabbi Tanḥum said in the name of Rabbi Ḥanilai, 'Any man who has no wife is without joy, without blessing, without goodness.'... Rabbi El'azar said, 'Any אדם (*adam*), man, who has no wife is not an *adam*, as is said: *Male and female He created them... and He named them adam* (Genesis 5:2).'"

See Genesis 1:26-27; *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:2; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:9; *Midrash Tehillim* 59:2; *Zohar* 1:34b, 47a, 55b, 165a, 182a, 233a-b, 239a, 248a; 2:144b; 3:5b, 7a, 17a, 33b-34a, 46b, 74b, 81a-b, 143b (*IR*), 145b, 148a, 296a (*IZ*). On the androgynous nature of Adam, see below, [note 168](#). On the essential nature of the queen, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 5:19: "Is there a king without a queen?" See *Zohar* 3:69a, 77b.

**38. That man was the greatest...** Describing Job. According to a rabbinic tradition, his wife was also virtuous. See *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 10; *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:12.

According to BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 31a, Psalm 48 was chanted in the Temple by the Levites on the second day of the week, and it is still included in the morning liturgy for that day. Here, the second day symbolizes *Shekhinah* (who is praised in this psalm), while the first day symbolizes *Tif'eret*. Cf. *Zohar* 3:56b.

Historically, Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder) was a Babylonian teacher who lived in the mid-third century. Generally in the *Zohar*, Rav Hamnuna Sava appears as a contemporary of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai (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 as well.

**39. Why isn't good written of the second day?...** In the biblical 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. In *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:6, Rabbi Hanina explains the lack of the term *good* as follows: "Because on that day conflict was created: [God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters,] and let it divide water from water' (Genesis 1:6)."

Here the division or separation pertains to the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* (symbolized respectively by the upper and lower waters). As mentioned above ([note 12](#)), they are not always united, and the verse in Genesis indicates that *it is not good* for a male to be without his female partner. According to *Miqdash Melekh*, the clause "they are destined to separate" alludes to the original androgynous configuration of the divine couple, which eventually separates into distinct male and female *sefirot*. Until that separation, the configuration is, in effect, *alone* because the male aspect cannot relate to the female face-to-face, and this situation is *not good*. See *Zohar* 3:44b.

On the nature of the second day, see BT *Pesaḥim* 54a; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4; *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:25); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 506; *Zohar* 1:17a-18a, 33a; 46a, 47a; 2:149b; 3:44b; ZH 9a (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 41 (49). On the upper and lower waters as respectively male and female, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:13. The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH Elohim said, "It is not good for the human to be alone, I will make him a helper alongside [or: corresponding to, as a counterpart to, opposite, facing] him."*

**40. Great is YHVH...** See above at [notes 35-38](#).

**41. Beautiful in loftiness...** The Divine Male (including *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*) is *beautiful in loftiness* and brings *joy* to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *the earth*.

See *Zohar* 1:206b; cf. *Tanḥuma, Vayiggash* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayiggash* 11. The full verse in Psalms reads: *Beautiful in loftiness, joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, uttermost of the north, city of the great King*.

**42. God in her citadels...** *Shekhinah* (who is called *Elohim, God*) is known—as in *Adam knew Eve, his wife* (Genesis 4:1)—*in her citadels*, that is, by *Netsah* and *Hod*, representing the two divine testicles, which store blessing and seed. The joyous blessing then issues through the divine phallus, *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), sweetening *Shekhinah* (“this holy city”).

*Yesod* is known as Righteous One, based on Proverbs 10:25: וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*). Although the simple sense of the verse is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*, it is understood midrashically as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*. See BT *Yoma* 38b, *Hagigah* 12b; *Bahir* 71 (102); Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 34. In the verse from Psalms, *her citadels* refers to the citadels of Jerusalem.

**43. the kings assembled...** That is, the *sefirot* united. The last sentence alludes to another possible interpretation of this verse or this psalm. See *Zohar* 1:206a-b (Vol. 3, pp. 264-67).

On *kings* symbolizing *sefirot*, see *Bahir* 19 (27); *Zohar* 1:206b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 69.

**44. When a person mends his deeds...** By bringing an offering with the proper intention, a person can rectify his actions and unite the *sefirot*.

See above, [note 31](#). The verse in Leviticus reads: *When a person from among you brings [or: brings near] an offering to YHVH*. For the full verse, see above, [note 4](#).

**45. excluding whoever is not married...** One who is not married is only “half a body” and not a full human

being. Being defective and blemished, he is unqualified to bring a sacrificial offering. See above, [note 37](#).

According to rabbinic tradition, the high priest who serves in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur must be married. Here this restriction is extended to anyone who brings an offering at any time. See M *Yoma* 1:1; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Avodat Yom ha-Kippurim* 1:2; *Zohar* 1:239b; 3:37b, 145b; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Katz, *Halakhah ve-Qabbalah*, 45, 50; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh sheba-Nistar*, 28, 51.

On *Shekhinah* being present with a married couple, see BT *Sotah* 17a, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: “Man and woman: if they are worthy, *Shekhinah* abides between them; if not, fire consumes them.”

On a physical defect disqualifying a priest from bringing a sacrificial offering, see Leviticus 21:16–24. For the phrase “half a body,” see *Zohar* 3:7b, 57b, 109b (*RM*), 296a (*IZ*); *ZH* 43d, 59a (*MhN*); Liebes, *Peraqim*, 277–79.

**[46. Nadab and Abihu demonstrate this...](#)** These two sons of Aaron were killed by divine fire because when offering incense *they offered alien fire before YHVH* (Leviticus 10:1). According to one midrashic interpretation, Nadab and Abihu died because they were not married.

On Nadab and Abihu being unmarried, *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:9; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:9; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 7, 13; *Zohar* 3:33b–34a, 37b, 57a–b. Cf. Numbers 3:4; 1 Chronicles 24:2, which state that they had no children.

**[47. Although they have established the matter...](#)** Other reasons are also brought for the death of Nadab and Abihu, e.g., that they were drunk, or lacking the proper priestly garments, or had not washed their hands and feet, or had not fathered children. However, Rabbi Abba insists that the fact that they were not married was their essential sin. This rendered them unfit to bring any offering, especially incense, which surpasses all other offerings.

They were not worthy of *Shekhinah*, much less of effecting the union of higher *sefirot*.

On the various reasons for the death of Nadab and Abihu, see the sources cited in the preceding note; *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:32, 45c; *Aḥarei Mot* 1:1, 79c; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 10:9; JT *Shevi'it* 6:1, 36c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:1, 5; 20:10; *Ester Rabbah* 5:1; BT *Eruvin* 63a, *Yoma* 53a, *Yevamot* 64a, *Sanhedrin* 52a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:7; *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:23; below, [pp. 193-94, nn. 84-87](#). On the significance of the death of Nadab and Abihu according to the *Zohar*, see Yisraeli, "Ha-Mered ha-Qadosh"; Kara-Ivanov Kaniel, "Liv'or me-Ahavah."

On the significance of incense, see *Zohar* 1:100b-101a (*MhN*), 230a; 2:218b-219a; 3:11a-b, 37b, 58b-59a, 151b, 177b; *ZH* 67d (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 86-87; below, [note 183](#).

**48. Fire came out... and consumed them—why?...** Why were Nadab and Abihu punished so severely? On the term *matronita*, see the Glossary.

**49. when Nadab and Abihu entered...** Seeing them bringing incense, *Shekhinah* knew that Her spouse, *Tif'eret*, was about to come and join Her. However, when *Tif'eret* saw that Nadab and Abihu were defective by being unmarried, He withdrew. Once *Shekhinah* realized that they had ruined Her union with *Tif'eret*, She put them to death.

**50. Of animals—a generalization...** The verse reads: *When a person from among you brings an offering to YHVH, of [or: from] animals—from herd and from flock—you shall bring your offering.* According to a rabbinic interpretation, the phrase *of animals* is a generalization, which is then limited by the more specific wording *from herd and from flock*. Here, Rabbi Abba (following another midrashic interpretation) understands the specification *from herd and from flock* as implying that only kosher animals may be offered as sacrifices.

The last sentence apparently implies that kosher animals pertain to, and affect, holy realms, whereas non-kosher animals pertain to demonic realms. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Soncino; *Sullam*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. above at [note 43](#).

On the generalization and specification included in this verse from Leviticus, see *Sifra, Baraita* 1:7, 2a; BT *Nazir* 35a-b, *Zevaḥim* 34a-b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Issurei Mizbeaḥ* 5:6; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Leviticus 1:2, p. 13; *Zohar* 1:239b. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 4](#).

**51. If his offering...** The full verse reads: *If his offering is an ascent offering from the herd, an unblemished male he shall offer; to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting he shall bring it, to be accepted for him before YHVH.*

**52. For My thoughts...** In the Masoretic text the word מחשבותי (*maḥshevotai*), *My thoughts*, is actually spelled with a ו (*vav*), but some medieval manuscripts record it without the *vav*. (See *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc.) Relying on the abbreviated spelling, Rabbi Ḥiyya construes the word in the singular: מחשבתי (*maḥshavti*), *My thought*, on which he proceeds to expound.

**53. Thought of the blessed Holy One...** The primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*, symbolized by the י (*yod*) of יהוה (*YHVH*). From this beginning, or head, emanate the paths of Wisdom and all the lower *sefirot*. These *sefirot* are symbolized by the three remaining letters of the Holy Name, יהוה (*YHVH*). The flow of emanation proceeds to *Shekhinah*, pictured as the Garden of Eden, and through Her, all lower worlds are nourished. *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* are symbolized respectively by Written Torah and Oral Torah.

On Divine Thought and the process of emanation, see *Bahir* 134 (194); *Zohar* 1:21a, 65a, 74a, 246b. On the thirty-two paths of Wisdom, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1-2. On



the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#).

**54. thought of a human being...** Human thought likewise generates numerous paths, but these often lead to sinful acts.

**55. Therefore, first of all...** The first offering mentioned in Leviticus is the ascent offering, which atones for sinful thoughts. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 7:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: "The ascent offering is due only על הרהור הלב (*al hirhur ha-lev*), for sinful imagining [literally: for imagining of the heart, or mind]."

Regarding the wording *from the herd*, Rabbi Ḥiyya understands the preposition *from* as limiting which animals of *the herd* may be brought as an ascent offering. The continuation of the verse spells this out: *an unblemished male he shall offer*. The male sacrificial animal atones for the sinful human thought, thereby restoring harmony with Divine Thought, identified with the Divine Father, *Ḥokhmah*.

On the passage in *Vayiqra Rabbah*, see JT *Yoma* 8:9, 45b; *Shevu'ot* 1:6, 33b; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 6:2; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 10; *Tetsavveh* 15; *Tsav* 7, 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Lekh Lekha* 13; *Tsav* 9; *Zohar* 1:70a; 2:239b; 3:9a, 11a, 38a, 87a; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 1:4; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54, 263. On the ascent offering being male, see Naḥmanides on Leviticus 3:1; *Zohar* 1:70a, 246a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54.

For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 51](#). On the exclusionary sense of *from* in this verse, cf. *Sifra, Nedavah* 3:7, 5b. See above, [note 34](#).

**56. From the herd—unspecified...** Rabbi Yitshak reads the verse somewhat differently. *From the herd* means "any of the herd," which is then limited by the following phrase: *an unblemished male*. The male corresponds to *Ḥokhmah* (or the entire male configuration from *Ḥokhmah* through *Yesod*), whereas the female corresponds to a lower realm, *Shekhinah*. All ascent offerings (including the one

mentioned in Leviticus 1:10) must be male. Rabbi Shim'on's statement that "the ascent offering is due only על הרהור הלב (*al hirhur ha-lev*), for [sinful] imagining of the heart" is understood as implying that such an offering ascends על הלב (*al ha-lev*), "above the heart," namely above *Shekhinah*, reaching *Hokhmah* (or the entire male configuration), who "stands above the heart." Thereby, the impure human thought is rectified and realigned with Divine Thought.

Leviticus 1:10 reads in full: *If his offering is from the flock, from the sheep or from the goats, for an ascent offering, an unblemished male he shall offer.*

**57. If so...** If the ascent offering is intended to atone for sinful thought, the first category of animals mentioned in Leviticus should correspond to *Hokhmah*, Divine Thought. Why does this verse mention בקר (*baqar*), *herd*, which pertains to a lower *sefirah* (as explained below)?

**58. He had no answer** The subject is Rabbi Ḥiyya, or maybe Rabbi Yitshak.

**59. Head of all is Thought...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that whereas Thought is the ultimate focus of the ascent offering, the animal from the בקר (*baqar*), *herd*, alludes to *Yesod*, who is called בקר (*boqer*), "morning." *Yesod* is the consummation of Thought, and, being the sefirotic phallus, it is "consummation of the [divine male] body," uniting with and sweetening *Shekhinah*.

On *Yesod* as "morning," see *Zohar* 2:110a. On *Yesod* as "consummation of the body," see *Zohar* 1:149b, 153b-154a, 158a, 162b, 246b; 2:224a, 225a, 258b (*Heikh*), 259b (*Heikh*); 3:53b, 66b.

**60. Similarly, human thought...** A person may devise sin in his mind at night and then carry it out in the morning. In order to rectify both his sinful thought and the actualization of that thought, the intention of the ascent offering rises to *Hokhmah*, Divine Thought, while the animal offered *from* הבקר (*ha-baqar*), *the herd*, corresponds to *Yesod*,



known as בקר (*boqer*), “morning” and “consummation of Thought.”

The full verse in Micah reads: *Ah, those who devise iniquity and plot evil on their beds; at morning's light they do it, for they have the power.* See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 263. Cf. *Zohar* 1:109b (*MhN*); 3:11a.

**61. Virgin Israel...** *Shekhinah*, who is also known as שבַּעֲבַת (*Bat Sheva*), “Bathsheba,” literally “Daughter of Seven,” since She is the daughter of *Binah*, who generates all seven lower *sefirot*. (Alternatively, *Shekhinah* is called *Bat Sheva* because She receives the flow of all seven *sefirot* from *Binah* through *Yesod*, or because She includes all seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah* Herself.) Similarly, a virgin bride inherits seven blessings under the wedding canopy when this number of blessings is recited.

The verse cited here by Rabbi Yehudah—*And you, O son of man, raise a lament for Virgin Israel*—does not appear anywhere in the Bible, though it incorporates elements of Ezekiel 19:1 (*And you, raise a lament for the princes of Israel*) and Amos 5:1-2: *Hear this word that I intone as a lament over you, O House of Israel. Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel; abandoned on her soil, with no one to raise her up.* See *Zohar* 3:181b; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Abrams, “The Virgin Mary as the Moon that Lacks the Sun,” 46. On this phenomenon, see above, [note 24](#).

Rabbi Yehudah indicates that this (supposed) verse pertains to *Shekhinah* (known also as Assembly of Israel). He is especially troubled by Amos’s statement *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel*. Of course, he is aware of the rabbinic transformation of this verse in BT *Berakhot* 4b: “נפלה לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל” (*Nafelah lo tosif qum betulat yisra’el*), *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel...* — עוד — בתולת ישראל... (נפלה ולא תוסיף לנפול קום) (*Nafelah [ve-] lo tosif [linpol od]*). *Qum, betulat yisra’el*), *She has fallen [—but] She will not [fall] again. Rise, O Virgin Israel!*” However, this radical rereading is not

convincing because the context in Amos does not convey consolation but rather lamentation. (See the end of the preceding paragraph.)

On the seven blessings traditionally recited under the wedding canopy, see *Zohar* 2:102b, 169a-b, 255b (*Heikh*); 3:44b, 124a, 266b; *ZH* 88d-89a (*MhN, Rut*). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). On the verse in Amos describing the fall of Virgin Israel, see *Zohar* 2:239b-240a; 3:89a.

On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the Virgin Mary, see Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 139-40, 151-54; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 168-71; Green, "Shekhinah, the Virgin Mary, and the Song of Songs"; Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty*, 217-43; Liebes, "Ha-Omnam Betulah Hi ha-Shekhinah?"; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 45-49; idem, *Ben*, 385-99; Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 455-56, n. 224; Abrams, "The Virgin Mary as the Moon that Lacks the Sun."

[62. Certainly so!...](#) Rabbi Aḥa was also quite troubled by the verse in Amos, so he approached Rabbi Shim'on, who immediately sensed Rabbi Aḥa's turmoil. On Rabbi Shim'on's remark, cf. *Zohar* 1:96b; 3:157a; *ZH* 72a (*ShS*).

[63. my heart and my face are equivalent](#) See *M Terumot* 3:8: "He has not said anything [i.e., his word remains void] until his mouth and his heart are equivalent."

[64. One who is angry with his wife...](#) Rabbi Aḥa is troubled by the notion that *Shekhinah* has fallen into exile along with Israel and that both of them may never be restored. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 27](#).

[65. what all the Companions have said](#) Namely the Talmudic transformation of the verse, quoted above, [note 61](#): *She has fallen* [—but] *She will not* [fall] *again. Rise, O Virgin Israel!*

[66. They render the words compassionate...](#) Like Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Aḥa feels that the rabbinic rereading

of the verse violates the context in Amos, which is clearly mournful. See above, [note 61](#).

[67.](#) **shepherds are nowhere to be found...** Leaders who can explain the deeper meaning of Scripture.

[68.](#) **Yet now, in this last exile...** Which seems interminable. By means of a parable, Rabbi Shim'on explains the precise wording of the verse.

[69.](#) **matrona...** The Latin term *matrona* means "matron, married woman, noble lady," here referring to the queen.

[70.](#) **Fallen, not to rise again...** *Shekhinah* (known as *Virgin Israel*, who has *fallen*) will not *rise again* on Her own, as at the end of previous exiles; rather, the blessed Holy One Himself will raise Her. Similarly, in the later verse in Amos, She is pictured as *the fallen booth of David*, which the blessed Holy One will *raise*.

This parable appears with slight variation in Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 122-23. See *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva (Battei Midrashot, 2:407)*; *Battei Midrashot 2:464*. Cf. *Zohar 3:74a-b*, 114b.

For midrashic parables of God divorcing (or intending to divorce) Israel, see *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini) 1:5*, 43d; *Sifrei*, Numbers 131; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:1; *Devarim Rabbah 1:2*; *Bemidbar Rabbah 2:15*. Cf. Isaiah 50:1; Hosea 2:4. On the two verses in Amos, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana 16:8*; *Pesiqta Rabbati 29*, 138b; *Zohar 2:239b-240a*; and the first three references in the preceding paragraph.

[71.](#) **This I learned at that time** Rabbi Aḥa learned this interpretation from Rabbi Shim'on.

[72.](#) **The blessed Holy One will one day proclaim...** *Tif'eret* will proclaim the verse over *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

[73.](#) **members of the royal palace...** The prophets, such as Isaiah, who address *Shekhinah* with the expression *Arise!*

**74. Bathsheba came to the king...** At the end of previous exiles, *Shekhinah* (known as Bathsheba) would come to King *Tif'eret*. However, this time, He will approach Her, raise and restore Her, and unite with Her forever.

On Bathsheba as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 61](#). The context in Hosea (2:21–22) reads: *I will betroth you to Myself forever; I will betroth you with righteousness and justice, with kindness and compassion; I will betroth you with faithfulness, and You shall know YHVH.*

**75. let us welcome 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 welcomes his teacher is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.’... Rabbi Yishma’el taught... ‘One who welcomes his friend is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.’”

The *Zohar* sometimes 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 and they are revealed” (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, 94b, 198a, 225a; 3:59b, 148a, 201b, 298a; *ZḤ* 11c (*MhN*); Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 370. Cf. Genesis 33:10.

**76. he slid off his strapped quaestorian saddle...** Before they could honor him, he dismounted from his donkey to join them.

“His strapped quaestorian saddle” is a conjectural, contextual rendering of the neologistic phrase קסטורא דקוטפא (*qastora de-qutpa*). *Qastora* has a wide range of meaning in the *Zohar*, including “quaestor,” which derives from Latin *quaestor*, a Roman official or prosecutor. Other meanings include “castle, fortress, military camp,” deriving from

Latin *castrum* (pl. *castra*); and “tin” (from Greek *kassiteros*) or “slag.”

*Qutpa* is apparently related here to the Zoharic roots קטפר (qtpr) or קפטר (qftr), which often convey the sense of “tying, binding.” See below, [note 164](#). In *Zohar* 1:72a (Vol. 1, p. 424), קטפירא (qatpira) may mean “saddlebag(s).” Cf. Vol. 4, p. 212, n. 45.

On *qastora* and its variants, see *Zohar* 1:19b, 29a, 30a, 53b, 62a (*Tos*), 64b, 85a, 125a, 128a, 148b, 151a, 168a, 177a, 195a, 232a (*Tos*), 238b; 2:24b, 31b, 51a, 58b, 171b, 178b (*SdT*s), 208b; 3:10a, 13a, 65b, 83b (*Piq*), 85a, 90b, 107a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 186, 188; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *qstr* (and the following two entries). On this phrase, see also *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Soncino; *Sullam*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**77. The voice of the shofar...** This phrase, from the description of the scene at Mount Sinai, can be understood in two different ways. According to one interpretation, *the voice* and *the shofar* are distinct from one another: the former represents *Tif'eret*, which issues from *Binah*, known as *the shofar*, proclaiming redemption and liberation.

On *Tif'eret* as the voice issuing from the shofar, see *Zohar* 1:114a–b; 2:81b, 184a–b, 231b, 250b (*Heikh*); 3:38b, 99b (*Piq*), 261a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 96, 143. On *Binah* as the shofar of liberation, see *Zohar* 2:46b; 3:92b, 266b. *Binah* is also known as Jubilee, proclaimed every fifty years. See Vol. 5, pp. 135–36, n. 381.

According to Exodus 21:2, Hebrew slaves are to be set free in the seventh year. However, rabbinic sources sometimes associate the Jubilee with the freeing of slaves. This is based partly on Leviticus 25:10: *You shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim דרור (deror), release [or: freedom], in the land for 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.*



Furthermore, according to Leviticus, an Israelite debtor forced to work for another Israelite (as well as an impoverished Israelite sold as a slave to a non-Israelite) both go free in the Jubilee. (See Leviticus 25:40, 54.) Moreover, according to Exodus 21:6, a slave who refuses to be set free in the seventh year *shall serve* [his master] *forever*; and this is interpreted midrashically as “until the Jubilee.”

See *Mekhilta, Neziqin 2; Targum Yerushalmi, Exodus 21:6; BT Qiddushin 15a, 21b. Cf. M Qiddushin 1:2; Sifra, Behar 3:6,107c; 7:4, 109d; Zohar 3:92b, 108a-b. For further discussion, see Milgrom, Leviticus, 3:2251-53; Encyclopaedia Judaica, 17:624, 626.*

The full verse in Exodus reads: *The sound [or: voice] of the shofar was growing stronger and stronger. Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice.* The full verse in Isaiah reads: *On that day a great shofar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship YHVH on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.*

**78. Or, examining precisely, all is one...** Alternatively (and matching the simple sense of the verse), *the voice of the shofar* refers to one entity (“all is one”), namely *Binah*. She is known not only as *shofar*, but also *voice*—*a mighty voice* that never ceases.

The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *These words YHVH spoke to your whole assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the dense fog—a mighty voice, adding no more.* The final expression, ולא יסף (ve-lo yasaf), means literally *and He did not add*. Here, Rabbi Abba follows a midrashic interpretation of the clause: “it did not cease.” See *Targum Onqelos* on the verse: ולא פסיק (ve-la pasiq), “and it did not cease.” See *JT Megillah 1:4, 70d; BT Sotah 10b, Sanhedrin 17a; Bemidbar Rabbah 20:21; Rashi, Leqah Tov, and Nahmanides on the verse; Zohar 1:50b; 2:81a-b, 226b; 3:261a. Cf. Shemot Rabbah 28:6.*

**79. Was going...** The verse reads: *The sound* [or: *voice*] *of the shofar* הולך (holekh), *was growing* [literally: *was going*], *stronger and stronger*. Rabbi Abba focuses on the literal sense *was going*, which alludes to Torah (symbolized by *Tif'eret*) issuing from *Binah*, who contains and engenders all the lower *sefirot*.

The last sentence means that there is ultimately no conflict between the two interpretations of *the voice of the shofar...*, since according to the first, *the voice* (namely *Tif'eret*) issues from *the shofar* (*Binah*), while according to the second, Torah (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) issues from *Binah*.

**80. the first tablets were engraved...** The original tablets (later smashed by Moses) reflected the liberating quality of *Binah*.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets*. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:3: “חרות (Ḥarut), *Engraved, upon the tablets*. Do not read חרות (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.’”

See *Avot* 6:2; *BT Eruvin* 54a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:6; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 46; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 16, *Egev* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 9; *Shemot Rabbah* 41:7; *Zohar* 1:37b, 63b, 131b-132a, 152b; 2:45b, 113b-114a, 183a; 3:176a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 25 (29-30).

**81. You cannot find a single word...** The various and differing interpretations of Torah ultimately gather in the spring of *Yesod* and then flow into the sea of *Shekhinah*. She is known as Oral Torah, which includes all interpretations of Written Torah.

On the numerous aspects of Torah, see *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:16, where Torah is compared to wine: “Just as ׀”



(*yayin*), wine, is numerically equivalent to seventy, so Torah assumes seventy faces.” See *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva (Battei Midrashot, 2:354)*; Vol. 4, pp. 462–63, n. 343.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes 1 reads: *All the streams go to the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place that the streams go, there they go again.* The full verse in Ecclesiastes 3 reads: *All goes to one place: all comes from the dust, and all returns to the dust.*

**82.** וחזק מאד (*Ve-ḥazeq me’od*), **stronger and stronger...** Rabbi Abba plays with the root חזק (*ḥzq*), “to be strong,” and the participle מחזיק (*maḥaziq*), “holding.” The *voice* of Torah—or *Shekhinah* (as Oral Torah)—“holds” all possible interpretations.

The quotation is based on M *Oholot* 9:12, 14, where a *seah* is a unit of volume. The term also appears as a measure of weight, and according to *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 26 (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah), the original tablets weighed forty *seahs*.

**83. a single word in Torah that is weak...** When properly understood, even seemingly insignificant or meaningless elements of Torah turn out to be solid and powerful.

On the significance of every element of Torah, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 336; *Midrash Tanna’im*, Deuteronomy 32:47; BT *Eruvin* 13a *Menaḥot* 29b, *Hullin* 60b; Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 10, intro, principle 8; idem, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:50; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 548; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37–38; *Zohar* 1:54a, 135a, 145b, 163a, 187a, 201a, 234b; 2:12a, 55b–56a, 59b, 65b, 93b, 95a, 98b–99b, 124a, 217b, 236a; 3:71b–72b, 79b, 149a–b, 152a, 174b, 202a, 213b, 221a, 265a, 269a; *ZḤ* 6d (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 341–42; Matt, “The Aura of Secrecy,” 194–207.

On the image of a hammer smashing rocks, see *Leqaḥ Tov*, Exodus 20:2: “In the School of Rabbi Yishma’el it was

taught: *'Is not My word like fire,' declares YHVH, 'and like a hammer smashing rock?'* (Jeremiah 23:29). Just as a hammer splits into many sparks, so every single utterance issuing from the mouth of the blessed Holy One splits into many meanings."

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 42; BT *Shabbat* 88b (and Rashi and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *mah pattish*), *Sanhedrin* 34a (and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *mah pattish*); *Zohar* 2:83b.

On the verse in Deuteronomy and its midrashic sense (employed here), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:14, in the name of Rabbi Yishma'el: "For it is not an empty word מִכֶּם (*mi-kem*), for you—and if it is empty, it is *mi-kem*, from you, because of you, because you do not know how to interpret." See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:47; JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 15b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:2; 53:15; *Zohar* 1:86b, 163a.

**84. with a voice—with the voice of Moses...** See BT *Berakhot* 45a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi: "How do we know that the one who translates [the public Torah reading into Aramaic] is not permitted to raise his voice above that of the reader? As is said: *Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice*. The phrase *with a voice* need not have been stated. What then does *with a voice* come to teach? With the voice of Moses [i.e., not louder than that of Moses]." Just as God did not overwhelm Israel with a voice mightier than that of Moses, so the translator should not raise his voice above that of the Torah reader.

Here, Rabbi Abba understands "the voice of Moses" as referring to *Tif'eret*, the divine voice and rung attained by Moses. God responded to Moses, or confirmed what he said, with the power of this sefirotic voice. (For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.) Rabbi Abba wonders why, in the next chapter of Exodus, God, rather than Moses, is described as speaking.

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see *Tanḥuma*, *Shemot* 25; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:9; *Midrash*

*Tehillim* 18:29; 24:11; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:3; *Leqah Tov*, Exodus 19:19; *Zohar* 3:265a.

**85. *Speak you with us...*** According to a rabbinic tradition, at Mount Sinai God began speaking to Israel directly, but after hearing the first two of the Ten Commandments the Israelites were overwhelmed and they asked Moses to convey the rest of the revelation to them. According to Rabbi Abba, the wording *God spoke* refers to the first two commandments, whereas *Moses would speak* refers to the rest.

In BT *Megillah* 31b, Abbaye distinguishes between the list of curses in Leviticus 26 and the later list in Deuteronomy 28: “The former [curses] are stated in the plural [i.e. addressed to all Israel] and Moses uttered them מפי הגבורה (*mi-pi ha-gevurah*), from the mouth of [divine] Power [i.e., conveying God’s speech]; the latter are stated in the singular and Moses uttered them מפי עצמו (*mi-pi atsmo*), from his own mouth [i.e., in his own formulation and in his own name].” For example, the list in Leviticus reads: *If you [plural] do not heed Me* (Leviticus 26:14), conveying divine speech, whereas the list in Deuteronomy reads: *It shall be, if you [singular] do not heed the voice of YHVH your God...* (Deuteronomy 28:15).

Here, Rabbi Abba understands the phrase *mi-pi atsmo* (from his own mouth) as meaning “from (or with, by) the mouth of the voice of *Tif’eret*,” the *sefirah* to which Moses was intimately linked (and which is called “voice”). The phrase *mi-pi ha-gevurah* (from the mouth of [divine] Power) refers either to *Gevurah* (Power) or *Shekhinah* (who is known as lower *Gevurah*).

In rabbinic literature, the book of Deuteronomy is referred to as the Repetition of Torah, since it contains Moses’ summary of laws and history from earlier books of the Torah. Cf. Deuteronomy 17:18.

On Israel asking Moses to convey the revelation after hearing the first two commandments, see *Shir ha-Shirim*

*Rabbah* on 1:2; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 22, 111a. Cf. Vol. 4, p. 439, n. 262. The full verse in Exodus reads: *They said to Moses, "Speak you with us that we may hear, and let not God speak with us lest we die."* On the passage in *Megillah*, see *Zohar* 3:115a, 261a, 265a.

**86. In the Book of *Aggadta*...** According to this legendary source, Moses conveyed the words of Torah with his own voice (or from the voice of *Tif'eret*, to which he was linked), and then the revelation was confirmed by *Elohim*—namely *Gevurah* (or *Shekhinah*, who is known as lower *Gevurah*). Here, “with that voice of Moses” apparently means “along with that voice of Moses,” confirming it. Cf. above, [note 84](#).

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the Book of *Aggadta* of the school of Rav, see BT *Sanhedrin* 57b; *Zohar* 3:289a, 290a–b, 293a, 295a (all *IZ*). On Torah being uttered *הגבורה מפִי הגבורה* (*mi-pi ha-gevurah*), “from the mouth of [divine] Power,” see the preceding note; Vol. 4, p. 439, n. 262. On the term *aggadta*, see the Glossary.

**87. Now, he who has opened...** Rabbi Abba concludes his interpretation of the verse in Exodus by saying that just as *Elohim* acknowledged the voice of Moses, so should the Companions acknowledge Rabbi Abba’s words of Torah.

**88. If the daughter of a priest...** In such a case, she can eat of the sacred priestly food. *Stranger* renders זָר (*zar*), “stranger, alien, outsider,” which in this verse refers to one who is neither a servant nor a family member of a priest.

See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1861, 1863–64. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:95a, 101a–b. On Israel receiving the Torah as the purpose of Creation, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 3a.

**89. When this world was consummated by Israel...** This may mean that from the beginning God foresaw Israel, who would consummate and fulfill Creation, corresponding to the supernal pattern, thereby extending the cosmic Tree of Life through the world. God desired to draw down a soul to animate Adam and thereby to link the divine and earthly

realms. For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**90. male and female, to be complete...** When a man and a woman unite, they imitate the union of the divine male and female. Moreover, if they engender a son and a daughter, their family corresponds to the divine family of *Hokhmah* and *Binah* (Father and Mother) and *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* (Son and Daughter).

On the complete human as male and female, see above, [note 37](#). On the requirement to engender both a son and a daughter, see M *Yevamot* 6:6; BT *Yevamot* 61b–62b; *Zohar* 1:219a; 3:34a (RM). On the name *YHVH* as symbolizing the entire sefirotic spectrum, see above, [note 27](#).

**91. But if a person does not want...** To complete the name *YHVH* by marrying and engendering children. In such a case, when the person dies his soul is not joined to the Name because by failing to extend the chain of being he “diminished the [manifestation of the divine] image” in which he was created. Consequently, his soul is reincarnated and thus provided another opportunity to fulfill the commandment of *Be fruitful and multiply* (Genesis 1:28). Thereby, the soul can merit to eventually be reunited with her divine parents, King *Tif'eret* and Queen *Shekhinah*.

On “diminishing the [divine] image,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 34:14, in the name of Ben Azzai: “Whoever abstains from procreation is as though he spilled blood and diminished the image.”

See *Tosefta Yevamot* 8:7; BT *Yevamot* 63b; *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 8; *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:2; *Devarim Rabbah* 12; *Zohar* 1:13a, 186b; *ZḤ* 59a (*MhN*), 89b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 140; David ben Judah he-Ḥasid, *The Book of Mirrors*, 28, and intro, p. 34, n. 238; Heschel, *Torah min ha-Shamayim*, 1:220–23.

On reincarnation in Kabbalah and its link with procreation, see Vol. 5, pp. 38–39, n. 108. On the soul as

*daughter of a priest*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:5; *Zohar* 2:95a-b, 101a-b. On the soul's divine parents, see *Zohar* 1:245b; 2:12a; 3:42b, 174b.

**92. *Becomes a widow...*** If the soul becomes a widow of the body that died. She is *divorced* from the Name if the deceased failed to engender children and thereby resemble the sefirotic family above. See *Zohar* 2:101a.

**93. *And she returns to her father's house...*** Rabbi Abba reads this clause as follows: If the deceased has no children, then *she* [i.e., the soul] *returns* to another body through reincarnation in order to fulfill the command of procreation. ("In an undefined manner" means that the expression *returns* does not initially pertain to the continuation of the verse: *to her father's house*.) Then, assuming that the new person engenders children, the soul *returns to her father's house*—to her divine origin and home.

**94. *Of her father's bread...*** The fulfilled soul will delight in divine abundance.

**95. *From now on, but no stranger...*** The continuation of the verse means that if a person has not engendered new life (and thereby fulfilled the Name), his soul will not taste the divine delights.

The phrase "where it dwells" apparently alludes to *Shekhinah*. On the verse in Song of Songs, see above at [notes 2, 5-17](#). On spiritual "eating," cf. Vol. 5, pp. 181-82, nn. 120-22.

**96. *When food appears below...*** God delights "above" in the sacrificial offerings only when Israel is sustained "below." The divine delight is *pleasing*, while Israel's sustenance below is stimulated by the *aroma* of the offering. The souls of the righteous are privileged to partake directly of the divine meal.

"The Ancient One" refers to *Keter*. On the progression of the verse in Song of Songs, see *Zohar* 3:226a; above, [notes 2, 5-15](#).



On Israel sustaining their Father in heaven by sacrifices, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 15:9; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 1:15; *Aggadat Shir ha-Shirim*, 27-28; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Exodus 418; cf. *Tosefta Menaḥot* 7:9. All of these sources are based on Numbers 28:2: *My offering, My bread, for My fire-offerings, My pleasing aroma, you shall take care to offer to Me at its fixed time.*

**97. Look, how good and how pleasant...** Whereas other nations are ruled by heavenly princes, God and Israel are intimately connected.

On the seventy heavenly princes, see above, [note 21](#). On God calling Israel His “children” and “brothers,” see *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:8. On God calling Israel by progressively more intimate terms, 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 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 *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); 2:100b; 3:262a; ZH 91c (*MhN, Eikhah*); Green, *Keter*, 80-81. Cf. *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:15, 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.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *For Mine are the Children of Israel as servants; they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am YHVH your God.* The full verse in Psalm 122 reads: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions, let me say, "Peace be within you."* This verse is addressed to Jerusalem; but according to a midrashic interpretation, it is sung by God, who refers to the Israelites as *my brothers and my companions*. See *Mekhilta, Beshallah* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:15; *JT Berakhot* 9:1, 13b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 4:8; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 5; *Shemot Rabbah* 27:9; 52:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 4:3; 15:4; *Zohar* 2:55b, 122a; 3:22a, 59b, 77b, 160b.

**98. The Holy Lamp...** בּוֹצִינָא קֳדִישָׁא (*Botsina Qaddisha*), "the Holy Lamp," is the title of Rabbi Shim'on. He relates the expression *brothers* in Psalms to the verse in Leviticus about a brother marrying his sister. The latter verse reads in full: *A man who takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is חֶסֶד (ḥesed), a disgrace, and they shall be cut off before the eyes of their people. His sister's nakedness he has exposed; he shall bear his punishment [or: his guilt].* The homonym of *ḥesed*, "disgrace, shame," means, paradoxically, "loving-kindness," and for Rabbi Shim'on and Rav Yeiva Sava this verse implies that the union of the blessed Holy One and His *sister, Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), is an act of this type of loving *ḥesed*. Similarly, the verse in Psalms refers to the union of divine siblings.

Yet Israel is also included in the divine union, as implied by the emphatic particle גַּם (*gam*), "also, even": *Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers יחד גם (gam yahad), also together.* Alternatively, the word *gam* alludes to *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), who links *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. These two interpretations are

harmonious (“all is one matter”) because Israel stimulates the union of the divine couple and shares the role of *Yesod*.

On Rabbi Shim'on's title *Botsina Qaddisha*, see *Zohar* 1:3b-4a, 156a, 197b, 217a; 2:4a, 31a, 123b, 127b, 149a, 189b, 200b, 203b; 3:25b, 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.”

Historically, Rav Yeiva Sava (the Elder) was a Babylonian *amora* of the third century. See BT *Pesahim* 103b, *Bava Qamma* 49b; *Zohar* 1:47b, 79b, 117b, 225a; 2:6a, 60b, 114a, 206b; 3:155b, 289a (*IZ*), 290a (*IZ*), 295a (*IZ*). On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, [note 38](#).

On the positive sense of *hesed* in Leviticus 20:17, see below, [p. 524](#), [n. 533](#). Cf. Proverbs 14:34; 25:10. The contradictory senses of *hesed* (“disgrace” and “loving-kindness”) may represent what Freud called “the antithetical meaning of primary words” in his essay of this title.

In rabbinic hermeneutics the word גַּם (*gam*), “also, too,” can amplify the literal meaning of a biblical word or phrase. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:14; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; *Zohar* 3:59b. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). On the earthly Assembly of Israel as God's sister, see the passage from *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* quoted in the preceding note. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#).

**99. Hear, O Israel!...** God is truly *one* only when *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One) and *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel) are united.

See *Zohar* 3:77b, 93b, 96a; *ZH* 43d. On the male being incomplete without the female, see above, [note 37](#). On the phrase “half a body,” see above, [note 45](#). On the significance of the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 1:12a, 18b; 2:43b (*Piq*), 133b-134b, 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.

**100. Now the blessed Holy One is not called *one*...** As long as Israel remains in exile, the blessed Holy One is not fully united with *Shekhinah* (Assembly of Israel), and the name *YHVH* is incomplete. *Shekhinah* is known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom), and when Israel is redeemed, *The kingdom shall be YHVH's*—that is, united with Her partner.

The verse in Zechariah can imply that *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) and *Shekhinah* (known as *His name*) will both be *one*. See *Zohar* 2:134a, 161b-162a; 3:56a, 77b, 93b. On the sefirotic significance of the name *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#). On the term *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

**101. Like fine oil on the head...** This oil symbolizes the flow of emanation issuing from *Keter* (known as the Holy Ancient One), conveyed by the river of *Binah*, the Divine Mother who suckles Her children (the lower *sefirot*) and illumines them.

The King's head symbolizes the highest *sefirot*, and the flow of emanation trickles down His beard onto the lower sefirotic garments or *robes* (also pictured as crowns). The Divine Name encompasses all of the *sefirot*; see above, [note 27](#).

On the “glory” 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* 2:122b, 177a-b (*SdTs*); 3:130b-134b (*IR*), 139a-141b (*IR*), 289a-b (*IZ*), 295a-b (*IZ*).

The full verse in Psalms (which follows the verse *Look, how good and how pleasant...*) reads: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, descending over the collar of his robes*. See *Zohar* 2:87b; 3:34a, 39a, 88b-89a, 132b (*IR*), 209a, 295b (*IZ*); Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 21:19.

**102. All the flow...** The entire stream of emanation proceeds only through the lower *sefirot*, which are known as divine *מדות* (*middot*), “attributes.” Thus the verse reads

*descending* על פי מדותיו (*al pi middotav*), which is understood now not as *over the collar of his robes*, but rather *according to his attributes*.

The verse in Numbers reads: על פי (*Al pi*), *By the word of [or: by the command of, on orders from], Aaron and his sons shall be all the work of the Gershonites....*

**103. This fine oil was not available...** The flow of emanation cannot proceed until it is stimulated by Israel's worship below in the Temple. The verse in Proverbs now implies that when *oil* (the flow of emanation) is met by *incense* (offered in the Temple), then joy pervades all the worlds.

On the verse in Proverbs, see *Tanḥuma, Tetsavveh* 15; *Zohar* 1:230a; 3:11a, 30b, 34a, 58b, 104b-105a, 149a, 150a, 151b, 177b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 86-87. Cf. above, [note 47](#).

**104. Elohim came to Abimelech...** Abimelech was king of the Canaanite city-state Gerar, who married Sarah after Abraham told him, "*She is my sister*" (Genesis 20:2). Rabbi Aḥa wonders why the expression *Elohim came to* appears in the Bible only in relation to non-Israelites such as King Abimelech and never in relation to Israelites.

For other occurrences of *Elohim came to*, see Genesis 31:24 (referring to Laban); Numbers 22:9, 20 (referring to Balaam). Genesis 20:3 reads in full: *Elohim came to Abimelech in a night-dream and said to him, "You are about to die because of the woman you took, as she is another man's wife."* Genesis 20:6 reads in full: *Elohim said to him in the dream, "I also know that with a pure heart you have done this, and I also have kept you from sinning against Me, and so I have not allowed you to touch her."*

**105. Every Elohim here...** In this biblical passage the name *Elohim* refers not to God but to the heavenly prince appointed over King Abimelech and his people.

See *Zohar* 1:111b; 2:96a; 3:113a, 200a, 207a, 208b; *ZḤ* 78d (*MhN, Rut*); *Minḥat Shai* on Genesis 20:3. On the

heavenly princes of the nations, see above, [note 21](#).

[106](#). ***I also know...*** How can the name *Elohim* refer to Abimelech's heavenly prince if this verse states that *Elohim* knew that Abimelech had married Sarah with pure intentions (namely thinking that she was simply Abraham's sister, not his wife)? After all, such knowledge pertains primarily to God, not to a lower heavenly being. Rabbi Aḥa explains that the biblical wording *I also know* implies that the heavenly prince is acknowledging that God Himself knows and that he, the prince, *also* knows. On the hermeneutical function of *also*, see above, [note 98](#).

[107](#). ***And I also have kept [you from sinning...]*** This certainly seems to pertain to God, not to a heavenly prince. (God kept Abimelech from sinning by preventing him from touching Sarah.) Yet, by sinning, nations of the world can weaken their heavenly princes and even cause them to be deposed. The unusual spelling of the word מַחַטּוֹ (*me-ḥato*), *from sinning [against me]*—which would normally be spelled מַחַטּוֹא (*me-ḥato*), with an א (*alef*)—suggests the word מַחַט (*maḥat*), “a needle,” implying that a nation's sins can harm its heavenly prince.

On the heavenly princes being deposed, defeated, or punished by God, 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, 175a, 232b; 3:147a. This notion is often linked with Isaiah 24:21: *YHVH will punish the host of the heights on high and the kings of the earth upon the earth*—implying that God first punishes or defeats the heavenly princes and then deals with their nations.

On וַאֲקֻטְ (va-aquts), *and I loathed*, and קוצין (*qotsin*), “thorns,” see *Zohar* 3:42b; Baḥya ben Asher on Deuteronomy 21:23. Cf. *JT Megillah* 3:6, 74b; *Devarim Rabbah* 4:1; *Soferim* 12:1; *Zohar* 3:114b. The full verse in



Leviticus reads: *You shall not go by the statutes of the nation that I am driving out before you, for all these things they have done, and I loathed them.*

**108. by sinning, people cause a defect above...** The nations harm their heavenly princes by sinning, whereas Israel's sins disrupt the union of the divine couple, causing *Shekhinah* (their *mother*) to be *sent away* into exile along with Her people. By bringing a קרבן (*qorban*), "an offering"—derived from the root קרב (*qr̥v*), "to draw near"—one is able to reunite the male and female realms.

On causing a defect above, see BT *Sanhedrin* 74a (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai); *Zohar* 2:26b; 3:16b, 66a, 78a, 79a, 297a-b; ZH 78c (*MhN*, *Rut*). On the concept of weakening and strengthening God, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 319, 346; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:12; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:33; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:6; 25:1; *Zohar* 1:57b, 234b; 2:32b, 64a, 65b; 3:18b, 22a, 75b.

On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 27](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:237a; 2:189b; 3:74b-75a, 102b, 115a. The full verse reads: *Thus says YHVH: Where is your mother's bill of divorce by which I sent her away? Or which of My creditors was it to whom I sold you off? Behold, it is for your sins that you were sold, and for your crimes your mother was sent away.* On the mystical meaning of *qorban*, see above, [note 31](#).

**109. thanked him** They thanked Rabbi Aḥa.

**110. worship... should be with joy...** See BT *Berakhot* 31a: "One should not stand to pray while immersed in sorrow or laziness or laughter or chatter or frivolity or idle talk, but only in the joy of [fulfilling] a *mitsvah*." See *Zohar* 2:165a.

**111. The ritual of an offering cannot be so...** An offering intended to atone for a sin cannot be brought in joy, since the person bringing it should feel contrite and sorrowful.

**112. How, then, is this remedied?...** How are *joy* and *glad singing* incorporated in the offering? By the priests and Levites who participate in it. The priest symbolizes the “crown” (or *sefirah*) of *Hesed*, the opposite of *Din* (Judgment), and his radiant face conveys joy. The Levites are assigned to sing in the Temple.

On the priest having to be joyful, see Rashi on BT *Yoma* 14a, s.v. *mi la mitrid*; *Zohar* 1:116a; 3:38b-39a; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh sheba-Nistar*, 105-6, n. 3. On the association of *Hesed* with joy, see *Zohar* 1:116a.

**113. These preside over it...** The priests and Levites preside over the offering, thereby contributing *joy* and *glad singing*. The name *YHVH* symbolizes the full spectrum of the *sefirot*, which are unified by the joyful worship. Furthermore, *YHVH* symbolizes Compassion, while *Elohim* symbolizes Judgment; by the joint participation of the priests (who symbolize *Hesed*) and the Levites (who symbolize *Din*), Compassion and Judgment are drawn near one another and harmonized.

On the intention of the priest, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 116; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 521; *Zohar* 1:45b (*Heikh*), 89b (ST); 2:57a; 3:18a, 35a, 146b; *ZH* 82a (*MhN*, *Rut*); Bahya ben Asher, *Kad ha-Qemah*, 292; Lieberman, *Tosefet Rishonim*, 2:207.

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#). On *YHVH* and *Elohim* signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see above, [note 31](#). On *qorban* and “drawing near,” see above, [notes 31, 108](#).

**114. Now that offerings no longer exist...** Because the Temple was destroyed, offerings can no longer be brought, although they have been functionally replaced by sincere repentance. Yet now, too, *joy* and *glad singing* are possible, through joyful praise of God and intoning Torah as one studies.

**115. ‘not while immersed in sorrow’...** See BT *Berakhot* 31a (quoted above, [note 110](#)): “One should not



stand to pray while immersed in sorrow or laziness or laughter or chatter or frivolity or idle talk, but only in the joy of [fulfilling] a *mitsvah*.” But one who is repenting sincerely cannot help but feel sorrowful during prayer.

**116. A person should always enter...** See BT *Berakhot* 8a, in the name of Rav Ḥisda: “A person should always enter two doors into the synagogue. Do you imagine ‘two doors’? Rather, say: a distance of two doors, and then pray.” Here, Rabbi Yehudah identifies the “two doors” with two sefirotic openings, *Hesed* and *Gevurah* (or *Din*), which are also symbolized by *joy* and *glad singing*.

See above, [note 112](#). On the passage in *Berakhot*, see JT *Berakhot* 5:1, 9a; *Devarim Rabbah* 7:2; *Midrash Mishlei* 8:34; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 11; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittahon*, 366; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod, Berakhot* 8a, p. 5b (part of which is translated into Aramaic here in the printed editions); *Zohar* 3:164a. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:81.

The wording “A person should always enter a distance of two doors...” appears in various medieval sources. See, e.g., Isaac Alfasi and Asher ben Yehiel, *ad loc.*; Jacob ben Asher, *Arba’ah Turim, Hilkhhot Tefillah*, 90.

**117. Joy is Assembly of Israel...** Alternatively, *joy* refers to *Shekhinah*, when She unites with Her spouse, *Tif’eret*. The verse in Isaiah implies that Israel will go forth from exile *with joy*, that is, along with *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who shared their exile. Furthermore, one should *serve YHVH with joy*—focusing on *Shekhinah* and, through Her, on the higher *sefirot*.

As the Divine Presence, *Shekhinah* is also known as זאת (*zot*), *this*, because She is constantly present right here. The wording in Leviticus—בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this*—implies that Aaron should enter the Holy of Holies while focusing on Her and “with Her.” The closing clause, “all is one,” means that both *joy* and *this* refer to *Shekhinah*.

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 3:118a, 212b. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *With this shall Aaron enter the sanctuary, with a bull from the herd for a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a ram for an ascent offering*. See *Zohar* 1:72a; 2:51a, 57a; 3:37b, 53b, 58b-59a, 60b, 108a. For other references to *Shekhinah* as *zot* (*this*), see *Zohar* 1:49b, 93b, 176b, 200b, 228a; 2:11b-12a, 37a-b, 39b, 50b, 54b, 57a, 126b, 236b, 238b; 3:13b, 24a, 31a, 40b-41a, 48b, 52b-53a, 62a, 76a, 79b, 145b, 179b, 250a.

**118. Come before Him with glad singing...** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *joy*) is fulfilled by uniting with *Tif'eret* by means of *Yesod* (symbolized by *glad singing*). One who prays and sings to God joyously stimulates the union of the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who are called respectively *YHVH* and *Elohim*.

Furthermore, the name יהוה (*YHVH*) itself encompasses all the *sefirot*: the first three letters symbolize the entire masculine realm from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*, while the final letter symbolizes *Shekhinah*. The goal of prayer is to unify the male and female realms. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#).

**119. for three miles** Out of respect for Rabbi Abba, the two others (Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Aḥa) escort him. According to Rav Sheshet (BT *Sotah* 46b), one should accompany 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; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Avel* 14:3; *Zohar* 1:51a, 87a, 96b, 150b, 217a, 240a; 2:14a, 164a, 187a.

**120. As for me, through Your great loving-kindness...** According to a Spanish custom, this verse is to be recited upon entering the synagogue. The parallel passage in *Zohar* 1:11a (as well as the version in later printed editions here) refers also to the third patriarch, Jacob, and associates part of the verse with him. Here, Abraham is linked with his *sefirah*, *Ḥesed* (Loving-kindness), and Isaac is linked with *Gevurah*, which is also known as *Paḥad* (Fear), associated with the word *awe* in the verse from Psalms. In the closing verse from Isaiah, *Israel* may allude to Jacob (who was renamed Israel), and אֶתְפָּאֵר (*etpa'ar*), *I glory*, may allude to his *sefirah*, *Tif'eret*.

On the patriarchs instituting 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.

On reciting the verse from Psalms upon entering the synagogue, see *Kolbo*, 87; David Abudarham, *Sefer Abudarham*, 349. The verse in Micah reads: *You give truth to Jacob*, חֶסֶד (*ḥesed*), *loving-kindness, to Abraham*.

The verse in Genesis reads: *Were it not that the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, was with me, you would have sent me away now empty-handed*. See *Sekhel Tov*, Exodus 15:16, who links *the Fear of Isaac* with the terror felt by Isaac as he was bound upon the altar.

**121. If his offering...** The full verse reads: *If his offering is an ascent offering from the herd, an unblemished male he shall offer; to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting he shall bring it, to be accepted for him before YHVH*.

**122. What difference does it make...** Rabbi Yose wonders why different categories of animals are mentioned for the ascent offering, since all of them are burned on the altar.

**123. one whose hand can attain...** If the person can afford it, he should bring *from the herd*; if not, then *from the flock*; and if not this, then *from birds*. The verse immediately following Leviticus 14:21 mentions *two turtledoves or two young pigeons, as his hand may attain*. Actually the context there concerns the offering to be brought by a poor person recovering from a skin disease. See *Nitsotsei Zohar; Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. Leviticus 5:7; 12:8.

On God not demanding more than a person can manage, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 2:10; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 16, 84b; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 10, *Pinḥas* 14; *Shemot Rabbah* 34:1; *Zohar* 3:104a.

**124. Corresponding to the sin...** According to Rabbi El'azar, the variation in animals corresponds to the moral character of the individual. A wealthy person, whose heart is often גס (*gas*), "arrogant," should offer from the category of בהמה גסה (*behemah gassah*), "large animal, cattle." The less wealthy a person is, the less his arrogance and the less his required offering. Each offering is "recognized," denoting a particular type of moral failing. As mentioned above ([note 55](#)), the ascent offering is intended to atone for sinful thoughts.

**125. For three sins of the world...** See *M Avot* 5:8: "Seven kinds of punishment come upon the world for seven major transgressions. If some people give tithes and some do not, there comes a famine from drought; some go hungry and some have plenty. If all have decided not to give tithes, there comes a famine from panic and drought. If they have decided not to set apart the dough offering [for the priest], there comes a famine of extermination...."

The arrogant rich are especially liable to neglect giving such donations. Why, then, does God punish such sins by bringing a famine, which will kill mainly the poor, since the rich can store up plenty and survive? Moreover, when the rich see that they themselves have not been seriously

affected, whereas the innocent poor are starving, they will keep on sinning, now even more brazenly. See ZH 77c (*MhN, Rut*).

**126. He gives them tranquility...** God rewards the wicked in this world for whatever little good they may have done, in order to deprive them of eternal life in the world-to-come. The righteous, on the other hand, are punished now for their few failings, in order to be fully rewarded in the hereafter.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 37:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:1; 24:11; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 7.

**127. Among all inhabitants...** The poor are God's own vessels.

See ZH 77c (*MhN, Rut*). On God's broken human vessels (who endure suffering or poverty), see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 7:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 24:5; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11, p. 211; *Zohar* 1:10b; 2:86b, 218a; 3:90b; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 38:1; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1455, n. 120; 1463, nn. 288, 308.

The full verse in Psalm 51 reads: *The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not spurn.* The verse in Isaiah reads: *I dwell on high, in holiness, and with the crushed and lowly in spirit—reviving the spirit of the lowly, reviving the heart of the crushed.*

Exodus 22:22 reads in full (hyperliterally): *If you abuse, abuse him, when he cries, cries out to Me, I will hear, hear his outcry.* Exodus 22:26 reads: *When he cries out to Me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.* Exodus 22:23 (*My wrath will flare up and I will kill you by the sword*) is here applied to God's punishment of the wicked, who are responsible for the famine.

**128. slightest of all...** Consisting merely of birds, because his broken heart and his suffering atone for him

and “remove” his guilt. The priest can determine which offering is appropriate for each person.

As mentioned above ([note 55](#)), the ascent offering is intended to atone for sinful thoughts. On the poor person’s offering, see above, [note 123](#). On the suffering of the poor saving them from punishment, see BT *Yevamot* 102b. On the correspondence between a person’s status or character and his offering, see above, [notes 123-24](#).

[129](#). **This offering is not for you...** The priest could tell that he was wealthy and should therefore bring a more substantial offering. See the preceding note.

[130](#). **If he is poor and his hand cannot attain...** The following verse mentions *two turtledoves or two young pigeons, as his hand may attain*. See above, [note 123](#).

[131](#). **if a single thought is so grave...** As mentioned above ([note 55](#)), the ascent offering is intended to atone for sinful thoughts.

[132](#). **Yehudah the Other** Signifying that he had been transformed.

On the significance of altering a person’s name, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b: “Rabbi Yitṣḥak said, ‘Four things tear a person’s verdict: charity, crying out, change of name, and change of conduct.’” Here, the title אַחֵרָא (*aḥra*), “the Other,” may derive from Maimonides’ wording in *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Teshuvah* 2:4: “Among the ways of *teshuvah* are... changing one’s name, by which one says: ‘אֲנִי אַחֵר (ani aḥer), I am another [person], no longer that person who did those deeds.’”

On the passage in *Rosh ha-Shanah*, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 44:12; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 5:6; *Tanḥuma, Noah* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 13; *Zohar* 1:133b; 3:76a. Cf. Isaiah 65:15; *Targum*, 2 Chronicles 13:2; 15:16; Naḥmanides on Numbers 10:29; ZH 79a (*MhN, Rut*).

[133](#). **He opened...** Yehudah the Other begins to expound the verse in Samuel. The Kenites were a tribe of



migratory metal-smiths who had good relations with Israel, though the nature of the *kindness* they did for Israel is uncertain. According to the verse in Samuel, King Saul gave them friendly warning before attacking the Amalekites, who generations earlier had attacked the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. (See Exodus 17:8-16; and Deuteronomy 25:17-18.) Here, Yehudah the Other identifies *the Kenites* as the descendants of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who is called *the Kenite* in the verse in Judges.

On Jethro as *the Kenite*, see also *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Yitro) 1*; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:1; *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 35; BT *Berakhot* 63b; *Zohar* 2:195a; 3:121b. On Jethro's and his descendants' devotion to Torah, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 62; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 12:5; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 16, pp. 304-5; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 35; *Shemot Rabbah* 27:8; *Zohar* 3:121b-122a, 196b.

On studying Torah without luxuries or comforts, see *Avot* 6:4: "This is the way of Torah. Bread with salt shall you eat, and water by measure shall you drink, and on the ground shall you sleep, and a life of trouble shall you live—while you toil in Torah. If you do so, *Happy will you be, and it will be well with you* (Psalms 128:2): *Happy will you be* in this world, *and it will be well with you* in the world that is coming."

See *Tosafot, Ketubbot* 104a, s.v. *lo neheneiti*; *Zohar* 1:242a; below, [p. 388](#), [n. 95](#). On the incompatibility of Torah and business, see BT *Eruvin* 55a.

The verse in Judges reads: *The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah to the desert of Judah, which lies in the Negeb [or: south] of Arad, and they went and dwelt with the people* [Septuagint reads: *the Amalekites*]. Here, *the City of Palms* is identified with Jericho; see Deuteronomy 34:3.



The full verse in Psalms reads: *Even the bird has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may set her fledglings, by Your altars, YHVH of Hosts, my king and my God.*

**134. because he hosted Moses...** Jethro hosted Moses in Midian (see Exodus 2), and according to rabbinic tradition Moses was equivalent to all of Israel. Furthermore, Jethro advised Moses to appoint other leaders to help share the burden of judging Israel, and his advice was incorporated into the Torah. See Exodus 18:13–26.

On Moses being equivalent to all of Israel, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 1, 9; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:1, 13; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 11:25; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:15; *Tanḥuma, Beshallah* 10; *Zohar* 2:47a, 191b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 207; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 378.

On Jethro adding a passage to the Torah, see *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:1, where one of Jethro's seven names is explained as follows: “[He was called] יתר (*yeter*) because יתר” (*yitter*), he added, a portion to the Torah.” See *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Yitro)* 1; *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 16, p. 307; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:16; *Tanḥuma, Yitro* 2, 4; *Tanḥuma (Buber), Yitro* 11; *Shemot Rabbah* 27:8. For the name *yeter*, see Exodus 4:18.

**135. Why does this matter appear here...** Why did Saul warn the Kenites to remove themselves from among the Amalekites? See above, [note 133](#).

**136. he brought an offering to YHVH...** Jethro worshiped God and sought to convert. The wording in Exodus—*came to eat bread... before God*—implies that when an offering is brought with pure devotion, God Himself appears.

On Jethro's conversion, see *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Yitro)* 1–2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:27; *Sifrei*, Numbers 78; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:6; *Zohar* 2:68a. On the significance of the

wording *before God*, see *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Yitro) 1*; JT *Eruvin* 5:1, 22b.

**137. he brings two offerings...** Although he has very little, he still brings an offering, which otherwise he himself could have eaten; so in a sense he is bringing “his own fat and blood.” If he cannot afford even two birds, then he brings “a little flour.”

See Leviticus 5:7, 11, according to which a poor person who needs to bring a purification offering (and cannot afford a sheep or goat) is allowed to bring *two turtledoves or two young pigeons*, and if he cannot manage even that, he is allowed to bring *a tenth of an ephah of fine semolina*. See above, [note 123](#). The phrase “a little flour” may also refer to the grain offering; see below, [note 139](#). On a poor person offering his own self, see BT *Menahot* 104b.

**138. that enabled me...** After his “poor-person’s offering” was rejected by the priest, Yehudah the Other became inspired to devote himself to Torah. The statement “I divided up all my possessions” is an exaggeration, since in fact he gave half to the poor and invested the other half. See above at [notes 129–32](#).

**139. Just as a poor person...** Just as he burns up his own fat, since he has so little to eat, so the flour is heated with oil. Furthermore, the element of fire symbolizes the hot intensity of the evil impulse, which is atoned for by the hot offering. One’s desire should be surrendered or redirected to God.

Cf. Naḥmanides on Leviticus 1:9. “Grain offering” renders מנחה (*minḥah*), “gift, tribute,” which in Leviticus refers to a cereal offering. This functions as a substitute for the ascent offering for the benefit of those who cannot afford the latter. See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:179, 195–202.

**140. who bring an offering every day...** By engaging selflessly in study, prayer, and virtuous activity. Yehudah the Other wants to emulate the righteous, but he realizes that actual sacrificial offerings fulfill a cosmic function by

stimulating the union of the divine couple, who convey blessing and sustenance to the lower worlds. See above, [note 31](#).

**141. Blessed is YHVH from Zion...** YHVH symbolizes *Tif'eret*, so Yehudah the Other wonders how this central *sefirah* can be *blessed... from Zion*, which symbolizes *Yesod*, situated beneath *Tif'eret*. Normally, *Tif'eret* is *blessed* by the higher stream of emanation issuing from *Binah*. He explains that sometimes *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) is called YHVH, the name of King *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun). So the verse in Psalms means that *Shekhinah* is *blessed* by *Yesod*.

On the significance of *And YHVH*, in the verse from Genesis, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 51:2 (on this verse), in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "Wherever it is said *And YHVH*, this implies: He and His court." 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*]." Here, however, Yehudah the Other implies that YHVH signifies *Shekhinah*, who shares this name with *Tif'eret*. See *Zohar* 2:213a.

The "one agent" mentioned in the closing line probably refers to Metatron, "whose name is like the name of his Master" (BT *Sanhedrin* 38b). Alternatively, it may refer to Gabriel; see *Bereshit Rabbah* 51:2; *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 19:24, p. 46; Naḥmanides on Genesis 19:24.

On the passage in *Bereshit Rabbah*, 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; Naḥmanides on Genesis 19:24; Exodus 13:21; *Zohar* 1:15b, 64b, 105a, 107b, 159b, 192b, 198a, 240a; 2:37b, 46a-b, 56a, 86a, 149a, 227b; 3:149a. The hermeneutical significance of *va-* (*and*) was championed by Rabbi Akiva. See BT *Yevamot* 68b, *Sanhedrin* 51b.

On the verse in Psalms, cf. *Zohar* 1:158b. The full verse in Genesis reads: *And YHVH rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from YHVH out of heaven.*

**142. from which place is it revealed...** According to this interpretation, *YHVH* refers to *Tif'eret*, whose blessing is demonstrated in and by *Yesod* (known as *Zion*). The full verse in Psalm 133 reads: *Like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion, for there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life.*

**143. If his offering is a sacrifice of well-being** There does not seem to be any connection between this verse and the following discourse by Rabbi Yehudah. See Vital; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The full verse reads: *If his offering is a sacrifice of well-being—if he offers from the herd, whether male or female, unblemished he shall offer it before YHVH. Well-being* renders שלמים (*shelamim*), whose precise meaning is uncertain here and which may imply “well-being, peace, greeting, repayment.” See Levine, *Leviticus*, 15; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:204, 217–25.

**144. He created seven heavens above...** On various “sevens,” see *Sefer Yetsirah* 4:4, 12; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:11; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:10; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 37; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 18; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:11; 92:2; *Zohar* 2:165a; *ZH* 3a (*MhN*).

On the seven heavens, see also BT *Hagigah* 12b. On the seven earths, see also below, [notes 147–48](#). On the seven seas, see also JT *Kil'ayim* 9:4, 32c; *Ketubbot* 12:3, 35b; BT *Bava Batra* 74b; *Midrash Tehillim* 24:6. On the seven rivers, see *Zohar* 1:52a. Cf. the four rivers mentioned in BT *Bava Batra* 74b; *Midrash Tehillim* 24:6.

Seven weeks constitute the period of the Omer. “Seven years seven times” refers to the biblical Sabbatical and to the Jubilee, which comes after seven Sabbaticals. (See Leviticus 25:8: *You shall count for yourselves seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times...*)

The phrase “seven thousand years that the world exists” refers to a tradition appearing in BT *Sanhedrin* 97a, in the name of Rabbi Katina: “The world will exist for six thousand years and for one thousand lie desolate.”

The closing sentence (“The blessed Holy One is in the seventh of all”) may refer to God’s manifestation in a number of these various “sevenths,” e.g., in the highest of the seven heavens, in the highest earth, in the Sabbath day, and in the seventh millennium, when (according to the passage in *Sanhedrin*) *YHVH alone will be exalted on that day* (Isaiah 2:11). See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 18; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:2. For another interpretation, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:657.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water.”*

**145. various chariots...** Angelic powers. The verse in Psalms reads: עושה 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 Yehudah adopts a midrashic reading that follows the precise order of the words: *He makes His angels 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, Ḥayyei Sarah* 3; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 2:4; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 77; *Zohar* 1:40b (*Heikh*), 58a, 81a (*ST*), 101a, 144a; 2:10a, 98b, 173a-b, 229b; 3:126b, 152a; *ZḤ* 10a (*MhN*), 81b (*MhN, Rut*).

On “six wings” and “four wings,” see Isaiah 6:2; Ezekiel 1:6; BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 23; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 33, 155b-156a. On four faces, see Ezekiel 1:6.

**146. like skins of an onion...** This matches exactly Maimonides' description of the arrangement of the numerous heavenly spheres. See his *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* 3:2; *Zohar* 2:209a.

**147. Correspondingly, seven earths below...** Seven zones, also known as the "seven climates," the seven inhabitable regions recognized in Ptolemaic and medieval geography. See *Sefer Yetsirah* 4:12; Ibn Ezra on Genesis 1:2; *Zohar* 1:177a; 2:30b.

On Israel and Jerusalem being the highest of all, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 23, 37, 152; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 17:8; BT *Qiddushin* 69a-b, *Sanhedrin* 87a, *Zevahim* 54b. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 10; Vol. 5, p. 419, n. 654.

On the correspondence between the seven earths and the seven heavens, see *ZH* 9b. Cf. the sources listed above at the beginning of [note 144](#).

**148. Our Companions who dwell in the south...** They have seen descriptions of seven strata of the earth, one beneath the other, rather than seven zones on the surface of the earth.

Rabbinic literature depicts these seven strata, which are sometimes listed as follows (from below to above): *Erets* (earth), *Adamah* (earth, ground), *Arqa* (Aramaic, earth), *Gai* (valley), *Tsiyyah* (dry region), *Neshiyyah* (oblivion), *Tevel* (firm land, world).

According to various medieval traditions, the angel Raziel transmitted a magical book to Adam. Later, probably in the seventeenth century, *Sefer Razi'el* (the Book of Raziel) was compiled in its present form, comprising ancient magical, mystical, and cosmological teachings.

On the Book of Adam, see *Zohar* 1:17b, 37a-b, 55a-b, 58b, 72b, 90b, 227b; 2:70a-b, 70a-b (RR), 77a, 131a, 143b, 180a, 181a, 197a; 3:68b; *ZH* 16d (*MhN*), 37b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:117-18, n. 110; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 85-87; idem, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 66-77. This book is not to be confused



with the Book of Adam in the Apocrypha. 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*."

Cf. 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 phrase "our Companions who dwell in the south" apparently refers to a group of kabbalists. The Talmud links the figure of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai (the leader of the Zoharic Companions) with the south. According to BT *Yevamot* 62b, after thousands of Rabbi Akiva's students died, "he came... to our Rabbis in the south and taught them," and one of these disciples was Rabbi Shim'on. See *Zohar* 3:120a, 269a; *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1186. For the phrase "who dwell in the south," see *Targum Yonatan*, Obadiah 1:9, 19.

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*, 1:24-25); *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:32-33); *Zohar* 1:9b, 39b-40a (*Heikh*), 54b, 157a; 2:30b, 100a-b; *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). On the strange creatures of the lower strata, see *Zohar* 1:9b, 157a; 2:80a-b; *ZH* 9b; Vol. 1, p. 63, n. 474.

**149. But all inhabitants of the world issued from Adam!...** So how could there be human-like creatures in



any of the lower strata? Rabbi Yehudah insists that Adam never descended below, and soon he explains how the lower creatures developed.

*Tevel* (Firm Land) is the name of the highest stratum, namely the surface of the earth. (See the beginning of the preceding note.) This highest level of earth is linked with “the supernal Name,” that is, with *Shekhinah*, who is known as *righteousness*.

On Adam descending to a lower stratum and engendering offspring, see *ZH* 9b, 79d (*MhN, Rut*); *TZ* 64, 96a. On Cain descending and engendering offspring, see *Zohar* 1:9b; *ZH* 9b; Vol. 2, p. 374, n. 444.

The supposed biblical verse—*He commanded* להביל ארצו (*le-tevel artso*), *His earth Tevel* [or: *His inhabited world*]*—exists nowhere in Scripture. Rabbi Yehudah may be playing on Proverbs 8:31: Playing* בתביל ארצו (*be-tevel artso*), *with His inhabited world*. (The term *tevel* means “firm land, mainland, inhabited and cultivated areas of the earth.”) Cf. Eisenstein, *Otsar Midrashim*, 2:357. On the verse in Psalms as applied to the stratum *Tevel*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:11; *Ester Rabbah* 1:12; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 6:4; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:11.

**150. How so?...** How is the human being the highest? Just as in the highest firmament there is *an image like the appearance of a human being upon a throne*, so on earth the human being reigns supreme, and none of the subterranean creatures compares with him.

The verse in Ezekiel, describing what lies above the angelic *hayyot* (living beings), reads in full: *Above the firmament over their heads—like the appearance of sapphire, image of a throne. And upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of a human being upon it above.*

**151. And those lower ones...** They originated from vapors of the earth combining with the other elements of the sublunary sphere.

“Residual vapors” renders קסטורא (*qastora*), whose range of meaning in the *Zohar* includes “dross, slag.” Rabbi Yehudah may be playing here with קטורא (*qatora*) or קוטרא (*qutra*), “smoke”; V6 and *Or Yaqar* read here: *qatora*. On *qastora*, see *Zohar* 2:31b; 3:83b (*Piq*); above, [note 76](#).

**152. In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava...** Here the earth is apparently described as a rotating sphere, with all creatures living on the surface, “some below” (in the southern hemisphere) “and some above” (in the northern hemisphere). According to this source, the various creatures live as long as humans do.

The spherical nature of the earth was taught by Aristotle, Ptolemy, Aquinas, and Dante, and was well known in Western Europe after the twelfth century. From a medieval perspective (as from a contemporary naïve one), as the sun revolves daily around the globe of the earth and shines on part of it, the opposite side of the earth is in darkness. And in certain parts of the earth, daytime can extend so long that there is hardly any darkness—namely in the extreme northern hemisphere in mid-summer, or in the extreme southern hemisphere in mid-winter.

However, it is difficult to reconcile this view with the literal meaning of the statement here, “all the inhabited world מתגלגלא בעיגולא (*mitgalgela be-iggula*), revolves in a circle, like a ball,” unless “Rav Hamnuna” means that the earth rotates daily on its axis and/or revolves annually around the sun. The espousal of such theories (even approximately) in medieval Spain is extremely unlikely, despite ancient precedents. In the fourth century B.C.E., Heraclides of Pontus explained the apparent motion of the celestial sphere through the rotation of the earth. In the following century Aristarchus of Samos proposed that the earth revolves around the sun. (Earlier, in the fifth-fourth centuries B.C.E., the Pythagorean philosopher Philolaus taught that at the center of the universe is a fire around which the earth, sun, moon, and planets revolve.) These

views were not current in medieval Europe, though in the sixteenth century Copernicus referred to both Philolaus and Aristarchus in his revolutionary work.

Scholem sought to solve this problem by suggesting that here the phrase *mitgalgela be-iggula* is a corruption of סגלגלא (*segalgela*), “round,” yielding a sentence that reads “all the inhabited world is circular like a ball.” (This is precisely the translation offered by Soncino, although no manuscripts or printed versions support it.) Alternatively, Scholem proposes that even the reading *mitgalgela* “does not mean rotation [or revolution], but rather the property of being round.” This latter formulation seems more likely, though the wording is still puzzling.

See Scholem, “Parashah Ḥadashah,” 442, n. 163; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. Fluegel, “Philosophy and Qabbala.” On the earth being round “like a ball,” see JT *Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:14, 17; ZH 15a (*MhN*); Scholem, “Parashah Ḥadashah,” 442. Cf. Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 3:49; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:31, 73; Gershon ben Solomon, *Sha’ar ha-Shamayim* 13:4, 42a. For the expression “revolves like a ball” (not referring to the earth), see *Midrash Tehillim* 91:3, and Buber’s n. 28.

On light and darkness dominating different parts of the spherical earth at different times, see ZH 15a (*MhN*); Scholem, “Parashah Ḥadashah,” 441–42. On there being places on earth with hardly any darkness, see Ibn Ezra on Job 38:23, and Naḥmanides on Job 38:20 (both quoting Saadiah Gaon); Scholem, “Parashah Ḥadashah,” 441. On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, [note 38](#).

**153. And that which is said...** Rabbi Yehudah insists that the previous description of the seven strata of earth and their strange creatures (found in the books of the ancients and in the Book of Adam) is also true. Although this view seems quite different than the theory of the seven zones on the earth’s surface, yet “all is fine,” that is, both theories are valid. The mystery of the seven strata has been

transmitted to the kabbalists, not to “markers of boundaries,” namely the geographers.

On the seven strata of earth, see above, [note 148](#). On the seven zones or “climates,” see above, [note 147](#).

[154. Rabbi Nehorai Sava...](#) Rabbi Nehorai the Elder, who appears as a wise hermit in *Zohar* 2:187a. The phrase “an inhabited land” (beneath the sea) refers to one of the strata beneath the surface of the earth.

[155. I transgressed believing in the Rabbis...](#) In their description of the seven strata of earth, which he doubted until his journey there. Consequently, he feared punishment in the world-to-come.

Cf. the story (in BT *Bava Batra* 75a, *Sanhedrin* 100a; *Midrash Tehillim* 87:2) in which a student of Rabbi Yoḥanan doubts his teacher’s description of how God will miraculously rebuild Jerusalem, until he sails on the ocean and sees the preparations for this miracle; upon returning, he is severely punished.

[156. Let there be a firmament...](#) Rabbi Yehudah interprets the verse with which he opened (above at [note 144](#)). The upper and lower waters symbolize the conflicting powers of right and left (*Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*), which are balanced and harmonized by the *firmament* (symbolizing the middle sefirotic column, or specifically *Yesod*).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water.”* On the conflict between the upper waters and lower waters, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:6. Cf. *Zohar* 1:17a-18a, 46a.

On the world being established on peace, 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.”

[157. The blessed Holy One is called Peace...](#) On Peace as God’s name, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 42; BT *Shabbat* 10b. In the *Zohar*, peace often designates *Yesod*.

**158. the entire Holy Name is peace...** The name *YHVH* symbolizes all of the *sefirot*, which function harmoniously, with paths diverging to the right (conveying the influence of *Hesed*) and to the left (conveying the influence of *Gevurah*, or *Din*). On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#).

**159. ' (Yod) of the Holy Name...** The first letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*). The traditional shape of this letter includes a tip at the top left, a tip at the bottom, and the body of the letter. The “tip above” symbolizes *Keter* (Crown), the first *sefirah*.

On the three components of *yod*, see *Zohar* 2:180a; 3:11b; *TZ* 69, 104b. Cf. *Zohar* 1:15b, 16b-17a (Vol. 1, p. 126, n. 137).

**160. One tip in the middle...** The main body of the letter ' (*yod*) symbolizes *Hokhmah*, the primordial point, which is the origin of all the lower *sefirot* and more concealed than all of them. The name יהוה (*YHVH*) is based on this initial letter.

**161. Another, lower head...** The bottom tip of the ' (*yod*) symbolizes *Binah*, from which issues the flow of emanation watering *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the Garden) and the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod* (pictured as plants).

**162. the Book of Enoch...** 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. Here, Enoch poses a question to the angels.

On the Book of Enoch, see *Zohar* 1:13a, 37b, 58b, 72b; 2:55a, 100a, 103b, 105b, 180b, 192b, 217a, 277a-b; 3:236b, 240a, 248b, 253b; *ZH* 1c-2b, 3b, 4b (all *SO*). See

Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:158, 163, nn. 60, 61; Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 80–83; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 78–95.

**163. All are established upon י (yod)...** On the creative power of this letter, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10: “כִּי בִיהַ יְהוָה צוּר עוֹלָמִים (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 [interpreting the verse as *For by* (the letters) ה י (yod, he), YHVH צָר עוֹלָמִים (tsar olamim), *formed worlds*].... ‘This world’ was created by ה (he)... and ‘the world that is coming’ was created by י (yod).”

See JT *Hagigah* 2:1, 77c; BT *Menaḥot* 29b; *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva (Battei Midrashot, 2:363)*; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 1:1; *Tosafot, Berakhot* 51a, s.v. *zokheh*; *Zohar* 1:140a, 141b; 2:22b, 126b; 3:290b (IZ).

**164. the Book of King Solomon...** Here King Solomon alludes to the sefirotic significance of *yod*, whose three components symbolize respectively *Keter* (feared by all), *Hokhmah* (containing thirty-two paths), and *Binah* (from whom issues the river of emanation). See above, [notes 159–61](#).

On the thirty-two paths of Wisdom, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1–2. “Concatenation” renders קַטְפוּרָא (*qatpora*). In the *Zohar* the roots קַפְטַר (*qftr*) and קַטְפַר (*qtpr*) often convey the sense of “linking, tying, binding,” apparently based on the root קַטַר (*qtr*), “to tie.” See *Zohar* 1:177a, 211a, 217a, 218a, 219b; 2:183b, 209a; 3:6b, 15a, 36b, 59b, 62b, 102a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 188, n. 185; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *qftr, qaftera*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 349–54 (esp. 350); above, [note 76](#); below, [p. 388](#), [n. 94](#).

“Cluster” renders קַטְפוּן (*qitpun*), which apparently derives from קַטוּפָא (*qetupha*), “bunch of grapes, cluster.” See *Zohar* 1:17b; 2:38a, 49b, 175a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 190, s.v. *qitpa*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *qitpin*. Alternatively, it could mean “garment(s),” based on Arabic *qatifa*, “cloak, blanket.” See *Zohar* 2:45b; 3:19a; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *qtf*; *Bei'ur*



*ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 183, s.v. *atifa*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *qitpoi*.

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*), 125a, 139a, 172a, 204b; 3:65b, 70b, 78b, 104a, 151b, 164a, 193b, 263b (*Piq*), 295b (*IZ*); *ZH* 12b (*MhN*). Cf. 1 Kings 11:41. 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; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 63–65. On the numerous scientific and magical books attributed to King Solomon, see Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:956–57.

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 catalogue of these books, see Neuhausen, *Sifriyyah shel Ma'lah*.

**165. Afterward, he explains letters in detail...** Then in his book, King Solomon proceeds to explain how the sefirotic structure emerges from ך (yod), the primordial point of *Ḥokhmah*. He focuses on the full spelling of the name of the letter: ך׃ (yod). The ך (yod) itself symbolizes *Ḥokhmah*; the ם (vav), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes the Divine Son, *Tif'eret*, and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*). The ך (dalet) symbolizes the Divine Daughter, *Shekhinah*, who is דלָה (dallah), “poor,” until She is filled with emanation from above.

Known as *Matronita*, *Shekhinah* conducts the divine battles. The lower worlds issue from Her and return to Her; all those below are nourished by Her.

On the significance of the full spelling of the letter *yod*, see *Zohar* 3:92a, 290b (*IZ*). On the term *Matronita*, see the



Glossary. On *Shekhinah* as controlling the divine weapons, see *Zohar* 2:51a-b; 3:34b, 42b, 150a, 269b; *ZH* 7b.

**166. Then yod generates all...** *Hokhmah* (the primordial point symbolized by *yod* and known as *Eden*) emanates *Binah*, the river, who is symbolized by ה (he), the second letter of יהוה (YHVH). She conceives two children: *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, symbolized respectively by ו (vav) and ה (he), the third and fourth letters of YHVH. See *Zohar* 3:65b, 290b (*IZ*).

The verse in Proverbs implies here that the divine house is built out of the primordial point of wisdom. On this verse, see *Zohar* 1:29a, 32b, 94b; 2:85b; 3:78a, 290b-291a (*IZ*).

The Holy Lamp is a title of Rabbi Shim'on; see above, [note 98](#). On the phrase "King who possesses... peace," see below, [p. 391](#), [n. 102](#).

**167. Ten names were fashioned...** Ten divine names represent the ten *sefirot*, which were conveyed by *Hokhmah* (symbolized by *yod*) to *Binah* (symbolized by the river).

*Hokhmah* is "Father of Fathers," because He engenders the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized by the three patriarchs.

Rabbinic tradition enumerates certain especially holy divine names "that cannot be erased." For various lists of these, see JT *Megillah* 1:8, 71d; BT *Shevu'ot* 35a; *Soferim* 4:1-2; *Sefer Torah* 4:1-2. Cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 34.

**168. ו ו (Vav, dalet)—alluding to ten...** As mentioned above (at [note 165](#)), the full spelling of the letter וו (yod) includes ו (vav), alluding to the male, *Tif'eret*, and ו (dalet), alluding the female *Shekhinah*. The numerical value of vav and dalet equals ten.

The letters dalet and vav also spell the word וו (du), "two," based on Greek *duo*. This word appears in a famous midrash describing the original 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 He 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 *du partsufin* (דו פרצופין), with two faces; and He sawed him and gave him two backs, a back for the male and a back for the female.’”

Here Rabbi Abba indicates that the androgynous nature of Adam matches the androgynous nature of the divine couple. From above to below, the progression is *vav* (symbolizing *Tif’eret*), *dalet* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*); from below to above, *dalet*, *vav*.

Thirteen divine attributes of Compassion are listed in Exodus 34:6-7: *YHVH, YHVH! A compassionate and gracious God...* Here these thirteen are said to depend on the letter *yod*, whose full spelling—*yod*—alludes to thirteen: the sum of the three tips of the letter *yod* (above, [note 159](#)) and the combined numerical value of *vav* and *dalet*.

On the androgynous nature of the original human being (and of the soul), see Plato, *Symposium* 189d-191d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1; BT *Berakhot* 61a, *Eruvin* 18a; *Tanḥuma*, *Tazri’a* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri’a* 2; *Midrash Tehillim* 139:5; *Bahir* 116-17 (172); *Zohar* 1:2b, 13b, 34b-35a, 37b, 47a, 55b, 70b, 85b, 91b, 165a; 2:55a, 144b, 167b, 176b (*SdTs*), 178b (*SdTs*), 231a-b, 246a (*Heikh*); 3:5a, 19a, 44b, 78a, 83b, 117a, 283b, 292b (*IZ*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1355-56; Matt, *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, 217. On the sefirotic significance of *du* (two), see *Zohar* 2:178b (*SdTs*).

**169. Ten names corresponding to ten letters...** The ten divine names correspond “to ten letters,” presumably the first ten letters of the Hebrew alphabet, *alef* to *yod*. There are eight names, if one begins counting from *Binah*, aside from the two highest rungs, *Keter* and *Hokhmah*, which transcend the lower eight like two firmaments. The total number of names varies, depending on whether one begins counting from *Keter* (ten names), *Hokhmah* (nine), *Binah* (eight),

or *Hesed* (seven). On Rav Hamnuna and his book, see above, [note 38](#).

**170. First, יה (Yah)...** This first name refers to *Hokhmah*, who is often symbolized simply by the letter י (yod), representing the primordial point. However, the full spelling of the letter יוד (yod) includes ו (vav) and ד (dalet), whose shapes combine (approximately) to form the letter ה (he), which symbolizes *Binah*, who is originally included in *Hokhmah* and issues from Him. So the name יה (Yah), consisting of both י (yod) and ה (he), is fitting for *Hokhmah*.

**171. Second, יהוה (YHVH), pronounced Elohim...** This name—יהוה—consists of the letters יהוה (YHVH) along with the vowels of אלהים (Elohim), and it is pronounced *Elohim*. This hybrid form designates the river of *Binah*, who conveys Compassion (symbolized by YHVH), yet also yields Judgment (symbolized by *Elohim*). The final clause—“but it is not *Elohim*”—indicates that *Binah* should not be confused with *Gevurah* (or *Din*), who is totally Judgment and thus called by the actual name אלהים (Elohim).

The hybrid form יהוה appears only in the phrase אדני יהוה (*Adonai YHVH*), *my Lord YHVH*, to indicate its standard vocalization as *Adonai Elohim, my Lord God*. This phrase occurs four times in the Torah, three times in Psalms, and often in the Prophets. See *Zohar* 3:65a. On YHVH and *Elohim* signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see above, [note 31](#). On the dual nature of *Binah*, see *Zohar* 1:151a; 2:64a-b; 3:39b, 65a, 99a, 262b.

**172. Third, אל (El), God...** Referring to *Hesed*, who is also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness).

**173. Fourth, אלהים (Elohim), God...** Referring to *Gevurah*, also known as *Din* (Judgment). On *Elohim* signifying Judgment, see above, [note 31](#).

**174. Fifth, יהוה (YHVH)...** Designating *Tif'eret*, also known as *Rahamim* (Compassion). This name is “totality of all complete faith” because the letters YHVH symbolize the

entire range of the *sefirot*. See above, [note 27](#). On *YHVH* signifying Compassion, see above, [note 31](#).

**175. Sixth and seventh...** The sefirotic pair *Netsah* and *Hod* are called צבאות (*Tseva'ot*), “Hosts,” as in the combined name יהוה צבאות (*YHVH Tseva'ot*).

**176. Eighth, אל חי (*El hai*), Living God...** Referring to *Yesod*, who conveys the stream of divine life to *Shekhinah*. The full verse in Psalm 133 reads: *Like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion, for there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life.* Here it implies that *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) deposits *blessing, everlasting life* in *Yesod* (known as *Zion*).

*Yesod* is also known as Righteous One, and He shares with *Tif'eret* the name *YHVH* as well as the symbolism of the letter ו (*vav*). The pronunciation and full spelling of this letter is וו (*vav*), consisting of two *vavs*, one large (designating *Tif'eret*) and one small (designating His extension, *Yesod*).

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#). The verse in Psalm 11 reads יהוה צדיק יבחן (*YHVH tsaddiq yivhan*), *YHVH tests* [or: *examines, probes*] *the righteous*; here, Rabbi Abba quotes only the first two words, which he construes as *YHVH tsaddiq, YHVH is righteous*. On the two *vavs*, see *Zohar* 1:18a, 119a; 2:9b; 3:12b, 53b, 66b, 74b.

**177. Ninth, אדני (*Adonai*), My Lord...** Referring to *Malkhut*, or *Shekhinah*. Rabbi Abba associates the name אדני (*Adonai*) with its anagram, דינא (*dina*), “Judgment.” *Shekhinah* is the last of the ten *sefirot*.

**178. The name אהיה (*Ehyeh*), I am...** Having completed the nine names corresponding to the *sefirot Hokhmah* through *Shekhinah*, Rabbi Abba finally mentions the name corresponding to the first, most hidden *sefirah, Keter*. This is the name אהיה (*Ehyeh*), “I am” or “I will be,” signifying the hidden source from which all comes to be.

**179. the Book of Aggadta...** This legendary source records the names differently. Rabbi Abba may be referring to *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 34, which records “ten [divine] names of praise,” some of which differ from the ones listed

here. See above, [note 167](#). On the term *Aggadta*, see the Glossary.

**180. *Awake, north wind...*** Following a midrashic tradition, Rabbi Abba interprets this verse as referring to sacrifices. The ascent offering is classified in the Mishnah as one of the “offerings of greatest holiness,” which must be sacrificed on the north side of the altar.

According to another midrashic tradition, “The ascent offering is due only על הרהור הלב (*al hirhur ha-lev*), for sinful imagining [literally: for imagining of the heart, or mind].” Here Rabbi Abba alludes to this teaching by associating the word צפון (*tsafon*), *north*, with צפון (*tsafun*), “hidden.” This is one reason any ascent offerings are sacrificed “in the north.” Another reason is that north symbolizes *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), which prevails at night, when sinful thoughts may arise.

On the midnight scenario, see BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: “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 below, [note 228](#).) For Rabbi Abba, David’s harp apparently symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is aroused by the wind of *Gevurah*. See *Zohar* 3:22a, 175b.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Awake, north wind! Come, south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its luscious fruits.* On this verse as alluding to various sacrifices (including the ascent offerings and peace offerings mentioned here), see *Seder Olam Rabbah* 7; JT *Megillah* 1:11, 72c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:5; 34:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:6; BT *Zevaḥim* 116a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:12 (on 1:2); 4:31 (on 4:16); *Tanḥuma, Naso* 20; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 5, 16a–b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:2; *Zohar* 2:37b.

On the ascent offering being sacrificed “in the north,” see M *Zevaḥim* 5:4. On its being brought “for imagining of



the mind,” see above, [note 55](#). On sinful thoughts at night, see *Zohar* 1:109b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 263; above, [note 60](#).

**[181. Come, south wind!...](#)** Unlike the ascent offering, various other offerings (such as individual peace offerings) are termed “offerings of lesser holiness.” These do not have to be slaughtered on the north side of the altar but can rather be slaughtered anywhere in the Temple Courtyard (including the south). Rabbi Abba indicates that peace offerings bring peace in the upper and lower worlds, “completing” (or “unifying”) the four “directions of the world,” which symbolize *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif’eret*, and *Shekhinah*.

The individual who brought a peace offering was allowed to eat a portion of it, unlike the ascent offering (which was totally consumed on the altar) and the purification and guilt offerings (whose edible flesh was eaten only by the priests).

On the שלמים (*shelamim*), “peace offerings” (or “offerings of well-being”), see above, [note 143](#). On the peace offering being sacrificed anywhere in the Temple Courtyard, see *M Zevahim* 5:7. On *shelamim* and *shalom*, see *Tosefta Zevahim* 11:1; *Sifra*, *Nedavah* 16:1,13a; *Ḥovah* 4:2, 18c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:9; *Tanḥuma*, *Toledot* 1, *Tsav* 4, 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tsav* 10; *Zohar* 2:267b (*Heikh*).

On purification (or offense) offerings, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:253–92. On guilt (or reparation) offerings, see *ibid.*, 1:339–78.

**[182. Highest of all—incense...](#)** Expressing pure joy in serving God. The oil (mentioned in Proverbs and implied in Exodus) can symbolize the flow of emanation, which is stimulated by the offering of incense.

On the significance of incense, see above, [note 47](#). On the verse in Proverbs, see above, [note 103](#). Cf. *Zohar* 3:151b. On the linking of the verses in Proverbs and Exodus, see *Zohar* 1:230a; 3:150a. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.



**183. incense binds...** Rabbi Abba associates the Hebrew word קטרת (*qetoret*), “incense,” with the Aramaic root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie, bind,” indicating that the offering of incense unites the *sefirot*.

See *Zohar* 1:230a; 2:219a; 3:11b, 30a-b, 37b, 58b, 151b, 177b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 86-87. Cf. above, [note 31](#).

**184. All those ten names are written...** In the Torah. Rabbi El’azar presents a slightly different list than Rabbi Abba’s. See above at [notes 167-78](#).

The first name, אהיה (*Ehyeh*), *I am* [or: *I will be*], refers to *Keter*, whose true identity is unknown. The continuation of this name in the biblical verse—*that I am* [or: *who I will be*]—alludes to the proceeding stages of revelation in the following *sefirot*.

The full verse in Exodus (in which God responds to Moses’ request to reveal the Divine Name) reads: *God said to Moses*, “אהיה אשר אהיה (*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*), *I am that I am* [or: *I will be who I will be*].” *He said*, “*Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel: ‘Ehyeh, I am, has sent me to you.’*” On this verse, see *Zohar* 1:15a-b; 2:49b; 3:65a-b. Cf. Ibn Ezra on Genesis 27:19; *Zohar* 1:167b; 2:85a; Vol. 4, p. 477, n. 400; Scholem.

**185. So it is written concerning Moses...** God first revealed to him the name of *Keter*, *Ehyeh* (*I am*). The continuation of this name, *that I am*, implies further revelation. At the end of the verse, the third *Ehyeh* signifies that the Divine Mother, *Binah*, has conceived. By two verses later, the Son (*Tif’eret*) has emerged, signified by the name *YHVH*.

For the full text of Exodus 3:14, see the preceding note. Cf. *Zohar* 1:15a-b; 3:65a-b.

**186. Second, ה' (Yah)...** Referring to *Hokhmah*, who is often symbolized simply by the letter ך' (*yod*), representing the primordial point. However, the full spelling of the letter ך' (*yod*) includes ם (*vav*) and ך (*dalet*), whose shapes combine

(approximately) to form the letter ה (he), which symbolizes *Binah*, who is originally included in *Hokhmah*, issues from Him, and remains intimately linked with Him. So the name יה (Yah), consisting of both י (yod) and ה (he) is fitting for *Hokhmah*.

The verse in Genesis implies that the river of *Binah* issues from *Hokhmah* (known as *Eden*). See above, [notes 166, 170](#). Rabbi El'azar transmits what he learned from his father, Rabbi Shim'on.

The sentence “yod generates he, like this: ה י (yod, he)” apparently alludes not only to the sefirotic sequence but also to its symbolic enactment in a scribal technique of writing the first letter ה (he) of יהוה (YHVH): beginning with a י (yod) and then extending this letter on the top toward the left and below on the right to form the top and right portion of the letter ה (he), which is then completed with the leg on the lower left. See Scholem (on 3:11b); *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**187. Below, two children...** From the side of *Hokhmah* issues the Divine Son, *Tif'eret*. From the side of *Binah* issues the Divine Daughter, *Shekhinah*. *Tif'eret* is symbolized by ו (vav), the third letter of יהוה (YHVH). “Faith of all” may refer specifically to *Shekhinah*, or to the whole sefirotic ensemble. See above, [note 166](#).

**188. one who wishes to write the Holy Name...** That is, יהוה (YHVH). The first letter should be written in the form of three tips (as explained above, [notes 159–61](#)). On the technique of writing the next letter, ה (he), see above, end of [note 186](#). The sequence ה י (yod, he) symbolizes not only *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, but also their Son and Daughter, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, because the full spelling of the letter יוד (yod) includes ו (vav) and ד (dalet), which symbolize respectively *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*; and the shape of the letter ה (he) includes (approximately) the shapes of ו (vav) and ד (dalet). See above, [notes 166, 168, 170](#).

**189. Then faith spreads...** As emanation proceeds, *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the third letter of YHVH) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the final letter) emerge. When writing the

final two letters of this name, one should first write ו (vav), and then compose the final letter by starting again with a ו (vav), then extending its top toward the left to form the roof of the ה (he), and finally adding the leg of the he on the lower left. This technique demonstrates that *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the he) issues, or extends, from *Tif'eret* (symbolized by vav). Similarly, *Binah* (symbolized by the river) issues from *Hokhmah*, who is symbolized by י (yod). See Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*; above, end of [note 186](#).

**190. established by Father...** By Rabbi Shim'on, who "deposited" these scribal instructions like a פקדונא (*piqdona*), "a pledge," with his son, making him promise to follow them.

**191. Third, יהוה (YHVH), pronounced אלהים (Elohim)...** The name—יהוה—consists of the letters יהוה (YHVH) along with the vowels of אלהים (*Elohim*), and it is pronounced *Elohim*. This hybrid form designates the river of *Binah*, issuing from *Hokhmah* (symbolized by Eden). *Binah* conveys Compassion (symbolized by YHVH), yet also yields Judgment (symbolized by *Elohim*). See above, [note 171](#). On the river issuing from Eden, see Genesis 2:10.

**192. Fourth, אל גדול (El gadol), Great God...** Referring to *Hesed*, who is also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness). See above at [note 172](#).

**193. Fifth, אלהים (Elohim)...** Designating *Gevurah*, also known as *Din* (Judgment), a quality associated with the name *Elohim*. The phrase "always *Gevurah*" may imply that although the name *Elohim* can also designate *Binah* or *Shekhinah*, they too convey or arouse Judgment. See above, [note 173](#); *Zohar* 3:39b, 65a, 269b.

**194. Sixth, יהוה (YHVH): Compassion...** Referring to *Tif'eret*, who is also known as *Rahamim* (Compassion), a quality associated with the name YHVH. *Tif'eret* harmonizes the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, and binds together the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. His full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). See above, [note 174](#).

**195. Seventh and eighth, צבאות (Tseva'ot), Hosts...** Designating the sefirotic pair *Netsah* and *Hod*, often associated with prophecy. If the prophet declared *Thus says YHVH Elohim*, this indicated to his listeners that the words came from the aspect of *Gevurah* (known as *Elohim*). If he declared *Thus says YHVH Tseva'ot*, then his audience realized that the prophecy issued the aspect of *Netsah* and *Hod*. See *Zohar* 3:269b; above at [note 175](#).

**196. Ninth, שדי (Shaddai)...** According to a midrashic interpretation, this name alludes to God's original command to limit the expansion of the universe. See BT *Hagigah* 12a, in the name of Resh Lakish: "I am the one *v* (*she*), who, said to the world: 'די (*dai*), Enough!'" Here this name is associated with *Yesod* (known as Righteous One), who conveys the flow of emanation through *Shekhinah* to all those below.

On the midrashic interpretation of *Shaddai*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 5:8; *Tanḥuma, Hayyei Sarah* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 11; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 3. On *Yesod* as Righteous One and Foundation of the World, see above, [note 42](#).

**197. Tenth, אדוני (Adonai), My Lord...** Referring to *Shekhinah* (or *Malkhut*), who is associated with Judgment. The name אדוני (*Adonai*) is an anagram of דינא (*dina*), "judgment." *Shekhinah* conducts the divine battles, and in various ways is linked with the *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, who is also known as *Din* (Judgment). Among Her many names is צדק (*Tsedeq*), Righteousness. See above at [note 177](#).

The saying דינא דמלכותא דינא (*Dina de-malkhuta dina*), "The law [or: judgment] of the [local] kingdom is [binding] law," is attributed to Shemu'el in BT *Bava Qamma* 113a-b. Here, *Malkhuta* denotes *Malkhut* (or *Shekhinah*), who conveys *dina* (judgment). See *Zohar* 1:92b, 226b.

**198. they are His name and He is they...** The *sefirot* constitute God's name, revealing His qualities and essence;

He is identical with them. See *Zohar* 2:86a; 3:70a, 93b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 98 (125).

Rabbi El'azar associates the Hebrew word קטרת (*qetoret*) with the Aramaic root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie, bind,” indicating that the offering of incense unites the *sefirot*. See above, [note 183](#). In its original context, the verse from Isaiah refers to all the nations of the world.

**199. *If his offering is a sacrifice of well-being...*** The full verse reads: *If his offering is a sacrifice of well-being—if he offers from the herd, whether male or female, unblemished he shall offer it before YHVH. Well-being* renders שלמים (*shelamim*), whose precise meaning is uncertain here and which may imply “well-being, peace, greeting, repayment.” See above, [note 143](#).

**200. *ten, ten shekels...*** The full verse, describing part of the dedication offering for the altar, reads: *Twelve golden ladles filled with incense: ten, ten shekels per ladle by the sanctuary shekel; all the gold of the ladles, one hundred twenty.* Rabbi Shim'on wonders why the word *ten* is repeated, and he explains that this alludes to two sets of *ten*, which are linked: the ten divine utterances by which the world was created and the Ten Commandments uttered at Mount Sinai. The tenfold revelation of Torah is the entire purpose of Creation, and without Torah the world would not endure.

According to *M Avot* 5:1, “By ten utterances, the world was created.” Rabbinic sources include several different lists of these ten biblical utterances, some of which include Genesis 2:18 (as below at [note 211](#)), and some of which count the opening word of the Torah, *be-reshit*, *in the beginning*, as an utterance in itself.

See *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 31; B, 36; *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:1; *BT Rosh ha-Shanah* 32a; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 3 (and Luria's n. 73); *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 108a-b (and Ish-Shalom's n. 138); *Ezra of Gerona, Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 506; *Zohar* 1:15a, 16b, 30a; 2:14b (*MhN*), 34b, 67a,

75b, 156b, 169b, 178b (*SdT*s), 200a; 3:73a; Duran, *Magen Avot* on 5:1.

On the relation between the ten utterances and the Ten Commandments, see especially *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 108a–b, which is imitated throughout this passage. See also *Leqah Tov*, Deuteronomy 5:6; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 6:46; *Zohar* 2:75b, 93b. On the verse in Numbers as alluding to the ten utterances and the Ten Commandments, see *Midrash Tadshe* 10 (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 3:174); *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:12.

On Torah as the foundation of the world (based on the verse in Jeremiah), 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 with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth.*” See BT *Shabbat* 33a, *Nedarim* 32a, *Sanhedrin* 99b, *Avodah Zarah* 3a; *Ester Rabbah* 7:13; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 7, p. 139; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 18, p. 105; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 16; *Tanḥuma*, *Noaḥ* 3, *Ha'azinu* 3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 109b; *Shemot Rabbah* 47:4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:1.

See 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).’” See *Tanḥuma*, *Bereshit* 1. Cf. M *Avot* 1:2; BT *Shabbat* 119b.

A slightly different version of this passage (extending below to p. 69 at n. 212) appears in Hebrew in Moses de León, *Ha-Nefesh ha-Hakhamah*, P3b–P4a.

**201. *I am YHVH your God...*** The first of the Ten Commandments is parallel to the first utterance of Creation—*Let there be light!*—because God is *light*, as indicated in the verse from Psalms.

**202. *You shall have no other gods...*** The second commandment is parallel to the second utterance of



Creation: *Let there be a firmament.* Rabbi Shim'on first explains that Israel is considered to be *a firmament* since they are linked to *Tif'eret* (who is known as Heaven), and they are thus joined to the one true God. Whereas other nations are entrusted to the heavenly princes, Israel is ruled directly by *Tif'eret*, who is called *the firmament of heaven*.

On the heavenly princes, see above, [note 21](#). On the question posed to Rabbi Ilai and his answer (and the next paragraph), see *Battei Midrashot*, 2:97-99; Moses de León, *Ha-Nefesh ha-Hakhamah*, P3b-c. Genesis 1:17 (describing the sun, moon, and stars) reads in full: *God placed them in the expanse [or: firmament] of heaven to shine upon the earth*.

**[203.](#) *In the midst of the waters...*** Israel serves as a *firmament in the midst of the waters*, which symbolize Torah. By their devotion to Torah, they distinguish between the true God and false gods.

On Torah being compared to water, see *Mekhilta*, *Vayassa* 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:22; BT *Bava Qamma* 82a; *Tanḥuma*, *Beshallah* 19; *Zohar* 1:12b; 2:60a.

**[204.](#) *You shall not take the name...*** The third commandment is parallel to the third utterance of Creation: *Let the waters under heaven be gathered*. One who takes God's name in vain (by swearing a false oath) separates *Shekhinah* (the Mother) from Her partner, *Tif'eret*, thereby disturbing all the sefirotic crowns from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. (Alternatively, Mother refers to *Binah*, who would be separated from Her sefirotic children.) Such an act diverts the flow of emanation from the site of divine union (*one place*, "the place of truth") to the demonic powers ("another place, of falsehood").

The verse in Proverbs reads: *A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer [or: whisperer] separates an intimate*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on applies the second half of the verse to one who swears falsely and thereby separates



the intimate divine couple. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:2, referring to the serpent's advice to Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge: "A *whisperer separates an intimate...* A *whisperer*—[this is the serpent,] for he whispered rebelliously against his Creator, saying: [If you eat from the Tree of Knowledge,] *you surely will not die* (Genesis 3:4). *Separates* אלוף (aluf), *an intimate*—for he separated אלופו (alufo), Chief, of the world [that is, he caused the Divine Presence to depart from the world] and was immediately cursed."

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:7; *Zohar* 1:34a; 2:230b; 3:16b, 31a, 74a. On *Binah* being separated from Her children by human sin, see *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:85b; 3:15b. On the relation between the third commandment and the primordial waters, cf. *Zohar* 2:91b; *ZH* 76b (*MhN, Rut*). On this paragraph, see Moses de León, *Ha-Nefesh ha-Hakhamah*, P3c.

**205. Remember the Sabbath day...** The fourth commandment is parallel to the fourth utterance of Creation—*Let the earth sprout grass*—because *the earth* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is known as ארעא קדישא (ar'a qaddisha), "the Holy Land (or Earth)." She flourishes and is arrayed in the lower sefirotic crowns on the Sabbath, when She unites with *Tif'eret* in order to *sprout grass* (that is, to spread life) and blessing below.

**206. Honor your father and your mother...** The fifth commandment is parallel to the fifth utterance of Creation—*Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven*—because these *lights* symbolize the divine parents: Father *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun) and Mother *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon). He is known as the blessed Holy One, and She is known as Assembly of Israel. Thus, the verses in Exodus and Genesis complement one another, and "all is one."

See *Zohar* 2:90a. The interpretation of *father* and *mother* as divine parents probably derives from BT *Berakhot* 35b, in the name of Rabbi Hanina son of Papa:

“Whoever enjoys something of 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 his mother and says, ‘It is no crime,’ is partner to a destroyer* (Proverbs 28:24)—*his father* is none other than the blessed Holy One... and *his 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 below, [p. 404](#), [n. 140](#). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). The verse in Psalms reads: *For a sun and shield is YHVH Elohim...*

[207.](#) ***You shall not murder...*** The sixth commandment is parallel to the sixth utterance of Creation—*Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living beings*—because the human being is called a *living being*, and humans should not devour one another as do the fish.

The full verse in Genesis 2 reads: *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.*

[208.](#) ***You shall not commit adultery...*** The seventh commandment is parallel to the seventh utterance of Creation—*Let the earth bring forth living beings after their kind*—because the phrase *after their kind* implies that a person should engender children only with his or her own mate.

[209.](#) ***You shall not steal...*** The eighth commandment is parallel to the eighth utterance of Creation: *Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant.*

[210.](#) ***You shall not bear false witness against your fellow...*** The ninth commandment is parallel to the ninth utterance of Creation: *Let us make a human in our image.* One who does bear false witness is considered to have done so against God.

[211.](#) ***You shall not covet your neighbor's wife...*** The tenth commandment is parallel to the tenth utterance of Creation: *It is not good for the human to be alone; I will make him a helper alongside [or: corresponding to, as a counterpart to, opposite, facing] him.*

[212.](#) **ten utterances...** The parallel between these two sets of ten demonstrates that the world endures only for the sake, and through the power, of Torah. See above, [note 200](#).

[213.](#) שלמים (*shelamim*), **well-being...** As mentioned above ([note 199](#)), the term *shelamim* may imply “well-being, peace, greeting, repayment.” Here, Rabbi Shim'on focuses on the meaning “peace.”

On *shelamim* and *shalom*, see above, [note 181](#). On the question of whether *shelamim* provide atonement, see BT *Menahot* 73b; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

[214.](#) ***Dominion and fear are with Him...*** Abraham symbolizes *Hesed*, which is also called *Gedullah* (Greatness), so he is associated with *dominion* and God promises to make his name *great*. Isaac symbolizes *Gevurah*, which is also called *Paḥad* (Fear). The third patriarch, Jacob, symbolizes *Tif'eret* (also known as *truth*), who harmonizes the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, making *peace* between them. The term *peace* also refers to *Yesod*, who is considered an extension of *Tif'eret*; thus, “*truth [Tif'eret] and peace [Yesod] are interlinked.*”

The verse in Job is often applied to God making peace between the archangels Michael (called *dominion*) and Gabriel (called *fear*). See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11; *Tanḥuma, Vayiggash* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 13; *Derekh Erets, Pereq ha-Shalom* 8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:8; *Bahir* 9 (11).

On truth and peace, see *Bahir* 131 (190). The verse in Genesis 23 is spoken to Abraham by the Hittites of Hebron. The verse in Genesis 31 reads: *Were it not that the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, was*

*with me, you would have sent me away now empty-handed.* The verse in Micah reads: *You give truth to Jacob,* חסד (*hesed*), *loving-kindness, to Abraham.*

**215. this is perfection of all...** *Tif'eret*—who harmonizes *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, and extends through *Yesod*—is perfection. Similarly, “*shelamim*, peace offerings, are שלימותא (*sheleimuta*), perfection, and שלמא (*shelama*), peace,” because they atone for positive commandments (associated with *Hesed*) and negative commandments (associated with *Gevurah*). See above, [note 213](#).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, whereas 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 שלימ (*shelim*), “complete, perfect, consummate.” Here, Rabbi Shim'on adopts this rendering as an allusion to Jacob's harmonizing of *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. The phrase “complete above and below” may refer to Jacob being complete in the sefirotic realm and on earth, or to his uniting with *Binah* above and *Shekhinah* below. On Jacob as *ish tam*, a complete man, see *Zohar* 1:146a, 167b, 173b, 222a; 2:78b, 175b; 3:163a-b.

**216. If he offers it for thanksgiving...** Rabbi Aḥa associates the noun תודה (*todah*), *thanksgiving*, with the verb התודה (*hitvaddah*), “to confess,” which can also be read as *ha-todah*, “the thanksgiving (offering).” One who has sinned must bring an offering, especially since sin affects the divine realm, so his sin is עליה (*aleha*), *against her*—namely against *Shekhinah*. The חלות מצות (*hallot matsot*), *unleavened cakes*, accompanying the sacrifice allude to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by מצה (*matsah*), unleavened bread. As a result of sin, She is separated from *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*); therefore the word חלה (*hallot*), *cakes*, is spelled without this letter.

Actually, according to rabbinic tradition, the thanksgiving offering is not brought for a sin. (See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:4.) The verse in Leviticus 5 quoted here, relating to confession and sin, refers to a different sacrifice: the guilt (or reparation) offering. Cordovero (in *Or Yaqar*) tries to link the thanksgiving offering with sin by explaining that this offering is brought after emerging or recovering from suffering, and such suffering must have been caused by sin.

On sin affecting the divine realm, see above, [note 108](#). On *Shekhinah* as *matsah*, see *Zohar* 1:33a, 47b, 157a, 235b, 238a, 245b-246a, 250b; 2:40a-b, 183a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 112-13. The letter *vav*, whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*).

Leviticus 7:12 reads in full: *If he offers it for thanksgiving, he shall offer with the thanksgiving sacrifice חלות מצות (hallot matsot), unleavened cakes, mixed with oil and unleavened wafers coated with oil and חלה (hallot), cakes, of semolina soaked through, mixed with oil.* According to the Masoretic text, the first occurrence of חלות (*hallot*) is written with a *vav*, the second without a *vav*.

[217.](#) זבח תודת שלמיו (*zevah todat shelamav*), **his thanksgiving peace sacrifice...** Playing on *shelamav*, *his peace offering*, and שלימו (*shelimu*), “perfection.” The plural form *shelamav*, *his peace offerings*, alludes to two entities (explained below). The *thanksgiving* offering pertains to *Shekhinah*, as explained in the preceding note.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *With cakes of leavened bread he shall bring forward his offering with his thanksgiving sacrifice of well-being [or: his thanksgiving peace sacrifice].*

[218.](#) **Two vavs:** וו (*vav*)... The plural form שלימו (*shelamav*), *his peace offerings*, refers to the sefirotic pair of *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*, who are each symbolized by the letter ו (*vav*). The full spelling of this letter—וו (*vav*)—includes two *vavs*. See above, [note 176](#).



[219.](#) **for it brings peace to all...** According to Rabbi Yitshak, the plural form implies that such an offering brings peace and harmony to all worlds.

[220.](#) **for Assembly of Israel is blessed by those two...** *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) is blessed by the sefirotic pair of *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

[221.](#) **Leavened bread...** Alluding to the evil impulse—or to demonic forces, which are stimulated by sin to threaten and impair *Shekhinah*. Because the sinner aroused such forces, he must bring a corresponding offering of *leavened bread* to repair the damage.

See above, [note 139](#). On leaven as representing the evil impulse, see the prayer attributed to Rabbi Tanḥum in JT *Berakhot* 4:2, 7d: “May it be Your will, *YHVH* my God and God of my fathers, that You break and destroy the yoke of the evil impulse from our heart. For You created us to do Your will, and we must do Your will; You desire it and we desire it. So who prevents it? The leaven in the dough.”

See BT *Berakhot* 17a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *se'or she-ba-issah*; *Mekhilta*, *Beshallah* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 4; *Zohar* 1:142a-b, 226b; 2:40a, 40b-41a (*Piq*), 182a, 183a-b; 3:95a-b, 97a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 132 (and Wolfson's note); Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:189. Cf. Naḥmanides on Leviticus 23:17. For the full verse in Leviticus 7, see above, [note 217](#).

[222.](#) חלת מצות (*Ḥallot matsot*), **unleavened cakes, deficient...** The supposedly deficient spelling of חלת (*ḥallot*), *cakes*—without a ם (*vav*)—alludes to a lack within *Shekhinah*.

Actually, in the Masoretic text both words חלות מצות (*ḥallot matsot*) are spelled with a *vav*. See above, [note 216](#); *Minḥat Shai* on Leviticus 7:12 (quoting the standard printed text of the *Zohar*); cf. Exodus 29:2.

[223.](#) **These are the flame of the whirling sword...** *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the word *unleavened*, is pictured as a divine sword. The *wafers* represent Her

powers, which flash forth to punish those who violate the Torah. The offering must be *mixed with oil* to ensure that the flow of emanation from above will assuage the harshness of Judgment and provide blessing to the world.

On *Shekhinah* as *unleavened*, see above, [note 216](#). On *Shekhinah* as “sword,” see *Zohar* 1:53b, 66a–b, 237a, 238b, 240b; 2:26a, 28b, 54a, 66a; 3:19b, 30b, 52b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 69, 213. 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.*

[224. wine for the libation...](#) Wine was poured as a libation on the altar, and on the festival of *Sukkot* water was poured as a libation. Wine symbolizes the flow issuing from *Binah*, and oil is associated with the initial flow from *Hokhmah*. These two *sefirot* are united, representing “one place.” Water symbolizes *Hesed* (the first *sefirah* generated by the upper sefirotic couple), which conveys the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah* (the Garden) and Her plants (the other lower *sefirot* or Her powers).

Whereas holy water symbolizes *Hesed*, there is also impure water, symbolizing demonic forces. *Binah* contains fine wine, but beneath Her in the realm of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), the wine becomes harsher and conveys punishment to those who have sinned. On the wine of *Binah*, see the following note. On different types of wine, cf. *Zohar* 1:238b; 2:246b–247a (*Heikh*); 3:39a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 36–37 (43–44). A *hin* is a liquid measure, estimated as equivalent to approximately one gallon.

[225. one who sees it in a dream...](#) Based on BT *Berakhot* 57a: “A *tanna* recited in the presence of Rabbi Yoḥanan: ‘All drinks are a good omen in a dream except wine—for some, drinking it is beneficial; for others, it is harmful. For some, drinking it is beneficial, as is said: *wine that gladdens the human heart*. For others, it is harmful, as is said: *Give beer to one who is perishing, and wine to the*



*embittered.*' Rabbi Yoḥanan said to the *tanna*, 'Teach as follows: For one who is learned, it is always beneficial, as is said: *Come, eat of my bread! Drink of the wine I have mingled!* (Proverbs 9:5).'"

In its simple sense, the verse in Song of Songs reads: *For your caresses are better* מִיַּיִן (*mi-yayin*), *than wine*. Here Rabbi Shim'on construes this as: *For your caresses are fine, deriving from wine*. See Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 485; *Zohar* 1:70a-b; 3:93b, 95a; *ZḤ* 63d (*ShS*), 64c (*ShS*).

The phrase "preserved wine" recalls a passage in BT *Berakhot* 34b (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi), describing the world that is coming, when 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 the vintage emanation stored within (and flowing from) *Binah*, who is Herself called the World that is Coming. See above, [note 13](#); below, [p. 243, n. 122](#).

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see JT *Ma'aser Sheni* 4:12, 55c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 89:8; *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:18; *Eikhah Rabbah* (ed. Buber) 1:1; *Midrash Mishlei* 20:1.

**[226.](#) one should bring these items...** By including wine and oil, one stimulates the flow of emanation and ensures that Compassion will overwhelm Judgment. The harsh wine of Judgment will be removed, and the fine preserved wine will appear. Similarly, in all activities one should eliminate Judgment and arouse Compassion.

**[227.](#) Oil should never be lacking...** From a grain offering, "except for the grain offering of jealousy." According to Numbers 5:11-31, a wife suspected of adultery was tested by being made to drink a potion; if she was guilty, *her belly will swell and her thigh sag* (ibid., 27). Before the potion was prepared, a grain offering was brought for her by her "jealous" husband, but without oil. Rabbi Shim'on explains that the lack of oil signifies a lack

of Compassion, since in this situation Judgment prevails, and the priest declares that if the wife is guilty she will become an infamous example employed in curses.

Actually, according to rabbinic sources, no grain offering brought by a sinner can include oil. See M *Menahot* 5:3; *Tosefta Sotah* 1:10, *Menahot* 5:23; *Sifra, Nedavah* 11:3, 11b; 13:2, 11c; BT *Sotah* 15a, *Menahot* 4a, 6a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:13; *Nitsotsei Orot*. The wording here may be based on M *Sotah* 2:1: "All grain offerings require oil and frankincense, whereas this [i.e., the suspected adulteress's offering] requires neither oil nor frankincense." See Leviticus 2:1; 5:11; Maimonides and Obadiah of Bertinoro on M *Sotah* 2:1; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 8:619.

Numbers 5:15 reads: *He shall pour no oil over it nor put frankincense upon it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy*. For the full text of Leviticus 7:12, see above, [note 216](#).

**228. bless YHVH, all you servants of YHVH...** Rabbi Yitshak applies this verse to those who are devoted to kabbalistic faith and who rise at midnight to study Torah and stimulate the union of the *sefirot* (which are symbolized by the letters of YHVH). By their devoted study, they also cleave to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

On studying Torah at midnight, see BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: "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, 136a-b, 178a, 194b, 206b-207b, 231b-232a, 242b; 2:26b, 30a, 36b, 46a, 56b-57a, 67b, 130a-b, 136a, 173b, 195b-196a, 209a; 3:11a, 21b-22b, 44a-b, 49b, 52b, 65a, 67b-68a, 81a, 90a, 156b, 193a, 213a, 260a; *ZḤ* 13b-c (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54; idem, *Seder Gan Eden*, 3:138; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 146-50; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 121-45. Cf. BT *Tamid* 32b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya: “Whoever engages in Torah at night—*Shekhinah* faces him.”

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). On the verse in Psalms, see BT *Menahot* 110a; *Zohar* 1:136a.

**[229](#). the Doe stands and praises...** Stimulated by those who rise at midnight to study Torah, *Shekhinah* rises to praise Her beloved, *Tif'eret*, and She is joined by myriads of angels.

On *Shekhinah* as a doe, see *Zohar* 1:4a; 2:7b, 8b, 10a-b, 36b, 46a, 52b, 56b, 119b (*RM*), 219b-220a; 3:21b, 25a-b, 68a, 249a-b; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 153-67.

**[230](#). You who dwell in the gardens...** This verse is applied to the study of Torah in BT *Shabbat* 63a: “Rabbi Abba said in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish, ‘When two disciples of the wise listen to one another in *halakhah*, the blessed Holy One listens to their voice, as is said: *You who dwell in the gardens, companions listen for your voice; let me hear!*’” See Rashi, ad loc.

Here the *companions* are “the multitude [of angels] above and all those [angelic] praisers,” who turn silent in

order to listen to the learned praise arising from earth. See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:13; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 8:13; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 19, p. 117; *Midrash Tehillim* 116:1; *Zohar* 1:77b, 92a, 178b, 207b, 231a-b; 2:18b (*MhN*), 46a; 3:22a, 213a.

**231. that Doe adorns Herself...** *Shekhinah*, fittingly adorned by this human devotion, approaches King *Tif'eret*. Psalm 134:2 reads: *Lift up your hands toward holiness [or: the sanctuary] and bless YHVH.*

**232. What is holiness?...** This term refers to *Hokhmah*, from which issues the spring of the river of *Binah*. *Hokhmah* is also known as *Eden*. A person should aspire toward *Hokhmah* and draw blessing from that *holiness* to *Tif'eret* (who is known as *YHVH* and the blessed Holy One). One who does so, joining *Shekhinah* in praising King *Tif'eret*, will be blessed *from Zion*—namely from *Yesod*, through which *Tif'eret* blesses *Shekhinah*. On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary.

**233. the goodness of Jerusalem...** *Jerusalem* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, and *goodness* symbolizes *Yesod*. One who is truly devoted will partake even of the blessings intended for *Shekhinah* by King *Tif'eret*, flowing through the rung of *Yesod*. The closing line—"all is one expression"—means that both *Zion* and *the goodness of Jerusalem* refer to the same realm, namely *Yesod*.

*Yesod's* designation as *goodness* (or *good*) is often based on Isaiah 3:10: *Say of the righteous one that he is good.* On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Yoma* 38b, *Hagigah* 12a; *Zohar* 1:30b, 33a, 60a, 82b; 2:11b, 128b, 176b (*SdT*s); 3:16a, 110b.

The full verse in Psalm 128 reads: *YHVH will bless you from Zion, and you will see the goodness of Jerusalem all the days of your life.* The first part of the verse also appears in Psalms 134:3, following the verse *Lift up your hands toward holiness and bless YHVH.* See the preceding paragraph.

**234. *Peace upon Israel?*...** Rabbi Yitshak wonders why the verse refers to all of Israel, when until now the psalm was addressing an individual. He explains that a person who devotes himself to midnight study increases peace in the divine realm and also on earth. The phrase *peace upon Israel* is “unspecified”—in other words, it applies not only to Israel on earth but also to *Tif’eret*, whose full name is *Tif’eret Yisra’el* (Beauty of Israel).

See *Zohar* 3:36a. On disciples of Torah increasing peace in the world, see BT *Berakhot* 64a (and parallels). According to a midrashic tradition, the word *strength* in Psalm 29 refers to Torah. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:2; 19:16; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 343; BT *Zevahim* 116a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; 2:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 8:4; 21:2; *Zohar* 1:240a; 2:58a, 94a, 235a; 3:269a.

The phrase “all nations” renders כל עמין (*kol ammin*), reflecting the reading in L27, N10, P2, R1, T1, V3, V5, V6, V22, and the Cremona edition. The text in *Or Yaqar* and the Mantua edition (upon which nearly all later editions are modeled) reads כל עלמין (*kol almin*), “all worlds.”

**235. *If a soul sins*...** The full verse reads: *If a person [or: soul] sins when she has heard a voice of adjuration [against withholding testimony]—he being witness, having seen or known—if he does not tell, he shall bear his punishment [or: iniquity].* Soul renders נפש (*nefesh*), usually translated here as *person*. The English pronouns switch in gender from *she* to *he* because the verse begins by referring to *nefesh* (which is grammatically feminine) and continues in terms of הוא (*hu*), a generic “he” (without respect to the referent’s masculine or feminine gender). See Stein, “Gender Representation in Biblical Hebrew.”

**236. *Before the day breathes and the shadows flee*...** In Song of Songs, this verse may refer to the end of night, just before the break of dawn, when darkness flees.



Alternatively, the “fleeing shadows” indicate the late afternoon, when shadows lengthen.

**237. When the blessed Holy One draws out souls...**

When God is about to send a soul into a human body, He first instructs her to live a holy life on earth—warning her and also showing her the delights that await those who fulfill the Torah.

The “garment in the image of this world” refers to an ethereal body in which each soul is clothed before entering a human body. This bodily garment resembles the physical body that she will inhabit on earth.

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 (standard editions), 224a–b, 227a–b, 233b; 2:11a, 13a–b, 96b, 141b, 150a, 156b–157a, 161b; 3:43a–b, 61b, 70b, 104a–b; *ZH* 10b–c (*MhN*), 68d–69a (*ShS*), 90b (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 390; idem, *Seder Gan Eden*, 133; Scholem, *Shedim Ruḥot u-Nshamot*, 215–24; 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 *Hagigah* 12b, s.v. *ve-ruḥot u-nshamot*; Vol. 6, p. 197, n. 266.

On the adjuration of the soul, see BT *Niddah* 30b; *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*, in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:157; *Zohar* 1:76b (*ST*), 233b; 2:161b; 3:43a. On the preexistence of the soul, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:7; BT *Yevamot* 62a; *Tanḥuma*, *Yitro* 11, *Pequdei* 3, *Nitsavim* 3; *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*, in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:153–58; *Hibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 253–55; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *guf*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:698–703. A description of the tour of both Paradise and Hell appears in *Tanḥuma*, *Pequdei* 3; *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*; and *Hibbut ha-Qever*.

“Quaestors” renders קסטורין (*qastorin*), based on rabbinic קוסטור (*qustor*), which derives from Latin *quaestor*, a Roman official, prosecutor, or judge. Here it refers either to heavenly prosecutors or to possible punishments.

**238. When the time comes to descend...** The soul first visits the Garden of Eden to witness the reward of the righteous; then she returns briefly to “her place” in heaven before descending into “her place” on earth within a human body.

On “delving into darkness,” see *Zohar* 3:46a. On the verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 235](#); *Zohar* 3:16a.

**239. let us return to the verse...** With which he opened. (See above at [note 236](#).) Before the earthly days of this person come to an end and the soul must depart from this world.

**240. And the shadows flee...** A person’s צולמא (*tsulma*), “image,” or ethereal body, accompanies him throughout his life, and then shortly before death it disappears. Here this *tsulma* is associated with a person’s צל (*tse*l), “shadow,” which likewise disappears shortly prior to death. Before this, a person should turn back to God.

The link between *tsulma*, “image,” and *tse*l, “shadow,” is accentuated by the fact that the Hebrew equivalent of *tsulma* — צלם (*tselem*)—actually means “shadow” in Psalms 39:7. On the ethereal body, see *Zohar* 1:227a; above, [note 237](#). On its relation to (or identification with) the shadow, see *Zohar* 1:217b; 3:43a (quoting the clause in Song of Songs); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:771. On the significance of not seeing one’s shadow, see Vol. 5, p. 304, n. 318. “Blows” renders ינשוף (*yinshof*), “blows” or “moves a bit.” See BT *Berakhot* 3b; *Zohar* 1:92a.

**241. A person has two images...** As indicated by the plural: *the shadows flee*. On the two images (or ethereal bodies), see *Zohar* 1:220a (standard editions); 3:43a (both quoting the clause in Song of Songs); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:770–71.

**242. once those shadows are removed...** When a person is close to death and he is confined to his bed, he can still repent, but it is more noble to do so while still in good health. According to the simple sense of the verse in



Leviticus, *a voice of adjuration* refers to an adjuration against withholding testimony; but here Rabbi El'azar applies the phrase to the oath of loyalty taken by the soul before entering this world. See above, [notes 235, 237](#).

On being confined to the sickbed as being “held in a neck-iron,” see *Zohar* 2:61a; 3:53a, 126a-b. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 32a; *Zohar* 2:252a (*Heikh*); 3:299a-b; *ZH* 24d (*MhN*).

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of evil come, and the years arrive, when you will say, “I have no delight in them”*—which implies here that one should turn back to God before old age. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1; BT *Shabbat* 151b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Hayyei Sarah* 7; Rashi on Ecclesiastes 12:1; *Zohar* 1:204a; 3:87b. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 22a, *Avodah Zarah* 19a; *Zohar* 2:47a; *ZH* 7a-d (*MhN*); *Zohar* 3:227b (*RM*); David ben Abraham Maimuni (the grandson of Maimonides), *Midrash David*, 14.

[243. when he returns to the King...](#) When he has the opportunity to repent, if he does not confess what he has done, then *he shall bear his iniquity*. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 235](#).

[244. If a soul sins...](#) The full verse reads: *If a person [or: soul] sins and commits a sacrilege against YHVH by dissembling with his fellow about a deposit or pledge, or by robbery, or by withholding from his fellow*. No reference is made to this verse in the following *Zohar* passage, which discusses the sin of betraying the covenant of circumcision, but apparently this sin is an example of a *sacrilege against YHVH*. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1178.

[245. All this has come upon us...](#) This verse is preceded by a list of God's punishments, so Rabbi Abba wonders why it reads כל זאת באתנו (*Kol zot ba'atnu*), *All this has come upon us*—employing the singular, rather than the plural. The reason (only hinted at here) is that all of the punishments are judgments issuing from *Shekhinah*, who is

called זֹאת (*zot*), *this*. Forgetting Torah is tantamount to forgetting God Himself, since the entirety of Torah is God's name.

*Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, is known as *zot, this*, because She is constantly present right here. See above, [note 117](#). On Torah as God's Name, see Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 548; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37; *Zohar* 1:160a; 2:55b, 60a-b, 87a, 90b, 124a, 161b; 3:19a, 21a, 35b-36a, 61a, 71a-73a, 76a, 80b, 89b, 91b, 98b, 159a, 176a, 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." Cf. Naḥmanides, introduction to Commentary on the Torah, 6-7; idem, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:167-68.

[246](#). **Nor have we betrayed Your covenant...** The covenant of circumcision, which is betrayed by illicit sexual relations.

On sexual sin as betraying the covenant of circumcision, see *Zohar* 1:93a, 131b; 2:3b, 7a, 57b, 61a, 90a; 3:57b, 142a (*IR*). In rabbinic literature, the mark of circumcision is identified with the ם (*yod*) of the divine name יְדַי (*Shaddai*), which is also the initial letter of יהוה (*YHVH*). See *Tanḥuma*, *Tsav* 14, *Shemini* 8; *Zohar* 1:13a, 56a, 60a, 89a, 93a, 95a-b; 2:3b, 36a, 87b, 90a, 216b, 235a; 3:73a, 91a, 142a (*IR*), 215b, 220a, 256a (*RM*), 266a; Wolfson, "Circumcision and the Divine Name"; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 29-48.

[247](#). **Another verse confirms this one...** The first half of verse 21 (*If we had forgotten the name of God*) corresponds to the clause in verse 18 (*yet we have not forgotten You*). The second half of verse 21 (*and spread out our palms to an alien god*) matches the end of verse 18 (*nor have we betrayed Your covenant*), because the wording *spread out our palms to an alien god* implies lying down with a foreign woman, which is a betrayal of the covenant of circumcision.

Elsewhere the *Zohar* equates the sin of lying down with a foreign woman with the sin of bowing down to another god; both constitute acts of betrayal. See *Zohar* 1:131b, 189b; 2:3b, 61a, 87b, 243a; *ZH* 21a (*MhN*), 78c (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 212–13, 230–31; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 51 (63). Cf. *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 107b; *Zohar* 2:90a; Vol. 4, p. 513, n. 536.

“Torah is linked to this,” namely to the covenant of circumcision. In fact, preserving the covenant of circumcision and maintaining sexual purity are equivalent to fulfilling the whole Torah. See *Tosefta Nedarim* 2:6; BT *Nedarim* 32a; *Maḥazor Vitri*, 624; *Zohar* 1:197a; 2:61a; Wolfson, “Circumcision and the Divine Name,” 104–5. According to BT *Horayot* 8a, the prohibition against idolatry “is equivalent to all the commandments.”

The *Zohar*’s concern with sexual immorality reflects the social reality of Jewish life in thirteenth-century Castile. See Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 51–54 (63–67); Baer, “Todros ben Yehudah ha-Levi u-Zmano,” 31–44; idem, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1:250–63; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1371–72; Assis, “Sexual Behavior in Mediaeval Hispano-Jewish Society”; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 51; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 118.

Psalms 44:21–22 reads: *If we had forgotten the name of God and spread out our palms to an alien god, would not God have fathomed this? For He knows the heart’s secrets.*

**248. Once he was circumcised...** And he maintained sexual purity, he was considered to have kept the entire Torah.

Cf. M *Nedarim* 3:11. On *covenant* as a designation for Torah, see *Mekhilta, Pisha* 5; *Sifrei*, Numbers 111; *Midrash Tanna’im*, Deuteronomy 17:2; BT *Shabbat* 33a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 3, p. 13.

**249. Joseph, because he maintained this sign of covenant...** By withstanding the sexual advances of Potiphar’s wife, Joseph proved his virtue and attained the

rung of *Yesod*, the divine phallus and symbol of the covenant of circumcision. He gained royal status in Egypt and spiritual rewards in the world that is coming.

The verse in Psalm 81 includes the name יה (Yah) within Joseph's expanded name יהוסף (Yehosef), "testifying" to his virtue. On the divine element within *Yehosef*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:10; BT *Sotah* 10b, 36b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 17, pp. 321-22; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:5; *Zohar* 2:221b; 3:213b. The verse in Psalms reads: *A testimony He ordained it in [or: for] Joseph, when He went forth against the land of Egypt.*

**250. His firstling bull...** Moses' blessing of Joseph refers to a *bull*, which was "the first offering," namely the offering brought by the first human, Adam.

On Adam offering a bull or a unicorn-bull, see *Tosefta Hullin* 3:20; *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:8; 34:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:7, 10; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; BT *Shabbat* 28b, *Avodah Zarah* 8a, *Hullin* 60a; *Midrash Tehillim* 39:3; above, [note 34](#). The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *His firstling bull is his glory, wild ox's antlers his horns. With them he gores peoples, all together, the ends of the earth.*

**251. something of the left...** With a *bull*, whose face appears on the left side of each of the four living beings carrying the chariot-throne, as described by Ezekiel. The left side symbolizes *Din* (Judgment), and Joseph should have been blessed with something associated with the right side, symbolizing *Hesed* (Love).

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion's face, and on the left the four of them had a bull's face, and the four of them had an eagle's face.*

**252. sin of Jeroboam** The king of Israel who built golden calves, which were worshiped by the northern tribes. (See 1 Kings 12:26-33.) Joseph's association with a *bull* nullified (or atoned for) the sin of his descendant, King Jeroboam. Cf. *Zohar* 3:163a-b.

**253. mystery about this verse...** The covenant of circumcision is linked with two *sefirot*, *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*. The red cow (described in Numbers 19) symbolizes *Shekhinah*, while the *bull* symbolizes Her partner, *Yesod*. This bull demonstrates *Yesod's glory*, unlike a normal bull, or the bull representing the left side.

On the association of both *Yesod* and *Shekhinah* with circumcision, see *Zohar* 1:13a, 32a (*Tos*), 32a-b, 93b, 96b, 98b (*ST*), 238b; 2:3b, 40a, 57b, 60b-61a, 66b-67a, 125b; 3:91b, 95b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 133; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 55 (67). On the red cow symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 3:76b, 180b-181a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1166.

**254. whoever maintains this holy mark...** Whoever is circumcised and controls his sexual urges is linked with *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*. Joseph attained royal status in Egypt, and later, as a result of his virtue, his descendant Jeroboam became king of Israel. Even though Jeroboam was himself unworthy, when Solomon betrayed the covenant of circumcision by clinging to foreign women, the kingship over the northern ten tribes was given to Jeroboam.

See *Zohar* 1:93b. On Solomon's clinging to foreign women and its consequences, see 1 Kings 11.

**255. A person who has a son...** And circumcises him is linked to *Shekhinah*. She is an opening to all the upper *sefirot*: through Her the soul can ascend, and through Her the emanation from above flows to all those below. "The Holy Name" *YHVH* symbolizes *Tif'eret*, with whom *Shekhinah* is joined.

When human sin arouses Judgment, God gazes upon the blood of circumcision and assuages the harshness of Judgment. Rabbi Shim'on links the *eight days* associated with circumcision with the phrase in Psalm 90: *and if* בגבורות (*bi-gvurot*), *in strength, eighty years*—which alludes to *Gevurah* (Strength), or *Din* (Judgment). Circumcision (associated with *eight days*) serves to temper the harsh Judgment of *Gevurah*



(associated with *eighty years*). The final clause, “and all attains one balance,” means that the references to *eight days* and *eighty years* balance one another.

See Scholem. For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1181. On the association of *Shekhinah* with circumcision, see above, [note 253](#). On the saving power of the blood of circumcision, see the following note. The verse in Psalms reads: *The days of our years are but seventy years, and if in strength, eighty years.*

[256. By that blood...](#) See BT *Shabbat* 137b: “Were it not for the blood of the covenant [of circumcision], heaven and earth would not endure.” Cf. M *Nedarim* 3:11.

“Of being established” renders לאִתְּבַסְמָא (*le-itbassama*), which could also be translated “of being perfumed (or sweetened).” The root בִּסַּם (*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, 143a, 147b, 168a, 227a; 3:14b–15a, 18a, 31a, 62a, 85b, 292a (*IZ*); Bronsnick, “Ha-Shoresh ‘Bsm’”; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 44; idem, *Kabbalah*, 228. The image of the world “being established in love” recalls Psalms 89:3: יְבֹנֶה עוֹלָם חֶסֶד (*olam ḥesed yibbaneh*), which is usually understood to mean *Forever is love established*, but is construed midrashically as *The world is built on [or: by] love*. See below, [pp. 524–25](#), [notes 533–34](#).

[257. Two crowns are joined as one...](#) *Tif’eret* (symbolized by *day*) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *night*) unite. *Shekhinah* is characterized by Judgment, whereas *Tif’eret* is characterized by Compassion (and Love), and the world is conducted by the blending of these two *sefirot*. White is the color of *Ḥesed* (which especially influences *Tif’eret*); red is the color of *Din* (which especially influences *Shekhinah*). *Yesod*, symbolized by *covenant*, links *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, so He is known as *covenant with day and night*.

The phrases “rendering one another sweetly firm,” “tempering one another,” and “all is fragrantly firm” all involve the root  $\text{בשמ}$  (*bsm*), on which see the preceding note.

**258. For this, a person is called complete...** By being circumcised and preserving this covenant faithfully, one becomes *complete* like *Yesod*, linking and attaining both *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who are symbolized respectively by *day* and *night*. *Day* (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) is associated especially with *Hesed* (as demonstrated by the verse in Psalms), whereas *night* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) is associated with *Gevurah*. One who is circumcised also completes and balances *Hesed* and *Gevurah*.

Abraham “inherited both” *Tif'eret* (or *Hesed*) and *Shekhinah*. But he did not completely attain his particular *sefirah*, *Hesed*, until he was circumcised. Afterward, he is described as *sitting at the opening of the tent*, and this *opening* symbolizes the tenth *sefirah*, *Shekhinah*, who is the gateway to all other *sefirot* and is known as *righteousness*. The name *YHVH* can symbolize *Tif'eret* or all of the *sefirot*. (See above, [note 27.](#))

Genesis 17:1-2 reads: *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, YHVH appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am El Shaddai. Walk in My presence and be תמים (tamim), complete [or: perfect, blameless, wholehearted, unblemished], and I will grant My covenant between Me and you and I will increase you very greatly.”* This divine directive is soon followed by the covenantal command of circumcision (verses 9-14). On *tamim* and circumcision, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 46:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:6; *M Nedarim* 3:11; *BT Nedarim* 31b-32a; *Zohar* 1:59b, 95a-b, 200b, 246a; 3:142a (*IR*), 166a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 228, 376.

The full verse in Genesis 18 reads: *YHVH appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre, as he was sitting at the opening of the tent in the heat of the day. On the opening of the tent, see Zohar 1:21a, 98a-b, 103a-b; 2:36a; 3:71b.*



[259.](#) כחום (*Ke-ḥom*), ***In the heat of, the day...*** Having been circumcised, Abraham dwelled in *Ḥesed*, his sefirotic day. “As he sat there” (*at the opening of the tent*, symbolizing *Shekhinah*), “so he sat here” (*in the heat of the day*, within *Ḥesed*). On *the heat of the day*, see *Zohar* 1:21a, 97b–98b (ST), 98a–b; 2:36a.

[260.](#) ***YHVH will pass over the opening...*** Implying that *Ḥesed* will hover over *Shekhinah*, sweetening and stabilizing Her, thereby preventing any attack by the demonic power.

On the clause “so that it will be fragrantly firm,” see above, [note 256](#). The full verse in Exodus 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 [or: opening], and He will not allow the Destroyer to enter your houses to strike.*

[261.](#) **A convert who has been circumcised...** Traditionally, the term גר צדק (*ger tsedek*), “convert of righteousness,” refers to a convert who accepts all the laws of Judaism. In the *Zohar*, it implies that such a person is linked with the rung of *Shekhinah*, who is known as צדק (*Tsedek*), Righteousness, but ascends no farther on the sefirotic ladder. Rabbi El’azar wonders, then, how his father could say that when a person is circumcised he attains both *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*.

See above, [note 258](#). The image of entering “beneath the wings of *Shekhinah*” derives from Ruth 2:11–12, where Boaz says to Ruth: *I have been told of all that you did for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband, how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth and came to a people you had not known before. May YHVH reward your deed, and may you have a full recompense from YHVH, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge.* Based on this verse, the metaphor of coming under the wings of *Shekhinah* is used in rabbinic literature to describe conversion. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:9: “If a convert

comes to convert, one should extend a hand to him to bring him under the wings of *Shekhinah*.” See *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 18:6; BT *Shabbat* 31a, *Yevamot* 46b.

On the term *ger tsedeq*, see BT *Yevamot* 48a-b; *Zohar* 1:13a-b, 96a; 2:27a, 70a, 87a; 3:168a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 340; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 212.

**262. there is no comparison...** Jewish souls derive from a holy divine source, whereas non-Jewish souls derive from demonic filth.

On the innate distinction between Jews and Gentiles, see Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 1:27-47, 95, 102-11. On the distinction between converts and born Jews, see *ibid.* 1:27. On the souls of converts, see below, [note 507](#).

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *She* [Jerusalem] *lusted after their* [Egypt’s] *paramours, whose flesh is the flesh of donkeys and whose emission is the emission of stallions*. In this verse the word בשר (*basar*), *flesh*, is a euphemism for “penis.” See Leviticus 15:2; Ezekiel 16:26; *Zohar* 1:117a (*MhN*), 173a, 222b; 2:192b.

**263. holy Israel—faithful seed...** When Israel accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai, they were sweetened, and cleansed of the primordial filth that the serpent had injected into Eve. Ever since, they have been able to reach the covenantal rung of *Yesod* and thereby attain *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *day and night*). It is difficult, however, to eradicate this filth from the nations of the world. Consequently, a convert can only attain the rung of *Shekhinah*, who is known as Righteousness.

On Israel turning fragrant at Mount Sinai, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:12; *Zohar* 3:61b; cf. BT *Shabbat* 88b. On the phrase “that became fragrantly firm,” see above, [note 256](#). On the purifying effect of the revelation at 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 *Zohar* 2:87b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 212; below, [note 366](#).

On the theme of “three generations,” see Deuteronomy 23:9, according to which the *third generation* (i.e., the grandchildren) of Edomites and Egyptians living among Israelites may be admitted *into the assembly of YHVH*. See M *Yevamot* 8:3; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 252; BT *Shabbat* 146a; *Zohar* 2:77a–b; *ZH* 82b (*MhN, Rut*).

On the truncated quotation, “The best among the Gentiles...,” see *Mekhilta, Beshallah* 1, in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai: “The best among the Gentiles—kill! The best among serpents—smash its brains!” See *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:7; JT *Qiddushin* 4:14, 66b; *Tanḥuma, Beshallah* 8; *Soferim* 15:7.

[264.](#) **Rav Hamnuna Sava said...** That the nations of the world abide under demonic powers (“crowns”). If they are circumcised, they can attain the rung of *Shekhinah*. Israel, however, who were purified at Mount Sinai, can enter more fully into the sefirotic realm once they are circumcised. The phrase יהוה אלהיכם (*YHVH Eloheikhem*), *YHVH your God*, alludes to *Tif’eret* (known as *YHVH*) and *Shekhinah* (known as *Elohim*).

On Rav Hamnuna Sava (the Elder), see above, [note 38](#). On the phrase “became fragrantly firm,” see above, [note 256](#).

[265.](#) **the waters of Noah...** Rabbi Yose wonders why the verse refers to the Flood by this phrase rather than simply *the waters of the Flood*. Furthermore, why does the verse employ the singular form זאת לי (*zot li*), *this is... to Me*, rather than the plural: *those are ...to Me*? This question applies to a hyperliteral reading of the verse: כי מי נח זאת לי (*Ki mei noah zot li*), *For this is the waters of Noah to Me*. The full verse reads: *For this is [like] the waters of Noah to Me: As I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth, so I swear not to be angry with you or rebuke you.*

**266. When a righteous person appears in the world...** He brings peace to all worlds and creates harmony among the angels, who constitute “the family above.”

See BT *Sanhedrin* 99b, in the name of Rabbi Alexandri: “Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake makes peace among the family above [i.e., the angels] and among the family below [i.e., humanity], as is said: *Or let him hold fast to My refuge, that he may make peace with Me; peace he will make with Me.*”

According to Rabbi Alexandri, the repetition in the verse refers to making peace both among the angels and among humanity. Here, for Rabbi Yose, *that he may make peace with Me* alludes to the peaceful union of the divine couple (*Tif'eret*, or *Yesod*, and *Shekhinah*), while *peace he will make with me* alludes to harmonizing the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized respectively by the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Cf. *Zohar* 3:118a; above, [note 234](#).

**267. What is the difference between them?...** Between the two repetitive clauses, or their referents. Rabbi Yose explains that the second clause—*Peace he will make with Me*—begins with *peace*, which is primary and characteristic of the inherent harmony between *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. On the other hand, the first clause—*That he may make peace with Me*—does not begin with *peace*, because before the Male can unite peacefully with *Shekhinah*, the demonic serpent threatening Her must be removed by intense effort (indicated by *that he may make*). For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**268. When a righteous person...** The notion that the world endures for the sake of a righteous person is based on Proverbs 10:25: וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*). The simple sense of this verse is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*, but it is understood midrashically as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*. See

above, [note 42](#). On the righteous person being “a sign,” see below, [note 275](#).

**269. From Moses...** After Israel worshiped the Golden Calf (“that act”), God sought to destroy them, but Moses interceded, risking his life to save his people.

See BT *Berakhot* 32a; *Zohar* 1:67b, 106a; *ZH* 15a, 23a (both *MhN*). All of these passages quote Exodus 32:32, understanding Moses’ statement *wipe me out from Your book* as “Take my life.” The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Release Me [or: Let Me be], that I may destroy them and wipe out their name from under the heavens, and I will make you into a greater and mightier nation than they*. On the significance of the wording *Release Me*, see Vol. 6, p. 75, n. 57.

The verse from Numbers actually relates to the incident of the spies. See *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 46; Luria, ad loc., n. 81; *Devarim Rabbah* 3:15; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 31; *Shemot Rabbah* 51:4; *Da’at Zegenim (Ba’alei ha-Tosafot)* on Numbers 14:20; *Zohar* 1:106a.

**270. Whereas of Noah...** Unlike Moses, Noah was concerned only for himself, and having heard that he would be safe in the ark, he failed to pray for the world and save them; so fittingly, the Flood is called *the waters of Noah*.

See *Zohar* 1:67b. Cf. *Devarim Rabbah* 11:3; *Zohar* 1:106a; *ZH* 23a (*MhN*). Genesis 6:13 reads in full: *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!”* Genesis 6:18 actually reads: *I will establish My covenant with you...* Cf. *ibid.* 9:9.

**271. Noah... was the first...** Rabbi Yose understands ויחל (*Va-yahel*), *he was the first* [or: *he began*], according to a different meaning of the same verb: יחל (*yahel*), *he will profane*. By failing to protect his generation, Noah lost his holiness.

On *va-yahel* as *he became profane*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 36:3; *Tanḥuma, Noah* 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 20. The



verse in Genesis reads: *Noah, a man of the soil [or: earth], was the first to plant a vineyard.* The full verse in Numbers reads: *If a man takes a vow or makes an oath to YHVH, to take upon himself a binding pledge, he shall not profane [or: desecrate] his word.*

**272. for his sake it endured...** After the Flood, Noah offered sacrifices, and YHVH smelled the pleasing aroma and YHVH said in His heart, *“I will not again curse the ground on humankind’s account, since the devisings of the human heart are evil from youth, and I will not again strike down all living things as I have done”* (Genesis 8:21). See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 20; *Bereshit Rabbah* 36:3; *Zohar* 1:58b; *ZH* 22a (*MhN*).

**273. the waters of Noah...** Named after him because he failed to save the world. See above, [note 270](#).

**274. זאת לי (zot li), This is... to Me...** Now, Rabbi Yose answers his earlier question about the singular wording of this clause (*this is...*), rather than the plural (*those are...*). See above, [note 265](#). *Zot* (*this*) designates *Shekhinah*, whose sefirotic spectrum is symbolized by the rainbow. After the Flood, God displayed Her as a sign of His covenant. In the verse from Isaiah 54, God is saying, *“כי מי נח (Ki mei noah), Because of the waters of Noah, this is to Me,”* i.e., *“The waters of Noah caused Me to reveal this (namely Shekhinah).”*

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [note 117](#). Genesis 9:12–13 reads: *God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I set between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for everlasting generations: My bow I have set in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.”*

**275. it is a sign of a righteous and pious person...** Such a person himself serves as a sign of the covenant, so the rainbow (symbolizing *Shekhinah* and the covenant) is unnecessary.

The cryptic verse in Samuel reads: *The God of Israel has said, to me the Rock of Israel has spoken: He who rules*

humanity, צדיק מושל יראת אלהים (*tsaddiq moshel yir'at Elohim*), *just, who rules [in] the awe of God*. According to a midrashic interpretation, the conclusion of the verse means *The righteous one rules the awe of God*. See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16b, where Rabbi Abbahu conveys this sense of the verse and quotes God as saying, "I rule over humanity. Who rules over Me? The righteous one. For I issue a decree and he abolishes it."

See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:1; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tavo* 1; *Devarim Rabbah* 10:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:20; *Zohar* 1:10a, 45b (*Heikh*); 2:15a (*MhN*), 201a, 262a (*Heikh*); 3:242a. Cf. BT *Shabbat* 63a, *Bava Metsi'a* 85a; *Rut Zuta* 2:19; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:6; *Zohar* 1:209a; 3:68a.

On the righteous person (or specifically Rabbi Shim'on) replacing the rainbow, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 35:2; JT *Berakhot* 9:2, 13d; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:15; BT *Ketubbot* 77b; *Midrash Tehillim* 36:8; *Zohar* 1:225a; 3:36a, 215a; *ZH* 10d (*MhN*); Scholem, "Parashah Ḥadashah," p. 432, n. 29; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 15.

On the special status of Rabbi Shim'on, see also BT *Sukkah* 45b; *Zohar* 1:218b, 223a; 2:15a (*MhN*), 38a, 97b, 174b; 3:59b-61b, 71b, 79b, 132b (*IR*), 159a, 206a, 241b, 296b (*IZ*); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 1-84; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 31-61; Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 11-42; below, [p. 387](#), [n. 93](#).

**276. Like Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai...** On this story, cf. *ZH* 26b-c. The redundant phrase בבא דתַרְעָא (*bava de-tar'a*), "the gateway of the gate," appears only in the *Zohar*, perhaps signaling a deep inner meaning about to unfold. See *Zohar* 1:201b; 2:6b, 28a; *ZH* 12b (*MhN*). The colors black and green may signify respectively Judgment and Compassion.

**277. Rabbi Shim'on was shaken...** "Was shaken" renders אִשְׁתַּנִּיק (*ishteniq*), "was distressed." The root שִׁנַּק (*shnq*) can also mean "to shake," as in *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus



14:27; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Psalms 136:15. Cf. Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *shnq*; below, [note 410](#).

“Fastened” renders קטפר (*qatpar*). In the *Zohar*, the neologistic root קטפר (*qtpr*) often means “binding, tying.” See above, [note 164](#). For another interpretation, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, 353.

[278.](#) **that Serpent...** The primordial Serpent, Samael.

[279.](#) **so the upper one will return...** So the primordial Serpent will return to its demonic abode and no longer threaten the world.

[280.](#) **Slips of plucking...** Apparently referring to decrees of death or destruction, which have now been nullified by the presence of Rabbi Shim'on. “Slips” renders פוטקרא (*putqera*), which may be based on פיטק (*pitaq*), “slip, memorandum, name slip carried by the Angel of Death” (derived from Greek *pittakion*). See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 3:2; *Zohar* 3:156b; Scholem. Cf. *Zohar* 3:106b; *Derekh Emet*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *pitqera de-qutpa*.

“A band” renders קטפירא (*qatpira*). As mentioned above ([note 277](#)), the neologistic root קטפר (*qtpr*) often means “binding, tying.” “Outlaws” renders בורייני (*buryanei*), apparently based on בריוני (*baryonei*), “outlaws.” See *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber), 1:5; BT *Berakhot* 10a, *Gittin* 56a-b, *Sanhedrin* 37a; *Tanḥuma*, *Emor* 22; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 30.

[281.](#) **above all inhabitants of the world...** Even above the glory of Moses, who was overwhelmed when he implored God to forgive Israel after the incident of the Golden Calf. Rabbi Shim'on, on other hand, stands up to God more boldly.

According to BT *Berakhot* 32a, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer, the expression ויחל משה (*Va-yḥal Mosheh*), *Moses implored*, implies “that Moses stood in prayer before the blessed Holy One until he was seized with אחילו (*aḥilu*), trembling [or: a fever].” Here, the *Zohar* replaces *aḥilu* with פרגדא (*pargedā*), a corruption of פודגרא (*podagra*), based on

Greek and Latin *podagra*, “gout.” According to rabbinic sources, in his old age King Asa of Judah was “seized with *podagra*, gout.”

See 1 Kings 15:23; BT *Sotah* 10a, *Sanhedrin* 48b; *Tanḥuma*, *Mase’ei* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Mase’ei* 9 (and Buber’s n. 54); *Bemidbar Rabbah* 23:13; Scholem. Cf. ZH 23a (*MhN*).

On the comparison and contrast between Rabbi Shim’on and Moses, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi’a*, 11-42. On the righteous abolishing God’s decrees, see above, [note 275](#).

[282.](#) **has become fragrantly firm** On this rendering, see above, [notes 256-57](#).

[283.](#) **For YHVH is righteous...** The conclusion of the verse reads: יָשָׁר יִחְזוּ פְּנֵימוֹ (yashar yeḥezu faneimo), *the upright behold* [or: *shall behold*] *His face* [or: *their faces*]. The noun *yashar* is singular, whereas the verb *yeḥezu* is plural. The suffix of the final word, יָמוֹ (-eimo), usually conveys a plural sense (“their” or “them”), but in this verse it is considered singular: *His* [*face*]. Here, however, Rabbi Shim’on insists on the plural: *their* [*faces*]. He understands the clause to mean that *the upright behold* the dejected *faces* of humanity, and they plead to God for mercy on them.

For various interpretations of the verse in Psalms, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 32:2; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:6; *Kallah Rabbati* 9:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 1:15; David Kimḥi on Psalms 11:7; *Zohar* 1:53a, 241b; 2:194a; 3:72a; Moses de León, *Sod Eser Sefirot*, 381.

[284.](#) **the verse should read...** As mentioned in the preceding note, the clause יָשָׁר יִחְזוּ פְּנֵימוֹ (yashar yeḥezu faneimo), *the upright behold their faces* [or: *His face*], begins with the singular noun *yashar*, followed by the plural verb *yeḥezu*. Rabbi El’azar wonders why.

[285.](#) **Supernal mystery...** Rabbi Shim’on offers a deeper meaning of the verse. First of all, the phrase *their faces* refers to the sefirotic aspects (or “days”) of two divine

realms: *Keter*, and the configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*.

The highest *sefirah*, *Keter*, is known as the (Holy) Ancient One. Characterized by pure compassion, He is described as אַרִיךְ אַנְפִּין (*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 זַעִיר אַנְפִּין (*ze’eir anpin*), “short-tempered, irascible, impatient” (deriving from Proverbs 14:17). On the “primordial days” and “olden days,” see *Zohar* 3:134b, 138b (both *IR*).

**286. When the blessed Holy One...** When God perceives virtue in the world, the Holy Ancient One is manifested in the Short-Tempered One, and the faces of the latter gaze directly at the faces of the former. The perfect alignment of their gaze is expressed by the term יָשָׁר (*yashar*), which now functions adverbially: *Yashar, Straight, their faces behold*. Thus, each element of this strange clause makes sense: the singular form *yashar*; the plural verb יִהְזֶזוּ (*yeḥezu*), [*they*] *behold*; and פְּנֵימוֹ (*faneimo*), *their faces*.

The concluding verset *YHVH is one and His name one* often refers to the union of *Tif’eret* (referred to as *YHVH*) and *Shekhinah* (known as *His name*). See above, [note 100](#). On the Holy Ancient One and the Short-Tempered One gazing face-to-face, see *Zohar* 3:136b (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*).

**287. But when sins of the world proliferate...** Human sin disrupts divine harmony, and the faces of the Holy Ancient One and the Short-Tempered One no longer gaze directly upon one another. Then the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the patriarchs), which normally functions as “a throne” for the highest divine powers, is “cast down,” as it were. The Holy Ancient

One (known as *the Ancient of Days*) sits unseen and unrevealed, and Judgment dominates.

On the wicked turning Compassion into Judgment, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Nahman: "Woe to the wicked, who turn the Attribute of Compassion into the Attribute of Judgment!"

See *Zohar* 2:63a; 3:30b, 65a, 79a, 137b (*IR*), 207b. On the patriarchs as constituting the divine chariot-throne, see below, [note 325](#).

The full verse in Daniel reads: *As I watched, thrones were placed [or: were cast], 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.* On thrones being cast down, see *Zohar* 3:18b, 100a.

**[288](#). From the side of Mother...** From *Binah* (the Divine Mother) issue forces conveying the harshness of *Gevurah*, which is also known as *Din* (Judgment). The biblical phrase *over YHVH* implies that these powers prevail *over* Compassion, which is signified by the name *YHVH*. Furthermore, they originate in *Binah*, who is situated "above" *Tif'eret*—known as both *Raḥamim* (Compassion) and *YHVH*.

On *YHVH* as signifying Compassion, see above, [note 31](#). The verse in Numbers describes Korah and his followers as *banding together* נַל (al), *against* [or: *over*], *YHVH*. Here, the *Zohar* adopts the hyperliteral meaning *over*. See *Zohar* 3:79b. "Guardians" renders גַּרְדֵּינֵי (gardinei), which is based on the Castilian *guardián* (guardian). See Corominas, *Diccionario*, 3:246-48.

**[289](#). YHVH relented...** The full verse reads: *YHVH relented from [or: was comforted over] the evil that He had threatened to do to His people.*

**[290](#). When judgments are assuaged...** Then each sefirotic crown returns to its position and power, and *Binah* (the Divine Mother) is blessed by the sefirotic "keys" (Her children, from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod* or *Shekhinah*) returning to

Her. Appropriately, She is then called תשובה גמורה (*Teshuvah Gemurah*), “Complete Returning (or Repentance).” She is also known as *Yom ha-Kippurim* (Day of Atonement), pardoning all. Through Her fifty gates, emanation flows to the *sefirot* below and then to all the worlds.

The image of *Binah*’s fifty gates derives from a 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, as is said: *You made him little less than God* (Psalms 8:6).”

See Nahmanides, *Peirush al ha-Torah*, intro, 3-4; *Zohar* 1:3b. These gates are apparently unlocked by the sefirotic keys. “Keys” renders קלדיטי (*qalditei*), which may be based on the rabbinic term אקלידא (*aqlida*), deriving from Greek *kleida*, “key.” See *Zohar* 2:5a-b (*MhN*), 14a (*MhN*), 66b; *ZH* 12b (*MhN*).

On *Binah* as *Teshuvah*—from whom all emerges and to whom all ultimately returns—see *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:106a-b; 3:16a-b, 40b, 74b-75a, 89b, 185b. The full verse in Leviticus, describing Yom Kippur, reads: *For on this day purgation [or: atonement] will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure.*

**291. When he sins and is guilty...** If he sins, then of course he *is guilty*, so why does the verse include וְאִשָּׁם (*ve-ashem*), *and is guilty*? Because here *ve-ashem* does not imply *and is guilty*, but rather *and* [he makes] אָשָׁם (*asham*), *reparation*. If he mends his deeds, then he will restore *that which he robbed*—namely he will restore the flow of emanation that he interrupted. See below, [note 305](#).

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *It shall be, when he sins and is guilty, he shall return [or: restore] that which he robbed or that which he withheld, or the deposit that was entrusted to him, or the lost object that he found.* See above, [p. 87](#). The passage in Numbers concerns a situation in which a person who has been defrauded dies leaving no



relative, in which case the reparation belongs to the officiating priest: *The reparation restored shall be YHVH's, the priest's* (Numbers 5:8).

**292.** וְהָשִׁיב (ve-heshiv), **He shall restore...** This wording emphasizes that the sinner should mend his ways by personally restoring *that which he robbed*. On the precise wording of the verb, cf. below, [note 434](#).

**293. In four cycles in the year...** At the turn of each season, as control passes from one angelic or sefirotic power to another, the heavenly voice ceases and harsh Judgment momentarily prevails. The flow from *Binah*—known as *Teshuvah* (returning, repentance)—is suspended until Israel engages in *teshuvah*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH regretted having made the human on earth and was grieved to the heart*. As to where this grieving or sadness occurs, see BT *Ḥagigah* 5b: “*If you will not listen, My soul will weep in secret because of the arrogance* (Jeremiah 13:17)... But is there weeping before [i.e., on the part of] the blessed Holy One? Look, Rabbi Papa has said: ‘There is no sadness before the blessed Holy One, as is said: *Splendor and majesty are before Him, power and joy in His place* (1 Chronicles 16:27)’! There is no contradiction: this refers to the inner chambers; that refers to the outer chambers.”

The last sentence is usually taken to mean “This [the weeping] refers to the inner chambers; that [the joy] refers to the outer chambers.” However, Ḥananel ben Ḥushiel (on the passage in *Ḥagigah*) adopts the reverse interpretation: “This [the joy] refers to the inner chambers; that [the weeping] refers to the outer chambers,” which accords with Rabbi Yose’s view here. See *Zohar* 1:57a, 163a, 2:17b–18a (*MhN*); *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Margaliot, *Sha’arei Zohar*, *Ḥagigah* 5b.

On the dangerous transition from season to season, see Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, add., 15; *Sha’arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge’onim*), 80; *Zohar* 2:81a, 195b;

David Abudarham, *Sefer Abudarham, Sha'ar ha-Tequfot*, 311-12; Aptowitzer, "Issur Shetiyyat Mayim bi-Sh'at ha-Tequfah," 122-26; Ginzberg, "La-Hadashim Yevaqqer," 184-86. Cf. BT *Eruvin* 56a.

**294. Ever since the Temple was destroyed...** On the lasting effects of the destruction of the Temple, see M *Sotah* 9:12, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a: "Ever since the day the Temple was destroyed, not a single day passes without a curse, dew has never descended as a blessing, and flavor has been eliminated from fruit." See *Zohar* 1:55b, 61b, 70b, 134a, 177a, 181b, 203a, 250a; 3:51b, 74b, 236a.

According to rabbinic tradition, God participates in Israel's exile, and until Israel returns to Jerusalem and God appears again with them there, He will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem. Here, heavenly Jerusalem symbolizes *Shekhinah*, with whom the blessed Holy One will reunite fully only when Israel returns from exile.

See BT *Ta'anit* 5a (in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan), and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *lo avo* and *Yerushalayim*; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 122:4; *Zohar* 1:1b, 231a; 2:224b; 3:68b, 147b-148a, 262b. Cf. Revelation 21:2; *Targum Yonatan*, Psalms 122:3.

**295. your mother's nakedness...** The biblical idiom לגלות ערוה (*le-gallot ervah*), "to expose nakedness (or genitals)," means to have (forbidden or incestuous) sexual relations. Here, conversely, the idiom refers to disrupting the union of *Hokhmah* (the Father) and *Binah* (the Mother), thereby exposing their nakedness (or genitals) and "stripping" or depriving them of one another. Human sin has this profound effect on the cosmic parents. Only by engaging in sincere *teshuvah* (returning, repentance) can one restore the union that he has disrupted, "covering" the divine nakedness.

See *Zohar* 1:219a (Vol. 3, p. 323, n. 121); 2:60b, 84a (Vol. 4, p. 468, n. 364), 126b, 176a-b (*SdT*s), 177b (*SdT*s);



3:74a-80a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 348-49; *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1367-68; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The full verse in Leviticus reads literally: *Your father's nakedness and your mother's nakedness you shall not expose. She is your mother; you shall not expose her nakedness.* The first half of the verse means *The nakedness reserved for your father—that is, your mother's nakedness—you shall not expose.* See Levine, *Leviticus*, ad loc.; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, ad loc.

**296. When the evil impulse proliferates...** The temptation to sin is motivated by the nakedness that has been exposed above. Or, the urge to sin is based on sexual immorality, which is known as גלוי עריות (*gillui arayot*), “exposing nakedness.” All those sins “cling to that nakedness,” separating the divine couple. By turning back to God, one can “cover” what he has exposed, reuniting *Binah* with *Hokhmah*. This is true *teshuvah*, which is also *Binah's* name.

**297. All sins of the world are interlinked...** See *M Avot* 4:2, in the name of Ben Azzai: “One *mitsvah* draws another *mitsvah*, and one transgression draws another transgression.” When *Binah* (the Divine Mother) is exposed, all Her sefirotic children are exposed as well, separated from Her. “When the world below is mended” by genuine *teshuvah*, then *Binah* “is mended and covered,” and She is rightly called *Teshuvah* (Returning), since Her state of union has returned. She is also known as *Yom ha-Kippurim* (Day of Atonement), accepting Israel's *teshuvah* and purifying them.

The context in Deuteronomy (22:6-7) reads: *If a bird's nest happens to be before you on the way, in any tree or on the ground—fledglings or eggs—and the mother crouching over the fledglings or over the eggs, you shall not take the mother together with the children. Surely send off the mother, and the children you may take for yourself, so that it may go well with you and you will prolong your days.*

Here, Rabbi Yitshak interprets the command *You shall not take the mother* אַל (al), *together with, the children* as follows: *You shall not take the mother al, off of, the children*—that is, “You shall not, through your sins, disrupt the divine union and cause *Binah* (the Divine Mother) to abandon Her sefirotic children,” thereby interrupting the flow of emanation.

See *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:85b; 3:12a. For the usual kabbalistic interpretation of the command in Deuteronomy, see *Bahir* 74 (104–105); Naḥmanides and Recanati on Deuteronomy 22:6; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod, Berakhot* 33b, p. 7a–b; *Hullin* 142a, p. 32c–d; *Zohar* 1:158a; 2:8a, 93a; 3:254a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 338–39. On separating *Binah* from Her children, see also *Zohar* 2:105a.

The phrases “is exposed” and “are exposed” render respectively אֶתְגַּלִּיא (itgalya) and אֶתְגַּלִּיָּן (itgalyan), which can also mean “is exiled” and “are exiled.” When *Binah*’s nakedness is exposed, She is separated from Her partner, *Ḥokhmah*, and Her sefirotic children are abandoned by Her. The *Zohar* sometimes plays on both meanings of the Hebrew root גלה (glh) or the Aramaic root גלי (gly). See *Zohar* 1:27b (TZ), 219a; 3:75a, 77b.

The full verse in Leviticus, describing Yom Kippur, reads: *For on this day purgation [or: atonement] will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure.*

**298. that which was closed returns...** The flow of emanation resumes, and all the lower *sefirot* are blessed with nourishment. The phrase “*Teshuvah* unspecified” means that the term is not limited to one particular realm but encompasses all.

**299. When the whole world is bound as one...** When human *teshuvah* stimulates sefirotic union, then this verse applies: *For Your love is great over heaven*—implying an

ascent or manifestation above *Tif'eret*, who is known as *heaven*.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Psalms reads: *For Your love is higher than [or: great over] heaven*. See BT *Pesahim* 50b; *Zohar* 1:219a; 2:6a.

**300. Precisely...** Rabbi Yehudah focuses on the wording מעל (*me-al*), *over*, *heaven*. The simpler form על (*al*), *over*, would imply the *sefirah* immediately above *Tif'eret* (who is known as *heaven*), namely *Hesed*. The fuller form *me-al* alludes to a higher *sefirah*, namely the Divine Mother, *Binah*.

**301. When deeds are worthy below...** Human virtue brings delight to *Binah*, and ensures that the highest *sefirah*, *Keter* (known as the Holy Ancient One), will reveal itself to and through the configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod* (known as the Short-Tempered One). Thereby, Compassion reigns, and all is restored, or returned. On the Holy Ancient One and the Short-Tempered One, see above, [note 285](#)–87.

**302. All is included...** In the word יָשׁוּב (*yashuv*), *He will return* (Micah 7:19), which is not limited to the Holy Ancient One but encompasses all aspects of return and restoration. The identical word in Deuteronomy applies to the Short-Tempered One (known as *YHVH*), who will *turn back* from anger and manifest compassion.

**303. He shall restore that which he robbed...** According to the Talmud, a thief (who commits his crime in stealth) is punished more severely than a robber (who commits his crime openly). Whereas if a robber is caught, he must simply *return that which he robbed*, a thief is required to pay back double or more. The reason, according to Rabbi Yoḥanan son of Zakkai, is that the thief is more concerned about human beings seeing him steal than he is about God seeing him, whereas the robber is equally concerned (or unconcerned) about both—and thus does not elevate humans above God.

See Exodus 21:37; 22:3; BT *Bava Qamma* 79b; *Zohar* 2:207b. The *Zohar's* formulation is based on the passage in *Bava Qamma*, while the references to fear probably derive from Rashi's comment ad loc., s.v. *hishvah kevod eved*. See Scholem.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *It shall be, when he sins and is guilty, he shall return [or: restore] that which he robbed or that which he withheld, or the deposit that was entrusted to him, or the lost object that he found.*

**304. If a soul sins...** Understood as “How can it be that the glorious soul sins? After all, she swore an oath to be faithful!” See above at [notes 237–38](#), [242](#).

Leviticus 5:1 reads in full: *If a person [or: soul] sins when she has heard a voice of adjuration [against withholding testimony]—he being witness, having seen or known—if he does not tell, he shall bear his punishment [or: iniquity].* See above, [note 235](#). Leviticus 5:15 reads: *If a person [or: soul] commits a sacrilege, being inadvertently remiss with any of YHVH's sancta...* Leviticus 5:4 reads in full: *Or if a person [or: soul] swears, uttering with his lips, whether for evil or for good, of all that a human utters in a vow, and it be hidden from him, and he know and be guilty of one of these.*

**305. It is written נפש (nefesh), a soul...** Referring to the lowest of the three levels of soul, above which are רוח (*ruah*), “spirit,” and נשמה (*nesamah*), “breath, soul, soul-breath.” The context in Leviticus alludes to both body and *nefesh*, since *he sins* refers to the physical act committed by the body, and *is guilty* refers to one's conscience, associated with the soul. The higher two levels of soul are not involved in sin.

Through sincere *teshuvah* (repentance, returning), a sinner can mend his deeds and restore the flow of emanation from the higher sources to “the plants,” namely the *sefirot Hesed* through *Yesod*. This vital flow had been interrupted by the sinner and, in effect, *robbed* by him.

See above, [note 291](#). On the three aspects of soul, see *Zohar* 1:62a, 81a (*ST*), 83a-b, 206a, 224b-225a; 2:95a-b, 141b-142b, 182a; 3:24b-25a, 70b-71a, 91b; *ZH* 6d (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:684-722, 761-64. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:37.

[306.](#) **Why like a palm tree?...** Since this tree takes so long to flower, Rabbi Shim'on wonders why *the righteous one* is compared to it. Although the verse presents the comparison explicitly, none of the Companions has revealed its deeper meaning, which relates to Messianic redemption.

On the palm tree yielding fruit after seventy years, see *Zohar* 3:24a; Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 23:40. According to BT *Ta'anit* 23a and *Bekhorot* 8a, the fruit of the carob tree ripens after seventy years. Cf. *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Psalms 845. See Emden, *Mitpaḥat Sefarim*, 27 (and Rappaport's comment, 43); Kunitz, *Sefer Ben Yoḥai*, 81b-82a; Leiner, *Ma'amar Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 133; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:56; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

The context in Psalms (92:13-16) reads: *The righteous one flourishes like a palm tree, like a cedar in Lebanon he grows. Planted in the house of YHVH, in the courts of our God they flourish. They bear fruit still in old age, full of sap and fresh they are, to tell that YHVH is upright, my rock, in whom there is no wrong.*

[307.](#) **exile of Babylon...** Which lasted for seventy years. After this span of time, *the righteous one* (*Tiferet* or *Yesod*) reunited with *Shekhinah*, bringing an end to Israel's exile.

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, the male and female aspects of the palm tree symbolize *the righteous one* and *Shekhinah*, who are interdependent, becoming fruitful only by joining together.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 40(41):1; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:11; BT *Pesaḥim* 56a; *Bahir* 117 (172), 139 (198), and Scholem's note, ad loc.; Rashi on *Pesaḥim* 56a, s.v. *Rav Aḥa*; *Tosafot, Menahot* 71a, s.v. *markivin*; *Zohar* 1:82a; 2:37b, 126a; 3:135b (*IR*), 143b (*IR*), 292a (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 128.

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#). The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *For thus says YHVH: When Babylon's seventy years are over, I will attend to you, and I will fulfill to you My good word—to bring you back to this place.* On the verse in Psalms, see above, [notes 283–86](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Yoma* 38b, *Ḥagigah* 12a; *Zohar* 1:30b, 33a, 60a, 82b; 2:11b, 128b, 176b (*SdTs*); 3:110b.

**[308. who is a cedar?...](#)** This symbolizes *Tif'eret*, known as the blessed Holy One. Jacob attained this rung, becoming a “throne” for *Tif'eret*. Furthermore, according to a rabbinic tradition the image of Jacob was engraved on the Throne.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:12; 82:2; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:2; *Targum Yerushalmi* and *Targum Yerushalmi* (frag.), Genesis 28:12; BT *Hullin* 91b (and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *bi-dyoqno*); *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Akiva B (Battei Midrashot, 2:415–16)*; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 35; *Zohar* 1:72a, 168a, 222a; 2:241a; Moses de León, *Commentary on the Ten Sefirot*, 338b; Wolfson, *Along the Path*, 1–62. On Jacob as “perfect,” see above, [note 215](#).

**[309. in Lebanon, surely...](#)** Alluding to *Hokhmah*, who is also symbolized by Eden. *Tif'eret* extends to this sefirotic height.

Whereas the Babylonian exile lasted seventy years, the current exile will last “a day plus the beginning of the next day”—that is, a millennium plus the start of the next millennium, since a divine “day” equals a thousand years (based on Psalms 90:4: *For a thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday gone*). The Second Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. (or according to *Seder Olam Rabbah*, 68 C.E.), so



“a [millennial] day plus the beginning of the next day” could extend to early in the fourteenth century, shortly after the appearance of the *Zohar*. For various interpretations of the prediction here, see *Or Yaqar*; *Yahel Or*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

On shade signifying the end of exile, see *Zohar* 3:270a; cf. BT *Ta’anit* 29a. On the verse in Isaiah, 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 date of the destruction of the Temple, see *Seder Olam Rabbah* 30; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 18:236. On the date of the final redemption, see *Zohar* 1:116b–119a, 139a–b (*MhN*); 2:9b–10a; 3:249a (*RM*), 251b–252a (*RM*); Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*, 90–92.

**310. The cedar rises only when enjoying water...** *Tif’eret* grows and flourishes only when fed by the stream of emanation, which issues from *Ḥokhmah* (*Lebanon*). The verse in Song of Songs, describing the beloved male, is applied midrashically to the blessed Holy One, which here designates *Tif’eret*.

**311. on the day when the world will be destroyed** A day lasting one thousand years (see above, [note 309](#)). According to BT *Sanhedrin* 97a (in the name of Rabbi Katina), “The world will exist for six thousand years and for one thousand lie desolate.”

**312. the wicked cause a defect above** Disrupting the union of *Shekhinah* and *Tif’eret*.

On causing a defect above, see BT *Sanhedrin* 74a (in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai); *Zohar* 2:26b; 3:8a, 66a, 79a, 297a–b.

**313. And a slanderer separates** אלוף (*aluf*), **an intimate...** The verse reads: *A slanderer [or: whisperer] separates an intimate*. According to Rabbi Shim’on, one



who sins by speech separates *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One) from *Shekhinah*.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:2, referring to the serpent's advice to Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge: "A *whisperer separates an intimate...* A *whisperer*—[this is the serpent,] for he whispered rebelliously against his Creator, saying: [If you eat from the Tree of Knowledge,] *you surely will not die* (Genesis 3:4). *Separates* אלוף (*aluf*), an *intimate*—for he separated אלוף (*aluf*), the Chief, of the world [that is, he caused the Divine Presence to depart from the world] and was immediately cursed." See above, [note 204](#).

[314](#). **What is *yeshallah*?...** This implies that such a person *drives away* the sefirotic plants (*Hesed* through *Yesod*) from their source of Compassion and causes them to be influenced by harsh Judgment.

[315](#). **he separates *Matronita* from the King...** Namely, *Shekhinah* from *Tif'eret*, thereby ruining the divine unity and Oneness. The righteous, who maintain this unity, "sustain existence above." The "masters of *teshuvah* (repentance, returning)" restore everything to its place, both above and below. On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary.

[316](#). **In the place where...** See BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: "In the place where *ba'alei teshuvah* (masters of returning, or repentance) stand, the completely righteous cannot stand." According to Rabbi Shim'on, the *ba'alei teshuvah* attain the rung of *Binah* (who is known as *Teshuvah*), from whom the stream of emanation flows to *Shekhinah* (the Garden). The completely righteous attain the rung of *Yesod*, who is known as Righteous One.

On the passage in *Berakhot*, see BT *Sanhedrin* 99a; *Zohar* 1:39a (*Heikh*), 129b; 2:106a–b, 113b; 3:202b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 174–75. On *Binah* as *Teshuvah*, see above, [notes 290](#), [296–98](#). On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#).

**317. the former dwell in a supernal place...** In *Binah*, whereas the righteous dwell in a (relatively) “small place,” namely *Yesod*. The *ba’alei teshuvah* (masters of returning, or repentance) restore the flow of emanation to the lower *sefirot*, from the deep river of *Binah* to *Yesod* (known as Righteous One). The completely righteous conduct this flow from *Yesod* to *Shekhinah*, and from Her it proceeds to the world.

**318. It shall be, when he sins...** The context (Leviticus 5:21-23) reads: *If a person [or: soul] sins and commits a sacrilege against YHVH by dissembling with his fellow about a deposit or pledge, or by robbery, or by withholding from his fellow; or if he finds something lost and dissembles about it and swears falsely about anything that a person may do to sin—it shall be, when he sins and is guilty, he shall return [or: restore] that which he robbed or that which he withheld, or the deposit that was entrusted to him, or the lost object that he found.*

Sin causes God to withdraw from the world, interrupts the flow of emanation, and splits the divine couple: *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah* (who is known as Assembly of Israel). She is thus “alienated from Her place,” from Her union with *Tif’eret*. The verses in Jeremiah 7 and 9 imply that *Shekhinah* (called *faith* and *the land*) *has lost* Her divine partner. The verse in Psalms links *faithfulness* (or *faith*) with *nights*, symbolizing *Shekhinah*. The clause “all is one” means that both *faith* and *the land* refer to Her. Rabbi Shim’on indicates that in both verses from Jeremiah the verb אבדה (*avedah*) should be construed as transitive—meaning that *Shekhinah has lost Tif’eret*—not that *faith has been lost* (or *has perished*), or that *the land has been lost* (or *ruined*). Similarly, the verse in Isaiah implies that as a result of sin, *Yesod (the righteous one) loses* His partner, *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Leviticus now means that by engaging in sincere *teshuvah*, a sinner can *return*, or restore, the flow of

emanation that he interrupted, or *robbed*. And he can *return the lost object*—*Shekhinah*—to Her partner, *Tif'eret*.

See above, [note 305](#). The verse in Jeremiah 7 reads: אבדה האמונה (*Avedah ha-emunah*), *Faithfulness* [or: *honesty, truth*; literally: *faith*] *has perished* [or: *been lost*]. See *Zohar* 1:55b. The verse in Jeremiah 9 reads: *Why* אבדה הארץ (*avedah ha-arets*), *has the land been ruined* [or: *lost*]? See *Zohar* 3:266b, 268a. The verse in Isaiah reads: *The righteous one* אבד (*avad*), *perishes* [or: *is lost*]. See *Zohar* 1:55b, 182a, 196b; 2:9b, 11a, 57a–b; 3:69a, 150b, 266b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 73.

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). On *Shekhinah* as *faith* or *faithfulness*, see *Zohar* 1:19b; 2:214a; 3:35b, 198b; *ZH* 82a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 25–26. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#).

[319](#). ***If the anointed priest should sin...*** The full verse reads: *If the anointed priest should sin, incurring guilt for the people, he shall offer for his sin that he has committed an unblemished bull from the herd for YHVH as a purification offering.*

[320](#). ***Tell me, you whom my soul loves...*** In midrashic sources, these verses in Song of Songs (which include the question *Where do you pasture your sheep?*) are linked with Moses' request before he dies that God appoint a new leader *so that YHVH's community will not be like sheep without a shepherd*. The question in Song of Songs becomes, as it were: *Who will pasture your sheep?*

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 139; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:7–8. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 12; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:4; 3:4. On the tradition that this verse alludes to exile, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:7; Rashi, ad loc.; *Zohar* 3:197a–b.

The context in Song of Songs reads: *Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where do you pasture your sheep? Where do you rest them at noon? Lest I be as one who strays* [or: *as*

*one enwrapped] among the flocks of your fellows. If you do not know, O fairest of women, go follow the tracks of the sheep, and graze your kids by the shepherds' tents.*

The context in Numbers reads: *Let YHVH, God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the community, who will go out before them and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that YHVH's community will not be like sheep without a shepherd.*

**321. spoken by Assembly of Israel...** Spoken by *Shekhinah* to Her beloved, King *Tif'eret*. Similarly, later in Song of Songs, *the one whom my soul loves* refers to *Tif'eret*. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

**322. In the Book of Rav Hamnuna...** This source teaches that as long as *Shekhinah* is with *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One), the latter is fulfilled, imbibing nourishment from *Binah* (the Divine Mother) and conveying sustenance to those below.

On the link between blessing and the union of male and female, see BT *Yevamot* 62b-63a, in the name of Rabbi Hanilai: "Any man who has no wife is without joy, without blessing, without goodness." See above, [note 37](#).

On God's roaring, see BT *Berakhot* 3a, in the name of Rav: "The night consists of three watches, and at each watch the blessed Holy One sits and roars like a lion, saying: 'Woe to the children, on account of whose sins I destroyed My house and burned My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world!'" Here in the *Zohar*, the Temple's destruction implies the exile of *Shekhinah* Herself, who is symbolized by *His abode* and over whom God weeps.

See *Zohar* 3:74b; *ZH* 47c, 77b (*MhN*, *Rut*). On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, [note 38](#). On *Binah's* milk, see *Zohar* 2:122b; cf. 3:136b (*IR*).

**323. When Assembly of Israel went into exile...** When *Shekhinah* accompanied Her people Israel into exile, She asked the blessed Holy One how He would nourish

Himself from the ceaseless river of *Binah* and from the radiance of *Hokhmah* (known as Eden)—since Her separation from Him disrupts the entire process of emanation. See *ZH* 52c. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 27](#).

**324. *Where do you sprinkle at noon?...*** Rabbi Abba interprets תרביץ (*tarbits*), *do you rest* [*them*], according to another sense of the verb, *do you sprinkle*. He may be interpreting the dual form צהרים (*tsohorayim*), *noon*, according to the root meaning, “to shine.” Here the question is posed by *Shekhinah* to Her beloved: How will You sustain all the shining entities?

See *Or Yaqar; Miqdash Melekh*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:411; Scholem. For the full verse in Song of Songs, see above, [note 320](#).

**325. *The flocks of your fellows—Israel...*** Pictured as *flocks* of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are themselves considered God’s *fellows* (or *companions*). The three patriarchs constitute a chariot-throne for God and symbolize respectively the sefirotic throne of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*.

According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:6 (in the name of Resh Lakish), “The patriarchs themselves constitute the [Divine] Chariot.” See Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 57; *Zohar* 1:60b, 99a, 150a, 154b, 173b, 186a, 222b, 223b–224a, 248b; 2:23b, 31b, 144a; 3:38a, 71b, 99a, 146a, 182a, 262b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 239–40; Chaze, “De l’identification des patriarches au char divin.” On *the flocks of your fellows*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 139; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:7; *ZH* 52c.

**326. *Leave what is Mine...*** *Tif’eret* tells *Shekhinah* that She should not inquire into the mysterious process of His nourishment. However, if She wishes to know how to maintain Herself, then She should focus on the righteous, whose devotion even in suffering stimulates the flow of emanation.

On the significance of לך (*lakh*), *yourself*, cf. *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 27, p. 144; Rashi and Nahmanides on Genesis 12:1; *Zohar* 1:77b-78a, 254b (*Hash*); 2:32a (Vol. 4, p. 134, n. 235), 219a-b (Vol. 6, pp. 251-52, nn. 440-41); 3:157a; *ZH* 71b (*ShS*). The quotation from Song of Songs 1:15 implies that *fair* refers to *Shekhinah*.

On *the tracks of the sheep* as referring to paths of the righteous (or simply the righteous), see *Targum*, Song of Songs 1:7; *ZH* 52d; cf. BT *Shabbat* 33b. On it referring to those who are “trampled underfoot,” see *ZH* 70d (*ShS*). For the full verse in Song of Songs (1:8), see above, [note 320](#).

**[327.](#) and graze your kids...** According to BT *Shabbat* 119b (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince), “The world endures only for the sake of the breath of schoolchildren.”

See *Zohar* 1:1b, 47a, 146b (*ST*); 2:39a; 3:47b. On *kids* (that is, young goats or sheep) as children, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:8; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:4.

**[328.](#) they are seized first...** The death of the righteous atones for their generation; similarly, innocent children. *Shekhinah* shares in the exile of Her people.

On virtuous people being seized for the sin of others, see BT *Shabbat* 33b (per Munich MS): “Rabbi Gorion (according to others, Rabbi Yosef son of Rabbi Shema’yah) said, ‘When there are righteous ones in the generation, the righteous are seized for the sin of the generation. When there are no righteous in the generation, schoolchildren are seized for the sin of the generation.’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:6; *Kallah Rabbati* 6:4; Rashi on BT *Ta’anit* 11a, s.v. *ha-tsaddiq avad*; *Zohar* 1:67b-68a, 180a; 2:10b, 38b, 53a, 195a; 3:38a, 46b, 218a. Cf. *Mekhilta*, *Neziqin* 18; BT *Shabbat* 55a, *Avodah Zarah* 4a. On the death of the righteous as atonement, see below, [pp. 360-61](#), [n. 14](#). On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 27](#).



**329. *If the anointed priest should sin...*** The *anointed priest* symbolizes the blessed Holy One, who receives the flow of emanation from above. If He withholds His goodness and judges the world harshly, this is *because of the guilt of the people*.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *If the anointed priest should sin*, לְאַשְׁמַת הָעָם (*le-ashmat ha-am*), *incurring guilt for the people, he shall offer for his sin that he has committed an unblemished bull from the herd for YHVH as a purification offering*. Rabbi Abba interprets *le-ashmat ha-am* not as *incurring guilt for the people*, but rather as *because of the guilt of the people*. On God as a priest, see BT *Sanhedrin* 39a, *Zevahim* 102a; *Zohar* 3:49b.

The verse in Kings is spoken by Bathsheba to King David, urging him to announce that their son, Solomon, will succeed him. If David fails to do so, Bathsheba fears that *I and my son Solomon will be regarded as* חַטָּאִים (*hatta'im*), *sinners* [or: *traitors, offenders*]. According to Rashi, the word *hatta'im* here means *lacking*, that is, deprived of royalty. This sense conveys the primary meaning of the root חָטָא (*ht*), “to miss, fail to reach.” (See Isaiah 65:20; Proverbs 8:36; Job 5:24; Judges 20:16.) Rabbi Abba adopts this meaning and applies it to the word יַחֲטֵא (*yeḥeta*) in Leviticus, which now implies that God “withholds” His goodness.

**330. *withholding from Assembly of Israel...*** From *Shekhinah*.

**331. *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel...*** Why does the verse read אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק (*Avraham Yitshaq*), *Abraham, Isaac*, rather than אַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק (*Avraham ve-Yitshaq*), *Abraham and Isaac*? Appropriately, it is Rabbi Yitshak who explains that the lack of *ve-* (*and*) emphasizes the union of these two patriarchs, who symbolize respectively the polar opposites *Hesed* (on the right) and *Gevurah* (on the left). *Gevurah*, also known as *Din* (Judgment), must be tempered by and “included in” *Hesed*; so the verse “does not separate” at all



between Abraham and Isaac, who appear here as “one totality.”

*Israel* (or Jacob) symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who balances *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, “holding” both of them. He is “perfectly complete,” so the verse lists him on his own: *and Israel*. Cf. *Zohar* 2:23a.

On left being included in right, see *Zohar* 1:17a, 119b, 243a; 2:26b, 52b, 57a-b, 66a, 81a, 162b, 168b-169a, 223a, 231a; 3:24a, 118b, 176a, 178b, 236b; *ZH* 44a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 254; Wolfson, “Left Contained in the Right.” The verse in Exodus reads in full: *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself and said to them, “I will multiply your seed like the stars of heaven, and all this land of which I spoke, I will give to your seed, and they will possess it forever.”*

**332. To whom You swore by Yourself..** God swore an oath to the earthly patriarchs by the sefirotic Patriarchs: *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*.

**333. Of which I spoke...** Since Moses is speaking this verse to God, it should read *of which You spoke*. However, Rabbi Yitshak explains that Moses is quoting God, who told the patriarchs that He had previously made this promise to them. See BT *Berakhot* 32a. For the full verse in Exodus, see above, [note 331](#).

**334. אמרתי (amarti), I spoke...** The root אמר (*'mr*), “to say, speak,” can also mean “to intend”—or “to desire,” as in 1 Samuel 20:4: *whatever your soul תאמר (tomar), desires*. This latter verse is quoted here in several manuscripts and in the standard editions. See Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:65; Nahmanides on Genesis 1:3.

**335. And they will possess it לעולם (le-olam), forever...** In biblical Hebrew, *olam* means “eternity,” whereas in later Hebrew it also means “world.” Here, Rabbi Yitshak interprets the verse to mean that Israel should not only possess the *land* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), but also ensure and

maintain Her union with *Tif'eret*, the supernal *olam* (*world*). Otherwise, *if the anointed priest should sin*—that is, if *Tif'eret* “withholds” the flow of emanation from *Shekhinah*—She will suffer exile, all *because of the guilt of the people*. See above, [note 329](#). For the full verse in Exodus, see above, [note 331](#).

[336.](#) ***If the anointed priest should sin...*** Now Rabbi Yitshak interprets the subject according to its simple sense: the high priest. If he is discovered to have sinned, he cannot serve until he brings a purification offering. See above, [note 329](#).

[337.](#) **All the more so the priest...** When, by his service, he unites the divine couple, all worlds turn joyous. *Hesed* is aroused on the right, *Gevurah* on the left is included within *Hesed*, and all becomes harmonious. On the intention of the priest, see above, [note 113](#).

[338.](#) **now that he himself has sinned...** Who can bring an offering for such a priest? How can he atone for himself if he is unworthy?

[339.](#) **He shall atone for himself...** On Yom Kippur the high priest offers a sacrifice for this purpose. On the priest atoning for himself, see also M *Horayot* 2:1-2; *Sifra*, *Hovah* 9:5, 21c; 10:8, 22a; BT *Menaḥot* 74a, 109a.

[340.](#) **to which place the high priest is linked...** The high priest, a common priest, and the prefect were each linked to a particular *sefirah*. According to Rabbi Hiyya, if the high priest sinned, a common priest would bring an offering for the high priest, thereby attaining the rung to which the common priest was linked. Then the high priest himself could bring an offering and attain his own, higher rung. The phrase “all those above” refers either to angelic or sefirotic powers.

According to M *Berakhot* 5:3, if a person leading the prayers commits a mistake in praying, he is to be replaced by another. For various interpretations of which *sefirot* correspond to each of the priestly grades, see *Or Yaqar*;

*Miqdash Melekh; Sullam; Scholem. Cf. Zohar 2:95a-b.* The term שגן (*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.

**341. watched over him for three days...** This resembles the weeklong preparation of the high priest before Yom Kippur, when he was required to reside in a chamber within the Temple and receive instruction on the upcoming rituals. See M *Yoma* 1.

**342. These blowings proceed...** The main blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah consists of three sets, each of which repeats a particular order of sounds three times. The order of the first set is: *teqi'ah* (a single long “blast”), *shevarim* (three “broken sounds”), followed immediately by *teru'ah* (“alarm,” a tremolo of nine staccato notes), and *teqi'ah*. The order of the second set is *teqi'ah, shevarim, teqi'ah*. The order of the third set is *teqi'ah, teru'ah, teqi'ah*, concluding finally with *teqi'ah gedolah* (a great [very long] blast). See M *Rosh ha-Shanah* 4:9; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 33b-34a; *Zohar* 3:99b-100b.

According to Rabbi Yeisa Sava, “The first comprises all,” that is, the first set—*teqi'ah, shevarim-teru'ah, teqi'ah*—includes all three sounds. The second set includes “one orderly,” that is, it begins with *teqi'ah*, as does every set; “another orderly,” that is, it ends with *teqi'ah*, as does every set; and “powers between them,” referring to *shevarim*, whose “broken sounds” symbolize aspects of *Gevurah* (Power). The third set includes “one here, another there,” that is, *teqi'ah* at the beginning and the end, with “power between them,” referring to *teru'ah*, whose “alarm” symbolizes an aspect of *Gevurah*.

“Cutting off” describes *shevarim* (broken sounds), which “ascends” to the higher *sefirah, Gevurah*, whereas “cluster” describes the nine staccato notes of *teru'ah*, which

“descends” to the lower *sefirah*, *Shekhinah*. *Gevurah* is called “harsh Judgment,” whereas *Shekhinah* is “mild Judgment.”

There are ten sounds in three sequences: *teqi'ah*, *shevarim-teru'ah*, *teqi'ah*; *teqi'ah*, *shevarim*, *teqi'ah*; *teqi'ah*, *teru'ah*, *teqi'ah*. However, since *shevarim-teru'ah* are sounded together, these two can be considered as “one, totality of all” (understood as “totality of both”), so the ten sounds are also nine. (In fact, the two sounds called *shevarim* and *teru'ah* are very closely related, being two rabbinic approximations of what was meant by the biblical term *teru'ah*.) Alternatively, there are ten sounds in three sequences, but each sequence is repeated three times, making nine total sequences. And the final sound—*teqi'ah gedolah*—is “one, totality of all.”

**343. On this day Isaac is crowned...** Rosh Hashanah is the Day of Judgment, dominated by the *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). Isaac symbolizes this *sefirah*, so on this day he is empowered and becomes, as it were, “head of the patriarchs.”

According to rabbinic tradition, Sarah conceived Isaac on Rosh Hashanah. The Torah reading for the two days of the holiday describes the conception, birth, and binding of Isaac (Genesis 21–22). Abraham’s binding of Isaac on the altar symbolizes the inclusion of Isaac’s *sefirah* (*Din*) within Abraham’s *sefirah* (*Hesed*), a process which includes “binding all” aspects of Judgment. Sarah may symbolize *Shekhinah*, who wails over the threatening powers of Judgment. The phrase “who passes through them” means “who passes through the sounds of Judgment conveyed by the shofar.”

On Isaac and Rosh Hashanah, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 73:1; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 10b–11a; *Tanḥuma*, *Vayera* 17; *Zohar* 1:37a, 103a, 226b; 3:32a, 99a–100a, 99b–100a (*Piq*); *ZH* 27b, 45a. On the binding of Isaac, see *Zohar* 1:119b; cf. above, [note 331](#). On the tradition that Isaac was bound on Rosh Hashanah, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* (per Munich MS, printed in *Neveh Shalom*, ed. Taussig, 51); *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 171b; *Midrash Aggadah* Genesis 22:14; Ginzberg,

*Legends*, 5:252, n. 248. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:9; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:9; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 169b, 171b. On Sarah's wailing, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:2; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 32; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:7. The clause "the sound of the shofar is extremely strong" is based on Exodus 19:19, and *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.

**344. on this day we read the portion of Isaac...** Describing his birth and his binding on the altar. (See the preceding note.) Isaac's binding below also tied him to his *sefirah* above, *Gevurah*—or his *sefirah* was tied to the higher *sefirah*, *Hesed*. See *Zohar* 1:119b.

**345. On this day Isaac crowned Abraham...** By binding Isaac, Abraham was fulfilled and elevated because now the left side (symbolized by Isaac) was included within Abraham on the right. The verse in Genesis 31 implies that now *Gevurah* or *Din* (also known as *Paḥad*, "Fear") was with Abraham (although the verse was actually spoken by Jacob).

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 55:1: "It came to pass after these things that God נִסָּה (*nissah*), tested, Abraham [by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac], It is written: You have given נֵס (*nes*), a banner, to those in awe of You, לְהִתְנוּסֹס (*le-hitnosos*), to be unfurled... (Psalms 60:6)—trial upon trial, elevation above elevation, to test them in the world, to elevate them in the world like a ship's banner."

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 55:6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 43; *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 9; *Zohar* 1:119b, 140a, 230b; *ZḤ* 50b.

**346. For Elohim is the judge...** This divine name is associated with *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac. According to Rabbi Abba, this *sefirah* on the left must not only be balanced by *Hesed* on the right, but also pass through the harmonious realm of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Jacob), where it is assuaged ("rinsed"); otherwise, the harshness of Judgment could still destroy the world. The verse in Isaiah implies that Judgment (symbolized by *fire*) is

mitigated by Compassion (symbolized by the name *YHVH*). On *YHVH* and *Elohim* signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see above, [note 31](#).

**347. he went out to rebuke...** Instead of לאוכחא (*le-okhaḥa*), “to rebuke,” several of the older manuscripts (P2, T1, V5) read לאורחא (*le-orḥa*), “on the way (or the road).”

**348. Similarly, the blessed Holy One...** God tells Israel that He intends to prevent harsh Judgment from striking the world, but He asks Israel to strengthen Him by sounding the shofar. This sound has the power to arouse the patriarchs—or their corresponding *sefirot*: *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*—who then all abide in the realm of *Tif'eret* (called “the dwelling of Jacob”), also known as *Raḥamim* (Compassion). Thereby the harshness of Judgment is assuaged.

See *Zohar* 3:99a–100b, 99b (*Piq*). On strengthening God, see above, [note 108](#). On the role of the patriarchs’ merit on Rosh Hashanah, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:7; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:7; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 169a.



[349](#). **Not a single sound...** Each sound of the shofar ascends to a different place, and all the angels make room for it.

On the interplay between voices (or sounds), cf. *Zohar* 2:184a-b; 3:38b, 99a-100b, 99b-100a (*Piq*). The full verse in Joel reads: *YHVH utters His voice before His army. How vast is His camp! Numberless are those who obey His command. For great is the day of YHVH; most terrible—who can endure it?*

[350](#). **thrones are cast down...** Thrones of Judgment are removed, and the Throne of Compassion (symbolized by Jacob) is established firmly.

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "*Elohim has gone up with a blast, YHVH with a sound of the shofar* (Psalms 47:6). When the blessed Holy One ascends to sit upon the Throne of Judgment on Rosh Hashanah, He ascends for Judgment, as is written: *Elohim has gone up with a blast*. But as soon as the people of Israel take their shofars and blow them, immediately *YHVH with a sound of the shofar*. What does the blessed Holy One do? He rises from the Throne of Judgment and sits upon the Throne of Compassion, and He is filled with Compassion for them, turning for them the Attribute of Judgment into the Attribute of Compassion."

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 168b; *Midrash Tehillim* 47:2; *Zohar* 3:99a, 99b (*Piq*), 100a-101a. Cf. BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b. On *YHVH* and *Elohim* signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see above, [note 31](#).

The image of thrones being "cast down" derives from Daniel 7:9, which reads in full: *As I watched, thrones were placed [or: were cast], 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*. See above, [note 287](#).



**351. in the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava...** On Rav Hamnuna and his book, see above, [note 38](#). On the effect of the shofar on heavenly accusers, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16a-b: “Why do we sound a plain blast and a tremolo blast while sitting and then again while standing? In order to confound Satan.”

See Rabbeinu Ḥananel on BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 35a (cited in *Nitsotsei Zohar*, 3:99b, n. 8); *Arukh*, s.v. *arev*; *Tosafot*, *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b, s.v. *kedei le-arbev*; *Zohar* 1:114b, 152a (*ST*); 2:184a-b, 196b, 237b-238a; 3:99b (*Piq*); *TZ* 21, 51b.

**352. Happy is the people...** The full verse reads: *Happy is the people who know תרועה (teru'ah), the shout of joy [or: the (horn's) blast], O YHVH, they walk in the light of Your presence.* See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:4; *Midrash Tehillim* 81:4; *Zohar* 2:250b-251a (*Heikh*); 3:99b, 100b, 149b, 231b.

**353. should look to someone...** To lead them in prayer on Rosh Hashanah. Here *the anointed priest* in Leviticus refers to the cantor, who is called שליח צבור (*sheliah tsibbur*), “agent of the congregation.” If he is unworthy, he incurs *guilt for the people*, dooming them with Judgment. For the full verse, see above, [note 319](#).

**354. a priest and a Levite must be examined...** Cf. M *Qiddushin* 4:4, where it is taught that if a man (or according to some interpretations, a priest) seeks to marry a priest's daughter, he must examine her lineage to make sure that there is no disqualification (such as an ancestress who was divorced and then married a priest). The following mishnah mentions a Levite and a member of the Sanhedrin. However, the context is different than what Rabbi El'azar discusses here; furthermore, there is no mention of examining behavior, only ancestral qualification. See *Zohar* 3:34b.

The subject of “If he is found fitting...” is the priest or Levite. The context in Deuteronomy (33:8-11) records

Moses' blessing to the tribe of Levi: *For Levi he said: Your Thummim and Your Urim for Your devoted man, whom You tested at Massah, disputed with at the waters of Meribah; who says of his father and mother, "I have not seen them," and his brothers he recognized not, and his sons he did not know. For they kept Your utterance and Your covenant they preserved. They shall teach Your laws to Jacob and Your teaching to Israel. They shall put incense in Your nose and whole offerings on Your altar. Bless, O YHVH, his abundance, and his handiwork favor....*

The verse *who says of his father and mother, "I have not seen them,"* etc., may allude to the Levites' ruthless denial of their relatives when they played the role of God's avengers in the episode of the Golden Calf, or perhaps this motif was also attached to the Levites in a story about Massah and Meribah that did not survive elsewhere. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*; Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*. The point here is that the Levites (and the priests, also descended from Levi) were tested before being allowed to perform holy service. On the Urim and Thummim, see Vol. 6, p. 322, n. 174.

**355. *If the whole community of Israel should err***  
The context (Leviticus 4:13-14) reads: *If the whole community of Israel should err, and the matter be hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do one of the things that by YHVH's commands should not be done, and they bear guilt, when the sin that they committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd as a purification offering, and they shall bring it before the Tent of Meeting.* This situation could occur, for example, if the high priest declares the new moon on the wrong day, in which case festivals of the ensuing month would be observed by everyone on the wrong day. See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:242. According to rabbinic tradition, this chapter of Leviticus deals with occasions when the people

have been led to sin by a wrongful decision of the Sanhedrin. See M *Horayot* 1.

**356. Rabbi Shim'on opened...** God created the first human as androgynous and thus *right* or complete.

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 5:2).' Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥmani said, 'When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces; and He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.'" See above, [note 168](#).

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *You complacent [or: at ease, carefree, lolling] women, rise, hear my voice! You confident young ladies, listen to my speech!* The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *Besides, see, this I have found, that God made the human being יָשָׁר (yashar), right [or: upright], but they have sought many schemes.*

**357. From the hollow of the great supernal abyss...** From the demonic abode issued Lilith, head of all evil spirits. According to *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, Lilith was Adam's first wife, created from the earth. Insisting on her equality, she refused to lie beneath Adam; rather, uttering the name *YHVH*, she flew away.

On Lilith, see *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, ed. Yassif, 231-34, 289-90; *Zohar* 1:14b, 19b, 34b, 122a-b, 131b, 148a-b (ST), 190b, 204a; 2:60b-61a, 96a-b, 231b, 242b-244a, 267b; 3:69a, 76b-77a, 224a-b, 231b, 266a; *ZH* 16c (MhN); Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 36-37; Margalio, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 235-41; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:464-65, 531; Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 221-54; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 356-61; Hutter, "Lilith"; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 120-22. The word נֹקְבָא (*nuqba*) means both "hole, cavity" (translated here as "hollow") and "female."

**358. When Adam was created...** His body was desired by demonic spirits, who lacked bodies. Adam, meanwhile,

was only a body, not yet animated by spirit.

On demons lacking bodies, 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*] לעשות (*laasot*), *to make* (Genesis 2:3), 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; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:14a, 47b–48a, 178a; 2:155b, 178b (*SdTs*); 3:43a, 48b, 142b (*IR*); *ZH* 32d–33a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 397. Cf. *M Avot* 5:6: “Ten things were created on Friday eve at twilight:.... Some say, ‘Also the demons.’” On the green color of Adam’s body, see *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 11.

**359. Let the earth bring forth a living soul...** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth*) was impregnated by the Divine Male, who conveyed Adam’s soul to Her. This soul was androgynous, reflecting the male and female aspects of the divine couple.

Rabbi Shim’on interprets the biblical phrase נפש חיה (*nefesh ḥayyah*), *a living soul*, as *soul of a living being*. If the word *ḥayyah*, *living being*, included the definite article ה (*ha*), *the*, then it would refer to one specific *living being*—either *Shekhinah* (the lower *sefirah*) or *Tif’eret*, whose full name is *Tif’eret Yisra’el* (Beauty of Israel). However, the unspecified wording *ḥayyah*, *a living being*, implies “all,” namely both of these divine parents, who generated Adam’s soul.

On *nefesh ḥayyah* as the soul of Adam, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:1; *Tanḥuma*, *Tazri’a* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri’a* 2; *Zohar* 1:34a; 2:12a, 55a; 3:39b, 43b, 70b, 174b. On the connotation *soul of a living being* (rather than *a living soul*), see *Zohar* 3:24b, 39b, 46b.

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, 126a, 238a, 242a; 3:24b, 39b, 41a; *ZH* 9b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 51; idem, *Commentary on the Ten Sefirot*, 338b. On the *ḥayyah* called Israel, see *Midrash Konen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:39); and Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, § 406: “There is one *ḥayyah* there whose name is Israel.” See *Zohar* 2:4b (*MhN*), 14b (*MhN*).

Genesis 1:24 reads in full: *God said, “Let the earth bring forth נפש חיה (nefesh ḥayyah), living beings [or: a living soul], of each kind and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth of each kind.” And it was so.* Genesis 2:7 reads in full: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the soil, and blew into his nostrils נשמה (nishmat), the breath of life, and the human became נפש חיה (nefesh ḥayyah), a living being [or: a living soul].*

**360. When he rose...** Adam’s androgynous soul animated both his female and male sides. Genesis 2:21–22 states: *YHVH Elohim cast a deep slumber on the human, and he slept, and He took one מצלעותיו (mi-tsal’otav), of his ribs [or: of his sides], and closed the flesh in its place. YHVH Elohim built הצלע (ha-tsela), the rib [or: the side], He had taken from the human into a woman and He brought her to the human.* According to the midrashic tradition quoted above ([note 356](#)), God divided the original androgynous human into two halves: the male Adam and the female Eve. Then He adorned Eve before presenting her to Adam.

On *tsela* as “side,” see Exodus 25:12; 26:20 (quoted here and in *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:1; 17:6; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:1; *Bahir* 116 [172]; Rashi and Ibn Ezra on Genesis 2:21); 2 Samuel 16:13; *Zohar* 2:55a; 3:44b, 78a.

On God adorning Eve, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 18:1: “*YHVH Elohim built ha-tsela, the 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.’” Cf. BT *Berakhot* 61a:



“Rabbi Shim’on son of Menasia expounded, ‘Why is it written *YHVH Elohim built the side?* This teaches that the blessed Holy One braided Eve’s hair and brought her to Adam.’”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:13; BT *Shabbat* 95a, *Eruvin* 18a, *Niddah* 45b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 4; B, 8; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:2; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayera* 1, 4; *Hayyei Sarah* 2; *Midrash Tehillim* 25:11; *Kallah Rabbati* 1:2; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Genesis 2:22; *Zohar* 1:34b, 48b; 2:55a; 3:44b.

**361. In the books of the ancients...** Alluding to the account in *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira* (summarized above, [note 357](#), and referred to similarly in *Zohar* 1:34b). Rabbi Shim’on, however, insists that Lilith did not flee until Eve (“this one”) issued from him. Until then, “a [human] female was not with him” and Lilith “coupled with him.”

**362. The remedy for this...** Lilith seeks to interfere with sexual union. By stealing drops of semen, she can generate demons; and her mere presence threatens the new life about to be conceived. One must be vigilant and strive to banish her.

“Loosened, loosened” renders שרי שרי (*sharei sharei*), apparently meaning “Loosened, loosened be your spell!” or perhaps (also) “Loosen, loosen your wrap!” The phrase “not yours” means that the semen does not belong to Lilith. On Lilith’s abode in the ocean, see *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, ed. Yassif, 232; *Zohar* 1:19b. Cf. on the preceding page: “She is in the cities of the sea”; and the description of Na’amah in *Zohar* 3:76b.

“Bedspread” renders קיטפא (*qitpa*), apparently based on Arabic *qatipha*, “cloak, blanket, bedspread.” See *Zohar* 2:45b; 3:106b; *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 183–84, s.v. *atipha*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *qatpoi*.

“Its rolling waves” renders גלגלוי (*galgalloi*), literally “its wheels,” but in medieval Spanish Hebrew poetry and in the *Zohar* גלגל (*galgal*), “wheel,” is equivalent to גל (*gal*), “wave.”

See *Zohar* 1:245a; 2:27b, 48b-49a, 50b, 56a, 225b; 3:30a; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 296.

“The holy share” and “holiness of the King” may well refer to higher aspects of the soul: *ruah* and *neshamah*. See below at [note 506](#).

On this incantation, see *Derekh Emet*; Menahem Azariah da Fano, *Hevel Nevi'im*, 14-15; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem; idem, *On the Kabbalah*, 157; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1364; Liebes, “Sefer ‘Tsaddiq Yesod Olam,’” 106, n. 170; *Matoq mi-Devash*. For another sexual incantation, see *Zohar* 1:112a (*MhN*).

On demons being impregnated by human semen, see *Tanhumah* (Buber), *Bereshit* 17; *Zohar* 1:19b, 55a, 102a-b; below, [pp. 303-4](#), [n. 155](#); Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 51-54; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 154-57; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1366-67. See BT *Shabbat* 151b: “Rabbi Hanina said, ‘One may not sleep alone in a house [or, “in an isolated house”], and whoever sleeps alone in a house is seized by Lilith.’” Cf. *Zohar* 2:264a; 3:45a; *Orhot Hayyim*, par. 60.

[363](#). **and so every time...** That they engage in sexual intercourse until three days after conception.

On the question of how one knows whether conception has occurred, see Emden, *Zohorei Ya'bets*. Cf. *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the period of three days, cf. M *Shabbat* 9:3.

On grafting within three days, see M *Shevi'it* 2:6: “In the sixth year [of each seven year period], within thirty days of Rosh Hashanah, trees may not be planted nor vineshoots sunk nor trees grafted. If one has planted or sunk or grafted, he must uproot it. Rabbi Yehudah says, ‘Any grafting that does not take root within three days will never take root.’ Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Shim'on say, ‘Within two weeks.’”

In this mishnah the two opinions expressed about the time required for successful grafting are three days and



two weeks. Here in the *Zohar*, Rabbi Shim'on mentions "three days" and "thirty days" for successful conception. The phrase "thirty days" also appears in the same mishnah, but in a different context. Here, the opinion of "thirty days" is attributed to the book of Ashmedai, king of the demons.

On the Mishnaic passage, see JT *Shevi'it* 2:6, 33c-d; BT *Pesahim* 55a, *Rosh ha-Shanah* 10b, *Yevamot* 83a. Cf. M *Shabbat* 9:3. On King Solomon and Ashmedai, see BT *Gittin* 68a-b; *Midrash Tehillim* 78:12; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 4:165-72; 6:299-300, n. 86. On the book that Ashmedai taught (or left for) King Solomon, see *Zohar* 2:128a; 3:43a, 77a, 194b.

[364.](#) **Subsequently...** Once the baby is born. See Moses de León, *Orhot Hayyim*, 59.

[365.](#) **Torah is the Holy Name...** On Torah as God's name, see above, [note 245](#).

[366.](#) **On that day they were commanded...** On the day that Adam and Eve were created, they were commanded not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Because Eve sinned first and the serpent copulated with her, she was punished by being dominated by her husband, a fate that extended to all women from then on. However, when men are sinful, they are dominated by women—not by their wives but by the demonic females Lilith and Na'amah (or Agrat daughter of Maḥalat).

On the serpent copulating with Eve, see BT *Yevamot* 103b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זחמא (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust]. Israel, who stood at Mount Sinai—their filth ceased. Star-worshipers, who did not stand at Mount Sinai—their filth did not cease."

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 4:1 (per British Library MS 27031, ed. Clark); BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a, *Avodah Zarah* 22b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21 (and Luria's nn. 7-8); *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 3:12; *Zohar* 1:36b-37a, 52a, 54a-55a, 63b, 70b, 122b, 126a-b, 145b, 228a; 2:94a, 167b, 193b, 231a, 236b; 3:14b, 24a, 76b, 79a, 87a, 97b; *ZH*

8c-9b, 63c (*ShS*), 83b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 139; Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 38-53; Koren, *Forsaken*, 89-92.

On the dominating demonic females, see *Zohar* 2:125a, 178b (*SdTs*); below, [pp. 394-95](#), [n. 113](#). The first and last of these Zoharic passages quote Isaiah: *and women rule over them*. The full verse in Genesis reads: *To the woman He said, "I will greatly increase your birth pangs, with pain will you bear children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

**[367](#). These are called *flame of the whirling sword*...** The *sword* itself symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who executes Judgment, while the *flame* symbolizes harsh powers of Judgment, including females and males.

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*. According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 21:9, *whirling* means "turning" from one aspect into another: "*Whirling—changing: sometimes male, sometimes female; sometimes spirits, sometimes angels.*"

See *Zohar* 1:44a, 53b, 165a (*ST*), 232a, 237a; 2:264a (*Heikh*); 3:73b (*Mat*). On *Shekhinah* as "sword," see above, [note 223](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH has a sword, full of blood, gorged with fat—with the blood of lambs and goats, with the kidney fat of rams. For YHVH has a slaughter in Bozrah, a great butchery in the land of Edom.*

**[368](#). When the prophet saw...** When Isaiah saw Israel sinning, he called upon the demonic *women* to *rise* and *dominate*. For the full verse in Isaiah, see above, [note 356](#).

**[369](#). Elsewhere we have established this verse...** In BT *Berakhot* 17a, the verse from Isaiah is applied positively to women in general. In *Zohar* 3:167b, the *lolling women* are identified as virtuous women residing in a palace in Paradise along with Bithiah, daughter of Pharaoh. (Deborah resides in a nearby palace.) However, Rabbi Shim'on insists

that the essential meaning of the image in Isaiah is negative, referring to situations such as that of Deborah, who served as judge (or leader) only because no worthy man could be found. Her position as judge reflected the domination of demonic females. Cf. *Midrash Tehillim* 22:20.

According to rabbinic sources, if a man does not know how to recite the Grace after Meals, his wife or children can recite it on his behalf. However (as recorded in BT *Berakhot* 20b), “the Sages said, ‘May a curse fall upon a man whose wife or children have to say Grace for him!’” See *Zohar* 2:168b (Vol. 5, pp. 479–80, n. 823); 3:191a; *ZḤ* 87d (*MhN, Rut*); *Sha’arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge’onim*), 345.

**370. Hannah...** Her poetic prayer alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is “opening of faith,” that is, opening of the sefirotic realm of faith. She is described as *poor*, since She has nothing of Her own, but rather receives the flow of emanation from above. *Shekhinah* is raised to the level of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, who are symbolized by the three patriarchs, described as *nobles*.

“All those verses” refers to Hannah’s full prayer (1 Samuel 2:1–10). On *Shekhinah* as “opening of faith,” see *Zohar* 1:98b (*ST*), 103a.

In rabbinic sources Abraham is described as “a noble,” based loosely on the verse in Psalms: *Nobles of nations have gathered with the God of Abraham*. See BT *Sukkah* 49b, *Ḥagigah* 3a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:2. On all three patriarchs as *nobles*, see *Zohar* 1:235a; 2:197b; 3:26a, 150a, 286a. 1 Samuel 2:8 reads in full: *He raises the poor from the dust, from the dungheaps He lifts the needy, to seat [them] among nobles, a throne of honor He bequeaths them*.

**371. she prophesied of Samuel...** The phrase *to seat among nobles* alludes to Hannah’s future son, who would be associated with Moses and Aaron in the verse from

Psalms. See BT *Berakhot* 31b; *Zohar* 1:21b; 2:148a; *ZH* 43c.

**372. to two kings** Saul and David, who were both anointed by Samuel.

**373. to His servants** The ones chosen by God to serve as king.

**374. YHVH, יחתו מריבו (*yehattu merivav*), *His adversaries will be shattered...*** The word מריבו (*merivav*), *His adversaries*, would normally be spelled with a second ם (*yod*): מריביו (*merivav*). The lack of this *yod* enables Rabbi Shim'on to read the word as consisting of two elements: ן מריב (*meriv vav*), "one who quarrels with *vav*," that is, with *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by the letter ן (*vav*) in יהוה (*YHVH*). This letter, whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif'eret* along with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*).

When sin abounds, the harsh elements of Judgment are empowered and enabled to overwhelm Compassion, which characterizes *Tif'eret*—who, in fact, is called *Raḥamim* (Compassion), the quality associated with the name *YHVH*. However, when *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) is nourished by the flow of emanation from *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, then Compassion overwhelms Judgment, as described in Hannah's prayer: *YHVH, יחתו מריב ן (*yehattu meriv vav*), one who quarrels with vav will be shattered.*

In its simple sense, the full verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH, His adversaries will be shattered; against them in heaven He will thunder. YHVH will judge the ends of the earth; He will grant power to His king and raise the horn of His anointed.*

**375. עליו (*Alav*), *Upon him...*** When the dew of *Keter* (known as the Holy Ancient One) trickles *upon him*—that is, upon the next sefirotic configuration, whose core is *Tif'eret* (known as *heaven*)—then *He will thunder*, destroying the forces of harsh Judgment.

The verse in Samuel reads: *YHVH, His adversaries will be shattered; עליו (alav), against them* [understood here hyperliterally as *upon him*], *in heaven He will thunder*. For the full verse, see the preceding note.

**376. He will therefore grant power...** The Holy Ancient One *will grant power to Tif'eret, His king, and raise the horn of His anointed*, namely *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). The phrase *the horn of His anointed* refers doubly to Her. First of all, She is known as *horn*, as in the phrase *horn of Jubilee*—where *Jubilee* refers to the Divine Mother *Binah*, whose daughter, *Shekhinah*, is Her *horn*. Secondly, *Shekhinah* is known as משיח (mashiah), “anointed, Messiah.” The quotation from 2 Samuel—*anointed of the God of Jacob*—apparently links *Shekhinah (anointed)* with *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *Jacob*).

On *Shekhinah* as *horn of Jubilee*, see *Zohar* 1:96a; 2:123a, 179a (*SdTs*). On *Shekhinah* as being associated (or identified) with the Messiah, see *Zohar* 1:84a, 238a; 2:127b, 164b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 343; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 71–72 (90–91). On anointing with the horn, see 1 Samuel 10:1; Vol. 5, p. 585, n. 92.

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). For the full verse in 1 Samuel, see above, [note 374](#).

**377. Deborah, who came and offered praise...** She is the second of the two women whose praise of God was unequalled by any man. (See above at [note 370](#).) According to rabbinic tradition, before giving the Torah to Israel, God offered it to the other nations, including Edom (who dwelled in Seir). However, they refused to accept its moral constraints.

See *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 5; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 343; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:2; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 33:2; BT *Avodah Zarah* 2b; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 41; *Tanḥuma, Vezot Haberakhah* 4; *Shemot Rabbah* 27:9; *Leqah Tov*, Exodus 20:2; *Zohar* 2:3a; 3:91b, 192a–193a. The full verse in Judges reads: *YHVH, when You came*



*forth from Seir, when You strode from the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the heavens poured, the clouds indeed poured water.*

**378. All those verses uttered by Deborah...** The verses of her song conveyed profound wisdom—until she boasted by saying, *Guidance ceased, ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose; I arose, mother in Israel* (Judges 5:7). Immediately, the Holy Spirit departed from her, depriving her of prophetic power. Seeking to regain this, she exclaimed, *Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, utter a song!*

See BT *Pesahim* 66b. On the profound meaning of Deborah's song, cf. *Zohar* 1:32a-b. Judges 5:7 reads in full: פֶּרְזוֹן (*Ferazon*), *Peasants* [or: *warriors, bravery, guidance, deliverance, leadership*], *ceased, ceased in Israel, until שְׂקַמְתִּי* (*she-qamti*), *you arose, O Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel*. The verb *qamti* (though appearing to be in the first person) is actually an archaic second-person feminine form, meaning *you arose*, but it has often been construed as *I arose*.

**379. If the whole community of Israel should err...** According to a rabbinic tradition, this refers to a situation where most of the people follow an erroneous ruling of the Sanhedrin (described as *community of Israel*). Since the single word עֵדָה (*edah*), *community*, can refer to a court, Rabbi Shim'on wonders why the verse reads *the whole community*? He explains that this wording implies all the members of the Sanhedrin.

See M *Horayot* 1:5; *Sifra, Hovah* 4:2, 19a; Rashi on Leviticus 4:13. The clause “whence Torah issues to the whole people” derives from M *Sanhedrin* 11:2.

The context in Leviticus (4:13-14) reads: *If the whole community of Israel should err, and the matter be hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do one of the things that by YHVH's commands should not be done, and they bear guilt, when the sin that they committed becomes known,*



*the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd as a purification offering, and they shall bring it before the Tent of Meeting.* See above, [note 355](#).

**[380.](#) *The eyes of the assembly...*** On the Sanhedrin as the community's eyes, see *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 2:4; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:15; 4:1; 5:12; 7:5; *Rut Rabbah* (Lerner) 4:12; *Midrash Shemu'el* 14:7; *Tanḥuma, Tetsavveh* 5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 15:24; *Zohar* 2:218a. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 41; JT *Horayot* 1:4, 46a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 98:10; *Eikhah Rabbah* 2:8; BT *Ta'anit* 24a; *Rut Rabbah* 4:12.

**[381.](#) *words of the Ancient of Days*** Secrets of Torah, which are referred to in BT *Pesaḥim* 119a 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; 2:134b, 143a, 168a; 3:105b, 138b (*IR*), 232b. The divine title Ancient of Days appears in Daniel 7:9, and in Kabbalah refers specifically to *Keter*, the primordial *sefirah*. On this story, see Wolski, *A Journey into the "Zohar,"* 185-214.

**[382.](#) *My sin I acknowledged...*** On the need to confess and specify one's sins, see *Tosefta Yoma* 4:14; JT *Yoma* 8:9, 45c; BT *Yoma* 86b; *Zohar* 2:41a (*Piq*); 3:195a-b, 231a. On opposition to declaring one's sins, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, *Sotah* 7b; *Zohar* 2:186a.

On the power of weeping, 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 BT *Bava Metsi'a* 59a; *Zohar* 1:132b; 2:12b, 165a, 245b (*Heikh*); *ZH* 80a (*MhN, Rut*). The full verse in Psalms reads: *My sin I acknowledged to You and my iniquity I did not conceal. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to YHVH," and You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.*

**383. He who sacrifices...** The verse reads: *He who sacrifices* תודה (*todah*), *thanksgiving* [i.e., a *thanksgiving offering*], *glorifies Me*. Rabbi Ḥiyya interprets *todah* as הודאה (*hoda'ah*), which can mean “admission, confession.” Furthermore, he wonders why the letter נ (*nun*) is doubled in the word יכבדוני (*yekhabbedaneni*), *glorifies Me*. He explains that this alludes to two glorifications.

On *todah* in this verse as implying “confession,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 97 (p. 1214); *BT Sanhedrin* 43b. Cf. above, [note 216](#). On the significance of the double *nun* in יכבדוני (*yekhabbedaneni*), see *Bereshit Rabbah* 97 (p. 1214); *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:1; *BT Sanhedrin* 43b (and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *zoveah*); *Tanḥuma, Tsav* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tsav* 9; *Midrash Tehillim* 50:3.

**384. This verse is totally difficult...** Not only is it redundant, but it begins by addressing God directly in the second person (*to You*) and then switches to an indirect wording (*to YHVH*). For the full verse, see above at the end of [note 382](#).

**385. David uttered all his words by the Holy Spirit...** King David, the Psalmist, was inspired, and he began this verse by directly addressing *Malkhut* (Kingdom), the last and most accessible of the *sefirot*, who conveys Israel’s prayer from below to above and channels the divine flow of blessing from heaven to earth. On *Malkhut* (or *Shekhinah*) as the agent, see *Zohar* 2:51a.

**386. from Righteous One of the world** Namely, *Yesod*, the next higher rung. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#).

**387. to YHVH—the Holy King who possesses all peace...** Namely, *Tif’eret* (above *Yesod*), who harmonizes the polar opposites *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, thereby mitigating harsh Judgment and bringing peace. By confessing one’s sins, a person contributes to such peace.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *With cakes of leavened bread he shall bring forward his offering* תודת שלמיו

עַל זֶבַח (*al zevah todat shelamav*), with his thanksgiving sacrifice of well-being [or: his thanksgiving peace sacrifice]. Rabbi Hiyya interprets *todat shelamav*, his thanksgiving peace [sacrifice], as indicating that peace offerings are brought with אֹדָאָה (*oda'ah*), “confession.”

On *todah* as implying confession, see above, [notes 216, 383](#). According to Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Ma'aseh ha-Qorbanot* 3:15, peace offerings do not involve confession. On *shelamim* (offerings of “wellbeing” or “peace”), see above, [notes 143, 181](#). On the phrase “King who possesses all peace,” see below, [p. 391, n. 102](#).

[388. high above...](#) A high sefirotic realm, where *Keter* (known as the Holy Ancient One) abides. *Keter* is pure Compassion, forgiving sin. Thus the verse spans the divine spectrum from *Malkhut* to *Keter*.

The word *You* in this verse may allude to *Hokhmah*, in which *Keter* abides. See *Zohar* 2:90a; 3:290a (*IZ*). On the significance of *Selah*, see Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, 97; Scholem.

[389. unify His Holy Name...](#) Through pure intention, one can unify the *sefirot*, which are all symbolized by the letters of the Name *YHVH*. See above, [note 27](#).

[390. King David...](#) Who is linked with (and often symbolizes) *Shekhinah*, the gateway of the *sefirot*.

[391. Thus says YHVH...](#) The specific divine name employed by a prophet signifies a particular *sefirah*. In this verse, *YHVH* refers to *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) and כֹּה (*koh*), *thus*, is a name of *Shekhinah*. The blessed Holy One declares that *Shekhinah's voice of weeping is heard*. As She descends from heaven to accompany Her suffering people, She mourns the loss of Her dwelling (the Temple), Israel's exile, and Her separation from *Tif'eret*.

On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 27](#). On *Shekhinah* weeping and bidding farewell to Her dwelling, see *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 25; *Pesiḳta de-Rav Kahana* 13:11; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 34; *Zohar* 1:134a, 203a. Cf. *BT Rosh ha-*

*Shanah* 31a. On *koh* as a name of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:90b, 96a, 152b, 174b; 2:23b, 37b, 79b, 139b; 3:145b-146a; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 12a-13a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

On the description “with millstones round their necks...,” see Lamentations 5:13; *Eikhah Rabbah*, *Petihta* 24; *ibid.* 2:6; 5:13; *Zohar* 2:2b, 118b (RM); 3:45b. The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Thus says YHVH: A voice is heard ברמה (be-ramah), in Ramah [or: on a height]—wailing, bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more [or: they are not].*

**392. She raised Her voice...** Which reached Her Husband, King *Tif'eret*. Numerous angels sought to console *Shekhinah*, but She refused to be comforted.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because איננו (einennu), they are no more [or: they are not].* The word *einennu* means literally “he is no more (or he is not).” In this verse its simple sense is understood to refer distributively to *her children*, so it can be translated *they are no more*. Rabbi Yose, however, insists on reading the word hyperliterally: *he is no more*—referring to the absence of *Shekhinah's* Husband, *Tif'eret*, who has ascended and abandoned Her, sending Her into exile along with Israel.

See *Zohar* 1:210a; 2:29b; *ZH* 92a-b (*MhN*, *Eikhah*). “Chaos” renders *תהו ובהו (tohu va-vohu)*, which derives from Genesis 1:2: *The earth was tohu va-vohu, waste and empty, with darkness over the abyss and the wind of God hovering over the face of the waters.*

**393. Why Rachel weeping for her children?** If the verse refers to *Shekhinah* weeping, why does it mention Rachel?

**394. this is Assembly of Israel...** Rachel symbolizes *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who is married to

*Tif'eret*, symbolized by Jacob. The description *Jacob loved Rachel* alludes to the harmony of the divine couple. In time of exile, when *Shekhinah* is separated from Her Husband, She cannot generate blessing or new souls into the world, so She is then called *barren*. However, eventually She will be redeemed and restored to *her home* as a fruitful *mother of children*.

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). On Rachel's two states, see Bahya ben Asher on Deuteronomy 33:4. On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:157b-158a, 219a; 2:84a, 85b; 3:15b-16a.

**395. Einennu, There is no one, greater...** In this verse from Genesis, Joseph explains to Potiphar's wife why he must reject her sexual advances. The context (Genesis 39:8-9) reads: *He refused. And he said to his master's wife, "Look, my master has given no thought with me here to what is in his house, and all that he has he has placed in my hands. אֵינְנִי (Einennu), There is no one [or: He is not], greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, since you are his wife. So how could I do this great evil, and sin against God?"*

Here, Rabbi Yose associates Joseph with *Yesod*, the divine phallus and symbol of the covenant of circumcision. Joseph attained this sefirotic rung by proving his virtue when he withstood sexual temptation. Whereas according to the previous interpretation, the word in Jeremiah—אֵינְנִי (*Einennu*), *He is not* [or: *He is no more*]*—refers to Tif'eret, who ascends and abandons Shekhinah, now it is Yesod who does so. The disruption of divine union renders the Name YHVH incomplete.*

On the verse in Jeremiah, see above, [notes 391-92](#). On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#).

**396. She began from the Temple...** Where She dwelled in the Holy of Holies, and then went around the



whole land of Israel. Later, She remembered all Her accompanying angels.

The book of Lamentations opens by mourning the desolation of Jerusalem: *How does she sit alone, the city once full of people?* Here in the *Zohar*, Jerusalem symbolizes *Shekhinah*. On *Shekhinah*'s journeys from the Temple and Her reaching the desert, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 31a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 34. Cf. above, [note 391](#).

[397. once the heads of the people...](#) See *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Friedlander) 42: "The entire body follows the head, and when the shepherd goes astray, the sheep go astray after him." See *Tosefta Ta'anit* 2:5; BT *Eruvin* 41a; *Zohar* 2:36b, 47a, 198a; 3:114a, 135a (*IR*).

[398. From here...](#) Rabbi Ḥiyya demonstrates the responsibility of the leaders from the verse in Leviticus. The context (Leviticus 4:13-14) reads: *If the whole community of Israel should err, and the matter be hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do one of the things that by YHVH's commands should not be done, and they bear guilt, when the sin that they committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd as a purification offering, and they shall bring it before the Tent of Meeting.* See above, [notes 355, 379-80](#).

[399. Let's get up from here...](#) Rabbi Ḥiyya takes the bird's chirping as a warning about disreputable characters roaming the mountains, plying their trade.

"Mountain peckers" renders נגרי טורייא (*naggarei turayya*), "mountain carpenters, mountain peckers," by which (in the singular) *Targum Onqelos* translates דוכיפת (*dukhifat*), often rendered "hoopoe." See Leviticus 11:19; Deuteronomy 14:18; and *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, ad loc.; BT *Gittin* 68b; *Midrash Tehillim* 78:12; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:664.

[400. I will save you from afar...](#) Rabbi Ḥiyya wonders why the verse reads *from afar* (which could imply that the time of redemption is far off) rather than *from nearby*



(namely soon). He then quotes a nonexistent verse—*They shall return from a faraway land*—to demonstrate that *afar* refers to a faraway place not a far-off time. But this remote place is actually a sefirotic realm: *Hokhmah*, from which *YHVH* (*Tif'eret*) *appeared to* Jeremiah. This is the source of the stream of emanation, from which *Shekhinah* draws sustenance, as implied in Proverbs: *From afar she brings her food*.

On *Hokhmah* as *afar*, see *Zohar* 1:6a, 107a; 2:50b; 3:35b, 60a, 90a. The full verse in Jeremiah 30 reads: *As for you, 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; and Jacob will return and be calm and secure, with no one frightening him*.

On the quotation *They shall return from a faraway land*, cf. Jeremiah 31:16: *They shall return from the land of the enemy*. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *She is like the ships of a merchant, from afar she brings her food*.

**401. And Jacob will return...** This promise seems unnecessary since God has already said *Do not fear, My servant Jacob*. However, Rabbi Hiyya explains that the second reference to *Jacob* designates *Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One), who during exile ascended to the faraway realm of *Hokhmah*. From there, He will save Israel and *will return* to *Shekhinah* (pictured as “His throne”) to unite with Her.

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#). The full verse in Psalms reads: *Why, O YHVH, do You stand afar, and hide in times of distress?*

**402. And be calm...** *Yesod* will rest calmly with *Shekhinah*, with no fear of harsh Judgment, symbolized by Isaac. The two verses in Genesis demonstrate the association between Isaac and “trembling” or *fear*. The verse in Isaiah implies that *sinners are afraid* when *Yesod* (symbolized by *Zion*) withdraws due to the harsh Judgment aroused by their sins.

For the full verse in Jeremiah, see above, [note 400](#). The full verse in Genesis 27 reads: *Isaac trembled very violently*

and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate of it all before you [namely Esau] came and I blessed him? Now blessed he will remain!" The verse in Genesis 27 (spoken by Jacob) reads: *Were it not that the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, was with me, you would have sent me away now empty-handed.*

**403. the blessed Holy One has saved us...** From the robbers "and hidden us" in the cave that appeared miraculously. See above, [page 131](#).

On miracles being enacted completely, see BT *Yoma* 69b: "They do not grant half in heaven." See *Zohar* 1:113b.

**404. Barak said to her...** To Deborah, who summoned Barak to battle the Canaanites. The verse concludes: *if not, I will not go*. On Torah as God's name, see above, [note 245](#).

**405. They sat the whole day...** In the cave.

"Dusked" renders רמש (remash), an apparently Zoharic verb based on רמשא (ramsha), "evening." See *Zohar* 1:34b; 2:36b, 171a, 173a, 198a, 208a; 3:52b, 113b, 149a-b, 166b; *ZH* 7d (*MhN*), 25d (*MhN*), 28b (*MhN*).

"Donkey-drivers" renders ט"ע"י (tayya'ei), "Arabs," Arab caravaners, 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 *Zohar* 1:5b; 2:45b, 145b, 155b-157a; 3:94b-114a; 3:186b; *ZH* 83a-d (*MhN*, *Rut*); *TZ* 23, 69a. Cf. the story in BT *Hagigah* 14b (and parallels); *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-Heqer Sefat ha-Zohar"; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 46; idem, *Kabbalah*, 227; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod ve-Sod ha-Parshanut*, 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.

**406. I will thank You forever...** The verse reads: *I will praise* [or: *thank*] *You forever*—כי עשית (*ki asita*), *for You have done* [or: *for You have acted, for what You have done*], and *I will wait for* [or: *hope in*] *Your name, for it is good*—*before Your devoted ones* [or: *faithful*]. According to the verse’s simple sense, the phrase *before Your devoted ones* probably applies to *I will praise You forever*.

The donkey-driver reads the verse hyperliterally: *for You have done*, and he wonders why there is no mention of what God has done. He is also puzzled as to why God’s name *is good* only *before Your devoted ones*. Isn’t it good and sustaining for all creatures?

**407. Woe for the load...** His work has forced him to neglect Torah, making him unable to explain the verse.

**408. He does so completely** See above at [note 403](#).

**409. Peace, peace for the far and the near...** The clause “*for the far* who becomes *near*” apparently refers to the donkey-drivers who have approached the rabbis. Then, Rabbi Ḥiyya applies the verse to “a master of *teshuvah*,” one who repents sincerely.

See BT *Berakhot* 34b: “Rabbi Abbahu said, ‘In the place where masters of *teshuvah* stand, the completely righteous cannot stand, as is said: *Peace, peace for the far and the near*—*for the far* first, and then *for the near* [i.e., God offers peace first to one who had sinned and was *far* before turning back to God, and only afterward to one who was completely righteous and always *near*].’ But Rabbi Yoḥanan would say to you, ‘What is *the far*? One who from the beginning was *far* from transgression [i.e., completely righteous]. And what is *the near*? One who was *near* to transgression and has now moved far from it.’”

See BT *Sanhedrin* 99a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 11, p. 210; *Midrash Shemu’el* 28:6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 44, 185b;

*Midrash Tehillim* 120:7; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 8:4; *Zohar* 3:54a, 76b; above, [note 316](#).

**410. They unloaded...** Based on the reading preserved in several manuscripts (P2, T1, V5): אשתקלו (*ishtaqlu*) or אשתקולו (*ishtequlu*), which could mean “they removed [the load from],” i.e., they unloaded. Various other manuscripts and the printed editions read אשתנקלו (*ishtenaqlu*), which could mean “they tethered,” based on the Arabic root *shnq*, “to bind.”

See *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *shnq*, which cites a lost Targum on Proverbs 4:12; *Or Yaqar*; *Derekh Emet*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *shnq*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Soncino; *Sullam*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. above, [note 277](#).

**411. For asita, You have made, surely!...** Rather than its simple sense of *I will thank You לעולם (le-olam), forever*, Rabbi Ḥiyya construes the verse as *I will thank You לעולם (le-olam), for the world*; he justifies this reading based on the verse’s otherwise obscure continuation: *for You have made [it], or that You have made*.

**412. Your name...** Torah—which is described as God’s name—is good before the devoted ones, who treasure it, but not before the wicked, who neglect and scorn it. On Torah as God’s name, see above, [note 245](#).

**413. He said to him...** The donkey-driver acknowledges to Rabbi Ḥiyya that the latter’s interpretation solves the problems in the verse, but he says that he has heard a deeper, secret meaning.

**414. Torah is not bequeathed...** It is not intended to remain with one recipient, but rather should be shared with others. Cf. *M Avot* 2:12, in the name of Rabbi Yose: “Make yourself fit to study Torah, for it is not bequeathed to you” automatically and without effort.

**415. I will thank You...** Rabbi Shim’on interprets the verse as *I will thank You לעולם (le-olam), for the world, that You have made*—where “world” refers to *Malkhut* (Kingdom),

or *Shekhinah*, the last of the sefirotic “worlds” emanated from above. The Psalmist, King David, is linked with *Malkhut*.

**416. *And I will wait for Your name...*** *Tif’eret* (the blessed Holy One) together with *Yesod* unites with *Shekhinah* (the final sefirotic *world*). *Yesod* is called *good* when it receives the flow of emanation from *Keter* (known as the Ancient One), conveyed by *Netsah* and *Hod*, who are called *faithful* חסדי דוד (*hasdei david*), *acts of love for David*—namely for *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by David.

The formulation “There is חסד (*hesed*), and then there is *hesed!*” alludes to the *sefirah* of *Hesed* and the lower manifestations of *Hesed* in *Netsah* and *Hod*. See *Zohar* 1:219a; cf. 3:133b (*IR*). On *hasdei david, acts of love for David*, see *Zohar* 1:8a, 219a; 2:169a; 3:40b, 262b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 48 (59).

*Yesod* is often called *good*, based on Isaiah 3:10: *Say of the righteous one that he is good*. See above, [note 307](#). On the association of *Yesod* and *world*, see Proverbs 10:25: עולם יסוד וצדיק יסוד (Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam). Although the simple sense of the verse is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*, it is understood midrashically as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*. See above, [note 42](#).

The verse in Psalms reads: *and I will wait for Your name, for it is good, before Your devoted ones*. For the full verse, see above, [note 406](#).

**417. *Who would cover your eyes...*** Playing on the rabbinic formulation “Who will remove the dust from your eyes?” In rabbinic sources this means “Oh, that you were still alive!” Here, Rabbi Hiyya implies “Who would dare to help bury you, Rabbi Shim’on, when you pass away?”

For the rabbinic formulation, see M *Sotah* 5:2, 5; *Bereshit Rabbah* 21:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:2; *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemini* 13. On Rabbi Shim’on making things quake, see *Zohar* 2:14b (*MhN*); 3:296b (*IZ*), paraphrasing Isaiah 14:16; Liebes, “Mar’ish ha-Arets.”



**418. That man...** The donkey-driver, who now transmits another teaching of Rabbi Shim'on.

If the name *Adonai* referred to the highest *sefirah* (or one of the highest *sefirot*), then it would be appropriate to address a lower *sefirah*—referred to in the verse as *Eloheinu, our God*—and ask Him to *hear... the prayer... for the sake of Adonai*, just as people say “Do it for the sake of the king.” However, the name *Adonai* pertains to *Shekhinah*, pictured as the Court of Judgment, on a lower level than the King Himself.

The full verse in Daniel reads: *Now hear, O our God, the prayer of Your servant and his pleas, and let Your face shine upon Your desolate sanctuary, for the sake of Adonai, My Lord.*

**419. However, so it should be...** The wording of the verse is perfect, because *Shekhinah* (known as *Adonai*) serves as a house for *Tif'eret* and is symbolized by the Temple in Jerusalem, in which She dwells. She and the Temple are linked; when the latter stands firm, so does the name *Adonai*. So the verse means “May the Temple be rebuilt *for the sake of Adonai.*”

See Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 101 (129). On the term *matronita*, see the Glossary.

**420. when he was in the desert of Judea...** Fleeing from King Saul. The name *Elohim* signifies *Gevurah* (Power), which is linked with *Shekhinah*, associated with David; so in this psalm he says *Elohim, You are my God*. On the plural *Gevuran* (Powers), see below, [note 471](#).

**421. how could David seek the blessed Holy One...** When he was in the desert, having been driven from Jerusalem, where *Shekhinah* dwells?

**422. living waters...** Alluding to the flow of emanation filling *Shekhinah*. The phrase *a well of living waters* also appears in Genesis 26:19.

**423. It is time to assist Assembly of Israel...** *Shekhinah*, who praises King *Tif'eret* at midnight. On



Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

[424.](#) **On the doe of dawn...** *Shekhinah* is pictured as *the doe of dawn*, issuing (or nourished) from *Ḥesed*, who is symbolized by *dawn*. On *Shekhinah* as a doe, see above, [note 229](#).

[425.](#) **When night enters...** Heavenly gates are shut. The “distant” demons—who lack bodies—roam the world, craving to cling to human bodies. But when they see the glorious human form, fashioned in the image of God, they become afraid, especially if those lying in bed have fortified themselves by reciting *Shema*.

On demons lacking bodies, see above, [note 358](#). On the power of reciting *Shema*, see BT *Berakhot* 5a, in the name of Rabbi Yitṣḥak: “Whoever recites *Shema* upon his bed holds, as it were, a two-edged sword in his hand.... Whoever recites *Shema* upon his bed—demons keep away from him.”

[426.](#) **Souls of humans ascend...** During sleep, some receiving mostly accurate dream material conveyed by angels, others mostly false dream material conveyed by demons.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9; BT *Berakhot* 55a-b; *Zohar* 1:83a, 92a, 122a (*MhN*), 130a-b, 150b, 183a, 199b-200a, 238a; 2:130a, 195b, 251b (*Heikh*), 264a (*Heikh*), 267a (*Heikh*); 3:25a, 48b, 52b, 156b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:809-14.

[427.](#) **When the night is split...** At midnight. See BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: “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.” Here, David’s harp symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is aroused by the wind of *Gevurah* (symbolized by the north). See *Zohar* 3:11a, 23a-b, 175b.

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 above, [note 228](#).

**[428. one who awakes at that time...](#)** To engage in the midnight ritual of Torah, as described in the preceding note.

The verse in Psalms is addressed to Jerusalem; but according to a midrashic interpretation, it is sung by God, who refers to the Israelites as *my brothers and my companions*. See above, [note 97](#).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *You who dwell in the gardens, friends listen for your voice; let me hear!* In BT *Shabbat* 63a, this verse is applied to the study of Torah: "Rabbi Abba said in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish, 'When two disciples of the wise listen to one another in *halakhah*, the blessed Holy One listens to their voice, as is said: *You who dwell in the gardens, friends listen for your voice; let me hear!*'" See above, [note 230](#). Cf. BT *Tamid* 32b, in the name of Rabbi Hiyya: "Whoever engages in Torah at night—*Shekhinah* faces him."

**[429. When day comes...](#)** The gates of the south (symbolizing *Hesed*) are opened. Then all those devotees who have studied Torah at night grasp the wings of *Shekhinah*, and their words ascend to settle in God's lap. They are now beloved members of the King's palace.

On the thread of love, 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 directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His*

*song is with me* (Psalms 42:9).” *His song* is the song of Torah.

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 3b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 13, pp. 254–55; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 17, p. 22; *Midrash Mishlei* 31:15; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Talmud Torah* 3:13; *Zohar* 1:82b, 92a, 104a, 178b, 194b, 207b; 2:18b (*MhN*), 46a, 57a, 149a; 3:23b, 25a–b, 36a, 44b–45a, 64b–65a, 68a, 76a, 213a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54.

**430. Assembly of Israel does not stand...** *Shekhinah* comes before King *Tif’eret* only with Her people’s words of Torah. She needs this empowerment especially at midnight. On weakening and strengthening God, see above, [note 108](#).

**431. An utterance concerning Dumah...** 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 often represent Rome, and in medieval literature they often represent Christian rule. This biblical passage is understood as conveying Israel’s anguished cry from the darkness of exile and God’s response. Here, Rabbi Yose contrasts earlier exiles, whose duration was known, with the current lengthy exile, whose end is unknown.

The noun נשׂא (*massa*) derives from the root נשא (*nasa*), “to carry, lift, raise,” so it can mean “burden” (that which is carried), or “utterance, pronouncement” (raising of the voice). Rabbi Yose plays with both meanings and also equates *Dumah* with its homonym, meaning “silence.”

See JT *Ta’anit* 1:1, 64a; BT *Sanhedrin* 94a; Rashi and Radak on Isaiah 21:11; *Zohar* 1:144a; 2:38b, 130b–131a; *ZH* 8a (*MhN*). 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!”*

**432. Watchman, what of the night?...** Israel asks the divine *watchman* about the fate of *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *night* and known as *Matronita*. On this term, see the Glossary.

**433. the blessed Holy One gathers His family...** Of angels. He is touched that Israel cares so deeply about *Shekhinah*.

Rabbi Yose distinguishes between the normal form לילה (*lailah*), *night*, and the poetic form לַיְלֵי (*leil*), *night* (or *night of*). The former, which ends with the letter ה (*he*), designates *Shekhinah* in Her state of union with *Tif'eret*; the latter, lacking the *he*, designates Her when She is not joined with Him.

See *Zohar* 2:38b, 131a. The full verse in Exodus reads: *It is לַיְלֵי (leil), a night of, watch for YHVH, for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; this הַלַּיְלֵה (ha-lailah), night, is YHVH's, a watch for all the Children of Israel throughout their generations.*

**434. My watching endures...** The blessed Holy One assures Israel that He is ready to welcome back *Shekhinah* (who is pictured as the divine house). At first, He ascended and removed *Yesod* (symbolized here by *morning*), who normally unites with Her); but now, *morning is coming* to join *night* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*). The essential factor delaying the divine reunion is Israel's failure to turn back to God.

On the radical reading of the verse in Deuteronomy, see BT *Megillah* 29a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yohai: "Come and see how beloved are Israel in the sight of the blessed Holy One! Wherever they went in exile, *Shekhinah* accompanied them. When they were exiled to Egypt, *Shekhinah* was with them.... When they were exiled to Babylon, *Shekhinah* was with them.... And even when they are destined to be redeemed, *Shekhinah* will be with them, as is said: ושב יהוה אלהיך את שבותך (Ve-shav YHVH Elohekha et shevutekha), *YHVH your God will return with your captivity*. The verse does not read וְהָשִׁיב (ve-heshiv), *will restore*, but rather ושב (ve-

*shav*), *will return*. This teaches that the blessed Holy One will return with them from amidst the exile.”

Rabbi Yose adds that the two occurrences of *will return* apply respectively to *Shekhinah* (who *will return* to the blessed Holy One) and to the blessed Holy One (who *will return* to Her). Instead of “one for Assembly of Israel” (referring to the return of *Shekhinah*), three manuscripts (P2, T1, V5) read: “one for Israel” (referring to the people’s return).

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *YHVH your God will return your captivity and have compassion on you. He will return and gather you from all the nations where YHVH your God has scattered you*. According to the midrashic reading, the word *et* (אֶת) in the clause *וְשָׁב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת שְׁבוּתְךָ* (*Ve-shav YHVH Elohekha et shevutekha*), *YHVH your God will return your captivity*, is construed not as signaling the direct object (namely, *your captivity*), but rather as meaning *with*, thereby yielding the radical reading: *YHVH your God will return with your captivity*.

See *Mekhilta, Pisha* 14; *Sifrei, Numbers* 84, 161; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 7:10; *Zohar* 1:120b, 145b; 3:90b, 115a, 266b, 270a–b. On God’s own salvation, see also *Mekhilta, Amaleq (Be-shallah)* 2; *JT Sukkah* 4:3, 54c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 9:3; *Midrash Shemu’el* 4:4; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 12; *Tanḥuma (Buber), Aḥarei Mot* 18, *Bemidbar* 10; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:24; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:14; 13:4; 80:3; 91:8; *Zohar* 2:55b, 57b; 3:69a; *Minḥat Shai* on Isaiah 43:14.

**435. When the blessed Holy One comes...** At midnight, as described above, [note 427](#).

On the trees opening in song, see *Pereq Shirah*, 2:57, 80; *JT Hagigah* 2:1, 77a; *BT Hagigah* 14b; *Zohar* 1:7a, 77a, 231b; 3:96a–b; Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 138. On the rooster, see Rashi on *BT Eruvin* 53b, s.v. *maggidei ba-alatah*, according to whom the rooster’s crows mark the various divisions of the night. See *Pereq Shirah*, 2:57 (s.v. *tarnegol*): “When the blessed Holy One comes to the righteous in the

Garden of Eden, all the trees of the Garden sprinkle spices before Him. Then he [the rooster] praises.”

See 3 Baruch 6:15–16; Naḥmanides on Job 38:36; *Zohar* 1:10b, 77b, 92b, 195b–196a, 218b; 3:23a–b, 52b, 171b–172a; *ZH* 13c (*MhN*), 88a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Maskiyyot Kesef*, 105a, 12–13; Liebes, *Pulḥan ha-Shaḥar*, 168–97.

**436. When morning comes...** Bringing light and healing. South symbolizes *Ḥesed*, and east symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who is known as *Raḥamim* (Compassion).

The donkey-driver wonders why *the sons of Elohim* are mentioned in the verse from Job, since the element of Judgment associated with the name *Elohim* and the harsh quality of “shouting” do not fit with the morning, when *Ḥesed* prevails. He explains that here the verb וִירִיעוּ (*va-yari'u*) does not mean *they shouted*, but rather *they were smashed*, based on the root רָעַע (*r' '* ), “to smash.”

On the healing power of the south, see *Zohar* 3:204a; *ZH* 53c. Cf. 3:233a. On *va-yari'u* as meaning *they were smashed*, see *Zohar* 3:36a, 45a.

**437. Abraham comes...** *Ḥesed* (symbolized by Abraham) plants the sefirotic tree in *Shekhinah*—who is called באַר שֶׁבַע (*Be'er Sheva*), “Well of Seven,” because She receives the flow of emanation from seven *sefirot* (*Binah* through *Yesod*), or because She is both a “well” and the “seventh” of the lower *sefirot*. The name *YHVH* designates *Tif'eret* (identified with the Tree of Life), who is *invoked there*, namely in *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *Beersheba*).

On *Shekhinah* as *Beersheba*, see *Zohar* 1:147a–b, 152b; 3:52b, 115a; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 6a. The full verse in Genesis reads: *He planted a tamarisk at Beersheba, and he invoked there the name of YHVH, eternal God.*

**438. The morning was light...** When *Ḥesed* (on the right side) appears in the בֹּקֵר (*boqer*), “morning,” all the powers deriving from the right side מִבְּקֵרֵי (*mevaqqerei*), “visit,” their source (in *Ḥesed*). *Light* symbolizes *Ḥesed*, which flows



to *Yesod*, who is called *good*—a process implied by the verse in Genesis.

Morning often symbolizes *Hesed*, but here it is linked or identified with *Yesod*. The clause *The morning is light* implies that *Yesod* is filled with the light of *Hesed*. See *Zohar* 2:110a; 3:204a. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

*Yesod* is often called *good*, based on Isaiah 3:10: *Say of the righteous one that he is good*. See above, [notes 307, 416](#). The full verse in Genesis 44 (describing the departure of Joseph's brothers from Egypt) reads: *The morning was [or: is] light, and the men were sent off, they and their donkeys*.

**439. All is on specific rungs...** Night symbolizes *Shekhinah*. *Morning is light* symbolizes *Yesod* filled with the light of *Hesed*, “always found with” *Shekhinah*—that is, when *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the sun) shines, conveying radiance. The verse in Psalms reads: *For a sun and shield is YHVH Elohim*.

**440. the blessed Holy One sent them to us...** God guided the two donkey-drivers toward Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose. Before resting for the night, the donkey-drivers discussed Torah. See above, [pages 132–33](#).

**441. in the days of Rabbi Shim'on...** On his special status, see above, [note 275](#). Rabbi Ḥiyya's reference to birds whispering wisdom recalls how a bird warned him of nearby robbers. See above at [note 399](#).

**442. A single handmaid...** At the splitting of the Red Sea, even the most lowly Israelite saw more of God's manifestation than was eventually seen by Ezekiel. If those handmaidens “attained so much, all the more so....”

See *Mekhilta, Shirta 3*, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: “A handmaid at the Sea saw what Isaiah and Ezekiel did not see.” See *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:2; *Zohar* 2:55b, 60a, 64b, 94a.

[443.](#) **Similarly, woe to the world...** See *Zohar* 3:58a. On the comparison between Moses and Rabbi Shim'on, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 11-42.

The context in Leviticus (4:13-14) reads: *If the whole community of Israel should err, and the matter be hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do one of the things that by YHVH's commands should not be done, and they bear guilt, when the sin that they committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd as a purification offering, and they shall bring it before the Tent of Meeting.* Here (based on rabbinic tradition), Rabbi Hiyya interprets *the eyes of the assembly* as referring to the leaders or authorities. See above, [notes 355](#), [380](#), [398](#).

[444.](#) **deep mysteries of Torah...** On the Torah in the time of the Messiah, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 98:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 13:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 11:8; *Otiyyot de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:367-68); *Pesiqta Hadta* (*Beit ha-Midrash* 6:47); Idel, "Torah Hadashah."

On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:140a (*MhN*); 2:68a. The verse in Jeremiah reads: *No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother...* See *Zohar* 3:58a, 130b (*IR*).

[445.](#) **When a chieftain sins** The context (Leviticus 4:22-23) reads: *When a chieftain sins and does inadvertently one of the things that by the commands of YHVH his God should not be done, and he bears guilt—or his sin that he has committed is made known to him—he shall bring his offering, an unblemished male goat.*

[446.](#) **Why is this different...** Why *when* and not *if*? Cf. *Sifra*, *Hovah* 5:3, 19d; BT *Horayot* 10a; Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *yakhol gezerah*. For the full verses beginning *If*, see above, [notes 319](#) and [443](#).

[447.](#) **these are not in a state of sin...** It is unlikely that the priest or the entire people would sin. The priest, after all, is vigilant because of his heavy responsibilities in the Temple, which include offering sacrifices on behalf of

Israel. As for the people, only some of them are likely to sin, not *the whole community*.

On the priest's scrupulousness, see BT *Shabbat* 20a, 114b, *Eruvin* 103a, *Yoma* 13a, *Beitsah* 18a, *Bava Batra* 90a, *Zevahim* 35a, *Hullin* 123b; JT *Pesahim* 2:8, 29c; *Sheqalim* 2:2, 46c; 4:9, 48c.

**448. When a chieftain sins, surely...** His public position of authority makes him arrogant, which leads inevitably to sin.

See Bahya ben Asher on Leviticus 4:22. Cf. the rabbinic tradition quoted by Maimonides, *Peirush ha-Mishnah, Avot* 1:10: "Once a person has been appointed [leader of the community] from below [i.e., on earth], he becomes [i.e., he is considered] wicked from above." See Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Leviticus 4:22, n. 133. On "having violated one of the negative commandments," see *Sifra, Hovah* 1:6, 15c.

**449. The chieftains brought...** Rabbi Yehudah wonders why only the chieftains brought these precious stones, since *everyone whose heart impels him* was instructed to bring the various items for the Dwelling, including these stones.

The ephod was apparently a multicolored apron worn by Aaron the high priest. Its two shoulder straps bore two precious stones, each engraved with the names of six of the twelve tribes. Fastened to the ephod was a breastpiece made of the same multicolored fabric, to which were affixed twelve other gemstones, each engraved with one of the names of the tribes.

**450. leave these stones for the chieftains...** God wanted the chieftains alone to bring the precious stones because these would be placed on the heart of the high priest, who would obtain atonement for the chieftains' arrogance.

See Bahya ben Asher on Leviticus 4:22. Cf. BT *Arakhin* 16a: "Rabbi Anani son of Sason said, '...Just as sacrifices atone, so the priestly garments atone.... The turban atones

for the arrogant.’ This accords with the view of Rabbi Hanina, who said, ‘Let something high up come and atone for an act of haughtiness.’ ‘The sash atones for sinful imagining of the heart—where it is [worn].’” See BT *Mo’ed Qatan* 28a, *Zevahim* 88b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:1.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *You shall place in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart when he comes before YHVH, and Aaron shall carry the judgment for the Children of Israel upon his heart before YHVH perpetually.* On the Urim and Thummim, see Vol. 6, p. 322, n. 174.

**451. And does one of the things...** For the full verse, see above, [note 445](#). On “violating a negative commandment,” see *Sifra, Hovah* 1:6, 15c.

**452. Or his sin is made known to him...** For the full verse, see above, [note 445](#).

**453. thirsting clarity...** Rendering צְהוּתָא (*tsahuta*), which in Aramaic means “thirst,” but here reflects the Hebrew word צְהוּת (*tsahut*), “clarity.” See the Talmudic Aramaic saying: “Legal discussion requires צִילוּתָא (*tsiluta*), clarity, like a day of the north wind.”

See BT *Eruvin* 65a; *Megillah* 28b; *Targum*, Song of Songs 6:7; *Zohar* 1:72a, 89b (*ST*); 2:89a; 3:46a, 207b, 221b, 266b; *ZH* 13d (*MhN*); Scholem, *Major Trends*, 389, n. 49; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 157.

**454. clarity of Written Torah is Oral Torah...** The Oral Torah explains and clarifies the Written Torah. (See the Glossary.) Written Torah symbolizes *Tif’eret* (who rules by day), whereas Oral Torah symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who rules the night.

On day and night pertaining respectively to Written and Oral Torah, see *Targum*, Lamentations 2:19; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 46; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 2, p. 10; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 36; *Midrash Tehillim* 19:7; *Zohar* 3:97b–98a; Recanati on Exodus 19:13, 45a–b.

**455. When the north wind stirs...** See BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: "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 above, [note 427](#). On the rooster, see above, [note 435](#). In ZH 88a (*MhN, Rut*), the heavenly גבר (gever), "rooster," is identified as גבריאל (Gavri'el), "Gabriel," who derives from *Gevurah*. Cf. *Zohar* 3:171b-172a.

Rabbi Yose associates the rare biblical word שכוי (*sekhvi*), "rooster" (Job 38:36), with the Aramaic verb אסתכי (*istakhi*), "to look, watch." See Rashi, BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 26a, s.v. *sekhvi*; Naḥmanides on Job 38:36.

**456. Scions of Faith rise...** The faithful rise at midnight to study Torah. King David, who began this custom, thereby attained intimacy with *Malkhut* (Kingdom) and his descendants ruled after him.

See above, [notes 228, 427](#); below, [note 458](#). On strengthening *Shekhinah* by rising at night to study Torah, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 54.

**457. he crows again...** Cf. *Zohar* 3:171b-172a.

**458. Where is God, my Maker...** One who sleeps through the night fails to assist *Shekhinah* with the song of Torah, joining Her in praising the blessed Holy One.

Rabbi Yose wonders why the verse in Job speaks of *God*, as עושי (*osai*), hyperliterally *my Makers*, rather than עושני (*oseni*), *my Maker*. He explains that the plural refers to the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* (known respectively as "the blessed Holy One" and "Assembly of Israel"), who adorn nocturnal devotees of Torah with a thread of love the next day.

See BT *Ḥagigah* 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 directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with*

me (Psalms 42:9).” *His song* is the song of Torah. See above, [note 429](#).

On jubilation of Torah existing only at night, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 19:1 (and Margalioṭ’s note, ad loc.); *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 2:19; *Shemot Rabbah* 47:5. On the verse in Job, see BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Zohar* 2:172b–173a (explaining the apparently plural *osai* similarly); 3:284a. On the form *osai*, see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, § 124k. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

**459. Why *osai*, my Makers?...** Rabbi Abba explains the apparently plural form as alluding not only to *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah* but also to *Ḥesed*, who is symbolized by Abraham, who possesses the thread of *Ḥesed*. The divine name אֱלֹהִים (*Eloah*) is now construed as אֵל (*El*), “God”—designating *Ḥesed*, the *sefirah* of Abraham, also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness)—and the letters וָו הֵה (*vav, he*), symbolizing respectively *Tif’eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) and *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

On *Eloah*, see *Zohar* 1:94a; 2:172b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 100 (127); cf. *Zohar* 2:96b, 97b. On the sefirotic significance of the letters *vav* and *he*, see above, [note 27](#). On the plural sense of *be-osav, in its Makers*, see *Zohar* 3:219b.

The full verse in Genesis records part of Abram’s oath to the king of Sodom: *From a thread to a sandal strap, I will not take anything that is yours, so that you will not say, “I made Abram rich.”* See *Bereshit Rabbah* 43:9; BT *Sotah* 17a, *Hullin* 89a; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Lekh Lekha* 17; *Zohar* 3:25a–b.

**460. all is one word** That is, the interpretations of *osai, my Makers*, offered by Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Yehudah (who quotes Rabbi Abba) are compatible.

**461. הוֹדָעַתְּ (hoda), is made known...** Rabbi Yehudah wonders why the verse employs this passive form of the verb rather than the active—יָדָעַתְּ (*yada*), *he knows*—since there is no mention of the one who makes the sin known.



He explains that the form *hoda* is actually not passive but imperative: *Make known*. *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) is commanding *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) to inform a person of his sin. The verse in Job now implies that *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *heaven*) *will expose* a person's *sin* by commanding *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *earth*) to *rise up against him*.

On the unusual form *hoda*, see Ibn Ezra and Nahmanides on Leviticus 4:23; Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, § 69w. The context in Leviticus (4:22–23) reads: *When a chieftain sins and does inadvertently one of the things that by the commands of YHVH his God should not be done, and he bears guilt—or his sin that he has committed is made known to him—he shall bring his offering, an unblemished male goat*. See above at [notes 445–52](#).

[462.](#) **When a person sins...** On the soul testifying, see BT *Ta'anit* 11a, *Hagigah* 16a; *Zohar* 1:92a, 121b, 227a; 3:58a, 67a, 121b.

[463.](#) **that act with 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 to be brought to him and they slept together. When David later learned that he had impregnated her, he arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle with the Ammonites, after which he married her. Immediately, God sent the prophet Nathan, who demonstrated to David by means of a parable that he had sinned gravely.

See 2 Samuel 11–12. The full verse (quoted here inexactly) reads: *Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says YHVH God of Israel: 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who saved you from the hand of Saul.'"*

[464.](#) **Here too...** Similarly, in the case of the chieftain who sins, God instructs *Shekhinah*: הוֹדֵעַ (*Hoda*), *Make known, to him his sin*. Like Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Yose construes the

verb *hoda* as imperative, not passive. (See above, [note 461](#)). The verse in Exodus exemplifies a simple passive form.

[465.](#) **If one rises at night...** To study Torah at midnight. Then, through his study, he becomes aware of his misdeeds and turns back to God. On the midnight ritual of study, see above, [notes 427, 455](#).

[466.](#) **David, who rose at midnight...** King David initiated this midnight ritual, so why was he punished? Rabbi Yose explains that King David was linked to *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—Aramaic *Malkhuta*. By sinning with Bathsheba (who symbolizes *Malkhut*), David impaired *Malkhut*, so he was fittingly punished by Her and deprived of his kingdom. David's son Absalom rebelled and declared himself king, forcing David to flee from Jerusalem (another symbol of *Malkhut*). See 2 Samuel 15; *Zohar* 1:93b-94a, 151b.

[467.](#) **through his son...** Absalom. See the preceding note.

[468.](#) **As has been established...** In BT *Berakhot* 7b: “A *psalm of David, when he fled from his son Absalom* (Psalms 3:1). A *psalm of David*? The verse should read *A lamentation of David!* Rabbi Shim'on son of Avishalom said, “To what can this be compared? To a person in debt. Until he pays it off, he is distressed; once he pays it, he rejoices. So it was with David. When the blessed Holy One said to him, *I am about to raise up evil against you from your own house* (2 Samuel 12:11), he was distressed, thinking: “Perhaps it will be a slave or a bastard who has no mercy on me.” Once he saw that it was Absalom, he rejoiced, and therefore he said, *A psalm.*” See *Zohar* 1:151b.

[469.](#) **against Bathsheba, unspecified...** That is, referring both to Bathsheba and to *Shekhinah* (or *Malkhut*), whom she symbolizes. By committing adultery with Bathsheba, David sinned against *Shekhinah*, the Divine Feminine; fittingly he was punished through a son of an “alien” feminine—namely Absalom, whose mother was *Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur* (2 Samuel 3:3).

According to rabbinic tradition, Absalom's mother was a beautiful war captive. The biblical passage about marrying a beautiful captive (Deuteronomy 21:10-14) is followed almost immediately by a passage about *a wayward and rebellious son* (ibid., 18-21); and according to midrashic tradition, one who marries such a woman is destined to engender such a son.

On "filth (having) not yet ceased," see BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a, in the name of Rav Yosef: "When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with זחמא (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 *Zohar* 2:87b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 212; above, [notes 263](#), [366](#).

On Absalom's mother being a captive, see BT *Sanhedrin* 107a. On the link between the two passages in Deuteronomy, see ibid.; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 218; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 21:22; *Devarim Rabbah* 6:4; *Tanḥuma*, *Ki Tetse* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tetse* 1; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 3; *Leqah Tov*, Deuteronomy 21:18; *Zohar* 2:87b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 212.

The phrase *daughter of an alien god* appears in Malachi 2:11: *Judah has broken faith; an abhorrent act has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has desecrated the sanctuary of YHVH, which He loves, and has married the daughter of an alien god.*

[470.](#) **YHVH has sworn by His right hand...** The divine right hand normally signifies *Hesed*, but when a person sins, one finger of this hand is poised to judge him, threatening punishment. If the person sins again, then another finger concurs in the punishment. Eventually, if the person repeatedly fails to repent and keeps sinning, God's entire *right hand* turns against him.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by His mighty arm: Nevermore will I give your new grain to your enemies for food, nor shall*

*foreigners drink the new wine for which you have labored.* On this verse, see BT *Berakhot* 6a; *Tanḥuma*, *Noah* 11.

**471. left is ready to concur with right...** The divine left hand symbolizes *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). When a person's sins become extensive and habitual, the five fingers of this hand concur with the right hand and *teshuvah* is no longer possible.

The verse in Isaiah refers to these two hands: *YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by His mighty arm.* On the five *Gevuran* (Powers), see *Zohar* 3:137b, 142a (both *IR*), 296a (*IZ*). Cf. above, [note 420](#); *Zohar* 3:31b, 38a, 48b, 60a.

**472. fingers are configured...** The fateful concurrence of both divine hands—the intertwining, as it were, of all ten divine fingers—seals the Judgment, and this tragic moment is reflected in a person's intertwining his fingers and stretching them unintentionally.

On the negative quality of intertwining one's fingers, see *Or Yaqar*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Sperling, *Ta'amei ha-Minhagim*, 511; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**473. Your right hand... Your right hand...** At the Red Sea, God's two hands concurred in executing Judgment against the Egyptians and thereby ensuring Israel's "endurance." "Left merged with right," sharing its name, so both are referred to as *Your right hand*. Similarly, in the time to come, both of God's hands will concur in defeating Israel's enemies and redeeming His people.

**474. Fruit of a majestic tree...** The full verse describes four species of vegetation held on *Sukkot*: *You shall take for yourselves on the first day fruit of a majestic tree, fronds of palms, and a branch of a thickly-leaved tree [or: branches of thickly-leaved trees] and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before YHVH your God seven days.* These four species became identified as the *etrog* (citron), *lulav* (palm branch), *hadas* (sprigs of myrtle), and *aravah* (willow twigs).

See *Sifra, Emor* 16:4, 6–7, 102c–d; *JT Sukkah* 3:5, 53d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:8, 15; *BT Sukkah* 34b–35a; *Tanḥuma, Emor* 20; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 29. On the kabbalistic significance of the four species, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1249–51.

**475.** *YHVH Elohim built the side...* The verse reads: *YHVH Elohim built* הַצֵּלַע (*ha-tsela*), *the side* [or: *the rib*], *He had taken from the human into a woman and He brought her to the human*. According to a midrashic tradition, God divided the original androgynous human into two halves: the male Adam and the female Eve. Here the male and female halves represent *Tif'eret* (with the *sefirot* surrounding Him) and *Shekhinah*. *Tif'eret*, known as *adam* (or Primordial Adam), is described as *a majestic tree*, whose *fruit* is *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Deuteronomy warns those who are besieging a town not to destroy its fruit trees; it then asks rhetorically: *For is the tree of the field a human, to withdraw from you in the siege?* Here the rhetorical question is turned into a declarative statement: *For the human is a tree of the field*—demonstrating “that *adam* is called *a tree*.” The verse may also imply that *Tif'eret* is planted in the *field* of *Shekhinah*, who is Herself known as “field of holy apples.” See *Zohar* 2:60b (Vol. 4, p. 321, n. 432); 3:202a–b. Cf. *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21.

On the androgynous nature of Adam, see above, [note 356](#). On *tsela* as “side,” see above, [note 360](#). Genesis 2:23 reads in full: *The human said, “This one at last, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! This one shall be called Woman, for from man was this one taken.”*

**476.** *כַּפּוֹת (Kappot), Fronds of, palms...* Symbolizing *Yesod*, who is adorned with seven *sefirot*—*Binah* through *Yesod* (or *Ḥesed* through *Shekhinah*)—which expand into “seventy years.” *Yesod* is bound or linked above to *Tif'eret* and below to *Shekhinah*. He is known as *all*, conveying the entire flow of emanation and joining *heaven* (symbolizing *Tif'eret*) with *earth* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*).



On the palm tree yielding fruit in seventy years, see above, [note 306](#). On *kappot*, *fronds*, as implying “binding,” see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:8; BT *Sukkah* 31a, 32a.

The verse in Chronicles reads: *Yours, O YHVH, are* וְהָיוּ הַגְּדוּלָּה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת וְהַנְּצַח (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 is understood as designating *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*). All of these “belong” to *YHVH*, which here refers to *Binah* (or the triad of *Keter*, *Hokhmah*, and *Binah*). See *Zohar* 1:235b, 241a–b; 2:40b, 178b (*SdTs*); 3:89b, 92a.

[477](#). ***Fruit of a majestic tree—an altar...*** Rabbi Yose agrees that this *fruit* signifies *Shekhinah*, who is also symbolized by the altar. Having been blessed and filled by “all seventy years” (apparently the seven *sefirot* from *Binah* through *Yesod*), She yields souls for the world. She “is bound with the one bound above”—that is, with *Yesod*, who is linked with *Tif'eret*. The lack of *and* in the phrase *fruit of a majestic tree, fronds of palms* demonstrates the close connection between *Shekhinah* and *Yesod*, who are each symbolized by one of these elements.

[478](#). זֹאת מִשְׁחָת (Zot mishḥat), ***This is the allotment of...*** *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, is known as *zot*, *this*, because She is constantly present right here. Rabbi Yose plays with two meanings of the root מִשַּׁח (*mshḥ*), “measure” and “anoint.” *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the altar) is anointed with the flow of emanation from *Hesed* (symbolized by Aaron) and other, lower *sefirot* (symbolized by Aaron’s sons).

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [note 117](#). The verse in Leviticus describes the portions of the well-being sacrifice that are reserved for Aaron and his sons, namely the breast and the right thigh.



**479. On the Festival...** On each of the first six days of *Sukkot* during the period of the second Temple, worshipers circled the altar once; “afterward”—that is, on the seventh day (*Hosha’na Rabbah*)—they circled seven times. After the destruction of the Temple, these circuits were eventually replaced by similar ones in the synagogue, where worshipers carried the four species (except on the Sabbath). See M *Sukkah* 4:5; *Midrash Tehillim* 17:8; *Zohar* 3:31b.

**480. sweet delicacy...** Equal to all that is offered to the guests.

“Sweet delicacy” renders פֶּרֶקְטָא (*peraqta*), which may be based on פֶּרֶקְדִּיס (*parqadis*), apparently meaning “delicacy.” See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:11 (and Buber’s note, ad loc., 104b, n. 90); *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *panqeres, pqrs, prqds*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *prqts*; Scholem.

Several commentators interpret *peraqta* as “pool,” based on פֶּרֶקְטָן (*peraqtan*), “channel, watercourse, pool.” See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 14:3; Numbers 21:34; 24:6; *Targum*, Song of Songs 7:5; Ecclesiastes 2:6; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:12; *Zohar* 3:42b (below, [p. 259](#), [n. 5](#)); *Arukh ha-Shalem* and *Tosefot he-Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *prqtn*; *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 185, s.v. *parqa*; *Derekh Emet*.

**481. offerings for the nations of the world...** During the seven days of *Sukkot* a total of seventy bulls were sacrificed on the altar. According to rabbinic tradition, these benefited the seventy nations of the world. Here, *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the altar) asks the blessed Holy One about Her own portion.

On the seventy bulls, see Numbers 29:12–34. On these bulls and the seventy nations, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:23; BT *Sukkah* 55b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 28:9; *Tanḥuma, Pinḥas* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pinḥas* 14–15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:24; *Zohar* 1:64a–b, 208b; 2:58b–59a, 135a, 185a, 186b–187a, 233b; 3:32a, 54b–55a (*Tos*), 96b–97a, 104b, 258b–259a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 177–78; Tishby,

*Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1251–53; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 244, n. 92. On *Shekhinah* as altar, see *Zohar* 1:173b; 2:66a–b; 3:30a–b.

**482. Every single day seven supernal varieties...** Seven sefirotic powers (apparently from *Binah* through *Yesod*) will provide for You.

**483. corresponding to seventy bulls...** See above, [note 481](#).

**484. at the end of seven days...** That is, on the seventh day (*Hosha'na Rabbah*), *Shekhinah* is blessed directly from *Binah*, where the “anointing oil” of *Hokhmah* is found. Then the altar is circled seven times, confirming *Shekhinah*’s blessings from *Binah* (the continuous “spring of the stream”). The phrase “and so another time” probably refers to each successive circuit of the altar. See above, [note 479](#); *Zohar* 2:187a.

**485. While the barren one bears seven...** Alluding to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), whose blessings on each day of *Sukkot* accumulate greatly. On the other hand, the number of bulls offered for the *many*—the seventy nations—*dwindles* on each subsequent day of the Festival (from thirteen to twelve to... seven), finally reaching a total of seventy. Meanwhile, *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the altar) conveys Her blessings to Israel, purifying them and atoning for their sins.

On the gradual diminution of the Festival offerings, see Numbers 29:12–34; BT *Sukkah* 47a; *Tanḥuma*, *Pinḥas* 17; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Pinḥas* 16; *Leqaḥ Tov*, Numbers 29:36; Rashi on Numbers 29:18; *Zohar* 2:135a, 233b; 3:92a, 258b–259a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

**486. a branch of a thickly-leaved tree...** Symbolizing King *Tif'eret*, who includes and harmonizes the polar opposites *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah* (on the right and left respectively). This species is identified as the myrtle, and

traditionally three sprigs of myrtle are taken, symbolizing here the triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*.

For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 474](#). On the three sprigs, see M *Sukkah* 3:4; *Zohar* 2:186b.

**487. And willows of the brook...** Symbolizing *Netsah* and *Hod*, the two divine legs or pillars, from which the flow proceeds to *Yesod* (symbolized by *fronds of palms*). As mentioned above (at [note 476](#)), *Yesod* is attached above to *Tif'eret* and below to *Shekhinah*, linking the two.

*Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the *etrog*) emerges from the cluster of *sefirot* around *Tif'eret* (the tree), specifically from *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—whose harshness is likened to thorns. *Yesod* is also attached to these powers on the left.

On *Netsah* and *Hod* as the *willows*, see *Bahir* 119–20 (177–78); *Zohar* 2:98a, 186b; 3:193b–194a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 185. On the tree, see above, [note 475](#). On the connection between *fronds of palms* and thorns, see Rashi on BT *Sukkah* 32a, s.v. *derakheha*; *Nefesh David*. “Thorns” renders גובין (*gubbin*), “pits,” here apparently a misspelling of כובין (*kubbin*), “thorns,” resulting from either scribal error, a phonetic interchange of כ (*kaf*) and ג (*gimmel*), or playful variation. See *Zohar* 2:103b; 3:42b.

**488. the altar of Elohim...** *Shekhinah*, who derives from *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—known as *Elohim*. Similarly, She is described as “the well of Isaac,” since Isaac symbolizes *Gevurah*. However, when *Shekhinah* receives directly from *Tif'eret*—also known as *YHVH* and *Rahamim* (Compassion)—She is called *the altar of YHVH*. Therefore, *Shekhinah* conveys both Judgment and Compassion to the worlds below, since She imbibes both these qualities.

**489. When נפש (nefesh), a soul...** The full verse reads: *When נפש (nefesh), a person [or: soul], commits a sacrilege, being inadvertently remiss with any of YHVH's sancta, he shall bring his reparation to YHVH, an unblemished ram from the flock, or its equivalent in silver shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel, as a guilt offering.* On the אשם (*asham*),

“guilt (or reparation) offering,” see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:339–78.

**490. Nefesh, a soul, surely...** Only this lowest aspect of soul is implicated in sin, not רוּחַ (*ruah*), “spirit,” or נְשָמָה (*neshamah*), “breath, soul, soul-breath.” The verse in Samuel demonstrates that precisely the *nefesh* is rewarded or punished.

On the three aspects of soul, see above, [note 305](#). On the verse in Samuel, 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 *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 34; Radak on the verse in Samuel; *Zohar* 1:77b, 128a, 217b; 2:59a, 99b, 103a, 106a, 142b; 3:185b–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 Wolfson’s n. 6), 399; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 67–68; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 345–48.

The full verse in Samuel (recording Abigail’s blessing to 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*.

**491. Happy are the righteous...** Whose holy actions enable them to receive the highest level of soul, *neshamah*, engendered by the divine couple, *Tif’eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) and *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

On the verse in Leviticus, see BT *Yoma* 39a: “*You shall hallow yourselves and become 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 verse in Deuteronomy, see *Zohar* 1:82b, 245b; 2:89b; 3:42b. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

**492. *Let the earth bring forth...*** The simple sense of this verse is *Let the earth bring forth* נִפְשׁ חַיִּים (nefesh hayyah), *living beings*. However, Rabbi Yitshak reads the phrase *nefesh hayyah* hyperliterally: *the soul of a living being*. The expression *a living being* is “unspecified”—lacking the definite article *the*—and it alludes here to *Shekhinah* (or to both *Shekhinah* and *Tif’eret*), from whom *the soul* issues. This primordial soul (of Adam) was inherited by King David, who became linked with *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom). Fittingly, Abigail blessed David by telling him that his *soul* would be *bound in the bundle of life*, namely in *Shekhinah*.

On *bundle of life* as referring to *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:65b, 224b; 2:11a, 59a, 142b; 3:70b, 71b, 92a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 123; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 57; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 60–61 (75–76). On the verse in Genesis, see above, [note 359](#).

**493. *nefesh is linked with ruah...*** On these three aspects of soul, see above, [note 305](#).

**494. *Woe to the wicked...*** Whose souls are tormented. See the description in BT *Shabbat* 152a, quoted above, [note 490](#).

On souls of the wicked becoming demons, see Eleazar of Worms, *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, 24c; *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Margalioṭ, par. 1170; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 34 (according to the version in *Yalqut Shim’oni*, Isaiah 429); *Zohar* 1:14b, 28b–29a (*TZ*), 100a, 129b; 2:118a (*RM*); 3:16b (*RM*), 70a; *ZH* 11a (*MhN*), 118c (*Tiq*); Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, *Peirush Qabbali li-Vreshit Rabbah*, 79, 243, 259; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:109, n. 98; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:704–



5; 3:1453, n. 94; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 93–95. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 489](#).

**495. When Assembly of Israel is crowned...** When *Shekhinah* is crowned by King *Tif'eret*. Her title Bundle of Life derives from 1 Samuel 25:29; see above, [notes 490, 492](#).

**496. When *Shekhinah* journeys...** She is accompanied by the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the three patriarchs. *Shekhinah* is pictured as *the angel of Elohim*, and three consecutive verses in Exodus (14:19–21) correspond to Her three sefirotic companions.

The three verses read: *The angel of Elohim who was going before the camp of Israel moved and went behind them, and the column of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. And it 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. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and YHVH drove the sea with a mighty east wind all night, and He turned the sea into dry ground, and the waters were split.*

According to a tradition, the 216 Hebrew letters composing these three verses are rearranged into 72 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. These 72 triads are known as the Name of Seventy-two. See *Zohar* 2:51b–52a; Vol. 4, pp. 257–64 and nn. 216, 221–26.

On *Shekhinah* journeying with the patriarchs, see *Zohar* 2:46b, 51b. On *Shekhinah* as *angel of Elohim*, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:19; Naḥmanides on Exodus 14:19; *Zohar* 1:61a; 2:47a, 50b (*Mat*), 51a–b; 3:78a, 150b, 269b.



**497. All becomes one crown...** The triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized by the three verses in Exodus) becomes one crown, and the Name of Seventy-two is revealed in the colors white, red, and green, corresponding to those three *sefirot*. White symbolizes the purity of *Ḥesed*; red, the harshness of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment); green, the harmony of *Tif'eret*. All three colors appear in the apple: the white pulp, the red skin, and the green leaves. The verse in Song of Songs alludes to *Tif'eret*, *Shekhinah's beloved*, who includes the qualities of *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, and is thus pictured as *an apple tree*. On the image of apples, see Vol. 4, p. 62, n. 274.

The potent Name of Seventy-two split the Red Sea, benefiting Israel and dooming the Egyptians. The verse in Deuteronomy alludes to all three patriarchal *sefirot*. The word בפניו (*be-fanav*), *through His face* [or: *presence*], suggests *Tif'eret*, perhaps because His *face* shines upon *Shekhinah*. The word בכחו (*be-khoḥo*), *with His power*, refers to Isaac's *sefirah*, *Gevurah* (Power). The word הגדול (*ha-gadol*), *the great*, refers to Abraham's *sefirah*, *Ḥesed*—also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness). See *Zohar* 2:53a.

On the patriarchs appearing at the Red Sea, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 92:2; Rashi, BT *Ta'anit* 5b, s.v. *af hu ba-ḥayyim*; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 33; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, 14:287–88; *Zohar* 2:53a; 3:52a.

**498. Why a goat for an offering...** The verse from Leviticus discussed above—concerning one who *commits a sacrilege, being inadvertently remiss with any of YHVH's sancta*—instructs the offender to bring *an unblemished ram ... as a guilt offering*. (See above at [note 489](#).) The reference here to a goat may pertain to (Leviticus 4:27–31), according to which one who sins inadvertently should bring *an unblemished female goat* as a purification (or offense) offering.

Rabbi Abba asks why a goat, given that this animal's name—עִז (ez)—implies אִז (az), “harsh,” namely harsh and

demonic forces. He explains that since one who sins is overwhelmed by an impure spirit, the goat is an appropriate offering.

On the demonic nature of *ez*, “goat,” see Isaac ha-Kohen, in “Qabbalot R. Ya’aqov ve-R. Yitshaq,” ed. Scholem, 280; *Zohar* 2:185a, 213a (Vol. 6, p. 213, n. 316); 3:25b, 41b; *ZH* 27a. Cf. BT *Pesaḥim* 111b; *Zohar* 2:124b–125a; 3:72a. The related term שַׁעִיר (*sa’ir*), means “goat, demon, satyr.” On the שַׁעִירִים (*se’irim*), “goat-demons,” see Leviticus 17:7; *Sifra*, *Aḥarei Mot* 9:8, 84a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:8; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1462. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 9:3.

**499. Some attain neshamah...** Some attain the highest level of soul (*neshamah*), some the middle level (*ruah*), and some only *nefesh*. One who has only *nefesh* clings “to that side,” namely to the demonic Other Side. Such a person’s dreams are influenced by demons, who convey some true information but also smuggle in false material.

On the three aspects of soul, see above, [note 305](#). According to BT *Berakhot* 55b, angels convey prophetic dreams, whereas demons convey false ones. See above, [note 426](#). On demons’ limited knowledge of the future, see Naḥmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:83a, 130a, 200a; 2:195b, 251b (*Heikh*).

**500. Among those evil species are rungs...** The highest rung, the lowest rung, and a middle rung—displaying characteristics of the other two rungs.

The thirteenth-century kabbalist Jacob ben Jacob Ha-Kohen describes three parts of the air (or atmosphere), populated by different demonic forces whose nature and behavior partly resemble what is depicted here. See Scholem, “Qabbalot R. Ya’aqov ve-R. Yitshaq benei R. Ya’aqov ha-Kohen,” 255–57. Cf. *Zohar* 3:48b, 76b, 253a (*RM*).

**501. someone who has attained no more than nefesh...** His *nefesh* seeks the higher level (*ruah*), so during sleep part of the *nefesh* wishes to ascend, though it is

conflicted, while part of the *nefesh* remains below, animating the body.

**502. then returns to its place...** In the body, as the person awakes.

**503. Once he obtains *neshamah*...** She (*neshamah*) ascends and enters among the souls of the righteous, who are joined with *Shekhinah* (the Bundle of Life). See above, [notes 490, 492](#).

**504. When the Doe is awakened...** When *Shekhinah* is awakened at midnight, the *neshamah* descends back to the sleeping person, who then rises to study Torah through the rest of the night. In the morning he accompanies *Shekhinah* to appear before King *Tif'eret*, from whom he receives a thread of *Hesed* (the *sefirah* of Abraham). This thread was first obtained by Abraham, who embodied the quality of *Hesed* (Loving-kindness) and refused any benefit for himself. After saving the king of Sodom, Abraham said to him, *From a thread to a sandal strap, I will not take anything that is yours, so that you will not say, "I made Abram rich."*

On *Shekhinah* as a doe, see above, [note 229](#). On the north wind at midnight, see above, [note 228](#). On the phrase "grows mighty as a lion...", see *Avot* 5:20, in the name of Yehudah son of Teima: "Be bold as a leopard, swift as an eagle, fleet as a gazelle, and mighty as a lion, to do the will of your Father in Heaven." See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 23; Rashi on Numbers 23:24; *Zohar* 1:178b, 190b; 3:211a.

On the thread of *Hesed*, 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 directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9)." *His song* is the song of Torah. See above, [note 429](#). On the verse in Genesis, see above, [note 459](#), and the rabbinic sources cited there.

**505. the doe of dawn...** With these words, David alludes to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who in

exile calls out to Her partner, *Tif'eret*, from whom She has been separated: *Why have You forsaken me?* On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 5](#).

**506. whoever fails to attain Torah...** Cannot attain the higher aspects of soul. See *ZH* 10d-11a (*MhN*).

**507. the difference between Israel and other nations...** A Jew can attain the higher aspects of soul, but a Gentile cannot. If he converts to Judaism, his previous *nefesh* is replaced by a new *nefesh*. According to the *Zohar*, the convert's new soul is formed by the union of the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. From there, this soul flies and shelters beneath the wings of *Shekhinah* and then descends into the convert's body.

On the innate distinction between Jews and Gentiles, see Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 1:27-47, 95, 102-11. On the distinction between converts and born Jews, see *ibid.* 1:27. On the souls of Gentiles, see *ZH* 10a (*MhN*). On the souls of converts, see *Zohar* 1:13a-b, 96a; 2:27a, 87a, 95b, 98b-100a, 147b; 3:14a-b, 167b-168a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 16, 212-13; Wijnhoven, "The *Zohar* and the Proselyte."

The phrase נפש תחת נפש (*nefesh taḥat nefesh*), "*nefesh instead of nefesh*," appears in Exodus 21:23 in a legal context, where it means *a life for a life*. See Leviticus 24:18.

**508. If an Israelite...** Who possesses a holy *nefesh* does not strive to attain *ruah* and *neshamah* by devoting himself to Torah and fulfilling the commandments, then he will be severely punished. The verse in Psalms reads: *Let sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more*.

**509. a person who clings to this side...** Namely, to the demonic side. One who has only *nefesh*, and has not proved worthy of *ruah* or *neshamah*, is vulnerable to impure forces, which lead him into sin. Fittingly, he should bring a goat as a purification (or offense) offering, since this animal derives from the demonic realm. See above, [note 498](#).

**510. *You shall not leave his corpse...*** This verse refers to one who is executed for a capital offense, after which his body is hung and exposed. According to a kabbalistic interpretation, demonic forces settle upon an exposed corpse, and by burying the corpse before nightfall one prevents these forces from remaining in the Holy Land. Rabbi El'azar wonders how the goat can be offered up on the holy altar, given this animal's demonic nature.

Based on the verse in Deuteronomy, 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; 2:141a; 3:88b, 143b-144a (*IR*). On the meaning of *under God's curse*, see Tigay, *Deuteronomy*; and Alter, *Five Books of Moses*, ad loc.

**511. *For YHVH your God is a consuming fire...*** The divine fire consumes any other fire and all lower forces. This holy fire is manifested on the altar, where it consumes the impure spirit of the goat.

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 song, and 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 3 Enoch 40:4; *Bereshit Rabbah* 78:1; *Eikhah Rabbah* 3:8; BT *Hagigah* 13b; *Zohar* 1:17b, 18b-19a, 44a-b (*Heikh*); 2:10a, 144b, 213b-214a, 247a (*Heikh*); 3:73b (*Mat*); *Sidrei de-Shimmusha Rabba*, 123-24 (and Scholem's n. 31); *Ma'yan Hokhmah* (*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*, *Hagigah* 14a, p. 23d; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:513-14, 624-25.

On the expression "a fire consuming fire," see BT *Yoma* 21b (describing the fire of *Shekhinah*, which consumes the fiery angels); *Tanḥuma*, *Yitro* 16; *Tosafot*, *Hagigah* 23a, s.v. *she-ein bo*; *Zohar* 1:18b-19a, 50b, 69a; 2:19b (*MhN*), 89b, 226b; 3:27b, 32b, 138a (*IR*), 154b, 294a (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 63-65.

On standing by one's offering, see BT *Sotah* 8a: "A person's offering is not sacrifice unless he stands by it." According to Leviticus 4:29, one who brings the goat as a purification (or offense) offering *shall lay his hand on the head of the purification offering* before it is slaughtered.

**512. fit to welcome the face of *Shekhinah*...** Apparently by engaging in Torah. See *Zohar* 2:188b: "From here on, let us join with *Shekhinah*, engaging in Torah as we go."

On the connection between Torah and welcoming the face of *Shekhinah*, cf. above, [note 75](#). See M *Avot* 3:2, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina son of Teradyon: "If two are sitting with words of Torah between them, *Shekhinah* is between them." Cf. *ibid.* 3:3, 6; BT *Berakhot* 6a. On the importance of engaging in Torah while walking or traveling, see Deuteronomy 6:7; M *Avot* 3:7; BT *Eruvin* 54a, *Ta'anit* 10b, *Sotah* 49a; *Zohar* 1:7a, 58b-59a, 69b-70a, 76a, 87a, 115b, 157a, 164a, 230a-b, 242b; 2:13a, 32a, 95a, 138b, 155b, 188b, 232b; 3:52a, 80a; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 111-20.



**513. a word linking Torah...** Linking one part of Torah to another—or specifically the first *parashah* of Leviticus (*Parashat Va-Yiqra*) to the next one (*Parashat Tsav*). The narrative beginning here (near the end of *Parashat Va-Yiqra*) extends into the following *parashah*. See below, [p. 169](#), [n. 1](#); Scholem. In the text accompanying *Or Yaqar*, this narrative begins *Parashat Tsav*.

The phrase “a word linking” renders מילה דקטורא (*millah di-qtora*), “a word of the knot.” Some commentators understand *qetora* as referring to קטורת (*qetoret*), “incense,” alluding to the sweetness of Torah. See *Nitsotsei Orot; Matoq mi-Devash*.

**514. the Holy Lamp...** Rabbi Shim'on. See above, [note 98](#). The verse in Deuteronomy demonstrates that the verb *pour down* refers to *rain*.

**515. Now, you might say...** One might assume that rain and sustenance depend on *heaven*, which symbolizes *Tif'eret*. However, according to BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a (in the name of Rava): “Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but במזלא (*be-mazzala*), on destiny.” Merit is associated (or identified) with צדקה (*tsedaqah*), *righteousness*, or charity. See, e.g., Proverbs 10:2: וצדקה (*U-tsdaqah*), *Righteousness* [later understood as *Charity*], *saves from death*. Furthermore, *Targum Onqelos*, Deuteronomy 6:25, renders *tsedaqah*, *righteousness* [or: *merit*], as זכותא (*zakhuta*), *merit*.

Thus *tsedaqah* (*righteousness*) is equivalent to merit, and since *righteousness* is a name of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *heaven*), “merit and *heaven* are the same thing.” The verse in Isaiah reads *Pour down, O heavens*, which implies that *heaven*, or merit, is the source of sustenance. But this contradicts the Talmudic teaching that “life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit.”

On *tsedaqah* as “merit,” see Genesis 15:6, and *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.; Psalms 106:31, and *Targum Yonatan*, ad loc. On the heavenly court known as *zakhuta*, “merit,” see *Zohar* 2:248b, 249b, 251a–b, 252b (all *Heikh*).

**516. from above, surely...** The verse in Isaiah reads: *Pour down, O heavens, from above*—alluding to what lies above *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *heavens*), namely *Keter*, known as the Holy Ancient One. This, rather than *Tif'eret* (“that place”), is the ultimate source of sustenance, as indicated by the Talmudic tradition: “Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but במזל (be-mazzala), on destiny.”

The term *mazzala* has a wide range of meaning: “constellation, planet, planetary influence, zodiacal sign, destiny, fortune, guardian angel.” In the *Zohar*, *mazzala* is associated with the root נזל (*nzl*), “to flow,” and often refers to the flow of emanation from *Binah*. Here, however (as in *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* and the *Idrot*), *mazzala* describes the higher source of emanation in *Keter*.

On the passage in *Mo'ed Qatan*, 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, 177a, (*SdT*s), 178b (*SdT*s), 252b (*Heikh*), 274b (*Tosafot*); 3:77b, 79b, 134a (*IR*), 289a (*IZ*), 292b (*IZ*), 295b (*IZ*); *ZH* 36c; 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.

**517. Let the skies flow...** When *heaven* (*Tif'eret*) receives the flow *from above* (from *Keter*), then שחקים (*sheḥaqim*), *the skies*, convey it farther below. According to BT *Hagigah* 12b (in the name of Resh Lakish), *sheḥaqim* refers to the third heaven (counting from below), “in which millstones stand, grinding manna for the righteous, as is said: *He commanded sheḥaqim, the skies, above, and the doors of heaven He opened, and rained on them manna to eat...* (Psalms 78:23-24).” (The word *sheḥaqim* is here associated with the root *shḥq*, “to crumble, pound, grind.”)

Rabbi Yehudah identifies *sheḥaqim, the skies*, with *Netsah* and *Hod*, who prepare the flow of emanation (symbolized by manna) and convey it to *Yesod*, known as צדיק (*Tsaddiq*), “Righteous One.” *Yesod* then transmits this to *Shekhinah*,

known as צדק (*tsedeq*), *righteousness*. Together, *Yesod* and *Shekhinah* are צדיקים (*tsaddiqim*), “the righteous,” for whom the manna is intended. The verse in Psalms now implies *Let Netsah* and *Hod* (*the skies*) convey the *flow* to *Shekhinah* (*righteousness*).

On the passage in *Hagigah*, see *Zohar* 3:128b (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*); Gikatilla, *Sha’arei Orah*, 35a. On the righteous eating manna in the world that is coming, see also *Mekhilta*, *Vayassa* 4; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 16:25; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:8; Naḥmanides on Exodus 16:6; *Zohar* 2:63a.

On *Netsah* and *Hod* conveying the flow of emanation to *Yesod* and (through Him to) *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 3:5a–b, 21a. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [note 42](#). On *Yesod* and *Shekhinah* as *Tsaddiq* and *Tsedeq* respectively, see *Zohar* 1:49a.

**518. If I have come just to hear this...** 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; 2:99a, 121b–122a, 193b; 3:115b, 121a, 203a.

**519. Every heartfelt aspiration...** In prayer, one should intend to unify the *sefirot* (symbolized by the letters of *YHVH*) and thereby stimulate the flow of blessing. For Rabbi Yose, *the depths* mentioned in the Psalm do not refer primarily to the depths of the human heart or the depths of despair, but rather to two cosmic depths: *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, the divine parents. From them, one should seek to draw forth the divine stream: *From the depths* [in which You are] *I call You* [forth].

See *Zohar* 2:63a–b; 3:70a, 265b; Gikatilla, *Sha’arei Orah*, 37b–38a; idem, *Sod Shelosh-Esreh Middot*, 219. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [note 27](#). For the rabbinic application of the verse in Psalms

to prayer, see *Tosefta Berakhot* 3:17; *JT Berakhot* 2:3, 4:4; *BT Berakhot* 10b.

**520. Who are *ḥoqevei Yisra'el*?...** If the wording were לְחַקְוֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*le-ḥaḳuḳei Yisra'el*), *to those engraved by Israel*, this would refer to sefirotic powers below *Tif'eret*—whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel)—who are influenced or formed by Him. The wording לְחַקְוֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*le-ḥoqevei Yisra'el*) suggests *engravers of Israel*—namely *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, who form and influence *Tif'eret Yisra'el*.

**521. המתנדבים (*Ha-mitnaddevim*), who volunteer...** Alluding to the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized by the three patriarchs, described as *nobles*.

In rabbinic sources Abraham is described as “a noble,” based loosely on the verse in Psalms: *Nobles of nations have gathered with the God of Abraham*. See *BT Sukkah* 49b, *Ḥagigah* 3a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:2. On all three patriarchs as *nobles*, see *Zohar* 1:235a; 2:197b; 3:19b, 150a, 286a.

**522. appear here...** In this world.

**1. Rabbi Aḥa opened...** This passage continues the narrative that begins above, [p. 165](#) at [n. 512](#). The material immediately preceding this passage in the Mantua edition and nearly all subsequent editions (3:26a-27a) appears in numerous manuscripts and in all printed editions as part of the *Zohar* on Exodus (2:238b-239b; Vol. 6, pp. 379-87). Whereas the Cremona edition and the manuscripts do not include it here, the Mantua editors duplicated it because it discusses the opening verses of *Parashat Tsav*, despite the fact that it interrupts the narrative of Rabbi Aḥa and his companions. See above, [p. 165](#), [n. 513](#).

**2. The fire on the altar...** Rabbi Aḥa wonders why the priest, who symbolizes *Ḥesed* on the right side, is commanded to feed *the fire on the altar*, which symbolizes *Din* (Judgment). See *Zohar* 3:124a.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *The fire on the altar shall be kept burning; it shall not go out. And the priest shall feed wood to it morning after morning and arrange on it the ascent offering and on top turn the fat part of the well-being offerings into smoke.*

**3. When a person is about to sin...** He inflames himself with the evil impulse, which derives from the impure spirit, so holy fire is essential in order to eliminate such impurity. Cf. above, [p. 46](#), [n. 139](#).

One who sins inadvertently is required to bring a goat as a purification (or offense) offering. This particular animal derives from demonic forces and is thus an appropriate sacrifice, resembling “that [impure] side.” See above, [p. 161](#), [n. 498](#).

**4. And he shall arrange...** The priest represents *Ḥesed*, which is also symbolized by the light of *morning*. Fittingly, he arranges the fire each *morning*, when his sefirotic side prevails, thereby tempering the harshness of *Din* (Judgment). The holy fire consumes the threatening fire deriving from the left side.

On “fire consuming fire,” see BT *Yoma* 21b; above, [pp. 164-65](#), [n. 511](#). For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 2](#).

**5. Isaac said to Abraham...** Rabbi Ḥiyya wonders why the verb *said* appears three times in this verse with Isaac as the subject and once with Abraham as the subject. After all, Isaac’s statements could have been conveyed with one instance of *said*: *Isaac said to Abraham his father, “Here is the fire...”* Then, Abraham could have responded with what is recorded in the following verse: *God will see to the sheep for the offering, my son.*

**6. three for the Account of Creation...** In the account of the first three days of Creation, the clause *God said* appears three times: *God said, “Let there be light.”...* (Genesis 1:3); *God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters”* (ibid., 6); *God said, “Let the waters be gathered”* (ibid., 9). These correspond to the three times Isaac *said*.

The clause *Abraham said, “Here I am, my son”* conveys his distress over the imminent sacrifice of his son. This distress corresponds to the lack of light implied by the divine command on the fourth day of Creation, when *God said, “Let there be מארת (me’orot), lights.”* The word מארת (*me’orot*), *lights*, is written without *vavs*, the vowel letters. Such variant spelling is common in the Bible and affects neither the pronunciation nor the simple meaning of the words. As construed here, however, the deficient spelling alludes to a profound 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.)

See JT *Ta’anit* 4:4, 68b; BT *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, 167b, 205a, 264b; 3:45a, 234a; *ZḤ* 69b-c (*ShS*). On the



diminishment of the moon, see BT *Hullin* 60b and parallels (below, [pp. 229–30](#), [n. 71](#)).

**7. There are more instances of *said*...** This verb appears numerous times in the account of the Binding of Isaac. Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that the other instances of *said* correspond to realms hidden in Divine Thought, whereas the four mentioned here are more revealed and can be correlated with the divine commands on the first four days of Creation.

**8. Behold, *YHVH* was passing by...** The prophet Elijah's description of the theophany at Mount Horeb. The context (1 Kings 19:11–12) reads: *He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before YHVH." And behold, YHVH was passing by, and a great, mighty wind splitting mountains and shattering rocks before YHVH; YHVH was not in the wind. After the wind—an earthquake; YHVH was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake—fire; YHVH was not in the fire. After the fire—קול (qol), a sound [or: voice] of, sheer silence.* Here, Elijah's description is related to that of Ezekiel: both prophets mention רעש (ra'ash), *earthquake* [or: *rumbling*], after *wind*.

Elsewhere, the *Zohar* identifies the *great wind* described by Elijah with the *stormy wind* described by Ezekiel (1:4)—both representing an outer shell surrounding other shells, enclosing a divine kernel. See *Zohar* 2:203a; *ZH* 38a. On Elijah's vision, see also *Zohar* 1:16a; 209a. On Ezekiel's vision and the shells, see *Zohar* 2:81b–82a, 203a–b; *ZH* 38a–d; Moses de León, *Peirush ha-Merkavah*, 59–60; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:463–64, 509.

**9. After the earthquake, fire...** Identified with *river of fire* seen by Daniel. The verse in Daniel reads: *A river of fire was flowing and gushing from His presence, a thousand thousands serving Him, a myriad of myriads attending Him.* See above, [p. 165](#), [n. 511](#).

**10. קול (qol), a sound of...** This *sound* or *voice* is *Shekhinah*, last of the seven lower *sefirot*—described as

“voices” issuing from *Binah*. On Her own, *Shekhinah* is silent; but when the higher *sefirot* “gather about Her” and flow into Her, She conveys their power throughout the worlds.

“Voice” is a conjectural rendering of עִירְטָא (*irta*), a neologism whose meaning is unknown. In his commentary to *Zohar* 1:250b, Shim’on Lavi defines it as צַעֲקָה (*tse’aqah*), “a cry, shout.” See his *Ketem Paz*, ad loc.; *Or Yaqar*; Vol. 3, p. 541, n. 1021; Scholem.

**11. Sheer...** Rendering דַּקָּה (*daqqah*), “thin, soft, small.” *Shekhinah* is the last and smallest of the *sefirot*.

**12. fire of Isaac...** The harsh power of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac. The account of the Binding of Isaac also alludes to this fire. Balancing the fire is “wood of Abraham,” the patriarch who represents *Hesed* (symbolized by *morning*). By bringing wood, the priest (who symbolizes *Hesed*) tempers the fiery harshness of *Din*. See above, [note 4](#).

**13. This fire of Isaac extends...** The power of *Gevurah* extends toward *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the altar.

On *Shekhinah* as altar, see above, [p. 156](#), [n. 481](#). On the priest circling the altar, see M *Zevahim* 5:3, *Tamid* 4:1; *Zohar* 3:120a.

**14. On the altar is a ramp...** In the Second Temple in Jerusalem, at the southern end of the altar there was a stone ramp, thirty-two cubits long and sixteen cubits wide, enabling the priests to reach the top of the altar without transgressing the prohibition in Exodus 20:23: *You shall not go up by steps upon My altar, that you may not expose your nakedness upon it*. See M *Middot* 3:3; *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 11.

Beneath the altar was a שִׁית (*shit*), “pit, hollow”—or שִׁיתִין (*shitin*), “pits, hollows”—into which flowed the wine that was poured as a libation on the altar. According to a tradition attributed to Rabbi Yose, the hollow(s) penetrated to the abyss. See *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:15; JT *Sukkah* 4:9, 54d; BT *Sukkah* 49a.

Here the ramp symbolizes the flow of emanation descending from *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the altar) and reaching “the highest abyss,” which is inhabited by angels.

**15. In that place are legions...** In the highest abyss are countless angels uttering the first word of the chant *Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!* (Isaiah 6:3). In Isaiah’s vision, the angels chanting this verse are identified as שרפים (*serafim*).

The angelic chieftain may be the archangel Michael. The ephod was a multicolored apron worn by Aaron the high priest.

“Corresponding to those below” refers to the ritual in the earthly Temple in Jerusalem. The fantastic total of twenty-four billion angels corresponds to the twenty-four משמרות (*mishmarot*), “guards,” which were the rotating divisions of priests and Levites in the Temple. On various angels dividing up *Holy, holy, holy...*, see BT *Hullin* 91b; *Zohar* 2:171qa; 3:252a (RM); ZH 39b.

**16. rolling waves of water...** This may refer to the אופנים (*ofanim*), *wheels*, described by Ezekiel (in the verse following *Blessed be the glory...*) and later identified as a separate class of angels. That subsequent verse also mentions the angelic חיות (*hayyot*), *living beings*, who move in perfect unison with the wheels. According to BT *Hullin* 91b–92a, the *ofanim* chant *Blessed be the glory...*, whereas according to the morning liturgy, both the *ofanim* and the *hayyot* chant this line. See *Tosafot*, *Hullin* 92a, s.v. *barukh ofanim*. “Rolling waves of” renders גלגלי (*galgallei*), literally “wheels of.” See above, [p. 120](#), [n. 362](#).

**17. They had radiance...** This verse describes the rims of the אופנים (*ofanim*), *wheels*, seen by Ezekiel. All the various angels gaze toward *Shekhinah*, “that supernal altar.”

The verse in Ezekiel actually reads: וגבה להם (*Ve-govah la-hem*), *They had height*, whereas here the *Zohar* reads: להם וגבה (*Venogah la-hem*), *They had radiance*. For other instances of

a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar's* reading, see above, [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#).

**18. When the fire of Isaac reaches the altar...** When the power of *Gevurah* (or *Din*) reaches *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the altar), numerous forces of Judgment are aroused in the world. These forces are countered and assuaged by the power of *Hesed*, activated by the priest arranging wood on the earthly altar. See above, [notes 4](#), [12](#).

**19. From these shooting coals...** From these forces of Judgment, the backs of the חיות (*hayyot*), *living beings* (who carry the Divine Throne), are set aflame.

“That one on the left” refers to the wind on the left. The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *The image of the living beings, their appearance, was like burning coals of fire; something with the appearance of torches it was, moving about among the living beings. The fire had a radiance and from it lightning flashed.*

**20. There are two altars below and two above...** The altar for animal sacrifices stood in the courtyard in front of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple), whereas the incense altar was placed within the Tabernacle (and the Temple). According to Exodus, the sacrificial altar was plated with bronze, and the incense altar with gold.

The Altar of Gold symbolizes *Binah*, the Divine Mother who engenders all the lower *sefirot* and in whom they are reunited. Rabbi Abba associates the Hebrew word קטרת (*qetoret*) with the Aramaic root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie, bind,” indicating that the offering of incense unites the *sefirot*. “The highest priest of all” is apparently *Hesed*, whose loving nature stimulates the reunion. (Cordovero, in *Or Yaqar*, suggests that here “the highest priest of all” refers to *Hokhmah*.)

The Altar of Bronze (placed outside of the sanctuary) symbolizes *Shekhinah* (last of the ten *sefirot*). Here the archangel Michael (the celestial high priest) brings an

offering to God, which is elsewhere described as consisting of the souls of the righteous who have departed this world.

On the bronze and golden altars, see Exodus 27:1-8; 30:1-10; *Zohar* 1:80a; 2:138b, 219a; 3:151b; *ZH* 61b (*MhN*, *ShS*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 66 (83). On *qetoret* as signifying “binding,” see above, [p. 60](#), [n. 183](#).

On the angel Michael bringing an offering to God, see BT *Hagigah* 12b, *Zevahim* 62a, *Menaḥot* 110a; *Midrash Tehillim* 134:1. On his offering the souls of the righteous, see *Araqim*, in *Otsar Midrashim*, ed. Eisenstein, 1:70a (cf. *Otsar Midrashim*, 1:104a; *Beit ha-Midrash*, 5:63); *Tosafot*, *Menaḥot* 110a, s.v. *u-Mikhael*; *Zohar* 1:80a (*ST*), 81a (*ST*); 2:37b, 211b, 247a (*Heikh*); 3:33a (*RM*), 53a; *ZH* 21a (*MhN*), 24b (*MhN*), 25a (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Seder Gan Eden*, 137; Margaliot, *Mal’akhei Elyon*, 114-16. Cf. *Zohar* 2:119b (*RM*), 213b, 229a; 3:29b (*RM*).

**21. Oil and incense...** *Oil* symbolizes the flow of emanation from *Hokhmah*, and *incense* pertains to *Binah* and signifies sefirotic union (as explained above). These two ritual elements produce great joy. Although the fat and sacrificial portions succeed in assuaging harsh Judgment, *oil and incense* signify a more sublime process.

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. Elsewhere, the *Zohar* indicates that such nighttime offerings are intended to nourish demonic forces. See M *Berakhot* 1:1; BT *Berakhot* 26b; *Zohar* 2:130a, 141a, 162a; 3:32b; *ZH* 46c. On the association of oil with *Hokhmah*, see *Zohar* 3:39a. On the verse in Proverbs, see above, [p. 35](#), [n. 103](#).

**22. This inner altar...** *Binah*, symbolized by the inner Altar of Gold, is called *voice of sheer silence*, befitting Her concealed status. She is also known as Altar of *YHVH*. *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the outer Altar of Bronze, is described not as “of *YHVH*” but rather *before YHVH*, somewhat removed.

On *Binah* as *voice of sheer silence*, see *Zohar* 1:209a; 2:81b, 3:193b. Above (at [notes 10-11](#)), this description applies to *Shekhinah*. The expression קטרת דקה (*getoret daqqah*), “fine incense,” derives from Leviticus 16:12.

The full verse in Kings (describing the dedication of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem) 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.*

**23. From here...** Rabbi Yose tries to demonstrate the existence of two altars below and two above from biblical verses.

Actually, the verse in Deuteronomy mentions just one altar: *They shall teach Your laws to Jacob and Your teaching to Israel. They shall put incense in Your nose and whole offerings on מִזְבְּחֶךָ (*mizbehekha*), Your altar.* Rabbi Yose playfully construes the pausal form *mizbehekha* as *Your altars*. The normal singular form is מִזְבַּחְךָ (*mizbahakha*); the correct plural form is מִזְבְּחוֹתֶיךָ (*mizbehotekha*), as in 1 Kings 19:10, 14; Psalms 84:4.

Similarly, the second quotation transforms an original singular *altar* into *altars*. The actual phrase appears in Isaiah 56:7: *Their ascent offerings and sacrifices על מזבחי מִזְבְּחֵי (le-ratson al mizbehi), will find favor on My altar.* See *Derekh Emet; Nitsotsei Orot; Nitsotsei Zohar*. For other instances of a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar*’s reading, see above, [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#).

**24. Moses built an altar...** Soon after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they were attacked by Amalek. According to rabbinic tradition, the Amalekites mutilated some of the Israelites by cutting off the covenantal sign of circumcision (or the phallus) and throwing it mockingly



toward heaven. After the people defeated Amalek, *Moses built an altar and called its name YHVH My Banner*.

Rabbi Abba indicates that the altar symbolizes *Shekhinah*, yet here She is aligned or harmonized with *Binah*, the inner altar, known as Altar of *YHVH* and described as *sound of sheer silence*. (See above, [note 22](#).) Moses named the altar *YHVH My Banner* because *Shekhinah* wreaked vengeance upon Amalek for their violent act against the covenantal “sign” of circumcision, thereby confirming this holy mark for Israel. From then on, *Shekhinah* became known as *a sword avenging with vengeance of the covenant*.

See *Zohar* 2:66a–b. On Amalek’s violent act, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 25:18; *Eikhah Rabbah* 3:64; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 3:6, 11; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tetse* 9–10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tetse* 10, 14; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:3; *Zohar* 2:65b, 67a, 195a; 3:190a Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 68.

For various attempts to explain the view attributed here to Rabbi Abba, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Leviticus reads: *I will bring against you a sword avenging with vengeance of the covenant*. On *Shekhinah* as “sword,” see above, [p. 72](#), [n. 223](#).

**25. A perpetual fire...** The fiery power of *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac, always influences *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by the altar). Appropriately, She is called *Adonai*, which is an anagram of אֲדֹנָי (*dina*), “Judgment.” However, when the priest arranges wood upon the altar, Judgment is assuaged and *Shekhinah* is called by the name *YHVH*, signifying Compassion. Thus, sometimes *Shekhinah* is simply the outer altar, and sometimes She attains the quality of the inner altar, known as Altar of *YHVH*.

See above, [notes 22](#), [24](#). On *Adonai* and *dina*, see above, [p. 64](#), [n. 197](#). On *YHVH* as signifying Compassion, see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#). On the sefirotic impact of the priest’s action, see above, [notes 4](#), [12](#), [18](#).

**26. Two of them...** Rabbi Shim'on insists that there are two altars: the inner altar (*Binah*), poised over the outer altar (*Shekhinah*); yet the two are interlinked.

**27. every single day Judgment impends...** See BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16a: "Rabbi Yose says, 'A person is judged every day....' Rabbi Natan says, 'A person is judged every moment.'"

On the world being created by, and based upon, Judgment (or Justice), see M *Avot* 1:18; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 43; *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:1; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:13; *Zohar* 1:180b; 2:122a, 187a; 3:32a, 62a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 291, 345.

**28. Setting out on a journey...** Where he is especially vulnerable. Here Judgment is identified with *righteousness*, which signifies *Shekhinah*, who is influenced by Judgment.

The full verse in Psalm 85 reads: *Righteousness goes before him, and he sets his footsteps on the way*. See BT *Berakhot* 14a; *Zohar* 1:49b-50a, 58b, 76a, 240b. On the verse in Psalm 7, see *Zohar* 1:8a, 91a, 177a; 248b-249a; 2:147a, 251 (*Heikh*); 3:119b, 176b-177a.

**29. El is always H̄esed...** This divine name signifies *H̄esed*—also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness)—as indicated by the phrase *האל הגדול* (*ha-El ha-gadol*), *the great God*. *H̄esed* emerges from *Hokhmah*, which is located directly above it. So how can the verse in Psalms state *And El rages every day*? Why would Scripture abandon here the various names indicating Judgment (such as *Elohim*) and employ the name *El*, which signifies *H̄esed*? If so, the consistent significance of biblical words—and especially divine names—is ruined. Furthermore, the divine title *אל גבור* (*El gibbor*), *mighty God*, is problematical, combining *El* (signifying *H̄esed*) with *gibbor* (signifying its opposite, *Gevurah*).

On *El* signifying *H̄esed*, see *Zohar* 1:16b, 17b, 94a; 3:11a, 23b, 65a; Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Or*, 76b-78b. Cf. *Mekhilta, Shirta* 3; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:2; *ZH* 30c. On

*Ḥesed* emanating from *Ḥokhmah*, see *Zohar* 1:94a; 2:175b; 3:31a, 65a.

**30. The wicked turn Compassion into Judgment...**

The various divine qualities are all intertwined and are affected by human actions. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥman: "Woe to the wicked, who turn the Attribute of Compassion into the Attribute of Judgment!"

See above, [p. 94](#), [n. 287](#). On the intertwining of the *sefirot*, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 101.

**31. Fine...** Rabbi Yehudah accepts that human action can affect the *sefirot*, and that the wicked can transform *Ḥesed* (signified by *Ei*) into *Gevurah* (signified by *gibbor*). But the verse in Psalms is still troubling, indicating that *Ḥesed* (*Ei*) *rages every day*, regardless of how humans behave.

**32. Surely, *Ei rages every day*...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that the name *Ei* actually signifies either Judgment or Compassion, depending on human behavior. On the effect of human actions, see below, [note 49](#).

**33. But here is something fine...** On a deeper level, *Ei* always represents *Ḥesed*, which emanates from *Ḥokhmah*. Without this quality of Divine Love, the world could not endure the harsh judgments aroused daily by human wickedness.

The anagram בַּהֲבָרָאם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*—בְּאַבְרָהָם (*be-Avraham*), *by Abraham*, appears in *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:9. There, according to Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Korḥah, it indicates that *heaven and earth* were created for Abraham's sake. Here, the point is that the world is sustained by *Ḥesed*, which is symbolized by Abraham: his quality of *Ḥesed* overwhelms all judgments.

On *Ḥesed* emanating from *Ḥokhmah*, see above, [note 29](#). On the midrashic anagram, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 16; *Lekh Lekha* 4; *Zohar* 1:3b, 86b, 91b, 93a, 105b, 128b, 154b, 230b, 247a; 2:31a, 48b, 79a, 220b; 3:38a, 117a, 298a.

**34. Thus it is written *EI rages every day...*** This verse does not mean that *EI is enraged*, but rather that *EI* overwhelms the forces of Judgment.

“Establishes... sweetly” renders מבסם (*me-vassem*), since the root בסם (*bsm*) conveys both senses. See above, [p. 83](#), [n. 256](#).

**35. *EI gibbor, mighty God...*** This expression does not mean that *EI* (which normally signifies *Hesed*) alludes here to *Gevurah* (associated with *gibbor*). Its actual meaning is soon clarified.

**36. Wonderful—supernal Wisdom...** The verse in Isaiah provides the throne name of the Davidic king: *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace*. Here, each element of this complex name is interpreted in terms of the *sefirot*. The first word—פלא (*pele*), *wonderful*—alludes to *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), based on the image in the first verse of *Sefer Yetsirah*: “thirty-two paths of פליאות חכמה (*pe’li’ot hokhmah*) wondrous wisdom.”

The verse in Deuteronomy demonstrates that *wondrous* can mean “concealed.” The clause, referring to a difficult legal case, reads: *If the matter יפלא ממך (*yippale mi-mekha*), is too wondrous [or: baffling] for you. Targum Onqelos renders the phrase as יתכסי מנך (*yitkesei mi-nakh*), “is concealed from you.”*

**37. Counselor—supernal river...** Alluding to *Binah*, the constant stream of emanation, nourishing and guiding all the lower *sefirot*.

**38. *EI, God—Abraham...*** The name *EI* signifies *Hesed*, who is symbolized by Abraham. *Hesed* is also known as *Gedullah* (Greatness), as indicated by the phrase האל הגדול (*ha-EI ha-gadol*), *the great God*. See above, [note 29](#).

**39. גבור (*Gibbor*), *Mighty—Isaac...*** The adjective *gibbor* (*mighty*) refers to *Gevurah*, the *sefirah* of Isaac. The verse in Deuteronomy reads: האל הגדול הגבור (*ha-EI ha-gadol ha-gibbor*), *the great, mighty God*—alluding to both *Hesed*—or *Gedullah* (Greatness)—and *Gevurah*.

**40. Eternal Father—Jacob...** The phrase *Eternal Father* alludes to *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by Jacob, one of three fathers (patriarchs). *Tif'eret* includes and harmonizes the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*. The word עַד (*ad*), *eternal*, can also mean “until, to, as far as,” perhaps suggesting here that *Tif'eret* extends from *Hesed* on the right *ad* (until, to, as far as) *Gevurah* on the left.

On the sefirotic significance of *ad*, see *Zohar* 1:247b (Vol. 3, p. 520, n. 952). On *Tif'eret* spanning right and left, see *Zohar* 1:1b, 148b (*ST*), 224a; 2:51b, 175b; 3:186a-b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 7; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 41-42 (49-51).

**41. Prince of Peace—Righteous One...** Namely, *Yesod*, the divine phallus, who is also known as “peace.” He unites *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, bringing harmony.

See BT *Shabbat* 152a, where Rabbi Shim'on son of Ḥalafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.” Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:1; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 12:5; *Zohar* 3:115b. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#). On *Shekhinah*'s name *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

**42. The wicked of the world...** Their wickedness ruins the harmony of the divine couple, causing *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) to depart from *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer [or: whisperer] separates אלוף (aluf), an intimate.* According to Rabbi Shim'on, a wicked person separates *Tif'eret*—who is אלוף (*aluf*), “Chief,” of the world—from *Shekhinah*. She is known as זאת (*zot*), the feminine form of “this,” while *Yesod* is known as זה (*zeh*), the masculine form of “this.” (*Yesod* and *Tif'eret* together constitute the Divine Male.) The concluding clause means “and they (should) form one coupling.”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:2, referring to the serpent's advice to Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge: “A *whisperer separates an intimate... A whisperer*—[this is



the serpent,] for he whispered rebelliously against his Creator, saying: [If you eat from the Tree of Knowledge,] *you surely will not die* (Genesis 3:4). *Separates* אלוף (*aluf*), *an intimate*—for he separated אלופו (*alufo*), the Chief, of the world [that is, he caused the Divine Presence to depart from the world] and was immediately cursed.” See above, [p. 67](#), [n. 204](#).

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On *Shekhinah* and *Yesod* as *zot* and *zeh* respectively, see *Zohar* 1:93b; 2:37b, 39b, 50b, 236b; 3:48b, 250a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

The verse in Leviticus reads: *This is the offering of Aaron and his sons...* On the verse in Jeremiah, see BT *Hagigah* 16a.

**[43.](#) Holy Aaron and his sons come...** By their pure service in the Dwelling, the divine couple—*zeh* and *zot*—are united.

**[44.](#) Why is it not written *zot*, *This*...** Why doesn't the verse refer to *Shekhinah*, known as *zot*, instead of *Yesod*, known as *zeh*? It would seem more natural for the human priest below to approach *Shekhinah* and lead Her to Her partner. However, Rabbi Shim'on explains that the priest symbolizes *Hesed*, who conveys the flow of emanation downward to *Yesod* (symbolized by *zeh*), who then unites with *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *zot*). In the final sentence “their share” means “the share of the priests.”

**[45.](#) For YHVH has chosen Zion...** The passage in Psalms reads: *For YHVH has chosen Zion, He desired her* [or: *it*] *as His seat*. “זאת (*zot*), *This, is My resting place forever; here will I dwell, for I desire her* [or: *it*].”

*Zion* often symbolizes *Yesod*, the Divine Male, who is characterized by Compassion, whereas in this verse *Zion* is clearly feminine, as indicated by *zot*, *this* (as well as by *He desired her... for I desire her*). On *zot*, see above, [note 42](#).

**[46.](#) We have heard as follows...** From Rabbi Shim'on, known as “the Supernal (or Holy) Lamp.” He explained that



the feminine description of *Zion* refers to when *Shekhinah* is united with, and included in, *Yesod*. The wording בציון (*be-tsiyyon*), *in Zion*, emphasizes that *Shekhinah* is included *in Yesod*, or that *Yesod* is *in Shekhinah*, both fully united. The alternative wording—לציון (*le-tsiyyon*), *to Zion*—would apparently refer to *Yesod* alone. In any case, whether *Zion* is referred to as masculine or feminine, the term refers to the rung of *Yesod* (occupied either by *Yesod* alone or when He is united with *Shekhinah*).

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On Rabbi Shim'on's title, see above, pp. 32–33, n. 98. On the feminine and sexual aspect of *Zion*, see *Zohar* 3:296b (*IZ*). On the feminine being contained within the male, see Wolfson, “Woman—The Feminine as Other in Theosophic Kabbalah,” 175–78; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 92–98.

**47. A man and a man were born in it...** Alluding to two divine aspects: *Shekhinah* (influenced by Judgment) and the Divine Male (influenced by Compassion). When the two are fully united, the name *Zion* applies most fully.

Furthermore, *Zion* alludes to *Yesod*, and Jerusalem alludes to *Shekhinah*. Emerging from transcendent hiddenness, *Yesod* unites with *Shekhinah* and reveals His nature. See *Zohar* 1:186a; 3:262b, 296b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 368.

**48. You shall hallow yourselves...** See BT *Yoma* 39a: “*You shall hallow yourselves and become holy*. If one sanctifies himself slightly, he is sanctified greatly; [if one sanctifies himself] below, he is sanctified from above; in this world, he is sanctified in the world that is coming.” Cf. BT *Shabbat* 104a, in the name of Resh Lakish: “If one comes to defile himself, they open the door for him; if one comes to purify himself, they assist him.”

Here Rabbi Yose wonders how a person can be defiled “from above.” How can defilement exist in the upper

realms? See BT *Sanhedrin* 59b: “Nothing impure descends from heaven.”

**49. By an action below...** On this essential principle of Kabbalah, see *Zohar* 1:35a, 77b–78a, 82b, 86b, 88a, 156b, 164a–b, 233a, 235a, 244a; 2:31b, 35b, 47b, 125a, 184a–b, 232b, 265a (*Heikh*); 3:30b–31a, 36b, 38b, 40a–b, 47a–b, 66a, 92a–b, 105a, 110b, 112b, 145a (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 144; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1160–61.

**50. There is no good or evil...** Even evil originates in the divine realm, having its roots in the *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). Human action stimulates action above, as does human speech. On the latter, see *Zohar* 2:47b; 3:53a, 85a, 105a.

**51. What can a word arouse?...** The alliterative doubling in Isaiah—*וְדַבֵּר דָּבָר* (*ve-dabber davar*), *speaking a word*—implies that a human *davar* (*word*) can arouse *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as the divine *davar* (*word*). She is *the word of YHVH* that comes to the prophets and is sometimes *rare*; She is the divine *word* by which the world was created.

The context in Isaiah (58:13–14) reads: *If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from engaging in your affairs on My holy day, and call the Sabbath “delight,” the holy of YHVH “honored”; if you honor it by not going your own ways, pursuing your affairs, or speaking a word, then you will delight in YHVH....* The phrase *speaking a word* may refer to idle, mundane, or excessive talk, business, or legal proceedings. See *Zohar* 2:47b; 3:94b, 105a–b.

On words splitting the heavens, see *Zohar* 2:201a; 3:55a, 61a, 105a, 121b, 260b, 294a–b (*IZ*). The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Keep yourself from every evil דָּבָר (davar), thing—understood here as word, as in JT Pe’ah 1:1, 16a; BT Ketubbot 46a; Zohar 3:52a.*

**52. There are four species...** The four species of vegetation held on *Sukkot*, based on Leviticus 23:40: *You shall take for yourselves on the first day fruit of a majestic*

*tree, fronds of palms, and a branch of a thickly-leaved tree [or: branches of thickly-leaved trees] and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before YHVH your God seven days.* These four species became identified as the *etrog* (citron), *lulav* (palm branch), *hadas* (sprigs of myrtle), and *aravah* (willow twigs). See above, [pp. 153-54](#), [n. 474](#).

These four species consist of seven elements since traditionally there are three sprigs of myrtle and two willow twigs along with the *lulav* and *etrog*. But these still represent four species, not seven. The “three others” are the second and third sprigs of myrtle and the second willow twig. By holding all seven elements together and shaking them, the human worshiper arouses the seven lower *sefirot*, stimulating a flow of blessing.

**[53. Although Assembly of Israel...](#)** Although *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) is one of the lower seven *sefirot*, She is blessed by all the other six (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). She is also blessed from the ceaseless stream of *Binah*, the Divine Mother. Both the upper world (*Shekhinah*) and the lower, terrestrial world are blessed by the six lower *sefirot* through the arousal of shaking the four species. Therefore, when the Temple stood, worshipers circled the altar (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) during *Sukkot*. After the destruction of the Temple, these circuits were eventually replaced by similar ones in the synagogue, where worshipers carried the four species (except on the Sabbath).

See above, [p. 155](#), [n. 479](#). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**[54. by this arousal...](#)** This ritual of the four species stimulates a flow of water from *Binah* to the six lower *sefirot* (*Hesed* through *Yesod*), who convey it through *Shekhinah* to the world.

During the time of the Temple, the ceremony of the water libation took place on the intermediate days of *Sukkot* and prayers were offered for rain. Later it became customary to recite a prayer for rain on *Shemini Atseret* (Eighth

Day of Convocation), following the seven days of *Sukkot*. According to M *Rosh ha-Shanah* 1:2, on *Sukkot* the whole world “is judged regarding water.” On the requirement that none of the four species be withered, see M *Sukkah* 3:1–3, 5.

**55. Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava...** Here it is taught that the angelic powers appointed over the trees of the four species receive blessings during *Sukkot*. These heavenly forces are stimulated by “those holy ones of the King”—namely the people of Israel, who wave the four species. On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, [p. 14](#), [n. 38](#).

**56. The voice of YHVH...** The verses in this psalm allude to various *sefirot*, which are all nourished by the flow of emanation (*the waters*). The title אֱלֹהֵי הַכְבוֹד (*El ha-kavod*), *the God of glory*, refers to *Hesed* (symbolized by Abraham), since the name *El* designates *Hesed*. (Alternatively, *the waters* alludes to *Hesed*, who is symbolized by water.) The phrase בְּכֹחַ (*ba-koah*), *in power*, refers to *Gevurah* (Power), symbolized by Isaac. The following verses allude to the following *sefirot*: *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Jacob), *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod* (known as Righteous One). The phrase *brings on the birth pangs of does* refers to *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness), who is symbolized by the doe.

The verse in Genesis implies that the river of emanation issues from *Hokhmah* (symbolized by *Eden*), eventually watering *Shekhinah* (*the garden*), in which are planted the sefirotic trees. See Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 229–51.

For attempts to explain how these verses allude to various *sefirot*, see *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On *El* as a name of *Hesed*, see above, [note 29](#). On הַדָּר (*hadar*), *majesty*, as alluding to *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Jacob), see *ZH* 44a, 95d (*Tiq*); *TZ* 69, 104b; cf. *Zohar* 3:292a (*IZ*). On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#). On *Shekhinah* as a doe, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 229](#).

**57. These seven voices...** During the rest of the year, the seven lower *sefirot* depend on human prayer and study, which stimulate emanation. But on *Sukkot*, they depend on the ritual act of waving the four species.

**58. On the seventh day of the Festival...** On *Hosha'na Rabbah* (the seventh day of *Sukkot*), the divine decrees for the coming year issue from above. Powers of Judgment are finalized on this day. *Netsah* and *Hod*, who are symbolized by the willows of the brook (one of the four species), depend upon these powers, which also intensify the rains. Whereas on each of the first six days of *Sukkot* (during the period of the second Temple), worshipers circled the altar once, on *Hosha'na Rabbah* they circled seven times. Here, this circling stimulates a powerful flow of water from *Gevurah* (symbolized by Isaac) to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the altar and known as “the well of Isaac”).

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); 2:142a-b; Wilhelm, “Sidrei Tiqqunim,” 130-43; Tamar, “Hosha'na-Rabbah ke-Yom Hittum ha-Din”; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 30-31.

On *Gevuran* (Powers), see above, [p. 153](#), [n. 471](#). The association of *Gevuran* (or *Gevurah*) with rain is based on the expression גבורות גשמים (*gevurot geshamim*), “the power(s) of rain.” See M *Berakhot* 5:2; *Ta'anit* 1:1; *Zohar* 2:154b. On circling the altar, see above, [p. 155](#), [n. 479](#).

**59. On this day...** On *Hosha'na Rabbah* Israel needs to stimulate the powers in order to ensure abundant rain, but these powers must then conclude so that judgments come to an end. Therefore, Israel beats the willow branches on the ground, overcoming the harshness of the powers.

**60. from the aspect of the brook...** These powers issue from *Binah*, the ceaseless stream.

**61. On this day, Isaac returned...** On *Hosha'na Rabbah*, Isaac—symbolizing *Din* (Judgment)—*dug* בארת (*be'erot*), *wells of water*. The abbreviated spelling of בארת (*be'erot*)—without a ו (*vav*)—enables the phrase to be read as בארת (*be'erat*), *a well of water*, alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by a well. On the first day of Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah), Isaac ascends the Throne of Judgment. Then, on *Hosha'na Rabbah*, *Isaac returned* to conclude Judgment. He *dug the wells* [or: *the well*] *of water*—that is, he prepared to pour powers into *Shekhinah*, ensuring water for the coming year.

On “powers” and rain, see above at the end of [note 58](#). On Isaac and Rosh Hashanah, see above, [pp. 112–13](#), [n. 343](#).

**62. Since they are powers...** Since these are powers of Judgment, they bring rain to the world only by ominous clouds, so the righteous remain calm on a cloudy day only because rain is essential. Why are powers of Judgment necessary for rain? Because the world was created, and endures, by Judgment.

See BT *Ta'anit* 8b: “Rabbah son of Shila said, ‘A day of rain is as hard as a day of Judgment.’ Amemar said, ‘Were [rain] not essential for creatures, we would pray for mercy and abolish it.’” On the world being created by Judgment (or Justice), see above, [note 27](#).

**63. all depends upon action...** So by the priest’s ritual on earth, the *sefirot* are stimulated and blessing flows to those below. See above, [note 49](#).

**64. The willows resemble lips...** According to rabbinic tradition, each of the four species resembles a particular part of the body, and the willow leaves resemble the lips. Rabbi Yose wonders how this resemblance pertains specifically to *Hosha'na Rabbah*, when the willows branches are beaten on the ground.

See *Tanḥuma*, *Emor* 19; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 28; *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 340. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:14 (see variants).



**65. to be expounded homiletically...** The midrashic sources compare the four species to various parts of the body in order to teach that a person should praise God with one's whole being. However, Rabbi Hiyya indicates that the resemblance of the willow leaves to human lips conveys a deeper meaning, related specifically to *Hosha'na Rabbah*. On this day, fervent prayer with the lips is essential, since the divine decrees are about to be finalized and actualized. Furthermore, by beating the willows on ground, Israel nullifies the evil accusations of Samael.

According to *Or Yaqar*, "beginning and end" refers to the higher aspect of the willows or lips (represented by *Netsah* and *Hod*) and the lower demonic lips of Samael.

On beating the willows as a way to nullify demonic accusations, see *Sha'arei Teshuvah (Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim)*, 340. On the clause "This comes in order to be expounded homiletically," see BT *Megillah* 2b, *Yevamot* 54b, *Qiddushin* 4a, *Sanhedrin* 55a; *Zohar* 2:29b-30a, 160b, 175a; 3:87b, 267a; *ZH* 25d (*MhN*), 86a-b (*MhN, Rut*); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 2a; Matt, "New-Ancient Words," 198.

**66. blessings of the other nations are completed...** During the seven days of *Sukkot* a total of seventy bulls were sacrificed on the altar. According to rabbinic tradition, these benefited the seventy nations of the world. On *Hosha'na Rabbah*, these offerings are completed and Judgment again prevails over the nations. Meanwhile, the decrees of Judgment against Israel are concluded and blessing returns to them. On the next day, *Shemini Atseret* (Eighth Day of Convocation), Israel alone rejoices with God.

On the seventy bulls, see above, [p. 156](#), [n. 481](#). On *Shemini Atseret*, see *Zohar* 1:64a-b; 2:187a; 3:96b-97a, 104b, 214b, 259b.

**67. I have loved you...** This prophecy declares that God loves Jacob (that is, Israel) and hates Esau (representing Edom). In rabbinic literature Edom often represents the Roman Empire, and in medieval literature it

often represents Christian rule. Since, in medieval Europe, Christian powers prevailed, how can the verse in Malachi still be true? How has God *made his hills a desolation*?

**68. everywhere it is so...** Whenever a biblical prophecy describes a divine act as already completed, this indicates that God has decreed and recorded it, thereby ensuring that it will be enacted. So the verse in Malachi provides a guarantee that God will defeat Israel's enemies. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 44:22; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:25; *Midrash Tehillim* 107:3.

**69. וזאת (ve-zot), And this, is the Torah...** The verse reads: וזאת תורה (ve-zot torat), *And this is the teaching* [or: *ritual*] *of, the guilt offering*—and similarly, the other verses. Rabbi Yitshak reads the verses hyperliterally: *And this is the Torah of* the various offerings. If these verses pertain to the world below, they indicate that the study of Torah is equivalent to all the sacrifices. Alternatively, the verses apply above, alluding to *Shekhinah*—who is known both as *zot, this*, and Oral Torah. She includes the qualities of all the higher *sefirot*, which flow into Her, and one who engages in Torah receives from Her abundantly.

On Torah being equivalent to (or outweighing) sacrifices, see BT *Menahot* 110a (based similarly on Leviticus 6:18; 7:37); *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 57; *Zohar* 1:100a (*MhN*), 191a-b; 3:35a, 80b, 159a, 164a. Cf. *Ta'anit* 27b; *Megillah* 31b.

**70. bringing holy entities...** Uniting the *sefirot* by performing ritual sacrifice. See above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#).

**71. these are the Levites...** Their harps (modeled on King David's harp) apparently symbolize *Shekhinah*, who is linked with David. *Shekhinah* (and the harps) derive from *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Torah), and She Herself is known as Oral Torah. So the Levites are *those who handle Torah*.

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.” In Kabbalah, Torah is pictured as being given “from the side of *gevurah*” on the left, implying that *Tif’eret* (symbolized by Torah) derives from *gevurah* (which it balances with *hesed*). The Levites are associated with *gevurah*, so “Torah was given from [their] side.”

See *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 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, 111a; *Shemot Rabbah* 33:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:6; *Zohar* 1:48b, 198a, 243a; 2:81a, 84a, 122a; 3:39a, 80b.

**72. These are three rungs...** The priests, Levites, and Israel (all involved with the sacrificial ritual) correspond respectively to *hesed*, *gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*. By sacrificing the offering with pure intention, the priest unifies the *sefirot*, symbolized by the letters of *YHVH*, and stimulates “his side,” namely *hesed*. Therefore Jeremiah criticizes the priests for not asking *Where is YHVH?*—that is, for not intending to unify the Name.

Through song, the Levites stimulate “their side” (*gevurah*) to merge with *hesed*, thereby assuaging the harshness of the left side and attaining harmony. Israel ideally turns back to God—specifically to *Tif’eret*, the Holy King. Just as *Tif’eret* receives and blends all the opposite qualities of right and left, the people of Israel receive total blessing and their sins are atoned.

Technically, the Levites chanted song only during communal, not individual, sacrifices. I have adopted here the reading preserved in several early manuscripts (P2, T1, V5): “their sins,” instead of “his sin” (which appears in other manuscripts and in the printed editions). See *Or Yaqar; Matoq mi-Devash*. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#).

**73. Setting beams for His lofts...** Above the vault of the heavens lie the upper waters, where God builds *His*

*lofts.*

The full verse in Psalm 104 reads: *Setting beams for His lofts in the waters, making the clouds His chariot, moving on the wings of the wind.* See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 8; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:11; *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:1; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:22.

On the primordial and creative nature of the water, see *Zohar* 3:219b; *ZH* 12a-c (*MhN*), 13a (*MhN*), 16a (*MhN*). On water underlying the world, see BT *Hagigah* 12b; *Midrash Tehillim* 104:8; 136:5. The context in Psalms (24:1-2) reads: *The earth and her fullness are YHVH's, the world and those who dwell in her. For upon seas He founded her, and upon rivers set her firm.*

**74. supernal holy beings...** Angels, distilled from God's breath.

"Mouth" renders בְּסִיטָא (*besita*), which apparently derives from Castilian *boca*, "mouth," with the diminutive suffix *ita*. See *Zohar* 2:30b, 177a (*SdT*s); 3:131a (*IR*); *Ma'arikh*, s.v. *bosita*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 134-35; Corominas, *Diccionario*, 1:603-4. Cf. *Zohar* 3:128b (*IR*); Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *besit*.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water."* The full verse in Psalms reads: *By the word of YHVH the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their array.*

**75. those who offer praise by day...** Angels who chant in the morning and early evening. Above them stand fiery angels; when these smell the consuming fire of *Shekhinah*, they retreat to their places.

On angels who chant by day and others who chant by night, see *Zohar* 2:131b; 2:64b. On the fire of *Shekhinah* (which can consume fiery angels), see BT *Yoma* 21b; above, [pp. 164-65](#), [n. 511](#).

**76. On the Other Side...** Are realms inhabited by demonic forces, who execute harsh Judgment upon the

wicked.

The image of the River of Fire derives from 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.* See above, [p. 165](#), [n. 511](#).

**77. When smoke of the altar ascends...** This smoke assuages and nourishes the demonic forces, drawing them away from their destructive activity and enabling them to approach the realm of holiness. The altar below is aligned with *Shekhinah*, “the supernal altar.”

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. Elsewhere the *Zohar* indicates that the smoke from such nighttime offerings assuages and nourishes the demonic forces. See M *Berakhot* 1:1; BT *Berakhot* 26b; *Zohar* 2:130a, 141a, 162a; 3:30b; *ZH* 46c.

**78. Another smoke ascends...** A finer smoke ascends, benefiting the holy angels. Thus, aspects of the sacrificial offerings benefit “each and every one,” both angels and demonic forces. The aspiration of the human worshipers (priests, Levites, and Israelites) ascends to *Tif’eret*, delighting Him.

See *ZH* 46c. For other interpretations of the two smokes, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the sacrifices providing pleasure to God, see Numbers 28:2: *My offering, My bread, for My fire offerings, My pleasing aroma, you shall take care to offer to Me at its fixed time.* See above, [p. 31](#), [n. 96](#).

**79. אוריאל (Uri’el)...** This archangel—whose name actually derives from אור (*ur*), “fire”—appeared on the altar as אריא (*arya*), “a lion,” ready to devour the offering. When heavenly fire descended to meet the fire on the altar, the Israelite who had brought the offering was filled with awe.

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.” Cf. *Zohar* 1:6b; 3:211a, 235a, 241a; *ZH* 44a; Todros Abulafia, *Sha’ar ha-Razim*, 90.

**80. in complete unification** Unifying the *sefirot* through their ritual offering. See above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#).

**81. A fire came out...** The full verse reads: *A fire came out from before YHVH and consumed on the altar the ascent offering and the fat, and all the people saw and shouted with joy and fell on their faces.* The biblical context is the conclusion of the consecration of the altar and of Aaron and his sons.

**82. the smoke did not rise in a straight path...** According to a rabbinic tradition (*Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 35), one of the miracles regularly performed in the Temple was that “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 the description of the incense offering on Yom Kippur in *Tanḥuma, Tetsavveh* 5: “When the cloud of incense rose straight up in a column and then became like a cluster, the high priest would know that Israel’s iniquities had been atoned for.”

Here Rabbi Yehudah indicates that when the people were unworthy or the sacrifice was not offered properly, the smoke would rise in a twisted way. From the north (symbolizing harsh Judgment), a wind (or spirit) issued, reaching the altar.

See *BT Yoma* 21b (quoted in part, above, [note 79](#)): “Five things were reported about the fire of the pile of wood on the Temple altar: it crouched like a lion.... But it has been taught: Rabbi Hanina, prefect of the priests, said, ‘I myself saw it, and it was crouching like a dog.’ There is



no contradiction: the former refers to the First Temple, the latter to the Second Temple.” Here, Rabbi Yehudah resolves the conflicting views differently: when Israel proved worthy (or the sacrifice was offered properly), Uriel appeared on the altar as a lion; if not, the image of an impudent dog appeared. See *Zohar* 1:6b; 3:91a, 211a; *Miqdash Melekh*.

On the smoke rising straight, see M *Avot* 5:5; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 39; BT *Yoma* 21a-b; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 6; *Zohar* 1:176b-177a; 2:130a, 141a, 242b, 278a; ZH 43b; Vol. 3, p. 66, n. 450. On the smoke twisting, see *Zohar* 2:130a, 141a, 242b. On the smoke and the direction north, cf. BT *Yoma* 21b.

**83. This is Uriel...** See above, [note 79](#). The consecration of the altar and of Aaron and his sons was a time of immense favor, as demonstrated by the miraculous fire from heaven and the manifestation of the Divine Glory. But this spectacular event was marred by the death of two of Aaron’s sons, as described in the very next verses (Leviticus 10:1-2): *The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, took each of them his fire-pan and put fire in it and placed incense upon it and offered alien fire before YHVH, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from before YHVH and consumed them, and they died before YHVH.*

See *Zohar* 3:37b, 38b. Leviticus 9:23 reads: *The glory of YHVH appeared to all the people*, which is confused here with Numbers 16:19: *The glory of YHVH appeared to all the community*.

**84. it was not the time for incense...** According to Exodus, incense should be offered in the morning and the evening, whereas Nadab and Abihu offered it at a different time. See *Zohar* 3:37b. On oil and incense, see above, [note 21](#); [pp. 34-35, n. 103](#); [p. 60, n. 182](#).

**85. except when plague prevails...** Since incense assuages wrath and harsh Judgment.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *Moses said to Aaron, "Take the fire-pan and place fire upon it from the altar and put in incense and carry it quickly to the community and atone for them, for the fury has gone forth from before YHVH, the plague has begun!"*

**86. they forced the hour...** Offering incense during the lifetime of Aaron their father, who alone was commissioned to do so.

See *Zohar* 3:60a. Cf. 3:37b, 56b; *Leqah Tov*, Leviticus 10:1; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Leviticus 10:1, p. 220; *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:32, 45c; *Aḥarei Mot* 1, 79c.

Cf. *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:21, 44d: "[Nadab and Abihu] saw Moses and Aaron walking in front, while they came behind, followed by all of Israel. Nadab said to Abihu, 'As soon as these two old ones die, we will lead the community!'"

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:10; BT *Sanhedrin* 52a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:9; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 7, 13.

**87. they were not married...** One who is not married is only "half a body" and thus defective. He lacks blessing and surely cannot convey it to others. See BT *Yevamot* 62b-63a: "Rabbi Tanḥum said in the name of Rabbi Ḥanilai, 'Any man who has no wife is without joy, without blessing, without goodness.'... Rabbi El'azar said, 'Any אדם (*adam*), man, who has no wife is not an *adam*, as is said: *Male and female He created them... and He named them adam* (Genesis 5:2).'" See above, [p. 13, n. 37](#); [pp. 15-16, n. 45](#).

On their being unmarried, see above, [p. 16, n. 46](#). On their being intoxicated, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 10:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:1, 5; 20:9; *Ester Rabbah* 5:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:9; *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 11, *Aḥarei Mot* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 7; *Zohar* 1:73b, 192a; 3:39a; *ZḤ* 22c (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 36-37 (43-44). On the significance of incense, see above, [p.](#)

[16](#), [n. 47](#). On the verse in Proverbs, see above, [p. 35](#), [n. 103](#).

[88](#). **זאת משחת (Zot mishḥat), This is the allotment of...** *Shekhinah* is known as *zot*, *this*. Rabbi Yose plays with two meanings of the root *משח* (*mshḥ*), “measure” and “anoint.” *Shekhinah* is anointed with the flow of emanation from *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Aaron.

See above, [p. 155](#), [n. 478](#). On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). The verse in Leviticus describes the portions of the wellbeing sacrifice that are reserved for Aaron and his sons, namely the breast and the right thigh.

[89](#). **Elisha said to her...** The prophet 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 one’s table not to be empty, 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 Naḥmanides on Exodus 25:24; *Zohar* 1:88a-b, 240a, 250a; 2:63b, 67a, 87b-88a, 153b, 155a, 157b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 270; Joseph Caro, *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 180:2; Abraham Gombiner, *Magen Avraham*, ad loc.; *Zohorei Ya’bets*, 48; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 28; idem, *Minhag Ashkenaz ha-Qadmon*, 267-70.

[90](#). **Surely, this helps the miracle...** The flask of oil stimulates the miracle because oil alludes to the flow of emanation from *Ḥokhmah* above (“in its place”). On the association of oil with *Ḥokhmah*, see *Zohar* 3:39a.

According to the simple sense of the verse in Kings, *she kept pouring* refers, of course, to the poor woman; but Rabbi Yehudah indicates that the subject is “unspecified,” and is actually *Shekhinah*. The stream of emanation is brought

to Her by the higher *sefirot*, and She conveys it to those below—including to the poor woman.

**91.** ותעמוד השמן (*Va-ta'amod ha-shamen*), **And the oil stood...** The full verse reads: *When the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." He replied, "There are no more vessels."* ויעמוד השמן (*Va-ya'amod ha-shamen*), *And the oil stopped* [literally: *stood*].

Here Rabbi Yose apparently misreads the verse intentionally, as if it read: ותעמוד השמן (*va-ta'amod ha-shamen*), employing the feminine form of the verb—literally *she stood*—which does not match the masculine noun שמן (*shemen*), *oil*. He then explains why, in fact, this feminine form fits here: because *Shekhinah* remained standing, poised to conduct blessings to the world.

Cf. *Zohar* 1:88a-b. The (apparently intentional) misreading ותעמוד השמן (*va-ta'amod ha-shamen*) appears in numerous manuscripts (including N10, P2, R1, T1, V3, V5, V6). *Or Yaqar* and the printed editions contain the “correct” reading ויעמוד השמן (*va-ya'amod ha-shamen*), along with a different reading of what follows here: “The verse should read ותעמוד (*va-ta'amod*), and she stood. However, *va-ya'amod*, and he stood, surely....” For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. For other instances of a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar*’s reading, see above, [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#).

**92. The oil...** Symbolizing the flow of emanation from *Hokhmah*. The phrase in Isaiah—בקרן בן שמן (*be-qeren ben shamen*)—means *on a fertile* [or: *fat*] *slope* [or: *spur*]. Here, Rabbi Yose reads it hyperliterally: *on a horn, son of oil*—alluding to *Shekhinah* (pictured as a *horn*), whose father is *Hokhmah* (associated with *oil*). She is also the divine *name*, conveying the *oil* from above.

*Hesed* (symbolized by the priest) conducts the oil of emanation to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *zot*. See above, [note 88](#). The full verse in Psalms reads: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron,*

*descending over the collar of מדותיו (middotav), his robes.* In the *Zohar*, this verse alludes to the flow of emanation from God's head, trickling down His beard onto the lower sefirotic garments or robes, which are also known as מדות (*middot*), "attributes." See above, [p. 34](#), [nn. 101-2](#).

On *Shekhinah* as horn, see above, [p. 124](#), [n. 376](#). On the association of oil with *Hokhmah*, see *Zohar* 3:39a. On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:95b-96a. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *As for fragrance, your oils are fine; your name is oil poured—therefore, maidens love you.*

**93. For with You is the fountain of life...** The verse is addressed, as it were, to *Hokhmah*, with whom *is the fountain of life*—namely *Binah*. The oil represents the stream of emanation proceeding from *Hokhmah* through *Binah* to the lower *sefirot*.

On the constant state of union between *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, [pp. 4-5](#), [n. 12](#). For various interpretations of this passage, see *Or Yaqar; Miqdash Melekh; Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1003, n. 159; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**94. She is the fountain...** *Binah* is the source, conveying life to *Tif'eret*, the Tree of Life, and kindling the other lower sefirotic lamps.

**95. light treasured away...** The primordial light of Creation. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:7 (in the name of Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Simon): "With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, a person 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; *Midrash*

*Tehillim* 27:1; *Bahir* 97-98 (147), 106 (160); *Zohar* 1:1a, 7a, 21a, 30b, 31b-32a, 45b-46a, 47a, 59a, 121b (*MhN*), 131a, 203b; 2:35a, 78b, 127a-b, 147b, 148b-149a 166b-167a, 220b, 224b, 230a; 3:88a, 93a, 173b, 225b, 231b; *ZH* 1a (*MhN*), 15b (*MhN*), 85a-b (*MhN, Rut*).

**96. Alternatively...** The verse is addressed to *Tif'eret*, the tree in the midst of the Garden (symbolizing *Shekhinah*, who includes all the lower *sefirot*). *Tif'eret* balances right and left (*Hesed* and *Gevurah*), and spans above and below (*Binah* and *Shekhinah*). *The fountain of life* (*Binah*) is *with* Him, adorning Her son *Tif'eret* (symbolized by King Solomon) on the day of His wedding to *Shekhinah*. On the verse in Song of Songs, see above, [p. 7](#), [n. 22](#).

**97. the High Priest above...** *Hesed*, first of the lower seven *sefirot* and thus first to receive the flow of life from *Binah*, *the fountain of life*. The human high priest below corresponds to *Hesed*, who conveys the emanation (pictured as “holy anointing oil”) and kindles the sefirotic lamps below Him.

*Hesed* includes the fullness of all seven sefirotic “days” (from *Hesed* itself through *Shekhinah*). Parallel to these seven divine days are the seven days of the priestly מלואים (*millu'im*), “ordination”—literally “filling.” This earthly ceremony stimulates the completion of *Hesed* (the High Priest above) by the other sefirotic days, who are aroused together with Him.

See *Zohar* 3:35b, 89a-b. The Targum literature sometimes translates מלואים (*millu'im*) literally as אשלמותא (*ashlamuta*), “filling, completion.” See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 7:37; 8:22, 28, 34; 9:1; cf. *Targum Onqelos* and *Targum Yerushalmi*, Exodus 25:7; 35:9, 27. On the term *millu'im*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:526-27, 538-40.

**98. when the priest below is aroused...** When he is properly and “fully” ordained and begins to perform the sacred ritual, the *sefirot* are aroused above and blessings flow.



**99. Why was it Moses who anointed Aaron?...**

Because he is considered the son of *Binah*, the Divine Mother and Fountain of Life, who conveys the flow to *Ḥesed* (symbolized by Aaron) on the right. The verse in Isaiah now implies that God sent Aaron, symbolizing *Ḥesed*, to be at Moses' right hand. Aaron is referred to here as זרוע תפארתו (*zero'a tif'arto*)—construed as *the arm of His Tif'eret*, namely the arm on the right of *Tif'eret* (who is symbolized by Moses).

On Moses anointing Aaron, see Exodus 28:41; 29:7; 40:13. On *Binah* as Fountain of Life, see above, [notes 93-94](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Who sent His glorious arm to be at Moses' right hand, splitting the waters before them to make Himself an everlasting name.* See *Zohar* 3:142b (*IR*), 283b.

On Moses ministering as high priest during the seven days of ordination, see *Sifra, Millui'm (Tsav)* 1:14, 41c; *Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:14, 44c; *JT Yoma* 1:1, 38b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 11:6; *BT Ta'anit* 11b, *Avodah Zarah* 34a, *Zevahim* 101b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:5; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 63c; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 21; *Shemot Rabbah* 37:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 18:22.

**100. Seven, as follows...** In rabbinic literature these same seven things are described as being created before the world, though without any mention of “light.” Here, the seven primordial lights correspond to the seven lower *sefirot* (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*), which are all “joined with” or included in *Ḥesed*, symbolized by Aaron the high priest. Aaron stimulated the illumination of these seven *sefirot* and lit—or by lighting—the seven lamps of the menorah in the Dwelling.

On the seven things created before the world, see *BT Pesahim* 54a, *Nedarim* 39b; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 3; *Midrash Mishlei* 8:9; *ZḤ* 5a (*MhN*) (all including “the name of the Messiah”). Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 37; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:4, p. 6; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 31, p. 160; *Tanḥuma*, *Naso* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 19; *Midrash*

*Tehillim* 90:12; 93:3; *Zohar* 1:113a (*MhN*). For attempts to match up each of the seven lights with one of the seven lower *sefirot*, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**101. even the globe of the sun...** According to a midrashic tradition (in the name of Rabbi Naḥman), “even the globe of the sun” was created from the earth. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:11; *Qohelet Rabbah* and *Qohelet Zuta* on 3:20; *Zohar* 1:170a; 3:125a, 181a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 344.

In *Shemot Rabbah* 13:1, Yosef the Builder explains how God created the earth: “The blessed Holy One took dust from beneath the Throne of Glory and scattered it upon the waters and the earth was formed, and little pebbles in the dust became mountains and hills.” Cf. *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 3.

Here “the holy Throne of Glory” may represent *Binah*, who forms a throne for the *Ḥokhmah*. Her *dust* would then be Her lowest aspects or *Shekhinah*. See below.

**102. the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava...** In this venerable source the *dust* is identified as *Shekhinah*, who gathers the entire flow of emanation. Above, numerous paths branch out of *Ḥokhmah*—“like dust thrown in every direction”—eventually reuniting in *Shekhinah*. Thus, *All* (of creation) *comes from the dust* (*Shekhinah*), *and all* (of emanation in its many paths) *returns to the dust* (*Shekhinah*), who is symbolized also by the Temple. *Shekhinah* derives from an even higher dust, namely *Binah*, known as *dust of gold*. In this sense, *All comes from the dust* (from *Binah*), *and all returns to the dust* (to *Shekhinah*).

On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, [p. 14, n. 38](#). 1:170a: On *Shekhinah* as dust, see *Zohar* 1:49a, 170a, 249b-250a; 2:23b-24b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 344-45; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 171; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 57-58, 62 (70-71, 77-78).

On *dust of gold*, cf. *Zohar* 1:249b–250a; 2:24a, 266b (*Heikh*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 344. The context in Job 28 is the process of mining metals; the full verse reads: *A place whose stones are sapphire and that has dust of gold.*

**103. Dust—dust of the Temple...** Namely, *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized variously by dust, the Temple, and the final letter of the name יהוה (*YHVH*). Through Her, the world was created.

According to a midrashic tradition in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, the word in Genesis בהבראם (*be-hibbare'am*), *when they were created*, can be construed as בה' בראם (*be-he bera'am*), “by [the letter] *he* He created them.”

See JT *Hagigah* 2:1, 77c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10; BT *Menahot* 29b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 16, *Lekh Lekha* 4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 109b; *Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva* (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:363); *Midrash Tehillim* 62:1; 114:3; *Zohar* 1:46b, 91b; 3:43a, 298a; *ZH id* (*MhN*), 17a (*MhN*), 26a (*MhN*). Cf. Vol. 5, p. 188, n. 11; above, [note 33](#).

The creative function of the dust of the Temple is based on blending two midrashic motifs on the creation of Adam. See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11 and 12: “He began gathering the dust of Adam [see Genesis 2:7] from the four corners of the earth... He created him from a pure, holy site. From where did He take him? From the site of the Temple.” See Vol. 4, pp. 83–84, n. 49.

**104. You are entirely beautiful...** The lover's exclamation to his beloved is understood as spoken by *Tif'eret* to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). She is also pictured as the Divine Court, presiding, as it were, over the Sanhedrin, which included seventy-one flawless members (seventy and the presiding officer); so along with *Shekhinah* there are seventy-two in all. (Alternatively, the number seventy-two may refer to seventy members of the Sanhedrin plus their two scribes.)

The number seventy-two corresponds to seventy-two triads of letters known as “seventy-two names” or the Name of Seventy-two. Employing the round number seventy, Rabbi El’azar refers also to God’s seventy names, which correspond to the seventy souls who descended to Egypt with Jacob. Along with Jacob himself and “the blessed Holy One above all,” they constituted seventy-two.

According to the Mishnah, if a man (or according to some interpretations, a priest) seeks to marry a priest’s daughter, he must examine her lineage to make sure that there is no disqualification (such as an ancestress who was divorced and then married a priest). If, however, her father or grandfather was a member of the Sanhedrin, this provides sufficient proof of unimpaired stock and no further ancestral investigation is required. See M *Qiddushin* 4:4-5; BT *Qiddushin* 76a-b (quoting *There is no flaw in you*); above, [p. 116](#), [n. 354](#).

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#). On the Sanhedrin and the numbers seventy and seventy-two, see below, [p. 534](#), [n. 554](#). On the Name of Seventy-two, see *ibid.*; *Nitsotsei Zohar* on *Zohar* 2:270a, n. 2.

On the seventy names of God, see *Targum*, Song of Songs 2:17; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:12; Nahmanides, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:135; *Zohar* 1:5b; 2:51b, 123a, 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.

On the number of Jacob’s descendants who went down to Egypt, see Genesis 46:26-27; Exodus 1:5; Deuteronomy 10:22; Sarna, *Exodus*, on 1:5. On the parallel between those who descended to Egypt, the members of the

Sanhedrin, and the Divine Name, see Nahmanides on Numbers 11:16.

**105.** ממלכת (*mamleket*), **a kingdom of priests...** *Mamleket*, a kingdom, refers to *Malkhut* (Kingdom), or *Shekhinah*. She is also known as זאת (*zot*), *this*. Rabbi El'azar plays with two meanings of the root מִשָּׁח (*mshh*), “measure” and “anoint.” *Shekhinah* is anointed with the flow of emanation from *Hesed*, symbolized by Aaron.

See above, [note 88](#). The verse in Exodus 19 reads: *As for you, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

**106. Rabbi Shim'on said...** Rabbi El'azar's father indicates that in this verse from Exodus, *Shekhinah* is not called 'ממלכות (*mamlekhut*), a kingdom of [priests],' but rather ממלכת (*mamleket*), which he apparently construes as the passive ממלכת (*momleket*), “enthroned, crowned, made into a queen,” because by their ritual service the priests crowned Her as Queen. When *Shekhinah* joins with *Tif'eret*, who is known as Heaven, She is called מלכות שמים (*malkhut shamayim*), “Kingdom of Heaven.” On *Shekhinah*'s being in charge of the King's weapons, see above, [p. 55](#), [n. 165](#).

**107.** ואגדתו (*Va-aguddato*), **And His bond...** The verse reads: *Who builds His chambers in the heavens, ואגדתו (*va-aguddato*), and His vault, He founds upon the earth.* Rabbi Yose interprets *va-aguddato* based on the root meaning of אגד (*'gd*), “to tie together.” When King *Tif'eret* joins with all the sefirotic powers around Him to unite with *Shekhinah*, then this verse applies: *And His bond He founds upon the earth*—namely upon *Shekhinah*.

**108. When they join as one...** When *Tif'eret* and His surrounding *sefirot* join in one *bond* and *Shekhinah* “is blessed by them, She reigns over all.” The sefirotic union is effected by the priestly service.

On קרבן (*qorban*), “offering,” as referring to “drawing (the *sefirot*) near” to one another, see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#). On קטורת (*qetoret*), “incense,” as signifying “binding,” see above, [p. 60](#),



[n. 183](#). On the priest's intention, see above, [p. 38](#), [n. 113](#). The full verse in Exodus reads: *Take a bundle of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and touch [some of the blood that is in the basin] to the lintel and to the two doorposts.*

[109](#). **When Aaron moves...** When *Hesed* (symbolized by Aaron) moves toward *Shekhinah*, all the other lower *sefirot* move with Him. The verse in Psalm 135 may imply that *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) dwells in *Shekhinah* (called *Jerusalem*) by means of *Yesod* (called *Zion*). The verse in Psalm 72 alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is *His glorious name* and *His glory*.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. above, [pp. 46-47](#), [nn. 141-42](#).

[110](#). **from Cappadocia to Lydda...** Such a journey recurs frequently in the *Zohar* and usually includes an encounter with some interesting character. See 1:69b, 132a, 138a (*MhN*), 160a, 197b, 213a, 223a, 243b; 2:31a, 38b, 80b, 86a; 3:75b, 221b; *ZH* 22a (*MhN*).

The itinerary from Cappadocia in eastern Asia Minor to Lydda in Palestine may be intentionally fantastic; alternatively, the author(s) may have imagined (or pretended) that Cappadocia was a Galilean village near Sepphoris, based on the phrase "Cappadocians of Sepphoris" in JT *Shevi'it* 9:5, 39a. According to a dream interpretation in *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:12, Cappadocia is not far at all from Palestine. Cappadocia figures prominently in M *Ketubbot* 13:11 and BT *Ketubbot* 110b, while Cappadocia and Lydda are linked in *Tosefta Yevamot* 4:5; JT *Yevamot* 2:9, 4a-b; and BT *Yevamot* 25b.

See Scholem, "She'elot be-Viqqoret ha-Zohar," 40-46 (and the appended note by S. Klein, 56); idem, *Major Trends*, 169; idem, *Kabbalah*, 222; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:63-64; Meroz, "Reqimato shel Mitos," 187-93.

[111](#). **I have put My words in your mouth...** If God's words are in a person's mouth, then he is protected by



*Shekhinah*. Furthermore, God delights with him as if that person himself had created the world.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 99b, in the name of Rav, concerning one who studies Torah for its own sake: "It is as though he built heavenly and earthly palaces, as is written: *I have put My words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand, to plant heavens and establish earth.*" See *Zohar* 1:4b-5a.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *I have put My words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand, to plant heaven and establish earth, and to say to Zion: "You are My people!"* See *Zohar* 1:5a: "Do not read: 'You are עַמִּי (*ammi*), My people,' but rather: 'You are עִמִּי (*immi*), with Me, becoming My partner! Just as I made heaven and earth by speaking, as is said: *By the word of YHVH, the heavens were made* (Psalms 33:6), so do you.'"

**112. Israel is called by the name Zion...** See JT *Ta'anit* 4:2, 68a; *Megillah* 3:5, 74b. On *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) being called Zion, see above, [note 46](#).

The verse in Isaiah 1 reads: *Zion will be redeemed by justice, and her repentant ones [or: those who return to her,] by righteousness.* The first half of this verse can be interpreted as: *Shekhinah (Zion) will be redeemed by Tif'eret* (who is known as *justice*). Cf. *Zohar* 3:293b, 296b (both *IZ*).

**113. Bind up the testimony...** *Testimony* alludes to *Shekhinah*, perhaps because She testifies on behalf of those who attain Her rung. She is linked with King David the Psalmist, who calls Her *my testimony*; and She is bound to Her partner, *Tif'eret*, by virtuous human action, for example, the study of Torah.

On *Shekhinah* as *testimony*, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 49; *Zohar* 3:90b. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Bind up the testimony, seal תורה (torah), the teaching [or: the instruction], among My disciples.*

**114. Seal Torah בלמודי (be-limmudai), among My disciples...** Torah symbolizes *Tif'eret*, and the flow of

emanation (channeled by Him) gathers, or is “sealed,” *be-limmudai, among My disciples*—namely in *Netsah* and *Hod*, often described as two pillars. They are also pictured as the divine testicles, conveying the flow to *Yesod*, the divine phallus, who transmits it into *Shekhinah* (known as *testimony*).

See *Zohar* 3:90b. *Netsah* and *Hod* are called God’s *disciples* because of their link with prophecy. See Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 49, 78; *Zohar* 2:170a; 3:36a, 61a, 90b, 91b; *ZH* 27d, 45b-c; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 337; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 47-48 (57-59); the following note. Cf. Ibn Ezra on Isaiah 50:4.

**115. Come and see the difference...** See BT *Bava Batra* 12a: “Rabbi Avdimi from Haifa said, ‘Since the day that the Temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from the prophets and given to the wise.’... Amemar said, ‘A wise person is preferable to a prophet.’”

Here Rabbi El’azar explains that those who engage in Torah attain the rung of *Tif’eret*, symbolized by Torah, whereas the prophets attain the lower rungs of *Netsah* and *Hod*, which are the source of prophecy. Others “who utter words by the Holy Spirit” attain the rung of *Shekhinah* (identified with the Holy Spirit), so they “stand below all of them.” This third group corresponds to the third part of the Bible, the Writings—which follow the Torah and the Prophets, and are traditionally regarded as having been composed through the Holy Spirit.

See Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 2:45; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 48-49; *Zohar* 3:91b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 337; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 19-20. On the saying in *Bava Batra*, see *Zohar* 1:7b, 183b, 194b; 2:6b; Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi’a*, 11-42.

**116. has no need of sacrifices or ascent offerings...** See BT *Menaḥot* 110a; above, [note 69](#).

**117. a man who was coming with three sprigs of myrtle...** The narrative here is based on the story in BT

*Shabbat* 33b about Rabbi Shim'on and his son, Rabbi El'azar, who, after hiding in a cave for twelve years and then an additional year, had the following encounter: "On the eve of Sabbath, they saw an old man holding two sprigs of myrtle and running at twilight. They said to him, 'What are these for?' He replied, 'In honor of Sabbath.' 'Isn't one enough for you?' 'One for *Remember* [*the Sabbath day*] (Exodus 20:8), and one for *Keep* [*the Sabbath day*] (Deuteronomy 5:12).' He said to his son, 'See how precious the *mitsvot* are to Israel!'"

The reference here to three myrtle sprigs, instead of the two mentioned in the Talmudic story, probably reflects the tradition of holding three sprigs of myrtle on *Sukkot*. See M *Sukkah* 3:4; above, [note 52](#); [pp. 153-54](#), [n. 474](#); [p. 157](#), [n. 486](#). Cf. BT *Ketubbot* 17a, where Rav Shemu'el son of Yitshak dances before a bride while holding three sprigs of myrtle.

**118. To restore the loss** To regain or relieve the loss of the additional Sabbath soul, one inhales the fragrance of myrtle during *Havdalah*.

On the additional soul and its loss, see 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, as is said: שבת וינפש (*shavat va-yinnafash*), *He ceased and was refreshed* (Exodus 31:17)—once *shavat*, it [the Sabbath] has *ceased*, ווי אבדה נפש (*vai avedah nefesh*), 'Woe, the soul is lost!'"

See *Zohar* 1:48a, 81b (*ST*); 2:88b, 98a, 135b, 136b, 204a-205b, 207a-b, 208b-209a, 256a (*Heikh*); 3:79b, 95a, 173a, 288b (*IZ*); *ZH* 17a (*MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1222, 1230-33; Ginsburg, *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah*, 121-36. On inhaling the fragrance of spices (or myrtle) as Sabbath departs in order to sustain the soul, see Simḥah ben Samuel, *Maḥazor Vitri*, 117; Eleazar of Worms, *Peirushei Siddur ha-Tefillah la-Roqeah*, 2:590-91; Zedekiah Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 130, p. 435;

*Tosafot, Beitsah* 33b, s.v. *ki haveinan*; *Zohar* 2:208b–209a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 130; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1237; Ginsburg, *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah*, 259–67.

On the myrtle, see also *Zohar* 1:17b; 2:20a (*MhN*); *ZH* 64d (*ShS*); Lauterbach, “The Origin and Development of Two Sabbath Ceremonies”; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 125, n. 84; Hallamish, *Ha-Qabbalah*, 177–78, 323.

The phrase “to restore the loss” renders לְרוּוח אֹבְדָא (*Je-ravvah ovada*), which may mean “to regain the loss” or “to relieve the loss.” See *Or Yaqar*; Zacuto; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Soncino; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1270, n. 235; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Exodus (quoted in the passage in *Beitsah*) reads in full: *Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever that in six days YHVH made heaven and earth and on the seventh day He ceased וַיִּנַּפֵּשׁ (va-yinnafash), and was refreshed [or: caught his breath].*

**119. Why these three?** Why three sprigs; wouldn’t one suffice? Rabbi El’azar’s question entrains the question posed by him and his father, Rabbi Shim’on, in BT *Shabbat* (above, [note 117](#)): “Isn’t one enough for you?”

**120. One for Abraham...** One sprig of myrtle for each of the three patriarchs, who symbolize respectively the sefirotic triad *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*. The fragrance revives both the human soul—weakened by the loss of the additional Sabbath soul—and *Shekhinah* (who is known as “soul”), who is weakened too by the departure of Sabbath. The expression “by this faith” apparently refers here to *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, whose fragrant power restores *Shekhinah*, ensuring a flow of blessing to the world.

Cf. the old man’s response in BT *Shabbat* (above, [note 117](#)): “One for *Remember*, and one for *Keep*.” On the three sprigs of myrtle symbolizing *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, see above, [p. 157](#), [n. 486](#). On the soul being weakened by the loss of the additional Sabbath soul, see Rashi, *Ta’anit* 27b,

s.v. *neshamah yeteirah*. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 43b, in the name of Rav: “What is it that gives enjoyment to the soul and not to the body? You must say that this is fragrance.”

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *As for fragrance, your oils are fine; your name is oil poured—therefore, maidens love you*. Cf. above, [note 92](#).

**121. Happy is the share of Israel...** Cf. Rabbi Shim'on's exclamation in BT *Shabbat* (above, [note 117](#)): “See how precious the *mitsvot* are to Israel!”

**122. The world is sustained only by fragrance...** Whose subtle power assuages Judgment and sustains the world. The fragrance of myrtle enables one to perceive a higher, spiritual fragrance. When Sabbath departs, the bundle of souls (the regular aspects of soul and the additional Sabbath soul) is undone, saddening one's normal נפש (*nefesh*), “soul,” and רוח (*ruah*), “spirit.” The fragrance of the myrtle stimulates the *nefesh* and *ruah* to draw close to each other and rejoice again.

On the world being sustained by fragrance, see *Zohar* 2:20a (*MhN*). “The bundle is undone” renders אפרדא חבילה (*ippareda havilah*), based on the Talmudic expression חבילה נתפרדה (*nitparedah havilah*). See BT *Avodah Zarah* 10b-11a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *nitparedah havilah*, who explains that *havilah* refers to the binding of “soul to soul.” Cf. BT *Gittin* 59b.

**123. one needs breath after breath...** To inhale the fragrance deeply, so that one's *nefesh* and *ruah* will come together and rejoice. “Breath” renders רוחא (*ruha*), “spirit, breath.”

Similarly, by the aroma of the sacrifice, the *sefirot* draw near one another and blaze. See above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#).

**124. Two lamps...** The smoke rising from the extinguished lamp below can kindle the unlit upper lamp. Similarly, smoke rising from the sacrifice can kindle the sefirotic lamps.

On the power of smoke to kindle a lamp, see Ibn Ezra [pseud.], *Sefer ha-Atsamim*, 20; El'azar of Worms, *Hokhmat*



*ha-Nefesh*, 13c; *Zohar* 1:70b, 244a. On the sacrificial smoke kindling divine lamps, see *Zohar* 1:176b-177a, 244a, 247b-248a. Cf. above, [notes 77-78](#). On the term אִשָּׁה (*isheh*), *fire offering*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:161-62; he contends that this term actually means “gift” or “food gift.”

[125.](#) וּקְרַבָּנָא (***Ve-qorbana***), **And the offering...** The sacrificial offering draws the *sefirot* near one another. Similarly, by completing the seven days of מְלוּאִים (*millu'im*), “ordination” (literally “filling”)—or אֲשִׁלְמוּתָא (*ashlamuta*), “ordination” (literally “completion”)—the priest completes the sefirotic union.

On *qorbana* as “drawing near,” see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#). On *ashlamuta* (ordination, completion), see above, [note 97](#).

[126.](#) ***YHVH, You are my God...*** Rabbi El'azar shows how this verse spans the sefirotic spectrum. The word פֶּלֵא (*pele*), *wonders*, alludes to the deepest source, *Keter*.

The verse in Isaiah 25 reads: *YHVH, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will praise Your name. For You have done wonders, plans [or: counsels] of old [literally: from afar], faithful and true.* See *Zohar* 1:73a; 3:193b.

The verse in Isaiah 9 provides the throne name of the Davidic king: *He has been named: פֶּלֵא יוֹעֵץ* (*pele yo'ets*), *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace*. Cf. above at [note 36](#), where *pele* signifies *Hokhmah*. See *Zohar* 3:193b.

[127.](#) ***Counsels from afar...*** *Counsels* alludes to *Binah*, who guides all the lower *sefirot*. See above, [note 37](#).

*From afar* alludes to *Hokhmah*, the remote sefirotic realm from which *YHVH* (*Tif'eret*) *appeared to* Jeremiah. This is the source of the stream of emanation, from which *Shekhinah* draws sustenance, as implied in Proverbs: *From afar she brings her food.*

On *Hokhmah* as *afar*, see above, [p. 131](#), [n. 400](#). The full verse in Proverbs reads: *She is like the ships of a merchant, from afar she brings her food.*



**128. *Faithful and true...*** Alluding to *Shekhinah*. The verse in Psalms links *faithfulness* with night, when *Shekhinah* rules. The verse in Lamentations implies that each morning *Shekhinah* faithfully restores and renews the soul.

On *Shekhinah* as *faithful* or *faithfulness*, see above, [pp. 104-5](#), [n. 318](#). On the verse in Lamentations, see *Zohar* 1:19a-b; 2:213b-214a; *ZH* 18b (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Hagigah* 14a, where it is applied to angels who are born daily.

**1. holy Torah, delight of all...** The full verse in Proverbs (spoken by Wisdom) reads: *I was by him as אָמוֹן (amon), a nursling [or: intimate, confidant, artisan]; I was a delight day after day, playing before Him at all times.* According to a midrashic tradition, this verse is spoken by the Torah, which served as God's blueprint for Creation, or His architect.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1, in the name of Rabbi Osha'ya: "I was by Him as אָמוֹן (amon), a nursling.... אָמוֹן (amon)—אֹמָן (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 Rabbah* 29, p. 160; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 5; *Zohar* 1:5a, 47a, 134a-b; 2:161a-b, 200a, 205b, 217a; 3:61b, 65b, 67b, 152a, 178a; Wolfson, *Philo*, 1:242-45, 266-69.

On Torah as God's name, see above, [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#). "Stroll" renders the neologism אֵיטִילוּתָא (*itailuta*), based on the root טִיל (tyl), "to walk about." The image of God strolling recalls Genesis 3:8: *They heard the sound of YHVH Elohim מִתְהַלֵּךְ (mithallekh), walking about [or: moving about], in the garden in the evening breeze.* See *Targum Yerushalmi*, ad loc. It also suggests the motif of God strolling with the righteous in Paradise. See *Sifra, Beḥuqqotai* 3:3, 111b; *BT Sanhedrin* 102a; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 62 (quoting *Midrash Yelammedenu*); *Aggadat Bereshit* 23:5; Rashi on *Leviticus* 26:12.

**2. By Torah, the human being was created...** The plural form *Let us make* implies here that God consulted with Torah in creating the human being.

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 1:26; *Zohar* 1:134a-b, 205a-b; 3:69b. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:3. The verse in Genesis reads: *God said, "Let us make a human in our image, according to our likeness...."*

**3. slow to anger...** God is frequently called so. See especially Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18.

**4. Written Torah and Oral Torah...** Symbolizing *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, who are implied by the plural form *Let us make*. Together, the divine couple created the human being.

**5. From here...** Rabbi Yose finds another proof-text to demonstrate that *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* jointly created the human being. He understands the plural form עֲשׂוּהוּ (*asuhu*) as *they have made him*. The term צֶלֶם (*tselem*), *image*, alludes to *Tif'eret*, while דְמוּת (*demut*), *likeness*, alludes to *Shekhinah*. The initial letter of the Torah—ב (*bet*), whose numerical value is two—alludes to both *sefirot*.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I turned to see wisdom and madness and folly [or: to see that wisdom is but madness and folly], for what is the man who comes after the king, that which כְּבַר עֲשׂוּהוּ (*kevar asuhu*), they have already done?* The last clause, which is obscure, apparently means: "who can only repeat what he [the king] has already done." (Many biblical manuscripts read in the singular: עָשָׂהוּ [*asahu*], *he has... done*.) On *tselem* and *demut* as referring to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:13b; 2:55a; 3:117a; *ZH* 73b (*ShS*).

**6. Why is ב (*bet*) open and closed?...** The shape of this opening letter of the Torah is open on the left and closed on the right, implying that Torah is open to receive anyone who approaches her, but closed to one who closes his mind and strays.

On the significance of the shape of the letter ב (*bet*), see *JT Hagigah* 2:1, 77c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:10; *Pesiqta Rabbati*

21, 108b; *Bahir* 11 (14–15); *Zohar* 1:145a. Cf. BT *Menahot* 29b, regarding the shape of the letter ה (he).

**7. To you, men, I call out...** This verse from Proverbs is spoken by Wisdom (traditionally identified with Torah), and the second verse describes Wisdom. The full verse in Proverbs 8 reads: *To you, men, I call out; and my voice, to humankind.*

**8. ב (Bet)—two roofs...** The upper line of this letter symbolizes heaven, and the lower one earth. See *TZ* 58, 92b.

**9. Three lights...** The three lines of the letter ב (bet) symbolize three sefirotic lights, namely *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*—or the three sefirotic columns: right, left, and center. Thus the opening letter of the Torah includes all the components of *Tif'eret*, who symbolizes Torah. The letter ב (bet) signifies ביתא (*beita*), “a house,” the cosmic home.

**10. for the entire Torah is one holy supernal Name...** See above, [note 1](#); [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#). The letter ב (bet) itself constitutes a holy Name, since its three lines signify the sefirotic triad *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, pictured as “three bonds of faith.”

**11. those who engage in Torah also at night...** See BT *Tamid* 32b, in the name of Rabbi Hiyya: “Whoever engages in Torah at night—*Shekhinah* faces him.” On the midnight study ritual, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 228](#).

On the thread of love, 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 directs His love. Why? Because in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9).” *His song* is the song of Torah. See above, [p. 139](#), [n. 429](#).

In the verse from Job, the phrase *the sons of Elohim* implies powers of Judgment, associated with the name *Elohim*. Why then does the verse employ the verb וידיעו (*vayari'u*), *they shouted for joy*? Rabbi El'azar explains that *vayari'u* implies *they were smashed*, based on the root רעע (*r' ')*,

“to smash.” In the morning, which symbolizes *Hesed* (the *sefirah* of Abraham), the power of harsh Judgment is broken. See above, [pp. 142-43](#), [n. 436](#).

The verse from Job is the same one quoted by Rabbi Yitshak, above at [note 1](#). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**12. Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya’ir...** A second-century rabbi who lived in Palestine, renowned for his saintliness and ability to work miracles. (See JT *Demai* 1:3, 22a; BT *Hullin* 7a-b; *Devarim Rabbah* 3:3.) In the *Zohar* he is a revered member of Rabbi Shim’on’s circle. See 1:11a-b; 3:59b-60b, 62a-b, 200b-202a, 203a, 240b, 225b, 288a, 296b (*IZ*); *ZH* 12b, 19a (both *MhN*).

Such special recognition is to be expected since, according to BT *Shabbat* 33b, Rabbi Pinḥas was the son-in-law of Rabbi Shim’on. However, the *Zohar* elevates Pinḥas further by transforming him into Rabbi Shim’on’s father-in-law (and thus Rabbi El’azar’s grandfather). This new role could be the result of a simple mistake: confusing חתן (*hatan*), “son-in-law,” and חותן (*hoten*), “father-in-law.” However, the switch may also be deliberate, an instance of interchanging father and son. See Vol. 1, p. 75, n. 566. Note that here both Rabbi Pinḥas and Rabbi El’azar soon quote verses related to three generations.

In rabbinic literature Rabbi Pinḥas’s donkey is depicted as pious, refusing to eat food that has not been definitely tithed. See JT *Demai* 1:3, 21d-22a; *Sheqalim* 5:1, 48d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 60:8; BT *Hullin* 7a-b, *Shabbat* 112b. Cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 8.

Rabbi Pinḥas’s exclamation here, addressed to his perceptive donkey, is clarified below. “Equilibrium” renders טיקולה (*tiqqula*), a Zoharic neologism based playfully on the root תקל (*tql*), “to weigh, balance.” In the *Zohar*, the various neologisms constructed from this root cover a wide range of meaning, including “scale, potter’s wheel, hollow of the hand, fist, water-clock.” See *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 178;

*Derekh Emet*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 327–35 (esp. 333); Vol. 5, p. 8, n. 22.

**13. As soon as he emerged...** As soon as Rabbi Pinḥas emerged, he saw Rabbi El'azar. His remark apparently means that now another donkey with its rider (Rabbi El'azar) has appeared, balancing and delighting Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey and rider. See *Derekh Emet*.

"The noontime overhang of a cliff" renders טיהרי טינרא ענפי (*anpei tihrei tinnara*), apparently referring to the natural shelter beneath which Rabbi Pinḥas and his donkey were resting to escape the midday sun.

**14. Rabbi El'azar dismounted...** From his donkey.

**15. He said...** Rabbi Pinḥas said to Rabbi El'azar.

"An itinerary" renders טופסא דארחה (*tufsa de-orḥa*), "configuration of the way." *Tufsa* derives from Greek *tupos*, "form, shape, figure, pattern, outline." For various interpretations of his remark, see *Or Yaqar*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Derekh Emet*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**16. He replied...** Rabbi El'azar replied, happy to have found his grandfather, Rabbi Pinḥas. See above, [note 12](#).

**17. YHVH will bless you from Zion...** Rabbi Pinḥas offers a biblical blessing to his grandson, Rabbi El'azar. He interprets *Zion* as referring to *Yesod*, from whom blessings flow to *Shekhinah* and, through Her, to all worlds below.

See above, [p. 47, n. 142](#); [pp. 75–76, nn. 232–33](#). The full verse in Psalm 133 reads: *Like the dew of Hermon that descends upon the mountains of Zion, for there YHVH ordained blessing, everlasting life.*

**18. And you will see the goodness of Jerusalem...** *Jerusalem* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, and *goodness* symbolizes *Yesod*, by whom *Shekhinah* is blessed. *Yesod* is characterized by Compassion, which He conveys to *Shekhinah*. See above, [p. 76, n. 233](#).

**19. the rainbow will not appear in your days...** Ever since the aftermath of the Flood, the rainbow has signified God's covenant with the world. But a truly righteous person



(such as Rabbi Shim'on and Rabbi El'azar) himself embodies the covenant, making the rainbow unnecessary. See above, [pp. 90–91](#), [nn. 274–75](#).

**20. Peace upon Israel...** Rabbi Pinḥas understands this as a royal blessing offered to King *Tif'eret*, whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). The righteous stimulate a flow of blessing from the highest sefirotic realm, reaching *Tif'eret*. See above, [p. 76](#), [n. 234](#).

**21. The crown of elders is sons of sons...** As mentioned above ([note 12](#)), the *Zohar* pictures Rabbi Pinḥas as Rabbi Shim'on's father-in-law and thus Rabbi El'azar's grandfather. Appropriately, Rabbi El'azar interprets a verse from Proverbs dealing with three generations. *Sons* alludes to *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are sons of the elder divine couple, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. *Sons of sons* alludes to *Netsaḥ*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, descended, as it were, from *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* convey prophecy and are thus pictured as *disciples of YHVH*. They can also be imagined as *sons of Zion*—that is, branches of *Yesod*.

On *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* as God's *disciples*, see above, [p. 203](#), [n. 114](#). On *Yesod* as *Zion*, see above, [note 17](#). On the verse in Proverbs, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:2; *Tanḥuma*, *Toledot* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 1. The full verse in Lamentations reads: *The precious sons [or: children] of Zion, worth their weight in pure gold—how are they reckoned as earthen jars, work of a potter's hands!*

**22. Sons are only crowned and saturated...** *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* are nourished by the stream of emanation issuing from *Binah* when the divine parents (*Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*) are blessed by *Keter*.

**23. a snake wound itself...** The appearance of the snake during prayer is based on M *Berakhot* 5:1, which demands that a person maintain complete devotion while reciting the *Amidah*: “Even if the kings greets him, he should

not respond; even if a snake is wound around his heel, he should not pause.”

“Wound itself” renders קפטר (*qaftar*). In the *Zohar* the roots קפטר (*qftr*) and קטפר (*qtpr*) often convey the sense of “tying, binding, linking,” apparently based on the root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie.” See *Or Yaqar; Derekh Emet; Liebes, Peraqim*, 354; Scholem; above, [p. 55](#), [n. 164](#).

“Startled” renders קפטא (*qafta*), which may be based on the root קפד (*qfd*), which in Syriac means “to bristle (from fear).” See Ezekiel 7:25; Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, ad loc.; *Sullam*. Scholem links *qafta* with the root קפז (*qfz*), “to jump.” Cf. *Or Yaqar; Derekh Emet; Matoq mi-Devash*.

**24. My animal is surely in pain...** Earlier that day the donkey had led Rabbi Pinḥas through a filthy place while he was immersed in Torah and unaware of his surroundings, thereby tainting the holy act of study; so now the donkey is punished by means of this snake.

**25. go and slap your bind in sloping burrows** Rabbi Pinḥas commands the snake to unwind itself from his donkey and perform its harmful work underground.

“And slap your bind in sloping burrows” renders דחיותא באסטרו קוטרך בקטפירי (*ve-astar qutrakh be-qatpirei de-ḥeivata*). *Qatpirei* apparently derives from the rabbinic term קטפרס (*qataphres*), “incline, slope” (from Greek *katapheres*, “going down, sloping, inclined”). Here, it could refer to sloping burrows made by (and for) *ḥeivata*, “animals.” Rabbi Pinḥas may be playing with *ḥeivata*, “animals,” and חיויא (*ḥivya*), “snake.” On *qatpirei* and *qataphres*, see M *Oholot* 3:3; *Zohar* 2:48b (Vol. 4, p. 235, n. 132); 3:51a; *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 188, s.v. *qataphres*; *Ma’arikh*, s.v. *qatpirei*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 351.

Instead of באסטרו (*ve-astar*), “and slap” (attested, with or without *ve-*, by C9, L27, M5, M9, R1, V3, V5, V7, V22), several witnesses (including V6 and *Or Yaqar*) read: ואפטר (*ve-aftar*), “and release.” Mantua and Cremona read: ואסחר (*ve-aṣḥar*), “and wind,” while recording *ve-astar* as an alternate

reading. See *Or Yaqar*; *Derekh Emet*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**26. many pieces** A conjectural, contextual rendering of קפסירי קפסירי (*qafsirei qafsirei*), a neologism of uncertain meaning. Cf. *Zohar* 1:37a, 177a; 3:152a; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 191, s.v. *qafsirei*; *Or Yaqar*.

**27. Does the blessed Holy One deal so strictly...** Punishing Rabbi Pinḥas's donkey for simply carrying him through a place unfit for Torah?

See BT *Yevamot* 121b, in the name of Rabbi Abba: "The blessed Holy One deals strictly with those around Him even to a hairbreadth."

See *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11, p. 217; JT *Sheqalim* 5:1, 48d; BT *Bava Qamma* 50a; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 20; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 29; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:24; *Zohar* 1:140a, 185b; 2:247b.

**28. How many agents the blessed Holy One has...** On God accomplishing His mission by everything, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 10:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:3; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 5:8; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 49; *Tanḥuma, Huqqat* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:22; *Shemot Rabbah* 10:1; *Zohar* 2:28a; 3:107a.

**29. except when [the latter] acts unintentionally...** As in the case described in the Torah, where someone commits involuntary manslaughter and is therefore allowed to take refuge in a place of sanctuary. See Exodus 21:12-13: *He who strikes a man and he dies is doomed to die. And he who did not lie in wait [or: scheme], but God conveyed it to his hand [or: made it befall him], I shall set apart for you a place to which he may flee.*

According to rabbinic tradition, in such a case both the unintentional killer (A) and the victim (B) had previously killed someone, A unintentionally and B intentionally. Consequently, in order "to punish both of them," God arranges a situation in which A now kills B accidentally, thereby punishing B with death (for his previous act of

murder) and forcing A to be exiled (the appropriate punishment for his original act of unintentional manslaughter). See *Mekhilta, Neziqin* 4; BT *Makkot* 10b; Rashi on Exodus 21:13; *Or Yaqar; Nefesh David; Matoq mi-Devash*.

**30. your father...** Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai.

**31. If He grants quiet...** God alone determines whether a person will be tranquil or vulnerable to harmful agents. Divine providence may extend to an entire nation or to one individual.

The full verse in Job reads: *If He remains silent [or: grants quiet], who can condemn [or: disturb, stir up strife]? If He hides His face, who can glimpse Him [or: who will take note of him], whether a nation or a person?*

**32. When human actions are worthy...** These stimulate *Hesed* (God's right hand), arousing many compassionate powers to protect humanity and subduing harsh Judgment (on the left).

On the effect produced by human actions, see above, [p. 182, n. 49](#). On sinners being "marked on their faces," see BT *Shabbat* 55a; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 7, *Tazri'a* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 13; *Zohar* 2:48b, 244b; 3:45b-46b, 49b-50a, 75b-76a. "Animals" renders חיותא (*ḥeivata*), which may be a play on (or imply) חיויא (*ḥivya, ḥivvayya*), "snake(s)"; see above, [note 25](#).

**33. even if their actions are unworthy...** Even Jews who have sinned "come from the side of the right," which has been subdued by their sins; so they can be punished only by those from the left side, not by fellow Israelites who, even if they too are wicked, still "come from the side of the right."

**34. A wicked Israelite who falls into the hand...** See above, [note 29](#).

**35. How do we know?** That wicked Israelites are not punished intentionally by other wicked Israelites.

**36. Come and see from Gibeah...** Referring to the bloody tale that concludes the book of Judges (19-21). A Levite man from the hill country of Ephraim and his concubine stayed one night in the town of Gibeah, north of Jerusalem in the tribal territory of Benjamin. After the men of the town threatened the Levite, he offered them his concubine, whom they brutally raped, until in the morning she was found dead at the threshold of the house. Her husband transported her home to Ephraim and proceeded to cut up her body limb by limb into twelve parts, which he sent to the twelve tribes of Israel (including the Levites but excluding the tribe of Benjamin, in whose territory the crime had been committed). A mass of Israelites demanded that the perpetrators from Gibeah be handed over for punishment, but the Benjaminites refused, so the confederated forces of the other tribes prepared to attack them. On the first day of battle, the Benjaminites killed 22,000 Israelites; on the second day, they killed another 18,000. Finally, on the third day, by employing a strategy of ambush and decoy, the Israelites defeated the Benjaminites.

Here Rabbi Pinhas explains that although the rapists of Gibeah were wicked, the blessed Holy One did not want them to be punished by other wicked Israelites. The 40,000 Israelites who were killed in the first two battles (“time after time”) included “all the wicked who had been aroused against” the perpetrators, leaving “only the more virtuous,” who could execute the punishment fittingly. Even virtuous Israelites are entrusted with the responsibility of punishing wicked Israelites “only when worlds are evenly balanced,” which apparently means when an entire group of Israelites corresponds to the divine power of Judgment; at the time of the concubine’s rape, this was not the case, since the Israelite army initially included many sinners.

See *Or Yaqar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. According to a rabbinic tradition, the forty thousand Israelites who died in

the first two days of battle against the Benjaminites were killed because they tolerated idolatry. See BT *Sanhedrin* 103b.

**37. A clever one among them...** One of the offenders pretended to be on the officer's team, trying to assist in punishing his fellow offenders and thereby escape harm.

**38. Similarly, Israelites...** Wicked Israelites empower the harsh forces of Judgment on the left, causing "the right to be subdued." If one of these Israelites tries to punish his fellow sinners, he is immediately detected as deriving from the right side and is punished first—just as the wicked Israelite soldiers were killed in battle before the rapists of Gibeah were punished.

**39. to his harm...** The simple sense of the biblical phrase is "to the harm of the human who is being controlled." But Rabbi Pinḥas interprets it as "to the harm of the human who *holds power*." A sinful Israelite (who still comes from the side of the right) and tries to administer divine punishment (which belongs to the left) ends up harming himself and being punished first.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All this have I seen and set my heart to all that is done under the sun, a time when a human holds power over a human to his harm.*

**40. There is right and there is left...** *Hesed* (Love) on the right and *Din* (Judgment) on the left.

**41. It happened on the eighth day...** After the rite of consecration of the altar and of Aaron and his sons and the prescribed seven days of their ordination, the priests are ritually fit to offer the sacrifices, which are described in the following verses.

Rabbi El'azar wonders why the verse in Leviticus reads *because seven days He shall ordain you*, rather than *because for seven days He shall ordain you*. His explanation appears in the following paragraph. First, he explains that when the priests are anointed with oil, this arouses the flow of emanation above, saturating all seven



*sefirot*—from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*, or from *Binah* through *Yesod*. These seven sefirotic “lamps are thereby kindled.”

The full verse in Leviticus 9 reads: *It happened on the eighth day, that Moses called to Aaron and to his sons and to the elders of Israel.* The full verse in Leviticus 8 reads: *From the entrance of the Tent of Meeting you shall not go out for seven days, until the day of completion of the days of your ordination, because seven days* ימלא את ידכם (*yemalle et yedkhem*), *He shall ordain you* [or: *shall your ordination be*; literally: *He shall fill your hands*]. On this idiom and the term מלואים (*millu'im*), “filling, ordination” see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:526–27, 538–40; above, [p. 197](#), [n. 97](#).

**42. They are six...** The six sefirotic days from *Hesed* through *Yesod* are all included originally in *Binah*, so She is called *seven days* (referring to the sefirotic sextet plus Herself). The unusual wording of the verse—*seven days shall ordain*—means that *Binah shall ordain*, or *shall fill*. *Shekhinah*, known as Assembly of Israel, is also called בַּת שֶׁבַע (*Bat Sheva*), “Bathsheba”—literally “Daughter of Seven”—since She is the daughter of *Binah* (who is known as *seven*, or *seven days*) and includes all six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**43. Once this seven ordained the priests...** Once the sevenfold flow from *Binah* ordained and anointed the priests (thereby filling the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), it reached *Shekhinah*, who is eighth (counting from *Binah*). This answers Rabbi El'azar's initial question (above at [note 41](#)): “Who is *the eighth day*?”

Aaron was commanded to offer a calf in order to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf, which he had fashioned. This grave sin was an attempt to displace *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by an unblemished cow.

The high priest's eight garments correspond to the eightfold nature of *Shekhinah*. These garments included four garments worn by all of the priests (tunic, sash, head-dress

—or, for the high priest, a turban—and breeches), and four special garments worn by the high priest alone (ephod, breastpiece, robe, and gold medallion). See Exodus 28 and 39; Leviticus 8:7–9, 13; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:501–13.

On the link between Aaron's offering of a calf and the sin of the Golden Calf, see *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:3, 43c; *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 4, 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemini* 6; *Midrash Aggadah* Leviticus 9:2; Rashi on Leviticus 9:2; *Zohar* 2:219b, 236b–237a; 3:37b–38a. Cf. Ibn Ezra (long and short) on Exodus 32:1; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 9:2.

On the sin of the Golden Calf as an attempt to displace *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:191a, 193b. On *Shekhinah* as a cow, see above, [p. 82](#), [n. 253](#). The phrase שלִּימוּ דְאִמוּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*shelimu de-emunei yisra'el*), “consummation of the faithful of Israel” is based on the expression in 2 Samuel 20:19: שְׁלֹמֵי אִמּוּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*shelumei emunai yisra'el*), [of] *the peaceable faithful of Israel*. See *Zohar* 3:180b.

**44. In everything one must manifest action...** Because human action below stimulates sefirotic activity above. Therefore Aaron was consecrated, ordained, and rendered fit to offer sacrifices.

On the need to manifest action, see *Zohar* 1:99b–100a, 220b (standard editions); 2:47b; 3:37b, 66b, 86b, 92b, 95a, 99b, 118b–119a, 120b, 149a; *ZH* 43c. According to Kabbalah, “By an action below is aroused an action above.” See above, [p. 182](#), [n. 49](#).

**45. He asked him...** Rabbi Pinḥas asked Rabbi El'azar. The full verse reads: *He said to Aaron, “Take you a calf, a young of the herd, as a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a ram as an ascent offering, both unblemished, and bring them forward before YHVH.”*

**46. Because of the sin...** Of the Golden Calf. See above, [note 43](#). The *ram* recalls the ram sacrificed by Abraham as an ascent offering in place of Isaac (Genesis 22:13). Isaac symbolizes *Gevurah*, from whom *Shekhinah* (“this place”) draws. *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the ascent offering,

since She ascends to unite with the upper *sefirot*. By offering a ram, Aaron stimulates and assuages the harshness of *Gevurah*, who then embraces *Shekhinah* fittingly.

On the ram offered by Aaron as signifying the ram of Isaac, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 21:11; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 47, 191a (both referring to the ram mentioned in Leviticus 16:3 as part of the Yom Kippur ritual). On *Shekhinah* as “an ascent offering,” see *Zohar* 2:238b.

**47. And the people of Israel, who sinned...** By worshiping the Golden Calf. They are commanded to bring a similar offering. The *bull* corresponds to the calf that they worshiped, while the *ram* (recalling the ram of Isaac) stimulates and assuages the harshness of *Gevurah* (symbolized by Isaac), who then completes *Shekhinah* (“this place”).

See *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:4, 43c-d. The context in Leviticus (9:3-4) reads: *To the Children of Israel you shall speak, saying, “Take a he-goat as a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a yearling unblemished calf and lamb as an ascent offering, and a bull and a ram as offerings of well-being [or: peace offerings] to sacrifice before YHVH, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today YHVH will appear before you.”*

**48. Why is it written...** The priest’s offering of a calf is referred to as *an offense offering*, whereas the Israelites’ offerings of a bull and a ram are referred to as שלמים (*shelamim*), *offerings of well-being [or: peace offerings]*. Rabbi El’azar explains that since Israel had already been punished in several ways (or “places”) immediately after worshiping the Golden Calf, God did not insist on mentioning their sin here, so the verse does not refer to the bull (father of a calf) as *an offense offering*, but rather as one of the *peace offerings*.

On Israel’s various punishments for the sin of the Golden Calf, see Exodus 32:25-29 (the attack by the Levites); *ibid.*, 35 (a plague); and *ibid.*, 20: *He took the calf*

*that they had made and burned it in fire and ground it fine and scattered it upon the water and made the Children of Israel drink it.*

**49. Aaron, however, was not punished...** Aaron had not been punished yet for his role in the sin of the Golden Calf, since Moses interceded with God and saved his life. Finally, now Aaron atoned for his sin by appropriately offering a calf.

See above, [notes 43](#), [46](#). According to one rabbinic tradition, Aaron was eventually punished by the death of his two sons, Nadab and Abihu. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 7:1; 10:5; *Tanḥuma, Tetsavveh* 10, *Aḥarei Mot* 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 12; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 47, 189a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:47; *Zohar* 2:193a.

**50. On that day...** When the ordination of the priests was completed and the ritual service in the Dwelling could begin, peace and joy prevailed. Aaron and Israel were purified of the sin of the Golden Calf, and demonic accusers could find no opportunity to accuse Israel of any misdoing—until Nadab and Abihu sinned and disturbed the joy, which otherwise would have been greater than on any day since the splitting of the Red Sea.

See above, [p. 193](#), [n. 83](#). For the idiom of “disturbing the joy” in connection with Nadab and Abihu, see Rashi on Leviticus 10:4, 6; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 10:6. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:10; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:25.

Leviticus 9:23 reads: *The glory of YHVH appeared to all the people*, which is confused here with Numbers 16:19: *The glory of YHVH appeared to all the community*. The context in Leviticus 10:1-2 reads: *The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, took each of them his fire-pan and put fire in it and placed incense upon it and offered alien fire before YHVH, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from before YHVH and consumed them, and they died before YHVH.*

**51. That day was joy of Assembly of Israel...** *Shekhinah* was now prepared to unite with *Tif'eret* and the *sefirot* surrounding Him. Rabbi El'azar associates the term קטר (qetoret), "incense," with the Aramaic root קטר (*qtr*), "to tie, bind," indicating that the offering of incense unites the *sefirot*. However, Nadab and Abihu performed the ritual improperly: although they linked all the other *sefirot* (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), they failed to include *Shekhinah*—and in fact, instead of linking Her, they linked the demonic force (as explained below). Therefore, God subsequently warned the priests: בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary*—meaning that the priest must include *Shekhinah*, who is known as זאת (*zot*), *this*.

On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3, n. 5](#). On the significance of the term *qetoret*, see above, [p. 60, n. 183](#). On *Shekhinah* as *zot* (and the verse in Leviticus), see above, [p. 39, n. 117](#). The full verse reads: *With this shall Aaron enter the sanctuary, with a bull from the herd for a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a ram for an ascent offering.*

**52. In various ways they disturbed the joy...** First of all, they were not married, and one who is not married is only "half a body" and thus defective and unqualified to bring an offering. He lacks blessing and cannot convey it to others. See above, [p. 13, n. 37](#); [pp. 15-16, nn. 45-46](#); [p. 194, n. 87](#).

Furthermore, according to Exodus (30:7-8), incense should be offered in the morning and the evening, whereas Nadab and Abihu offered it at a different time. See *Zohar* 3:33b.

Furthermore, "they forced the hour," offering incense during the lifetime of Aaron their father, who alone was commissioned to do so. See above, [pp. 193-94, n. 86](#).

Furthermore, "their sentence had previously been decreed," referring to an episode at Mount Sinai involving Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel:

*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* (Exodus 24:10-11). In both verses the pronoun *they* refers to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders (mentioned in the preceding verse), but (following a midrashic tradition) the *Zohar* focuses on Nadab and Abihu. Although they dared to gaze upon God, they were not punished then, but rather now when they ruined the cosmic joy.

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 disturb 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 disturb the joy of Torah. Later, My own joyous celebration [the consecration 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; 2:126a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 37 (44).

**53. They offered alien fire...** For Rabbi El'azar, אש זרה (*esh zarah*), *alien fire*, apparently alludes to the אשה זרה (*ishah zarah*), *alien woman* (Proverbs 2:16; 7:5), identified with the demonic feminine, Lilith. Nadab and Abihu left *Shekhinah* outside the sefirotic realm and empowered Lilith in Her place.

See *Zohar* 1:73b, 116b, 148b (*ST*); 3:57b; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 37 (44); *Or Yaqar*. On Lilith supplanting *Shekhinah*, see below, [p. 458](#), [n. 315](#). For a different kabbalistic interpretation of offering *alien fire*, see Naḥmanides on Leviticus 10:2; Yisraeli, “Ha-Mered ha-Qadosh,” 90–95. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above at the end of [note 50](#).

**54. Rabbi Pinḥas said...** He insists that Nadab and Abihu did not intentionally exclude *Shekhinah* from uniting with *Tif'eret* and the higher *sefirot*. Rather, because Aaron's two sons were not married, *Shekhinah* could not abide with them and was thereby excluded from the divine union. The instruction in Leviticus that Aaron should enter the sanctuary only בזאת (*be-zot*), *with this*, implies that a priest should serve only “with *Shekhinah*” (known as *zot*)—namely only if he is married and thus in a status that attracts Her.

According to rabbinic tradition, the high priest who serves in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur must be married. Here this restriction is extended to any priest who brings an offering. See M *Yoma* 1:1; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Avodat Yom ha-Kippurim* 1:2; above, [pp. 15–16](#), [n. 45](#).

On *Shekhinah*'s being present only where male and female are together, see above, [p. 15](#), at [n. 45](#). Cf. above, [note 52](#). On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [note 51](#); [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#).

**55. It happened on the eighth day** For the context and the full verse, see above, [note 41](#).

**56. Like a lily among thorns...** In midrashic literature this verse is understood as being sung by God in praise of the earthly Assembly of Israel. Here the singer is *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One), who praises *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). A married human couple resembles the divine couple, and one who is married can, through his devotion, stimulate sefirotic union.

In Song of Songs *שושנה* (*shoshanah*) probably means "lily" or "lotus," though sometimes in the Midrash and the *Zohar* it connotes "rose." See Vol. 6, p. 66, n. 33. On the verse in Song of Songs as being spoken by God in praise of Israel, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:2-7; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:2; *Tanḥuma*, *Ḥayyei Sarah* 3; *Midrash Tehillim* 80:1. For its use in the *Zohar*, see *Zohar* 1:1a, 137a; 2:189b; 3:180b. On *Shekhinah* as a rose (or lily), see also *Zohar* 3:74a, 107a, 233b, 286b-287a. On the need to manifest action, see above, [note 44](#).

**57. which is the finest, transcending all...** Just as a lily stands out against the background of thorns, so *Shekhinah* stands out among legions of angels. *Shekhinah* is also compared to an etrog among thorns.

On the contrast between a lily and thorns, see *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* 2:2. On the etrog among thorns, see above, [p. 153](#) at [n. 474](#).

**58. Assembly of Israel is blessed by the priest...** *Shekhinah* is blessed by the priest, as are the people of Israel, while the priest himself is blessed from the flow conveyed by *Ḥesed* (known as "the supernal Priest").

The verse in Numbers describes the priestly blessing. According to its simple sense, the closing word, *them*,

refers to the Israelites, but midrashically it is applied to the blessing priests, who are themselves blessed.

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 39, 43; BT *Sotah* 38b, *Hullin* 49a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:8; *Zohar* 1:199b; 2:67a; 3:147b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 255.

**59. Remember Your compassion...** *Your compassion* alludes to Jacob, who symbolizes *Tif'eret*, known also as *Raḥamim* (Compassion). *Your love* alludes to Abraham, who symbolizes *Ḥesed* (Love). In the verse from Psalms, מעולם (*me-olam*) means *from of old*, but Rabbi Yose construes it as *from the world*, implying that God removed the patriarchs from the world and transformed them into the Divine Chariot, since they had attained the rungs of *Ḥesed* and *Tif'eret*. (Isaac constitutes the third component of the Chariot, *Gevurah*.) Similarly, when God removes the righteous from the world, their merit serves to protect all.

See *Zohar* 1:37a. According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:6, in the name of Resh Lakish, “The patriarchs themselves constitute the [Divine] Chariot.” See above, [p. 107](#), [n. 325](#). On the removal of the righteous, see above, [p. 108](#), [n. 328](#).

**60. Why is Isaac not mentioned here?...** Why doesn't the verse from Psalms allude to him as well, since surely his merit also serves to protect the world? Rabbi Yose explains that Isaac's sefirotic quality—*Gevurah* (Might)—is reserved to punish Israel's enemies. The closing expression, “removed here,” apparently means that Isaac's name is “removed” from the verse.

**61. Rabbi Ḥiyya said ...** He offers a somewhat different explanation for the omission of Isaac from the verse in Psalms. Since this patriarch symbolizes the stern quality of *Gevurah*, Israel does not want to associate him with Abraham and Jacob, lest harsh judgments or accusations be aroused.

**62. when the blessed Holy One created the world...** According to a rabbinic tradition, God began to create the world by His attribute of Judgment, which is signified by

the name *Elohim* in the first verse of the Torah. However, the world could not endure without the attribute of Compassion, signified by the name *YHVH*. See *Midrash Yelammedenu* on Genesis 1:1 (*Battei Midrashot*, 1:141): “When the blessed Holy One created His world, He created it by the attribute of Judgment, as is said: *In the beginning Elohim created* (Genesis 1:1). And it did not stand until He combined the attribute of Compassion with it, as is said: *on the day that YHVH Elohim made earth and heaven* (ibid. 2:4).”

Here Rabbi Hiyya recasts this tradition, substituting Isaac for “the attribute of Judgment,” since his *sefirah* is *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). The initial creation, based solely on Judgment proved unstable, so God added the quality of *Hesed* (Love), symbolized by Abraham. Greater stability was finally attained by adding the quality of *Rahamim* (Compassion), symbolized by Jacob. Thus, Abraham and Jacob are *מעולם* (*me-olam*), *from the world*—forming the foundation *of the world*.

The anagram *בהבראם* (*be-hibbare’am*), *when they were created*—*באברהם* (*be-Avraham*), *by Abraham*, appears in *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:9. There, according to Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Korḥah, it indicates that *heaven and earth* were created for Abraham’s sake. Here, the point is that the world is established by *Hesed*, which is symbolized by Abraham. See above, [pp. 178–79](#), [n. 33](#).

On *YHVH* and *Elohim* signifying respectively Compassion and Judgment, see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#). On the passage in *Yelammedenu*, cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:15; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 166b–167a; *Midrash Shir ha-Shirim* (ed. Grünhut), 39b; Rashi on Genesis 1:1; *Zohar* 1:58b, 180b, 230b; *ZḤ* 27a (*MhN*).

**63. It happened on the eighth day...** For the context and the full verse, see above, [note 41](#). After Aaron was “completed” (or “ordained”) during the seven days of ordination and by the seven sefirotic days (from *Binah* through *Yesod*), the eighth day (namely *Shekhinah*) had to be

completed by the sefirotic septet. Therefore, beginning on the eighth day, sacrifices were offered by Aaron (symbolizing *Hesed*, who conveys the flow). Aaron was instructed to offer *a calf* in order to atone for his role in the sin of the Golden Calf.

On *Shekhinah* as the eighth day, see above, [note 43](#). On the offering of *a calf* as atonement for the Golden Calf, see the same note.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *He said to Aaron, "Take you a calf, a young of the herd, as a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a ram as an ascent offering, both unblemished, and bring them forward before YHVH."* The full verse in Exodus reads: *He took from their hand and he fashioned it with a graving tool [or: and he fashioned it in a mold, or: and he wrapped it in a bag] and made it into a molten calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!"* On the various interpretations, see Sarna, *Exodus*, ad loc.

[64.](#) בן בקר (*Ben baqar*), **A young of a bull...** The verse reads: *Take you a calf, בן בקר (ben baqar), a young of the herd [or: a young of a bull].* (For the full verse, see the preceding note.) Rabbi Yehudah wonders why the verse specifies the calf's father, *baqar* (which he understands as *a bull*), rather than its mother, פרה (*parah*), *a cow*. He explains that since Aaron had to atone for his role in the sin of the Golden Calf—which was an attempt to displace *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by an unblemished cow—it was not fitting for him to offer an animal "from Her own," so the verse avoids the term *parah*, "a cow." See above, [note 43](#).

[65.](#) **From Her own to Her own is not fitting** Rabbi Yose objects that Aaron's offering is still a calf, which seems unfitting, since it comes from a cow, symbolizing *Shekhinah*.

[66.](#) **Therefore, ben baqar, a young of a bull, surely...** Rabbi Yehudah insists that this designation implies that the



animal is distinct from *a young of a cow*. He may be associating *baqar*, a bull, with *Yesod*, who is distinct from *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *parah*, “a cow”). For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. below, [note 72](#).

**67. As a purification offering...** To purify him for the sin of the Golden Calf. The term חטאת (*ḥattat*), sometimes rendered *sin offering* or *offense offering*, probably means more precisely *purification offering*. See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:253–54.

**68. תמימים (*temimim*), both unblemished...** According to the simple sense of the verse, the plural adjective *temimim*, *unblemished*, applies to both the calf and the ram: *Take you a calf, a young of the herd, as a purification offering* [or: *an offense offering*] *and a ram as an ascent offering, temimim, unblemished...* But Rabbi Yehudah restricts *temimim* to the phrase immediately preceding it, *and a ram as an ascent offering*, as distinct from the earlier phrase: *a calf, a young of the herd as a purification offering*. If the adjective applies only to *a ram*, then the plural form is incorrect. For the full verse, see above, [note 63](#).

**69. Well, the ram of Isaac...** Rabbi Yehudah explains that the plural form תמימים (*temimim*), (*both*) *unblemished*, alludes to two rams, namely two (or multiple) aspects of *Gevurah*, who is symbolized by Isaac—as well as by the ram that Abraham offered up *as an ascent offering* instead of Isaac. These two rams are alluded to by the double mention of *ram* in the verse from Genesis. The aspects of *Gevurah* branch out “to numerous others,” eventually nourishing, or becoming, demonic powers.

The Cow refers to *Shekhinah*, whom the worshipers of the Golden Calf had sought to displace. (See above, [notes 43, 64](#)). The quoted term “גבורות (*Gevurot*), Powers,” may allude to the expression גבורות גשמים (*gevurot geshamim*), “the power(s) of rain.” See M *Berakhot* 5:2; *Ta’anit* 1:1; *Zohar* 2:154b; 3:31b. (The plural usage is otherwise uncommon.) On



multiple aspects of *Gevurah*, see above, [p. 153](#), [n. 471](#). The verse in Genesis concludes: *instead of his son*.

**70. Take a he-goat as an offense offering...** Rabbi Yehudah wonders why Israel's *offense offering* is not the same as Aaron's, namely *a calf*. He explains that the people had already been punished for worshiping the Golden Calf, whether they sinned by word (declaring *These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!* [Exodus 32:4]) or deed (donating gold for making the Calf) or actual worship.

Various punishments were inflicted upon different groups of Israelites immediately after the incident of the Golden Calf. Some were killed by the Levites (Exodus 32:25-29); others perished in a plague (*ibid.*, 35); others died after Moses made them drink a potion containing the dust of the calf: *He took the calf that they had made and burned it in fire and ground it fine and scattered it upon the water and made the Children of Israel drink it* (*ibid.*, 20).

According to a rabbinic tradition, when Moses made the Israelites drink this potion, 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. If the wife had committed adultery, *her belly will swell and her thigh sag* (Numbers 5:27). Similarly here, those Israelites drinking the potion who had sinned in the incident of the calf (even by just desiring to worship it) "were found bloated and dead; that water churned in their intestines all night, and in the morning they were found dead" (*Zohar* 2:193a).

Rabbi Yehudah indicates that even those Israelites who merely derived any pleasure from the sight of the Calf—with no intention of worshiping it—needed to be purified. This is why the verse in Leviticus commands the Israelites to offer *a calf... as an ascent offering*, not *as an offense offering*, since the ascent offering is prescribed specifically

for sinful imagining. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 7:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: "The ascent offering is due only על הרהור הלב (*al hirhur ha-lev*), for sinful imagining [literally: for imagining of the heart, or mind]." See above, [pp. 18-19](#), [n. 55](#).

Cf. above, [notes 47-48](#). On the ordeal of the suspected straying wife, see Numbers 5:11-31. On the rabbinic interpretation linking this ordeal to the incident of the Golden Calf, see *Tosefta Avodah Zarah* 3:19; JT *Sotah* 3:4, 19a; *Avodah Zarah* 3:3, 42d; BT *Avodah Zarah* 43b-44a; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 26; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 10, 38a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:48; *Zohar* 2:113b, 191b-192a, 193a. Cf. BT *Yoma* 66b; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 45. A number of these sources (JT *Sotah*; BT *Yoma*; *Tanḥuma*; *Pesiqta Rabbati*; *Bemidbar Rabbah*) specify which of the three punishments applied to which group of sinners, depending on exactly how they participated in the worship of the calf, or on whether they were warned and/or witnessed. See Vol. 6, p. 94, n. 106.

The context in Leviticus (9:3-4) reads: *To the Children of Israel you shall speak, saying, "Take a he-goat as a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a yearling unblemished calf and lamb as an ascent offering, and a bull and a ram as offerings of well-being [or: peace offerings] to sacrifice before YHVH, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today YHVH will appear before you."*

[71](#). **why Take a he-goat as an offense offering?...** If the Israelites had already been punished for the actual worship of the Calf, why was there any need for *an offense offering*? Because, Rabbi Yehudah explains, they were guilty of having worshiped goat-demons in Egypt.

Furthermore, according to a rabbinic tradition, this *eighth day* (Leviticus 9:1) was the new moon of Nisan, and on every new moon a he-goat is brought as an offense offering. According to the *Zohar*, the diminution of the moon symbolizes the vulnerability of *Shekhinah* to demonic forces. The new-moon offering is intended to preoccupy

those forces so that they will not threaten *Shekhinah* or Israel. Then She (along with them) can be safely renewed.

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!” 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 [both] 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 [i.e., 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 that’s 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; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 6, 51; *Zohar* 1:19b–20a, 181a–b; 2:138a, 144b, 147b–148a, 219b; 3:79b, 271b (*Piq*); *ZH* 14a (*MhN*), 70d–71a (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 189; idem; *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 35b. On the new-moon offering, see also *Zohar* 1:64a, 65a, 122b, 138b; 2:33a, 185a, 238a, 269a; 3:248a–b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:893. On *the eighth day* being the new moon of Nisan, see *Sifra, Millu’im (Shemini)* 1:1, 43c; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 7; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 9:1; BT *Shabbat* 87b; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 7, 27b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:6; Rashi on Leviticus 9:1. Cf. Exodus 40:17.

The word שַׁעִיר (*sa’ir*), means “goat, demon, satyr.” On the goat-demons, see Leviticus 17:7; *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 9:8, 84a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:8; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1462. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 9:3.

**72. And a bull...** Here this animal apparently symbolizes *Yesod*, who is complete (balancing right and left) and known as Peace.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On *Yesod* as a bull, see above, [p. 82](#), [n. 253](#). Cf. above, [note 66](#). On *Yesod* as Peace, see above, [p. 180](#), [n. 41](#). For the full verse in Leviticus, see above at the end of [note 70](#).

**73. A bull and a ram come from the left side...** Both of these animals symbolize *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), on the left. They are offered to assuage any harshness of Judgment within *Shekhinah* (who is known as Assembly of Israel).

The verse in Ezekiel describes the prophet's vision of the four living beings carrying the heavenly throne, each of whom had four faces: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion's face, and on the left the four of them had a bull's face, and the four of them had an eagle's face.* On the connection between the *bull's face* and the Golden Calf, see Vol. 6, pp. 78-79, n. 65. On the bull and the left side, see *Zohar* 1:166b, 172b; 2:6a, 64b-65a, 191a, 236b-237a, 240b; 3:86b, 186a, 207a. On the ram of Isaac being associated with *Gevurah*, see above, [notes 46, 69](#).

**74. All because Assembly of Israel is crowned...** The entire ritual of *the eighth day* marks the crowning and blessing of *Shekhinah*, which was stimulated by Aaron (who symbolizes *Hesed*) through אשלמוּתָא (*ashlamuta*)—which means literally “completion, filling,” but also “ordination.” Thereby *Shekhinah* was filled with the sefirotic flow and united joyously with Her partner, the blessed Holy One. As Aaron was ordained and completed below, so was the Priest above (*Hesed*). However, the divine union was spoiled by the sin of Nadab and Abihu.

On Nadab and Abihu, see above, [notes 50-54](#). On the term *ashlamuta*, see above, [p. 197](#), [n. 97](#). On the term *Matronita*, see the Glossary. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Fire*

came out from before YHVH and consumed them, and they died before YHVH.

**75. Moses said to Eleazar...** The context actually reads: *Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, "Your heads you shall not dishevel nor your garments rend, lest you die and He be furious with the whole community. Your brothers, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning that YHVH has inflicted. And you shall not go out from the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, lest you die, for YHVH's anointing oil is upon you."*

**76. By actions below...** Human actions stimulate sefirotic activity, provided that a person imitates the divine model. On this basic principle of Kabbalah, see above, [p. 182, n. 49](#).

**77. All joy above depends upon that holy oil...** The joyous stream of emanation begins with the oil flowing from *Hokhmah* to *Binah*, which then proceeds to the lower sefirotic lamps. The first of these lower lamps is *Hesed*, the supernal Priest, whose anointing must be stimulated by the anointing of the human priest below. If the latter is defective in any way or without joy, he will spoil the divine flow. On the priest having to be joyful when he serves, see above, [p. 37, n. 112](#).

**78. If Eleazar and Ithamar had appeared defective...** When their brothers Nadab and Abihu were killed, Judgment would have also lashed out at any other priest who was at all defective; so Moses warned them: *Your heads you shall not dishevel nor your garments rend, lest you die.*

See BT *Bava Qamma* 60a-b: "Rabbi Yosef taught: 'What is the meaning of the verse *None of you shall go out from the entrance of his house until morning* (Exodus 12:22)? Once permission has been granted to the Destroyer, he does not distinguish between righteous and wicked.'... Our Rabbis taught: 'A plague in town? Keep your feet indoors.' ... Our Rabbis taught: 'A plague in town? One should not

walk in the middle of the road because the Angel of Death walks there, for as soon as permission has been granted him, he strides brazenly.”

See *Mekhilta, Pisha* 11; *Devarim Rabbah* 4:4; *Zohar* 1:63a, 64b, 67b-69a, 101b-102a, 107b, 108b, 113a, 182b, 197b, 204b, 264b (*Heikh*); 2:36a, 196a-197a, 227a; 3:54a-b; *ZH* 77a (*MhN, Rut*), 81c (*MhN, Rut*).

**79. Your brothers...** Judgment threatened only the priests, so the other Israelites were allowed to mourn and display sadness.

**80. Aaron took Elisheba...** The full verse reads: *Aaron took Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as a wife, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.*

**81. Bathsheba was destined for David...** 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 to be brought to him and they slept together. When David later learned that he had impregnated her, he arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle with the Ammonites, after which he married her. Immediately, God sent the prophet Nathan, who demonstrated to David by means of a parable that he had sinned gravely.

See 2 Samuel 11-12. Rabbinic tradition tries to justify David's adultery or at least mitigate its sinfulness. See BT *Sanhedrin* 107a: "Rava expounded, '...Ever since the six days of Creation, Bathsheba daughter of Eliam was destined for David, but she came to him with suffering.' The school of Rabbi Yishma'el taught likewise: 'She was destined for David, but he ate her unripe [prematurely, while she was still married to Uriah].'"

Here, building on the Talmudic passage, Rabbi El'azar indicates that Elisheba was similarly destined for Aaron. Both wives symbolize the same *sefirah*. The name *בת שבע* (*Bat*



*Sheva*), literally “Daughter of Seven,” alludes to *Shekhinah*, the daughter of *Binah* (who is known as Seven, since She includes all seven lower *sefirot*). Alternatively, *Shekhinah* is called *Bat Sheva* because She receives the flow of all seven *sefirot* from *Binah* through *Yesod*, or because She includes all seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah* Herself. The name אלישבע (*Elisheva*), understood as “My God is Seven,” similarly alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as Seven for the reasons just mentioned. Since Bathsheba symbolizes *Shekhinah*, she was destined for King David, who is intimately linked with *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom).

But if both Bathsheba and Elisheba symbolize *Shekhinah*, what is the difference between them? Rabbi El’azar explains that Bathsheba signifies the aspect of Judgment often influencing *Shekhinah*, which enabled King David to wage war; whereas Elisheba signifies the aspect of Compassion attained by *Shekhinah*, which conveyed radiant joy to Aaron. In the name אלישבע (*Elisheva*), the element אלי (*eli*), “My God,” alludes to *Hesed*, who is known as אל (*El*), “God,” and who is symbolized by Aaron. By marrying Elisheba, Aaron stimulated the union of *Hesed* with *Shekhinah*.

On David and Bathsheba, see BT *Shabbat* 56a; Rashi and *Tosafot*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:8a-b, 73b; 2:106b-107a; 3:71b, 78b. On the significance of the name Bathsheba, see *Zohar* 3:6a, 37a. On the name Elisheba, see *Zohar* 2:49b.

**82. The voice of the shofar...** *Binah* is the divine shofar, from which issues *the voice* (or *the sound*), namely *Tif’eret*, who is symbolized by Jacob. All three patriarchal *sefirot* (*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*) arose in *Hokhmah*, who is known as Thought, and they issued together from the shofar of *Binah*. Just as the voice (or sound) of a shofar is generated by moist, warm breath (“water, fire, and air as one”), so the Divine Mother, *Binah*, generated all three patriarchal *sefirot*—*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*—who are symbolized respectively by water, fire, and air. These three became “one in one

voice,” since *Tif'eret* includes both *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, just as Jacob was the culmination of the patriarchs.

See above, [p. 24](#), [n. 77](#). The full verse in Exodus reads: *The sound [or: voice] of the shofar was growing stronger and stronger. Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice.*

**83. There are two voices...** Namely, *Tif'eret* (who blends *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*) and *Yesod* (who blends *Netsah* and *Hod*); but the essential voice is *Tif'eret*, *the voice of the shofar*. From Him issued other sefirotic voices, through the power of the union of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* (“Thought with *the shofar*”), which engendered a total of seven voices (*Ḥesed* through *Shekhinah*). All of these are nourished by the shofar of *Binah*—first the Patriarchs (*Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*) and then the Children (*Netsah*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, and *Shekhinah*).

**84. Aaron took Elisheba...** Thereby stimulating his *sefirah*, *Ḥesed*, to assuage any harsh elements of Judgment within *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Elisheba) and to unite Her with King *Tif'eret*. On Aaron as the bridesman of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:49b; 3:53b, 177b, 180b. Cf. 3:124a.

**85. the priest must appear with a radiant face...** To help enact the divine union. Any sadness or harshness would disqualify him from the rung of *Ḥesed*.

See *Zohar* 3:85b. The verse in Deuteronomy is part of Moses’ blessing to the tribe of Levi, from whom the priests are descended. On the application of this verse to the priests, see, e.g., *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 352.

**86. From this passage...** The prohibition against drinking wine appears immediately after the account of the death of Nadab and Abihu, implying that they died because they were intoxicated.

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 10:9; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:1; *Ester Rabbah* 5:1; above, [p. 194](#), [n. 87](#). On the various reasons offered for their death, see above, [pp. 16-17](#), [nn. 46-49](#); [pp. 193-94](#), [nn. 84-87](#).

**87. Wine that gladdens the human heart...** The verse reads: *Wine that gladdens the human heart, oil to make the face shine* [or: *making the face shine brighter than oil*]. See Alter, *The Book of Psalms*, ad loc. On the priest having to be joyful when he serves, see above, [note 77](#).

**88. wine begins with joy...** But one who is drunk eventually sinks into sorrow. Wine signifies the flow from *Gevurah* on the left, symbolized by the Levites, whereas the priest symbolizes *Hesed* on the right, associated with water.

On the initial versus the eventual effects of wine, see *Tanḥuma, Shemini* 11; *Zohar* 1:240a. On Torah being given “from the side of *Gevurah*,” see above, [p. 189](#), [n. 71](#). On the fine wine of Torah, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 30:1; BT *Avodah Zarah* 35a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:1; 27:1; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:4; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:3; *Tanḥuma, Vayhi* 10; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:4; *Zohar* 2:124b; 3:95a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 319. Cf. above, [p. 5](#), [n. 13](#).

**89. Each one lends to his fellow...** *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, on the right and left respectively, influence one another. Thus wine, though it comes from *Gevurah*, manifests joy at first, since it includes the element of water from *Hesed* on the right, but eventually it reverts to the left, manifesting sorrow, anger, and Judgment.

**90. From one place issue wine, oil, water...** All of these liquids symbolize types of emanation issuing from *Binah* to the lower *sefirot*. Water and oil (associated respectively with *Hesed* and *Hokhmah*) are intended for the priests on the right, who wash ritually in water and are anointed with oil. Wine reaches the Levites on the left, stimulating them to sing praises aloud in the Temple. See BT *Berakhot* 35a, in the name of Rabbi Yonatan, “[The Levites] sing a song only over wine.”

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Like fine oil on the head, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron,*

*descending over the collar of his robes.* In the *Zohar*, this verse alludes to the flow of emanation. See above, [p. 34, n. 101](#).

The last clause contrasts oil (which flows silently) with wine, which makes a sound when it is poured and makes drinkers boisterous.

**[91. What is the difference between them?...](#)** Oil derives from *Hokhmah*, the silent realm of Thought, whereas wine comes from *Binah*, the Divine Mother and source of *Gevurah*. The Levites, associated with *Gevurah* or *Din* (Judgment), appropriately render judgment in Israel.

Actually, the verse in Deuteronomy describes the priests: *The priests, sons of Levi, shall come forward, for them did YHVH choose to minister to Him and to bless in the name of YHVH, and by their word shall be every dispute and every injury.* However, Rabbi Abba apparently focuses on the wording *sons of Levi*. See *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:939.

**[92. wine is forbidden to him...](#)** The noise associated with (and caused by) wine is incompatible with priestly service, which involves silent contemplation intended to unify the *sefirot*, stimulating a flow of blessing. Furthermore, the most important service of the priest is “secretly silent”—performed in private—namely the Yom Kippur ritual in which the high priest enters Holy of Holies all alone.

“Secretly silent” renders בַּחֲשָׁאִי (*ba-ḥashai*), which can mean “in secret, quietly, silently.” On the priest’s service being *ba-ḥashai*, see BT *Yoma* 44a, *Zevaḥim* 88b, *Arakhin* 16a; *Zohar* 3:177b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:939. Cf. *Zohar* 3:88b.

On wine revealing secrets, see BT *Sanhedrin* 38a, in the name of Rabbi Ḥiyya: “When wine enters, a secret emerges,” based on the fact that יַיִן (*yayin*), “wine,” and סוֹד (*sod*), “secret,” are numerically equivalent, both equaling seventy. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:4; BT *Eruvin* 65a;

*Tanḥuma, Shemini 5; Bemidbar Rabbah 10:8; 11:1; Zohar 3:177b.*

**93. from the village of Meron to Sepphoris...** “The village of Meron” renders *בי מרוניא* (*bei meronya*). See *Shemot Rabbah 5:1*; cf. BT *Eruvin 22b, Rosh ha-Shanah 18a*. A number of manuscripts (C9, R1, P2, V5, V7) read *בי טרוניא* (*bei tirunya*), “house of sovereignty,” implying “a castle.” See *Targum Yerushalmi* and Rashi on Numbers 31:10; *Zohar 1:92b; 3:118a*.

“Honey-spiced wine” renders *קונטא דדובשא* (*qonta deduvsha*). *Qonta* is apparently based on *קונדיטון* (*qonditon*), from Greek *chonditon*, “spiced wine.” See *Eikhah Rabbah 2:16*, where the word is spelled *קונטיטון* (*qontiton*); *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:10 (quoted below, [note 95](#), and see parallels there). Cf. Song of Songs 8:2.

For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *qinta*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. *Zohar 2:56a* (Vol. 4, p. 295, n. 343). On this story, see Wolski, *A Journey into the “Zohar,”* 89–112.

**94. Your palate is like fine wine...** Alluding to the wine of Torah, as opposed to harmful wine. One who imbibes Torah will attain the world that is coming and will be revived from the dead—as implied by the phrase *stirring the lips of sleepers*.

On the wine of Torah, see above, [note 88](#). On different types of wine, see above, [p. 72, n. 224](#). The verse in Song of Songs reads: *Your palate is like fine wine—flowing to my beloved smoothly, gliding over [or: trickling over, stirring] the lips of sleepers*.

**95. even in that world...** Those who are devoted to Torah in this world will be worthy of studying it in the afterlife.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:10: “Rabbi Yoḥanan said, ‘Even when a scholar [reading *בן תורה* (*ben torah*), “son of Torah,” instead of *בן תורתה* (*ben tortah*), “son of Tortah”] is dead, his lips move in the grave. Why? *Stirring the lips of*

*sleepers.* ‘... Rabbi Hanina son of Papa and Rabbi Simon. One said, ‘Like one who drinks קונדיטון (*qonditon*), spiced wine.’ The other said, ‘Like one who drinks aged wine: even though he has drunk it, the taste and aroma are still in his mouth.’”

In numerous rabbinic parallels, the first part of this teaching reads differently. See, e.g., BT *Sanhedrin* 90b: “Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yehotsadak, ‘If a law is quoted in a person’s name in this world, his lips stir in the grave, as is said: *stirring the lips of sleepers.*’”

See JT *Berakhot* 2:1, 4b; *Sheqalim* 2:4, 47a; *Mo’ed Qatan* 3:7, 83c; BT *Yevamot* 97a, *Bekhorot* 31b; *Midrash Shemu’el* 19:4; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 3; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 2, 5b; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:3; *Zohar* 2:134b (*Piq*); 3:96a, 135a (*IR*); ZḤ 85c (*MhN, Rut*).

**96. If it were written *Your palate is from fine wine*...** Only then would Rabbi Yitṣhak’s interpretation fit: “Whoever satiates himself ‘from the wine’ of Torah will awaken in the world that is coming.”

**97. one who engages in Torah...** One who studies Torah aloud, not mumbling or whispering it, will go straight to Paradise when he leaves this world. The boy interprets *like fine wine* to mean that one’s study of Torah should resemble wine, whose sound is heard when it is poured and which stimulates a drinker to raise his voice. The verse in Proverbs describes Wisdom, traditionally identified with Torah.

**98. *Stirring the lips of sleepers*...** See above, [note 95](#).

**99. spoken to Assembly of Israel...** To *Shekhinah*. But if the verse was uttered by Her beloved, the blessed Holy One, it should read *Your palate is like fine wine—flowing to me*.

**100. surely the blessed Holy One praises...** He praises *Shekhinah*, just as She praises Him. The phrase



“preserved wine” derives from a passage in BT *Berakhot* 34b (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi), describing how in the world-to-come 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 the vintage emanation stored within (and flowing from) *Binah*. See above, [p. 5](#), [n. 13](#).

The full verse in Song of Songs 5 reads: *His palate is sweets, and all of him desirable. This is my lover and this is my companion, O daughters of Jerusalem.* See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on this verse.

**101. Flowing to my beloved—Isaac...**

The reason that the verse reads *to my beloved*, rather than *to me*, is that *Tif’eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) is describing how the *fine wine* of *Binah* flows to *Gevurah*, symbolized by Isaac, who is referred to as “beloved from the womb.”

According to BT *Shabbat* 137b, the blessing over circumcision includes the phrase: “who sanctified the beloved from the womb.” Rashi, ad loc., interprets this as a reference to Isaac. See *Zohar* 1:96a; *ZH* 64a (*ShS*); *Ba’al ha-Turim* on Genesis 17:21. Cf. Genesis 2:22.

**102. למישרים (Le-meisharim), smoothly...**

From the root ישר (*yshr*), “to be straight,” alluding to the alignment of right and left (*Hesed* and *Gevurah*) within *Tif’eret*, as He conveys the joyous flow of emanation toward *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 2:51b.

**103. You will be Rabbi Yeisa...**

They could tell that he was destined to teach Torah, and they were confident that he would live longer than their colleague Rabbi Yeisa, who died during the session known as *Idra Rabba* (The Great Assembly). See *Zohar* 1:217a; 2:61b; 3:79a, 144a-b (*IR*).

**104. three words of Torah...**

Three passages or teachings.

**105. forbidden for us to see his face...**

Because he lacks any respect for Torah.

**106. Ramin**

This place is not mentioned in rabbinic literature, but it appears in *Zohar* 1:63b.

**107. three things about the cup of blessing...** Held during Grace after Meals. See BT *Berakhot* 51a: “Ten things have been said concerning the cup of blessing....” In the *Zohar*, this cup symbolizes *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 1:1a, 156a (ST), 233b, 240a, 250a-b; 2:104a, 138b, 143b, 157b, 168b, 189b; 3:245a-b (RM); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 105; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 383.

**108. Elohim created the great sea serpents...** The name *Elohim* signifies Judgment and can refer to various manifestations, including *Din* (Judgment), *Shekhinah* (who is influenced by *Din*), and even demonic forces, which derive from harsh Judgment and are known as אלהים אחרים (*elohim aḥerim*), *other gods* (Exodus 20:3). In the verse in Genesis, it designates *Binah*, “that supernal place” from which all forces of Judgment issue, although *Binah* Herself is characterized by Compassion.

On *Elohim* signifying Judgment, see above, [p. 11, n. 31](#). On the dual nature of *Binah*, see above, [pp. 57-58, n. 171](#). The full verse in Genesis reads: *Elohim, God, created the great sea serpents and every living being [or: soul] that crawls, which the water swarmed forth of each kind, and the winged fowl of each kind, and God saw that it was good.*

**109. The great sea serpents—the Patriarchs...** The sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the patriarchs), who receive the flow of *Binah* first.

**110. And כל נפש החיה (kol nefesh ha-ḥayyah), the whole soul of the living being...** The boy’s father interpreted the biblical phrase *kol nefesh ha-ḥayyah* not as *every living being*, but *the whole soul of the living being*—namely the soul that *Shekhinah* (known as “the supernal earth”) conveyed from *Binah*, who is the *ḥayyah*, *living being*, above all. Similarly, several verses later, *Let the earth bring forth nefesh ḥayyah* means: *Let Shekhinah bring forth a soul of Binah.*

Cf. above, [pp. 118-19, n. 359](#). For the full text of Genesis 1:21, see above, [note 108](#). Genesis 1:24 reads in

full: *God said, "Let the earth bring forth נפש חיה (nefesh ḥayyah), living beings [or: a living soul], of each kind and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth of each kind." And it was so.*

**111. soul of Adam...** The primordial human soul, which *Shekhinah* drew from above and then conveyed to Adam. On *nefesh ḥayyah* as the soul of Adam, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:5; above, [p. 118](#), [n. 359](#).

**112. The living being that crawls...** *Binah*, whose flow and influence extend through all the *sefirot* (or everywhere). For the full verse, see above, [note 108](#).

**113. in that supernal river...** The stream of emanation issuing from *Binah* and watering the cosmic Tree (*Tif'eret* together with His surrounding *sefirot*).

**114. Alternatively, the living being...** *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), symbolized by King David, who alludes to his role as *the living being* by exclaiming *I shall... live!*

**115. And the winged fowl of each kind...** Alluding to the angels. 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 above Him [or: in attendance on Him, or: above it, that is, above the throne]. Each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he flew.*

**116. so much is not fitting for this boy...** Knowing and revealing so many secrets could be dangerous for a child. See BT *Ḥagigah* 13a: "There was a child who expounded [the mysteries of] חשמל (*hashmal*), *gleaming amber* (Ezekiel 1:4), and a fire came forth and consumed him."

**117. Surely, ha-ḥayyah, the living being, that crawls...** Rabbi Yitshak agrees with the boy's first interpretation of this phrase, namely that it refers to *Binah*, the supreme *ḥayyah*, since "the other" *ḥayyah* (*Shekhinah*) is called *earth* in the following verse. There, the angelic *fowl*

are instructed by God to *multiply in the earth*—that is, within the realm of *Shekhinah*—not *in the water*, which refers to the river of emanation issuing from *Binah*. This higher flow is undivided until it reaches *Shekhinah*, below which it branches into multiplicity. The angels are not nourished directly from the unified river, but rather from the multiple streams issuing from *Shekhinah*. The full verse in Genesis 2 reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads.*

**118. Sustain me with raisin cakes...** According to the Midrash, this verse is spoken by Israel to God, her beloved. Here, Rabbi Yehudah explains that it is spoken by *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) to Her people, Israel.

On the midrashic interpretation of the verse, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:5; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:3. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3, n. 5](#). On *Shekhinah's* fallen state, see above, [p. 20](#) at [n. 61](#), discussing Amos 5:2: *Fallen, not to rise again, is Virgin Israel*. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 9, n. 27](#).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love*. For its simple sense, see Pope, *The Song of Songs*, ad loc.; Bloch and Bloch, *The Song of Songs*, ad loc.

**119. With raisin cakes—the Patriarchs...** By their devotion, Israel unifies the Holy Name, uniting the *sefirot*. Thereby they sustain *Shekhinah*, drawing toward Her the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized respectively by the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These three *sefirot* are the first to be filled with *Binah's* flow of emanation from *Binah*, pictured as “fine preserved wine.”

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of the Holy Name (YHVH), see above, [p. 9, n. 27](#). On the image of preserved wine, see above, [note 100](#).

**120. Refresh me with apples—all is one...** This food alludes to the same sefirotic triad, since the respective

colors of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* all appear in the apple: the white pulp, the red skin, and the green stem. Whereas raisins (or wine) can intoxicate, apples alleviate intoxication and restore sobriety. The sefirotic triad fulfills both these functions, conveying the rich wine of emanation to *Shekhinah*, but protecting Her from intoxication.

“A raisin cake” renders אֲשִׁישָׁה (*ashishah*), which some commentators understand as “a bottle, jug,” based on the rabbinic term שִׁישָׁה (*shisha*), אֲשִׁישָׁה (*ashisha*). See BT *Pesahim* 36b; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 4:20; Rashi on 2 Samuel 6:19; Ibn Ezra on Song of Songs 2:5; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the sefirotic significance of the colors of the apple, see above, [p. 160](#), [n. 497](#). On the beneficial effects of the apple, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 40b; *Zohar* 3:74a.

**121. For I am faint with love...** *Shekhinah* needs the preserved wine of emanation because She pines in exile for Her beloved, the blessed Holy One. One who unifies the sefirotic Name must blend the opposite qualities, sweetening the harshness of Judgment.

**122. Where are their gods...** These lines are uttered by God concerning Israel’s enemies and their false gods. The context (Deuteronomy 32:37–38) reads: *He* [i.e., God] *will say, “Where are their gods, the rock in whom they sheltered, who ate the fat of their offerings, drank their libation wine? Let them arise and help you [that is, Israel’s enemies], be over you as a shield!”*

Eternal life comes from the realm of *Binah*, known as the World that is Coming. 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.” Here, this wine symbolizes the vintage emanation stored within (and flowing from) *Binah*. See above, [p. 5](#), [n. 13](#).

עֲלְמָא דְאַתֵּי (*Alma de-atei*) is the Aramaic equivalent of the rabbinic Hebrew הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא (*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, Hilkhoh 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.

**123. Wine of Israel...** Their wine requires special treatment because it reflects and depends upon the higher wine issuing from *Binah* to “Israel above,” namely *Tif’eret Yisra’el* (Beauty of Israel). *Tif’eret* derives life from this higher wine, and His name, Tree of Life, implies that He grows from *Binah*, the source of life. In numerous rituals, Israel blesses God over wine, and this wine reflects the wine of emanation above, flowing to the Divine Israel.

**124. But when a Gentile...** In rabbinic tradition, wine consecrated by Gentiles for idol worship is called *yein nesekh* (יין נסך), “libation wine,” and it was absolutely forbidden to Jews. Wine processed or bottled by Gentiles for regular use (and not idolatry) is called *setam yeinam* (סתם יינם), “their ordinary wine.” This too, however, was traditionally forbidden, partly to avoid the suspicion that it might be *yein nesekh*, and partly to limit social contact with non-Jews. Eventually, the prohibition was extended to unbottled wine that had merely been touched by a Gentile.



According to Kabbalah (based partly on the ideas of Judah Halevi), the souls of Gentiles derive from the Other Side, so they are impure. If a Gentile touches Israel's wine, it becomes impure and thus cannot be drunk by a Jew or used ritually. Not only does Jews' wine reflect the wine in the sefirotic world, but also everything they do affects that realm.

On the expression *yein nesekh* (libation wine), cf. Deuteronomy 32:38 (quoted above at [note 122](#)): ׁן ׁסׁכּם (yein nesikham), *their libation wine*. On various prohibitions against *yein nesekh* and any wine made or touched by Gentiles, see, e.g., Daniel 1:8; M *Avodah Zarah* 2:3; 4:8; 5:1-2, 7-10; BT *Shabbat* 17b, *Sanhedrin* 106a, *Avodah Zarah* 29b (quoting Deuteronomy 32:38), 36b, 59a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 319-20; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 21:81. On the innate distinction between Jews and Gentiles, see Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 1:27-47, 95, 102-11; see above, [p. 85](#), [n. 262](#); [p. 163](#), [n. 507](#).

**[125.](#) Israel drinks wine made fittingly...** They must be careful not to drink wine made or touched by a Gentile, since their wine corresponds to the preserved wine of *Binah*, which nourishes Divine Israel (*Tif'eret*). A Jew should also not drink with Gentiles because he thereby becomes defiled and ruins his share in the world that is coming, which symbolizes *Binah*.

**[126.](#) holy Israel must guard this...** Being extremely careful not to drink wine made or even touched by Gentiles. By blessing God over pure wine, Israel stimulates the flow of preserved wine from *Binah*. This supernal wine rejoices *Gevurah* on the left, assuaging its harsh Judgment and then including the left within *Hesed* on the right. On an action below arousing an action above, see above, [p. 182](#), [n. 49](#).

**[127.](#) Since it is preserved above...** Since the divine wine is preserved in *Binah*, Israel must guard and preserve its own wine. *Binah*, who is identified with the preserved

wine, is known as the World that is Coming—constantly coming and flowing. See above, [note 122](#).

**128. A king makes the land stand firm...** A king symbolizes *Binah* (known here as the blessed Holy One), who stabilizes *Shekhinah* (known as *the land*) by *Tif'eret*—who is known as מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*), *justice*, and symbolized by Jacob. *Tif'eret* harmonizes and blends the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah* (symbolized respectively by Abraham and Isaac), so He (as Jacob) is “totality of the patriarchs.”

The verse in Proverbs reads: *A king makes the land stand firm by justice, but a man of exactions [or: a deceitful man] ruins it.* According to the Masoretic text of the verse, the word תְּרוּמוֹת (*terumot*), *exactions* is spelled with the second ו (*vav*), but here the boy playfully insists that this word is spelled without the second *vav*: תְּרוּמָה (*terumat*), enabling him to read it as *terumat*, in the singular (construct). This he associates with the clause וזאת התְּרוּמָה (*ve-zot ha-terumah*), *This is the offering*, symbolizing *Shekhinah*, who is known both as *zot* (*this*) and *terumah* (*offering*). The supposed deficient spelling תְּרוּמָה (*terumot* or *terumat*), without the *vav*, alludes to the incomplete state of *Shekhinah*, when She is not unified with *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *vav*) and is thus, as it were, “ruined.”

On the verse in Proverbs, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:1; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Mishpatim* 2; *Zohar* 1:193b, 232b, 237a. On the spelling of תְּרוּמוֹת (*terumot*), see *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc. On differences between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar*'s reading, see above, [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#). On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On *Shekhinah* as *terumah*, see Vol. 5, p. 189, n. 12. On Jacob's status among the patriarchs, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 76:1, in the name of Rabbi Re'uven: “The chosen of the patriarchs is Jacob, as is said: *For Yah has chosen Jacob for Himself* (Psalms 135:4).”

**129. but a man of terumot—Esau...** Now the boy understands *terumot* as “offerings” brought to the priest,

which he links with tithes, which were given to the Levites. According to a midrashic tradition, the wicked Esau pretended to his father, Isaac, that he was extremely careful about tithing. See *Tanḥuma, Toledot* 8, commenting on Genesis 25:28: *Isaac loved Esau, for ציד בפיו (tsayid be-fiv), he had a taste for hunted game*: “What is the meaning of *for tsayid be-fiv*? It is צד (Ṭsad), ‘He hunted [i.e., trapped],’ righteous Isaac *be-fiv*, ‘with his mouth.’... When Esau came in from the outdoors, he would say to his father, ‘Father, should salt be tithed?’ [Salt is exempt from tithing, which only applies to produce grown from the earth.] Isaac was amazed, and said, ‘See how meticulous this son of mine is regarding the *mitsvot*!’ He asked him, ‘My son, where have you been today?’ He replied, ‘In the house of study. Isn’t this the law concerning such-and-such? Isn’t this what has been forbidden? Isn’t this what has been permitted?’ By such words he trapped him with his mouth; therefore he [Isaac] loved him.”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:10; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, add. 1, p. 447; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 2; Rashi on Genesis 25:28; *Zohar* 1:139a.

**130. for He is not justice...** When *Tif’eret*—known as *justice* and *Raḥamim* (Compassion)—removes (or “elevates”) Himself from *Shekhinah*, “He is not *justice*,” that is, His quality of *justice* is lacking from *Shekhinah*, who is thereby impaired (or “ruined”). Consequently, the innocent may be *swept away* by harsh Judgment.

On the verse in Proverbs, see BT *Ḥagigah* 4b–5a; *Zohar* 1:113b, 119a; 2:196a; 249a (*Heikh*); 3:54b, 59b, 283b, 291b (*IZ*); *ZḤ* 77c (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 366–67; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 29, 117.

**131. But King David was a man of terumah...** He was intimately linked (and identified) with *Shekhinah*, who is known as *terumah*. Does this mean that in his days *Tif’eret* was removed (or “elevated”) from *Shekhinah*? No, because *Tif’eret*,

known as *Raḥamim* (Compassion), manifested Himself during David's reign, uniting with *Shekhinah*.

Furthermore, the phrase חסדי דוד הנאמנים (*ḥasdei david ha-ne'emanim*), *faithful acts of love for David*, alludes to *Netsah* and *Hod*, who convey the quality of Compassion, or of *Ḥesed*, to *Shekhinah*. The final clause ("as he clung to one...") apparently means: "as David clung to *Shekhinah*, so he clung to *Tif'eret*."

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On *Shekhinah* as *terumah*, see above, [note 128](#). On the phrase *faithful acts of love for David*, see above, [p. 135](#), [n. 416](#).

**132. All his days, King David strove...** He devoted himself to uniting *Shekhinah*—known as *terumah*, "offering"—with *Tif'eret* (known as *justice*). During the reign of his son, Solomon, the divine union was complete, as signified by the fullness of the moon (symbolizing *Shekhinah*); thus, both the physical land of Israel and the spiritual land (*Shekhinah*) were secure. But eventually the final Davidic king, Zedekiah, ruined the divine union, leading to the devastation of the land at the hand of the Babylonians, the destruction of the Temple, and the exile of the people. King Zedekiah was a *man of terumot*, causing the removal (or "elevation") of *Tif'eret* from *Shekhinah*.

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 *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: "When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full." By the time of the disastrous reign of King Zedekiah, the moon had completely waned, corresponding to the fact that Zedekiah was blinded by Nebuchadnezzar.

See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:12; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 15, 77a; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bo* 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 13:14; *Zohar* 1:73b-74a, 150a, 223a, 225b, 238a, 243a, 249b-

250a; 2:11a, 28b, 85a (especially), 143a, 145a; 3:46a, 61a, 74b, 181b, 297a; *ZH* 37d, 83b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 24, 47. On the precise number of kings after Solomon, see Vol. 4, p. 475, n. 391.

**133. Oil for the priests and wine for the Levites...**

The priests are anointed with oil, symbolizing the flow of emanation from *Hokhmah* on the right. The Levites do not “need wine,” yet it symbolizes the preserved wine issuing on the left from *Binah* to *Gevurah*, the *sefirah* associated with them. The passion of *Gevurah* stimulates the union of the divine couple, in which left (*Gevurah*) merges with right (*Hesed*), and all becomes right. On the preserved wine, see above, [note 100](#).

**134. one who joins his aspiration...** One who focuses on unifying the *sefirot* cleaves to *Binah*, the source of the divine flow, who is known as *Teshuvah* (return, repentance). According to its simple sense, the verse in Proverbs warns against indulging in *wine and oil*, which will lead to impoverishment. But here the boy understands *wine and oil* as the flow of emanation; one who devotes himself to these does not care about worldly riches or pleasures, and will inherit the world that is coming, which symbolizes *Binah*. In fact, he will taste the world that is coming even “in this world.”

See *Zohar* 1:88a-b (*ST*). The verse in Job speaks of Wisdom. The verse in Proverbs is spoken by Wisdom. According to a midrashic interpretation, the phrase *to endow those who love me with װ* (*yesh*), *substance*, alludes to 310 worlds that God will eventually bequeath to every righteous person, since this is the numerical value of *yesh*.

See M *Uqtsin* 3:12 (in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi); *Avot* 5:19; BT *Sanhedrin* 100a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, add. 1, 451; *Zohar* 1:4b, 88a (*ST*), 156b (*ST*), 158a, 206a, 242b; 2:166b. As mentioned in *Nitsotsei Zohar*, װ (*yesh*) can also be read as an abbreviation of ןװ ן׳ (*yayin*



shemen), “wine, oil.” On *Binah* as *Teshuvah*, see above, [p. 95](#), [n. 290](#).

**135. Go up to Me to the mountain...** On Mount Sinai, God gives Moses *the stone tablets* והתורה והמצוה (*ve-ha-torah ve-ha-mitsvah*), *and the teaching and the commandments*. According to BT *Berakhot* 5a (in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish), *ha-torah* refers here to the Five Books of Moses (the Written Torah), while *ha-mitsvah* refers to the Mishnah (the core of the Oral Torah). Here, Written Torah symbolizes *Tif’eret*, while Oral Torah symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

The boy adds that the spelling of the word להורתם (*le-horotam*), *to instruct them*—without the second ו (*vav*)—allows for the meaning להורתם (*le-horatam*), *to the one who conceived them*, similar to the wording in Song of Songs.

Regarding *ha-mitsvah* in the verse from Exodus, various medieval sources interpret this 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; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 387. Cf. *Zohar* 2:166b.

On the spelling להורתם (*le-horotam*), see *Midrash Ḥaserot vi-Yterot*, 71 (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:261); *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Exodus 24:12; Baḥya ben Asher on Exodus 13:1; 24:12; Recanati on Exodus 24:12, 48d; *Minḥat Shai* on Exodus 24:12. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Scarcely had I passed them, when I found the one my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go until I brought him to my mother’s house, to the chamber of the one who conceived me.*

**136. Here one should contemplate...** Assuming that the word *le-horotam* indicates *le-horatam*, *to the one who conceived them*, the boy wonders who *them* refers to. It cannot be “*the one who conceived Israel*,” since Israel does not appear in this verse (although according to the verse’s simple sense, the object of *le-horotam*, *to instruct them*, is indeed Israel!).



So *them* must refer to *torah* and *mitsvah*, alluding to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. Who is *the one who conceived them*? The Divine Mother, *Binah*, who contains the preserved wine of emanation. The writing of *Hokhmah* (who is pictured as “the supernal book”) abides in *Binah*, from whom issues *Tif'eret*, who is known as Torah or תורה שבכתב (*Torah she-bi-khtav*), “Written Torah”—literally “Torah in Writing,” namely rooted in the supernal writing conveyed from *Hokhmah* to *Binah*. Thus, *that I have written* להורתם (*le-horotam*) means “that I have conveyed *le-horotam*, to the one who conceived them.”

On the supernal book, see *Zohar* 1:37b; 2:136b, 137b, 200a. On “Torah in Writing,” cf. *Zohar* 2:200a.

**137.** תורה שבעל פה (*Torah she-be-al peh*), **Oral Torah...** This refers to “another” Torah, namely *Shekhinah*. She is described as *she-be-al peh*, literally “on the mouth” because She depends upon the hidden *sefirah* of *Da'at* (Knowledge)—who is called “mouth” because He expresses what is written in the supernal book. *Da'at* appears on the central line joining *Keter* and *Tif'eret*, and is closely associated with *Tif'eret*, so here *Da'at* shares *Tif'eret*'s designation as Written Torah (or Torah in Writing).

On *Da'at* as “mouth” and as linked with *Tif'eret*, see *Zohar* 2:123a. On *Shekhinah* as “Torah on the Mouth,” cf. *Zohar* 2:200a. For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**138. Moses was elevated entirely...** God transmitted *torah* and *mitsvah* to Moses alone because he had attained the high rung of *Da'at*.

**139. Remove the wicked...** When they abound on earth, *Shekhinah* (pictured as the Divine Throne) absorbs harsh Judgment, which She executes upon the world. When the wicked are eliminated, *Shekhinah* absorbs *Hesed* (Love), which She conveys to the world. The terrestrial world depends on the dynamics of the sefirotic realm, while that realm itself is influenced by human conduct.

On the effect of human action on the sefirotic realm, see above, [p. 182](#), [n. 49](#). Cf. below, [p. 279](#), [n. 69](#). The verse in Proverbs actually reads: *and his throne will be established* בַּצְדֵק (*ba-tsedeq*), *in justice* [or: *righteousness*], which the boy playfully changes to בַּחֶסֶד (*ba-ḥesed*), *in love*, for the purposes of his teaching. Cf. Isaiah 16:5: *A throne will be established* *ba-ḥesed*, *in love*. On this phenomenon, see above, [note 128](#); [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#).

**[140](#). in love, not in Judgment...** One who tries to stimulate the quality of *Ḥesed* (Love), not *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). Thus, when the priest prepares to enter the Temple, he washes his hands and feet with water (symbolizing *Ḥesed*), and avoids drinking wine (symbolizing *Gevurah*). The word בַּחֶסֶד (*ba-ḥesed*) can be rendered *in* [or *with*] *love*.

**[141](#). I have learned a word from him...** See *Avot* 6:3: “One who learns from his fellow one chapter or one law or one verse or one expression or even one letter, must treat him with respect.” See *Zohar* 2:247b (*Heikh*).

Rabbi Yeisa’s title (“the Hammerhead”) implies that he smashes the hardest problems and radiates sparkling discoveries. On the image of a hammer and shattering, see BT *Sanhedrin* 34a: “In the School of Rabbi Yishma’el it was taught: ‘*Is not My word like fire,*’ declares *YHVH*, ‘*and like a hammer shattering rock?*’ (Jeremiah 23:29). Just as a hammer is split into many sparks, so one verse conveys many meanings.”

Cf. *Leqah Tov*, Exodus 20:2: “In the School of Rabbi Yishma’el it was taught: ‘*Is not My word like fire,*’ declares *YHVH*, ‘*and like a hammer shattering rock?*’ Just as a hammer is split into many sparks, so every single utterance issuing from the mouth of the blessed Holy One splits into many meanings.”

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 42; BT *Shabbat* 88b (and Rashi and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *mah pattish*); *Tosafot*, *Sanhedrin* 34a, s.v. *mah pattish*); *Zohar* 2:83b.

[142.](#) ***YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron...*** Why is Aaron also addressed here by God as He distinguishes between what is permitted and forbidden to eat? Because the differentiation *between the impure and the pure* is inherent to the priestly function.

The opening verses of Leviticus 11 read: *YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, "Speak to the Children of Israel, saying, 'זאת החיה (Zot ha-ḥayyah), These are the living beings [or: living creatures, beasts], that you may eat of all the animals that are on the land.'"*

The conclusion of this chapter (11:46–47) reads: *This is the teaching... to divide between the impure and the pure, and between the living beings that may be eaten and the living beings that may not be eaten.* In the previous chapter (10:9–10), the phrase *to divide between the impure and the pure* relates directly to the priests: *Drink no wine or beer, you and your sons with you, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, lest you die—a perpetual law for your generations, and to divide between the holy and the profane, and between the impure and the pure, and to teach the Children of Israel all the laws that YHVH spoke to them by the hand of Moses.*

[143.](#) **What is life?...** Ultimate, eternal life resides in the realm of *Binah*, who is known as the World that is Coming. In Her is rooted the Tree of Life, namely *Tif'eret* (together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him).

See above, [p. 196](#), [n. 94](#). On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, [note 122](#).

[144.](#) **What are days?...** These are the cosmic days (the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*), which are joined to *Shekhinah*, who is known as God's Name, conveying the divine nature. The sefirotic days are called *days of heaven*—of *Tif'eret*, their core, who is known as *heaven—over the earth*, symbolizing *Shekhinah*. The verse in Psalms implies that one who seeks to share in the ultimate life of *Binah* and to cleave to the cosmic

days must be extremely careful with his mouth—not eating anything impure nor speaking words of evil.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *So that your days may be many, and the days of your sons, on the land that YHVH swore to your fathers to give to them, as the days of heaven over the earth.*

**145. Mouth and tongue...** The human mouth and tongue allude respectively to *Shekhinah* and Her partner *Yesod* (or *Tif'eret*). Whoever spoils his mouth or tongue (for example, by speaking falsely) spoils the divine mouth and tongue; and whoever defiles his soul and body (by eating impure food) becomes defiled in the world above or loses his share in the world that is coming. On the divine mouth and tongue, see *Zohar* 2:78b.

**146. זאת החיה (Zot ha-ḥayyah), These are the living beings...** Why does the verse refer first to *ha-ḥayyah*, *the living beings* [or: *living creatures, beasts*], and then to *הבהמה (ha-behemah), the animals*?

**147. As long as the people of Israel...** As long as they do not defile themselves by eating forbidden, impure food, they will be holy and cleave to *Shekhinah*, who is God's Name (conveying the divine nature) and is called both *zot (this)* and *ḥayyah (living being)*. But if they consume "[impure] food and drink," they will cleave to the demonic Other Side. The verse now implies that if one consumes pure food, then *zot ha-ḥayyah, this is the living being, that you will eat*—you will be nourished by the emanation from *Shekhinah*. Alternatively, Rabbi Abba may be reading the verse as *This is the living being, אשר (asher), when, you eat* what is pure—that is, you will cleave to *Shekhinah* if you eat what is pure and permitted.

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On *Shekhinah* as *ḥayyah*, see above, [p. 118](#), [n. 359](#).

**148. the food from this behemah, animal...** Which God has selected as pure and permissible to eat.

**149. Concerning Pharaoh...** By declaring to Pharaoh בּזֹאת (*Be-zot*), *By this, shall you know that I am YHVH*, God was telling him that *Shekhinah* (known as *zot, this*) would punish him. Similarly, one who defiles his soul by eating impure food will be punished by *Shekhinah* (from whom souls issue), as implied by the verse in Leviticus: *Zot ha-ḥayyah, This is the living being—Shekhinah will confront you—אֲשֶׁר תֹאכְלוּ (asher tokhelu), when you eat, of all the animals that are on the land, failing to avoid those which are impure.*

See *Zohar* 2:37b. The full verse in Exodus reads: *Thus says YHVH, “By this shall you know that I am YHVH: Look, I am about to strike with the staff in my hand on the water that is in the Nile and it will turn into blood.”*

**150. all those that are linked to this side...** To the side of *Shekhinah*, who is implied by *Zot ha-ḥayyah, This is the living being*. Scripture designates which animals are permitted and which are forbidden, based on physical characteristics. The description of these characteristics begins: *Everything that has hooves and that has split hooves, bringing up the cud, among animals, this you may eat. But this you shall not eat from those that bring up the cud or have hooves: the camel, for it brings up the cud but it has no hooves; it is unclean for you....* On the pure and impure animals, see *Zohar* 1:20b.

**151. The summation of all...** As there are ten *sefirot* above, so there are ten demonic forces below, from which sorcerers derive their power. See *Zohar* 1:167a; 2:30b; 3:70a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:450–58.

**152. What about the goat...** Which has a demonic association and yet is permitted to be eaten. Rabbi Shim'on explains that demonic spirits pass through goats and manifest in front of them, but do not settle permanently within them. As the impure spirits begin to settle, another, pure spirit passes over them, forcing them to leave the goats' bodies. On the demonic nature of the goat, see above, [p. 161](#), [n. 498](#).

**153. As soon as they come to possess them...** Just as the demonic spirits threaten to possess the goats, a pure spirit passes, and the demonic spirits leave because they notice the goats' signs of purity—namely their split hooves and the fact that they bring up the cud. See above, [note 150](#).

**154. Whether cattle, beasts, birds...** Among all animals, some come from the side of *Ḥesed* on the right (characterized by Compassion), whereas others come from the side of *Din* (Judgment) on the left.

**155. Israel, in whom I glory...** Since God glories in Israel, how can they defile themselves, for example, by eating impure food? God has distinguished between all animals coming from the side of holiness and all those coming from the Other Side—by creating them with different characteristics.

The full verse in Isaiah 49 reads: *He said to me, "You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory."* Leviticus 11:44 reads in full: *For I am YHVH your God, and you shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am holy; you shall not make yourselves impure through any swarming thing that crawls on the earth.* Here in the *Zohar*, the first part of the verse is quoted slightly differently, while the second part is confused with the second part of Leviticus 20:25, which reads in full: *You shall set apart the pure beast from the impure, and the impure bird from the pure, and you shall not make yourselves detestable through beast and bird and all with which the soil teems, which I set apart for you to treat as impure.* Cf. Leviticus 20:7: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am YHVH your God.* See Rosenthal, "Al Derekh Tippulam shel Ḥazal be-Hillufei Nussah ba-Miqra," 400.

**156. If he departs like this from the world...** Still in a state of impurity, having failed to repent and return to God.



[157.](#) ונטמתם (*ve-nitmetem*), **becoming impure...** The full verse reads: *Do not make yourselves detestable through any swarming thing that swarms and do not become impure with them, ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), becoming impure, through them.* According to Rabbi Shim'on (based on a Talmudic passage), the lack of the letter א (*alef*) in the word ונטמתם (*ve-nitmetem*), *becoming impure*—which would normally be spelled ונטמאתם (*ve-nitmetem*)—allows for a different reading: ונטמתם (*ve-nittamtem*), *becoming dulled* [or: *obstructed*]. One who eats forbidden food defiles and dulls (or “obstructs”) himself irremediably.

See BT *Yoma* 39a: “It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishma’el: ‘Sin dulls [or: obstructs] a person’s heart, as it is said: *Do not become impure with them, ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), becoming impure, through them.* Do not read ונטמאתם (*ve-nitmetem*), *becoming impure*, but rather [per Munich MS] ונטמתם (*ve-nittamtem*), *becoming dulled* [or: *obstructed*].” See Ibn Ezra on Leviticus 11:43; *Zohar* 2:125b; 3:75b; Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 11:43.

Rabbi Shim'on insists that a person who defiles himself and refuses to repent will never emerge from the state of impurity even after death and will never be able to cling to *Shekhinah*, the Bundle of Life.

On the phrase “the Bundle of Life,” see above, [pp. 158–59](#), [nn. 490](#), [492](#). The full verse in Isaiah describes the punishment of those who rebel against God, to be witnessed by the righteous: *They will go out and stare at the corpses of the people who rebel against Me, for their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be a horror to all flesh.*

[158.](#) **Israel comes from the right side...** The side of holiness. If they cling to the left side (the side of impurity), they spoil the right side and spoil themselves entirely—especially if they cling completely to the side of impurity by sinning repeatedly. Actions below affect the worlds above, “for all is connected with one another.” Immediately

following the verse in Deuteronomy appears a list of permitted and forbidden foods (14:3-21).

**159. *All a human's toil is for his mouth...*** This verse from Ecclesiastes demonstrates the wisdom of its author, King Solomon. According to Rabbi Yose, the verse implies that all a person's suffering (or *toil*) in the afterlife is on account of his oral sins, especially eating impure and forbidden food.

See David ben Abraham (the grandson of Maimonides), *Midrash David*, 18 (on *Avot* 1:17). Israel al-Nakawa, *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, 4:345. The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All a human's toil is for his mouth*, וגם הנפש (ve-gam ha-nefesh), *yet the appetite* [or: *throat, gullet, desire, soul*], *is not filled*.

**160. *והנפש (Ve-ha-nefesh), And the soul, is not filled...*** If a person has sinned in this world by eating impure food, in the afterlife his soul will be punished eternally. Alternatively, she will never attain her place in Paradise. For the full verse in Ecclesiastes, see the end of the preceding note.

**161. *Whoever is defiled by them...*** Eating impure food, which defiles a person, is tantamount to idolatry. Rabbi Yitshak demonstrates this by verbal analogy: the verse in Deuteronomy 7 describes idolatrous images as יהוה תועבה (*to'avat YHVH*), *an abhorrence to YHVH*, and the verse in Deuteronomy 14 forbids eating any תועבה (*to'evah*), *abhorrent thing*.

Cf. *Leqah Tov*, Deuteronomy 14:3. On the significance of the unusual spelling of ונטמתם (*ve-nitmetem*), *becoming impure*, see above, [note 157](#).

**162. *לטמא (le-tamme), to declare impure...*** This declarative form of the *pi'el* conjugation means "to declare, pronounce, treat as impure." Here, Rabbi Yitshak construes it as *to render impure*. God has *set apart* the impure animals to defile other nations, since those nations derive

from the side of impurity. Israel and the nations each cling to a different realm.

For the declarative *piel* אָמַט (*tamme*), see Leviticus 13:3-59 (passim). Leviticus 20:25 reads in full: *You shall set apart the pure beast from the impure, and the impure bird from the pure, and you shall not make your souls [or: yourselves] detestable through beast and bird and all with which the soil teems, which I set apart for you לֵטַמָּה (le-tamme), to treat as impure.* Here in the *Zohar*, instead of *make your souls detestable* the verse is misquoted as *make your souls impure*, reflecting Leviticus 11:44: *and you shall not make your souls [or: yourselves] impure through any swarming thing that crawls on the earth.* See above, [note 155](#).

**163. I will sprinkle pure water upon you...**  
Symbolizing the flow of *Hesed*.

The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Holy is Israel to YHVH, the first fruits of His harvest. All who eat of it will be held guilty; evil will befall them—declares YHVH.* The full verse in Exodus relates to impure, forbidden 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.* On the connection between these two verses, see *Zohar* 2:121b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 311-13.

Leviticus 11:44 reads in full: *For I am YHVH your God, and you shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am holy; you shall not make yourselves impure through any swarming thing that crawls on the earth.* Cf. Leviticus 20:7: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am YHVH your God.* See above, [note 155](#).

The context in Psalms (147:19-20) 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!*

**1. On my bed at night...** Rabbi El'azar wonders why the verse reads על משכבי (*al mishkavi*), which can mean *on my bed* or *about my bed*, rather than במשכבי (*be-mishkavi*), which can mean only *in my bed*. The latter reading would be clear and unequivocal. He explains that the verse is spoken by *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), who pleads before the blessed Holy One *al mishkavi*, *about my lying* [or: *my bed*], in exile, which resembles *night*.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:1. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**2. it is not His way...** The blessed Holy One unites with *Shekhinah* only when She resides in the Temple in Jerusalem, which has been destroyed.

**3. but he did not answer me...** Because *Shekhinah* is stranded in exile with Her people among foreign nations, where God's voice is not heard. The verse in Song of Songs 5 reads: *I sought him, but did not find him. I called him, but he did not answer me.*

**4. Al mishkavi...** This phrase can mean *about my bed* (see above, [note 1](#)). *Shekhinah* complains to the blessed Holy One that He is not uniting with Her and delighting Her as a husband should. Their union generates holy souls ("a holy inheritance"), animating the righteous in this world.

**5. walking by a watercourse...** "Watercourse" renders פּרְקָטָא (*peraqta*), apparently based on פּרְקָטָן (*peraqtan*), "channel, watercourse, pool." See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 14:3; Numbers 21:34; 24:6; *Targum*, Song of Songs 7:5; Ecclesiastes 2:6; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:12; *Arukh ha-Shalem* and *Tosefot he-Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *prqtn*; *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 185, s.v. *parqa*. Cf. above, [p. 155](#), [n. 480](#).

Rabbi Yose applies the description *a woman of strength* to Assembly of Israel, which here refers to the people of Israel (together with *Shekhinah*), beloved by God. Conversely, the other nations are *a shameful woman*.

On וַאֲקוּץ (*va-aquts*), *and I loathed*, and קוצין (*qotsin*), "thorns," see *Zohar* 3:8a; Bahya ben Asher on Deuteronomy

21:23. Cf. JT *Megillah* 3:6, 74b; *Devarim Rabbah* 4:1; *Soferim* 12:1; *Zohar* 3:114b. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *You shall not go by the statutes of the nation that I am driving out before you, for all these things they have done, and I loathed them.*

“Thistles” renders גובין (*gubbin*), “pits,” a misspelling of כובין (*kubbin*), “thorns,” apparently resulting from scribal error, a phonetic interchange of כ (*kaf*) and ג (*gimmel*), or playful variation. See *Zohar* 2:103b; 3:24b.

The image of a cave figures prominently in legends relating to the *Zohar*. According to one account, the *Zohar* itself was composed or hidden in a cave. This notion is based on the rabbinic tradition that Rabbi Shim'on together with his son, Rabbi El'azar, hid from the Roman authorities in a cave for thirteen years. See Vol. 4, p. 66, n. 291.

**6. mistress of many forces...** *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) commands many angelic powers.

**7. a crown of תפארת (*tif'eret*), glory...** Referring to *Tif'eret*, who is married to *Shekhinah*. “All is one” indicates that the two biblical descriptions—*her husband's crown* and *a crown of תפארת (*tif'eret*), glory*—are identical, since *Tif'eret* is *her husband*. See Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 72 (91).

**8. by uniting with the King...** By uniting with *Tif'eret*, *Shekhinah* generates angelic powers and righteous souls. On the verse in Deuteronomy, see *Zohar* 1:82b, 245b; 2:89b; 3:24b.

**9. Who can find?...** The word *find* alludes to *Shekhinah*, since the same word (supposedly) appears in the verse in Genesis: *what will find you באחרית הימים (*be-aḥarit ha-yamim*)*, *in the days to come*—literally *in the end of days*, referring to *Shekhinah*, who is the “last” of the seven cosmic “days” of Creation, the *sefirot* issuing from *Binah*. Who can possibly *find Shekhinah*? Who can confront Her power? Who can be so virtuous that he may cleave to Her constantly?



The full verse in Genesis actually reads: *Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather round, that I may tell you what יקרא (yiqra), will befall, you in the days to come”—not what ימצא (yimtsa), will find, you... Cf. Deuteronomy 4:30: When you are in distress and all these things מצאוך (metsa’ukha), find [or: befall] you, באחרית הימים (be-aḥarit ha-yamim), in the end of days [or: in the days to come], you shall return to YHVH your God and heed His voice.* The mistaken reading *what ימצא (yimtsa), will find, you* also appears in Ibn Ezra on Genesis 49:1 (*shittah aḥeret*). On the misquotation of biblical verses, see above, [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#). On *Shekhinah* as *the end of days*, see *Zohar* 1:234b; 2:189b; 3:270a.

**10. מכרה (Mikrah), Her selling...** This word can mean “her selling” or “her purchase price.” Rabbi Abba wonders why the verse doesn’t read *מקחה (miqḥah), her purchase [or: her buying, her purchase price]*, which would be unambiguous. He explains that here, in fact, the sense of “selling” is intentional: *Shekhinah* sells all those who do not cleave to Her into the captivity of exile. Consequently, they are *far from rubies*—far from the *sefirot*, whose name suggests *ספירים (sappirim)*, “sapphires,” similar to *rubies*.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *A woman of strength who can find? Her price is far beyond [literally: from] rubies.* The verse in Samuel reads: *They forgot YHVH their God, וימכרו (va-yimkor), and He sold [or: delivered], them into the hand of Sisera, commander of Hazor...* Here, this verse is conflated with other biblical passages; see Judges 2:12–14; 10:6–7. Cf. *Zohar* 1:32a–b, 93b; 2:3b; and toward the end of the preceding note.

**11. The heart of her husband trusts in her...** The blessed Holy One *trusts in Shekhinah* and therefore He appoints Her to conduct the world, to wield His weapons, and to direct the angelic forces.

On *Shekhinah* controlling the divine weapons, see above, [p. 55](#), [n. 165](#). The verse in Proverbs reads: *... and no booty [or: gain] will he lack.*



**12. *She repays him good and not evil...*** *Shekhinah* is symbolized by *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*, and She includes both of these opposite qualities. “The palace of the King” comprises lower worlds, whose “members” are angels and perhaps also Israel.

**13. *Good—when?...*** When does *Shekhinah* convey goodness below? When She is illumined and joined by the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*—which are known as Days of Heaven, namely the sefirotic days surrounding and including *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by heaven. He (along with His surrounding *sefirot*) is also known as the Tree of Life. By transmitting goodness to the worlds below, *Shekhinah*, as it were, *repays him good*, fulfilling the divine purpose.

**14. *When a woman yields seed...*** The full verse reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel, saying, “When a woman yields seed and bears a male, she shall be impure seven days, as in the days of her menstrual infirmity she shall be impure.”* The biblical verb תזריע (*tazri'a*), *yields seed*, could refer to producing progeny—the “fruit” that is capable of further reproducing the species. However, it is likely that the biblical author shares the view of many of the ancients (e.g., Galen) that both the female and the male generate genital seed (corresponding to the female’s ovum and male’s sperm), which then unite to produce the fetus. See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:743–44, and the next note.

**15. *If a woman yields seed first...*** See BT *Berakhot* 60a, in the name of Rav Yitshak son of Rav Ami, “If a man yields seed first, [his wife] bears a female. If a woman yields seed first, she bears a male.”

See BT *Niddah* 25b, 28a, 31a. Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 14:8; *Tanḥuma*, *Tazri'a* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 4.

**16. *But we have learned...*** If God decrees the gender of the fetus, how can the gender depend on which parent emits seed first?

On God decreeing the gender of the fetus, see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3; *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad*, in *Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:153; *Hibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 254.

**17. the blessed Holy One distinguishes...** Rabbi Yose explains that God sees which parent emitted seed first and then He decrees the gender.

**18. as soon as she yields seed...** The wording of the verse seems to skip over all nine months of pregnancy since it reads *When a woman yields seed and bears a male*.

**19. When a woman yields seed...** For the full verse, see above, [note 14](#). On this verse, see below, [note 33](#).

**20. All of them You made in wisdom...** The seeds of all existence were created in *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), and they subsequently sprouted one by one.

Cf. the rabbinic view (attributed to Rabbi Nehemiah) that all of Creation was made on the first day, and subsequently everything emerged on a particular day of the week. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 1-2; Rashi on Genesis 1:14, 24. “Conglomeration” renders the neologism *מקשרין* (*miqsharin*), based on the root *קשר* (*qshr*), “to tie, bind, link.”

**21. issuing only by certain paths...** Leading from *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) to *Binah* (Understanding), who then actualizes everything. Rabbi Abba divides the clause *עשית כלם בחכמה* (*kullam be-hokhmah asita*), *All of them in wisdom You made*, into two: *All of them in wisdom*—that is, everything was originally contained in *Hokhmah*—and then, *You made*, You actualized them in *Binah*.

On the paths of Wisdom, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1—2. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established*.

**22. The earth is filled...** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth* and known as Assembly of Israel) *is filled* “from there,” namely from *Binah*.

According to a midrashic tradition in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, the word in Genesis *בהבראם* (*be-hibbare'am*), *when*

*they were created*, can be construed as בה' בראם (*be-he bera'am*), "by [the letter] *he* He created them." Here, this letter represents *Shekhinah*, who is often symbolized by the final letter of יהוה (*YHVH*). See JT *Hagigah* 2:1, 77c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:10; BT *Menaḥot* 29b; see above, [p. 199](#), [n. 103](#). The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place that the streams flow, there they flow again.*

**23. When a man comes to sanctify himself...** When a man prepares to unite with his wife in holiness, a "holy spirit is aroused above him," including both male and female aspects, reflecting its divine parents, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. Until the new spirit actually enters the body of the fetus, it does not manifest as one particular gender.

See Plato, *Symposium* 189d-191d; *Zohar* 1:85b, 91b; 2:99b, 246a (*Heikh*); 3:167a, 283b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1355-56; below, [note 31](#). Cf. the rabbinic tradition on the original 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 5:2).' Rabbi Shemu'el son of Naḥman said, 'When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces; and He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.'" See above, [pp. 56-57](#), [n. 168](#).

*Shekhinah* (symbolized by *night*) informs the angel appointed over conception that *a male is conceived*, and before the spirit is "deposited" in the fetus, the blessed Holy One instructs it to live virtuously.

On God's commanding the soul, see above, [p. 77](#), [n. 237](#); *Tanḥuma*, *Pegudei* 3; *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:153-58); *Hibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 253-55. The full verse in Job reads: *Perish the day that I was born, and the night that said, "A male is conceived."* See BT *Sanhedrin* 96a, *Niddah* 16b.

**24. a certain image...** An ethereal body in which each soul is clothed before entering a human body. This bodily garment resembles the physical body that she will inhabit on earth. A person is created “in that image,” and as he proceeds through life, the image surrounds him as an aura, departing from him shortly before he dies. Here the *צולמא* (*tsulma*), “image,” is associated with a person’s *צל* (*tsel*), “shadow,” which likewise disappears shortly prior to death. The final word, “two,” refers to the notion of two images (which appears elsewhere in the *Zohar*).

The link between *tsulma*, “image,” and *tsel*, “shadow,” is accentuated by the fact that the Hebrew equivalent of *tsulma*—*צלם* (*tselem*)—actually means “shadow” in the verse in Psalms: *אך בצלם* (*Akh be-tselem*), *As a mere shadow* [or: *phantom*], *a human goes about*. On the ethereal body and the shadow, see above, [p. 77, n. 237](#); [p. 78, n. 240](#). On the notion of two images, see above, [p. 78, n. 241](#).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Before the day breathes and the shadows flee, turn away, my love—be like a gazelle or a young stag on jagged mountains*. The first part of the verse may refer to the end of night, just before the break of dawn, when darkness flees. Alternatively, the “fleeing shadows” indicate the late afternoon, when shadows lengthen. Here, the latter meaning pertains, with the end of daylight symbolizing the end of one’s life on earth.

**25. In the Book of Sorcery of Ashmedai...** King of the demons. Sorcery derives from the side of impurity, on the left. One who wishes to perform sorcery should stand by the light of a lamp or in another place “where his images may be seen,” such as in the moonlight where his shadow appears. He should then utter certain incantations, summoning demons, and invite his images to receive the demons “and say that [the images] are willingly prepared for [the demons’] commands.” Thereby, he surrenders his

image, which was given to him by God. On Ashmedai and his book, see above, [p. 121](#), [n. 363](#).

**[26. two spirits manifest...](#)** Two demonic spirits clothe themselves in his two images, since they are eager to assume any bodily form.

On demons lacking bodies, 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*] לעשות (*la-’asot*), *to make* (Genesis 2:3), 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 above, [p. 118](#), [n. 358](#).

**[27. forbidden to throw away household utensils...](#)** If a person discards anything—saying, for example, “Let the devil take it!”—he thereby actually gives it to the demonic Other Side and its harsh powers of judgment. It is far worse if someone summons demonic forces by incantation to dominate his sacred image. On the danger of discarding things, see *Zohar* 2:263b (*Heikh*); Vital; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:789.

**[28. When a person’s days draw near...](#)** When his time approaches to depart from the world, the demonic spirit comes and takes his ethereal body—which otherwise would clothe his soul in the afterlife.

See above, [note 24](#); *Zohar* 1:217b. On the image of days drawing near, see *Zohar* 1:224a-b.

**[29. When the soul descends...](#)** Before entering the world, it is first given a tour of both Paradise and Hell, with the righteous and the wicked testifying respectively about the rewards of virtue and the punishments of sin. See *Tanḥuma*, *Pequdei* 3; *Seder Yetsirat ha-Velad* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:153-54); *Ḥibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 254-55; *Zohar* 3:13a-b.

**30. When it emerges into the world...** When the soul emerges into the world, the ethereal body surrounds it (and the person). A person's life depends upon his צולמא (*tsulma*), "image," which is identified here with his צל (*tse*l), *shadow*.

On the verse in Psalm 39, see above, [note 24](#). On the verse in Job, see *Zohar* 1:217b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 390.

**31. All spirits of the world...** The soul is originally androgynous, reflecting the nature of both its divine parents, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. Afterward, it splits in two and each half manifests as one gender within either a male or a female body. If a man is worthy, he finds his original soul mate and they reunite. See above, [note 23](#).

**32. Let the earth bring forth...** Rabbi Abba interprets the verse as: *Let Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth*) *bring forth* the soul of Adam. This soul is the fruit of the Tree of Life, which symbolizes the blessed Holy One. *The garden* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the Divine Woman.

The full verse in Genesis 1 reads: *God said, "Let the earth bring forth נפש חיה (nefesh ḥayyah), living beings [or: a living soul], of each kind [or: according to its kind] and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth of each kind."* And it was so. On *nefesh ḥayyah* as the soul of Adam, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:5; above, [p. 118](#), [n. 359](#).

The full verse in Genesis 3 reads: *But from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God has said, "You shall not eat from it and you shall not touch it, lest you die."* According to a variant of this passage in *ZḤ* 60b, the divine command *You shall not eat from it and you shall not touch it* means that one should not try to understand how the androgynous spirits split into male and female.

On *in the middle of the garden* as signifying "in the middle of the woman," see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21 (quoting Song of Songs 4:12); *Zohar* 1:35b.

On souls as fruit, see *Bahir* 14 (22); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 489, 504; *Zohar* 1:15b, 19a, 33a,



59b–60a, 82b, 85b, 90b, 115a–b, 226b, 238a, 249a; 2:166b–167a, 186b, 223b; 3:97a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 51; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 56 (69). Cf. Ibn Ezra on Psalms 1:3.

**33. When a woman yields seed and bears a male...**

This now means: When *Shekhinah* generates a male soul, lacking the female aspect (or separated from its soul mate). Such an event is caused by Adam and Eve (or by subsequent human couples), who acted sinfully or failed to unite in holiness. The phrase “according to the ways of the world” apparently refers to human failure. Alternatively, it could refer to the ideal situation, in which the soul comprises both male and female (or issues along with its soul mate).

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1356. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 14](#).

**34. Not so!...** Rabbi El’azar insists that all souls issuing from *Shekhinah* comprise both male and female, separating afterward (as explained above, [note 31](#)). The phrase *and bears a male* refers to a soul in which the male aspect (associated with *Hesed* on the right) dominates the female (associated with *Gevurah* on the left), producing either a male or a manly female. Conversely, the clause *if she bears a female* refers to a soul in which the female aspect dominates the male, producing either a female or an effeminate male.

The full verse in Leviticus 12 reads: *If she bears a female, she shall be impure two weeks, as in her menstruation, and sixty days and six days she shall remain over blood purity [literally: blood of purity].*

**35. How many thousands and myriads...** Of souls issue simultaneously from *Shekhinah*! Yet (in the case of souls entering male bodies) they are not complete until they have existed in the body for thirty-three days (following circumcision).

The clause “they are stabilized” renders אַתִּיאֲשַׁן (*itya’ashan*), which is based either on the root אִשַׁן (*’vsh*), “to be strong, firm,” or שִׁשַׁן (*’shsh*), “to strengthen, make firm.” See Isaiah 46:8; Jeremiah 50:15; Ezra 4:12; *Bereshit Rabbah* 67:12; *Zohar* 2:47a, 140b; 3:160b; *ZH* 72a (*ShS*). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Thirty days and three she shall remain in blood purity [literally: blood of purity]. She shall touch no consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purity are completed.*

**36. *She shall be impure seven days...*** According to the simple sense of the verse, *she* refers to the mother who has given birth. Previously, Rabbi Abba interpreted the mother as *Shekhinah*, the Divine Mother of the soul; but now *she* signifies the soul herself. For the first seven days of the soul’s existence within a newborn male, she does not enter the presence of *Shekhinah* because she is trying to settle in the body. During this period, the soul remains *under its mother*, not with Her. Finally, when the baby boy is circumcised on the eighth day, the soul and body attain enough stability for them to appear together before *Shekhinah* (who is known as *Matronita*) and be joined with Her and *Tif’eret*.

The full verse in Leviticus 12 reads: *Speak to the Children of Israel, saying, “When a woman yields seed and bears a male, she shall be impure seven days, as in the days of her menstrual infirmity she shall be impure.”* (See above, [note 14](#).) The full verse in Leviticus 22 reads: *When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days under its mother, and from the eighth day onward it is acceptable as a fire offering to YHVH.*

**37. *Thirty days and three...*** It takes this long for the soul be fully stabilized in the body. The separate mention of *three* refers to the three days immediately following circumcision.

On the phrase “to be stabilized,” cf. above, [note 35](#). For the full verse in Leviticus, see *ibid*.

**38. First, in blood of purity...** According to Rabbi El'azar, the phrase בדמי טהרה (*bi-dmei tohorah*), *in blood* [or: *bloods*] *of purity*, refers not to the blood of childbirth but to the “blood after blood” of circumcision. The letter ה (*he*) at the end of טהרה (*tohorah*), *purity*, does not contain a *mappiq* (dot); if it did, this letter would be enunciated and the word would mean *her purity*. Since there is no *mappiq*, the *purity* is “unspecified”—not belonging to *Shekhinah*, but pertaining rather to the soul and body of the newborn, which are gradually purified and stabilized.

On the precise spelling of טהרה (*tohorah*), see *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Thirty days and three she shall remain in blood purity* [literally: *blood of purity*]. *She shall touch no consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purity are completed.*

**39. She shall touch no consecrated thing...** Until the spirit is fully stabilized in the body, *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) cannot *touch* the holy nourishment above and convey it below. For the full verse in Leviticus, see the preceding note.

**40. If she bears a female...** Referring to a situation in which *Shekhinah* generates a soul dominated by the female aspect (associated with *Gevurah* on the left). In that case, the period of purification and stabilization is double—sixty-six days (rather than thirty-three)—reflecting the greater agitation of the left side.

See above, [note 34](#). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *If she bears a female, she shall be impure two weeks, as in her menstruation, and sixty days and six days she shall remain over blood purity* [literally: *blood of purity*].

**41. When a woman yields seed...** For the full verse, see above, [note 14](#).

**42. There is no one holy like YHVH...** The verse implies that there are holy entities and other rocks, which creates a difficulty, for how can anything be compared at all to God?

**43. there are various holy ones...** The angels are described as *the holy ones*, and Israel is commanded to be *holy*. But such holiness depends on God, whereas divine holiness is absolute and not dependent on anything.

**44. no צור (tsur), rock, like our God...** See BT *Berakhot* 10a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Pazzi: "Come and see how human nature differs from divine nature: A human being draws a figure on the wall but cannot cast into it breath and soul, bowels and intestines. But the blessed Holy One is not so. צר צורה בתוך צורה (*Tsar tsurah be-tokh tsurah*), He designs a form within a form [the fetus within the womb], casting into it breath and soul, bowels and intestines. This is what Hannah said: *There is no one holy like YHVH, for there is no one beside You; there is no צור (tsur), rock like our God.* What does this mean: *there is no tsur like our God?* There is no צייר (*tsayyar*), artist, like our God!"

See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 8; BT *Megillah* 14a; *Midrash Shemu'el* 5:6; *Tanḥuma, Tazri'a* 2, *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 3; *Midrash Tehillim* 18:26; *Zohar* 1:90b-91a 3:141b (*IR*). The reference to designing "a form within a form" (the fetus within the womb) recalls the verse from Leviticus quoted above (at [note 41](#)): *When a woman yields seed.*

**45. there is that which is called rock...** Various rocks are mentioned in Scripture, but only God is the *rock* ruling over all.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug.* The following verse reads: *Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you.* The full verse in Exodus reads: *"Look, I am about to stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it and the people will drink."* And thus did Moses do before the eyes of Israel's elders.

**46. They rose at midnight...** Following the kabbalistic custom. See above, [p. 74](#), [n. 228](#), which includes this

quotation from BT *Berakhot* 3b (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid): "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."

Here the north wind (associated with Judgment) summons the harsh forces of Judgment (active during the first half of the night) to return to their demonic abode. No longer threatened by them, *Shekhinah* is now open to Her lover, the blessed Holy One, who comes to unite with Her and to delight with the souls of the righteous. See above, [p. 138, n. 427](#); [p. 208, n. 1](#).

**47. Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Ḥiyya returned...** To the house. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3, n. 5](#).

**48. Assembly of Israel is drawn...** *Shekhinah* is drawn toward Her beloved, the blessed Holy One, by singing His praise in the night. He responds by extending a thread of *Ḥesed* (Love) to Her and to the righteous who join Her by studying Torah at night.

See BT *Ḥagigah* 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 directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9)." *His song* is the song of Torah. See *Zohar* 2:46a; 3:45a, 64b-65a; above, [p. 139, n. 429](#). On the scepter, see *Zohar* 2:46a; 3:45a.

**49. It is not good for the human to be alone...** Why does God begin with a negative remark? As Rabbi Abba explains, the appearance here of the clause *It is not good* is linked with the fact that the converse expression *God saw that it was good* is missing from the description of the second day of Creation, unlike all the other days (which include this expression or a variation of it). In *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:6, Rabbi Ḥanina explains why the term *good* is

lacking on the second day: “Because on that day conflict was created: [*God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters,] and let it divide water from water’* (Genesis 1:6).” Here, the division or separation pertains to the divine act of separating the original androgynous human couple into male and female.

See the following note, and above, [p. 14](#), [n. 39](#). The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH Elohim said, “It is not good for the human to be alone, I will make him a helper כנגדו (kenegdo), alongside [or: corresponding to, as a counterpart to, opposite, facing] him.”*

[50. was he alone?...](#) How could God say that Adam was *alone* when, in fact, he included both male and female aspects? 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.*’ Rabbi Shemu’el son of Nahman said, ‘When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces; and He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.’”

Rabbi Abba explains that Adam was *alone* because he could not engage or unite with his female face-to-face. God solved this problem by separating the androgynous being into male and female entities. Until then, it was *not good*.

See above, [pp. 56–57](#), [n. 168](#); *Zohar* 2:55a, 231a–b; 3:83b, 142b (*IR*). Cf. above, [note 23](#). The context in Genesis 2:21–22 reads: *YHVH Elohim cast a deep slumber on the human, and he slept, and He took one מצלעותיו (mi-tsal’otav), of his ribs [or: of his sides], and closed the flesh in its place. YHVH Elohim built the rib [or: the side] He had taken from the human into a woman and He brought her to the human. On צלע (tsela) as side, see above, [p. 119](#), [n. 360](#).*

The full verse in Genesis 5 reads: *Male and female He created them, and He blessed them and named them אדם (adam), humankind, on the day they were created.* For the full text of Genesis 2:18, see the end of the preceding note.



**51. He adorned her like a bride...** See *Bereshit Rabbah* 18:1: “*YHVH Elohim built the 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.’” Cf. BT *Berakhot* 61a: “Rabbi Shim’on son of Menasia expounded, ‘Why is it written: *YHVH Elohim built the side*? This teaches that the blessed Holy One braided Eve’s hair and brought her to Adam.’” See above, [p. 119](#), [n. 360](#).

On the last sentence, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:2, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Korḥah: “They climbed into bed as two and descended as seven: Cain and his twin sister, Abel and his two twin sisters.” Here, the total of six includes just one twin sister of Abel’s. See BT *Sanhedrin* 38b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 1; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 21; below, [p. 524](#), [n. 533](#).

**52. the blessed Holy One blessed them...** The full verse reads: *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.”* This multiple blessing (which includes seven aspects) corresponds to the seven blessings traditionally recited beneath the wedding canopy. The human couple resembles the divine couple, *Shekhinah* and *Tif’eret*, who receive a flow of seven blessings (from *Binah* through *Yesod*, or from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah* Herself).

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 12. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:13. On the seven wedding blessings, see *Zohar* 2:102b, 169a-b, 255b (*Heikh*); 3:6a, 124a, 266b; *ZH* 88d-89a (*MhN, Rut*).

**53. one who comes to unite...** A man who commits adultery disrupts the union of *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, splitting them into two. Instead of imitating the divine couple by uniting in holiness, this man and his forbidden sexual partner betray them. This sin is so grievous that *teshuvah* is impossible during the perpetrator’s lifetime; it can be

purged only if he dies repentant and is then punished in the afterlife.

On the heresy of believing in “two [Divine] Powers,” see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 4, *Bahodesh* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:3; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 329; *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:7; BT *Berakhot* 33b, *Megillah* 25a, *Hagigah* 15a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 2:11; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:33; *Tanḥuma, Qedoshim* 4, *Shofetim* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qedoshim* 4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20, 98a.

On the severe consequences of adultery, see *Tosefta Hagigah* 1:7; BT *Hagigah* 9b, *Sotah* 4b (and *Tosafot*, ad loc., s.v. *hi*), *Bava Metsi’a* 58b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:6. Most of these sources quote Ecclesiastes 1:15: *What is crooked cannot be straightened.*

On the verse in Isaiah, see *Mekhilta, Bahodesh* 7; JT *Yoma* 8:9, 45b-c; *Sanhedrin* 10:1, 27c-d; *Shevu’ot* 1:6, 33b; BT *Yoma* 86a; *Ta’anit* 11a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 29; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 38; *Tanḥuma, Vayeshev* 2; *Midrash Mishlei* 10:1; *Zohar* 2:273a (*Tosafot*). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**54. if he troubles the blessed Holy One...** If a man commits adultery, he compels God to form the embryo in the divine image. Normally, a new human incarnation of this image represents a glorification of God, but since this newborn is a bastard, the adulterer has falsified the divine solemnity or counterfeited the divine image.

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 פומבי (*pumbei*), public, but they trouble Me and make Me set My seal [upon it] against My will!’” See Rashi, ad loc., and on Genesis 7:4; *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *pumbei*; *Zohar* 2:113a; Recanati on Deuteronomy 23:3, 89d-90a.

Here in the *Zohar*, *pumbei* apparently means “solemnity,” following the sense of Greek *pompe*, “pomp, solemn

procession, solemnity.” Alternatively, *pumbei* assumes the sense of “coin,” with which it is linked in the passage from *Avodah Zarah* quoted above. “Falsifying” renders אכחיש (*akhḥish*), which could also mean “weaken.” On weakening God by committing adultery, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:12. On the expression *akhḥish pumbei*, see *Zohar* 3:86b; Scholem, 5:1319 (unnumbered); idem, *Major Trends*, 389, n. 52; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 110–11, n. 21. Cf. Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 295–96; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 134–35; *TZ* 70, 128b.

“Bastard” renders ממזר (*mamzer*), “misbegotten,” more precisely, the offspring of an adulterous or incestuous union (not a child born out of wedlock).

**55. He who robs his father and his mother...** See BT *Berakhot* 35b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina son of Papa: “Whoever enjoys something of 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 his mother and says, ‘It is no crime,’ is partner to a destroyer—his father* is none other than the blessed Holy One... and *his 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 below, [p. 404](#), [n. 140](#).

**56. There we have learned...** In BT *Berakhot* 35b, quoted in the preceding note. According to Rabbi Ḥiyya, the generalization “Whoever enjoys...” includes the act of illicitly enjoying a woman to whom one is not married; and the phrase “without a blessing” means without the wedding ceremony that includes seven blessings. One who sins by this act *robs his father and his mother*—that is, he ruins the divine marriage of *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, depriving them of seven sefirotic blessings. (See above, [note 52](#).) It is even worse if he sins with a married woman, since she and her

husband—by marrying in a ceremony of seven blessings—imitate the divine couple.

On a bride being forbidden to her husband without the wedding blessings, see *Kallah* 1:1. On the opposition to sexual relations with an unmarried woman, see Jonah Gerondi, *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, 3:94; Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1:256.

**57. Jeroboam...** The king of Israel who built golden calves, which were worshiped by the northern tribes. See 1 Kings 12:26–33.

See BT *Berakhot* 35b (the continuation of the passage quoted above in [note 55](#)): “What is *He is partner to a destroyer*? Rabbi Ḥanina son of Papa said, ‘*He is partner to Jeroboam son of Nebat who destroyed Israel’s [faith in] their Father in Heaven.*’” See *Zohar* 2:193b.

**58. Who is a destroyer?...** Samael, who tries to impair *Shekhinah*. See *Zohar* 2:250a (*Heikh*).

The verse from Proverbs 6 reads in full: *One who commits adultery with a woman is senseless, destroying his soul—it is he who does it.* Rabbi Ḥiyya quotes this to demonstrate the link between *soul* and מִשְׁחִית (mashhit), *destroying* [or: *a destroyer*].

**59. Let me go, for dawn is rising...** The context in Genesis (32:23–27) describes what happened to Jacob on the night before he was to meet his long-lost brother, Esau: *He rose on that night and took his two wives and his two slave girls and his eleven boys and he crossed over the Jabbok ford. He took them and brought them across the stream, and he brought across all that he had. And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the rising of dawn. He saw that he could not prevail against him and he touched the socket of his thigh, and the socket of Jacob’s thigh was wrenched as he wrestled with him. He said, “Let me go, for dawn is rising!” And he [i.e., Jacob] said, “I will not let you go unless you have blessed me.”*

According to a rabbinic tradition, Jacob's nameless wrestling partner was Samael, Esau's heavenly prince. Rabbi Ḥiyya wonders why Samael said *Let me go!* "Was he bound in Jacob's hand?" And if God watches over the righteous, why was Samael able to harm Jacob? Rabbi Ḥiyya first answers this second question by saying simply that Samael "collected what was his."

This may be related to the tradition that Samael was empowered to inflict pain at childbirth because of the curse delivered to Eve (Genesis 3:16). By an act of deception, Jacob ensured that Samael could not dominate women's bellies beyond childbirth. In retaliation, Samael wounded Jacob's thigh. See *Zohar* 2:110b-112a.

Alternatively, the thigh represents the phallus, the sexual urge, and thus the evil impulse, which belongs to Samael. See *Zohar* 1:170b (standard editions); Vol. 3, p. 31, n. 213. According to another, related interpretation, Jacob had sinned by marrying two sisters (Leah and Rachel), so Samael was enabled to punish him. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nefesh David*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

On Jacob wrestling with Esau's heavenly prince, see *Tanḥuma*, *Vayishlah* 8; *Bereshit Rabbah* 77:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:6; *Zohar* 1:144a, 146a, 166a, 170a-171b, 179b; 2:105a, 111b, 163b. Cf. Rashi on *Sukkah* 29a, s.v. *eloheha*.

**60. What did Jacob have in mind...** Why did he bring his whole family across the stream? To protect them from Samael the Accuser.

**61. He saw his flame of fire...** Jacob saw Samael's flashing fire. According to various sources, water deters demons. See *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margalioṭ), par. 1144; *ZḤ* 21c-d (*MhN*); Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 159. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 67b; *Zohar* 2:82b.

**62. One who is alone in a house...** See BT *Shabbat* 151b, in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina: "One may not sleep



alone in a house [or: in an isolated house], and whoever sleeps alone in a house is seized by Lilith.” See above, [p. 120](#), [n. 362](#). On the danger of going out alone at night, see BT *Pesahim* 112b.

Rabbi Ḥiyya reads the verse as: *And Jacob was left alone, and [consequently] a man wrestled with him.*

**63. *Until the rising of dawn...*** Samael issued from the side of Judgment on the left, which is associated with night (and the dark night of Israel’s exile). As dawn appeared, his strength failed and Jacob overpowered him. See *Zohar* 1:144a, 170b; 2:163b.

In the verse from Job, the phrase *the sons of Elohim* implies powers of Judgment, associated with the name *Elohim*. Rabbi Ḥiyya associates the verb ויריעו (*va-yari’u*), *they shouted for joy*, with the root רעע (*r’*), “to smash.” Thus the verse can mean *all the sons of Elohim were smashed*. The morning can symbolize *Ḥesed*, which overcomes *Din* (Judgment). See *Zohar* 3:22b, 36a. On *Elohim* signifying Judgment, see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#).

**64. *The time has come to sing praise...*** Whereas according to one tradition, Jacob’s wrestling partner was Samael (see above, [note 59](#)), another tradition identifies him as a holy angel, who demanded that Jacob release him at dawn because he was scheduled to offer praise to God in heaven.

Rabbi Ḥiyya wonders why the verse employs the past tense—ברכתני (*berakhtani*), *you have blessed me*—instead of the imperfect tense: תברכני (*tevarekheni*), *you bless me*, which would be more fitting. He explains that Jacob was still concerned about the blessings he received from his father, Isaac, which were really intended for Esau. His use of the past tense, *you have blessed me*, implies that he wants Samael to confirm these blessings of the past, so that it will be as if *you have blessed me*.

See *Zohar* 1:144a-b. On the confirmation of the earlier blessings, see also *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 32:27, 30;



Rashi on Genesis 32:27 and Hosea 12:5; Nahmanides on Genesis 32:30; *Zohar* 1:171a; 2:163b.

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; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 37. On the linking of the two motifs (the angel seeking to praise God at dawn; the angel as Samael), see *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 32:27; *Zohar* 2:163b.

**65. Your name will no longer be יַעֲקֹב (Ya'aqov), Jacob...** Implying that Samael confirms the blessings, which were not ultimately the result of Jacob's עֹקְבָא (*uqba*), "deceit," but rather issued from *Israel*—namely from *Tif'eret*, whose full name is *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel), the sefirotic rung eventually attained by Jacob.

The name יַעֲקֹב (*Ya'aqov*) is taken to mean: "He grips the heel" or "He deceived [or: usurped]." See Genesis 25:26; 27:36. The full verse in Genesis reads: *He said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but rather יִשְׂרָאֵל (Yisra'el), Israel, for שָׂרִית (sarita), you have strived, with divine beings and with human beings, and have prevailed."*

**66. With אֱלֹהִים (elohim), divine beings...** The name *Elohim* is associated with Judgment on the left and thus also with Samael, who derives from there. On *Elohim* signifying Judgment, see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#). On acknowledging the earlier blessings, see above, [note 64](#).

**67. When light rises...** At dawn, all the harsh powers of Judgment disappear, and *Shekhinah* draws close to the blessed Holy One. Those who rose at midnight to study Torah share in the divine love and fullness.

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 יְהוָה directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9)." *His song* is the song of Torah. On this thread of love and the scepter, see above, [p. 271](#), and [n. 48](#).

On the image of conversing with one's beloved, see BT *Berakhot* 3a, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: "In the first watch [of the night], a donkey brays; in the second, dogs bark; in the third, a child sucks from its mother's breast, and a woman converses with her husband." On the erotic connotation of "converses," see BT *Nedarim* 20b, and pseudo-Rashi, ad loc.; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod*, *Berakhot* 3a, p. 3a. Cf. *Zohar* 1:178a; 2:46a; 3:64b-65a, 108a.

**68. When the blessed Holy One...** When the union of the divine couple is initiated by *Shekhinah* (who is stimulated by the righteous below), then She is filled from *Hesed* on the right side and numerous angels from that side spread throughout the worlds. However, when the blessed Holy One initiates the union (without an arousal from below), then the flow of emanation issues from *Gevurah* on the left side, associated with the Female, and the world endures harsh Judgment. On *Shekhinah* initiating the divine union, see *Zohar* 1:245a-b.

**69. When a woman yields seed...** In the sefirotic realm, if *Shekhinah* arouses love first, then the flow issues from the right side, associated with the Male. Similarly below, if the woman *yields seed* first, she *bears a male*.

See BT *Berakhot* 60a (quoted above, [note 15](#)): "If a man yields seed first, [his wife] bears a female. If a woman yields seed first, she bears a male." For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 14](#).

The theme of "as above, so below" is a cardinal principle of Kabbalah. See *Zohar* 1:38a, 57b-58a, 129a, 145b, 156b, 158b, 172a, 205b; 2:15b (*MhN*), 20a (*MhN*), 48b, 82b, 144a-b, 186b, 195b, 231b, 251a (*Heikh*); 3:40b, 65b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:273. On the similar Hermetic formulation, see *Secretum secretorum*, ed. Robert Steele, *Opera hactenus*, fasc. 5, 262.

**70. one should unite his desire above...** One should focus his will and desire on the divine realm, stimulating

sefirotic union.

**71. If a person has...** The context (Leviticus 13:2-3) reads: *If a person has on the skin of his body an inflammation or a rash or a shiny spot and it becomes a scaly affliction on the skin of his body, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. The priest shall examine the affliction on the skin of his body, and if the hair in the affliction has turned white and the affliction seems deeper than the skin of his body, it is scaly affliction; when the priest sees it, he shall declare him impure.*

*Scaly affliction* renders נגע צרעת (*nega tsara'at*). On the term *tsara'at*, often translated imprecisely as *leprosy*, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:774-76, 816-26.

**72. אל תראוני (Al tir'uni), Do not look at me...** The simple sense of the verse is: *Do not look at me for I am blackish, because the sun has scorched [or: gazed upon] me.* Rabbi Yehudah transforms this to: *You cannot see me because the sun has darkened me*—that is, *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *the sun*) has turned away from Me, leaving Me unilluminated—so *I am blackish*.

The verse is spoken by *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon) in exile, and She tells Israel sadly that She dwells in double darkness—as implied by the doubling of letters in the form שחרחרת (*sheḥarḥoret*), *blackish*. On the one hand, *Tif'eret* has withdrawn His light. On the other hand, *My mother's sons were incensed at me*, which is explained below.

See *Zohar* 3:59b; *ZH* 69d-70a (*ShS*). On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#). On the form *sheḥarḥoret*, see Ibn Ezra on Leviticus 13:49; Song of Songs 1:6; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:787-88, 811.

The full verse reads: *Do not look [or: stare] at me for I am blackish, because the sun has scorched [or: gazed upon] me. My mother's sons were incensed at me, they*

made me keeper of the vineyards; my own vineyard I did not keep.

**73.** שזפתני (*She-shezafatni*), **Because [the sun] has scorched me...** The root of this verbal form is probably שזף (*shzf*), “to look upon, catch sight of” (as in Job 20:9; 28:7). However, Rabbi Yehudah understands it as based on the noun זפת (*zefet*), “pitch,” yielding the meaning *because [the sun] has made me black as pitch*. If so, why does the word begin with a double ש (*shin*)? Because this spells שש (*shesh*), “six,” alluding to the six sefirotic lights of *Hesed* through *Yesod*, whose core is *Tif’eret* (symbolized by the sun).

On *she-shezafatni* and *zefet*, see Pope, *Song of Songs*, 322. For another interpretation, see Liebes, *Pulhan ha-Shaḥar*, 157.

**74. My mother’s sons were incensed...** *Shekhinah’s* mother is *Binah*, whose sons here are the forces of harsh Judgment associated with *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). Rabbi Yehudah associates the verb נחרו (*niḥaru*), *were incensed*, with נחר (*niḥar*), *is hoarse*, implying that the forces of Judgment made *Shekhinah hoarse* in exile, preventing Her from singing lovingly to *Tif’eret*. Similarly, Israel necks were weighed down with millstones, preventing them from singing prayer.

On the description “with their hands bounds tightly behind them and millstones round their necks,” see Lamentations 5:13; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 24; *ibid.* 2:6; 5:13; *Zohar* 2:2b, 118b (*RM*); 3:20b. The verse in Psalms reads: *My throat נחר (niḥar), is hoarse [or: is parched, burns]*.

**75. They made me keeper of the vineyards...** Before *Shekhinah* went into exile, She protected and cultivated Israel (*my own vineyard*), and the other nations of the world were nourished from the remnants. But now in exile, *Shekhinah* keeps other nations (or vineyards), so that Israel may be nourished from the remnants. See *Zohar* 2:266a (*Heikh*); 3:119b, 209b.

**76. When they reached a certain field...** They saw a beautiful tree, but realized that they could not enjoy the sight because the Temple had been burned to the ground and its residual smoke, as it were, clouded their eyes.

This account combines several rabbinic traditions. See M *Avot* 3:7 (attributed, in some versions, to Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai): "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 as if liable to the death penalty." Cf. *Zohar* 2:127a.

See BT *Berakhot* 31a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: "It is forbidden for a person to fill his mouth with laughter in this world, as is said: *Then will our mouth fill with laughter and our tongue with glad song* (Psalms 126:2). When? At the time when *they will say among the nations: 'Great things has YHVH done with these'* (ibid., 3)." See *Zohar* 1:114a (*MhN*), 127a (*MhN*); 3:56a, 118a.

Cf. M *Sotah* 9:12, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a: "Ever since the day the Temple was destroyed, not a single day passes without a curse, dew has never descended as a blessing, and flavor has been eliminated from fruit." See above, [pp. 96-97](#), [n. 294](#).

"A biferous balsam tree" renders דפטירא דקיטפא (*daftira de-qitpa*). *Daftira* is probably based on Rabbinic דופרה (*dufrah*), דיפרא (*difra*), from Greek *diphoros*, "biferous," i.e., bearing fruit or flower twice a year. *Qitpa* is based on קטף (*qetaf*), "balsam; balsam tree." On this story, see Greenstein, "Aimless Pilgrimage," 500-504; Hecker, "The Face of Shame."

**77. The earth and her fullness...** Rabbi Yose asks why the verse is redundant, mentioning *earth* and then *world*. He explains that הארץ (*ha-arets*), *the earth* [or: *the land*], refers to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the Holy Land and called Land of the Living. She is YHVH's, that is, She is wedded to *Tif'eret* (known as YHVH). *The world* refers to the rest of the earth (outside of the land of Israel), which is



judged by (and dependent on) *Shekhinah*, who is also known as *righteousness*. On the relationship between תבל (*tevel*), *world*, and ארץ (*erets*), *earth*, cf. above, [p. 49](#), [n. 148](#).

**78. The earth, granted...** Rabbi Ḥiyya grants that *the earth* refers here to *Shekhinah*; but if so, what is *her fullness*? He explains that this refers to souls of the righteous, who pour into Her through *Yesod*, or who ascend to Her. See *Zohar* 1:19b, 67a, 235a.

**79. how can we explain For upon seas...** How can this apply to *Shekhinah*?

**80. Certainly so...** *Shekhinah* (known as Land of the Living) depends upon the sefirotic *seas* and *rivers* issuing from the “supernal river” of *Binah*, who Herself flows from *Hokhmah* (symbolized by Eden). These *rivers* prepare and array Her to unite with King *Tif’eret*.

**81. נפשו (nafsho), his soul...** In the Masoretic text of Psalms, this word is spelled נפשי (*nafshi*), *My soul*, referring to taking an oath falsely in God’s name. Some biblical manuscripts and rabbinic quotations read נפשו (*nafsho*), *his soul*, referring to the person “bearing himself,” that is, taking an oath falsely. Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya explains that both readings—*his soul* and *My soul*—refer to *Shekhinah*. She is the beloved *soul* of *Tif’eret* (referred to in the quotations from Amos and Samuel), and is also linked with King David and thus known as נפש דוד (*nefesh David*), “soul of David.” In this verse from Psalms, David refers to *Shekhinah* as *my soul*.

The verses in Psalms read: *Who shall ascend the mount of YHVH, and who shall rise in His holy place? The clean of hands and the pure of heart, who has not borne נפשי (nafshi), My soul, falsely and has not sworn in deceit.* On the spelling *nafshi* (or *nafsho*), see *Zohar* 1:100b–101a; David Kimḥi and *Minḥat Shai* on Psalms 24:4.

On the phrase “soul of David,” see 1 Samuel 18:1; 2 Samuel 5:8; *Zohar* 1:101a, 206a, 240a; 2:27a, 171a; 3:182a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 348; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 43; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 61 (75).



**82. lesions...** Rendering מכתשין (*makhtashin*), “wounds, afflictions.” *Targum Onqelos* employs the singular form to render נגע צרעה (*nega tsara’at*), *scaly affliction* (e.g., Leviticus 13:2–3), as מכתש סגירו (*makhtash segiru*) or מכתש סגירוֹתא (*makhtash segiruta*). See above, [note 71](#).

**83. He is a sinner...** Who is being punished with these lesions. Such visible afflictions are not “chastenings of love,” which are intended to test or refine the individual and increase his merit, and are kept hidden from others.

See BT *Berakhot* 5b: “Rabbi Yoḥanan said, ‘[Scaly] afflictions and [the lack or loss of] children are not chastenings of love.’ But are not [scaly] afflictions a chastening of love? Look at what has been taught: ‘If anyone has one of these four symptoms of [scaly] afflictions [enumerated in M *Nega’im* 1:1, derived from Leviticus 13:2], it is nothing but an altar of atonement.’ Well, they are an altar of atonement, but they are not chastenings of... love Or if you like, I can say: This [teaching about their power to atone] refers to when [the afflictions] are concealed, whereas that [saying of Rabbi Yoḥanan] refers to when they are visible to all.”

Cf. below at [note 109](#). On “chastenings of love,” see BT *Berakhot* 5a: “Rava (some say, Rav Ḥisda) said, ‘If a person sees sufferings coming upon him, he should scrutinize his actions.... If he does so and finds nothing [deserving of punishment], he should attribute it to neglecting the study of Torah.... If he does so and finds no [such neglect], then these are surely chastenings of love, as is said: *For the one whom YHVH loves He reproves, as a father the son he delights in* (Proverbs 3:12).’ Rava said, in the name of Rav Saḥora, in the name of Rav Huna, ‘Whomever the blessed Holy One delights in, He crushes with chastenings, as is said: *YHVH delights in crushing him by disease* (Isaiah 53:10).’” See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 32; *Zohar* 1:180b–181a; 2:244b. On sinners being marked on their faces, see above, [p. 216](#), [n. 32](#).

**84. If a person has...** The context (Leviticus 13:2-3) reads: *If a person has on the skin of his body an inflammation or a rash or a shiny spot and it becomes a scaly affliction on the skin of his body, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. The priest shall examine the affliction on the skin of his body, and if the hair in the affliction has turned white and the affliction seems deeper than the skin of his body, it is scaly affliction; when the priest sees it, he shall declare him impure.*

The three symptoms (*inflammation, rash, and shiny spot*) are all called נגע צרעת (*nega tsara'at*), a *scaly affliction*, which *Targum Onqelos* renders as מכתש סגירו (*makhtash segiru*) or מכתש סגירותא (*makhtash segiruta*), “an affliction of closing” (or “of being closed off, confinement, quarantine”), since the afflicted person is confined (as described in Leviticus 13:4-5, 21, 26, 31, 33, 50, 54).

Although the two verses in Leviticus obviously describe a single group of symptoms, Rabbi Ḥiyya distinguishes between them. He imagines that the first verse pertains to an affliction that is *on the skin of his body* but concealed beneath the person’s clothes or at least not visible on his face, as indicated by the Aramaic term *segiru*, “closing,” implying concealment; such a person *shall be brought to the priest*. The second verse, however, pertains to a more grievous affliction, “from the side of impurity,” which is “externally visible,” as indicated by the wording *When the priest sees it, he shall declare him impure*.

**85. How do we know this?** That chastenings of love are concealed from others.

**86. me-ahavah, from love...** On this creative misreading of the verse, cf. Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 215, reporting a similar interpretation in the name of Jonah Gerondi. On reproving a person privately to avoid shaming him, see *Zohar* 3:85b-86a (*Piq*). Cf. *Sifra, Qedoshim* 4:8, 89a; *BT Arakhin* 16b; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 7.

**87. Similarly with the blessed Holy One...** See *Tanḥuma*, *Tazri'a* 10, *Metsora* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 14, *Metsora* 12; *Zohar* 85b–86a (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 214–15.

**88. Bound in single counsel...** The man suffering with lesions complains that Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose have ganged up against him, shaming him and labeling him a sinner.

On the open or revealed quality of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see *Zohar* 1:92b; 2:9a, 86b, 147a, 149a, 156a, 190b; 3:22b, 79a, 105b, 159a, 171a, 236b, 241b, 287a. Cf. *Zohar* 3:59b–60a.

**89. So it is with Torah...** Who reveals herself openly. Similarly, one should fearlessly and openly rebuke a sinner.

“Thirsting clarity” renders צְחוּתָא (*tsaḥuta*), which in Aramaic means “thirst,” but here includes the meaning of the Hebrew word צְחוּת (*tsaḥut*), “clarity.” See the Talmudic Aramaic saying: “Legal discussion requires צִילוּתָא (*tsiluta*), clarity, like a day of the north wind.” See BT *Eruvin* 65a; *Megillah* 28b; *Targum*, Song of Songs 6:7; *Zohar* 1:72a, 89b (*ST*); 2:89a; 3:23a, 207b, 221b, 266b; *ZH* 13d (*MhN*); Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 389, n. 49; Liebes, *Peraqim be-Millon Sefer ha-Zohar*, 157. The verse from Proverbs describes Wisdom, traditionally identified with Torah.

**90. Who is a God like You...** The afflicted man admits his guilt and turns to God, pleading for forgiveness. His realization of wrongdoing creates the opportunity for atonement and healing. His son's exclamation—“Heavenly help is here!”—may refer to divine responsiveness, the involvement of Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yose, or the son's own inspired teaching, about to unfold.

The same exclamation appears in *Zohar* 2:225b. The full verse in Micah reads: *Who is a God like You, forgiving iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant*

*of His people? He does not retain His wrath forever, for He delights in kindness.*

**91. I have seen all...** How could the wise King Solomon claim to *have seen all in the days of הַבְּלִי (heveli), my vanity* [or: *my (mere) breath*]? Certainly, one who explores the vanity of the world sees nothing valuable at all.

The term הַבְּלִי (*hevel*) is the favorite word of the author of Ecclesiastes, traditionally identified as King Solomon. Its basic meaning is “breath, vapor,” and in this biblical book it connotes “futility, vanity, absurdity, ephemerality, that which is empty and fleeting.”

Rabbi Yeisa Sava appears frequently in the *Zohar*. The name Rabbi Dostai appears nowhere else in the main body of the *Zohar*, though it does appear in *Midrash ha-Ne’lam*. Rabbi Dostai Sava is mentioned in JT *Hagigah* 1:8, 76d; *Nedarim* 10:8, 42b.

**92. the moon waxed full...** 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 *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: “When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full.” See above, [p. 247](#), [n. 132](#).

Here the moon symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who was fulfilled during Solomon’s reign. Then the king saw *Yesod*—who conveys the divine fullness and is thus called *all*—uniting with *Shekhinah* and illumining Her. Solomon himself was linked with *Shekhinah* (who is known as *breath*), so he refers to Her as *my breath*. Just as moist, warm breath includes the qualities of water, fire, and air, so *Shekhinah* (known as both moon and *breath*) includes the qualities of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret* (symbolized respectively by water, fire, and spirit). The verse in Ecclesiastes now means *I have seen all* [namely *Yesod*] *with my breath* [that is, united with *Shekhinah*].

**93. A righteous one perishes in his righteousness...** The simple sense of the verse is: A

*righteous one* אובד בצדקו (*oved be-tsidqo*), *perishes in his righteousness*. However, the root אבד ('*vd*) can mean both “perish” and “lose”; and the prepositional prefix ב (*be*) can mean both “in” and “through, on account of.” These alternative meanings enable the man’s son to reinterpret the verse: when the wicked abound in the world, and *Shekhinah* is darkened and separated from *Yesod*, then *A righteous one loses on account of his righteousness*—*Yesod* (known as *righteous one*) is deprived of His flow of emanation from above because *Shekhinah* (known as *righteousness*) is no longer present.

On this transformation of the verse, see *Zohar* 2:11a, 38b–39a; 3:291b (*IZ*). Cf. above, [pp. 104–5](#), [n. 318](#). On *Yesod* as *righteous one*, see above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#).

**94. the whole left side is aroused...** The wicked on earth endure and prosper because they cling to the left side, which has now been empowered.

**95. Furthermore, A righteous one perishes...** The verse can also imply that a righteous person is seized (and punished) for the sins of the wicked, especially if he does not try to rebuke them. The man’s young son admits that this was his father’s failing: he thought that he was being kind by not rebuking or challenging (and thereby embarrassing) *evildoers*, but he was seized *in his righteousness*—for being too kind, reticent, and indulgent.

See BT *Shabbat* 54b, in the name of Rav, Rabbi Ḥanina, Rabbi Yoḥanan (or Yonatan), and Rav Ḥaviva: “Whoever can protest against his household [for having committed a sin] and does not, is seized for [the sins of] his household; [if he can protest] against his townspeople [and does not], he is seized for his townspeople; [if he can protest] against the whole world [and does not], he is seized for the whole world.”

See BT *Avodah Zarah* 18a; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 7; *Zohar* 3:218a; *ZH* 78a (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. JT *Beitsah* 2:8, 61d; *Ketubbot* 13:1, 35c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:1; BT *Shabbat* 55a;

*Tanḥuma, Balaq 19; Tanḥuma (Buber), Balaq 28; Bemidbar Rabbah 20:23; Qohelet Zuta 7:11.*

Cf. BT *Shabbat* 33b (per Munich MS): “Rabbi Gorion (according to others, Rabbi Yosef son of Rabbi Shema’yah) said, ‘When there are righteous ones in the generation, the righteous are seized for the sin of the generation. When there are no righteous in the generation, schoolchildren are seized for the sin of the generation.’” See above, [p. 108, n. 328](#).

This passage reflects the situation in the Jewish community in thirteenth-century Castile, where moralists sharply criticized communal leaders for failing to rebuke sinners. In 1280-1281 a number of prominent Jewish courtiers were executed by the command of King Alfonso X, and these deaths were interpreted as punishment for their failures of moral leadership. See Jonah Gerondi, *Sha’arei Teshuvah* 3:59; *Zohar* 2:3b; Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1:250-70 (esp. 253, 257, 263); Hecker, “The Face of Shame,” 42-46.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *For David. Do not תתחר (tithar), be incensed [or: be vexed], by evildoers; do not envy those who do wrong.* Here, the son understands *tithar* as *challenge, strive (against)*. See *Zohar* 1:239a. Cf. Jeremiah 12:5; 22:15; BT *Berakhot* 7b; *Targum Yonatan* and Rashi on this verse.

**96. punished me with this...** With the afflictions on his face. Or, “... for this,” for failing to restrain his townspeople. On the final clause, see above at [note 86](#); *Zohar* 3:85b-86a (*Piq*).

**97. ויצר יהוה אלהים (Va-yiytser YHVH Elohim), YHVH Elohim formed...** The unusual double ם (yod) in the spelling of the word ויצר (*va-yiytser*), *formed*, alludes to two יצרין (*yitsrin*), “impulses” in the human being. The good impulse corresponds to *Ḥesed* (symbolized by water), while the evil impulse corresponds to *Gevurah*, on *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by fire.



On the spelling of *va-yiytser* as alluding to the two *yitsrin*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:4; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 2:7; BT *Berakhot* 61a; *Zohar* 3:141b. The full verse in Genesis reads: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the earth [or: soil], and blew into his nostrils נְשִׁמָה (nishmat) the breath of life, and the human became נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (nefesh ḥayyah), a living being [or: a living soul].*

**98. YHVH Elohim—a complete name** Comprising both *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. On this “complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; cf. 12:15.

**99. אֵת הָאָדָם (Et ha-adam), the human...** *Ha-adam* (*the human*) refers to the male. The word *et* is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. However, already in rabbinic times, Nahum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that the presence of *et* in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, the man’s son indicates that *et* alludes to the female. According to rabbinic tradition, the first human was originally created as an androgynous being.

On the significance of *et*, see BT *Pesaḥim* 22b, *Ḥagigah* 12a–b. On the androgynous nature of the first human being, see above, [pp. 56–57](#), [n. 168](#).

**100. Dust from the earth...** See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 12: “He created him from a pure, holy site. From where did He take him? From the site of the Temple.”

See JT *Nazir* 7:2, 56b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:8; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 2:7; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 2, p. 173; *Zohar* 1:34b, 130b, 205b; 2:23b; 3:83a (*Piq*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 344.

**101. drawn from supernal life** From *Binah*, as explained immediately below.

**102. נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (nefesh ḥayyah), a living soul...** The man’s son interprets *nefesh ḥayyah*, *a living soul*, as *soul of a living being*—namely a soul issuing from *Binah*, who is the “supernal *ḥayyah*, *living being*.” This soul is then brought

forth into the world by *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by *the earth*.

See above, [pp. 118–19](#), [n. 359](#). Genesis 1:24 reads in full: *God said, “Let the earth bring forth נפש חיה (nefesh ḥayyah), living beings [or: a living soul], of each kind and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth of each kind.” And it was so.*

**[103.](#) Many guardians protect him...** As long as he acts virtuously, angels protect him from demonic forces. But if he strays, a demonic spirit settles upon him and he is blemished, as happened to the speaker’s father. See above at [note 83](#).

**[104.](#) Because this *nefesh ḥayyah*, soul of a living being...** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the Holy Land) draws in this *soul of a living being* (namely of *Binah*), which is now called *neshamah* (soul-breath), because *Shekhinah* has, as it were, inhaled her from *Binah* above. Unlike the lower aspects of soul (*nefesh* and *ruah*), *neshamah* is called “speaking spirit,” because she alone can speak before God.

See above, [note 102](#). The phrase “speaking spirit” originates in *Targum Onqelos*, Genesis 2:7, which paraphrases *and the human became נפש חיה (nefesh ḥayyah), a living being [or: a living soul] as and she became in the human רוח ממללא (ruah memallela), a speaking spirit.*

**[105.](#) Keep your tongue from evil...** Evil speech contaminates a person, causing the holy *neshamah* to leave him and turn silent. Such harmful words are claimed by the demonic Serpent, from whom they originated.

On the evil speech of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, see Genesis 3:1; *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; *Zohar* 2:148b. Cf. *Zohar* 2:265a. On the demonic effects of wrong or evil speech, see BT *Berakhot* 19a; *Zohar* 1:175a, 195b; 2:47b, 264b–265a (*Heikh*), 266a; 3:47a, 53a, 85a, 155b.

The context in Psalm 34 (13-14) reads: *Who is the man desiring life, loving many days to see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.* The full verse in Psalm 39 reads: *I was dumb—in silence. I kept still, deprived of good, and my pain was intense.*

**106. When that evil word ascends...** Demonic spirits are aroused, one of which descends and settles upon the person who aroused it by speaking evil, and he becomes infected with the scaly affliction described in Leviticus 13.

On evil speech causing scaly affliction, see Numbers 12:10; *Tosefta Nega'im* 6:7; *Sifra, Metsora* 5:7, 73a; *Sifrei, Deuteronomy* 275; *Midrash Tanna'im, Deuteronomy* 24:9; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer*, 9, pp. 172-75; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 9; B, 16; JT *Sotah* 2:1, 17d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:1-7; 17:3; 18:4; BT *Shabbat* 97a, *Arakhin* 15b-16a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 5:5; *Devarim Rabbah* 6:8, 10; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 23, *Metsora* 1-2, 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 20, *Metsora* 1-7, 10; *Midrash Tehillim* 52:1; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:13; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 7:5; *Zohar* 2:122a, 264b-265a (*Heikh*); 3:53a, 183b, 206a-b. Many of these sources interpret המצורע (*ha-metsora*), *the one afflicted with scales*, according to the method of *notariqon* (shorthand) as המוציא רע (*ha-motsi ra*), "the one who utters evil," or המוציא שם רע (*ha-motsi shem ra*), "the one who defames a person." See below, [p. 332, n. 4](#).

**107. so he is punished for a good word...** By missing the opportunity to speak good words, a person taints his *neshamah* (which is known as "speaking spirit"). It is even worse if a person fails to restrain or rebuke sinners, as the speaker's father failed to do. See above at [note 95](#).

According to a rabbinic tradition in the name of Rav, King David suffered from scaly affliction for six months. Rav also taught that David listened to slander (concerning Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth). Here, the man's son indicates that David hoped to be forgiven of his sin by enduring the affliction. When David called out to God, פנה (*Peneh*), *Turn, to me and grant me grace*, he was praying to

be healed and forgiven. The “healing” sense of the verb פנה (*pnh*) is demonstrated by a verse from Numbers in the story of Miriam’s scaly affliction: ויפן אהרן (*Va-yiphen Aharon*), *Aaron turned, to Miriam, and, look, she was stricken with scales*. According to a rabbinic tradition, Aaron was also stricken, and the verb *va-yiphen, he turned*, means that “he turned away from,” i.e., was released from, his affliction.

On David’s suffering from scaly affliction, see BT *Yoma* 22b; *Sanhedrin* 107a. On his listening to slander, see BT *Shabbat* 56a, *Yoma* 22b. On the midrashic reading of *va-yiphen, he turned*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 105; BT *Shabbat* 97a; *Zohar* 2:224b. On the “speaking spirit,” see above, [note 104](#).

**[108.](#) *If a person has a scaly affliction...*** The verse reads: *If a person has נגע צרעה (*nega tsara’at*), a scaly affliction, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to the priest*. On the term *scaly affliction*, see above, [note 71](#).

**[109.](#) *The Companions have already discussed all the types...*** Of *scaly affliction* in the Mishnaic tractate *Nega’im*, based on the descriptions in Leviticus 13-14.

On distinguishing between “which ones were pure and which were impure,” see below, [note 193](#). On chastenings of love, see above, [note 83](#) and at [note 87](#). The phrase “on whom He spat” alludes to the account of Miriam’s scaly affliction (in Numbers 12:14). In explaining to Moses why Miriam has to be confined, God says, *Had her father spat in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be gathered back.*”

**[110.](#) *Incline not my heart...*** King David the Psalmist prayed that he would not want to do any evil because “one is led on the path one wishes to take.”

See BT *Makkot* 10b: “Rabbah son of Bar Hana said in the name of Rav Huna (some say, Rav Huna said in the name of Rabbi El’azar), ‘From the Torah, the Prophets, and

the Writings, it can be demonstrated that one is led on the path one wishes to take.’”

On this principle, see *Zohar* 1:53b-54a, 195b, 198b; 2:50a; 3:207a. The verse in Psalms begins: *Incline not my heart to an evil thing* [or: word].

**111. This verse is difficult...** How could David say to God *Incline not my heart to an evil thing*? If God leads a person astray, then there is no free will to *hearken* or *not hearken*, and thus no justice.

For the expressions *if you hearken* and *if you do not hearken* (or their near equivalents), see Deuteronomy 28:13, 15; 1 Kings 11:38; Psalms 81:9.

**112. However, David admonished his heart...** He was not addressing God, but rather his own heart. Rabbi Yitshak construes the verse as *Incline not, O my heart, to an evil thing*.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Know today* ודע היום (*Va-hashevota*), *and take* [literally: *take back, bring back*], *to your heart that YHVH is God in the heavens above and on the earth below; there is none else*.

**113. scaly affliction...** Which can be caused by various sins.

For lists of these sins, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:1; 17:3; BT *Arakhin* 16a; *Tanḥuma, Metsora* 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 10; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 7:5; *Zohar* 3:206a. Cf. above, [note 106](#).

**114. סגירו (Segiru), closing...** *Targum Onqelos* renders נגע צרעת (*nega tsara'at*), *a scaly affliction*, as מכתש סגירו (*makhtash segiru*) or מכתש סגירותא (*makhtash segiruta*), “an affliction of closing” (or “of being closed off, confinement, quarantine”), since the afflicted person is confined. See above, [note 84](#).

Rabbi Yehudah indicates that human sin “closes” off the flow of emanation, which leads to *affliction*. See *Zohar* 3:49b.

**115. the Patriarchs are not supplied...** Since the flow of emanation is blocked, the sefirotic triad of *Ḥesed*,



*Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (symbolized respectively by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) is not supplied, nor is the lower triad of *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*. According to Rabbi Yose, in the verse from Leviticus the term אדם (*adam*), *a person*, alludes to the divine *adam*, namely *Ze'eir Anpin* (the sefirotic configuration from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*), which is afflicted by human sin. Then, *affliction* descends to *Shekhinah*, as well as to the human sinner. On the term *Ze'eir Anpin*, see above, [p. 93](#), [n. 285](#).

**116. He has spurned His sanctuary...** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the *sanctuary*) is *spurned* and *defiled* through human sin.

The verse in Lamentations reads: נָאֵר (ni'er), *He has repudiated* [or: *disdained*] *His sanctuary*. הִסְגִּיר (Hisgir), *He has handed over, to the foe the walls of its citadels*. *Hisgir* derives from the same root as סָגִירוּ (segiru), “closing.” Here, the verse is misquoted as נָאֵץ (ni'ets), *He has spurned, His sanctuary*. The verse in Numbers reads: *A man who becomes impure and does not purify himself, that person will be cut off from the midst of the assembly, for he has defiled YHVH's sanctuary*.

**117. Why?...** Why is *Shekhinah* defiled? Because the higher configuration of *sefirot* has withdrawn from Her, leaving Her vulnerable to the demonic Serpent. The phrase “the one it defiles” refers to *Shekhinah*.

On the serpent injecting slime, 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, [pp. 121-22](#), [n. 366](#).

**118. When the Serpent begins to reveal itself...** The divine supports (*Netsah* and *Hod*) along with the higher sefirotic edifice are removed from *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the Sanctuary, and She becomes vulnerable



to the Serpent—all because of human sin (“his sins”). In the verse from Leviticus, both *house* and *land* allude to *Shekhinah*. Similarly, in the verse from Genesis, *the woman* alludes to the actual Divine Woman.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put a scaly affliction in a house of the land you possess.* In this biblical passage, a *scaly affliction* means “a fungal infection, mold, mildew.” The full verse in Genesis reads: *Now the serpent was most cunning of all the beasts of the field that YHVH Elohim had made, and he said to the woman, “Though God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden...’”*

**119. What is the sin?...** Evil speech especially arouses the Serpent. For example, according to the book of Numbers, after the Israelites complained against God and Moses that they had brought them out of Egypt *to die in the desert*, God sent *fiery serpents* against the people. According to a midrashic interpretation, the phrase השרפים הנחשים (*ha-nehashim ha-serafim*), *the fiery serpents*, implies that they had previously been שרופים (*serufim*), “burnt,” by the Cloud of Glory (accompanying the Israelites through the desert) and their bodies formed into a fence around the camp, but now God revived them and incited them against the people because of their evil speech.

Here Rabbi El’azar explains the word *serafim* differently, since it is not spelled *serufim*, “burnt” (matching the midrashic interpretation) or שורפים (*sorefim*), “burning” (referring to their burning poison). Rather, the spelling *serafim* refers to demonic forces, the counterpart of the angelic seraphim seen by the prophet Isaiah. His description of the seraphim as *standing above* God implies that they derived from *Gevurah*, which is situated above (and to the left of) *Tif’eret* (known as YHVH). Similarly, the verse in Job describes *the sons of Elohim* (signifying *Gevurah*) as standing *above* YHVH. Cf. *Zohar* 3:79b.

The plural *serafim* (referring to the demonic forces of the Serpent) matches the plural *sea serpents* in the verse from Psalms. 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, [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.).’”

Here the phrase “two, sometimes turning into one” apparently alludes to the dangerous coupling of the male and female demonic serpents. These dark forces are capable of “closing off” the divine flow entirely.

On evil speech arousing the Serpent, see *Zohar* 2:264b-265a; 3:53a. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 19; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:22. On evil speech causing scaly affliction, see above, [note 106](#). On the midrashic interpretation of *ha-neḥashim ha-serafim*, see *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 19; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:22 (both in the name of Rabbi Yudan); Baḥya ben Asher on Numbers 21:5.

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, 108b, 176b (*SdTs*), 244b; Idel, “Livyatan u-Vat Zugo.” On the relationship between the phrase “two, sometimes

turning into one” and the spelling of the word תנינים (*taninim*), *sea serpents*, see *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdTs*); Vol. 5, p. 553, n. 15.

The verse in Psalms reads: *You smashed the heads of sea serpents on the waters*. The image of smashing the head of the sea serpent belongs to the biblical myth of creation (based on ancient Near Eastern sources), in which God vanquishes the primordial forces of chaos.

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 above Him [or: in attendance on Him, or: above it, that is, above the throne]. Each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he flew*. The full verse in Job reads: *One day, the sons of Elohim came to stand in attendance before YHVH, וְהַשָּׂטָן (ve-ha-satan), and the Adversary, too, came among them*.

**120. Such is the way of an adulteress...** Alluding here to Lilith, “an adulteress, surely!” Empowered by human sin, she threatens to supplant *Shekhinah* and steal the flow of emanation.

On Lilith supplanting *Shekhinah*, see below, [p. 458](#), [n. 315](#). The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Such is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, “I have done no wrong.”* See *Zohar* 2:196b; 3:72a, 106a, 180b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 83.

**121. Deficiency of all...** The world lacks blessing and goodness only because of deficiency in the sefirotic realm, which is caused by human sin. On the interdependence of above and below, see above, [p. 182, n. 49](#); above, [note 69](#).

**122. I saw that wisdom has an advantage...** Surely this is obvious to anyone.

The phrase “the holy palace” may allude to *Shekhinah* or *Binah*. On this passage, see Moses de León, “Commentary on the *Sefirot*,” 364b–365a.

**123. called by seven rungs...** By seven names, corresponding to seven *sefirot*—namely the six sefirotic “days” from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, along with *Binah* above them. The “six days below” may be six palaces beneath *Shekhinah*, above which is the seventh. (Alternatively, this refers to the six days of the week, above which is the Sabbath.) According to 1 Kings 10:19, Solomon’s *throne had six steps*. The seven *sefirot* (from *Binah* through *Yesod*) are also described as “seven crowns of days.”

Solomon’s six additional names appear in 2 Samuel 12:25 (Jedidiah), Proverbs 30:1 (Agur, Bin Yake, Ithiel), Proverbs 31:1 (Lemuel), and Ecclesiastes 1:1 (Koheleth). Actually, the four names in Proverbs do not necessarily refer 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.

On Solomon’s names, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 39; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10 (on 1:1); *Qohelet Rabbah* 1:2 (on 1:1); *Zohar* 2:38b–39a. On the seventh above six, cf. *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdT*s).

**124. He uttered seven הבלים (*havalim*), breaths...** The opening two verses of Ecclesiastes read: *The words of Koheleth son of David, king in Jerusalem. הבל הבלים (Havel havalim), Breath of breaths [or: Futility of futilities]—said Koheleth—הכל הבלים הכל הבל (havel havalim, ha-kol havel), breath of breaths, all is breath!* According to a midrashic

interpretation, the second verse includes seven *havalim* (breaths, futilities) because the noun הָבֵל (*hevel*) appears three times in the singular and twice in the plural (each denoting a minimum of two), totaling seven. Rabbi Ḥiyya indicates that Solomon's sevenfold utterance corresponds to seven sefirotic crowns (from *Binah* through *Yesod*).

On the word *hevel*, see above, [note 91](#). On the seven *havalim* in this verse, see *Qohelet Rabbah* and *Qohelet Zuta*, ad loc.; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:2. On the divine breaths, see *Zohar* 1:146b (*ST*); 2:10b, 38b–39a, 59a; 3:291b (*IZ*).

**125. A breath generates a voice...** Human breath combines spirit (or air) and water (or moisture), and then turns into voice. Divine breath issues from the mouth of *Binah* and turns into the voice of *Tiferet*, which is also known as רוּחָא (*ruḥa*), “spirit,” and includes מַיָּא (*mayya*), “water,” symbolizing *Ḥesed*. The sevenfold divine breath animates all of existence.

See *Zohar* 2:39a. On the cosmic significance of breath, cf. BT *Shabbat* 119b, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince: “The world endures only for the sake of the breath of schoolchildren.” See above, [p. 108](#), [n. 327](#).

On God creating the world by breath, see Psalms 33:6; and Shabbetai Donnolo, *Sefer Ḥakhmoni*, on *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:10 (in Matt, *Essential Kabbalah*, 92, 194): “God, great, mighty, and awesome, powerfully breathed out a breath, and cosmic space expanded to the boundary determined by divine wisdom, until God said, ‘Enough!’”

On God sustaining the world by breath, see *Tanḥuma*, *Bereshit* 5; *Midrash Temurah*, 2 (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:109); *Zohar* 1:47a, 148a.

**126. Solomon spoke his words...** Inspired by the divine breath, Solomon spoke his words of wisdom, thereby sustaining the world.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *He afflicted you and made you hunger and fed you the manna, which you did not know nor did your fathers know, in order to make*

*you know that not on bread alone does the human live but on all issuing from YHVH's mouth does the human live.*

**127. min ha-sikhlut, from folly, precisely...** Because the contrast with folly highlights the value of wisdom and increases one's appreciation of it.

See *Midrash Temurah* (in *Battei Midrashot* 2:192): "If all people were stupid, their stupidity would not be recognized; and if all people were wise, their wisdom would not be recognized. Rather, *one against the other God has set* (Ecclesiastes 7:14)."

On the positive value of סכלות (*sikhlut*), *folly*, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 2:1; *Midrash Shemu'el* 8:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 116:5 (all quoting Ecclesiastes 10:1, which is also quoted below). On the value of studying that which is opposed to wisdom (or religious truth), see *M Avot* 2:14, in the name of Rabbi El'azar: "Be diligent to study Torah, and know how to answer an אפיקורוס (*appiqoros*), Epicurean [that is, heretic, skeptic, unbeliever]." See *Or Yaqar*.

On the interdependence of light and darkness, see Abraham Ibn Ḥasdai, *Ben ha-Melekh ve-ha-Nazir*, ch. 18, pp. 136-37; *Zohar* 1:32a; 2:115b (RM), 184a, 187a; 3:80b. Cf. *Massekhet Atsilut* 1-2. The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *I saw that wisdom has an advantage over folly as light has an advantage over darkness.*

**128. wisdom, unspecified...** The term *wisdom* can refer either to *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), *Shekhinah* (who is known as both Lower Wisdom and Wisdom of Solomon), or human wisdom. Here it apparently refers to *Shekhinah*. The threat of demonic "follies" stimulates and necessitates the illumination of *Shekhinah* from above, and highlights Her goodness.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1352; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**129. Similarly below...** Here, too, a bit of foolishness stimulates, necessitates, and highlights the value of



wisdom.

See BT *Shabbat* 30b (and *Pesaḥim* 117a): “Just as Rabbah, before beginning to teach the scholars, would speak words of humor, making the scholars happy; afterward, he would sit in awe and begin the discourse.” See *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

The verse in Ecclesiastes 10 reads: יקר מחכמה מכבוד (*Yaqar me-ḥokhmah mi-kavod*), *Heavier than weighty wisdom* [or: *Outweighing massive wisdom*], *is a little folly*.

**130. Rabbi Yose said...** He reads the verse as: ומכבוד יקר מחכמה (*Yaqar me-ḥokhmah u-mi-kavod*), *What is precious of wisdom and of glory, is a little folly*. That is, a little foolishness highlights the preciousness of *wisdom* and *glory*.

*Wisdom* and *glory* may refer respectively to *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*, or to human wisdom and *Shekhinah*. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1352; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**131. מן החשך (*min ha-ḥoshekh*), from darkness...** Instead of the simple meaning: *over darkness*. See above, [note 127](#). Cordovero (in *Or Yaqar*) describes how painters enhance the color white by placing a black border around it.

**132. One against the other God has set...** The full verse reads: *On a day of good fortune, enjoy the good, and on a day of evil, see: one against the other God has set, so that man find nothing after him* [or: *find nothing after he is gone, or: find no fault with Him*]. See *Sefer Yetsirah* 6:2. In the second quotation (from Ecclesiastes 7:18) *this* and *the other* may refer respectively to wisdom and foolishness, which are mentioned in the preceding two verses.

**133. A person is named...** Among these different terms, אדם (*adam*) is the greatest, reflecting the sefirotic *adam*, in whose image the first human was created. On this passage, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 114-15.

**134. When adam, a person...** If the term *adam* is so great, why does it appear in this verse describing one who

brings an offering, which is to be brought by a sinner?

The offerings described in the first chapter of Leviticus are ascent offerings, which (according to a rabbinic tradition) atone for sinful thoughts. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 7:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: "The ascent offering is due only על הרהור הלב (*al hirhur ha-lev*), for sinful imagining [literally: for imagining of the heart, or mind]." See above, [pp. 18–19](#), [n. 55](#). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *When אדם (adam), a person, from among you brings an offering to YHVH, of animals, from herd and from flock you shall bring your offering.*

**135. The offering is sustenance of the world...** An offering stimulates sefirotic union, thereby producing divine pleasure and sustaining the world.

On the cosmic effects of the קרבן (*qorban*), "offering," see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#). On God's pleasure, see Numbers 28:2: *My offering, My bread, for My fire offerings, My pleasing aroma, you shall take care to offer to Me at its fixed time.* See above, [p. 31](#), [n. 96](#).

**136. When adam, a person, has on the skin of his body...** Why does the elevated term *adam* appear in this verse describing scaly affliction, which results from sins such as evil speech?

See above, [note 106](#). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *If a person has on the skin of his body an inflammation or a rash or a shiny spot and it becomes a scaly affliction on the skin of his body, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests.* See above, [note 71](#).

**137. This one the blessed Holy One desires...** If one who is called *adam* falters and commits a sin, for which he is punished by scaly affliction, then God desires to purify him. Fittingly, Leviticus states that *he shall be brought to the priest*—by anyone who sees him, so that the divine image of *adam* may be restored to its pristine state. On the other hand, later in this chapter of Leviticus the lesser term זָרָע

(*ish*), a man, appears in several descriptions of scaly affliction. In such a case, it is not written *he shall be brought to the priest*, since for a lesser person the affliction does not taint the divine image to such a degree.

Leviticus 13:9 reads: נגע צרעת כי תהיה באדם (Nega tsara'at ki tihyeh be-adam), *If a person has a scaly affliction, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to the priest*. On the significance of *he shall be brought to the priest*, see Ibn Ezra on Leviticus 13:2, 9; *Nefesh David*. Cf. the wording in Leviticus 13:2 (in the preceding note).

**138.** וְהָאִישׁ (Ve-ha-ish), **And the man, Moses...** If the term *adam* is more noble than *ish*, then why is Moses described by the latter?

**139.** **Because he was called 'servant of the King'...** And the lesser term *ish* fits the status of servant. Also, Moses is called *ish* in relation to the sefirotic *Adam*. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Not so My servant Moses, in all My house he is trusted*.

**140.** **YHVH is ish, a man of, war...** How can God be called by the lesser term *ish*?

**141.** **The secret of YHVH...** Rabbi Yitshak does not want to reveal the secret reason why *YHVH* is called *ish*, which is reserved for initiates.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *The counsel [or: secret] of YHVH is for those who fear [or: revere] Him, and to them He reveals His covenant*.

On this verse, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 49:2; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 19, *Vayera* 5-6, *Ḥayyei Sarah* 4, *Vayḥi* 14; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Lekh Lekha* 23; *Vayera* 6, *Vayḥi* 13; *Midrash Tehillim* 25:13; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 526; *Zohar* 1:37b, 73a, 95a, 236b; 2:75a, 234a, 237b; 3:43b (*Piq*), 79a, 91b-92a; 127b (*IR*), 141b (*IR*), 142b (*IR*), 294b (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 339; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 226-28.

**142.** **I am one of them...** Rabbi Yehudah insists that he is certainly one of *those who revere Him*, and he is troubled

by being excluded from knowing this secret.

**143. When is there perfection above?...** When are the *sefirot* complete? When *Tif'eret* (together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him) sits on the Throne (symbolizing *Shekhinah*).

The verse in Ezekiel describes what lies above the angelic *hayyot* (living beings): *Above the firmament over their heads—like the appearance of sapphire, image of a throne. And upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of adam, a human being, upon it above.*

**144. YHVH is ish, a man of, war** Rabbi Yehudah still wants to know why *YHVH* is referred to here as *ish*, *man*. See above, [note 140](#).

**145. There, perfection of all was lacking...** When God devastated the Egyptians at the Red Sea, He was manifesting harsh Judgment and was not complete, so He is described by the lesser term *ish*. However, when He sits on the Throne, united with *Shekhinah*, He is perfectly complete, so He is called *adam*.

On God's being called by various names, depending upon how He acts, see *Tanḥuma*, *Shemot* 20; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:6. Cf. the following sources (several of which quote *YHVH is a man of war*): *Mekhilta*, *Shirta* 4, *Yitro* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:3; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:24; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 100b-101a; *Tanḥuma*, *Yitro* 16; *Shemot Rabbah* 28:5.

**146. Adam, Human, and beast...** Why does the sublime name *adam* appear with *beast*? The lesser name, *ish*, seems more appropriate.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; Your judgments, the great abyss; human and beast You deliver, O YHVH.*

**147. No?...** Rabbi Abba demonstrates that elsewhere Scripture does combine *ish* with *beast*. But the expression *adam and beast* is also legitimate, since it simply represents a style of speech spanning two extremes.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *But against any of the Children of Israel no dog will snarl [literally: sharpen, or: point, whet, move) its tongue], from man to beast, so that you may know how YHVH sets apart Egypt and Israel.* The full verse in Kings, describing Solomon's wisdom, reads: *He spoke about trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing out of the wall; and he spoke about beasts, birds, crawling things, and fish.*

[148.](#) וְאָדָם אֵין (ve-adam ayin), **and there was no human...** Why is the sublime name *adam* associated with tilling the soil?

The full verse in Genesis reads: *No shrub of the field was yet on earth and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for YHVH Elohim had not caused rain to fall on earth and there was no human to till the soil.*

[149.](#) **Everything in the world is only for the sake of adam...** So it is fitting that this name is associated with cultivating the earth. The name *adam* signifies the complete human, who was created in the supernal divine image, so Scripture states *YHVH Elohim formed האָדָם (ha-adam), the human*—employing the complete divine name *YHVH Elohim*, which symbolizes *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, from whose union Adam's soul issued.

See BT *Hullin* 60b: “Rav Assi raised a contradiction: ‘It is written *The earth sprouted grass* (Genesis 1:12)—on the third day—and it is written *No shrub of the field was yet on earth*, on the eve of Sabbath! This teaches that plants began to emerge yet remained at the opening of the ground, until Adam came and pleaded for mercy on them; then rain fell and they sprouted—to teach you that the blessed Holy One yearns for the prayers of the righteous.’”

See *Zohar* 1:46b, 97a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 346. Cf. above, [note 20](#). On *YHVH Elohim* as the “complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; cf. 12:15. Genesis 2:7 reads in full: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the earth [or: soil], and blew into his nostrils the*

*breath of life, and the human became a living being.* For the full text of Genesis 2:5, see the preceding note.

**150. Adam was created on the sixth day...** This last day of Creation corresponds to the completion of emanation, when the Throne (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) was prepared for King *Tif'eret*. The Throne's *six steps* represent six palaces beneath *Shekhinah*. The human *adam*, who is associated with the sefirotic *Adam*, is himself worthy of sitting on the Throne.

See *Zohar* 3:178a. On the human as a microcosm, see *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 31; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:4; Donnolo, *Sefer Ḥakhmoni*, 63d-66b; Joseph ibn Ṣaddik, *Sefer ha-Olam ha-Qatan*; *Zohar* 1:90b, 134b, 186b; 2:23b, 75b. Cf. the following note. On the verse in Kings, see above, [note 123](#).

**151. The image of their face...** In Ezekiel's vision each of the four living beings carrying the heavenly throne had four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. Rabbi Yose indicates that the three animal faces were somehow included in the human face, as implied by the opening of the verse.

The verse reads in full: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion's face, and on the left the four of them had an ox's face, and the four of them had an eagle's face.* According to Greenberg (*Ezekiel*, 45), the peculiar formulation of the verse reflects the sequence of observation. The onlooker (on any side) was confronted by a human face, flanked by two animal faces on its right and left. Finally, from what could be seen on the heads of the rest of the creatures, the onlooker inferred that in back of the human face confronting him was an eagle's face.

On the all-inclusive nature of the human image, see *Zohar* 1:18b-19a, 44a (*Heikh*); 2:73a (*RR*), 74a, 80b, 178a



(*SdT*s), 211b; 3:60b; and the references to the microcosm in the preceding note.

**152. But look at what is written...** The continuation of the verse describes three animal faces that appear to be distinct from the human face.

**153. They were a human face...** According to Rabbi Yose, the essential facial image of each living being was human, while the three animal faces appeared momentarily within that human face, as implied by the opening of the verse. See Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:1; above, [note 151](#).

**154. Whoever is under the control of *adam*...** *Adam* is the higher rung, originally occupied by Adam; but once he sinned, he lost this name and was called instead *ish*, “man.” Even before the sin, there was conflict between two spirits descending to the world along with Adam. The holy *neshamah* derived from the right side, whereas *nefesh ḥayyah* derived from the left. Whereas in Genesis 2:7 נִפְשׁ חַיָּה (*nefesh ḥayyah*) means *a living being* (or *a living soul*), 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 or even demonic forces. This *nefesh ḥayyah* on the left did not settle calmly with the holy *neshamah*.

The passage from the Book of Concealment, referred to here, appears in *Zohar* 2:178a–b (*SdT*s), where the wording differs slightly. On *nefesh ḥayyah*, see also *Bereshit Rabbah* 7:5; Jonah Gerondi, *Sha’arei Teshuvah* 2:18–19; Naḥmanides on 1:26; *Zohar* 2:178a–b; *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. The verse in Genesis reads in full: *YHVH Elohim formed the human, dust from the soil, and blew into his nostrils נִשְׁמַת (nishmat) the breath of, life, and the human became נִפְשׁ חַיָּה (nefesh ḥayyah), a living being [or: a living soul]*.

**155. When Adam sinned...** Then from the *nefesh ḥayyah*, on the left, issued demonic creatures lacking complete bodies, who consequently crave human bodies. When they clung to either Adam or Eve, they engendered new demons in the world.

See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 26, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “For 130 years Adam separated from his wife, Eve, for once Abel was killed, Adam said, ‘Why should I engender children if they become cursed?’ What did he do?... Female spirits approached him and inflamed 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 inflamed themselves from her and she gave birth, while female spirits inflamed 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 *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 4:25; *Bereshit Rabbah* 24:6; BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Zohar* 1:19b, 34b, 47b-48a, 54a-55a, 169b; 2:178b-179a (*SdTs*), 231b; 3:76b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:529-30; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 51-54. The figure of 130 years derives from Genesis 5:3: *Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and he engendered in his likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth*. On demons lacking bodies, see above, [p. 118](#), [n. 358](#).

**156. Superior to those...** Some demonic spirits remain above, suspended in the air, where they hear what has been decreed in heaven. Subsequently, they convey some of this

information to humans below through dreams. On the variety of demons and on demonic information, see above, [pp. 161–62](#), [nn. 499–500](#).

**157. From the Lamp of Adamantine Darkness...**

This primordial source generates sparks that are then joined to the side of *Gevuran* (Powers) and are called *Gevurot* (Powers). Since these manifest the quality of *Din* (Judgment), when they enter the sefirotic body (extending from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*), it is called *Ish* (Man), which is a lesser name than *Adam*. This instance of the name *Ish* fits the description of God at the Red Sea as *ish, a man of, war* (reflecting stern Judgment), but it is unlike other instances of the name, such as *ish, a man, blameless and upright*, or *a righteous ish, man*, which can refer to compassionate aspects of the Divine Male (*Tif'eret* and *Yesod*). Yet, ultimately “all is one,” because God manifests both Judgment and Compassion.

“The Lamp of Adamantine Darkness” renders דקדדינותא בוצינא (*botsina de-qardinuta*). This divine tool, which elsewhere in the *Zohar* delineates the stages of emanation, is here characterized by Judgment (which is related to limitation and boundaries). As the paradoxical name suggests, its potent brilliance overwhelms comprehension.

On *botsina de-qardinuta*, see Vol. 1, pp. 107–8, n. 4; Vol. 5, pp. 560–61, n. 35; *ZH* 57d–58a (*QhM*); *Zohar* 1:15a, 18b, 86b; 2:133b, 177a (*SdT*s), 233a, 254b (*Heikh*), 260a (*Heikh*); 3:49a, 3:135b (*IR*), 139a (*IR*), 292b (*IZ*), 295a–b (*IZ*); Liebes, *Peraqim*, 145–51, 161–64; idem, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 73–80; Wolfson, “Woman—the Feminine as Other in Theosophic Kabbalah,” 178–82; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 60–62.

On this whole passage (extending below to p. 309, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 110–26. On the generating of sparks as the cleansing of divine thought, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:289–90. On the number 325, see *Zohar* 2:53b; 3:132b (*IR*), 209a; Gikatilla, *Sod Shelosh-*

*Esreh Middot*, 222. Cf. the number 320 (in connection with sparks) in *Zohar* 2:254b (*Heikh*); 3:292b (*IZ*). On the significance of *ish*, a man of war, see above, [notes 144-45](#).

**158. Why?** Rabbi Yehudah is puzzled by the ambiguous nature of the name *Ish*.

**159. This is difficult...** According to Rabbi Shim'on, the clause לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה (*Le-zot yiqqare ishah*), *This one shall be called Woman*, refers to *Shekhinah*, the Divine Woman who is known as זֹאת (*zot*), *this* (or *this one*). She derives from the divine *ish* (*man*), who is *Yesod*, known as זֶה (*zeh*), “this”—and *Yesod* conveys (and is associated with) *Hesed* (Love). How, then, can *Ish* be associated with Judgment?

See *Zohar* 3:145b. On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On *Shekhinah* and *Yesod* as *zot* and *zeh* respectively, see above, [pp. 180-81](#), [n. 42](#). Adam’s exclamation in Genesis, following the creation of Eve, reads in full: *This one at last, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! This one shall be called Woman, for from man was this one taken.*

**160. All attains equilibrium...** When lower, demonic powers (characterized by harsh Judgment) cling to the hair of *Ish*, He is tainted by them and called Harsh Judgment. When the hair of His head is removed, He is assuaged and purified.

The verse in Job reads: *Who can produce pure from impure? No one!* A midrashic reading transforms the conclusion into a rhetorical question: *Is it not the One?* Here, the point is that *pure* issues only *from impure*—namely that *Ish* regains purity only when the impure forces clinging to His hair are removed and He “emerges from (their) impurity.” Similarly, the verse in Leviticus now describes how the divine *ish* (*man*) becomes *pure* when His *hair is plucked out*.

On hair as signifying harsh powers, see *Zohar* 1:217a, 223b, 241b; 3:60b, 70a, 79a, 125b-126a, 131b-132a (*IR*), 140a (*IR*), 151b, 295b (*IZ*); *ZH* 31b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 119-26.

On the midrashic reading of the verse in Job, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:1; *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:1. Cf. *Zohar* 1:102b; 2:69b, 237a–b; 3:180b. The verse in Leviticus reads: וַאִישׁ כִּי יִמְרַט רֹאשׁוֹ (Ve-ish ki yimmaret rosho), *If [or: When] a man's hair falls out [literally: is plucked out], he is bald; he is pure.*

**161. The head of this ish, man...** The head of *Ish* is identified with the Lamp, which is the source generating the higher Powers associated with Judgment; so His skull and head are red (the color of Judgment), and His hair is deep red. From this hair dangle lower, demonic powers. See above, [notes 157, 159–60](#).

On supernal *Ḥesed* (issuing from *Keter*), see *Zohar* 3:289a–b (*IZ*); Gikatilla, *Sod Shelosh-Esreh Middot*, 223; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 214, n. 196. Cf. *Zohar* 3:133b (*IR*).

**162. If He is named after it...** If, once His hair is removed, *Ish* is named after supernal *Ḥesed*, then He should be called *holy*. Why, then, does the verse in Leviticus describe Him as *pure*?

See *Or Yaqar; Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. *Zohar* 3:176b, 180b, where *holy* is associated with (lower) *Ḥesed*. On the verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 160](#).

**163. Not so!...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that *holy* pertains not to the removal of harsh hair, but rather to the abundance of holy hair, as in the case of the Nazirite, who is called *holy* precisely because his hair grows free. *Ish*, on the other hand, is called *pure* because He has been purified of demonic forces dangling from His hair. On the association of *holy* with hair, see *Zohar* 3:127b, 128b (*IR*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 292–93 (referring to the Nazirite); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 117.

**164. Whoever derives from the side of Judgment...** The divine *Ish* is characterized by Judgment, and He can be assuaged only by the removal of His hair. But the divine

*Adam* is characterized by Compassion, so His hair does not need to be removed.

In this passage *Ish* represents *Ze'eir Anpin* (the configuration of *sefirot* from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*), while *Adam* represents *Arikh Anpin* (*Keter*). Elsewhere in the *Zohar* (including most of the *Idrot*), *Adam* represents *Ze'eir Anpin*. See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 110–19. On *Ze'eir Anpin* and *Arikh Anpin*, see above, [note 115](#); [p. 93](#), [n. 285](#). On the association of hair with Judgment, see above, [note 160](#).

**[165](#). The Levites, who come from the side of Judgment...** They are associated with *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), on the left, so their purification requires the removal of hair. The priest (who symbolizes *Hesed*) derives ultimately from supernal *Hesed*.

On the removal of the Levites' hair, see *Zohar* 3:127a–b, 151b. On supernal *Hesed*, see above, [note 161](#). Numbers 8:7 reads in full: *Thus you shall do to them to purify them: sprinkle on them expiation water and have them pass a razor over all their flesh and wash their clothes and they will purify themselves.*

**[166](#). This *Ish* is included in *Adam*...** The lesser manifestation (characterized by Judgment) is included in the greater one (characterized by Compassion). When God needs to wage war against Israel's enemies, He does so by the manifestation of *Ish* (as indicated by the verse in Exodus), after removing *Ish's* hair, so that the demonic crowns clinging to it will be detached and destroyed. On the verse in Exodus, see above, [notes 144–45](#), [157](#).

The verse in Isaiah predicts the decimation of Judah, which God will accomplish by means of the Assyrians, whose king had been *hired* by King Ahaz to save him from his enemies. The verse reads in full: *On that day my Lord will shave with the razor that is hired beyond the Euphrates—with the king of Assyria—the hair of the head and the hair of the legs, and it shall clip off the beard as well.* Here, Rabbi Shim'on relates the image of shaving to



the divine *Ish*—an action that will cut off the demonic forces clinging to His hair. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 95b-96a, where the verse is interpreted as applying to the “shaving” of Sennacherib, king of Assyria.

**167. Thus you shall do to them...** The word *thus* implies that this purification of the Levites corresponds to the purification of *Ish*. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, [note 165](#).

**168. Sprinkle on them expiation water...** The water purifying the Levites derives from the sparkling dew of emanation. In the time to come, God will purify all of Israel directly.

The phrase “crystalline dew” renders טלא דבדולחא (*talla divdulḥa*). See Vol. 5, pp. 260-61, n. 200. The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be pure; from all your impurities and from all your idols will I purify you.*

**169. And wash their clothes...** The washing of the Levites’ clothes corresponds to the bathing of *Ish*.

“Enhancements” renders תקוני (*tiqqunei*), which in the *Idra* sections of the *Zohar* refers especially to the locks, curls, or curlicues of the divine beard. (See Vol. 5, p. 549, n. 10; pp. 565-66, n. 49.) The reference here to the enhancements being bathed is strange, since this whole section emphasizes removing the hair of *Ish*. See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 120-21. For the full verse in Numbers, see above, [note 165](#).

**170. with the razor...** This implement will remove the hair from *Ish* more thoroughly, eliminating the forces of harsh Judgment. When human rectify their deeds, God will pluck out the hair completely, as implied by the verse in Leviticus.

The verse reads in full: ואיש כי ימרט ראשו (*Ve-ish ki yimmaret rosho*), *If a man’s hair falls out [literally: is plucked out], he is bald; he is pure.* See above, [note 160](#). For the full verse in Isaiah, see above, [note 166](#). “With the scissors” renders

בקיספרין (*be-qisperin*), which is either a mistake for, or a playful transformation of, במספרים (*be-misparayim*), “with scissors.”

**171. The greatest of all Levites was Korah...** Who rebelled against Moses, even though God had made him a reflection of the divine *Ish*. In rabbinic literature, the name קרה (*Qorah*) is associated with קרה (*qereah*), “bald.” Since Korah was a Levite, his hair was shaved, in accordance with the command in Numbers 8:7: *Thus you shall do to them to purify them:... have them pass a razor over all their flesh.* According to Rabbi Yitṣḥak, this act of ritual shaving helped to remove the hair from the divine *Ish*.

On *Qorah* (Korah) and *qereah* (bald), see BT *Sanhedrin* 109b; *Midrash Mishlei* 11:27. On his being shaved, see BT *Sanhedrin* 110a; *Tanḥuma, Qorah* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qorah* 6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:4.

**172. When Korah saw his head hairless...** He became jealous of Aaron and rebelled against him and Moses. Yet although Korah and his followers were swallowed up by the earth, in the time to come they will be resurrected.

M *Sanhedrin* 10:3 records a dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eli’ezer, as to whether Korah’s gang will ascend from Sheol. The former insists that they never will, while the latter disagrees, based on the verse in Samuel quoted here.

On Korah’s being shaved and becoming jealous of Aaron, see *Tanḥuma, Qorah* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qorah* 6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:4. The verse in Numbers (referring to Korah’s gang) reads in full: *But if a new thing YHVH should create, and the ground gapes open its mouth and swallows them and all of theirs and they go down alive to Sheol, you will know that these men have despised YHVH.*

**173. If the hair falls out from the rim of his face...** According to the simple sense of the verse, this refers to baldness that starts from the forehead. Here, the image is applied to the wrathful face of the divine *Ish*, as opposed to

the joyful divine face. When the beard is removed from the wrathful face, all of the harsh powers suspended below are eliminated. The forces of Judgment suspended from the hair of the head are less threatening than those suspended from the beard. The aspect of Judgment derives from the Spark (or Lamp) of Adamantine Darkness.

On the harsh quality of the hair of the beard, see *Zohar* 3:131b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 119–20. On the Spark (or Lamp) of Adamantine Darkness, see above, [note 157](#). The verse in Leviticus reads in full: *If the front part of his hair falls out [literally: If the hair falls out (or: is plucked out) from the rim of his face], he is bald on the forehead; he is pure.*

[174.](#) **a reddish-white affliction...** The full verse reads: *If a reddish-white affliction appears on the bald crown or on the bald forehead, it is a scaly eruption on his bald crown or bald forehead.* According to Rabbi Yitshak, white symbolizes *Hesed*, and red symbolizes *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment); so if red is still visible, the affliction persists.

[175.](#) **the white is visible only with the red...** According to Rabbi Yose, *reddish-white* means that the two colors are intermingled. If, however, the white appears separately, then the affliction has been purified.

[176.](#) **Even though the white is visible...** Rabbi Yitshak insists that the affliction persists even if the white appears separately, as long as the red has not totally disappeared.

[177.](#) נגע היא (*nega hi*), **She is an affliction...** Leviticus 13:22 reads: נגע הוא (*nega hu*), *It [literally: She] is an affliction*; whereas Leviticus 13:3 reads: נגע צרעת הוא (*nega tsara'at hu*), *It [literally: He] is a scaly affliction*. Rabbi Abba explains that the formulation *She is an affliction* pertains to *Shekhinah*, who is defiled and afflicted by human sins, while *He is an affliction* (or, *a scaly affliction*) pertains to the Divine Male, who is also tainted by sin. From the particular human affliction, the priest can recognize its sefirotic source,

which has been affected by the person's sin clinging above, and he can determine the appropriate sacrifice to be brought.

The full verse in Leviticus 1 reads: *If his offering is an ascent offering from the herd, an unblemished male he shall offer; to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting he shall bring it, to be accepted for him before YHVH.* See Leviticus 1:10; 4:23. The full verse in Leviticus 4 reads: *If he brings a sheep as his offering for purification [or: for an offense], an unblemished female he shall bring.*

**178. The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit...** Rabbi Abba indicates that this verse pertains specifically to sacrifices brought for sin, which must be accompanied by repentance. Various other sacrifices—such as those offered for peace or in gratitude—do not require *a broken spirit*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not spurn.*

**179. If the priest sees it...** The rash on his skin.

**180. Listener to prayer...** Why the singular *prayer*, when God certainly listens to all prayers? Rabbi Hizkiyah explains that *prayer* alludes to *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), apparently because She receives and conveys earthly prayer. The blessed Holy One is *listener to prayer*, listening to the voice of *Shekhinah*. She is also known as אני (*ani*), *I*, because through Her God reveals Himself, declaring “I am.” So “all is one,” that is, both elements of the statement ואני תפלה (*va-ani tefillah*), *I am prayer*, signify *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *It shall be a sign on ידכה (yadekhah), your hand, and frontlets between your eyes, that through strength of hand YHVH brought us out of Egypt.* Traditionally, this verse is interpreted as referring to tefillin (phylacteries), both the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand and of the head. The unusual spelling of ידכה (*yadekhah*), *your hand*, with a superfluous ה (*he*)—rather than ידך (*yadekha*)—is

understood (in BT *Menahot* 37a) as implying יד כהה (*yad kehah*), “weak hand,” designating where the *tefillah* of the hand should be strapped: the left hand of those who are right-handed, or the right hand of those who are left-handed. Here, Rabbi Hizkiyah understands the extra *he* as alluding to *Shekhinah*, who is signified by the final *he* of יהוה (*YHVH*). She is thus symbolized by the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand, as well as by *tefillah* (prayer).

On *Shekhinah* as אני (*ani*), *I*, see *Zohar* 1:6a–b, 65b, 204b; 2:236b; 3:178b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 380 (and Wolfson’s [notes 8–9](#)). Cf. Vol. 4, p. 264, n. 231. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [p. 9, n. 27](#). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3, n. 5](#). The full verse in Psalm 109 reads: *In return for my love they accuse me, and [or: though] I am [all] prayer.*

**181. Unto You all flesh shall come...** The wording *flesh* rather than *spirit* refers to the fact that a person comes to pray for healing when his body is in pain.

The context in Leviticus 13 (2–3) reads: *If a person has on the skin of his body an inflammation or a rash or a shiny spot and it becomes a scaly affliction on the skin of his body, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. The priest shall examine the affliction on the skin of his body, and if the hair in the affliction has turned white and the affliction seems deeper than the skin of his body, it is scaly affliction; when the priest sees it, he shall declare him impure.* See above, [note 71](#).

Leviticus 13:15 reads in full: *When the priest sees the raw flesh, he shall declare him impure. The raw flesh is impure; it is scale disease.* On the Aramaic term מכתשין (*makhtashin*), “wounds, afflictions,” see above, [note 82](#).

**182. What is unto You?...** Just as one suffering physical pain comes *unto You* in prayer, so one who has a scaly affliction *shall be brought to the priest*—namely to the blessed Holy One, who is called *the priest*. When Scripture

reads *Aaron the priest*, this of course refers to Aaron, but when *the priest* is unspecified, it can refer to the blessed Holy One.

On God as a priest, see BT *Sanhedrin* 39a, *Zevahim* 101b-102a. Leviticus 13:9 reads in full: *If a person has a scaly affliction, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to the priest.*

**183. But look at what is written...** If the wording *the priest*, when it is unspecified, refers to the blessed Holy One, then how should this verse be understood? Does it really mean that someone with a scaly affliction *shall be brought to the divine priest*?

**184. Yes, since all purity...** The person's healing depends on his sincere prayer and repentance, whereby he is *brought* back to God, who purifies him.

**185. Its poles shall be brought...** Just as the poles of the altar are *brought through its rings*, so this person is *brought* into the presence of God, once he turns back to Him sincerely.

The four corners of the portable altar had four bronze rings, and the context (Exodus 27:6-7) reads: *You shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. Its poles shall be brought through the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar when it is carried.*

**186. נגע צרעה (Nega tsara'at), scaly affliction...** Affliction is a sign of harsh Judgment. *Targum Onqelos* renders צרעה נגע (*nega tsara'at*), a *scaly affliction*, as מכחש סגירו (*makhtash segiru*) or מכחש סגירותא (*makhtash segiruta*), "an affliction of closing [or: being closed off, confinement, quarantine]," since the afflicted person is confined. Here, "closing" refers to closing off the flow of emanation, caused by harsh Judgment.

On *affliction* as a sign of harsh Judgment, see *Zohar* 3:47a. On *segiru*, see above, [note 84](#).



**187. *be-adam, an adam, unspecified...*** The fact that in this verse *adam* is unspecified implies that it alludes to the divine *Adam*, who is Himself suffering *affliction* due to human sin. But whereas Rabbi Hizkiyah had interpreted *the priest* as referring to the blessed Holy One (the divine priest), Rabbi Yitshak insists that it means simply the human priest, who through ritual service is able to rectify the impairment above and bring healing—opening what had been closed off and kindling the sefirotic lamps.

Leviticus 13:9 reads in full: נגע צרעת כי תהיה באדם (*Nega tsara'at ki tihyeh be-adam*), *If a person has a scaly affliction, he shall be brought [or: it shall be reported] to the priest.*

**188. *who neither care nor know...*** They are unaware of the responsibility to be holy, especially in sexual union, which should not be performed as if one were a senseless animal. Ideally, the sexual act becomes an opportunity to cleave to God.

The verse in Leviticus 11 reads: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am holy.* In BT *Shevu'ot* 18b, this verse is applied to sanctifying oneself during sexual relations. Cf. Leviticus 20:7 (preceding a list of sexual prohibitions): *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am YHVH your God.* The wording *for I YHVH am holy* appears in Leviticus 19:2; 20:26. The full verse in Leviticus 11 reads: *For I am YHVH your God, and you shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am holy; you shall not make yourselves impure through any swarming thing that crawls on the earth.* See above, [p. 254](#), [n. 155](#).

Leviticus 20:24 reads: *I am YHVH your God who set you apart from the peoples.* The phrase *to be Mine* appears two verses later (in Leviticus 20:26): *You shall be holy to Me, for I YHVH am holy, and I set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.* On the verse in Psalms, see *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 3:3; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tetse* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ki Tetse* 6; *Zohar* 3:80a.

**189. at midnight the blessed Holy One enters...** 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 King *Tif'eret*. Thereby they join with Her in singing to Him. For others, midnight is an auspicious time to unite with their spouses in holiness. Kabbalists, however, who are engaged in ritual study at this special time each weeknight, wait for sexual union until the midnight of Sabbath, the sacred moment of “another coupling,” namely the weekly consummation of the wedding of the divine couple, whose union they imitate and to whom they cleave.

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, 136a-b, 204b-205a; 3:78a, 81a, 82a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 120; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1232-33, 1357; Wolfson, “Eunuchs Who Keep the Sabbath.” On the midnight ritual of studying Torah, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 228](#).

**190. Where are the holy souls...** By engaging in sexual union in holiness, one can draw down a holy soul for the new fetus from the union of the divine couple.

In the verse from Proverbs, according to Rabbi Abba, דעת (*da'at*), *knowledge*, signifies the hidden *sefirah* called by this name, which is closely associated (and here identified) with *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One). Thus, *without knowledge*—without focusing on the blessed Holy One—a *soul is not good*: one fails to draw down a holy soul. Rather, one whose sexual union is dominated by lust attracts a defective soul from the Other Side.

On the importance and consequences of holy sexual union, see BT *Nedarim* 20a-b, *Shevu'ot* 18b, *Niddah* 70b-71a; *Kallah* 1:8-10; *Kallah Rabbati* 1:11, 13, 15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:7; *Zohar* 1:54a, 90b, 112a (*MhN*), 130b, 155a (*ST*), 222b; 2:11b, 95b; 3:56a, 77a, 80a-82a, 83b-84a; *ZH* 11a-b (*MhN*); *Iggeret ha-Qodesh* (in *Kitvei Ramban* 2:321-37); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1363-64.

On the relation between the evil impulse and the demonic realm, 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 Proverbs reads: *Surely, without knowledge a soul is not good, and he who hurries with his feet sins*. See *Zohar* 2:24b; 3:182a.

**191. And he who hurries with his legs...** Acting impulsively, not waiting for the auspicious, holy moment. Such a person *sins* completely, harming the soul of the fetus and impairing divine union.

The full verse reads: *Surely, without knowledge a soul is not good, and he who hurries* ברגליו (*be-raglav*), *with his feet, sins*. Here, *be-raglav* is apparently understood as *with his legs*.

**192. testifying on their faces...** The face of the afflicted one demonstrates his immorality. See above, [p. 216, n. 32](#).

**193. So afflictions are recognized by the priest...** Who declares them pure or impure, as described in Leviticus 13. Here, “the other side” apparently refers to “the holy side,” the source of afflictions that do not

demonstrate sinfulness but are rather “chastenings of love.”

See above, [note 109](#); *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On chastenings of love, see above, [note 83](#), and at [note 87](#). For a different interpretation, see *Nitsotsei Zohar* and Scholem, based on the distinction between different types of affliction in BT *Horayot* 10a. Cf. *Sifra, Metsora* 5:4, 73a.

**[194.](#) and I give a scaly affliction in a house...** The full verse reads: *When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, ונתתי (ve-natatti), and I put [literally: give], a scaly affliction in a house of the land you possess.* In this biblical passage, a *scaly affliction* means “a fungal infection, mold, mildew.”

Rabbi Abba wonders why the verse reads *ve-natatti*, which he construes hyperliterally as *I give*, implying, as it were, that this *affliction* was some kind of gift! He explains, based on a midrashic interpretation, that the Canaanites had concealed treasures in the walls of their houses, which the Israelites discovered when they tore down those walls because of the moldy *affliction* that God had graciously “given.” See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 17:6 (in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai); Rashi on Leviticus 14:34.

**[195.](#) All the women whose hearts moved them...** While weaving fabric for the Dwelling, they dedicated each piece for its specific location, thereby inviting holiness and ensuring its presence.

**[196.](#) When Israel entered the land...** God wanted them to destroy the Canaanites’ buildings, which were contaminated by the impure spirit; so He infected the walls with scaly affliction, whose removal required demolishing the structures.

**[197.](#) If this action...** If the purpose of demolishing the buildings was only to find the treasures hidden in the walls (as described above, [note 194](#)), then afterward the Israelites would have rebuilt the houses with the same stones.

In Leviticus 14:42, *mortar* renders עפר (*afar*), whose basic meaning is “dust, loose earth,” and whose extended meanings include “mud, clay, mortar.” See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:873.

**198. when someone begins to construct a building...** He should dedicate it to a holy purpose. If he remains silent, this is tantamount to inviting the demonic Other Side.

On dedicating one’s actions, see below, [note 243](#). The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *Woe to him who builds his house בלא צדק (be-lo tsedeq), without righteousness [or: by unrighteousness], and his upper chambers by injustice, who makes his fellow man work for nothing and does not give him his wages.* For Rabbi Abba, *be-lo tsedeq, without righteousness*, implies “without *Shekhinah*,” who is known as *Tsedeq*, “Righteousness.”

The full verse in Job reads: *You will know that your tent is at peace, ולא תחטא (u-faqadta), inspect, your habitation (ve-lo teḥeta), and find nothing amiss [or: and not sin].* Here, Rabbi Abba plays on another of the many meanings of the root פקד (*pqd*), “to command, order.” For midrashic interpretations of *inspect your habitation*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 79:1; *BT Shabbat* 34a, *Yevamot* 62b, *Sanhedrin* 76b; *Zohar* 1:50a.

**199. All the more so...** It is even worse if one actually intends to build for the Other Side.

**200. How is it known?...** Now that the laws of scaly affliction no longer apply, how can one determine whether an impure spirit contaminates a house? Rabbi Abba explains that this becomes evident if three consecutive occupants of the house suffer harm there.

On the significance of something occurring three times, see *BT Yevamot* 64b (in the context of scaly affliction), *Hullin* 95b. “In a mud-plastered hut” renders בטיחלא דעפרא (*be-tiḥla de-afra*). *Tiḥla* is apparently based on the root טוח (*tvh*), “to plaster,” while *afra* means “dust, loose earth, mud, clay,

mortar” (as explained above, [note 197](#)). The phrase here probably plays on the clause in Leviticus 14:42 (quoted above by Rabbi Abba at [note 197](#)): וַעֲפַר אֶחָד (ve-afar aḥer), *and different mortar* [or: *clay, mud*], shall be taken וְטָח אֶת הַבַּיִת (ve-taḥ et ha-bayit), *and the house plastered*. See *Derekh Emet; Nefesh David*; Soncino. For another interpretation, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, 351.

**[201.](#) the blessed Holy One took pity on Israel...** Since the Canaanite houses were contaminated by the “affliction” of a demonic spirit, God sent another (fungal) affliction to mark the contaminated houses and eject the impure spirit.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *The house shall be demolished—its stones and its timber and all of the mortar of the house—and taken outside the town to an impure place.*

**[202.](#) it calls the husks of its cohorts...** The impure spirit invites its fellow demonic spirits. On the demonic nature of “husks,” see *Zohar* 1:19b–20a, 44b (*Heikh*); 2:15b (*MhN*), 27b, 140b, 203a, 233b; Vol. 1, p. 151, n. 341.

“Blows from a catapult” renders טורפי דקספתא (*turpei de-qaspeta*). The root טרף (*trph*) means “to knock, beat, smite.” The Zoharic neologism *qaspeta*—or קוספיתא (*quspita*)—can mean “hollow of a sling.” See *Zohar* 1:77b, 217b; 2:59a, 99b (Vol. 5, pp. 36–37, n. 105), 103a, 106a, 109a; 3:213b; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *turpei de-qaspeta*; *Nefesh David*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 345–47; *Matoq mi-Devash*. For other interpretations, see Vital; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Soncino; *Sullam*; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 348; Edri.

**[203.](#) Rabbi Yose entered a certain house...** Where he heard an impure spirit inviting its accomplices to attack him.

“Bumped into the doorpost” renders אטרא בסיפתא (*atra besiphtha*). The root טרַי (*try*) means “to strike, bump.” The noun *siphtha* is apparently based on סיפא (*sippa*), “doorpost, threshold.” For various interpretations, see *Derekh Emet*;



*Nefesh David; Soncino; Sullam; Scholem; Matoq mi-Devash; Edri.*

[204.](#) **They replied...** The demonic accomplices replied.

[205.](#) **whoever transgresses the words of the Companions...** By not invoking God's name while building a house.

[206.](#) **They come from their side...** They derive from the demonic realm.

[207.](#) ***Their houses are safe from fear...*** Implying that they will never be harmed. The full verse reads: *Their houses are safe from fear, and God's rod is not against them.*

[208.](#) **Because it belonged to someone else...** Who had originally built the house with a holy intention.

[209.](#) ***He whose house it is shall come...*** Whosever house has been afflicted by a fungal *affliction* must come and report it to the priest. Why does the verse read *something like an affliction*, rather than simply *an affliction*? And why *has appeared to me*, suggesting that the affliction appeared only to the homeowner, whereas it should have been visible to all?

Leviticus 14:34 reads in full: *When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put a scaly affliction in a house of the land you possess.*

[210.](#) **when this one enters, another is revealed...** When the affliction sent by God enters the house, the impure spirit hidden within the walls ("the one concealed") is revealed, as implied by the verse: *has appeared to me*. Meanwhile, the affliction ("the one revealed") is now concealed within the walls to drive out the impure spirit. Afterward, the affliction sent by God appears "in the image of [the original, impure] affliction of the house, while the other [i.e., the impure affliction] is concealed [i.e., disappears]." Therefore the homeowner says, *Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house*—meaning that he alone previously saw the impure affliction, which

was *something like* the affliction sent by God (which everyone now sees). See above, [note 201](#); *Zohar* 3:55a-b.

The verb הגיד (*higgid*), “to tell,” implies a word of wisdom, as opposed to the root אמר (*'mr*), “to say,” which pertains to normal or profane speech. On the sense of *higgid* as revealing something concealed or mysterious, see Genesis 3:11; 41:25; Judges 14:12, 15-16; 1 Kings 10:3; Job 11:6; Daniel 2:2. On the significance of *higgid*, see BT *Shabbat* 87a; *Zohar* 1:86b, 234b, 249a; 3:161a, 292b-293a (*IZ*). On *haggadah* as referring to the allegorical method of interpretation, see *Zohar* 2:99a; *ZH* 83a (*MhN, Rut*); Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 55; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1083-85; Talmage, “Ha-Munnaḥ ‘Haggadah,’” 271-73.

[211.](#) **they hurl the house and demolish it...** As described in Leviticus 14:45: *The house shall be demolished—its stones and its timber and all of the mortar of the house—and taken outside the town to an impure place.*

[212.](#) **houses filled with all good, which you did not fill...** God’s assurance that He will provide the Israelites with such houses in the Promised Land contradicts the idea that the Canaanites’ houses are occupied by an impure spirit.

[213.](#) **with money, with silver and gold...** The description *filled with all good* refers to wealth, just as the wording *from the best of the land of Egypt* refers to wealth. The full verse in Genesis reads: *Let not your eye spare [i.e., do not regret] your belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.*

On Egyptian expertise in sorcery, see Exodus 7:11; *Bereshit Rabbah* 86:5; BT *Qiddushin* 49b, *Menaḥot* 85b; *Tanḥuma, Va’era* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va’era* 12; *Shemot Rabbah* 9:6-7; *Zohar* 1:83a, 249a; 2:25a, 30b; 3:70a, 84b.

[214.](#) **Surely it was for this...** The essential purpose of God’s sending the afflictions into the houses was to

eliminate the impure spirit dwelling there. Furthermore, when the houses were demolished, the Israelites discovered treasure hidden in the walls—planted there by God. See above, [note 194](#).

**215. If a man...** The context (Leviticus 13:38–39) reads: *If a man or a woman has on the skin of their body numerous white shiny spots, and the priest sees and, look, on the skin of their body there are dull white spots, it is tetter that has erupted in the skin; he is pure.*

**216. Like a basket...** The various appearances of the bright shiny spot are compared to סִלְתָּא (*silta*), “a basket” surrounding it. By the spot’s appearance and hue, the priest would determine whether it was pure or impure.

See Leviticus 13; M *Nega’im*. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Derekh Emet*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Nefesh David*; *Zoharei Ya’bets*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

**217. three hundred rules...** According to BT *Sanhedrin* 68a, at the end of his life Rabbi Eli’ezer son of Hurkanos said, “I have studied three hundred rules regarding a bright shiny spot, but no man has ever asked me about them.” See *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 25; *Kallah* 6:4; *Zohar* 1:98b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Orhot Hayyim* 1.

Here Rabbi Yitshak focuses on one particular rule: If one black hair (pictured as a thorn) appears in an affliction on the head or beard, then the affliction is still impure; if two black hairs appear, it is pure. The hairs testify, as it were, and only two such “witnesses” establish purity.

See Leviticus 13:31, 37; M *Nega’im* 10:3, 8; *Sifra*, *Nega’im* 8:9, 66a; Rashi on Leviticus 13:3. On a hundred witnesses being like two, and vice versa, see BT *Shevu’ot* 42a. The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *A single witness shall not rise up against a man for any crime and for any sin, in any sin that he may commit; by the word of two witnesses or by the word of three witnesses shall a case be established.* Cf. Deuteronomy 17:6.

**218. a reddish-white affliction...** The full verse reads: *If a reddish-white affliction appears on the bald crown or on the bald forehead, it is a scaly eruption on his bald crown or bald forehead.* White symbolizes *Hesed*, and red symbolizes *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment); so if any red appears, the affliction is impure. See above, [note 174](#).

**219. If your sins are like crimson...** See above at [note 176](#). The color red “follows” or signifies *Din* (Judgment) on the left, whereas white follows *Hesed* (Love) on the right.

On everything following 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; 2:141a.

**220. Of Esau is written...** His reddish color signifies his demonic nature, deriving from the left side. It may be objected that David is also described as *ruddy*; however David clung to the holy radiance of reddish gold, whereas Esau clung to the impure residue of gold.

Gold often symbolizes *Din* (Judgment), whose byproduct, slag, represents demonic power and evil. Thus evil is the residue of the refining process of emanation—or that which derives from *Din* when this quality is not balanced by *Hesed* (Love). See *Zohar* 3:56a. On the alchemical symbolism, see Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, 38-40.

The full verse in Genesis reads: *The first one came out ruddy, like a hairy mantle all over, and they called his name Esau.* See *Zohar* 1:137b; 3:55b. The verse in Samuel reads: *He [i.e., David] was ruddy, with fine eyes and goodly to look on.* On David’s ruddiness, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:8; *Zohar* 2:73a (RR), 74a; 3:56a, 206b; ZH 32b.

**221. Red at first...** If the affliction is red at first and then white appears, this signifies that purification has begun; if the affliction is white at first and then red appears, defilement has begun. Actually in Leviticus 13:20, white signifies impurity. On whiteness signifying purity, see *ibid.*, 13.

**222. The scaly affliction of Naaman...** According to the biblical account, the prophet Elisha had cured the Aramean general Naaman of his affliction, refusing to accept anything in return. But Elisha's servant, Gehazi, cunningly solicited a reward from Naaman and then tried to deceive Elisha about this, whereupon he was cursed by the prophet. Rabbi Yehudah wonders why Gehazi's innocent descendants had to suffer. On scaly affliction, see above, [note 71](#).

**223. He saw that no virtuous son would issue...** Cf. BT *Sotah* 46b, where this reasoning is applied to another curse pronounced by Elisha. See *Zohar* 2:224b.

**224. I attained a double portion...** As Elisha had requested from Elijah. See 2 Kings 2:9-10: *As they were crossing [the river Jordan], Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I can do for you before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "May a double portion of your spirit be upon me." He said, "You have made a difficult request. If you see me being taken from you, it will be so for you; if not, it will not be."* See *Zohar* 1:191b.

"Swearing falsely" refers to Gehazi's false statement to Elisha after soliciting a reward from Naaman. See 2 Kings 5:25. On the command against coveting being equivalent to the entire Torah, see *Beit ha-Midrash* 6:117; *Zohar* 3:78b; *ZH* 44d. Cf. *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 107a.

"Die in this world" refers to Gehazi's impending death from scaly affliction. According to M *Sanhedrin* 10:2, Gehazi has no share in the world that is coming; but according to a tradition recorded in BT *Sanhedrin* 104b-105a, he does.

**225. Why a wool or linen garment?...** The full verse, referring to mold, reads: *This is the teaching about the scaly affliction of a wool or linen garment or warp or woof or any article of skin, to declare it pure or impure.* Rabbi Yeisa wonders why *wool* and *linen* are specified, or why *scaly affliction* appears in them.

**226. It settles in all...** Scaly affliction represents a power of Judgment, which issues from *Shekhinah*, who is represented by the *woman of strength* in Proverbs and associated with צמר ופשתים (*tsemer u-fishtim*), *wool and flax* [or: *linen*].

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *She seeks out wool and flax, and performs with willing hands.* Cf. *Zohar* 3:86b.

**227. slope-sided domicile...** A conjectural rendering of קטפורא (*qatpora*), a Zoharic neologism perhaps based here on the rabbinic term קטפרס (*qataphres*), “incline, slope” (from Greek *katapheres*, “going down, sloping, inclined”). See *M Oholot* 3:3; *Zohar* 2:48b (Vol. 4, p. 235, n. 132); *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 188, s.v. *qatafres*; *Ma’arikh*, s.v. *qatpirei*; *Liebes, Peraqim*, 351; above, [p. 214](#), [n. 25](#). For other interpretations, see *Derekh Emet*; *Nefesh David*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *qatpora*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

“Box strapped” is a conjectural rendering of דקיסטא שירטא (*sirta de-qista*). *Sirta* may be based on סרט (*seret*), “strip.” *Qista* can mean “box,” based on Greek *chiste*. For various interpretations, see *Derekh Emet*; *Nefesh David*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *surta*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**228. He didn’t reply at all** See the similar account in *Zohar* 2:80a.

**229. the afflicted Serunyans...** Rendering סגירי סרוניא (*segirei Serunya*). *Segirei* means “closed off, confined, quarantined,” referring to those suffering scaly affliction; see above, [note 84](#). The place-name סרוניא (*Serunya*) is based on סרונגיאי (*Serungaya*), or סרונגין (*Serungin*), a town located southwest of Tiberias (and later called Sergunieh).



According to a rabbinic tradition, from the middle gate of this town's synagogue one could see Miriam's well (famous for its healing properties) in the Sea of Galilee.

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:4; JT *Kil'ayim* 9:4, 32c; *Ketubbot* 12:2, 35b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 5:8. Cf. *Tanḥuma*, *Huqqat* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat* 1 (both mentioning a cave); *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:22; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:22, nn. 134–35; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem.

On snakes suffering scaly affliction, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:4; *Tanḥuma*, *Shemot* 23; *Metsora* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 20; *Metsora* 7; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:13. Cf. above, [note 106](#); below, [p. 332](#), [n. 3](#).

**230. to the cave of the afflicted Serunyans...** See the preceding note.

**231. Just as the Companions say...** That if a house is not dedicated to God, the demonic Other Side can occupy it. See above at [note 198](#).

**232. Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness...** Namely, without *Shekhinah*, who is known as Righteousness and who scatters all demonic forces. See above, [note 198](#).

**233. If so...** If whoever occupies a house first, possesses it, this implies that the Holy Name is no more powerful than the impure spirit and is unable to expel it.

**234. Not so...** Although the Holy Name (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) is capable of expelling the impure spirit, it avoids the place entirely.

**235. When the scaly affliction descended...** This manifestation of Judgment (appearing as a fungal infection in the house) expelled the impure spirit. See above, [note 201](#).

On using different mortar, see Leviticus 14:42; above at [note 197](#). The stipulation about rebuilding the house two handbreadths away from its original site does not appear in rabbinic sources. Cf. *Tosefta Nega'im* 6:8; Lieberman,

*Tosefet Rishonim*, 3:193, ad loc.; Samson of Sens, Commentary on M *Nega'im* 12:6.

**236. Now that nothing appears...** Now that the Temple has been destroyed and the laws of scaly affliction no longer apply and the fungal infection is not sent to expel the impure spirit, what is the remedy? It is best if one can leave the house; otherwise he should rebuild it at some distance, dedicating it to God.

On the laws of scaly affliction no longer pertaining, see *Leqah Tov*, Exodus 4:6; Leviticus 13:2, 35b. Cf. *Tosefta Nega'im* 8:2; *Sifra, Metsora* 1:13, 70c; JT *Sotah* 2:2, 18a; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tum'at Tsara'at* 11:6; idem, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Nega'im* 14:13; *Nefesh David; Nitsotsei Zohar*.

**237. Why should he go to all this trouble...** Of constructing a new house in a different location? Now that the Temple has been destroyed, there is no remedy—no means of expelling the impure spirit.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar; Sullam; Matoq mi-Devash*. On the lasting effects of the destruction of the Temple, see M *Sotah* 9:12, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a: "Ever since the day the Temple was destroyed, not a single day passes without a curse, dew has never descended as a blessing, and flavor has been eliminated from fruit." See above, [pp. 96–97](#), [n. 294](#). The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *What is crooked cannot be straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted.*

**238. Let us go with this man...** To the cave of the afflicted Serunyans, who could perhaps cure his son. See above at [notes 229–30](#).

**239. We are forbidden...** To associate with those who reject Torah and practice sorcery. According to 2 Kings 5, the Aramean general Naaman came to the prophet Elisha, who cured him of scaly affliction. See above, [note 222](#).

**240. except the wood of an asherah...** Wood devoted to idolatry or specifically to the Canaanite goddess Asherah.

See Deuteronomy 7:5; 16:21; BT *Pesahim* 25a (the source of Rabbi Yehudah's quotation, in the name of Rabbi Yohanan); *Zohar* 3:84a; *ZH* 10d-11a (*MhN*).

[241.](#) **This is idolatry...** The sorcery practiced by the Serunyans constitutes idolatry.

[242.](#) **he untied him...** From the back of the donkey.

[243.](#) **All of a person's actions should be for the Holy Name...** See M *Avot* 2:12, in the name of Rabbi Yose: "Let all your actions be for the sake [literally: the name] of Heaven." Rabbi El'azar indicates that one should utter God's name over each action, thereby dedicating the act to Him.

See Elijah de Vidas, *Reshit Hokhmah, Sha'ar ha-Ahavah* 9; above, [note 198](#); *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

[244.](#) **the warp or the woof...** Of a fabric or garment. It would become defiled (by mold) if one did not mention God's name while weaving. All the more so, if one actually dedicated the woven material to the demonic Other Side.

On the warp or woof, see above, [note 225](#). On dedicating something to the Other Side, see above at [note 199](#); cf. [note 27](#). The verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Keep yourself from every evil דבר (davar), thing*—understood here as *word*, as in JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 16a; BT *Ketubbot* 46a; *Zohar* 3:31b.

[245.](#) **Let us speak words of Torah as we go** On the importance of engaging in Torah while walking or traveling, see above, [p. 165, n. 512](#).

[246.](#) **Say, please, that you are my sister...** The context in Genesis (12:11-13) reads: *It happened as he drew near to the border of Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "Look, I know you are a beautiful woman, and so when the Egyptians see you and say, 'She is his wife,' they will kill me, while you they will let live. Say, please, that you are my sister, so that it will go well with me on your account and my soul will live [or: and I will remain alive] because of you."*

How could Abraham, who was so virtuous, put his wife in danger by presenting her as his sister, thereby making her seem “available” to the Egyptians, just so that he would be well treated? Rabbi El’azar explains that Abraham (as well as God) did not want to rely on the patriarch’s own merit in order to escape harm and be rewarded by the Egyptians, but rather on the merit of his wife, who he knew would be miraculously protected.

Cf. Naḥmanides on Genesis 12:10; *Zohar* 1:111b. See BT *Bava Metsi’a* 59a: “Rabbi Ḥelbo said, ‘A man should always be mindful about honoring his wife, for blessings appear in a man’s home only because of his wife, as is said: *It went well with Abram on her account* (Genesis 12:16).’ This corresponds to what Rava said to the residents of Maḥoza, ‘Honor your wives, so that you may be enriched.’”

According to the simple sense of the verse in Proverbs 19, its two halves are in contrast: *House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but an insightful wife is from YHVH*. However, Rabbi El’azar apparently reads the conjunctive ו (u-) hyperliterally as *and* (rather than *but*), linking *an insightful wife* with *house and wealth*.

The verse in Proverbs 31 reads: *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and no booty [or: gain] will he lack*. See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥayyei Sarah* 3; *Midrash Mishlei* 31:11; *Aggadat Bereshit* 34; above, [note 11](#).

**247. he saw an angel walking before her...** So Abraham knew that Sarah would be protected. But seeing no angelic protection for himself, Abraham became afraid and pleaded with Sarah to declare her intimate relationship with him so *that it will go well with me on your account*. Rather than putting Sarah in any danger, Abraham was actually asking her to help save him!

According to *Zohar* 1:82a, 111b, Abraham saw *Shekhinah* accompanying Sarah. Cf. 1:140b.

**248. יִטַּב לִי (Yitav li), it will go well with me...** Since the preceding verse mentions *the Egyptians*, this verse

should read ייטיבו לי (*yeitivu li*), *they will do good for me*. However, Rabbi El'azar interprets ייטב לי (*yitav li*), *it will go well with me*, as ייטיב לי (*yeitiv li*), *he will do good for me*—the subject being the angel walking before Sarah and representing God. For the context in Genesis, see above, [note 246](#).

[249.](#) על דבר (*al devar*), **because of, Sarai...** See *Bereshit Rabbah* 40(41):2: “*Al devar Sarai... Rabbi Levi said, ‘That whole night an angel was standing with a whip in his hand. When she said, ‘Strike!’ he struck; when she said, ‘Stop!’ he stopped.’*”

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 52:13; *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Lekh Lekha* 8; *Zohar* 1:113a.

[250.](#) **Ten times Sarah commanded the angel...** Prefiguring the ten plagues with which God would one day smite a later Pharaoh and his people, thereby delivering Sarah's descendants.

See *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 26; Naḥmanides on Genesis 12:6, 10; *Zohar* 1:82a. Cf. *Tanḥuma, Lekh Lekha* 9.

[251.](#) **As in the days of your coming out...** The ultimate redemption of Israel will resemble that of the Exodus. On the theme of this verse, see *Mekhilta, Shirta* 8; *Tanḥuma, Egev* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 17; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:11. This passage (extending through the following paragraph) reappears in *ZH* 26b (*MhN*).

[252.](#) **What is the difference...** The final redemption will surpass the redemption from Egypt, and the plagues inflicted upon the enemies of Israel will be twice as intense (or numerous) as the ten plagues preceding the Exodus. All the nations will then discover God and come to worship Him in Jerusalem, bringing with them all the exiled Israelites, as indicated by the verse in Isaiah.

In the concluding verse (from Micah), the wording switches from the second person (*your coming*) to the third person (*will show him*). According to Rabbi Abba, *him* refers to each of the patriarchs, who will witness the final

redemption of Israel, just as they appeared “before,” at Israel’s redemption from Egypt. See above, [pp. 160–61](#), [n. 497](#). Cf. *Zohar* 2:54a; Bahya ben Asher on Genesis 49:10.



**1. שדין (*shaddun*)...** The precise sense of this word is uncertain. According to the Masoretic text, it is spelled שדין (*she-din* or *sha-din*), apparently meaning *that there is judgment*. See *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 29; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 4; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:24; Rashi and Ibn Ezra on the verse; *Zohar* 2:26a.

On being rebuked for failing to engage in Torah, see *Avot* 6:2, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi, "Every single day an echo resounds from Mount Horeb [Sinai], proclaiming: 'Woe to creatures for the humiliation of Torah!' For whoever does not occupy himself with Torah is called 'rebuked.'"

According to a rabbinic tradition, two angels accompany a person every day. See BT *Ta'anit* 11a and *Ḥagigah* 16a, based on Psalms 91:11: *For His messengers [or: angels] He will command for you to guard you on all your ways*. Cf. *Berakhot* 60b, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *hitkabbedu*; *Shabbat* 119b. See *Zohar* 1:12b, 144b, 165b, 174b; 2:106b; *ZḤ* 47a, 84d (*MhN, Rut*).

**2. But when he engages...** Then numerous guardian angels protect him.

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; 55:3; *Zohar* 2:106b, 199a; 3:160b, 265a; *ZḤ* 41d; Moses de León, *Orḥot Ḥayyim*, 15.

**3. evil speech uttered by the serpent...** See *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:4, in the name of Rabbi Levi: "He [the serpent] began speaking slander against his Creator, saying, 'He ate of this tree and created the world. And He told you, "You shall not eat from it" (Genesis 3:3), so that you would not create other worlds.' For everyone hates his fellow artisan."

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 3:4; *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:1; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 13; *Devarim Rabbah* 5:10;

*Tanḥuma*, *Bereshit* 8, *Shemot* 23, *Tazri'a* 9, *Metsora* 2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Shemot* 20, *Metsora* 7. *Huqqat* 45; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:22; *Midrash Tehillim* 1:9; *Shemot Rabbah* 3:12. Cf. above, [p. 67](#), [n. 204](#). On the tongue as a sword, see BT *Yoma* 9b.

**4. The sword of YHVH...** *Shekhinah*, who executes Judgment and punishes those who speak maliciously. As explained above ([note 1](#)), the strange word שדון (*shaddun*) is construed as שדין (*she-din*), *that there is judgment*.

Scaly affliction is understood as a punishment for evil speech. In the verse from Leviticus (which provides the name of this *parashah*), the word המצורע (*ha-metsora*), *the one afflicted with scales*, is often interpreted according to the method of *notariqon* (shorthand) as המוציא רע (*ha-motsi ra*), “the one who utters evil,” or המוציא שם רע (*ha-motsi shem ra*), “the one who defames a person.” This verse now implies that *Shekhinah*—known as זאת (*zot*), *this*—will bring scaly affliction upon anyone *ha-motsi ra*, “who utters evil.”

On scaly affliction as punishment for evil speech, see above, [pp. 289–90](#), [n. 106](#). On construing *ha-metsora* as *ha-motsi ra* (or *ha-motsi shem ra*), see JT *Sotah* 2:1, 17d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:1–4, 6; BT *Arakhin* 15b; *Tanḥuma*, *Metsora* 1–2, 4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Metsora* 1, 5–6, 10; *Midrash Tehillim* 52:1. On scaly affliction (often translated imprecisely as *leprosy*), see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:774–76, 816–26; above, [p. 279](#), [n. 71](#). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *This shall be the teaching concerning the one afflicted with scales on the day of his purification. It shall be reported to the priest [or: He shall be brought to the priest].*

On *Shekhinah* as “sword,” see above, [p. 72](#), [n. 223](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH has a sword, full of blood, gorged with fat—with the blood of lambs and goats, with the kidney fat of rams. For YHVH has a slaughter in Bozrah, a great butchery in the land of Edom.* On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#).

**5. This shall be the teaching...** For the full verse, see the preceding note.

**6. Like birds caught in an evil net...** The full verse actually reads: *For a human does not know his time. Like fish caught in an evil net, like birds held in a trap, so humans are ensnared by an evil time, when it falls upon them suddenly.* See *Zohar* 1:195b, 217b.

On the daily proclamation, cf. above, [note 1](#). On no one listening, see *Zohar* 1:224a, 227a, 235a; 3:80a. Cf. *Zohar* 2:5a-b (*MhN*); 3:127b.

**7. When evening dusks...** Then the heavenly gates close and from the Hollow of the Great Abyss demonic forces issue into the world. They smuggle false material into human dreams, along with some true information.

According to BT *Berakhot* 55b, angels convey prophetic dreams, while demons convey false ones. See above, [p. 138, n. 426](#).

The verb “dusks” renders רמש (*remash*), an apparently Zoharic verb based on רמשא (*ramsha*), “evening.” See above, [p. 133, n. 405](#). “Ravaging bands” renders חבילין (*ḥavilin*), which derives from חבל (*ḥevel*), “band, group,” and/or the root חבל (*ḥvl*), “to injure, destroy.”

**8. When the north wind is aroused...** At midnight, God enters the Garden of Eden to delight with souls of the righteous. Right then the rooster crows and everyone awakens, but hardly anyone (here, hyperbolically, “no one”) arouses himself to engage in the midnight ritual of study or prayer.

On the midnight scenario, see above, [p. 74, n. 228](#). On the rooster’s crowing at night, see above, [p. 142, n. 435](#).

**9. When morning comes...** The angels praise God, and a ray from *Ḥesed* (symbolized by Abraham) illumines *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), inviting all inhabitants of the world to partake of the blessings of a new day.

The verse in Genesis implies that *Hesed* (symbolized by Abraham, the subject of the verse) plants the sefirotic tree in *Shekhinah*—who is called באר שבע (*Be'er Sheva*), “Well of Seven,” perhaps because She receives the flow of emanation from seven *sefirot* (*Binah* through *Yesod*), or because She is both a “well” and the “seventh” of the lower *sefirot*. See above, [p. 143](#), [n. 437](#). On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**10. How will he face the King...** When his life draws to a close. See *Zohar* 3:88a. For the full verse, see above, [note 6](#).

**11. Before a person departs from this world...** The soul and body are both punished since they are jointly accountable for any misdeeds. At the moment of death, the person sees *Shekhinah*, and the soul departs from the body to reunite with Her. According to the proverbial saying, the cat does not withdraw from the fire’s warmth until it sees its owner sharpening the knife to prepare food. Similarly, the soul does not withdraw from the body until she sees *Shekhinah* and is drawn to Her.

On the judgment of body and soul together immediately before death, see *Zohar* 1:65b, 79a, 98a (*MhN*), 130b, 201b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 393. Cf. the parable concerning the joint responsibility of body and soul after death in *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:1; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:5; BT *Sanhedrin* 91a-b. See *Zohar* 2:199b; 3:126b; *ZH* 83d (*MhN*, *Rut*).

On seeing *Shekhinah* at the moment of death, see *Sifra*, *Nedavah* 2:12, 4a: “Rabbi Dosa says, ‘Scripture states: *No human can see Me and live* (Exodus 33:20). In their lifetime they do not see, but in their death they do!’”

See *Sifrei*, Numbers 103; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 357; *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 34; *Tanḥuma*, *Huqqat* 16; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat* 39; *Hibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 258; *Kallah Rabbati* 3:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 22:32; 103:3; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:22; 19:18; *Zohar* 1:65b, 79a, 98a

(*MhN*), 99a (*ST*), 218b, 226a, 245a; 2:263a (*Heikh*); 3:88a, 126b, 147a, 205a; *ZH* 10a (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 393. On yearning to join *Shekhinah* at the moment of death, see *Zohar* 3:88a. Cf. Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 396.

**12. by the hand of Dumah...** The angel in charge of souls of the dead. According to various traditions, the corpse is punished by *hibbut ha-qever* (beating in the grave), administered by the Angel of Death or other heavenly or demonic beings. Most souls are punished in Hell and eventually purified of their sins. After ascending from there, the soul is bathed and perfumed, and finally offered as a sacrifice by the heavenly angel and priest Michael.

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 dwelt 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 and oversees Hell.

On souls of the righteous being cleansed in Hell, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 373–74; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 68; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 60 (74–75). Cf. *Zohar* 2:211b–212a.

On *hibbut ha-qever*, see 3 Enoch 28:10; *Hibbut ha-Qever* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:150–52); *Beit ha-Midrash*, 5:49; *Hibbut ha-Qever*, ed. Higger, 258–61; *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Margaliot, par. 30; *Zohar* 1:185a, 225a; 2:141b, 151a, 199b, 211b; 3:126b–127a.

On the angel Michael offering the souls of the righteous, see above, [pp. 174–75](#), [n. 20](#). The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Who is this rising from the wilderness like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?* For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 4](#). The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *What is crooked cannot be*

*straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted.* See above, [p. 326](#), [n. 237](#).

**13. This shall be the teaching...** For the full verse, see above, [note 4](#).

**14. The sun rises and the sun sets...** Alluding to the soul, who illumines the body. If a dying person has repented, his soul does not only set, but also *to its place it strives*—returning to her source in *Shekhinah* and continuing to shine. The verse in Leviticus implies that if, when the soul departs from the body, she does so in a state of purity, then she partakes of spiritual delights.

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *The sun rises and the sun sets, and to its place it strives* [or: *pants, glides*], *where it rises*. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 58:2; BT *Qiddushin* 72b; *Zohar* 1:136a, 146b, 146b (ST); 3:181b. In the biblical context, the verse in Leviticus refers to a priest who is ritually impure and must immerse himself in water. See *Zohar* 2:101b.

**15. The blessed Holy One grants pardon...** For all sins except those of evil speech.

See JT *Bava Qamma* 8:7, 6c, in the name of Rabbi Yosah: “One who defames another is never forgiven.” See BT *Arakhin* 15b, in the name of Rabbi Aḥa son of Rabbi Ḥanina, “If he has slandered, there is no remedy for him.” See *Zohar* 3:161a.

According to rabbinic tradition, the term המצורה (*ha-metsora*), *the one afflicted with scales*, is shorthand for רע המוציא (*ha-motsi ra*), “the one who utters evil,” indicating that evil speech is punished by such affliction. See above, [note 4](#).

**16. If anyone produces evil speech...** He deserves to be confined, as is done to one suffering scaly affliction. See above, [p. 283](#), [n. 84](#).

On human words (or actions) arousing potencies above, see above, [pp. 182–83](#), [nn. 48–51](#). See BT *Shabbat* 104a, in the name of Resh Lakish: “If one comes to defile himself,



they open the door for him; if one comes to purify himself, they assist him.” See *Yoma* 38b, *Avodah Zarah* 55a, *Menahot* 29b.

**17. *How has the faithful city become a harlot?...***

The full verse, referring to the corruption of Jerusalem, reads: *How has the faithful city become a harlot? She who was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers!* For Rabbi Hiyya, *justice* alludes to *Tif’eret* (known as the blessed Holy One) and *righteousness* apparently alludes to *Shekhinah* (sometimes also called the blessed Holy One). Because of Jerusalem’s corruption, the blessed Holy One abandoned her, leaving her vulnerable to a malicious spirit. All the more so will other people (who do not reside in the Holy City of Jerusalem) be defiled and afflicted if they perpetrate evil speech. See above, the end of [note 15](#).

**18. זֹאת (*zot*), *This, shall be...*** Alluding to *Shekhinah*, known as *zot*, *this*. She Herself will confront the one guilty of evil speech. See above, [notes 4, 15](#).

**19. *On the day of his purification...*** Unlike Rabbi Yitshak (above at [note 15](#)), Rabbi Yehudah teaches that a person can repent from evil speech. If one does so sincerely, then he (or his prayer) *shall be brought to the [Divine] priest* and he will be purified and healed.

The context in Leviticus (14:2-4) reads: *This shall be the teaching concerning the one afflicted with scales on the day of his purification. It shall be reported to the priest [or: He shall be brought to the priest], and the priest shall go outside the camp, and the priest shall see, and, look, if the scaly affliction is healed in the afflicted one, the priest shall command that there be taken for him who is being purified two live [or: wild] pure birds and cedar wood and crimson yarn and hyssop.*

**20. [The priest shall command]...** For the context, see the end of the preceding note.

**21. Cedar wood is well known...** This material symbolizes *Tif'eret*, which is rooted in *Hokhmah* (symbolized by *Lebanon*). But Rabbi Shim'on's two disciples wonder about the significance of *hyssop*.

The full verse in Kings, describing Solomon's wisdom, reads: *He spoke about trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing out of the wall; and he spoke about beasts, birds, crawling things, and fish.*

**22. If he comes to purify himself...** See BT *Shabbat* 104a, quoted above, [note 16](#). In the final sentence, "that which departed from him" refers to the blessed Holy One and *Shekhinah*.

**23. two live pure birds...** Obviously they are alive, so why would the verse bother to say so? In BT *Hullin* 140a, it is established that *live* implies here that the birds are not missing an entire limb. But Rabbi Shim'on offers a deeper meaning: חיות (*hayyot*), *live*, alludes to the angelic *hayyot*, *living beings*, who carried the divine chariot-throne, as seen by Ezekiel. Two of these *hayyot* symbolize *Netsah* and *Hod*, the source of prophecy.

**24. And cedar wood...** Alluding to *Tif'eret*, as explained above, [note 21](#).

**25. And crimson yarn...** Alluding to *Gevurah* (symbolized by the color red) and to *Shekhinah*, who derives from *Gevurah* and was associated with this person before he sinned and became afflicted. See above at [note 22](#).

**26. And hyssop—small ׀ (vav)...** This ingredient alludes to *Yesod*, symbolized by a small ׀ (*vav*), in contrast to a large ׀ (*vav*), which represents *Tif'eret*. *Yesod* suckles *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *cedar* and the large *vav*) is closely linked with *Yesod* (symbolized by *hyssop* and the small *vav*), since together they constitute the male partner of *Shekhinah*. Consequently, "׀ (*vav*) exists as one," meaning that the pronunciation of this letter's name combines the sound of two *vavs* into one: *vav*.

When the afflicted person is purified, “all return to settle upon him,” including *Tif’eret*, *Yesod*, and *Shekhinah*. The final sentence means that the physical ingredients of *cedar wood and hyssop and crimson yarn* symbolize their sefirotic paradigms.

On the two *vavs*, see above, [p. 58](#), [n. 176](#). For the progression *cedar wood and hyssop and crimson yarn*, see Numbers 19:6. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**27. A tree of life is she...** This verse in Proverbs describes Wisdom, traditionally identified with Torah. In Kabbalah, Torah symbolizes *Tif’eret*, who (together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him) is pictured as a cosmic tree. The name תורה (*Torah*) signifies that Torah אורי (*orei*), “shows,” what is hidden—implying that *Tif’eret* reveals the hidden essence of the higher *sefirot*.

**28. Life—for all life above...** The vivifying power of the higher *sefirot* flows through *Tif’eret*.

**29. And those who support her...** People can support Torah by “casting merchandise into the bag of scholars,” that is, by providing them an opportunity to gain a livelihood. Anyone who does so is rewarded with children who could be inspired with prophecy. *Netsah* and *Hod* (the source of prophecy) are pictured as the two divine legs supporting *Tif’eret* (symbolized by Torah), so fittingly human supporters of Torah (and of Torah scholars) can engender prophecy.

See BT *Pesaḥim* 53b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “Whoever casts merchandise into the bag of a scholar [literally: a disciple of the wise] will be privileged to sit in the Heavenly Academy.” See *Zohar* 1:171a.

The verse in Proverbs reads: *A tree of life is she to those who grasp her, ותומכיה (ve-tomekheha), and those who hold her, are deemed happy.* Here, *ve-tomekheha* is understood as *and those who support her*, based on a related sense of the root תמך (*tmkh*): “to uphold, support.”

[30.](#) מֵאוֹשָׁר (Me'ushar), **are deemed happy...** Rabbi Yehudah plays with an anagram of this word: מְרֹאֲשׁוֹ (me-rosho), “from its head,” alluding to *Hokhmah*, the head (or beginning) of the sefirotic body. Emanation flows from *Hokhmah* to *Yesod*, which is the consummation of the sefirotic sextet (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). The full verse in Proverbs (spoken by Wisdom) reads: *From eternity I was formed, from the beginning, from the origin of earth.* Here, the speaker is understood to be Torah, often identified with Wisdom.

[31.](#) **And those who support her...** Alluding to *Netsah* and *Hod*, the divine *thighs* supporting *Tif'eret*, who is the trunk of the sefirotic body. The word שֶׁשׁ (shesh), *marble*, can also mean “six,” alluding to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, whose core is *Tif'eret*. Those who support Torah scholars support the Divine Torah, from its head (*Hokhmah*) to “consummation of the body” (*Yesod*).

See above, [note 29](#); *Zohar* 3:97a. *Yesod*, as the sefirotic phallus, is “consummation of the [divine male] body.” See above, [pp. 19–20](#), [n. 59](#).

On the numerical sense of *shesh* in the verse from Song of Songs, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 25:8; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:1; *Zohar* 3:90b, 143a (*IR*), 236a (*RM*).

[32.](#) וַיִּקְרָא (Va-yiqra), **He called...** In the Masoretic text, the א (alef) of וַיִּקְרָא (va-yiqra) is written small. According to Rabbi Yitshak, this alludes to *Shekhinah* (associated with the entire small alphabet), who called to Moses, inviting him to enter the Sanctuary (or Dwelling).

On the small *alef* of וַיִּקְרָא (va-yiqra), see Vol. 3, p. 420, n. 580. On *va-yiqra* as alluding to *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:102b, 138a, 234b, 239a; 2:138a, 157a; 3:4b, 56a. On the large and small letters, see *Zohar* 1:3b, 159b; 2:132a, 174a, 180b, 205b, 228b; 3:2a, 220a; *ZH* 65d (*ShS*), 66c (*ShS*), 74c–d (*ShS*).

**33. there a large alef: אָדָם (Adam)...** In the opening verse of Chronicles, the *alef* of אָדָם (*Adam*) is written large. According to Rabbi Yitshak, this alludes to the sefirotic Adam, who includes both male and female. This androgynous being issues from *Binah*, the Divine Mother, who includes the entire large alphabet.

On the large *alef* of אָדָם (*Adam*), see *Zohar* 1:239a; *Minḥat Shai* on the verse. On *adam* as including male and female, see above, [p. 13](#), [n. 37](#).

**34. What is the difference between Moses and Aaron?...** Moses was the intimate friend of King *Tif'eret*, while Aaron was the intimate friend of *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*). Just as the queen's close friend comes before the king only together with her, so Aaron entered the presence of King *Tif'eret* only together with *Shekhinah*, who is known as זֹת (*zot*), *this*.

On Moses and Aaron as intimate friends of the King and *Matronita*, respectively, see *Zohar* 2:49b, 3:20a (*RM*), 177b, 180b, 275b. Cf. 3:124a. On *Matronita*, see the Glossary.

On *Shekhinah* as *zot* (and the verse in Leviticus), see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). The full verse reads: *With this shall Aaron enter the sanctuary, with a bull from the herd for a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a ram for an ascent offering.*

**35. he was invited as a guest...** First, *Shekhinah* invited Moses to enter the Dwelling, and then *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) *spoke to him*. Aaron the high priest stayed in the Dwelling (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), attending to *Matronita* and maintaining harmony between the divine couple by performing the rituals.

The verse in Psalms reads: *You are priest forever; by My word, My righteous king [or: after the manner of Melchizedek]*. Here, Rabbi Yitshak understands this as being addressed to Aaron, who is installed as the high priest in order to attend to *Shekhinah*, known as Melchizedek. See *Zohar* 2:104a (Vol. 5, p. 68, n. 202); 3:193b, 271a (*Piq*).

In Genesis 14:18, Melchizedek is the king-priest of Salem (Jerusalem), who participates in Abraham's victory over an alliance of eastern kings. On the high priest staying in the Sanctuary, see Leviticus 21:12; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1815-1818.

**36. whatever he needed, he took...** Aaron was entitled to various portions of the sacrificial offerings. He purified all those who were defiled, including those recovering from scaly affliction, so that no one impure would enter the Dwelling (or later, the Temple).

**37. He who sits in heaven יֹשֵׁב שָׁמַיִם (yishaq), will laugh...** In Psalms, God is mocking an alliance of nations attacking (or rebelling against) Judea. Here, Rabbi Yehudah interprets יֹשֵׁב שָׁמַיִם (yishaq), will laugh, as alluding to יִצְחָק (Yitshaq), Isaac, whose name derives from the root צָחַק (tshq), "to laugh." Isaac represents *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by wine (or deriving from *Binah*, who is symbolized by wine). This divine quality first shines upon the wicked but then rages against them, just as wine first delights a person but then takes its toll.

The precise wording יֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם (yoshev ba-shamayim), *He who sits in heaven*, refers to *Gevurah*, who is within the realm of *heaven* (which includes *Tif'eret* and the *sefirot* surrounding Him). If the verse read יֹשֵׁב שָׁמַיִם (yoshev shamayim), *sitter of heaven*, it would refer to *Tif'eret* Himself. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nefesh David*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

In several places in the Bible, Isaac's name appears as יֹשֵׁב שָׁמַיִם (Yishaq) rather than יִצְחָק (Yitshaq): Jeremiah 33:26; Amos 7:9, 16; Psalms 105:9. The verse in Psalm 2 reads:... אֲדֹנָי (Adonai), *the Lord, will mock them*.

**38. The blessed Holy One waits patiently for the wicked...** Hoping that they will turn back to Him.

See BT *Shabbat* 104a, quoted above, [note 16](#).

Rabbi Yehudah understands *the far and the near* as "one who was far from God and has now come near." See



*Vayiqra Rabbah* 16:9. Cf. above, [p. 134](#), [n. 409](#).

**39. When a woman has a flux of blood...** The full verse in Leviticus reads: *When a woman has a flux of blood for many days, not in the time of her menstruation [or: her menstrual impurity], or when she has a flux beyond her menstruation, all the days of the flux of her impurity she shall be as in the days of her menstruation; she is impure.* On menstruation in Kabbalah, see Koren, *Forsaken*.

**40. Behold, a day of YHVH אב (ba), has come...** The simple sense of the verse, which is addressed to Jerusalem, is: *Behold, a day of YHVH אב (ba), is coming, when your spoil [i.e., the spoil taken from you] will be divided [by your enemies] in your midst!* Here, Rabbi Ḥiyya construes the verb *ba* as being in the past tense—*has come*—and asks why it is so, since the future tense seems required.

**41. Well, it already has come...** This *day of YHVH* symbolizes the last of the seven sefirotic days, *Shekhinah*, who existed before Creation and is authorized to execute judgment upon the wicked.

On the divine battle against the enemies of Israel, see Zechariah 14:3: *YHVH will go forth and fight against those nations as when He fights on a day of battle.* Apparently, Rabbi Ḥiyya interprets *your spoil* in Zechariah 14:1 as meaning “the spoil formerly seized by Israel’s enemies,” which will now be restored and *divided in your midst*. See the preceding note. On the wording “it already *has come*, before the creation of the world,” cf. *Bahir* 106 (160).

**42. The blessed Holy One has two days...** One of these cosmic days is *Gevurah* (Power), or *Din* (Judgment), which “remains with” the blessed Holy One as His left arm, while the other one is *Shekhinah*, who “comes before Him.” When *Shekhinah* “comes to wage war,” She joins with *Gevurah* (or *Din*) and together they attack the heavenly princes of the nations (who are *proud and high*) and the nations themselves, who are *lifted up* (i.e., haughty) *and low* (i.e., earthly).

The simple sense of the end of the verse is: *against all that is lifted up, וּשְׁפַל (ve-shafel), and it shall be brought low.* Rabbi Yitshak construes the final word—*ve-shafel*—as *and low*. On the seventy heavenly princes of the nations, see above, [pp. 6–7](#), [n. 21](#). On God’s punishing or defeating the heavenly princes and then dealing with their nations, see above, [p. 36](#), [n. 107](#).

**43. When a woman has a flux of blood...** This woman symbolizes the Divine Woman, *Shekhinah*, and the *flux of blood* symbolizes Her bloody sword.

On *Shekhinah* as “sword,” see above, [p. 72](#), [n. 223](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH has a sword, full of blood, gorged with fat—with the blood of lambs and goats, with the kidney fat of rams. For YHVH has a slaughter in Bozrah, a great butchery in the land of Edom.*

**44. Not in the time of her menstruation...** Just as a woman’s blood may flow before her normal period, so the divine bloody sword may bring punishment ahead of time.

On *Shekhinah* as a menstruant, see Koren, *Forsaken*, 73–97. The verse in Daniel reads: *וַיִּשְׁקֹד יְהוָה (Va-yishqod YHVH), YHVH has watched, over the evil, and brought it upon us.* The root *שָׁקַד (shqd)* means “to watch, be wakeful, lie in wait, be alert, eager.” On the sense *has been eager to bring the evil upon us*, see BT *Gittin* 88a; *Sanhedrin* 38a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 13, p. 260; *Tanḥuma, Noah* 3; *Tazri’a* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri’a* 13; Rashi on Deuteronomy 4:25. For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 39](#).

**45. Or when she has a flux beyond her menstruation...** Just as a woman’s blood may flow beyond her normal period, so the divine punishment may exceed its normal extent.

The full verse in Leviticus 26 reads: *If even with these you do not heed Me, I will go on to chastise you sevenfold for your sins.* See *Zohar* 3:115a.

**46. לֹא אוֹסִיף (Lo osif), I will not again, curse the ground...** Following the Flood, God promised to never

again destroy the world. It seems, though, that the divine declaration *lo osif, I will not again, curse the ground* conflicts with the statement in Leviticus: וַיִּסַּפְתִּי (*ve-yasafti*), *I will go on, to chastise you*. Rabbi Shim'on explains that this latter verse specifies *to chastise you*, not *to destroy you*. On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:70b; 3:115a.

**47. All the days of the flux of her impurity...** The Divine Woman, *Shekhinah*, is defiled by human sin. She is pictured as *YHVH's sanctuary*.

On the last sentence, cf. BT *Shabbat* 104a, quoted above, [note 16](#). The full verse in Numbers reads: *A man who becomes impure and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, for he has defiled YHVH's sanctuary. Water of lustration has not been flung on him; he is impure.*

**48. They rose at midnight to engage in Torah...** On this midnight ritual, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 228](#). When God brings goodness to the world (on account of human virtue), one should go out and enjoy it and do good to others, "so that another goodness may settle upon him," namely the quality of *Hesed* (Loving-kindness).

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *On a day of good fortune, enjoy the good [literally: be in goodness], and on a day of evil, see: one against the other God has set, so that man find nothing after him [or: find nothing after he is gone, or: find no fault with Him]*. See above, [p. 298](#), [n. 132](#).

**49. And on a day of evil, see...** When Judgment looms over all the world (on account of human wickedness), one should see and watch vigilantly, because the harsh power of Judgment can strike anyone, even the innocent.

See BT *Bava Qamma* 60a-b: "Rabbi Yosef taught: 'What is the meaning of the verse *None of you shall go out from the entrance of his house until morning* (Exodus 12:22)? Once permission has been granted to the Destroyer, he does not distinguish between righteous and wicked.'... Our Rabbis taught: 'A plague in town? Keep your feet indoors.'

... Our Rabbis taught: 'A plague in town? One should not walk in the middle of the road because the Angel of Death walks there, for as soon as permission has been granted him, he strides brazenly.'" See above, [p. 232](#), [n. 78](#).

The verse in Proverbs now implies that when *Tif'eret* (known as *justice*) withdraws from *Shekhinah* (known as Righteousness), harsh Judgment can prevail, "sweeping away" anyone who ventures outside. See above, [p. 246](#), [n. 130](#); *Zohar* 3:85b.

**50. numerous swords dangle...** Many harsh powers of Judgment dangle from the supernal sword, *Shekhinah*.

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.* The verse in Joshua describes an angelic warrior, who identifies himself in the following verse as *captain of YHVH's host*.

**51. Look, please, your servant has found favor in your eyes...** A verse spoken by Lot, responding to the divine messengers who had told him to flee from the doomed city of Sodom and escape to the nearby hills. Lot understood that even in the outskirts of Sodom, harsh Judgment could attack him.

**52. Set me as a seal upon your heart...** According to Rabbi El'azar, This verse 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.

On truth as God's seal, see JT *Sanhedrin* 1:1, 18a; *Bereshit Rabbah* 81:2; BT *Shabbat* 55a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 1:10; *Shemot Rabbah* 4:13.

The final word of the verse in Song of Songs is שלהבתיה (*shalhevetyah*), with יה (*yah*) constituting a suffix denoting intensity; the word probably means *an intense* [or: *blazing*]

*flame*. Here, the word is apparently construed as two words: *שלהבת יה* (*shalhevet Yah*), a *flame of Yah*, a divine flame. See *Zohar* 1:245a; 2:114a. On the verse, see also 1:244b; 2:11a. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**53. the seal of tefillin...** Like the seal, or sign, of tefillin, one of which is bound on the upper arm near the heart.

On tefillin and their significance, see Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 4-6; *Zohar* 1:13b-14a, 147a; 2:43a-b (*Piq*), 162a; 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. On God wearing tefillin, see BT *Berakhot* 6a; Vol. 4, p. 489, n. 442.

**54. the weak hand...** According to Exodus 13:16, *It shall be a sign on ידכה* (*yadekhah*), *your hand, and frontlets between your eyes, that through strength of hand YHVH brought us out of Egypt*. Traditionally, this verse is interpreted as referring to tefillin, both the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the hand and of the head. The unusual spelling of *ידכה* (*yadekhah*), *your hand*, with a superfluous *ה* (*he*)—rather than *ידך* (*yadekha*)—is understood (in BT *Menaḥot* 37a) as implying *יד כהה* (*yad kehah*), “weak hand,” referring to the left hand (of those who are righthanded), or the right hand (of those who are left-handed), on which the *tefillah* of the hand is strapped. Here, the left hand (or arm) symbolizes *Gevurah*, the divine left arm, represented by Isaac.

See above, [p. 311](#), [n. 180](#). On a seal upon your arm as alluding to the *tefillah* of the hand, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:6.

**55. why as a seal?...** Like the *tefillah* (phylactery) of the head. One who wears tefillin imitates God, who also wears them. See above, [note 53](#). The phrase “on the arm and upon the heart” matches the verse: *Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm*.



**56. For love is fierce as death...** Just as the soul clings to the body on the verge of death, so *Shekhinah* clings to the blessed Holy One. According to Rabbi El'azar, in the verse from Song of Songs *his left hand* symbolizes *Gevurah*, which rests beneath the head of *Shekhinah*.

On the separation of the soul from the body, see above, [note 11](#); *Zohar* 1:245a; 3:126b. The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His left hand beneath my head, his right embracing me*. See *Zohar* 3:120b.

**57. Jealousy cruel as Sheol...** In the Bible, שְׂאוֹל (*she'ol*) is the underworld, abode of the dead, sometimes paired with אַבְדּוֹן (*avaddon*), “destruction, ruin,” which may refer to a distinct area of the underworld reserved for the wicked. According to rabbinic tradition, there are seven divisions of Hell, two of which are Sheol and Avadon.

Jealousy is intimately connected with love and generated by it. See *Zohar* 1:245a. On the seven divisions of Hell, see BT *Sotah* 10b; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 52; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:6; *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 62b, 237b; 2:150b, 263a-68b (*Heikh*); 3:178a, 285b-86a; *ZH* 25b (*MhN*); *Beit ha-Midrash* 1:149; 5:50; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:20, n. 56. Seven names for Hell are listed in BT *Eruvin* 19a. On Avadon, see Proverbs 15:11; Job 26:6; and Revelation 9:11, where Avadon is the name of *the angel of the bottomless pit*.

**58. a flame of Yah...** The divine flame of *Gevurah*, on the left side, issues from *Binah*, who is known (together with *Hokhmah*) as *Yah* and pictured as a shofar. This flame includes aspects of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by air) and *Hesed* (symbolized by water). But when *Gevurah*—or *Din* (Judgment)—blazes in *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel), She sets the world on fire through Her passionate jealousy for the blessed Holy One.

See *Zohar* 1:245a; 2:114a. On the rendering *a flame of Yah*, see above, end of [note 52](#). On *Binah* as a shofar, see above, [p. 233](#), [n. 82](#).



**59. Many waters...** Alluding to *Hesed* (Love), the divine right arm, which conveys the flow of emanation. When a person binds the knot of the phylactery on the left arm with his right hand, he stimulates the divine right arm to embrace *Shekhinah*.

See *Zohar* 1:245a. The full verse in Song of Songs 8 reads: *Many waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away. If a man offered all the wealth of his house for love, he would be utterly scorned.* For the full verse in Song of Songs 2, see above, [note 56](#).

**60. the supernal river...** *Binah*, from whom stream the lower *sefirot*. The context in Psalms (93:3-4) reads: *The rivers lifted up, O YHVH, the rivers lifted up their voice, the rivers lift up their roaring. More than the sound of many waters, the sea's majestic breakers, majestic on high is YHVH.*

**61. Nor rivers...** Alluding to the lower *sefirot*, issuing from *Binah*. For the context in Psalms, see the preceding note.

**62. If a man offered all the wealth...** This could be taken to mean that if a man tried to buy the love felt by *Shekhinah* for the blessed Holy One, *they would utterly scorn him*. But why, asks Rabbi El'azar, does the verse read יבוזו לו (boz yavuzu lo), *they would utterly scorn him*, when it should read in the singular: בוז יבוז לו (boz yavuz lo), *he would utterly scorn him*—he referring to God, who would scorn anyone daring to do this. He explains that a *man* refers to the blessed Holy One. If He *offered* the angels *all the wealth of his house for love*—that is, instead of their facilitating and participating in the union of the divine couple—*they* [the angels] *would utterly scorn it*.

The full verse in Song of Songs 8 reads: *Many waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away. If a man offered all the wealth of his house for love, he would be utterly scorned* [literally: *they would utterly scorn him* (or: *scorn it*)].

On God as *a man*, see Exodus 15:3: *YHVH is a man of war*. See above, [pp. 300–301](#), [n. 145](#). The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Through knowledge, rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant wealth*. On the verse in Song of Songs 2, see above, [notes 56, 59](#).

**63. One who puts on tefillin...** Should imitate and stimulate the sefirotic embrace. By stretching out the left arm (on which will be strapped the phylactery of the hand), a person stimulates the divine left arm to receive and hold *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel). When he binds the knot of the phylactery with his right hand, he stimulates the divine right arm to embrace Her.

See *Zohar* 1:13b–14a; 2:162a. The full verse in Isaiah 49 reads: *He said to me, “You are My servant, Israel, in whom I glory.”* On its association with tefillin, see *Zohar* 2:43a (*Piq*), 62a–b; 3:265a; *ZH* 41d. See BT *Berakhot* 11a, where the statement in Ezekiel 24:17—*Wrap פארך* (*phe’erekha*), *your turban, on you*—is interpreted as applying to tefillin. פאר (*Pe’er*), “turban,” is a homonym of פאר (*pe’er*), “glory.”

**64. Hear, O YHVH, righteousness...** According to Rabbi Hizkiyah, David the Psalmist asks God to respond to *Shekhinah* (who is known as *righteousness* and Assembly of Israel). David, the ideal King, is closely linked with *Shekhinah*, who is also known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom). The full verse in Psalms reads: *A prayer of David. Hear, O YHVH, righteousness [or: a just cause, my righteous plea]; heed my cry, listen to my prayer—not from deceitful lips.*

**65. Not from deceitful lips...** On words splitting the heavens and affecting the supernal realm, see above, [p. 183, nn. 50–51](#).

**66. They hurt his feet with shackles...** The passage in Psalms describes Joseph’s imprisonment and eventual release in Egypt. See Genesis 39:20; 41:14.

Psalms 105:19 reads: *Until the time that his word came [or: came true, came to pass], the utterance of YHVH purged*

[or: *refined, tested*] *him*. The verse yields various interpretations, but here Rabbi Hizkiyah understands it to mean that Joseph's *word* of prayer from prison ascended and *came* to heaven, where God *tested it*.

See *Midrash Tehillim* 105:6; Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and David Kimḥi on Psalms 105:19. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**67. Meanwhile, morning arrived...** After Rabbi Hizkiyah and Rabbi El'azar had engaged in Torah from midnight on. See above at [note 48](#).

According to Rabbi El'azar, the phrase נִפְשׁ אֲדֹנָי (*nefesh adoni*), *the soul of my lord* is "unspecified," since it could have been worded more specifically as *your soul*. The word *adoni* alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is known as אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*), "my Lord," and also as *nefesh, soul*, and "soul of David." Now that morning has come, *She will be bound* with *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*).

The full verse in Samuel (recording Abigail's blessing to 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*. See above, [pp. 158-59](#), [nn. 490, 492](#). On the verse in Psalms and the phrase "soul of David," see above, [p. 282](#), [n. 81](#).

The verse in Proverbs alludes here to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, the divine parents of the soul. See below, [p. 404](#), [n. 140](#).

**68. like זָר (zar), a stranger...** Israel should be totally estranged from impurity.

**69. When people are defiled below...** Rabbi El'azar explains how an impure spirit above is aroused and enabled to descend to the world. Usually, holiness attacks impurity, but when holiness withdraws due to human wickedness, then harsh Judgment is revealed and a spirit of impurity above manifests below.

See BT *Yoma* 38b–39a: “Resh Lakish said: ‘...If one comes to defile himself, they open the door for him; if one comes to purify himself, they assist him.’... Our rabbis taught: ‘*Do not become impure with them, becoming impure through them* (Leviticus 11:43). 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 hallow yourselves and become holy* (ibid., 44). 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.’” See above, [note 16](#).

**70. a word that I learned from my father...** From Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai.

When an impure spirit inhabits a house, God sends a scaly affliction (mildew), which is a manifestation of harsh Judgment, and the two forces attack one another. Even after the impure spirit has been expelled, the scaly affliction remains until the house is demolished. See above, [pp. 318–20](#), [nn. 201](#), [210–11](#).

**71. Similarly, one who is defiled...** In order to eliminate the impure spirit that has settled upon him, God sends a spirit of harsh Judgment to attack it; but even after the impure spirit has been eliminated, the spirit of Judgment remains until the person's body is virtually demolished.

**72. If one comes to defile himself...** A paraphrase of the rabbinic teaching quoted above, [note 69](#).

**73. Jacob went on his way...** Finally returning to his homeland after spending twenty years working for Laban. Because Jacob was residing with such a wicked person, God did not speak to him during that whole time except when he was about to leave.

See *Tanḥuma Vayetse* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 21. “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 לְאַזְפָּא (*le’ozafa*) in this sense. Cf. the English idiom “to lend an escort.”

**74.** וַיִּפְגְּעוּ בוֹ (va-yifge’u vo), **and [angels of God] met him...** Rabbi El’azar begins to interpret this verse based on a midrashic reading of Genesis 28:11: וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם (va-yifga ba-maqom), *He [Jacob] encountered a certain place*. Since the root פִּגַּע (*pg’*) means not only “to meet, encounter” but also “to entreat, plead,” that verse can mean *He entreated God* (who is known as הַמָּקוֹם [*ha-maqom*], “the place,” emphasizing divine immanence and omnipresence). Similarly, here *va-yifge’u* can mean not only *and [angels of God] met*, but also *and [angels of God] pleaded*. But if this meaning applies, then why does the verse read *va-yifge’u vo*, literally *and [angels of God] pleaded [or: met] in him*? It would seem better for the verse to read: וַיִּפְגְּעוּ לְפָנָיו (va-yifge’u le-fanav), *and [angels of God] pleaded before him*.

Rabbi El’azar explains that two groups of angels came to Jacob and *met in him*. One group consisted of angels of Judgment, signified by the name *Elohim*—as they are called in this verse: *angels of Elohim*. The other group consisted of angels of Compassion. Both of these groups blended *and met in Jacob*, symbolizing *Tif’eret*, who balances and harmonizes the polar opposites *Ḥesed* (associated here with Compassion) and *Din* (Judgment).

On the midrashic reading of *va-yifga ba-maqom*, see *Mekhilta, Beshallah* 2; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 14:10; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 28:11; JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7a-b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9; BT *Berakhot* 26b; *Tanḥuma, Ḥayyei Sarah* 5; *Miqqets* 9, *Beshallah* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 4; *Midrash Tehillim* 55:2; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:1; *Zohar* 1:49a-b, 148b, 165a; 3:225b. On the similar reading of *va-yifge’u vo*, see *Zohar* 1:165a; 3:225b. On *Elohim* as signifying Judgment, see above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#).

**75. This is a camp of Elohim...** Jacob first refers to one *camp* but later in the same verse calls the place מחנים (*Maḥanayim*), *Double Camps*. One of these camps consists of angels of Judgment, while the other consists of angels of Compassion.

On the two camps of angels, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 74:17; 75:10; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:1; *Tanḥuma, Vayishlah* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayishlah* 3, *Vayeshev* 2; *Leqah Tov*, Genesis 32:3; Rashi on Genesis 32:3; *Zohar* 1:165a–b; 3:225b–226a. The full verse in Genesis reads: *When he saw them, Jacob said, “This is a camp of God!” And he named that place מחנים (Maḥanayim), Double Camps.*

**76. When ראם (ra’am), he saw them...** Rabbi El’azar wonders why Scripture employs the rare compound word *ra’am* instead of ראה אותם (*ra’ah otam*). He explains that the single word implies that Jacob saw the two camps merging into one.

On *ra’am* and *ra’ah otam*, see *Sekhel Tov*, Genesis 32:3; Rashbam on Deuteronomy 7:23. Cf. *Zohar* 1:165a (Vol. 2, p. 423, n. 838). For the full verse, see the end of the preceding note. On the phrase “to save him from the hand of Esau,” cf. Genesis 32:12.

**77. The first one came out ruddy...** In describing Esau’s birth, the verse does not read *He came out first*, but rather *The first one came out*—implying that Esau had been engendered by the first drop of Isaac’s semen. Fittingly his reddishness reflected the quality of *Din* (Judgment), symbolized by Isaac. Jacob, Esau’s twin, was engendered by his father’s second drop, and he reflected the quality of *Raḥamim* (Compassion) along with the quality of his father.

According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:8 (in the name of Rabbi Yose son of Ḥalafta), Jacob was engendered by the first drop of Isaac’s semen. See Rashi on Genesis 25:26; Scholem. On Esau’s ruddiness, see above, [p. 322](#), [n. 220](#). The full verse in Genesis reads: *The first one came out*



*ruddy, like a hairy mantle all over, and they called his name Esau.*

**78. The drop of Esau...** When Isaac emitted this initial drop of semen, he focused on the end of his quality of *Din* (Judgment). This *sefirah* is symbolized by (refined) gold—whose byproduct, slag, represents demonic power and evil. Consequently, Esau embodied this slag. See above, [p. 322](#), [n. 220](#).

**79. a person should concentrate at that moment...** During sexual union, one should focus on God's will, in order to ensure that he will engender holy children. Certainly Isaac concentrated on holiness, but since he was linked with *Din* and focused on the end of that *sefirah*, the son he engendered was imbued with the slag of gold.

On the importance of holy sexual union, see above, [pp. 314-15](#), [n. 190](#). For the full verse in Genesis, see above at the end of [note 77](#).

**80. David issued in the beauty of red...** King David is also described as *ruddy*, but he clung to the holy radiance of reddish gold, whereas Esau clung to the impure residue of gold. See above, [p. 322](#), [n. 220](#).

**81. However, Jacob was firstborn...** Although Isaac's first drop of semen engendered Esau, when his second drop issued (which would engender Jacob), his will was focused on *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by the Tree of Life and associated with Jacob. In this sense, Jacob surpassed (or preceded) Esau, who issued from the residue of *Din*, the "end of all."

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Obadiah is part of a prophecy addressed to Edom, who is identified with Esau (according to Genesis 36:1). See *Zohar* 1:177a-b. In rabbinic literature Esau and Edom often represent Rome, and in medieval literature they often represent Christian rule.

**82. Esau is called *first*...** And he will eventually be punished by God, who is *the first*. Then God will restore the Temple, pictured as the Divine Throne, which has been *set on high from the first*.

On the connection between several of these *firsts*, see BT *Pesaḥim* 5a. Isaiah 41:4 reads in full: *Who has wrought and achieved, calling the generations from the beginning? I, YHVH, the first, and with the last I am He*. Cf. Isaiah 44:6; 48:12.

**83. The walls of Jerusalem...** Both Jerusalem and the Divine Throne symbolize *Shekhinah*. In the final redemption, the light of *Shekhinah* (represented by the moon) will be as great as that of *Tif'eret* (represented by the sun). The verse in Zechariah can imply that *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) and *Shekhinah* (known as *His name*) will both *be one*. See above, [pp. 33-34, n. 100](#).

For various descriptions of the expansion of Jerusalem, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 1; *Bereshit Rabbah* 5:7; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 10:9; BT *Pesaḥim* 50a, *Bava Batra* 75b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:22; 20:7; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:5; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1, 2a; 21, 103b; 41, 172b-173a; *Tanḥuma*, *Tsav* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Yitro* 14, *Tsav* 16; *Zohar* 2:220a, 234a.

The verse in Jeremiah reads: *At that time, they will call Jerusalem Throne of YHVH*. On the verse in Isaiah, see BT *Hullin* 60b.

**1. YHVH spoke to Moses...** The context in Leviticus (16:1-2) reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they encroached upon the presence of YHVH [or: drew near before YHVH, came forward before YHVH] and died. YHVH said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron your brother, that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary within the curtain, in front of the cover [or: the purging cover] that is on the Ark, lest he die. For in the cloud I shall appear over the cover."*

The death of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu is described in Leviticus 10. *Cover* (or *purging cover*) renders כַּפֹּרֶת (*kapporet*), whose precise meaning is unclear. It refers to a slab of pure gold, placed atop the ark. At each end of this gold cover stood the figure of a cherub, made of hammered gold. 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 Exodus 25:17-22; Leviticus 16:13-15; Sarna, *Exodus*, 161; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:1014.

**2. YHVH spoke to Moses... YHVH said to Moses...** In order to explain away the apparent redundancy, Rabbi Yehudah examines two other verses. According to the tradition that he cites, in the opening verse of Leviticus the anonymous subject of *He called* is *Shekhinah*, while *YHVH* refers to *Tif'eret*. Similarly in the verse from Exodus, the anonymous subject of *He said* is *Shekhinah*, who urges Moses, *Go up to YHVH*, namely to *Tif'eret*. So too, here in the opening of this Torah portion, the subject of *YHVH spoke to Moses* is *Shekhinah*, while the subject of the following verse is *Tif'eret*: *YHVH said to Moses*.

The last sentence may mean that *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret* attain equilibrium, both being rooted in *Ein Sof*. For various

interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; Vital; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

On the apparent redundancy of *YHVH spoke to Moses.... YHVH said to Moses*, see *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 1:3, 79d; below, [notes 97–99](#). On the verse in Leviticus 1, see above, [p. 340, n. 32](#). On the verse in Exodus, see BT *Sanhedrin* 38b; *Zohar* 1:102b; 2:60b, 125b, 131a, 138a, 157a.

**3. Serve YHVH in awe...** This seems to contradict the later verse in Psalms, which reads *Serve YHVH in joy*.

*Awe* renders ירא'ה (*yir'ah*), “fear, awe, reverence.” On the relationship between love and awe (or fear), see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:974–90.

**4. any service of his Lord...** On awe as the initial step in serving God, see BT *Shabbat* 31a–b.

**5. a person is forbidden to rejoice extremely in this world...** See BT *Berakhot* 31a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai: “It is forbidden for a person to fill his mouth with laughter in this world, as is said: *Then will our mouth fill with laughter and our tongue with glad song* (Psalms 126:2). When? At the time when *they will say among the nations: ‘Great things has YHVH done with these’* (ibid., 3).” See above, [p. 281, n. 76](#).

“Subsequently” may mean after limiting one’s pleasure in mundane matters, or after beginning to serve God in awe.

**6. what is awe here?...** To which *sefirah* does *awe* allude? To *Shekhinah*, who is the gateway to the divine realm. She is *the beginning of knowledge*—namely leading to *Tif'eret* who is associated with the hidden *sefirah* of *Da'at* (Knowledge). She is also *the beginning of wisdom*—leading eventually to *Hokhmah* (Wisdom). See *Zohar* 1:11b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 24–32.

**7. if one wishes to perform the service of his Lord...** Unifying the *sefirot*. One should begin from *Shekhinah*, known as *awe*.

**8. Aaron's sons—this has already been established...** Namely, the various explanations for the death of Nadab and Abihu. See above, [p. 16](#), [nn. 46–47](#).

**9. After the death... Speak to Aaron your brother...** What is the connection between the reference to the death of Aaron's two sons and Moses' instructions to Aaron? Rabbi El'azar alludes to the fact that Nadab and Abihu sinned against *Shekhinah*, and therefore Moses warned the priests to concentrate on Her in their service. The following verse (Leviticus 1:3) reads: בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary, with a bull from the herd for a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a ram for an ascent offering.* The word *be-zot*, *with this*, implies that Aaron should enter the Holy of Holies while focusing on *Shekhinah*, who is known as *zot*, *this*.

See above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On Nadab and Abihu's sin against *Shekhinah*, see below, [note 37](#). On the connection between *after the death of Aaron's two sons* and *Speak to Aaron your brother*, cf. *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 1:3, 79d; Rashi on Leviticus 16:1.

**10. After the death of Aaron's two sons...** Why doesn't the verse simply name them rather than stating *Aaron's two sons*, which we already know? Because, Rabbi Yose explains, Scripture wants to emphasize that Nadab and Abihu were still under the authority of their father, Aaron, and "they forced the hour" by offering incense on their own during his lifetime.

The clause "It was all" means that various factors identified by the Rabbis contributed to the death of Nadab and Abihu, as well as the sin of offering *alien fire*.

On Aaron's sons "forcing the hour," see above, [pp. 193–94](#), [n. 86](#). Cf. *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:21, 44d: "[Nadab and Abihu] saw Moses and Aaron walking in front, while they came behind, followed by all of Israel. Nadab said to Abihu, 'As soon as these two old ones die, we will lead the community!'"

On the significance of *alien fire*, see above, [p. 223](#), [n. 53](#); below, [note 37](#). For the full verse in Leviticus, see above, [note 1](#). The full verse in Numbers reads: *Nadab and Abihu died before YHVH when they offered alien fire before YHVH in the Desert of Sinai, and they had no sons, and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father.*

[11.](#) **the portion of Passover...** The account of the original Passover in Exodus 12.

[12.](#) **A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah...** Who did not die along with their father and his fellow rebels, and whose descendants played a prominent role in the Temple cult, apparently serving as a guild of Temple singers or musicians. Eleven psalms are associated with them. See Numbers 26:11; 2 Chronicles 20:19.

The men inside the clefts are discussing this verse and quoting Rabbi Shim'on's explanation of the wording *A song, a psalm*. According to him, the apparent redundancy actually indicates an especially worthy song, just like the wording *A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day*, and *The Song of Songs*.

On the wording *A song, a psalm* in Psalm 48, see above, [p. 13](#), [n. 35](#). On the similar wording in Psalm 92, see *Midrash Tehillim* 92:1. On the wording *The Song of Songs*, see *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1).

[13.](#) **sung by the sons of Korah...** Who, according to rabbinic tradition, occupied a special place in Hell.

See BT *Sanhedrin* 110a-b: "*But the sons of Korah did not die* (Numbers 26:11). A *tanna* taught: 'It has been said in the name of Moses our teacher: "A place was set up for them in Hell, where they sat and uttered song [to God]."'

"Rabbah son of Bar Ḥana said, 'Once I was walking on the way, when a certain Arab said to me, "Come and I will show you those of the band of Korah who were swallowed up [or: "the gaping chasms of Korah," as described in Numbers 16:32-33; 26:10]. I went and I saw two crevices



from which smoke was issuing. He took a tuft of wool, soaked it in water, attached it to the point of his spear, and passed it over there, and it was charred. He said to me, "Listen to what you hear." And I heard them say as follows: "Moses and his Torah are true, and they are liars." ["They" refers to Korah and his followers, or else is a euphemism for "we."] He said to me, "Every thirty days Hell whirls them back here like meat in a pot, and they say this: "Moses and his Torah are true, and they are liars."""

This story obviously forms the basis of Rabbi Hiyya's account (beginning above at [note 11](#)). Here, though, the men inside the clefts are not *the sons of Korah* (as in the Talmudic story), but rather two anonymous people discussing *A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah*, and explaining (based on the teaching of Rabbi Shim'on) that *the sons of Korah* sing this song over their brothers (or relatives or other members of Korah's gang), who are sitting at the opening (or the gates) of Hell.

According to M *Tamid* 7:4, this psalm (beginning *A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah*) was chanted by the Levites every Monday, the second day of the week. Here, the two men (apparently based on the teaching of Rabbi Shim'on) indicate how appropriate this is, since according to another rabbinic tradition, the fire of Hell (which is inhabited by *the sons of Korah*) was created on the second day. 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 *Bereshit Rabbah* 4:6; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 4; *Midrash Kohen (Beit ha-Midrash, 2:25)*; Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush Shir ha-Shirim*, 506; *Zohar* 1:17a, 33a, 46a; 2:149b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 374; idem, *Sheḡel ha-Qodesh*, 41 (49).

On the passage in BT *Sanhedrin*, see BT *Megillah* 14a, *Bava Batra* 74a; *Tanḥuma*, *Qoraḥ* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber),

*Qorah* 27; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:20.

**14. Whenever the righteous depart...** Whenever they pass away, harsh Judgment departs because their death atones for the sins of the generation.

Of course, the simple reason for reading Leviticus 16 on Yom Kippur is that it describes the offering of the two goats, *one for YHVH and one* [as a scapegoat to carry off Israel's sins] *for Azazel* (Leviticus 16:8). However, the two men in the clefts explain that since sacrifices can no longer be offered (now that the Temple is destroyed), instead Israel can gain atonement by recalling and contemplating the death of Aaron's two (basically) righteous sons, who are mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

On the death of the righteous (and specifically that of Nadab and Abihu) as atonement, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:12, in the name of Rabbi Hiyya son of Abba: "Aaron's two sons died on the first of Nisan. Why then does Scripture mention their death in connection with Yom Kippur? Well, this teaches that just as Yom Kippur atones, so the death of the righteous atones."

See JT *Yoma* 1:1, 38b; BT *Yoma* 42a, *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:11; *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 10. Cf. above, [p. 108](#), [n. 328](#).

**15. the firstborn Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar...** Why is there no *and* between *Abihu* and *Eleazar*? Because *Abihu* stands on his own, equivalent to *Eleazar and Ithamar*. As for *Nadab*, beneath his name appears a disjunctive accent (*etnaḥta*), which sets him off as "equal to all of them."

Cf. *Leqaḥ Tov*, Numbers 3:2. The context in Numbers (3:2-3) reads: *These are the names of the sons of Aaron: the firstborn Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests whom he installed to serve as priests.*

**16. some teach the reverse...** That the verse indicates something negative, not positive, about Nadab and Abihu.

The disjunctive accent beneath *Nadab* and the lack of the copulative *and* following *Abihu* set each of these apart: each one imagined arrogantly that he was equal to both *Eleazar and Ithamar*. Still, it is true that Nadab and Abihu together were equivalent to all of the seventy elders (with whom they are linked in Exodus 24:1).

The context in Leviticus 10 (6-7) reads: *Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, "Your heads you shall not dishevel nor your garments rend, lest you die and He be furious with the whole community. Your brothers, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning that YHVH has inflicted. And you shall not go out from the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, lest you die, for YHVH's anointing oil is upon you."*

**17. The firstborn Nadab...** The title *firstborn* indicates that Nadab was praiseworthy. Rabbi Shim'on construes *and Abihu* as implying "all the more so, Abihu."

See *Nefesh David*. On Nadab and Abihu's high status, see *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:23, 45a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 12:2; *Zohar* 3:61b.

**18. Therefore, thus says YHVH...** The verse is usually understood as *Thus says YHVH, who redeemed Abraham, to the house of Jacob*. However Rabbi Hizkiyah reads it hyperliterally, based on the midrashic tradition that Jacob's (future) merit *redeemed Abraham* from Nimrod's fiery furnace. As Abraham was cast into the furnace, the heavenly court debated whether he should be saved. The angels opposed rescuing Abraham because Ishmael was destined to issue from him.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 63:2; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:4; *Tanḥuma, Toledot* 4, *Shemot* 4; *Zohar* 1:154b. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 19b; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Toledot* 1. Parallels to this whole passage appear in *ZH* 47b-c, 76d (*MhN, Rut*).

**19. Well, Isaac...** God replied that Isaac would also issue from Abraham, and would demonstrate extreme devotion by his willingness to be sacrificed on the altar.

**20. Well, Jacob...** Who would be so virtuous that God would settle upon him as upon a throne.

On all of Jacob's sons being perfect, see 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* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—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 Vol. 5, pp. 298-99, n. 301.

**21. 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. On Daniel in the lions' den, see Daniel 6. On his three companions in the fiery furnace, see Daniel 3.

**22. What is Jacob doing here?...** If these verses now apply to Daniel and his three companions, why is Jacob mentioned here? After all, the four righteous men are described specifically as descendants of Jacob's son, Judah, so Scripture should read: *No longer will Judah be ashamed.*

**23. As they were bound...** As Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were about to be cast into the furnace, each one proclaimed a verse (or verses).

Rabbinic sources describe these three heroes as proclaiming parts of verses in Psalms 115 or 117. See BT *Pesahim* 118a; *Tanḥuma, Noah* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 15; *Midrash Tehillim* 117:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 9:1; 18:5.

**24. At the moment they all heard the name of Jacob...** When those assembled heard Mishael mention Jacob, they mocked him for relying on God's promise to the dead patriarch.

**25. This one will say, 'I am YHVH's'...** Corresponding to Hananiah's verse: *YHVH is with me, I will not fear.*

Similarly, *Another will call himself by the name of Jacob* matches Mishael's verse: *Do not fear, My servant Jacob.* The conclusion of the verse in Isaiah—*Another will write on his hand, "YHVH's," and adopt the name of Israel*—corresponds to Azariah's verse: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one.*

**26. His entire celestial family...** Of angels.

**27. May they know that You alone, whose name is YHVH...** Apparently alluding to Azariah's verse: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one.*

**28. By My Throne!...** God swears by His Throne that He will save Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah by the merit of Jacob, whom the assembly mocked and who was mentioned by Mishael. Now, *No longer will Jacob be ashamed... For when he sees his children, the work of My hands [namely Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah], in his midst, they will sanctify My name.*

See above, [notes 18, 24](#). Cf. above at [note 20](#), where Jacob is described as "a complete throne."

**29. All those who laughed at this word...** At the name of Jacob. These three heroes were saved because they prayed to God and were prepared to sanctify His Name as martyrs. Such devotion unified the *sefirot*. In contrast to them, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu offered alien fire, ruining the divine union, so they were fittingly punished by fire. On the significance of *alien fire*, see above, [p. 233, n. 53](#); below, [note 37](#).

**30. After the death... and they died...** The apparent redundancy in this single verse actually implies that Nadab and Abihu died two deaths: one a physical death *before*

*YHVH*, the other a spiritual death because they had no children.

See BT *Nedarim* 64b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "Any person who has no children is considered dead, for it is written: *Give me children! If not, I am dead* (Genesis 30:1)."

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 45:2; 71:6; *Eikhah Rabbah* 3:2; BT *Avodah Zarah* 5a; *Tanḥuma*, *Tsav* 13; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 19; *Shemot Rabbah* 5:4. On Nadab and Abihu having no children, see Numbers 3:4; 1 Chronicles 24:2; and the following note.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they encroached upon the presence of YHVH [or: drew near before YHVH, or came forward before YHVH] and died [or: and they died]*.

**31. they had no children, and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests...** What is the connection between these two clauses? Did Eleazar and Ithamar inherit the priesthood because their brothers, Nadab and Abihu, died childless? Rather, there is a mystery here. *They died* (or they were considered dead) because they were childless. However, as opposed to Rabbi Yitshak, who claimed that Nadab and Abihu died a spiritual death, Rabbi Abba insists their souls endured, as he proceeds to explain.

According to BT *Sanhedrin* 52a, Rabbi El'azar [son of Pedat] taught that Nadab and Abihu's souls were burnt, while their bodies endured. However, another opinion is recorded there, according to which their bodies were burnt, "beginning from within. ... For it has been taught: Abba Yose son of Dostai said, 'Two strands of fire issued from the Holy of Holies, branching into four, and two entered into each of their nostrils and burned them.'... Them, but not their garments."

Here Rabbi Abba teaches that Nadab and Abihu's bodies were burnt but not their souls. See *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:23, 45a; 1:27, 45a; 1:34, 45c-d; 1:41, 46a;



*Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 10:2; BT *Shabbat* 113b, *Pesahim* 75a, *Sanhedrin* 94a; *Tanḥuma*, *Noah* 15, *Shemini* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Noah* 21; below, [note 138](#).

On Nadab and Abihu's childlessness being a cause of their death, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 20:9; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26:9; *Tanḥuma*, *Aḥarei Mot* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 7. The full verse in Numbers reads: *Nadab and Abihu died before YHVH when they offered alien fire before YHVH in the Desert of Sinai, and they had no sons [or: children], and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father.*

**32. and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers...** Since Phinehas was the only son born to Eleazar and the daughter of Putiel, why does the verse continue in the plural: *These are the heads...*? According to its simple sense, this clause refers to the various heads of Levitical families mentioned in Exodus 6:16–25, but Rabbi Abba chooses to read the verse hyperliterally, as if *these are the heads...* is linked specifically with *Phinehas*, mentioned immediately before. Mysteriously, the plurals *These* and *heads* allude to Nadab and Abihu, whose souls did not die but were rather reincarnated (or “impregnated”) in Phinehas!

The clause near the end of the preceding paragraph —“even though they were not married”—alludes to the notion that if a married man dies childless, his soul rolls restlessly through the world, unless his brother redeems this soul through performing levirate marriage: marrying the widowed wife, impregnating her, and consciously drawing that homeless soul into the embryo. This process of reincarnation provides the soul with another opportunity to fulfill itself on earth by engendering new life. Since Nadab and Abihu were not married when they died childless, their souls could not be redeemed by levirate marriage. But “even though they were not married,” their souls were redeemed by being reincarnated in their

nephew Phinehas. Now it becomes clear why the verse reads: *and they had no children, and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests*. Although they had no children, their souls were redeemed in Eleazar's son, Phinehas.

On reincarnation in Kabbalah and its connection with levirate marriage, see Vol. 5, pp. 38-39, n. 108; above, [p. 30](#), [n. 91](#). On the particular type of (usually temporary) reincarnation, known as *נבור* (*ibbur*), "impregnation," see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 348-49. On the reincarnation of Nadab and Abihu's souls in Phinehas, see *Zohar* 2:26b; 3:61b, 213a-b, 215b, 217a, 237b (*RM*); Yisraeli, "Ha-Mered ha-Qadosh," 95-98; Hellner-Eshed, "Ha-Meqanne la-Berit," 151-56. On the hyperliteral reading of *and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads...*, see *Zohar* 2:26b.

**[33.](#) Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest...** Why is Phinehas described as *son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest*, whereas Eleazar is described simply as *Eleazar the priest*, with no mention of his father. Because, Rabbi El'azar explains, Phinehas was not only the *son of Eleazar* but also, in a sense, the *son of Aaron*, since the souls of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu endured within him.

On the wording *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest*, see *Zohar* 3:217a. Cf. BT *Zevaḥim* 101b; Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *va-yishma Pinḥas ha-kohen*.

The verse in Judges actually reads: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron was ministering [literally: standing] before it [namely the altar, or: before Him] in those days*. See *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Judges 76; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Scholem. Cf. BT *Shevu'ot* 35b; *Biblia Hebraica*, ad loc. For other instances of a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar's* reading, see above, [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#).

**[34.](#) in the mystery of our Mishnah...** In this secret source the name פינחס (*Pinḥas*) is construed as two elements: פן (*pan*) and חס (*ḥas*), plus a small ׳ (*yod*) among them. Just as the *yod* (approximately) links these two elements, so Phinehas included within himself both Nadab and Abihu.

Furthermore, the element *pan* may imply פנים (*panim*), “face,” alluding to *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence. The element *has* can mean “He feels compassion,” alluding to *Tif’eret*, or *Rahamim* (Compassion). The small *yod* symbolizes *Yesod*, who unites the “two as one.”

On the two elements of the name פנחס (*Pinhas*), or פינחס (*Pinhas*), see *Sekhel Tov*, Exodus 6:25: “*She bore him* פנחס (*Pinhas*), *Phinehas*—שפנה וחס (*she-panah ve-has*), who turned and felt concern, for the Glory of his Maker [when he witnessed the immoral act of Zimri, as described in Numbers 25].” Cf. *Zohar* 3:237b-238a (*RM*).

In the Masoretic text the name of Aaron’s grandson פנחס (*Pinhas*) is always spelled with a ’ (*yod*). (In 1 Samuel 1:3, the spelling פנחס (*Pinhas*) refers to someone else with the same name.) On the *yod* in פנחס (*Pinhas*), see *Zohar* 3:213b. On its size in Numbers 25:11, see below at [note 39](#); *Zohar* 3:215b, 220a; Menaḥem Lonzano, *Shetei Yadot*, 20a-b; *Minḥat Shai*, Numbers 25:11; Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, Numbers 25:11, n. 72.

The expression רזא דמתניתין (*raza de-matnitin*), “the mystery of our Mishnah,” refers to a secret, mystical Mishnah often cited in the *Zohar* and apparently known only to its own circle. See *Zohar* 1:37b, 55b, 74a, 91b, 93a, 95b, 96a, 223b-224a, 252a (*Hash*); 2:5a (*MhN*), 123b; 3:61b, 75b, 77a, 78a, 284b, 285a, 292b (*IZ*), 293b (*IZ*), 295a (*IZ*); *ZH* 15b (*MhN*), 16a (*MhN*); Matt, “Matnita di-Lan.” The term *matnitin* here is to be distinguished from the passages of the *Zohar* known as *Matnitin*, on which see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 216; Gottlieb, *Mehqarim*, 163-214.

**35. Surely they are two...** Nadab and Abihu’s souls are two separate souls, which were originally incarnated respectively in Aaron’s two sons. So why didn’t these souls reincarnate in two people, rather than both in Phinehas?

**36. They each were half a body...** A person who is unmarried is considered to be “half a body,” lacking the completeness of the original androgynous *adam* (human).

Since Nadab and Abihu were each only “half a body,” they were combined as one whole in Phinehas. The wording in Exodus—*Phinehas. These are the heads...*—implies that Phinehas included two.

Cf. BT *Yevamot* 63a, in the name of Rabbi El’azar: “Any אדם (*adam*), man, who has no wife is not an *adam*, as is said: *Male and female He created them... and He named them adam* (Genesis 5:2).”

See above, [p. 13](#), [n. 37](#); [pp. 15-16](#), [nn. 45-47](#). On the androgynous nature of Adam, see above, [pp. 56-57](#), [n. 168](#). On the phrase “half a body,” see above, [p. 16](#), [n. 45](#). On the verse in Exodus, see above, [note 32](#).

**[37. The ’ \(yod\) of פינחס \(Pinhas\), Phinehas, was given to him...](#)** His name and nature became complete only when he acted zealously at Shittim (as described in Numbers 25). There the tribal chieftain Zimri son of Salu had sexual relations with a Midianite woman named Cozbi daughter of Zur, inserting the covenantal sign of circumcision “into another domain.” God was incensed and inflicted a plague upon the people, but immediately out of divine zeal, Phinehas killed the sinning couple and the plague ceased, whereupon Phinehas inherited the priesthood and the letter *yod*. This letter symbolizes *Yesod*, the divine phallus, which is known as Covenant.

Phinehas’s zeal was fueled by the souls of his uncles Nadab and Abihu, which were reincarnated (or “impregnated”) within him at just this critical moment. Thereby, the earlier sin of Nadab and Abihu was purged. They had *offered* אש זרה (*esh zarah*), *alien fire*, which ruined the union of the divine couple, impairing *Shekhinah*—and empowering instead Lilith, the אשה זרה (*ishah zarah*), *alien woman* (Proverbs 2:16; 7:5). Now, Phinehas (energized by the souls of Nadab and Abihu) rectified what had been contorted—by killing Zimri and his Midianite partner, who was an alien woman, *the daughter of an alien god*. Consequently the divine couple could reunite.

Rabbi Shim'on seems to imply here that the name פינחס (Pinchas) is not spelled with a ך (yod) until Numbers 25, but in fact it is always spelled so (when referring to Aaron's grandson). See *Minhat Shai*, Numbers 25:11; above, [note 34](#).

In rabbinic literature, the mark of circumcision is identified with the ך (yod) of the divine name שדי (Shaddai), which is also the initial letter of יהוה (YHVH). See *Tanhumah*, *Tsav* 14, *Shemini* 8; above, [p. 80](#), [n. 246](#).

On the *alien fire* and the *alien woman*, see above, [p. 223](#), [n. 53](#). On Lilith replacing *Shekhinah*, see below, [note 315](#). For the full verse in Numbers, see above, [note 31](#). The full verse in Malachi reads: *Judah has broken faith; an abhorrent act has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has desecrated the sanctuary of YHVH, which He loves, and has married the daughter of an alien god.* See *Zohar* 1:131b, 238b; 2:3b, 87b; 3:127a, 142a (*IR*), 213a, 266a.

**38. they brought near what was far...** By bringing *alien fire*, Nadab and Abihu brought the demonic feminine, Lilith, near the realm of holiness, instead of leaving her at a distance, where she belongs. Similarly, Zimri brought near his Midianite partner, Cozbi, who was an alien woman and should have been kept afar. Furthermore, he inserted the covenantal sign of circumcision into a foreign domain, thereby bringing “the Name of King”—symbolized by the mark of circumcision, which is identified with the letter ך (yod)—“near to what was far,” namely to this alien woman.

Phinehas reacted immediately, killing both Zimri and Cozbi and thereby rectifying the earlier contortion caused by Nadab and Abihu, who had brought *alien fire*. Then the *yod* was placed in his name, combining the two elements פן (*pan*) and סח (*has*) into פינחס (*Pinchas*), signifying that the divine couple was now reunited by *Yesod*. As a reward, Phinehas was invested with the priesthood and granted peace (symbolizing *Yesod*), as indicated in Numbers 25:12-13: *I*



*hereby grant him My covenant of peace. And it shall be for him and for his seed after him a covenant of perpetual priesthood in recompense for his acting zealously for his God and atoning for the Children of Israel.*

See above, [notes 34, 37](#). On *Yesod* as peace, see above, [p. 180, n. 41](#); *Zohar* 1:66b. Numbers 3:4 reads: *Nadab and Abihu died before YHVH when they offered [or: brought near] alien fire before YHVH...* On Zimri “bringing near what was far,” see Numbers 25:6: *And look, a man of the Children of Israel came and brought near to his kinsmen the Midianite woman...* Numbers 25:7 reads in full: *Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest saw, and he rose from the midst of the community and took a spear in his hand.*

**39. What is peace?...** This signifies *Yesod*, the sefirotic crown against which Nadab and Abihu sinned by ruining the divine union. Now that Phinehas (fueled by Nadab and Abihu’s reincarnated souls) has restored the union, his name is completed by a small *yod*, signifying not only *Yesod* but also *Shekhinah*, who is associated with all the small letters.

See above, [note 34](#). On *Shekhinah* and the small letters, see above, [p. 340, n. 32](#). For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**40. On Yom Kippur...** The main Torah reading for Yom Kippur morning consists of Leviticus 16, which mentions the death of Nadab and Abihu and then describes “the order of this day,” namely the offering of the two goats, *one for YHVH and one* [as a scapegoat to carry off Israel’s sins] *for Azazel* (Leviticus 16:8). Since sacrifices can no longer be offered (now that the Temple is destroyed), instead the people of Israel read the description of “the order of this day,” and by recalling and contemplating the death of Aaron’s two (basically) righteous sons, they can gain atonement. See above, [note 14](#).

**41. if a person undergoes chastenings...** Or if he feels distress over chastenings of the righteous, this purges



him of guilt. See BT *Berakhot* 5a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "Chastenings scour all of a person's sins."

On expressing sorrow over the death of the righteous, see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 25a: "Whoever weeps and mourns for a worthy person, all his sins are forgiven him." See BT *Shabbat* 105b.

On chastenings of the righteous, see BT *Berakhot* 5a: "Rava (some say, Rav H̄isda) said, 'If a person sees sufferings coming upon him, he should scrutinize his actions. ... If he does so and finds nothing [deserving of punishment], he should attribute it to neglecting the study of Torah.... If he does so and finds no [such neglect], then these are surely chastenings of love, as is said: *For the one whom YHVH loves He reproveth, as a father the son he delights in* (Proverbs 3:12).' Rava said, in the name of Rav Saḥora, in the name of Rav Huna, 'Whomever the blessed Holy One delights in, He crushes with chastenings, as is said: *YHVH delights in crushing him by disease* (Isaiah 53:10).... And if he accepts them, what is his reward? *He will see seed and prolong his days* (ibid.). Moreover, his learning will endure in his hand, as is said: *The desire of YHVH will succeed in his hand* (ibid.).'"

See above, [p. 283](#), [n. 83](#). The full verse in Isaiah 53 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 desire of YHVH will succeed in his hand.*

**42. YHVH said to Moses...** The full verse reads: *YHVH said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron your brother, that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary within the curtain, in front of the cover [or: purging cover] that is on the Ark, lest he die. For in the cloud I shall appear over the cover."* On the purging cover, see above, [note 1](#).

**43. before that day...** When a person dies and must render an account of all his actions before God, who owns the soul and entrusts it to him temporarily.

The verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place that the streams flow, there they flow again* [literally: *return to flow*]. In the *Zohar* this verse is expounded frequently, e.g., 1:19b, 29a; 2:30a, 220a, 234b; 3:6b, 43a.

**44. Every day a herald proclaims...** See *Zohar* 1:165a, 193a, 227a; 2:99a; 3:80a (all quoting Proverbs 9), and 3:126a (quoting the verse in Proverbs 1). The full verses in Proverbs 9, spoken by Lady Wisdom, read: *“Whoever is a fool, let him turn aside here, he who lacks sense”—she says to him: “Come, partake of my bread, and drink of the wine I have mixed!”*

**45. Torah is destined to be forgotten...** And even among the wise, no one will be able to “close and open,” which can mean to declare forbidden (or impure) and permitted (or pure). “From here on,” that is, from the time of Rabbi Shim’on, there will be no generation as great as his until the Messiah appears.

On Torah being forgotten, see BT *Shabbat* 138b: “When our Rabbis entered the vineyard at Yavneh, they said, ‘Torah is destined to be forgotten in Israel, as is said: *Behold, days are coming—declares my Lord God—when I will send a famine upon the land: not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of YHVH.* And it is written: *They will wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they will roam about to seek the word of YHVH, and they will not find it* (Amos 8:11–12).’... Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai said, ‘Heaven forbid that Torah will be forgotten in Israel, as is said: *It shall not be forgotten in the mouth of their seed* (Deuteronomy 31:21).’”

See *Mekhilta, Pisha* 12; *Tosefta Eduyyot* 1:1; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 392; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 89.

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, 147a; 3:159a, 206a, 236b, 241b. On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see also *Zohar* 1:225a; 2:149a, 156a; 3:79a, 105b, 287a; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 62-104. On Rabbi Shim'on's Messianic status, see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 1-84.

"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 the various connotations of the term *iddera*, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, 93-107.

On the phrase "close and open," see *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 13, p. 260; *Tanḥuma, Noah* 3. Cf. *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 321; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:25; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 25; BT *Gittin* 88a, *Sanhedrin* 38a; *Tanḥuma, Tazri'a* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Tazri'a* 13. On the verse in Jeremiah, see *Zohar* 3:23b, 130b (*IR*).

**46. A river issues from Eden...** In Kabbalah this river symbolizes the flow of emanation issuing from *Ḥokhmah*, conveyed by *Binah* through *Yesod*, entering the garden of *Shekhinah*. This river is named Yuval (Stream), or alternatively, Life, conveying life to King *Tif'eret*. The Tree of Life symbolizes *Tif'eret* together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Ḥesed* through *Yesod*), and this cosmic tree is rooted in Life (namely in the River of *Binah*). The final sentence implies that the two names of the river—Yuval and Life—harmonize, both referring to *Binah*.

On יובל (*yuval*), *stream*, as the name of the primordial river (often in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai), see

*Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:10; BT *Bekhorot* 55b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 6:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 16, 81a; *Tanḥuma, Pinḥas* 12; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:18; *Zohar* 2:83a, 98b; 3:97a, 290b (12); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 335; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 106; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 56 (69).

On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, [p. 14, n. 38](#). On Life of the King, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 153; Naḥmanides on Genesis 2:7 and Numbers 30:3; *Zohar* 1:29a-b; 2:115b (RM); 3:110a (RM), 255a (RM).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads.* 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.*

**47. That river gushes deep streams...** The River of *Binah* spreads streams of emanation to water the Garden of *Shekhinah* and to saturate all the sefirotic forces. The “two pillars” are *Netsaḥ* and *Hod*, pictured as two divine legs supporting the trunk of the sefirotic body. Situated beneath this trunk, they are described as “external.” They are called Jachin and Boaz, after the names of the two freestanding bronze pillars at the porch of Solomon’s Temple.

On *Netsaḥ* and *Hod* being outside or beneath the trunk of the body, see *Zohar* 1:21b, 146a, 166a; 2:110b, 227a, 257b-258a (*Heikh*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 337; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 11 (13-14). On the Temple pillars Jachin and Boaz, see 1 Kings 7:15-22; *Zohar* 3:90b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 337. On the verse in Psalms, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 15:1; above, [p. 6, n. 19](#).

**48. a certain level called Righteous One...** The streams of emanation pour into *Yesod*, who is known as Righteous One, and He conveys the entire flow to *Shekhinah*. She is known as Sea of Wisdom, the culmination of the

process that began at the primordial point of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom).

On *Yesod* as Righteous One (and the verse in Proverbs), see above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#). On *Shekhinah* as Sea of Wisdom, see *Bahir* 65 (96); *Zohar* 2:19b; 3:137b (*IR*).

The full verse in Ecclesiastes reads: *All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place that the streams flow, there they flow again* [literally: *return to flow*].

**49. For if you say...** One might think that the streams of emanation reach *Shekhinah* and then cease; but the verse in Ecclesiastes demonstrates that *the streams... return*, because the River of *Binah* flows and feeds them ceaselessly. *They return* to *Netsah* and *Hod*, in order *to flow* into *Yesod*.

Cf. *Zohar* 2:50b. As mentioned in the preceding note, the verse reads: *To the place that the streams flow, there they flow again* [literally: *return to flow*].

**50. Leviathan whom You formed to play with...** The sea monster Leviathan symbolizes *Yesod*. Rabbi Shim'on derives the name לִיְיָטָן (*Livyatan*), *Leviathan*, from the root לוֹה (*lvh*), "to accompany, join," alluding to *Yesod's* union with *Shekhinah*, which is joyous and playful. *Yesod* is also known as זֶה (*zeh*), which usually means "this" but in the present verse *whom*. The full verse (describing the vast ocean) reads: *There the ships go, לִיְיָטָן זֶה (Livyatan zeh), Leviathan whom, You formed to play with.*

Since *Yesod* conveys the rich flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*, all beings below *look in hope* to Him (and Her) to receive nourishment. The expression *its* [or: *his*] *time* refers to *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*), who is the *time* of *Yesod*, uniting with Him at certain times.

On *Yesod* as Leviathan, see *Zohar* 2:11b, 48b, 50b; 3:60a (all of which quote Psalms 104:26); Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 17; 169, n. 51. Cf. *Zohar* 1:247a. On *Yesod* as *zeh*, see above, [pp. 180–81](#), [n. 42](#). On the erotic sense of *to play*, see Genesis 26:8; Exodus 32:6.

**51. When this *all* sweetens *its time*...** *Yesod*, who conveys the entire flow of emanation, is known as *all*. When He sweetens *Shekhinah* (*its time*), all worlds share in their bliss. But when human wickedness dominates, the streams do not reach *Shekhinah* and She imbibes from the demonic Other Side, which inflicts harsh judgments upon the world. In order to remedy this grave situation, people must turn to the priest (who symbolizes *Hesed*), so that he will stimulate that sefirotic crown to emanate to *Yesod*, who will convey blessing to *Shekhinah* and on to the worlds below.

**52. when Moses was asking...** Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, had sinned against *Shekhinah* and disrupted Her union with the Divine Male. When Moses asked God how harmony and blessing would be restored, God replied that this depended on Aaron, who symbolizes *Hesed*.

**53. YHVH said to Moses...** For the full verse, see above, [note 42](#).

**54. There are times before the blessed Holy One...** Certain times are propitious for prayer, and certain ones are not because harsh Judgment dominates. And sometimes Judgment is temporarily suspended yet looming.

On certain times being favorable for prayer, see *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 3:23; *JT Makkot* 2:6, 31d; *Eikhah Rabbah* 3:60; *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber) 3:44; *BT Berakhot* 7b-8a; *Rosh ha-Shanah* 18a; *Yevamot* 49b, 105a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 24:2; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:12; *Tanḥuma, Miqquets* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Miqquets* 11; *Midrash Tehillim* 4:3; 65:4; 69:2.

**55. There are times in the year...** Rabbi Shim'on is probably referring to specific times of the year, month, day, and even hour.

The months of Tammuz, Av, and Tevet are all characterized by harsh Judgment. Traditionally, on the seventeenth of Tammuz, the walls of Jerusalem were breached; on the ninth of Av, the First and Second Temples



were destroyed; on the tenth of Tevet, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began. See 2 Kings 25:1-3; Jeremiah 52:4-6; *Zohar* 2:12a, 78b; 3:174a, 259a; *ZH* 36d (*RR*), 92d (*MhN*, *Eikhah*).

The first half of the month (as the moon waxes) is a time of favor, whereas the second half (as it wanes) is a time of Judgment. On certain times of the week being dangerous or inauspicious, see BT *Shabbat* 129b, 156a; *Pesaḥim* 112b; *Zohar* 2:205a.

According to *Mekhilta*, *Beshallah* 5, the morning is considered auspicious for prayer. In the *Zohar*, morning (and sometimes the preceding second half of the night) are characterized by *Ḥesed* (or *Raḥamim*), whereas afternoon (and the first half of the night) are dominated by *Din*. See *Zohar* 1:132b, 182b, 230a; 2:21a-b (*MhN*), 63a, 81a, 156a; 3:64b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 66-67. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaḡar*; *Haggahot Maharḡu*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**56. As for me, may my prayer...** Certain times are auspicious and favorable, whereas at other times God is *far off*. Consequently, God instructed Aaron *that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary*.

On the verse in Psalm 69, see the sources cited above, [note 54](#) (except for BT *Rosh ha-Shanah*; *Yevamot*; and *Midrash Tehillim* 4:3); *Zohar* 1:105b, 116b; 2:156a, 253b; 3:129a (*IR*). On the verse in Isaiah, see, e.g., *Sifrei*, Numbers 42; JT *Berakhot* 5:1, 8d-9a; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 18a, *Yevamot* 49b, 105a; *Zohar* 1:105b; 3:79b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 169-70.

**57. We have established the expression in its time...** Above (at [note 50](#)), Rabbi Shim'on had indicated that *its time* refers to *Shekhinah*, who is the *time* of *Yesod*. After the death of Aaron's two sons (Nadab and Abihu), God warned Aaron not to repeat their sin, which ruined the union of the divine couple, impairing *Shekhinah* and empowering Lilith in Her place. In effect, they joined Lilith

—“a different *time*”—to the Divine Male. If Aaron “sees a time” when the demonic Other Side has control over the world, he must not draw Lilith toward holiness, since the Divine Male and *Shekhinah* (who is known as “My Name”) must remain united, and *Shekhinah* must not be replaced by Her demonic counterpart. The divine command that Aaron must *not enter* *אל הקדש בכל עת* (*ve-khol et el ha-qodesh*), *at all times into the sanctuary*, now means that he must *not enter with all times*—and especially that he not bring the demonic time—to *the holiness*. On the disastrous effect of Nadab and Abihu’s sin, see above, [note 37](#).

**58. בזאת (Be-zot), With this, shall Aaron enter the sanctuary...** He must enter the sanctuary only with *Shekhinah*, who is known as *zot, this*. She is the *time* joined to the Divine Name; She is symbolized by the letter ה (*he*), the final letter of יהוה (*YHVH*).

On *Shekhinah* as *zot* (and the verse in Leviticus), see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). The full verse reads: *With this shall Aaron enter the sanctuary, with a bull from the herd for a purification offering [or: an offense offering] and a ram for an ascent offering.*

**59. Everything He has made beautiful in its time...** According to the Holy Lamp (Rabbi Shim’on), this verse means that *Yesod*—who includes the entire flow of emanation and is thus known as כל (*kol*), *everything*—is made *beautiful* בעתו (*ve-itto*), *with its time*, namely by being united with *Shekhinah*. He should not be united with another, demonic *time*.

See the preceding two notes. On “the Holy Lamp” as Rabbi Shim’on’s title, see above, [pp. 32–33](#), [n. 98](#).

**60. before his father...** Rabbi Shim’on. Rabbi El’azar begins to discuss the verse in Numbers, which describes the miraculous death of Korah’s assembly. By linking the verb *perished* with the same verb in Leviticus, he suggests that the rebels’ souls *perished*.

According to a rabbinic tradition (reported in some sources in the name of Rabbi Akiva), the wording *They perished from the midst of the congregation* means that Korah and his followers have no share in the world that is coming. See M *Sanhedrin* 10:3; *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13:9; JT *Sanhedrin* 10:3, 29c; BT *Sanhedrin* 109b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 41; *Midrash Tehillim* 49:3.

The full verse in Numbers reads: *They went down, they and all that was theirs, alive to Sheol, and the earth covered them, and they perished from the midst of the congregation.* The full verse in Leviticus (discussing Yom Kippur) reads: *Any person who does any work on this very day—I shall make that soul [or: person] perish from the midst of her [or: his] people.*

**61. It is different with the sons of Aaron...** Nadab and Abihu's souls did not perish but were rather eventually reincarnated in Phinehas. In the story of Korah's assembly, the wording *All of us perish!* includes the two hundred and fifty community chieftains who joined the rebellion and were consumed by divine fire when they offered incense.

On Nadab and Abihu's reincarnation in Phinehas, see above, [note 32](#). On the two hundred and fifty chieftains, see Numbers 16:2, 16-22, 35. The full verse in Numbers 17 reads: *The Children of Israel said to Moses, "Look, we die, we perish, all of us perish!"*

**62. why is it not written at which time...** Rabbi El'azar wonders why God didn't specify when Aaron should enter the sanctuary, namely on Yom Kippur, as is mentioned later in the chapter (Leviticus 16:29-34). Cf. *Vayiqra Rabbah* 21:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 10:7.

**63. this has already been explained...** The expression *at all times* does not indicate primarily "when" Aaron should not enter, but rather "how" he should not enter—warning him not to enter with the demonic *time*. This corresponds with the command in the next verse: *With this shall Aaron enter*, namely with *Shekhinah* (who is known

as *this*). So *at all times* matches *with this*, “and it is one word.” Actually, the priests knew that the high priest should enter the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur; here God wanted to warn Aaron about the nature of his sons’ sin. See above, [notes 57-58](#).

**64. All sacrifices and ascent offerings are pleasurable...** As implied by Numbers 28:2: *My offering, My bread, for My fire offerings, My pleasing aroma, you shall take care to offer to Me at its fixed time*. However, incense provides God with the greatest pleasure, so on Yom Kippur it was offered in the Holy of Holies.

Because of the special significance of incense, Nadab and Abihu were punished by death when they offered incense with *alien fire* (Leviticus 10:1-2), and the two hundred and fifty rebellious community chieftains were consumed by divine fire when they offered incense. (See also 2 Chronicles 26:16-21, where King Uzziah is punished with scaly affliction for offering incense in the Temple.) In contrast, severe punishment is not recorded in narratives involving any other offerings. Rabbi Shim’on associates the Hebrew word קטרת (*qetoret*), “incense,” with the Aramaic root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie, bind,” indicating that this unique offering unites the *sefirot*.

See above, [p. 60](#), [n. 183](#). On the significance of incense, see above, [p. 16](#), [n. 47](#). On the incense being offered “within,” cf. above, [p. 174](#), [n. 20](#). On the verse in Proverbs, see above, [p. 35](#), [n. 103](#); [p. 175](#), [n. 21](#).

**65. As for fragrance, your oils are fine...** The ascending fragrance joins and stimulates the flow of emanation, which then illumines the sefirotic rungs.

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of the Holy Name *YHVH*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#).

**66. עולמות (*olamot*), worlds...** Who *love you* because the flow of blessing reaches all of them.

For this play on words (in relation to this verse), see BT *Avodah Zarah* 35b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:3; *Zohar*

3:71b.

**67. Upon עלמות שיר (*alamot shir*), maidens of song...**  
Angelic maidens accompanying *Shekhinah*.

The superscription to Psalm 46 reads: *Upon עלמות שיר (alamot shir), alamot, a song*. In this verse *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.” Here, Rabbi Shim’on understands *alamot shir* as *maidens of song*, associating *alamot* with the quoted verse in Song of Songs, where the word clearly means *maidens*.

“All is one” apparently implies that the two interpretations of *alamot* in the verse from Song of Songs—*alamot*, “worlds,” and *alamot*, “maidens”—are entirely compatible, since the angelic maidens occupy a world directly beneath the sefirotic world.

On the term *alamot*, see Psalms 9:1; 48:15; 1 Chronicles 15:20. On its connection with *maidens*, see *Zohar* 1:158b-159a; 2:144b, 227b.

**68. In the Book of Rav Hamnuna Sava...** This venerable sage explained (based on the verse in Proverbs) that *Shekhinah* provides nourishment for Her angelic maidens. On Rav Hamnuna Sava and his book, see above, [p. 14](#), [n. 38](#).

**69. על מות (*al mavet*), [those] over death, love you...**  
Now the word עלמות (*alamot*), *maidens*, yields another meaning by being split into two words: על מות (*al mavet*), *over death*. Even the masters of judgment, appointed *over death, love you*, having been assuaged by the fragrant incense.

On the connection between incense and binding, see above, [note 64](#). On the incense and oil, see above, [note 65](#). On the play on *alamot* and *al mavet*, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 35b; cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:3.

**70. I am like incense, and You are like oil...** *Shekhinah* likens Herself to incense, whose fragrance ascends toward

*Tif'eret*, and She likens Him to oil, flowing down toward Her.

Rabbi Shim'on explains why the verse combines the singular object (*Draw*) *me* and the plural construction *let us run*. The word *me* refers to the speaker, *Shekhinah*, while *let us run* includes the angelic *maidens* accompanying Her and dependent upon Her.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Draw me after you, let us run! The king has brought me into his chambers. Let us delight and rejoice in you. Let us savor your lovemaking more than wine. Rightly do they love you.*

**71. The king has brought me...** King *Tif'eret* has brought *Shekhinah* into his chambers. Again, the plural construction—*let us delight...*—includes *Shekhinah* and Her maidens.

**72. Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult...** Referring to heaven and earth and/or alluding to *Tif'eret* (symbolized by heaven) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by earth).

**73. For in the cloud I appear over the cover** The full verse reads: *YHVH said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron your brother, that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary within the curtain, in front of the cover [or: purging cover] that is on the Ark, lest he die. For in the cloud I shall appear [or: I appear] over the cover."*

**74. Happy are the righteous...** Whom God honors greatly. The high priest was forbidden to *enter at all times into the sanctuary* because God appeared there *in the cloud*. Yet Moses was allowed to enter *within the cloud*. The exclamation "*within the cloud, really!*" indicates that *the cloud* symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

On Elijah being honored by riding on God's horse, see *Tanḥuma, Va'era* 8, *Naso* 30; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 7, *Naso* 34, *Beha'alotekha* 15; *Midrash Tehillim* 21:2; *Shemot Rabbah* 8:1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:3. Cf. *M Sanhedrin* 2:5.

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, 96b–98a; *Zohar* 1:66a; 2:51b, 58a, 99a, 197a, 229a; 3:78b.

The full verse in Kings reads: *As they [Elijah and Elisha] were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind to heaven.* The verse in Exodus reads: *Moses entered within the cloud and went up the mountain.*

**75. The place where those cherubim settled...** The כַּפֹּרֶת (*kapporet*), *cover* (or *purging cover*), was a solid slab of pure gold, placed over 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. See above, [note 1](#).

According to BT *Bava Batra* 99a (in the name of Shemu’el), the cherubim (in Solomon’s Temple) “stood miraculously.” Here, Rabbi Shim’on describes the miraculous nature of the cherubim. They were not immobile figures, but rather moved their wings on their own, lifting them three times daily (presumably at the times of prayer) and then lowering them. 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 *Yoma* 21a; *Zohar* 1:228b; 2:152b, 176a, 278a; 3:59b, 67a; *ZH* 43b. On the wording *spreading wings* and *sheltering with their wings*, see *Zohar* 1:228b; 2:278a; *ZH* 43b; *Nitsotsei Orot*. The full verse in Exodus reads: *The cherubim shall be spreading wings above, sheltering the cover [or: the purging cover] with their wings, and their*

*faces toward each other, toward the cover the faces of the cherubim shall be.*

**76. What is this doing here...** These verses indicate that *Shekhinah* appeared *over the cover* and in *the sanctuary*. (In Leviticus 16:3, according to the *Zohar*, *this* refers to *Shekhinah*.) But how can this be, since the priest did not actually see *Shekhinah*? Rabbi Abba explains that although the priest did not see *Shekhinah*, he knew that She was present from the fluttering of the cherubim's wings and their song.

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On *this* as a name of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 58](#).

**77. What song did they sing?...** On the cherubim's singing, see *Zohar* 1:231a-b; 3:67a; *ZH* 43a.

The context in Psalm 98 (8-9) reads: *Let the rivers clap hands, let the mountains together sing gladly before YHVH, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.* Here, this verse is conflated with Psalms 9:9: *He will judge the world with righteousness, render judgment upon the nations with equity.*

**78. sheltering, precisely...** Miraculously, as explained above, [note 75](#).

The verse in Ezekiel describes the angelic *ḥayyot* (living beings), carrying the Divine Throne: *I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of mighty waters, like the sound of Shaddai, as they moved...*

**79. במישרים (be-meisharim), with equity...** According to Rabbi Yose, this verse means that *Shekhinah* will render judgment upon the nations through the cherubim, who are known as מישרים (*meisharim*). This word—deriving from the root ישר (*yshr*), “to be straight”—alludes here to the two cherubim (one male and one female) looking directly at each other or uniting.

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.

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.’”

See Rashbam on *Bava Batra* 99a, s.v. *kan bi-zman*; *Zohar* 2:152b, 176a, 277b–278a; 3:59b, 67a. The full verse in Numbers reads: *When Moses came into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he would hear the voice being spoken [or: speaking itself, continually speaking] to him from above the cover [or: purging cover] that is over the Ark of the Covenant, from between the two cherubim, and He would speak to him.*

**80. wherever male and female are not found...** One who is unmarried is incomplete and unworthy to behold the face of *Shekhinah*. The verse in Psalm 140 now implies that only ישרים (*yesharim*), *the upright*—namely those who are male and female, facing one another directly—*will dwell in Your presence*.

God is both male and female, as implied by the verse in Deuteronomy, where *righteous* alludes to *Yesod* (known as Righteous One) and *upright* apparently alludes to *Shekhinah*. Likewise, the cherubim were male and female, *their faces toward each other*, ensuring that *Shekhinah* would settle upon them.

On the importance of being “male and female,” see above, [note 36](#). On the sense of *righteous and upright* in the verse from Deuteronomy, see *Zohar* 3:285a, 297a–b; *ZH* 70b, 75a, 84b, 86b.

The full verse in Psalm 140 reads: *Surely the righteous will acclaim Your name, the upright will dwell in Your presence.* On the verse in Psalm 99, cf. above, [p. 238](#) at [n. 102](#). For the full verse in Exodus, see above, [note 75](#).

**[81](#). Once the world was in need of rain...** So the Companions came to Rabbi Shim'on, renowned for his spiritual powers.

Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir was a second-century rabbi who lived in Palestine, renowned for his saintliness and ability to work miracles. In the *Zohar* he is a revered member of Rabbi Shim'on's circle. Such special recognition is to be expected since, according to BT *Shabbat* 33b, Rabbi Pinḥas was the son-in-law of Rabbi Shim'on. However, the *Zohar* elevates Pinḥas further by transforming him into Rabbi Shim'on's father-in-law. See above, [p. 211](#), [n. 12](#).

Rabbi Shim'on greets the Companions with an appropriate verse from Psalms, which he interprets as alluding to the cherubim, as well as to the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. Both of these couples can be pictured as *brothers* (or partners). The verse in Exodus describes the two cherubim, who are sometimes pictured as male and female, facing each other when Israel fulfills God's will and turning away from each other when Israel sins. When the male and female cherubim (and their divine counterparts, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*) face one another and unite, *how good and how pleasant* it is for the world! But when they are separated, the world suffers, for example, by the drought referred to here.

The verse in Proverbs—*Some are swept away without justice*—now implies that when *Tif'eret* (known as *justice*) withdraws from *Shekhinah*, harsh Judgment can prevail, “sweeping away” anyone, even the innocent. It is vital that *justice* be united with *righteousness* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*), as implied by the verse in Psalm 89: *Righteousness and*

*justice are the foundation of Your throne.* Together, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* constitute the *throne* of *Binah*.

On the cherubim turning toward and away from one another, see above, [note 79](#). On the divine male and female facing (and not facing) one another, see *Zohar* 2:176b (*SdT*s); Vol. 5, pp. 545–46, n. 3. The full verse in Exodus reads: *The cherubim shall be spreading wings above, sheltering the cover [or: the purging cover] with their wings, and their faces toward each other [literally: a man toward his brother], toward the cover the faces of the cherubim shall be.*

On the verse in Proverbs, see above, [p. 246](#), [n. 130](#). On the verse in Psalm 89, see *Zohar* 2:122a; 3:73b, 85b, 287a, 291b (*iz*). The verse in Psalm 133 opens: *A song of ascents for David.* On this narrative (extending below to p. 421 at n. 198), see Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 180–81, n. 128; idem, “Zohar ve-Eros,” 109; idem, *Alilot Elohim*, 312–13; Meroz, “Reqimato shel Mitos,” 169–86, 194–97; Asulin, “Ha-Pegam ve-Tiqquno,” 239–44.

**[82.](#) because the male does not abide with the female...** The lack of divine union causes harsh Judgment, which here produced drought. Rabbi Shim'on assures the Companions that the divine couple will reunite.

**[83.](#) We have come to the Master for all...** Both to end the drought (by reuniting *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*) and to learn new aspects of Torah. “The good news” is the forecast of rain.

**[84.](#) Black am I but beautiful...** According to the Midrash on Song of Songs, this verse is spoken by the people of Israel to God. Here, “Assembly of Israel” can refer both to the people and to *Shekhinah*, who suffers with them in exile yet is adorned by their devotion to the *mitsvot*.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:5; *Shemot Rabbah* 23:10; 49:2. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#). On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#). The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Black am I but*

*beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem—like the tents of Kedar, like Solomon’s curtains.*

**85. Like the tents of קדר (Qedar), Kedar...** This nomadic Arabian tribe wove its tents from the wool of black goats. Here Rabbi Shim’on plays on the root קדר (*qdr*), “to become dark,” teaching that even though Israel is exiled to exposed mountainous regions, where their faces are darkened by the sun, they still retain the pure appearance of heaven. The reference to *Solomon’s curtains* suggests the purity of heaven, since the heavens are spread *like a curtain*.

The wording “like the appearance of heaven for purity” derives from *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 24:10. That verse 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.* The full verse in Psalms reads: *Wrapped in light like a cloak, spreading the heavens like a curtain.*

**86. אל תראוני (Al tir’uni), You cannot see me...** The simple sense of the verse is: *Do not look at me for I am blackish, because the sun has scorched [or: gazed upon] me.* Rabbi Shim’on transforms this to *You cannot see me because the sun has darkened me*—that is, *Tif’eret* (symbolized by *the sun*) has turned away from Me, leaving Me unilluminated—so *I am blackish*.

See above, [pp. 279–80](#), [n. 72](#). The full verse reads: *Do not look at me for I am blackish, because the sun has scorched [or: gazed upon] me. My mother’s sons were incensed at me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; my own vineyard I did not keep.*

**87. My mother’s sons were incensed at me...** Referring to the angelic princes of the seventy nations of the world, who are *sons* of *Shekhinah*, Israel’s *mother*. They have persecuted Israel. On these seventy heavenly princes, see above, [pp. 6–7](#), [n. 21](#).



**88. my mother's sons, literally...** According to this interpretation, *Shekhinah* is speaking the verse, referring to the *sons* of Her Divine Mother, *Binah*, namely the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, whose core is *Tif'eret* (known as *heaven*).

The verse in Lamentations reads: *He has cast down from heaven to earth* תפארת ישראל (*tif'eret yisra'el*), *the beauty* [or: *splendor*] *of Israel*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on interprets this to mean *He has cast down earth* [symbolizing *Shekhinah*] *from heaven...* [symbolizing *Tif'eret* together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him]. Alternatively, construing the concluding phrase as the subject, he reads it as: תפארת ישראל (*Tif'eret Yisra'el*), *The beauty of Israel, has cast down earth from heaven*.

Why has *Shekhinah* become *keeper of the vineyards*—that is, of the nations of the world among whom Israel has been exiled (thereby ensuring Her people's sustenance)? Because *my own vineyard I did not keep*—She did not keep Israel from sinning or discipline them effectively.

On the verse in Lamentations, see *Zohar* 1:219a, 238a, 242b; 2:175a; 3:72a, 74a. For the full verse in Song of Songs, see above, [note 86](#).

**89. My mother's sons, surely...** The sefirotic sons of the Divine Mother *Binah* concurred in keeping *Shekhinah* away from them when She (symbolized by *earth*) was removed from *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *heaven*).

The verse in Exodus describes Moses' sister, Miriam, waiting by the Nile to see what will happen to her baby brother: *His sister stationed herself afar, to know what would be done to him*. Here, it alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is the sister (or partner) of *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Moses) and who is now distanced 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 (where Rabbi Yitshak interprets *his sister* as referring to *Shekhinah*); *Shemot Rabbah* 1:22; *Zohar* 1:6a, 219a; 2:12a, 125b; 3:103a, 174b.

**90. the dwelling of brothers** גַּם יחד (*gam yahad*), **also together...** As opposed to the separation just described, this verse in Psalms alludes to union.

In rabbinic hermeneutics the emphatic particle גַּם (*gam*), “also, too,” can amplify the literal meaning of a biblical word or phrase. Here, Rabbi Shim’on applies this principle to the verse in Psalms, where *gam* could serve to include *Shekhinah*—as supported by the proof-text in Leviticus, where *gam* is linked with זֹאת (*zot*), *this*, a name of *Shekhinah*. However, the phrase *the dwelling of brothers* is “inclusive,” already including *Shekhinah*, since these *brothers* represent the divine couple, *Shekhinah* and *Tif’eret* (together with His surrounding *sefirot*). So here, *gam* includes the higher *sefirot*, where dominion is rooted.

On the amplifying power of *gam*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:14; JT *Berakhot* 9:5, 14b; above, [p. 33](#), [n. 98](#); *Zohar* 3:115b. On the sefirotic *brothers*, see above, [note 81](#). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Yet even this too—when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or loathe them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with them, for I YHVH am their God.*

**91. Alternatively... those Companions...** The verse in Psalms can refer to the Companions who are devoted to Torah. Although they begin by battling one another over the meaning of something, eventually they manifest brotherly love.

The word *gam*, *also*, now amplifies the meaning to include *Shekhinah*, who settles upon those who engage in Torah. Meanwhile, the blessed Holy One Himself listens to their words and delights in such faithful servants.

On the transition from bitter dispute to brotherly love, see BT *Qiddushin* 30b, in the name of Rabbi Hiyya son of Abba: “Even father and son, master and disciple, who are engaged in Torah at the same gate become each other’s enemies. Yet, they do not stir from there until they come אוהבים (*ohavim*), to love, one another, as is said: את והב בסופה (*et*

*vahev be-sufah*), *Waheb in a whirlwind* (Numbers 21:14)—do not read בסופה (*be-sufah*), *in a whirlwind*, but rather בסופה (*be-sofah*), at its end.”

See Rashi, ad loc.; *Leqah Tov*, Numbers 21:20; *Zohar* 2:56a; 3:42a (RM), 278b (RM). On the battle of Torah, see also *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 34; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:25; BT *Shabbat* 63a, *Megillah* 15b, *Hagigah* 14a, *Sanhedrin* 42a, 93b, 111b; *Rut Rabbah* 4:3; *Tanḥuma*, Noah 3, *Vezot Haberakhah* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 45:6; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* on 3:8; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:3; 13:10; *Zohar* 1:17b, 226a, 240b; 2:110a–b; 3:127b (IR), 188a–189b; *ZH* 14a (MhN).

On the verse in Malachi in the context of studying Torah, see M *Avot* 3:2: “Rabbi Ḥananya son of Teradyon says, ‘...If two are sitting engaged in words of Torah, *Shekhinah* dwells between them, as is said: *Then those who revere YHVH spoke with one another; and YHVH listened attentively, and it was written in a book of remembrance in His presence concerning those who revere YHVH and contemplate His name.*”

See BT *Shabbat* 63a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish, “When two scholars are amiable to one another in *halakhah*, the blessed Holy One listens to them, as is said: *Then those who revere YHVH spoke with one another, [and YHVH listened attentively].*”

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:13. In the Masoretic text of Malachi, the wording is ויכתב ספר זכרון (*va-yikkatev sefer zikkaron*), *and a book of remembrance was written, before Him*. However, the Kaufmann manuscript of the Mishnah reads (in M *Avot* 3:2, 6): ויכתב בספר זכרון (*va-yikkatev be-sefer zikkaron*), *and it was written in a book of remembrance, before Him*. The latter reading is preserved here in numerous *Zohar* manuscripts, as well as the Mantua and Cremona editions.

See *Ester Rabbah* 6:14; *Rut Rabbah* 4:5; *Minḥat Shai* on the verse; Vol. 6, p. 238, n. 394. The full verse in

Malachi reads: *Then those who revere YHVH spoke with one another; and YHVH listened attentively, and a book of remembrance was written before Him concerning those who revere YHVH and contemplate His name.*

**92. just as you have been previously...** In brotherly love.

On the mutual love of the Companions, see *Zohar* 2:190b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 37-43. The full verse in Psalm 122 reads: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions, let me say, "Peace be within you."* This verse is addressed to Jerusalem; but according to a midrashic interpretation, it is sung by God, who refers to the Israelites as *my brothers and my companions*. See above, [p. 32, n. 97](#).

**93. I am privileged to kiss *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 welcomes his teacher is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'... Rabbi Yishma'el taught... 'One who welcomes his friend is considered as if he welcomes *Shekhinah*.'"

The *Zohar* sometimes 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 and they are revealed" (2:163b).

See above, [pp. 23-24, n. 75](#); and *Zohar* 3:201b, where Rabbi Pinhas kisses Rabbi Shim'on and declares, "I have kissed the mouth of YHVH." On Rabbi Shim'on's divine status, see *Zohar* 1:218b, 223a; 2:38a; 3:61b, 79b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 239-40, n. 68.

**94. wheeled canopied couches of closely woven ropes** Rabbi Pinhas arranges comfortable seating or beds for his guests.

“Wheeled canopied couches...” is a conjectural rendering of the neologistic phrase טיקלי דערשי קפטורי דקילטא (*tiqlei de-arsei qaftorei de-qilta*). *Tiqlei* is the plural of the Zoharic neologism טיקלא (*tiqla*), which has a wide range of meaning in the *Zohar*, including “potter’s wheel, scale, hollow of the hand, fist, water-clock.” See Vol. 5, p. 8, n. 22; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 334. As Liebes suggests, here *tiqlei* may mean “wheels.” The plural noun ערשי (*arsei*) is probably an alternate spelling of ערסי (*arsei*), “beds, couches.”

Liebes also speculates that *tiqlei de-arsei* may be influenced by the Rabbinic phrase נקליטי המטה (*naqlitei ha-mittah*), “poles (or posts) of the bed,” connected by a cross-pole over which a net or a sheet is spread forming a slanting cover or canopy. See M *Sukkah* 1:3; *Kelim* 18:3.

The root קפטר (*qftr*) in the *Zohar* often conveys the sense of “tying, binding,” apparently based on the root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie.” See above, [p. 55](#), [n. 164](#). On the connection between *qftr* and “rope,” see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 4:2 (and Margulies’s n. 3, pp. 81–82); *Qohelet Rabbah* on 6:6; *Tanḥuma, Miqqets* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Miqqets* 15 (and Buber’s n. 116); *Arukh* and *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *pi turei*; Rashi on *Berakhot* 8a, s.v. *ke-fiturei*; *Zohar* 2:183b (Vol. 6, p. 31, n. 79); 3:102a; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 350.

The root קלט (*qlt*) can mean “clutch tightly.” See *Zohar* 2:209a (Vol. 6, p. 193, n. 250), where the phrase דקילטא אקופטרא (*aquftera de-qilta*) may mean “closely concatenated.” For various translations and interpretations of the entire phrase (or its elements), see also *Or Yaqar*; *Derekh Emet*; Luria, *Va-Ye’esof David*, s.v. *tiqlei de-arsa, qftr*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Soncino; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*; Meroz, “Reqimato shel Mitoš,” 172, 174–75.

**95. Torah does not require this...** Rabbi Shim’on prefers simplicity and austerity over comfort, so Rabbi Pinḥas removes the fancy couches.

See *Avot* 6:4: “This is the way of Torah. Bread with salt shall you eat, and water by measure shall you drink, and on

the ground shall you sleep, and a life of trouble shall you live—while you toil in Torah. If you do so, *Happy will you be, and it will be well with you* (Psalms 128:2): *Happy will you be* in this world, *and it will be well with you* in the world that is coming.”



See *Tosafot, Ketubbot* 104a, s.v. *lo neheneiti*; *Zohar* 1:242a; above, [pp. 43-44](#) at [n. 133](#). In *Or Ne'erav*, 3:2, Moses Cordovero quotes this passage from the *Zohar* and writes: "I have heard that the ancient ones used to sit on the ground when they taught this wisdom to students, in order to humble them and instill reverence in them."

**96. all words of Rabbi Shim'on are revealed...** He fears no one and boldly reveals secrets of Torah.

On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on, see above, [p. 91](#), [n. 275](#). On his boldness, see *Zohar* 3:61a, 79b. On Rabbi Shim'on as a lion, see JT *Shabbat* 10:5, 12c; BT *Bava Metsi'a* 84b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:24; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 10, p. 190; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 11:2; *Zohar* 1:223a; 2:15a (*MhN*); 3:79b, 196a; Yisraeli, *Parshanut ha-Sod ve-Sod ha-Parshanut*, 48, 92-93; Meroz, "Reqimato shel Mitoš," 186, n. 78; Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 140-78; Asulin, "Ha-Pegam ve-Tiqquno," 213.

**97. YHVH spoke to Moses...** This opening verse of the portion *Aḥarei Mot* seems superfluous because it includes no divine speech and is immediately followed by *YHVH said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron your brother..."*, which thus seems to be the actual beginning of the portion.

On the apparent redundancy of *YHVH spoke to Moses.... YHVH said to Moses*, see *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 1:3, 79d; above, [note 2](#).

The context in Leviticus (16:1-2) reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they encroached upon the presence of YHVH [or: drew near before YHVH, came forward before YHVH] and died. YHVH said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron your brother, that he not enter at all times into the sanctuary within the curtain, in front of the cover [or: the purging cover] that is on the Ark, lest he die. For in the cloud I shall appear over the cover."* See above, [note 1](#).

**98. when the blessed Holy One presented aromatic incense to Aaron...** God wanted Aaron alone to offer

incense because it binds all the *sefirot* together, bringing peace and harmony, and Aaron was already gifted with the ability to increase peace. Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, recklessly offered incense while their father was still alive, and this caused them to sin with *alien fire*, as described in Leviticus 10:1-2: *The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, took each of them his firepan and put fire in it and placed incense upon it and offered alien fire before YHVH, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from before YHVH and consumed them, and they died before YHVH.*

On Aaron's passionate talent for peace, see M *Avot* 1:12, in the name of Hillel: "Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving human beings and drawing them near Torah." See *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:37, 45d-46a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 12; B, 24-25; BT *Yoma* 71b, *Sanhedrin* 6b; *Zohar* 3:88a. On the significance of *alien fire*, see above, [note 37](#); [p. 223](#), [n. 53](#).

**99. Moses wondered what caused this error...** The apparently superfluous verse reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they encroached upon the presence of YHVH and died.* As explained above ([note 97](#)), this is immediately followed by the seemingly redundant *YHVH said to Moses* (etc.). Rabbi El'azar eliminates the problem by construing *when they encroached* ... as God's speech, explaining to Moses why Nadab and Abihu died: *they encroached*—or *drew near* prematurely—forcing the hour by offering incense in their father's lifetime. As the earlier verse (in Leviticus 10) states, *He had not commanded them*, implying that Aaron alone had been *commanded* to offer incense.

On Nadab and Abihu "forcing the hour," see *Zohar* 3:33b, 37b, 56b. Cf. *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:21, 44d: "[Nadab and Abihu] saw Moses and Aaron walking in front, while they came behind, followed by all of Israel. Nadab said to Abihu, 'As soon as these two old ones die, we will

lead the community!” See above, [pp. 193–94](#), [n. 86](#). For the context in Leviticus 10, see the preceding note.

**100. Now if Aaron’s two sons...** Rabbi El’azar reasons that if the otherwise righteous Nadab and Abihu were punished by death when they acted prematurely in their father’s lifetime, then how can he dare to force the hour by expounding Torah in the presence of his father (Rabbi Shim’on) and these other esteemed figures?

Cf. *Sifra, Millu’im (Shemini)* 1:27, 45a. On not speaking in the presence of those who are wiser, see *M Avot* 5:7.

**101. Here is the bed of Solomon!...** A little earlier (above at [note 95](#)), Rabbi Shim’on had declined Rabbi Pinḥas’s offer of comfortable beds (or couches), yet now he expounds on the spiritual meaning of *the bed of Solomon*. This royal bed symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who also represents the Divine Throne. The blessed Holy One has appointed Her over the world, entrusting Her with *sixty warriors* and divine weapons.

On *Shekhinah* as “bed” or *bed of Solomon*, see *Zohar* 1:37a, 225b, 226b, 248b, 250b; 2:5a (*MhN*), 30a–b, 48b, 51a, 133a, 226a; 3:114a, 118b, 119b, 210b, 269b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 370; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 62–64 (78–79). 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 the verse in Proverbs, see above, [p. 261](#), [n. 11](#). On *Shekhinah* controlling the divine weapons, see above, [p. 55](#), [n. 165](#). The verse in Song of Songs reads: *Sixty warriors surrounding it* [or: *her*].

**102. שלשמה (She-li-shlomoh), Of Solomon...** On this midrashic interpretation of King Solomon’s name, 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* (*Shelomoh*), *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*, the phrase “the King who possesses all peace” can refer to the entire male realm extending down from *Binah*, which “possesses” *Yesod*, known as “peace.”

See *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:15, 44c; *Mekhilta, Pisha* 14; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 1:2, 3; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:11 (on 1:1), 1:12 (on 1:2); *Zohar* 1:5b, 15b, 29a, 184a, 226b, 248b; 2:5a (*MhN*), 14a (*MhN*), 100b, 127b, 132a-b, 143b-144b, 164a; 3:10b, 20a, 73b; *ZH* 25c, 62b (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 62 (78).

**103. *Sixty warriors surrounding her...*** Sixty forces surrounding *Shekhinah*, deriving from *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment). These forces clothe the chief angel Metatron, who is known as נוער (*na'ar*), Youth, and who is situated below *Shekhinah* and conducts the world in Judgment. The sixty warriors' weapons also derive from *Gevurah*, who is pictured as the left arm of *Tif'eret*—or *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel)—so the warriors are called *the warriors of Israel*.

On “sixty lashes of fire” and Metatron, see BT *Hagigah* 15a, where Metatron is lashed with sixty strokes of fire to demonstrate that he is subservient to God. Here, these lashes envelop Metatron the Youth. See BT *Yoma* 77a, *Bava Metsi'a* 85b; *Zohar* 1:223b; 2:51b, 66b-67a; 3:170b. On Metatron as נוער (*na'ar*), “youth, lad, (heavenly) servant,” see above, [p. 2](#), [n. 3](#).

“His coat of mail” renders קליפוי (*qelippoi*), literally “his scales,” meaning “his scaly coat of mail.” See 1 Samuel 17:5; *Targum Yonatan* and David Kimḥi, ad loc.; BT *Sanhedrin* 95b; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 11:9.

**104. *She rises while it is still night...*** *Shekhinah* rises in the night, when She sucks from the divine left side, dominating the night. To Her forces of Judgment, She provides טָרֵף (*teref*)—usually understood in this verse as *food*, but here specifically as *prey*, corresponding to the image of a lion in the verse from Micah, who טָרַף (*taraf*), *tears apart*, its prey. The harsh forces of Judgment, nourished and empowered by *Shekhinah*, are now ready to punish humans below.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *She rises while it is still night, and provides טָרֵף (teref), food [or: prey], for her household and a portion for her attendants.* See above, [note 68](#).

**105. *Each with his sword...*** Reflecting the power of *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as the divine sword. See above, [p. 72, n. 223](#). On the verse in Psalms, see *Zohar* 1:240b; 2:61a; 3:74a (*Mat*), 86a.

**106. *Because of fear in the night...*** According to a midrashic interpretation of this verse, מִפַּחַד (*mi-pahad*), *because of fear, in the night* means “because of the fear of Hell.” But Rabbi Shim’on explains *mi-pahad* as *from fear*—that is, from *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), which is associated with Isaac and also known as *Pahad* (Fear). This *sefirah* is the source of the warriors’ power.

On *fear in the night* as the fear of Hell, see BT *Yevamot* 109b, *Sanhedrin* 7b; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 6; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 11:3; *Zohar* 2:163b, 226a; *ZḤ* 79b (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 64 (79).

Genesis 31:42 reads in full: *Were it not that the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, was with me, you would have sent me away now empty-handed.* See *Sekhel Tov*, Exodus 15:16, who links *the Fear of Isaac* with the terror felt by Isaac as he was bound upon the altar.

**107. *when they are commissioned to execute judgment*** Since night is dominated by Judgment.



**108. *She ponders a field and acquires it...*** *Shekhinah* is pictured as a *field*, in which the *beasts* (symbolizing angels) *play*. She is also the *sea*, sailed by *ships* (angels or souls). She draws emanation *from afar*, namely from *Hokhmah* (the divine head) and from even further realms. Her direct source for this nourishing flow is *Yesod*—known as Righteous One and pictured as *Leviathan*—with whom She unites joyously and playfully.

On the image of the field and on *Shekhinah* as field, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:22; BT *Ta'anit* 29b; *Tanḥuma, Toledot* 11; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 35–37; *Zohar* 1:36a, 85a–b, 122a, 128b, 139a, 141b, 142b–143b, 224b, 249b; 2:39a–b, 48b, 60b, 61b, 127b; 3:74a, 84a, 133b (*IR*), 135b (*IR*), 286b–287a, 288a (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 365; Vol. 4, pp. 187–88, n. 172.

On *afar* as alluding to *Hokhmah*, see above, [p. 131, n. 400](#). On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [p. 15, n. 42](#). On *Yesod* as Leviathan, and on the erotic sense of *to play*, see above, [note 50](#).

Proverbs 31:16 reads in full: *She ponders* [or: *considers, sets her mind on*] *a field and acquires it, from the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard*. The verse in Job describes the domain of the mythological beast Behemoth.

The verses in Psalms read: *This sea, vast and broad of reach, gliding creatures there beyond number, living beings small and great. There ships go, Leviathan whom You fashioned to play with*.

**109. One thousand five hundred shield-bearers...** These powerful angels are linked to the *sixty warriors* associated with Metatron the Youth (see above, [note 103](#)).

On the keys of Metatron, see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, §72; *Zohar* 1:37b, 181b, 223b; 3:171b; *ZH* 39d–40a.

**110. Four facial images...** Corresponding to the description of Ezekiel's vision of the four *ḥayyot* (living



beings) carrying the heavenly throne, each of whom had four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. According to Rabbi Shim'on, when the faces merged they appeared as *a human face*, as implied by the beginning of the verse, which reads in full: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion's face, and on the left the four of them had an ox's face, and the four of them had an eagle's face.*

According to Greenberg (*Ezekiel*, 45), the peculiar formulation of this verse reflects the sequence of observation. The onlooker (on any side) was confronted by a human face, flanked by two animal faces on its right and left. Finally, from what could be seen on the heads of the rest of the creatures, the onlooker inferred that in back of the human face confronting him was an eagle's face. See above, [p. 302](#), [n. 151](#).

The clause "large face and small face merging above" apparently refers to the *human face* and the other three faces. The image of large and small faces derives from a Talmudic discussion of the cherubim. See BT *Sukkah* 5b: "Rabbi Aḥa son of Ya'akov said, 'We have learned that the face of the cherubim was no less than a handbreadth....' What is a כְּרוּב (*keruv*), cherub? Rabbi Abbahu said, 'כְּרַבִּיָּא (*keravya*), Like a child, for in Babylon they call a child רַבִּיָּא (*ravya*).' Abbaye said to him, 'If so, how do you explain the verse: *The face of one was the face of a cherub, and the face of the second the face of a human* (Ezekiel 10:14), seeing that [the faces of] a cherub and a human are the same?'—'A large face and a small face [i.e., *The face of a human* is large, while *the face of a cherub* is small].'"

See BT *Ḥagigah* 13b; *Zohar* 1:18b; 2:278a; 3:217b, 274a; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 105–19. Cf. 3:201a, where Rabbi Shim'on and his son Rabbi El'azar are called "the large face and the small face." On Ezekiel 10:14 (and

its contrast to Ezekiel 1:10), see Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 182–83.

On the all-inclusive nature of the human image, see *Zohar* 1:18b–19a, 44a (*Heikh*); 2:73a (*RR*), 74a, 80b, 178a (*SdT*s), 211b; 3:48a.

**111. Two rise and roam...** Two harsh forces rise with shovels in their hands to gather the riches of emanation from *Shekhinah*. A thousand mountainous forces emerge daily from (or within, or toward) Her flow and are subsequently uprooted, “rising to another sea,” which apparently symbolizes Lilith, the demonic counterpart of *Shekhinah*. Countless harsh forces cling to the hair of *Shekhinah*, which signifies harsh Judgment.

The image of “a thousand mountains” appears in Psalms 50:10: *For Mine are all animals of the forest*, בהמות (*behemot*), *beasts, on a thousand mountains*. According to a midrashic interpretation, the apparent plural, *behemot*, is actually singular. See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:10, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “It is one beast, crouching on a thousand mountains—and a thousand mountains grow all kinds of herbs for her and she eats.”

See Job 40:15, 20; BT *Bava Batra* 74b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 6:1; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 16, 80b *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 11; *Tanḥuma, Pinḥas* 12; *Nitsavim* 4; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:18; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:49, nn. 141–42. On the association of “a thousand mountains” with *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:18b, 223a; 2:203a; 3:189a, 217a, 240b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 201–2.

On this increasingly terrifying description of *Shekhinah*, cf. *Zohar* 1:223a–b; and see Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 189–92. On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the demonic realm, see also Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:373–79; Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 249, 251–54.

On hair signifying harsh Judgment, see above, [p. 305, n. 160](#). According to BT *Eruvin* 100b, Lilith has long hair.

**112. Two sons suckle daily...** Alluding to the two angels Uzza and Aza'el, who fell from heaven after opposing the creation of Adam and Eve. Here they are identified with the two spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, apparently based on the image of angels spying on human beings. They suck nourishment from *Shekhinah*.

As indicated here, the identification of the fallen angels as Joshua's two spies appears in *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* (The Book of Concealment), *Zohar* 2:178b. On the fallen angels, see the following note. On the angelic nature of one of the spies, see *Tanḥuma, Shelah* 1; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 16:1.

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.

**113. Two daughters beneath Her feet...** Referring apparently to Lilith and her associate Na'amah (or Agrat daughter of Maḥalat), the demonic females who torment sinners. Here they are identified with *the daughters of humankind* mentioned in Genesis, who attracted *the sons of Elohim*—namely the fallen angels Uzza and Aza'el.

These demonic *daughters* cling to the toenails of *Shekhinah* (symbolized by "that bed"). They are further 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, or include them within the realm of holiness, which "previously" no one had accomplished. When the people of Israel are sinful, they are dominated by women—namely by the demonic females.

For the story of the two prostitutes who appeared before Solomon, see 1 Kings 3:16–28. Rabbinic sources identify the 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. See *Zohar* 2:178b

(*SdT*s); Vol. 5, p. 174, n. 97; Scholem. The designation “prostitutes” is likely linked to the notion of demonic female seduction of men during sleep. See Vol. 5, p. 213, n. 68.

On the 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); *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 22; *Zohar* 1:9b, 19b, 23a (*TZ*), 25a–b (*TZ*), 37a, 37a (*Tos*), 58a, 126a, 133b; 2:178b–179a (*SdT*s), 212b; 3:76b, 144a (*IR*), 184b, 194a, 207b–208b, 212a–b, 233a–b; *ZH* 81a–b (*MhN*, *Rut*); Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:147–51; Bamberger, *Fallen Angels*. Cf. Testament of Solomon 6:1–3. The full verse in Genesis reads: *The sons of Elohim saw that the daughters of humankind were beautiful, and they took themselves wives, whomever they chose.*

On the dominating demonic females, see *Zohar* 2:125a, 178b (*SdT*s); 3:19b. The first and last of these Zoharic passages quote Isaiah: *and women rule over them.* On *Shekhinah* as “bed,” see above, [note 101](#).

**114. In the left hand...** In *Shekhinah*’s left hand are seventy branches growing among the angelic fish of Her sea. These symbolize the seventy heavenly princes of the nations of the world, whose color red signifies harsh Judgment. The “even redder” branch above them symbolizes Samael.

On the seventy heavenly princes, see above, [pp. 6–7, n. 21](#). On the hair of *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 111](#).

**115. Master of the Evil Tongue...** The demonic force is expert in slander, denunciation, and incitement—as is his manifestation, the serpent. Having satisfied himself, he calms down and actually speaks favorably of humans.

Israel knows how to assuage the demonic power by offering him a portion of holiness—for example, the scapegoat on Yom Kippur. In the original ritual (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 scapegoat 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." The *Zohar* develops this theme, teaching that by providing a portion to the Other Side, one ensures that the demonic force will be occupied, assuaged, and deterred from interfering in the realm of holiness.

See *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:3, 43c; Nahmanides on Leviticus 16:8; Moses of Burgos, *Ammud ha-Semali*, 158-59; *Zohar* 1:11a, 64a-65a, 89b (*ST*), 113b-114b, 138b, 145b, 174b, 190a, 210b, 247b; 2:33a, 111b, 130a, 141a, 152b, 154b, 157a-b, 169a, 181b, 184b-185a, 203b, 227a-b, 237b-239b, 242b, 266b, 269a, 271b (*Piq*); 3:63a-64a, 63a-b (*Piq*), 79b, 101b-102a, 202b-203a, 224a-b, 258b-259a; *ZH* 20c, 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.

The phrase "bounding over hills, leaping over rocks" derives from Song of Songs 2:8: *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 realm. See *Zohar* 2:179a (*SdT*s). On the serpent's evil tongue, see above, [p. 332](#), [n. 3](#).

**116. When spearmen and swordsmen ascend...** These other harsh forces ascend toward the sixty angelic warriors accompanying *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Solomon's bed). See above, [notes 101](#), [103](#).

**117. countless thousands and myriads...** Other forces roaming the world to accuse and punish, until they are signaled to stop, and they gather to their places. These

cling to the dirt beneath the fingernails, which may refer to the residue of harsh Judgment in *Shekhinah*, or to the dirt of human fingernails.

On *Shekhinah's* nails, see above at [note 113](#). On the negative or demonic aspect of human nails, see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 18a, *Niddah* 17a; *Zohar* 1:20b-21a; 2:76a, 172b, 208b; 3:79a-b, 248b; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 219-22. Cf. *Zohar* 3:70a.

**118. This bed encompasses them...** *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Solomon's bed) encompasses all these forces. As the Divine Presence, She is manifested above and below. The name אדני (*Adonai*), "My Lord (or Master)," indicates Her mastery over all.

The phrase "distinguished among forces (or hosts)" recalls the midrashic interpretation of the divine name צבאות (*Tseva'ot*), *Hosts*. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 1: "What is the meaning of צבאות (*Tseva'ot*), *Hosts* (Psalms 89:9)? He is אות (*ot*), an ensign, among His צבא (*tsava*), host [or: army].... He is *ot*, an ensign, among His holy myriads." See BT *Hagigah* 16a; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:7; *Zohar* 1:6a; 2:232a.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Know today and take to your heart that YHVH is God in the heavens above and on the earth below; there is none else.*

**119. one must focus on supernal matters...** Aiming to unify the *sefirot* (which are symbolized by the letters of YHVH) from the appropriate place, namely *Shekhinah*. She is known as זאת (*zot*), *this*.

All the harsh forces described above operate in the service of *Shekhinah*, threatening and punishing those who sin.

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of YHVH, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#). On *Shekhinah* as *zot* (and the verse in Leviticus), see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Were they wise, they would contemplate [or: consider, comprehend] this, understand their final end.*



**120. If a person succeeds in learning Torah...** Then *Shekhinah* protects him and makes a covenant with him reinforcing and supplementing God's eternal commitment.

The subject of "it will not depart" may be the covenant, *Shekhinah*, or Torah. The latter is specified (in connection with the verse from Isaiah) in BT *Bava Metsi'a* 85a, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: "Whoever is a scholar, and his son a scholar, and his grandson a scholar—Torah will never cease from his seed, as is said: *As for Me, this is My covenant with them, says YHVH: My spirit that is upon you, and My words that I have put in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your children, nor from the mouth of your children's children—says YHVH—from now and forever.*" See *Zohar* 1:240b.

**121. YHVH Elohim has given me a tongue of disciples...** By attaining Torah, Israel becomes linked to God and His Name because Torah is equivalent to God's Name.

On Torah as God's Name, see above, [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (Adonai YHVH), *Lord Elohim, has given me a skilled tongue* [literally: *a tongue of disciples*], *to know how to speak timely words to the weary. He rouses, morning by morning, rousing my ear to listen like disciples.*

**122. in the presence of our Master...** Rabbi Shim'on. The primordial *sefirah*, *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), is total perfection and is called Holiness. From there issues the flow of emanation, which finally reaches *Shekhinah*, known as זַוּת (*zot*), "this." Since She contains all that originates in *Ḥokhmah*, She is called by His names: Holiness and (Lower) Wisdom. She also expresses the secrets and mysteries of Torah.

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On *Shekhinah* as Small (or Lower) Wisdom, see *Zohar* 1:141b; 2:235b; 3:290a (*IZ*), 296a (*IZ*).

**123. When that holy anointing oil flows...** Emanation flows to *Netsah* and *Hod*, pictured as two pillars, or the two legs of the divine body or its two testicles. From here the flow issues through *Yesod*, the divine phallus, to *Shekhinah* (Small Wisdom). She is then called *tongue of disciples*, because She conveys the flow from *Netsah* and *Hod* (known as *disciples*) to the holy prophets. Thus Isaiah could say *YHVH Elohim has given me a tongue of disciples*—inspiring him from *Netsah* and *Hod* through *Shekhinah*. On *Netsah* and *Hod* as God's *disciples*, see above, [p. 203](#), [n. 114](#).

**124. the Holy Lamp, Rabbi Shim'on...** Who boldly reveals secrets of Torah.

See above, [note 96](#). On “the Holy Lamp” as Rabbi Shim'on's title, see above, [pp. 32–33](#), [n. 98](#). The verse in Numbers (spoken by God about Moses) reads: *Mouth to mouth I speak with him; וּמַרְאֵה (u-mar'eh), and a vision [or: clearly, manifestly, in plain sight], not in riddles; and the image of YHVH he beholds*. On the relationship between Rabbi Shim'on and Moses, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi'a*, 11–42.

**125. YHVH gave Solomon wisdom...** 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 *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26: “When Solomon appeared, the disk of the moon became full.”

Here the moon symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is also known as Wisdom of Solomon. She became complete during Solomon's reign, enlightening him.

See above, [pp. 246–47](#), [n. 132](#). On *Shekhinah* as Wisdom of Solomon, see *Zohar* 1:150a, 223a, 238a, 248b; 3:74b, 160a, 176b, 297a. The full verse in Kings reads: *YHVH gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty*. Hiram was king of the two leading Phoenician city-states, Tyre and Sidon.

**126. And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon...** How does this follow from the opening of the verse: *YHVH gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him?* Rabbi Yeisa explains that King Hiram had proudly declared himself divine, until Solomon, by his wisdom, convinced him of his error. Once Hiram conceded, *there was peace between Hiram and Solomon.*

The full verse in Ezekiel reads: *O son of man, say to the prince of Tyre: Thus says the Lord God: Because your heart has been haughty and you have said, "I am a god; I sit in the seat of God in the heart of the seas," whereas you are a human and not a god, though you deemed your heart equal to God's.* On Hiram's self-deification (based on this verse), see *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:11; *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:5; 96:5; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 18:2; BT *Bava Batra* 75a-b, *Hullin* 89a; *Tanḥuma*, *Vayḥi* 3; *Va'era* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayḥi* 5; *Va'era* 8, 16; *Shemot Rabbah* 8:2. Cf. *Mekhilta*, *Shirta* 8.

On Hiram conceding to Solomon, see *Zohar* 2:149a. On their relationship, see also Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 8:2:6-9; 8:5:3; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:288, n. 36.

**127. [Solomon] sent him a demon...** Who transported King Hiram through all the habitations of Hell. Then Solomon wrote letters to Hiram, convincing him to abandon his claim to divinity.

On King Hiram entering Hell, see *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira* (ed. Steinschneider), 29a. On the seven habitations (or divisions) of Hell, see BT *Sotah* 10b; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:6; *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 62b, 237b; 2:150a-151a, 263a-268b (*Heikh*); 3:178a, 285b-286a; *ZḤ* 25b (*MhN*); *Massekhet Geihinnom* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:149); Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:20, n. 56. In BT *Eruvin* 19a, Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi lists seven names for Hell.

**128. Solomon inherited the moon...** He was fully illumined by *Shekhinah*. Similarly, Rabbi Shim'on is enlightened and rules over all in his wisdom. All those who

wish to explore the secrets of Torah and divinity require his approval and guidance. The phrase “at peace” renders שלמין (*shelemin*), which plays on שלמה (*Shelomoh*), “Solomon.”

**129. My dove in the clefts of the rock...** According to *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on this verse, the *dove* symbolizes the (earthly) Assembly of Israel. On the dove’s faithfulness to its mate, see BT *Eruvin* 100b; *Zohar* 3:240b–241a; *ZH* 31c.

**130. In the clefts of the rock—scholars...** Whose life is not easy or comfortable. Cf. BT *Berakhot* 64a, in the name of Rav: “Scholars have no rest either in this world or in the world that is coming.”

**131. In the covert of the cliff—the modest among them...** Who cover and conceal their level of greatness. Rabbi Yose is playing on המדרגה (*ha-madregah*), *the mountain pass* [or: *cliff*], which in later Hebrew comes to mean “rank, level.”

**132. Then the blessed Holy One asks...** He yearns to hear Israel’s sweet voice of Torah. See above, [p. 75](#), [n. 230](#).

**133. The image of all those engaged in Torah...** God gazes upon each one’s beautiful *form* and listens to his sweet *voice*, conversing with him. Rabbi Shim’on attains even a higher rung, until finally God is crowned with him. On a human voice splitting the heavens, see above, [p. 183](#), [n. 51](#).

**134. That which is has already been called by name...** The full verse in Ecclesiastes 3 actually reads: *That which was* [or: *is*] *has already been, and what is to be already has been, and God seeks the pursued* [or: *him who is sought*]. Here, the figure of Rabbi Ḥiyya conflates this verse with Ecclesiastes 6:10: *That which was* [or: *is*] *has already been called by name and is known...*

According to a rabbinic tradition, God originally created other worlds and destroyed them. Rabbi Ḥiyya elaborates on this idea by indicating that eventually *Ein Sof* emanated the *sefirot* (“was arrayed in His adornments...”),

through which He fashioned this world. Everything that would come to exist was already in His presence at Creation, prefigured within the *sefirot*. Thus, *that which is has already been... and what is to be already has been*. The verse may now also imply that the creation of the world is not entirely new, either because earlier creations preceded it or because God recycled the remains of those earlier worlds into this world.

On the worlds that were previously destroyed, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:2: “*Everything He has made appropriate in its time* (Ecclesiastes 3:11)... Rabbi Abbahu said, ‘From here we learn that 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.”’”

The theme of previous worlds that did not endure is developed in the *Idrot* and inspired Isaac Luria’s theory of “the breaking of the vessels.” See *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:7; *Qohelet Rabbah* and *Qohelet Zuta* on 3:11; *Midrash Tehillim* 34:1; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:3; Origen, *De Principiis*, 3:5:3; *Zohar* 1:24b (TZ), 29a, 154b, 223b; 2:34b, 176b (SdTs); 3:128a (IR), 135a–b (IR), 142a (IR), 292a–b (IZ); ZH 2d (MhN); Vol. 5, p. 546, n. 4; Meroz, “Reqimato shel Mito,” 182–83.

On God consulting the Torah before creating the world, see *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 12, p. 235; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabba* 29, p. 160; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 3. According to a midrashic tradition, the Torah served as God’s blueprint for Creation, or His architect. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1, in the name of Rabbi Osha’ya: “*I was by Him as אמן (amon), a nursling... אמן (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 above, [p. 208, n. 1](#).

Regarding the verses in Ecclesiastes, cf. Ecclesiastes 1:9: *That which was is that which will be, and that which was done is that which will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.*

**[135](#). All those inhabitants of the world...** Before coming into the world, each soul is clothed in an ethereal body resembling the physical body that she will inhabit on earth. Everything that a person learns in this world was already known by his soul in heaven; thus earthly learning is actually an act of remembering.

On the ethereal body and the preexistence of the soul, see above, [p. 77, n. 237](#). On the soul’s prior knowledge, see Plato, *Phaedo* 75-76; and BT *Niddah* 30b: “[The fetus] is taught the entire Torah.... And as soon as it enters the atmosphere of this world, an angel comes and slaps it on the mouth, making it forget the entire Torah.” Cf. *Midrash Mishlei* 2:7.

**[136](#). As for all those who are not... righteous...** Before coming into the world, the souls of such people already kept themselves aloof from God and rejected the holy share bestowed upon them. Instead, they entered the demonic realm, where they obtained an impure share. Too eager to enter the world and indulge in its pleasures, these souls descended prematurely and lived reproachably. However, if such a person turns back to God in *teshuvah*, he can regain his original holiness.

The (conflated) verse in Ecclesiastes may allude to this regained holy share, which *already has been*. Alternatively, it refers to the fact that a person’s character is already prefigured in heaven. On this passage, see *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:757-61. Cf. ZH 69a (*ShS*).



**137. The sons of Aaron...** Nadab and Abihu sinned and were killed, but did God actually annihilate them completely, dooming their souls?

On Nadab and Abihu's high status, see above, [notes 15-17](#). The context in Exodus 24 (9-11) reads: *Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ascended. 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.*

The expression רזא דמתניתין (*raza de-matnitin*), “the mystery of our Mishnah,” refers to a secret, mystical Mishnah often cited in the *Zohar* and apparently known only to its own circle. See above, [note 34](#).

**138. the Holy Lamp...** Rabbi Shim'on taught that the divine fire consumed only Nadab and Abihu's bodies, not their souls.

According to BT *Sanhedrin* 52a, Rabbi El'azar [son of Pedat] taught that Nadab and Abihu's souls were burnt, while their bodies endured. However, another opinion is recorded there, according to which their bodies were burnt, “beginning from within. ... For it has been taught: Abba Yose son of Dostai said, ‘Two strands of fire issued from the Holy of Holies, branching into four, and two entered into each of their nostrils and burned them.’... Them, but not their garments.”

Here Rabbi Ḥiyya attributes to Rabbi Shim'on the view that only Nadab and Abihu's bodies were burnt, not their souls. See above, [note 31](#). Cf. *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:27, 45a: “*They came forward and they carried them* [i.e., Nadab and Abihu] *off in their tunics* (Leviticus 10:5). This teaches us that the Omnipresent felt more concern for them in their death than in their life. For if their bodies were burnt and their clothes did not endure, they would

have been infamous and despised; however, their bodies were burnt yet their clothes endured.”

On “the Holy Lamp” as Rabbi Shim’on’s title, see above, [pp. 32–33](#), [n. 98](#).

**139. Before Aaron’s sons died...** Already in the book of Exodus we read that Nadab and Abihu’s brother Eleazar married Putiel, who then *bore him Phinehas*. His name was given back then because (as explained previously) it alludes to how he was destined to rectify the sin later perpetrated by Nadab and Abihu. Furthermore, the name Phinehas alludes to the fact that Nadab and Abihu’s souls—which were not consumed by the divine fire—were later reincarnated in Phinehas.

Thus, *what is to be already has been*—Phinehas was already born and named before Nadab and Abihu sinned, and he was prepared to correct their future flaw. The biblical clause may also allude to the eventual reincarnation of Nadab and Abihu in Phinehas. See above, [notes 32–39](#). On the significance of the name Phinehas, see above, [note 34](#).

**140. all the righteous of the world are arrayed...** According to a rabbinic tradition, the souls of the righteous are situated in the highest heaven. See BT *Hagigah* 12b. Cf. above, [note 135](#).

Rabbi Ḥiyya adds that ever since Creation, Rabbi Shim’on had been in heaven, prepared for his destiny of enlightening the world.

Cf. John 1:1 (in which *the Word* represents Jesus): *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. See Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, pp. 239–40, n. 68.

Here Rabbi Shim’on is referred to as the son of God, namely of *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, based on a midrashic interpretation of *father* and *mother*. See BT *Berakhot* 35b: “Rabbi Ḥanina 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* 2:124b, 193b, 250a (*Heikh*), 262a (*Heikh*); 3:44b, 270b (*Piq*); Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 27. Elsewhere in the *Zohar* (as here), the couple mentioned in Proverbs 23—*Your father and your mother will rejoice*—alludes to *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*. See 3:55a, 119a, 156a, 240b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 217, 349 (and Wolfson's notes). Cf. *Zohar* 2:82a (*RM*), 84a, 85a, 90a; 3:74a, 77b, 197b, 213a, 277b (*RM*).

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Your father and your mother will rejoice; she who bore you will be glad*. In *M Ta'anit* 3:8, this verse is applied to Ḥoni ha-Me'aggel, who brought rain in a time of drought; here it is applied to Rabbi Shim'on, who accomplishes the same miracle. See above, [notes 81, 83](#); Meroz, "Reqimato shel Mitoš," 183. On the unique status of Rabbi Shim'on, see above, [p. 91](#), [n. 275](#). On his divine status, see above, [note 93](#).

**141. While the king was on his couch...** Drawing on *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*, Rabbi Abba applies the verse to God, who was on His heavenly *couch* while directly below on Mount Sinai Israel *yielded fragrance* by declaring ונשמע ונעשה (*na'aseh ve-nishma*), *we will do and we will listen*—thereby demonstrating true faith: committing themselves to fulfill God's word even before hearing the details.

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:12; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* on 1:12; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 4, p. 179; *Zohar* 2:16b (*MhN*), 226b–227a. Cf. *Mekhilta, Baḥodesh* 3. The verse in Exodus reads: *All that YHVH has spoken* ונשמע ונעשה (*na'aseh ve-*

*nishma*), *we will do and we will heed* [or: *listen*]. On the word *מסבו* (*mesibbo*), *his couch*, cf. above, [notes 94](#), [101](#).

**142. Alternatively, While the king...** The verse can also be applied negatively: Israel admits that at Sinai they lost their *fragrance* by worshiping the Golden Calf. The clause *my nard נתן* (*natan*), *yielded, its fragrance* now means *my nard natan, gave up* [that is, *lost*], *its fragrance*.

See BT *Gittin* 36b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:12; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 4, p. 179; *Zohar* 2:16b (*MhN*). The full verse in Exodus (describing how Aaron fashioned the Golden Calf) reads: *He took from their hand ויצר אתו בחרט* (*va-yatsar oto ba-heret*), *and he fashioned it with a graving tool* [or: *and he fashioned it in a mold*, or: *and he wrapped it in a bag*], *and made it into a molten calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!"*

**143. Now this verse is in mystery of wisdom...** Having paraphrased the midrashic treatments of the verse, Rabbi Abba delves deeper. He begins with the verse from Genesis, in which the *river* symbolizes *Binah's* flow of emanation issuing from *Hokhmah* (who is symbolized by *Eden*), conveyed by the *sefirot Hesed* through *Yesod*, and entering *the garden* of *Shekhinah*. Father *Hokhmah* and Mother *Binah* unite by a secret *path*—the subtle passage between *Hokhmah* and the womb of *Binah*. Streams of emanation issue from *Binah*, adorning the Holy Son, *Tif'eret* (together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, from *Hesed* through *Yesod*). He conveys this flow to *Shekhinah*, uniting with Her joyously.

On the constant union between *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, [pp. 4-5](#), [n. 12](#). On the inheritance obtained by *Tif'eret* from His parents, see *Zohar* 3:291a (*iz*). The full verse in Genesis reads: *A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four riverheads*. The full verse in Job reads: *A path unknown to a bird of prey nor spotted by a falcon's eye*. See *Zohar* 1:29b; 2:122b-123a; 3:193b.

The full verse in Song of Songs 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. 7, n. 22](#).

**[144.](#) When the supernal King sits...** As *Tif'eret* is about to consummate His union with *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*), *Yesod* yields its fragrant flow.

The phrase תפנוקי מלכין (*tafnuqei malkhin*), “royal delicacies,” appears in *Targum Onqelos*, Genesis 49:20; Deuteronomy 33:24.

**[145.](#) now the Holy Lamp is adorned...** Rabbi Shim'on is adorned with divine gifts, and the Companions' praises adorn *Tif'eret* above.

The phrase “through this holy rung” refers either to *Yesod* or *Shekhinah*. On “the Holy Lamp” as Rabbi Shim'on's title, see above, [pp. 32–33, n. 98](#).

**[146.](#) He looked, and here: a well in the field...** This well symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who has been *dug by princes* (that is, by *Hokhmah* and *Binah*) and *delved by the people's nobles* (that is, *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*).

The context in Genesis (29:2–3) describes Jacob's arrival in Haran: *He looked, and here: a well in the field, and there were three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for from that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and they would put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.* On various elements of this *Zohar* passage, see *Zohar* 1:151b–152a; *ibid.* (*Tos*); *ibid.* (*ST*). Cf. *Zohar* 3:270a.

The full verse in Numbers, celebrating God's providing Israel with water, reads: *The well dug by princes, delved by nobles of the people—with a scepter, with their staffs.* See *Zohar* 1:235a; 2:197b; 3:150a, 286a. On נדיב (*nadiv*), *noble*,

as designating the patriarch Abraham, see BT *Sukkah* 49b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 7:2.

**147. three flocks of sheep...** Symbolizing *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, who convey the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*.

**148. from that well the flocks were watered...** This reference to *flocks* alludes to angels “above” and the worlds “below,” who are all nourished from the *well* of *Shekhinah*.

**149. The stone on the mouth of the well...** Alluding to *Gevurah*, or *Din* (Judgment), who is situated on the left side and influences *Shekhinah*.

**150. When all the flocks were gathered there...** *All the flocks* alludes to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, who convey the flow of emanation from the Divine Head (*Keter*, *Hokhmah*, and *Binah*) to *Shekhinah*.

**151. for those above and those below** For angels and the lower worlds.

**152. Judgment returns to its place...** Since the world cannot function or endure without justice and judgment.

See M *Avot* 1:18, in the name of Rabban Shim'on son of Gamli'el: “The world stands on three things: on justice, on truth, and on peace.” See above, [p. 177](#), [n. 27](#). “To make... fragrantly firm” renders לֵאֲתַבְּסָמָא (*le-itbassama*). The root בָּסַם (*bsm*) conveys both fragrance and firmness. See above, [p. 83](#), [n. 256](#).

**153. the blessed Holy One pours blessings upon you...** Upon the Companions from the spring of emanation issuing from *Binah*.

**154. Let the devout delight in glory...** Rabbi Shim'on refers to God's “thirteen attributes” of Compassion, which 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.* In Kabbalah these attributes of Compassion are often associated with *Keter*, the realm of total Compassion. See Vol. 5, pp. 524-25, nn. 952-53; p. 549, n. 10.

The exact meaning of “sealed in three” is unclear, probably intentionally. It could refer to the Holy Ancient One (*Keter*), Father (*Ḥokhmah*), and Mother (*Binah*); or to a triad of three hidden lights above the ten *sefirot*; or to *Binah*, *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*, and *Shekhinah*; or to *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), *Binah* (Understanding), and *Da’at* (Knowledge). See *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 3: “The world was created by ten utterances... and they were comprised in three, namely in *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), *Tevunah* (Understanding), and *Da’at* (Knowledge).”

The reference to a triad sealing “the entire faith of the blessed Holy One” seems to play on the Trinity. On likely traces of trinitarian influence in the *Zohar*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:973; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 140-45; Vol. 5, p. 2, n. 5. The theory of three hidden lights above the *sefirot* appears in a thirteenth-century responsum misattributed to Hai Gaon. See *Or Yaqar*; Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 347-54. On the expression “sealed in three,” cf. *Zohar* 3:65b. On the “ten utterances,” see above, [p. 65](#), [n. 200](#).

Parallel to the thirteen מכילן (*mekhilan*), “attributes,” are the thirteen *mekhilan*, hermeneutical “principles,” by which Torah is interpreted—beginning with קל וחומר (*qal va-ḥomer*), “a fortiori,” meaning “from the stronger,” that is, a conclusion that is inferred to be even more certain than another: “If x is true, then certainly y is true.” On these principles, see *Sifra, Baraita* 1:1, 1a; *Zohar* 1:241a; 3:149a; *ZḤ* 55d. On the word משכבותם (*mishkevotam*), *their couches*, cf. above, [notes 94](#), [101](#), [141](#).

#### **155. When Jacob wanted his sons to be blessed...**

The full verse in Genesis reads: *All these are the tribes of Israel, twelve, וזאת (ve-zot), and this, is what their father*

*spoke to them, blessing them; each according to his blessing, he blessed them.* Rabbi Shim'on breaks off the quotation at the word *ve-zot, and this*, because *zot, this*, is a name of *Shekhinah*, who joined with Jacob's twelve sons to confirm the blessings, bringing the total to thirteen. The phrase *each according to his blessing* now means "according to the paradigm above," namely the thirteen attributes of Compassion associated with *Keter*, each of which provided blessing for one of the tribes (plus presumably *Shekhinah*).

On the verse in Genesis, see *Zohar* 1:241a, 248a. On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On *Shekhinah* and the twelve tribes, see *Zohar* 1:155a, 157b-158a, 174a, 225b, 231b, 240b-241a, 246a-b, 248a; 2:104b-105a, 229b-230a; 3:118b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 8.

**[156](#). All those attributes ascend...** The thirteen attributes of Compassion ascend and adorn the head of the King.

The phrase "the highest rung of חסידות (*ḥasidut*), devotion" alludes to a famous teaching attributed to Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir, who figures prominently in this whole *Zohar* passage and is soon referred to by Rabbi Shim'on. See M *Sotah* 9:15: "Rabbi Pinḥas son of Ya'ir says, 'Zeal leads to cleanliness, cleanliness to purity, purity to holiness [per Kaufmann MS], holiness to humility, humility to fear of sin, fear of sin to *ḥasidut* (love, devotion), *ḥasidut* to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit to the revival of the dead, and the revival of the dead comes through Elijah, remembered for good.'" In BT *Avodah Zarah* 20b, Rabbi Pinḥas concludes that "*ḥasidut* is greater than any of these."

See *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 23:15; JT *Shabbat* 1:3, 3c; *Sheqalim* 3:4, 47c; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:9 (on 1:1); *Midrash Mishlei* 15:31; *Nefesh David*; Scholem.

On precisely what the thirteen attributes of Compassion adorn, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*; cf. Vol. 5, pp. 556-57, n. 24. On the verse

in Psalms, see *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 131; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 24; *Vezot Haberakhah* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vezot Haberakhah* 7; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 2, 5a-b; 12, 46b-47a; *Midrash Tehillim* 30:3; 149:5.

**157. Exultations of God in their throat...** The devout know how to unify the *sefirot* through their words of prayer and study.

**158. a double-edge sword in their hand...** The devout are able to activate *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as a divine sword executing Judgment.

See above, [p. 72](#), [n. 223](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *YHVH has a sword, [or: The sword of YHVH is] full of blood, gorged with fat—with the blood of lambs and goats, with the kidney fat of rams. For YHVH has a slaughter in Bozrah, a great butchery in the land of Edom. Psalms 149:7 reads in full: To wreak vengeance upon the nations, punishment on the peoples.*

**159. here is Rabbi Pinḥas, crown of Ḥesed...** Rabbi Pinḥas sang the praises of *ḥasidut* (love, devotion) and attained the rung of *Ḥesed*, which is the “head” of all the six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* through *Yesod*.

See above, [note 156](#). On Rabbi Pinḥas and *Ḥesed*, see *Zohar* 1:11b, where Rabbi Shim'on declares that Rabbi Pinḥas “stands on this rung.” Cf. 3:201a, 240b, where he is called אַדְוָה (*ḥasida*), “devotee, saint, pious one, lover of God.”

In conclusion, Rabbi Shim'on celebrates the fact that he and the Companions have shared Torah at Rabbi Pinḥas's table, turning it into *the table that is before YHVH*. This verse is from Ezekiel's vision of the restored Temple in Jerusalem, and describes the table for the Bread of the Presence. The 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.'*"

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. On the verse from Ezekiel, see *Zohar* 2:153a–154a, 168b.

**160. Taking the cup, he recited the blessing** The Grace after Meals, which is traditionally recited over a cup of wine. On the question of who should recite this blessing (the host or one of his guests), see BT *Berakhot* 46a; *Zohar* 1:250a; 3:187b; *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

**161. He opened, saying...** Perhaps Rabbi Pinḥas's discourse on this verse is missing here, but more likely he simply wishes to recite an appropriate verse. See above, [note 159](#); *Or Yaqar*; Soncino; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**162. Rabbi Pinḥas grasped Rabbi El'azar...** According to the *Zohar*, Rabbi Pinḥas was Rabbi El'azar's grandfather. (See above, [note 81](#).) The biblical Pinḥas (Phinehas) was the son of El'azar (Eleazar). (See above at [note 139](#).)

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Then you will delight על (al), upon [or: 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.* On this verse, see below, [note 282](#). The full verse in Psalms reads: *Happy the people who has it so, happy the people whose God is YHVH!*

**163. They set out early...** Rabbi Shim'on and the Companions prepare to leave the home of Rabbi Pinḥas.

“Escorted” renders אֲזִיף (*ozif*), which in normal Aramaic means “lent”; but the Hebrew verb לְהַלוֹת (*lehalvot*), “to lend,” is a homonym of *lehalvot*, “to escort,” and the *Zohar*—either playfully or mistakenly—employs the Aramaic verb לְאַזְפָּא (*le'ozafa*) in this sense. Cf. the English idiom “to lend an escort.” See above, [p. 352](#), [n. 73](#).

**164. It is time to act for YHVH** By expounding Torah on the way.

On the importance of engaging in Torah while walking or traveling, see above, [p. 165](#), [n. 512](#). The full verse in Psalms reads: *It is time to act for YHVH—they have violated Your Torah*. 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; 2:155b; 3:127b-128a (*IR*); Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 19b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 44-48; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 185.

**165. He took Simeon from them...** The subject is Joseph, who in this scene has not yet revealed himself to his brothers. According to the *Zohar*, both Simeon and Levi derive from the *sefirah* of *Din* (harsh Judgment), so their combined power is threatening. By taking Simeon and separating him from Levi, Joseph hopes to ensure that his brothers will not quarrel on their way back to Canaan.

The earlier verse in Genesis 37 does not specify which brothers hatched the initial plan to kill Joseph, but midrashic tradition assigns the role to Simeon and Levi. Their violent temper is evident in an even earlier episode, described in Genesis 34: after Shechem son of Hamor had raped Dinah, daughter of Jacob, her brothers agreed to let Shechem marry her and to permit intermarriage generally with the locals, on condition that all the males undergo circumcision. The residents of the town (also named Shechem) agreed to the pact, but Simeon and Levi violated

it. As the full verse in Genesis 34 reads: *It happened on the third day, while they were in pain, that Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unsuspected, and they killed every male.* Here, Rabbi Shim'on introduces this verse by saying "Afterward in Shechem," although this incident actually occurred earlier.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 97:8 (on Genesis 49:8); 99:7; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 37:19; *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 9; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayeshev* 13; *Zohar* 1:172b-173a, 184a, 185b, 198b, 200b, 236a, 244a; 2:6a, 11a.

The context in Genesis 37 (19-20) reads: *They said, a man to his brother, "Here comes that dream-master! Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of the pits, and we'll say, 'A vicious beast devoured him.' We'll see what comes of his dreams."*

**166. What prompted Simeon to pair with Levi...** After all, Simeon could just as well have joined with Reuben, since they were the two oldest sons of Jacob. However, Simeon realized that he and Levi shared an association with Judgment. He reasoned that if their two aspects of Judgment mingled, their combined power would be devastating. To prevent this, God "took Levi as His own," designating his tribe to serve in the Tabernacle and eventually in the Temple, while leaving Simeon to be linked with harsh Judgment by himself.

On the word ליתוזף (*litozaf*), "let (Simeon) be accompanied," see above, [note 163](#). The phrase "by concatenation" renders בקופטרא (*be-quffera*). In the *Zohar* the root קפטר (*qftr*) often conveys the sense of "linking, tying, binding," apparently based on the root קטר (*qtr*), "to tie." See above, [note 94](#).

**167. On the side of Mother...** Two demonic guardians are attached to the left hand of Mother *Shekhinah* (or possibly Mother *Binah*). Their task is to spy out the earth, searching for human misconduct. These powers are identified with



the two spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, and with the two angels Uzza and Aza'el, who fell from heaven after opposing the creation of Adam and Eve. (Aza'el is sometimes called Azazel, which is the name of the demon to whom the scapegoat is sent on Yom Kippur.)

See above, [note 112](#). In that context, the two demonic spies are nourished by *Shekhinah*. Cf. above, [p. 94](#) at [n. 288](#), where “guardians” issue from Mother *Binah*. On Aza'el as Azazel, see 1 Enoch 10:4.

“Dazzling, demonic guardians” renders גרדיני טהירין (*gardinei tehirin*). The first word is based on the Castilian *guardián*, “guardian.” See Corominas, *Diccionario*, 3:246–48. As for טהירין (*tehirin*), it 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; 2:130a, 195b, 205a, 207a; 3:73b (*Mat*), 266a; Liebes, *Peraqim*, 320. The Hebrew root טהר (*thr*), “pure,” lends this demonic name a euphemistic tone. The verse in Joshua reads: *Joshua son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, observe the land and Jericho.”*

**168. Happy is the share of Israel...** Whom God loves and for whom He has arranged Yom Kippur, enabling them to purify themselves and gain atonement.

According to Rabbi Shim'on, in the verse from Deuteronomy the phrase *the heights of the land* alludes to *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*; thus *atop the heights of the land* refers to *Tif'eret*, the high rung to which Israel is linked. On this verse, see *Zohar* 2:83a.

The full verse in Deuteronomy 7 reads: *Because of YHVH's love for you and because of His keeping the oath that He swore to your fathers, YHVH has brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the house of slaves,*

from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. The verse in Leviticus, describing Yom Kippur, reads: *For on this day purgation [or: atonement] will be effected for you....*

**169. Aaron shall place...** He is selected for this task because he symbolizes the quality of *Hesed*, which can overwhelm the harsh forces deriving from Judgment.

**170. על (א), Upon, the two goats...** Rabbi Shim'on construes the word על (*al*) as meaning *above*; so the biblical phrase now alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is *above the two goats*—that is, above the two demonic guardians symbolized by these goats. Once these harsh forces have been overcome, *Shekhinah* will be entirely sweet. See above, [note 167](#).

**171. why is one for YHVH?...** Since the goats signify harsh forces, why aren't both sent to Azazel? Because if the two of them joined together, they could devastate the world. Cf. above, [note 166](#).

**172. This one sets out...** One of the demonic forces sets out, intending to discover Israel's sins. First, in the land of Israel, he finds them engaged harmoniously in various forms of worship on Yom Kippur, so he cannot slander them. Frustrated, he roams throughout the world, but "he finds Israel acting similarly." Then from the Temple the scapegoat is sent off carrying all of Israel's accumulated sins from the entire year.

**173. Numerous bands of dazzling demons join...** Under the control of the roaming demonic force. But on this day of Yom Kippur, they find no opportunity to malign Israel in heaven.

See BT *Yoma* 20a: "On Yom Kippur, Satan has no permission to accuse. How do we know? Rami son of Hama said, 'השטן (Ha-satan), Satan, equals 364 in numerical value—implying that on 364 days he has permission to accuse, while on Yom Kippur he does not.'"

**174. When this goat reaches the mountain...** When the scapegoat reaches the mountaintop, which was located twelve Roman miles (approximately eleven statute miles)

from Jerusalem. The goat is then pushed off the peak and falls to its death.

The scapegoat bearing Israel's sins is intended to assuage all the demonic forces. Samael, the demonic "guardian," now retracts his accusations against Israel and turns into their advocate.

On the mountaintop outside of Jerusalem, see M *Yoma* 6:4-6; below, [note 186](#). On the scapegoat assuaging the demonic power, see above, [note 115](#). On the transformation of the demonic Accuser into the Advocate, see *Zohar* 2:60b; 3:63a-b (*Piq*), 63b, 102a, 123a (*RM*), 202b-203a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 126-27. Cf. *Zohar* 2:185a (Vol. 6, p. 40, n. 104).

[175](#). **Not this alone...** In addition to the scapegoat, Israel is able to overcome and assuage the demonic powers by benefiting them from various elements of the sacrifices. On Yom Kippur, Israel assuages all the demonic forces, including those who have an opportunity to accuse them in heaven. On the demonic share of the sacrifices, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:453-54, 3:890-95.

[176](#). **Aaron shall take the two goats...** Corresponding to these two earthly goats, there are two demonic forces above. As the priest places lots on the goats below, the celestial Priest (Michael) places lots on the two forces above—one of whom is left for the blessed Holy One, while the other goes roaming through the world. In the concluding sentence, the meaning of the phrase "the higher desert" is uncertain; perhaps it refers to the demonic realm. The final clause—"one bound to the other"—apparently means that the earthly ritual corresponds and is linked to the one above.

On the two forces above, see above, [notes 167](#), [170](#). On the desert as the abode of demonic powers, see *Targum Yerushalmi*, Deuteronomy 32:10; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 17:7; *Zohar* 1:14b, 126a, 169b, 178b; 2:21a (*MhN*), 60a, 157a, 184a, 236b; 3:63b. The full verse in Leviticus reads:

*He shall take the two goats and set them before YHVH at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.*

**177. Aaron shall lay his two hands...** Stimulating divine action above.

The full verse in Leviticus 16 reads: *Aaron shall lay his two hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the Children of Israel and all their transgressions, including all their sins, and he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it off in the hand of ish itti (יש עִיטִי) (ish itti), a timely man, to the desert.* The phrase *ish itti* signifies “an agent designated to serve for this time and task,” and can be rendered variously: *a man for the hour* [or: *the occasion*], *a designated* [or: *appointed, readied, fit*] *man, a man in waiting.*

**178. On the head of the live goat...** The adjective *live* alludes to and includes the demonic power above.

**179. And confess עליו (alav), over it...** Rabbi Shim'on associates the word *alav, over it*, with its grammatically feminine counterpart: עליה (aleha), *over it* [or: *that concerning (which)*], which appears in Leviticus 5, describing the guilt (or reparation) offering. Just as the latter animal bears a person's sin *aleha, upon it*, so the scapegoat bears all of Israel's sins *alav, upon it*.

**180. If so, look at what is written...** If the שעיר (sa'ir), “(scape)goat,” is sent to the satyr-demon Azazel, doesn't this violate the commandment in Leviticus: *They shall no longer offer their sacrifices לשעירים (la-se'irim), to the goats* [or: *goat-demons*]?

The word שעיר (sa'ir) means “goat, demon, satyr.” On the goat-demons, see *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 9:8, 84a; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 22:8; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 2:1462. Cf. *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 9:3. The verse in Leviticus reads: *They shall no longer slaughter their sacrifices לשעירים (la-se'irim), to the goat-demons, after which they go whoring.*

**181. Here it is different...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that in the following chapter of Leviticus, Israel is not

forbidden to *offer goats*, but is rather forbidden to ever again bring offerings *to the goats* [or: *goat-demons*]. Here, however, the Yom Kippur ritual involves two goats, only one of which is actually sacrificed—to God—while the scapegoat, bearing all of Israel’s sins, is sent off to the desert to Azazel and is not really a sacrifice.

See *Zohar* 3:248a (RM). For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:893; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:1020.

**182.** איש עתי (*ish itti*), **a readied man...** Certain people are better prepared than others to be agents of blessing or curse. The prophet Balaam was fit only to curse, as indicated by the fact that one of his eyes was permanently closed.

The verse in Numbers reads: *Utterance of Balaam son of Be’or, utterance of the man* שְׁתוּם הָעֵינַן (*shetum ha-ayin*). The original meaning of *shetum ha-ayin* may be either *whose eye is closed* or *whose eye is open*. Here, Rabbi Shim’on replaces *shetum* with סְתוּם (*setum*), “closed.”

See BT *Sanhedrin* 105a, and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *shetum ha-ayin*; *Zohar* 1:68b; 2:69a, 237a; 3:147b; Milgrom, *Numbers*, on the verse.

The phrase “even in one moment” alludes to a rabbinic tradition explaining how Balaam was able to curse Israel effectively, directing God’s anger against them. See BT *Berakhot* 7a: “How long does [God’s] wrath last? A moment.... And no creature could ever determine precisely that moment except for Balaam the wicked.” See BT *Sanhedrin* 105b, *Avodah Zarah* 4b.

On the phrase *ish itti, a readied man*, see above, [note 177](#). On Balaam being evil-eyed, see M *Avot* 5:19; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 45; *Tanḥuma, Balaq* 6; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Balaq* 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 20:10; *Zohar* 1:68b; 3:206b, 211b. Cf. *Zohar* 2:237a.

**183. He turned his face to the desert...** Seeking to curse Israel, Balaam turned to face the desert, where the demonic force dwells. As opposed to Balaam's evil eye, the priest *has a generous* [literally: *good*] eye and his gaze conveys blessing.

On the desert as the abode of demonic powers, see above, [note 176](#). The full verse in Numbers reads: *Balaam saw that it was good in the eyes of YHVH to bless Israel, and he did not go, as time after time, to encounter omens, but turned his face to the desert.* On the verse in Proverbs, see below, [note 185](#).

**184. in the hand of a readied man...** The man designated to lead the scapegoat to Azazel was *readied* and marked for such a task. His eyes were asymmetrical and frightening, his gaze crooked.

On the blemished nature of the *readied man*, see *Zohar* 2:237a; 3:90a (*RM*). Actually, according to *M Yoma* 6:3, the high priests permitted only other priests to lead the scapegoat. See *Nitsotsei Orot; Zohorei Ya'bits*. On the demonic quality of looking askance or cross-eyed, see *Zohar* 2:237a; *ZH* 31d; cf. *TZ* 70, 126b.

"Eyebrows" renders סורטא דעל עינא (*surta de-al eina*), "the fold over (or above) the eye," which could refer to the eyelid (and lashes) or the eyebrow. *Surta* may be based on סיטרא (*sitra*), "side, hem, fold." See *Zohar* 1:132b (Vol. 2, p. 244, n. 322); 3:130a (*IR*); *Nitsotsei Orot*; Luria, *Va-Ye'esof David*, s.v. *surta*; Scholem. Cf. above, [p. 324](#), [n. 227](#).

**185. In Giscala...** Or Gush Halav, a city in Upper Galilee.

Some people are ready "for this," namely to convey evil, while others are ready "for that," to convey blessing.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *He that has a generous eye יְבוֹרָךְ (yevorakh), shall be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.* By a change in vocalization, the verse is construed differently: *He that has a generous eye יְבִרָךְ (yevarekh), shall bless.* See *BT Sotah* 38b, in the name of



Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "We give the cup of blessing for the recital of Grace after Meals only to one who has a generous eye, as is said: *He that has a generous eye* יְבוֹרֵךְ (*yevorakh*), *shall be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor*. Do not read *yevorakh, shall be blessed*, but rather יְבַרֵךְ (*yevarekh*), *shall bless*."

**186. When the person going to the desert...** When the *readied man* leading the scapegoat reached the desert, he climbed a mountain. See M *Yoma* 6:6: "What did he do? He divided the strip of crimson wool, tying one half to the rock and the other half between its horns, and he pushed it from behind; and it went rolling down, and before it had reached halfway down the mountain, its limbs were torn to pieces."

The detail of pushing the goat "with both his hands" and the declaration "So may the sins of Your people, the House of Israel, be wiped out" are borrowed from the Sephardic liturgical poem *Attah Konanta* (You have established), recited during the *Avodah* prayer on Yom Kippur.

**187. the Accuser ascends and becomes the Advocate of Israel...** Samael, the demonic Accuser, is assuaged by the offering of the scapegoat and transformed into Israel's Advocate. Then God casts Israel's sins into *the depths of the sea*, just as the scapegoat has been thrown off the mountaintop.

On the transformation of Samael, see above, [note 174](#). On *the depths of the sea*, see *Zohar* 2:185b-186a; 3:101a-102a, 134a (*IR*), 163b, 197a.

**188. From the community of the Children of Israel...** The two goats—one for *YHVH* and one for Azazel—were purchased with funds donated by the entire community, since the scapegoat was to bear the sins of all the people.

According to M *Sheqalim* 4:2, the scapegoat (as well as other communal offerings) was purchased with funds from

the Temple treasury. Every adult male Israelite was obligated to pay a half-shekel to the treasury, and thirteen containers (each shaped like a shofar) were placed in the Temple court for these payments, in addition to containers set up around the country (M *Sheqalim* 2:1; 6:1, 5). The money was collected and kept in a special chamber of the Temple, and three times a year substantial funds were placed in three large baskets and designated for communal offerings and other needs of the Temple. These three baskets were undoubtedly also kept in a chamber, not in the Temple court (as stated here). See M *Sheqalim* 3:2; Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Sheqalim* 3:1; Scholem.

**189. The other goat...** First, one goat is offered to *YHVH* as a purification offering. Then, the scapegoat is brought forward and sent out to the desert and killed, as described above. Thereby, all the demonic forces are assuaged and Israel is cleansed of their sins. On the possible meaning of “to which place it is joined,” see *Sullam; Matoq mi-Devash*.

**190. Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man...** Esau is שַׁעִיר (*sa'ir*), *hairy*, and the same word also means “goat, demon, satyr.” According to Rabbi Shim'on, this designation indicates that Esau stems from the demonic realm. Conversely, Jacob is חֲלָק (*ḥalaq*), *smooth-skinned*, implying that he stems from the divine realm, since God חֲלָק (*ḥalaq*), *allotted*, the heavenly princes to all the Gentile nations, reserving Israel for Himself.

On Esau's hairiness and its demonic associations, see Genesis 25:25; *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:15; *Zohar* 1:65a, 138b, 145b, 153a; 3:63a (*Piq*), 70a, 232b. Cf. above, [note 180](#). In rabbinic literature Esau (or Edom) often represents the Roman Empire, and in medieval literature he often represents Christian rule. On the seventy heavenly princes of the nations, see above, [pp. 6–7, n. 21](#).

The full verse in Deuteronomy 4 reads: *Lest you raise your eyes to the heavens and see the sun and the moon and*

*the stars, all the array of the heavens, and you be led astray and bow down to them and worship them, for YHVH your God allotted them to all the peoples under the heavens.* Here, Rabbi Shim'on associates the heavenly bodies with the heavenly princes. See *Zohar* 2:14b (*MhN*).

**191. Furthermore, *ish ḥalaq, a smoothskinned man...*** Now the word *ḥalaq* implies that Jacob (representing the people of Israel) “apportioned” one goat for YHVH and one for Esau and his demonic mentor, Azazel, to serve as the scapegoat.

According to a midrashic interpretation of the verse in Leviticus, the word עוונותם (*avonotam*), *their iniquities*, implies עוונות תם (*avonot tam*), “the iniquities of the perfect one,” namely of Jacob, representing the people of Israel. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:15; *Zohar* 3:28a (*RM*), 232b; *TZ* 21, 52a. On Jacob as *tam*, see Genesis 25:27: *The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was איש תם (ish tam), a simple [or: mild, wholesome, perfect] man, dwelling in tents.* See above, [p. 70](#), [n. 215](#).

**192. On this day many doors are opened...** On Yom Kippur, heavenly doors are opened to receive Israel’s prayers. A portion of the offerings is given also to the demonic forces, assuaging them. The priest, who symbolizes *Hesed*, stimulates this quality to benefit the world.

On the demonic share of the sacrifices (aside from the scapegoat), see above, [note 175](#). On the priest effecting atonement for his own sins and then for the people’s sins, see Leviticus 16:6, 11, 17, 24.

**193. Having gone some distance...** From the home of Rabbi Pinḥas. See above at [notes 93](#), [163](#).

On the fiery cloud descending and surrounding the Companions, cf. BT *Ḥagigah* 14b, where “fire descended from heaven and surrounded all the trees of the field” as Rabbi El’azar son of Arakh began to expound on Ezekiel’s

chariot in the presence of Rabban Yoḥanan son of Zakkai. Cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:10.

**194. Three books of wisdom...** Traditionally, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs are attributed to Solomon the Wise. Here, Rabbi Shim'on associates each book with a specific divine quality. *Tevunah* is equivalent to *Binah*.

Cf. Naḥmanides, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:199; *Zohar* 2:39a. On Solomon's authorship, see the opening verse of each book; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 15; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:5-10 (on 1:1); *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:1; above, [p. 295](#), [n. 123](#); *Nitsotsei Zohar*.

**195. all those verses comprise two aspects...** Many of the verses in Proverbs consist of two parallel clauses, which, upon examination, fit together harmoniously. This structure accords with the *sefirah* of *Da'at*, which harmonizes *Hokhmah* and *Binah*.

**196. Rabbi Shim'on's wife has been healed...** The implication may be that her suffering protected the entire generation, and now that God has forgiven their sins, she is healed. Her illness is referred to also in *Zohar* 3:200b.

**197. generating miracles for us** Namely, the fiery cloud descending (above at [note 193](#)) and the *good news* about the healing of Rabbi Shim'on's wife, as well as the heavenly voice heard by the Companions. The biblical reference to *water* and *good news* also matches the beginning of this narrative, where the Companions come to Rabbi Shim'on, asking him to employ his supernatural powers in order to bring rain. See above, [notes 81-83](#).

**198. Cold water to a thirsting soul—Torah...** One who engages in Torah satiates his soul and is blessed, even though previously he was punished by *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by ארץ (*erets*), *land* or *earth*. Whereas earlier She rose up against him, now he is greeted with peace from a distant land—namely from *Shekhinah* Herself, who was, but is no longer, distant from him.

On Torah as water, see *Mekhilta, Vayassa* 1; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:22; BT *Bava Qamma* 17a, 82a; *Avodah Zarah* 5b; *Seder Eliyyahu Zuta* 1, p. 167; *Tanḥuma, Beshallah* 19; *Zohar* 1:12b; 2:60a.

The verse in Proverbs begins: *Cold water to a thirsting* נפש (nefesh), *throat* [or: *soul*]... The full verse in Job reads: *Heaven will expose his sin, and earth will rise up against him.*

**199. He shall go out to the altar...** The full verse reads: *He shall go out to the altar that is before YHVH and purge it* [or: *effect purgation upon it*], *and he shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar all around.* See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:1036–37. The verse is eventually discussed below, beginning at [note 235](#).

**200. A psalm of Asaph...** Huge numbers of angels chant to God as night turns into day, and as day turns into night, while a much smaller contingent chants at noontime.

Instead of בטיהרא (*be-tihara*), “at noon,” several manuscripts (V3, V22) read בסיהרא (*be-sihara*), “in the moon(light).” This reading is adopted by *Miqdash Melekh* and *Matoq mi-Devash*, and proposed independently by *Sullam*; but this sense of *be-sihara* does not match the word’s meaning elsewhere in the *Zohar*, and the progression of daybreak, noon, and twilight reads better. See below, [note 203](#).

The phrase בין הערבים (*bein ha-arbayyim*), literally “between the two evenings” (that is, between sunset and nightfall), refers to twilight.

[201.](#) **Rabbi Yose said...** Night is the time of Judgment, but as the day begins, the harsh quality of the angelic trumpeters is assuaged and Judgment subsides. The phrase *sons of Elohim* indicates that these angels are associated with Judgment, which is signified by the name *Elohim*. Abraham symbolizes *Hesed*, which is associated with the morning light.

[202.](#) **At the time called ‘between the two evenings’...** At twilight, as Judgment strengthens, an immense number of very harsh powers gather, who are referred to as “howlers.” The time of (late) afternoon is associated with Isaac, who symbolizes *Din* (Judgment), so Abraham (symbolizing *Hesed*) returns to his supernal abode. Since this is a time of Judgment, one must be careful to recite the afternoon prayer of *minḥah*.

On the importance of reciting *minḥah*, see BT *Berakhot* 6b; *Zohar* 1:95b, 132b, 182b, 230a; 2:21a (*MhN*), 36b, 88b, 156a; 3:129a (*IR*), 136a-b (*IR*), 288b (*IZ*), 293a (*IZ*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 87; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:963-64. On the verse in Jeremiah, see below, [notes 484-85](#).

[203.](#) **When night arrives...** Whereas Rabbi Yehudah associated the number 1,548 with noontime angels (see above at [note 200](#)), Rabbi Yose associates it with nighttime angels of Judgment “from outside the curtain,” that is, who are excluded from the innermost divine realm. They chant song until midnight, that is, through the first one-and-a-half watches of the night, each watch lasting for four hours.

On the three watches (or divisions) of the night, see BT *Berakhot* 3a-b. On the angels singing during the watches, see Rashi on BT *Berakhot* 3a, s.v. *i qa-savar*; *Zohar* 1:188b-189a, 231a; 2:173a-b, 195b-196a; *ZH* 5d-6a (*MhN*), 88a (*MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 403; idem, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 70-71 (88-89).

This particular disagreement between Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Yehudah disappears if one adopts the reading בסיהרא



(*be-sihara*), “in the moon(light).” See above, [note 200](#). But that reading is not convincing, and, in any case, their conflict immediately continues.

**204. When favor is found...** Whereas Rabbi Yose said that praises are uttered by other angels from midnight on, Rabbi Yehudah insists that such praises are chanted only in the morning, when divine favor returns.

**205. After the north wind is aroused...** Maintaining his position, Rabbi Yose indicates that once the north wind is aroused at midnight, Judgment begins to wane—and angels do chant praises until morning, when “this morning” of *Ḥesed* appears.

On the north wind at midnight, see BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on the Ḥasid: “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.”

**206. above them are three officers...** Rabbi Abba adds that above each of three cohorts of angels (in the three watches) are three angelic captains. Over the morning angels is an official named *הימן* (*Heiman*), Heman, whose name assonates with *ימין* (*yamin*), “right”—alluding to *Ḥesed*, which is associated with morning and is located on the right side of the sefirotic tree. The angel Heman corresponds “to the one below,” namely to the biblical Heman, mentioned in the superscription to Psalm 88.

**207. When the time of twilight is aroused...** As Judgment strengthens, the angelic howlers sing, and over them is appointed *ידותון* (*Yedutun*), Jeduthun, whose name assonates with *דין* (*Din*), Judgment. The angel Jeduthun corresponds “to the one below,” namely to the biblical Jeduthun, mentioned in the superscription to Psalm 39. Cf. Psalms 62:1; 77:1, where *yedutun* is a musical term.

The biblical phrase *זמיר עריצים* (*zemir aritsim*) is often translated *singing of tyrants*, but here Rabbi Abba

understands it as implying also *pruning of tyrants*, namely of the wicked, who are pruned by these howling songs. See *Midrash Aggadah*, Numbers 25:14; Rashi on Exodus 15:2; Isaiah 25:5; *Zohar* 1:1a; 3:284a.

**208. When night arrives...** Now Judgment prevails entirely, and harsh angelic forces “from outside the (divine) curtain” are aroused. Whereas according to Rabbi Yose these angels sing (see above at [note 203](#)), Rabbi Abba teaches that “all (singing) subsides,” and there is “no opening,” apparently meaning “no opening of angelic mouths in song,” or “no opening of heavenly portals.”

At midnight, however, the camps of angels gather to sing, under the angelic captain Asaph, whose name implies “gathering.” He corresponds “to the one below,” namely to the biblical Asaph, mentioned in the superscription to Psalm 50 (quoted above at [note 200](#) by Rabbi Yehudah) as well as in the superscriptions to Psalms 73–83.

The verse in Numbers, describing the journeying of the tribes in the wilderness, reads: *The banner of the camp of the children of Dan journeyed on, מַעֲסֵפָה (me’asseph), the rear guard, for all the camps by their divisions.* Here, Rabbi Abba understands *me’asseph* hyperliterally as *the gatherer*.

**209. Then, before morning comes...** Metatron, the chief angel, purifies his subordinates from the harsh effects of nighttime. He is known as the Youth, suckling from Mother *Shekhinah*. Soon, when morning arrives, *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*) joins Her Husband, King *Tif’eret*, who extends blessing not only to Her but also to all the righteous below who rose at midnight to study Torah.

On studying Torah at midnight, see BT *Berakhot* 3b, in the name of Rabbi Shim’on the Ḥasid: “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, [p. 74](#), [n. 228](#).

On Metatron as Youth, see above, [p. 2](#), [n. 3](#). On the image of suckling and of conversing with one's beloved, see BT *Berakhot* 3a, in the name of Rabbi Eli'ezer: "In the first watch [of the night], a donkey brays; in the second, dogs bark; in the third, a child sucks from its mother's breast, and a woman converses with her husband."

On the erotic connotation of "converses," see BT *Nedarim* 20b, and pseudo-Rashi, ad loc.; Todros Abulafia, *Otsar ha-Kavod, Berakhot* 3a, p. 3a (who identifies the suckling child in this passage as Metatron and the conversing couple as *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*). Cf. *Zohar* 1:178a; 2:46a; 3:45a, 108a.

On the thread extended by God, 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 directs His love. Why? Because in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9)." *His song* is the song of Torah. See *Zohar* 2:46a; 3:44b-45a; above, [p. 139](#), [n. 429](#).

[210](#). ***If I take wing with the dawn...*** According to Rabbi Shim'on, King David the Psalmist alludes here to his practice of rising at midnight to study Torah until the morning. *The sea* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who begins Her restoration at midnight (when Judgment still prevails) and completes it at dawn.

On David's practice, see the preceding note. The context in Psalms (139:9-10) reads: *If I take wing with the dawn, and I dwell at the end of the sea, there too Your hand leads me, and Your right hand grasps me.*

**211. All those who engage in Torah...** At midnight. See above, [note 209](#).

**212. At that time the patriarchs encounter Matronita...** The patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—symbolize respectively *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*. According to Rabbi Shim'on, the three divine names in the opening verse of Psalm 50 allude to this same sefirotic triad. *EI* refers to *Hesed*, shining forth from *Hokhmah* (Wisdom); *Elohim* refers to *Gevurah*; and *YHVH* refers to *Tif'eret*, who balances and completes *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, and is known as *Rahamim* (Compassion). By these three sefirotic potencies, the blessed Holy One “calls” to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth*), to unite with Her.

The verse in Psalms appears above (at [note 200](#)) at the beginning of this *Zohar* passage and again below at [note 233](#). On *EI* signifying *Hesed*, which radiates from *Hokhmah*, see above, [p. 177](#) and [n. 29](#). According to rabbinic tradition, the name *YHVH* signifies Compassion, whereas *Elohim* signifies Judgment, which in Kabbalah is associated with *Gevurah*. See above, [p. 11](#), [n. 31](#).

**213. Elohim is always Judgment...** As mentioned in the preceding note, the name *Elohim* signifies Judgment, whereas *YHVH* signifies Compassion. Rabbi El'azar wonders about the hybrid form יהוה־אלהים—consisting of the letters יהוה (*YHVH*) along with the vowels of אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*), and pronounced *Elohim*. Why is this pronounced *Elohim* (signifying Judgment), when its letters (*YHVH*) signify Compassion?

The hybrid form יהוה־אלהים appears only in the phrase אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (Adonai *YHVH*), *my Lord YHVH*, to indicate its standard vocalization as *Adonai Elohim, my Lord God*. This phrase occurs four times in the Torah, three times in Psalms, and often in the Prophets. See *Zohar* 3:10b.

**214. YHVH is Elohim...** According to Rabbi Shim'on, the verses in Deuteronomy and Kings indicate that the name *YHVH* includes the quality of Judgment, signified by *Elohim*.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Know today and take to your heart that YHVH is Elohim, God, in the heavens above and on the earth below; there is none else.* The quotation from Kings is spoken by the Israelites after a miracle is performed through Elijah at Mount Carmel: fire descends and consumes an ascent offering along with the wood, stones, and earth beneath it, as well as the water around it, demonstrating that YHVH is the true God and Baal is a false god. The verse reads in full: *When they saw this, all the people fell on their faces and cried out, “YHVH is God [or: YHVH alone is God], YHVH is God!”*

**215. This I know...** Rabbi El'azar realizes that God's Judgment is tempered by Compassion, and that His Compassion may also be combined with Judgment. But he wants a more satisfying answer to his question.

**216. when the wicked turn Compassion into Judgment...** Human wickedness has the power to transform God's Compassion into Judgment, thereby altering the vocalization of the name YHVH.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3, in the name of Rabbi Shemu'el son of Nahman: “Woe to the wicked, who turn the Attribute of Compassion into the Attribute of Judgment!” See above, [p. 94](#), [n. 287](#).

**217. There are three rungs...** *Binah*, *Gevurah*, and *Shekhinah*, each of which is called *Elohim*. Their shared name indicates that although each is unique and independent they are essentially inseparable.

**218. All those plants and all those burning lamps...** All the *sefirot* are nourished by the river of *Binah*, the Divine Mother, who waters the entire Garden of emanation. She is joined continually with *Hokhmah* (known as Eden), who fertilizes Her, and through Her fifty gates, emanation flows forth. She is the source of Compassion, but since She is female (in relation to the male *Hokhmah*), She also yields Judgment. Her dual nature is reflected in the hybrid name יהוה—combining the letters יהוה (YHVH), signifying

Compassion, with the vowels of אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*), signifying Judgment.

See above, [pp. 57–58](#), [n. 171](#). On the perpetual union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, [pp. 4–5](#), [n. 12](#). On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see above, [p. 95](#), [n. 290](#).

**219. Second rung...** From the side of *Binah* (on the left) emerges *Gevurah*, who is called *Elohim*, “with these letters”—unlike *Binah*, whose hybrid name יהוה combines the letters יהוה (*YHVH*) with the vowels of אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*).

The term *Ze’eir Anpin* (or *Ze’eir Anpin*), literally “short-tempered, irascible, impatient,” refers to the sefirotic configuration from *Hokhmah* through *Yesod*. One of its “beginnings,” or manifestations, is *Gevurah*. The name *YHVH* refers specifically to *Tif’eret*, the core of *Ze’eir Anpin*, and the biblical statement *YHVH is Elohim* implies that *Tif’eret* is linked with *Gevurah*.

On the term *Ze’eir Anpin*, see above, [p. 93](#), [n. 285](#). On the verses in Deuteronomy and Kings, see above, [note 214](#).

**220. Third rung...** The third *sefirah* associated with the name *Elohim* is the last *sefirah*, *Shekhinah*, who is also called *Tsedeq* (Righteousness). She is pictured as the Court of Justice, issuing divine decrees and conveying Judgment. She derives from *Gevurah*, but represents a more lenient form of Judgment. Another of Her names is אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*), which is pronounced exactly as written—unlike the name יהוה (*YHVH*), which is so holy that it is not pronounced as written but rather (normally) as *Adonai*.

“This name is completed in this place” means that the name *Elohim* is completed in the realm of *Shekhinah*, since She is the final *sefirah* associated with this name.

On the pronunciation of *Adonai*, see *Zohar* 1:15b. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**221. I have heard...** Rabbi El’azar asks his father about the deeper meaning of God’s response to Moses when asked for His name. The full verse reads: *God said to*



Moses, “אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*), *I am that I am* [or: *I will be who I will be*].” He said, “Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel: ‘*Ehyeh, I am, has sent me to you.*’” On this verse, see above, [p. 61](#), [n. 184](#).

**222. אֶהְיֶה (*Ehyeh*), *I am—totality of all...*** The first *Ehyeh* alludes to *Keter*, who includes all that will emerge but is now still concealed. *Hokhmah* has not yet emanated nor have its paths branched out. At this point, the Hidden God is saying, as it were, *Ehyeh, I am, or I will be*.

Once *Hokhmah* (known as “beginning”) emerges, and the river of *Binah* is impregnated by Him, then the rest of this triple name applies: אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*asher ehyeh*), *that I am*. The second *Ehyeh* implies “*I still am, ready now to convey all.*” See *Zohar* 1:15a; 3:11a.

**223. Now I am totality of all...** The first *Ehyeh* implies “*I am totality and generality,*” not yet manifesting any particular qualities, whereas *asher ehyeh* alludes to the unfolding of all particulars. When *Binah* soon gives birth to the lower *sefirot*, all the divine qualities will appear, included in the supernal Name *YHVH*, which encompasses the full sefirotic spectrum. See above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#).

**224. Moses wanted to know the details...** Namely, who would emerge from *Binah*. God responded with the conclusion of the verse: *Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel: “Ehyeh, I am [or: I will be], has sent me to you.”* Here the name *Ehyeh* stands alone—without the additional words *asher ehyeh, that I am*—alluding to the specific sefirotic qualities that *will be*. For the full verse in Exodus, see above, [note 221](#).

**225. in the Book of King Solomon...** This mysterious source interprets the phrase אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*asher ehyeh*), *that I am*, as alluding to the joyous, fruitful union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*. The word *asher, that*, is associated with אֲשֶׁר (*osher*), “happiness,” namely the “blissful bond” between *Hokhmah* and *Binah*—who is alluded to as “a supernal castle.” Having

been impregnated by *Hokhmah*, *Binah* declares “*Ehyeh, I am* [or: *I will be*],” for She is “ready to give birth.”

“In blissful bond of a supernal castle” renders עלאה (be-qittura de-idduna qastira ila’ah). *Qittura* is based on the root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie, bind.” *Idduna* is based on עדון (*iddun*), “delight,” and here alludes to *Hokhmah*, who is symbolized by עדן (*eden*), “Eden” (meaning “delight”). *Qastira* derives from Latin *castrum* (pl. *castra*), “castle, fortress, military camp,” and here symbolizes *Binah*, who is often pictured as a palace or house.

The declaration in Genesis is spoken by Leah, upon giving birth: “באשרי (*Be-oshri*), *Happy am I! For daughters אשרוני* (*isheruni*), *call me happy.*” And she named him אשר (*Asher*), *Asher*. In Kabbalah, Leah symbolizes *Binah*, and here the *daughters* may represent the lower *sefirot*, who issue from *Binah* and celebrate Her joy.

See *Zohar* 1:158a, 245b; 3:97a. Cf. the passage by Azriel of Gerona, published by Scholem in *Madda’ei ha-Yahadut* 2 (1927): 232. On the Book of King Solomon, see above, [p. 55](#), [n. 164](#).

**226. Come and see how it descends...** The phrase אהיה אשר אהיה (*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*), *I am that I am* [or: *I will be who I will be*], demonstrates the gradual process of emanation. The first *ehyeh, I am*, represents *Keter*, the unconcealed totality, who simply “is.” The verse in Proverbs opens with the word ואהיה (*va-ehyeh*), *I was*, which can similarly refer to *Keter*, who is *by Him*, namely by *Ein Sof*. Alternatively, since this verse is spoken by Wisdom, here *I was* can refer to *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), who is *by Him*, namely by *Keter*. The verse in Job (whose subject is Wisdom) demonstrates that Wisdom’s value cannot be ascertained—reflecting here the incomprehensibility of Wisdom’s source, *Keter*.

Subsequently, the river of *Binah* issued, and She became pregnant, ready to generate all the lower *sefirot*. See above, [notes 222–24](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:346.

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *I was by him as אָמוֹן (amon), a nursling [or: intimate, confidant, artisan]; I was a delight day after day, playing before Him at all times.* According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1, *amon* can also mean “concealed,” which pertains here. Cf. above, [p. 208, n. 1](#). On the verse in Job, see *Zohar* 1:141b; 2:123a; 3:292a (12).

[227.](#) **Afterward, She began to give birth...** The end of the verse in Exodus reads: *Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel: “Ehyeh, I am [or: I will be], has sent me to you.”* Here the name *Ehyeh* stands alone, without the additional words *asher ehyeh, that I am*—implying that “now all will issue and be arranged.” See above, [note 224](#).

Once all the lower *sefirot* emerged from *Binah*, God “left all” the previously mentioned names (that is, *Ehyeh* and *asher*), and in the following verse (Exodus 3:15) said *YHVH*, signifying the specific qualities manifested in the lower *sefirot*, which are then reflected in all of existence.

Exodus 3:15 reads in full: *God said further to Moses, “Thus shall you say to the Children of Israel: YHVH, God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, sent me to you. This is My name forever, My invocation for all generations.*

[228.](#) **be careful to write the Holy Name...** *YHVH* in a Torah scroll, tefillin, or mezuzot. One must write this name “fittingly,” intending to unify the *sefirot*, which are symbolized by the letters of *YHVH*.

On the following passage, cf. the discussion of the scribal letters of the name *YHVH* in *Zohar* 3:10b, 11b. On the sefirotic significance of these letters, see above, [p. 9, n. 27](#). On the importance of not omitting even part of a holy letter, see BT *Menaḥot* 29a-b. On the significance and danger of scribal activity, see BT *Eruvin* 13a, in the name of Rabbi Me’ir: “When I came to Rabbi Yishma’el, he said to me, ‘My son, what is your work?’ I replied, ‘I am a scribe.’ He said to me, ‘My son, be careful in your work, for your work is the work of heaven. If perchance you omit a single letter or

add a single letter, you would be destroying the whole world!” According to Kabbalah, the entire Torah is considered God’s name. See above, [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#); below, [note 415](#).

The full verse in Numbers reads: *For he has spurned the word of YHVH and His commandment he has violated. That soul shall surely be cut off, her iniquity [or: guilt] is upon her.*

[229](#). ’ (**Yod**), **at first...** The first letter of יהוה (YHVH) symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, while its tip alludes to the hidden realm of *Keter*, which is known as *Ayin* (Nothingness), reflecting its total incomprehensibility. This initial letter includes all that will emerge, though now everything is still concealed, and the paths of Wisdom have not yet opened.

Once the river of *Binah* issues from *Hokhmah*, the next letter pertains: ה (he). In the verse from Genesis, *Eden* symbolizes *Hokhmah*, while the present tense of *issues* implies that the divine river flows constantly, unceasingly. Even after emanating from *Hokhmah*, *Binah* remains inseparable from Him.

The phrase “totality of male and female” may refer to the significance of the full spelling of the name of the letter *yod*: יוד (yod). While the ’ (*yod*) itself symbolizes *Hokhmah* (and *Keter*), the ם (*vav*), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes the Divine Son, *Tif’eret*, and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*), and finally the ד (*dalet*) symbolizes the Divine Daughter, *Shekhinah*—who is דלה (*dallah*), “poor,” until She is filled with emanation from above. See above, [p. 55](#), [n. 165](#).

On *Ayin*, see Matt, “*Ayin: The Concept of Nothingness.*” On the perpetual union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, and the significance of the term *companion*, see above, [pp. 4-5](#), [n. 12](#). On the present tense of *issues*, see *Zohar* 2:83a; 3:267b, 290b (12). For other examples of emphasizing the

present tense, see *Zohar* 1:5a, 33b, 230a; 2:10a; above, [p. 243](#), [n. 122](#); Matt, “The Aura of Secrecy,” 201.

**230. Now, you might say...** The verse in Genesis speaks of a single *river*, yet three entities follow *Hokhmah*—namely *Binah*, *Tif’eret* (together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him), and *Shekhinah*. Rabbi Shim’on affirms that all three issue from *Hokhmah*: the river of *Binah* and Her two children, *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*. On the wording “in three is all included,” cf. above, [note 154](#).

**231. Afterward, ה (he), like this: ה ’ (yod, he)...** This apparently alludes not only to the sefirotic sequence but also to its symbolic enactment in a scribal technique of writing the first letter ה (he) of יהוה (YHVH): beginning with a ’ (yod) and then extending this letter on the top toward the left and below on the right to form the top and right portion of the letter ה (he), which is then completed with the leg on the lower left. See above, [p. 61](#), [n. 186](#).

The “children below Father and Mother” are the seven lower *sefirot* generated by *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, namely *Tif’eret* (along with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him) and *Shekhinah*.

**232. After giving birth...** *Binah* places Her Son, *Tif’eret*, in front of Her, corresponding to the next letter of YHVH, namely ם (vav). The numerical value of *vav* is six, symbolizing *Tif’eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). *Tif’eret* inherits the riches of emanation from His parents, *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, and conveys sustenance to the Daughter, *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the final letter of YHVH, ה (he).

Just as the first *he* of YHVH is composed by initially writing a ’ (yod), then extending it, and finally adding the leg, so the last *he* of YHVH is composed by starting with a ם (vav), then extending its top toward the left to form the roof of the ה (he), and finally adding the leg of the *he* on the lower left. This technique demonstrates that *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the *he*) and *Tif’eret* (symbolized by *vav*) are inseparable.

See the preceding note, and above, [p. 62](#), [n. 189](#). The expression “these words ascend to another place” alludes to another possible interpretation.

**233. *EI, Elohim YHVH has spoken...*** Rabbi Yehudah opened with this verse above (at [note 200](#)). Here he indicates that the three divine names refer to the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), as explained above, [note 212](#). By these three sefirotic potencies, the blessed Holy One “calls” to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth* and known as Assembly of Israel), to unite with Her.

The following verse in Psalms reveals the place from which the blessed Holy One appears, namely from *Yesod*, who is known as *Zion*. The context in Psalms reads: *A psalm of Asaph. EI, Elohim YHVH has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. From Zion, perfection of beauty, God shone forth.* The subject of אלהים (*Elohim*), *God, shone forth* can also be understood as *Shekhinah*, who shares the name *Elohim*.

**234. *When the blessed Holy One...*** When God wanted to create the world, He modeled it on the structure of the *sefirot*. He made Jerusalem the center of the world, corresponding to *Shekhinah*. At the height of Jerusalem, He fashioned Zion (the site of the Temple), corresponding to *Yesod*. From Zion, Jerusalem is blessed, just as *Shekhinah* is blessed from *Yesod*.

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.”

Thus, “from which place” did God call the earth into being? *From Zion*, specifically from the Foundation Stone. The final sentence can refer to the earthly Jerusalem and Zion, as well as to their sefirotic counterparts. Zion is



blessed from above, and *Yesod* is blessed from the higher *sefirot*. The subject of אלהים (*Elohim*), *God, shone forth* can be understood as *Shekhinah*, who is also known as *Elohim*.

On the passage in *Tanḥuma*, see BT *Yoma* 54b, *Sanhedrin* 37a; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Qedoshim* 10; Ibn Ezra on Genesis 1:2; Naḥmanides on Leviticus 18:25; *Zohar* 1:78a, 84b, 226a; 2:157a, 184b, 193a; 3:161b; TZ 21, 49b, 50b. Cf. *Eikhah Rabbah*, *Petiḥta* 16.

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; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 35; *Midrash Kohen* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 2:24–25); *Zohar* 1:71b–72a, 231a; 2:50a–b (*Mat*), 91b, 152a, 221a; ZH 2b (*MhN*), 28a (*MhN*), 76b (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 333; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:14–16, n. 39; Vol. 4, p. 248, n. 183.

**235. *He shall go out to the altar...*** The verse does not specify which altar—the incense altar or the sacrificial altar. Rabbi Yehudah assumes that it is the latter (more general) altar, which symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Just as the earthly altar is purged on Yom Kippur, so is the divine altar.

M *Yoma* 5:5 explains *the altar* in this verse as referring to the incense altar. According to *Sifra*, *Aḥarei Mot* 4:8, 81d, this conclusion is demonstrated by the wording *the altar that is before YHVH*, since the incense altar was situated within the Tabernacle proper directly in front of the curtain, whereas the sacrificial altar was located in the courtyard of the Tabernacle. See JT *Yoma* 5:3, 42c–d. Rabbi Yehudah's view matches that of Ibn Ezra (on the verse). See Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:1036.

On the high priest's ritual on Yom Kippur, see below (extending to 67a); 3:102a; ZH 19a, 21a (both *MhN*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:887–88. The full verse reads: *He shall go out to the altar that is before YHVH and purge it [or: effect purgation upon it], and he shall take*

*some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar all around. See above, [note 199](#).*

**[236.](#) Just as on this day the priest purges below...** Just as the priest purges in the Tabernacle (or in the Temple), so the Divine Priest (*Hesed*) purges above. Any action above must be stimulated by human action below. On this principle, see above, [p. 182](#), [n. 49](#).

**[237.](#) the blessed Holy One abandons His due...** He does not exact full retribution for their sins or even a small fraction of it.

**[238.](#) How many chariots...** God oversees countless angelic forces. However, none of these can perform the heavenly ritual until Israel performs service below.

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; *ZH* 12b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 91.

**[239.](#) all the more so afterward** When the Temple was destroyed and Israel went into exile, unable to offer any sacrifices.

**[240.](#) If you knew how many legions...** How many angels are prevented from performing heavenly rituals because Israel no longer brings offerings in the Temple. Yet even though Israel has ruined the heavenly service, God does not entirely reject them.

The verses in Leviticus 16 imply that by the Yom Kippur ritual, *Shekhinah* (the heavenly altar) is Herself purified; afterward, the people gain atonement. But Rabbi Yehudah wonders how purging applies to the divine altar, or how this happens.

The full verse in Leviticus 26 reads: *Yet even this too—when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or loathe them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with them, for I YHVH am their God.* For the full text of Leviticus 16:18, see above, [note 235](#). Leviticus 16:24

reads in full: *He shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments, and he shall go out and sacrifice his ascent offering and the people's ascent offering, effecting atonement for himself and for the people.*

**241. To arouse *Ḥesed*...** By arousing his *sefirah* (*Ḥesed*), the priest stimulates a flow that purifies or purges the heavenly altar (*Shekhinah*).

**242. *He shall purge the Sanctuary*...** The Sanctuary symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who is defiled by human wickedness. Then the demonic Serpent is aroused, and harsh judgments strike the world.

On causing a defect above, see BT *Sanhedrin* 74a (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yoḥai); above, [p. 103](#), [n. 312](#). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *He shall purge the Sanctuary of the impurities of the Children of Israel and of their transgressions, whatever their sins, and he shall do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their impurities.*

**243. On this day...** On Yom Kippur, the high priest must stimulate his *sefirah*, *Ḥesed*, which issues from *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, the divine head. Thereby the King comes to join *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*). Before their union, *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the Sanctuary*) must be purified and purged. Once they join, all the angels rejoice, along with the entire world, celebrating the atonement of sins.

The full verse in Leviticus, describing Yom Kippur, reads: *For on this day purgation [or: atonement] will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure [or: to purify you; from all your sins before YHVH, you will become pure].*

**244. *No person shall be in the Tent of Meeting*...** It is unseemly for anyone else to be present when the divine couple unites. At the moment of their union, all those below are purged of their sins. The phrase *for himself* [or: *for*

*him]* and for his household may allude to *Tif'eret* (*him*) and *Shekhinah* (*his household*).

See *Zohar* 1:206b. Cf. 1:208b. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *No person shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes in to effect purgation in the Sanctuary until he goes out, and he shall effect purgation for himself and for his household and for the whole assembly of Israel.*

**245. No person shall be in the Tent of Meeting** For the full verse, see the preceding note.

**246. When the people of Israel is in exile...** God shares their exile. Here “the blessed Holy One” may refer to *Tif'eret*, who accompanies Israel because *Shekhinah* is with them. Alternatively, “the blessed Holy One” refers more generally to God or is equivalent with *Shekhinah*.

On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see *Mekhilta, Pisha* 14, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: “Wherever Israel went in exile, *Shekhinah*, as it were, went into exile with them. When they were exiled to Egypt, *Shekhinah* went into exile with them.... When they were exiled to Babylon, *Shekhinah* went into exile with them.... And when in the future they return, *Shekhinah*, as it were, will return with them.” See above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#).

**247. For the sake of those righteous ones...** Who remained in the land of Israel; *Shekhinah* remained there after the return from Babylon and She dwelled in the Second Temple.

**248. For Matronita returned to the King...** *Shekhinah* returned to unite with King *Tif'eret*, and all returned to celebrate their wedding.

According to rabbinic tradition, the Great Assembly was originally convened by Ezra and his associates and became an institution governing the postexilic community of the land of Israel throughout the Persian period. Here, Rabbi Yehudah indicates that the Men of the Great Assembly were appropriately called by this title, since through their devotion and wisdom they restored *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) to greatness after Her

diminishment in exile. See BT *Yoma* 69b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "Why were they called Men of the Great Assembly? Because they restored the Crown to its pristine form."

See JT *Berakhot* 7:3, 11c; *Megillah* 3:6, 74c; *Midrash Tehillim* 19:2. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

**[249](#). if they are worthy, the blessed Holy One hastens...** See BT *Sanhedrin* 98a, where Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi discusses Isaiah 60:22, describing Israel's redemption: *I, YHVH, will hasten it in its time* (Isaiah 60:22). "Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi pointed out a contradiction. It is written: *in its time*; yet it is written *I will hasten it*. If they prove worthy, *I will hasten it*; if not, *in its time*."

The three patriarchs mentioned in the verse from Leviticus symbolize the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are cosmic patriarchs. On the link between the *sefirot* and the Name *YHVH*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#). For the full verse in Leviticus, see above at [note 246](#). On the passage in *Sanhedrin*, see *Zohar* 1:117b.

**[250](#). Why is Jacob first here?...** The verse in Leviticus lists the patriarchs in reverse order: Jacob, Isaac, Abraham—why? Because, Rabbi Hiyya explains, Jacob symbolizes *Tif'eret*, who harmonizes and blends the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah* (symbolized respectively by Abraham and Isaac). Thus Jacob is "totality of the patriarchs."

Jacob's *sefirah*, *Tif'eret*, is the trunk of the cosmic Tree. Furthermore, it is symbolized by the letter *vav* (ו) in *יהוה* (*YHVH*), because the numerical value of *vav* is six, alluding to *Tif'eret* together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). Appropriately, in this verse Jacob's name is spelled with an extra *vav*: *יעקוב* (*Ya'aqov*), Jacob.

On the reverse order of the patriarchs in this verse from Leviticus, see *Sifra*, *Beḥuqqotai* 8:6, 112b-c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 36:5. On Jacob's status among the patriarchs, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 76:1, in the name of Rabbi Re'uven: "The

chosen of the patriarchs is Jacob, as is said: *For Yah has chosen Jacob for Himself* (Psalms 135:4).”

On the spelling *יַעֲקֹב* (*Ya'aqov*) in this verse (and nowhere else in the Torah), see *Midrash Haserot vi-Yterot*, 34, 108 (*Battei Midrashot*, 2:242–43, 278–79); Rashi, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:117b, 119a, 168a; 2:9b–10a; *Minḥat Shai*, ad loc.

**251. וַו (vav) in its letters—thirteen attributes...** The numerical value of the full spelling of the name of this letter—*וַו* (*vav*)—is thirteen (six plus one plus six), alluding to God’s “thirteen attributes” of Compassion, which are derived from Exodus 34:6–7. These attributes are associated with *Keter* and “inherited” by the Divine Son, *Tif’eret*. On the thirteen attributes, see above, [note 154](#).

**252. Why does וַו (vav) include וַ אַ וַ (vav, alef, vav)?...** Rabbi Abba explains that the first letter of the complete spelling—the first *vav* of *וַו* (*vav, alef, vav*)—symbolizes *Tif’eret* (together with the five *sefirot* surrounding Him). He represents the sefirotic *Adam* (the *human being* described by Ezekiel), sitting on the Throne of *Shekhinah*.

The middle letter—*א* (*alef*)—symbolizes *Keter*, who is concealed within *Tif’eret* (and His surrounding *sefirot*), as indicated by the verse in Genesis, which is spoken by *Tif’eret* (known as *YHVH*), who swears an oath [*by that which is*] *within Me*, namely by *Keter*. Fittingly, this *alef* is not heard or noticed in pronouncing the name of the letter *vav*, reflecting the unknowability of *Keter*.

The last letter—the second *vav*—symbolizes *Yesod* (the divine phallus), who extends and completes *Tif’eret*, and is described as “consummation of the [divine] body.”

The conclusion of the paragraph may mean that the letter *vav* appears both at the beginning and end of the complete spelling *וַו* (*vav, alef, vav*). Alternatively, it refers to *Tif’eret* (symbolized by *vav*), *Keter* (the “beginning”), and *Yesod* (the “consummation”). For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.



On *vav* as symbolizing *Adam*, see *Zohar* 2:180b–181a; *ZH* 5c (*SO*), 60d (*MhN*, *ShS*). On the two *vavs* as symbolizing *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*, see above, [p. 58](#), [n. 176](#). On *Yesod* as “consummation of the body,” see above, [p. 20](#), [n. 59](#). The verse in Ezekiel, describing what lies above the angelic *hayyot* (living beings), reads in full: *Above the firmament over their heads—like the appearance of sapphire, image of a throne. And upon the image of a throne, an image like the appearance of a human being upon it above.*

The verse in Genesis records God’s declaration to Abraham following the binding of Isaac. It reads in full: *He said, “בי נשבעתי” (Bi nishba’ti), By My own Self I swear, declares YHVH, that because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only one.* Here, Rabbi Abba apparently reads *bi nishba’ti* as: [*By that which is*] *within Me I swear.* See *Zohar* 3:130a (*IR*); *ZH* 51d. Cf. Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 109; 210, n. 151.

**253. There are two letters like this...** Whose fully spelled name begins and ends with the letter itself and includes another letter in between. The first letter of נון (*nun*)—called “bent ן (*nun*)” after its shape—symbolizes *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*). The middle letter—ו (*vav*)—symbolizes *Yesod* (as explained in the preceding note). The last letter—ן (final *nun*), called פשוטה ן (*nun peshutah*), “straight *nun*”—symbolizes *Tif'eret*, whose אַתְּפִשְׁטוּתָא (*itpashetuta*), “extension,” includes *Yesod*. So this full spelling represents the union of *Shekhinah* with *Tif'eret* via *Yesod*.

On the two forms of the letter *nun*, see BT *Shabbat* 104a; *Bahir* 56 (83). On the full spelling נון (*nun*), cf. *Zohar* 2:180b, 235b. On ן (*nun*) as a symbol of *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:147a–b (*Tos*); 2:91a, 139a, 215a, 235b; 3:155a; *ZH* 41c. Elsewhere, the *Zohar*, indicates that ן (final *nun*) symbolizes the union of male and female. See *Bahir* 56 (83); *Zohar* 1:18b–19a, 147a (*Tos*); 3:155a, 156b, 285b; *ZH* 70a (*ShS*).

**254. Now, you might ask...** Why does ו (*vav*), which symbolizes *Yesod*, turn its face away from the bent ן (*nun*),

symbolizing *Shekhinah*, and instead face the straight ך (nun), symbolizing *Tif'eret*? Shouldn't the *vav* face its partner, the bent *nun*? Rabbi Abba answers that *vav* faces the straight *nun* so that it can honor King *Tif'eret*.

**255. םמ (mem) does not include another...** Unlike םא (vav) and ןן (nun), the full spelling of the letter ם (mem)—םם (mem)—“does not include another (letter) within itself.” This is because the two forms of this letter—open ם (mem) and closed (or final) ם (mem)—symbolize two contrasting *sefirot*. The first represents *Shekhinah*, who is open for *Tif'eret* (or *Yesod*) to join with Her; the second represents *Binah* (known as Jubilee), whose paths are hidden, although they also branch out. Some, however, maintain that the closed *mem* likewise symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who contains the flow of emanation, or who must remain protected from demonic forces, and is thus described as *locked* and *sealed*.

On the open and closed *mem*, see BT *Shabbat* 104a; *Bahir* 57 (84). On closed *mem* as symbolizing *Binah*, see *Zohar* 1:34b; 2:127a-b, 135a, 180a; 3:156b; *ZH* 5c (SO), 38c, 41d, 72b-d (*ShS*). On the open *mem* as symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 2:53b. On *Binah* as Jubilee, see Vol. 5, pp. 135-36, n. 381. On the verse in Song of Songs, see *Zohar* 1:32b, 63b; 2:4a (*MhN*); 3:298a.

**256. When the blessed Holy One remembers Israel...** And redeems them, *Shekhinah* is purified and returns to Her place in Jerusalem to reunite with the blessed Holy One. At that intimate moment, no person should be present. See above, [notes 243-44](#).

**257. The priest stimulates peace...** Unifying and harmonizing the *sefirot*.

In the rituals of Yom Kippur, the high priest alternated between his normal priestly garments (known as “garments of gold” because half of them contained gold) and special white garments, which he wore only on this day. He changed clothes five times during this day, and between each change he would immerse himself in water. In

addition, he had to sanctify his hands and feet (by ritually washing them) before removing one set of priestly garments and after donning the other set.

Here Rabbi Yehudah associates the garments of gold with *Shekhinah*, who is “one level,” and the white garments with *Tif’eret*, who is “another” level. As he prepares to enter the level of *Shekhinah*, he immerses his body before donning the garments of gold, and later he immerses his body again before donning the white garments and entering the level of *Tif’eret*. When he sanctifies his hands, both levels “are blessed as one.” The priest “must demonstrate action” in order to stimulate sefirotic activity above.

On the change of garments, immersion, and sanctification of hands and feet, see M *Yoma* 3:3–7. On the high priest’s rituals on Yom Kippur, see *Zohar* 3:102a–b. On the need to manifest action, see above, [p. 219](#), [n. 44](#). According to Kabbalah, “By an action below is aroused an action above.” See above, [p. 182](#), [n. 49](#).

[258](#). ’ (**Yod**) **opens its engravings...** The following description of the letters of *YHVH* pertains to the high priest’s pronunciation of the Name on Yom Kippur. This passage is intentionally cryptic, and its wording differs among the various manuscripts; here I venture to identify only certain elements. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

According to Kabbalah, the name *YHVH* symbolizes the entire sefirotic spectrum. The ’ (*yod*) symbolizes the primordial point of *Hokhmah*, while its upper tip symbolizes *Keter*. The first ך (*he*), often a feminine marker, symbolizes the Divine Mother, *Binah*. The ם (*vav*), whose numerical value is six, symbolizes *Tif’eret* and the five *sefirot* surrounding Him (*Hesed* through *Yesod*). The second ך (*he*) symbolizes *Shekhinah*. Thus, by pronouncing the actual name *YHVH* with the proper awareness and intention, the high priest unifies all the *sefirot*, ensuring a flow of blessing and the atonement of sin.

“Letters on sides linked to *yod*” refers to the three following letters of *YHVH*: ה ו ה (*he, vav, he*). “Its gates” refers to the fifty gates of *Binah*. The image of the portico, closed (or partially closed) on three sides and open on the fourth, matches the shape of the letter ה (*he*), which symbolizes *Binah*.

*Tif'eret* (symbolized by *vav*) “expands into seventy-two engravings,” corresponding to the complex divine name known as the Name of Seventy-two. *Binah* adorns *Tif'eret* with numerous crowns, as indicated by the verse in Song of Songs.

On the high priest’s pronunciation of *YHVH*, see M *Yoma* 3:8. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#). On the fifty gates of *Binah*, see above, [p. 95](#), [n. 290](#). On the image of the portico as representing the shape of ה (*he*), see BT *Menaḥot* 29b. On the Name of Seventy-two, see above, [p. 160](#), [n. 496](#).

The full verse in Song of Songs 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. 7](#), [n. 22](#).

[259](#). **vav descends to vav...** Apparently alluding to *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*, as explained above, [note 252](#). The image of cups and blossoms derives from the description of the lamp stand in the Tabernacle. See Exodus 25:31: *You shall make a lamp stand of pure gold, hammered work it shall be made, its base and its shaft, its cups, its calyxes, and its blossoms, shall be from that work*.

[260](#). **Yod is linked with he...** As explained above (in [note 258](#)), the four letters of *YHVH* symbolize the entire sefirotic spectrum. By pronouncing the Name with pure intention, the high priest links all of these qualities.

According to this reading of the verse in Genesis, *firm* can allude to *Yesod* (the divine phallus), who unites with *Shekhinah*, often symbolized by a *bow*. The *forearms* and

*hands* may both allude to *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah*, who embrace *Shekhinah*. *Tif'eret* is symbolized here (as often) by *Jacob*, whose *Champion* may be *Binah*. In the verse from Numbers, *firm* may likewise allude to *Yesod*, while *Shekhinah* can be pictured as *the cliff*.

On the verse in Genesis, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 87:7; *Zohar* 1:71b, 247a (Vol. 3, p. 515, n. 930). On the verse in Numbers (spoken by the prophet Balaam), see *Zohar* 2:110a-b. For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**261. Then all is linked...** The *sefirot* are united, emanation flows, and all rejoice. Then all the people at the Temple prostrate themselves and declare “Blessed be the name....” See M *Yoma* 3:8; 4:2; 6:2.

**262. A voice joins the priest...** The priest concludes his confession of sins with the verse in Leviticus: *For on this day purgation [or: atonement] will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure*. Toward the end of this verse, he pronounces the actual name *YHVH*, prolonging it until the people have finished reciting “Blessed be the name....” Then a heavenly voice joins the voice of the priest, and he utters the final word of the verse: *תטהרו* (*titharu*), *you will become pure*.

See M *Yoma* 3:8; 4:2; 6:2. According to the Mishnah, the entire verse is recited by the high priest, not by any other priests or the people. His prolonging of the Name, followed by *you will become pure*, is mentioned in the medieval poetic account included in the *Avodah* service of Yom Kippur.

**263. From all your sins before YHVH...** Obviously the purification and atonement take place *before YHVH*, so why does Scripture need to say so? Rabbi Yitshak indicates that this refers to *Binah*, who precedes *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*). From Rosh Hashanah (the first day of the month of Tishrei), the heavenly books are open, listing all human deeds, and celestial judgment begins. Then on the ninth of Tishrei (the

eve of Yom Kippur), judgments ascend to *Binah* (the Master of Judgment), and a throne is prepared for the King (namely *Binah*), who on the next day will sit over Israel, not in Judgment but in Mercy.

On the Throne of Mercy, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:3, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "When the blessed Holy One ascends to sit upon the Throne of Judgment on Rosh Hashanah, He ascends for Judgment.... But when the people of Israel take their shofars and blow them..., what does the blessed Holy One do? He rises from the Throne of Judgment and sits upon the Throne of Mercy, and He is filled with Mercy for them, and turns the Attribute of Judgment into the Attribute of Mercy."

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:4; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 23:3, 8, 11; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 40, 168b *Midrash Tehillim* 47:2; *Zohar* 2:4b (*Mat*), 89b.

Although *Binah* is often pictured as the Divine Mother, here She assumes the masculine role of King. Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, She is characterized as World of the Male (see Vol. 5, p. 48, n. 132) and is also associated with Yom Kippur.

On the ninth of Tishrei, see Leviticus 23:32. On rejoicing on this day, see *Zohar* 3:68b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 164; cf. BT *Berakhot* 8b. The full verse in Leviticus, describing Yom Kippur, reads: *For on this day purgation [or: atonement] will be effected for you, to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure [or: to purify you; from all your sins before YHVH, you will become pure].*

**264. before YHVH, precisely...** Referring to *Binah*, as explained in the preceding note. When the high priest recites the verse from Leviticus as part of his confession, even if others recite it along with him they must not utter the final word: תטהרו (*titharu*), *you will become pure*. He alone is authorized to pronounce the actual name YHVH, binding its letters and thereby unifying the *sefirot*. Then a



heavenly voice joins his, empowering him to utter the final word. See above, [note 262](#).

**265. He performs the ritual...** The rituals include drawing lots for the two goats and slaughtering the bull for the purification offering. Apparently, by performing the first of these, the high priest stimulates blessing for those heavenly forces above who have not yet received their share. Finally, he prepares to enter the Holy of Holies, where he will offer up incense.

On the ritual washing and sanctification, see above, [note 257](#). On the ritual sequence, see *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:922.

**266. Three ranks surround him...** Blessing him on his mission of securing atonement and praying that he will succeed and emerge safely from the Holy of Holies. If the high priest proves unworthy or performs his ritual improperly, he may die in the inner sanctum. In case he does, a golden cord (or rope or chain) is attached to his leg, so that his fellow priests can drag him out without having to enter themselves, which was normally forbidden.

According to Exodus 28:13-14, 22-24, the high priest's breastpiece was attached to his ephod by two golden chains (or cords). In fact, gold figured prominently in his entire wardrobe, including golden bells worn all around the hem of his robe and a gold medallion on his forehead (*ibid.*, 33-38). However, there is no reference in biblical or rabbinic literature to a golden cord attached to the high priest's leg on Yom Kippur. In fact, according to biblical and rabbinic tradition, the high priest wore simple linen garments when he entered the Holy of Holies and no golden items.

See Leviticus 16:4, 23-24; M *Yoma* 7:4; *Sifra, Millu'im (Tsav)* 1:7, 41a; *Aḥarei Mot* 1:5-9, 80c; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Leviticus 16:4; JT *Yoma* 7:5, 44b; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 21:10; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 26a; Rashi and Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 16:4. Cf., however, Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*

5:5:7; Ibn Ezra on Leviticus 16:4; Rashbam on Exodus 28:35. See the discussion by Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, 23:185–86.

The motif of the golden cord is probably based on a story about the burial of Rav Huna in the tomb of the venerated Rabbi Hiyya Rabbah. Rav Huna's colleagues wonder who will dare to enter the sacred tomb and perform the burial. Bravely, Rabbi Haggai volunteers, and says to them, "Do this for me. Bring a rope and tie it to my leg. If I come out, fine; if not, drag me out by my leg."

See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:10. Cf. JT *Kil'ayim* 9:4, 32b–c; *Ketubbot* 12:3, 35a–b. See also *Sifra, Millu'im (Shemini)* 1:35, 45d (per Vatican MS Assemani 66), where Rabbi Akiva explains that when Nadab and Abihu died in the sanctuary, their cousins Mishal and Elzaphan "cast iron hooks [into them] and dragged them out." Cf. *Sifrei*, Numbers 44.

The purpose of the golden cord is explained in *Zohar* 3:102a: "Rabbi Yitshak said, 'One קפטרָא (*qaftera*), braided rope, was tied to the leg of the priest when he entered, so that if he died there, they could extract him from outside. How did they know? By that [strip of] crimson wool, if its color did not change. During that time, it was well known that the priest was located within. If he emerged in peace, by the [strip of] crimson wool it was known and recognized, for its color turned white. Then there was joy among those above and below. If not, they all became distressed, and all knew that their prayers had not been accepted.'"

The transformation of the crimson strip is mentioned in rabbinic sources, where, however, its change of color is not linked explicitly to the high priest or Israel. See BT *Yoma* 67a: "Originally they would tie the strip of crimson wool outside the entrance of the Hall [leading to the interior of the Temple]. If it turned white [indicating atonement], they rejoiced; if it did not turn white, they were sad and ashamed. So they ordained that it would be tied inside the

entrance of the Hall. But still [the people] peeped in, and if it turned white, they rejoiced; if it did not turn white, they were sad. So they ordained that half of it would be tied to the rock [from which the scapegoat was pushed off the mountain], and the other half between [the scapegoat's] horns. Rabbi Nahum son of Papa said in the name of Rabbi El'azar son ha-Kappar, 'Originally they would tie the strip of crimson wool inside the entrance of the Hall, and as soon as the goat reached the desert, it turned white, and they knew that the commandment concerning it had been fulfilled, as is said: *If your sins are like crimson, they will become white as snow* (Isaiah 1:18).''

See M *Shabbat* 9:3; *Yoma* 4:2; 6:6, 8; JT *Shabbat* 9:3, 12a; *Yoma* 6:3, 43c; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 31b, *Yoma* 39a-b. (The conclusion of M *Yoma* 6:8, which matches the teaching transmitted by Rabbi Nahum, does not appear in most manuscripts of the Mishnah, including the Kaufmann manuscript.) On the custom of tying the strip of crimson wool, see Goldstein, "Meḥqarim be-Hagutam shel Ḥazal al ha-Avodah be-Veit ha-Miqdash," 109-23.

The *Zohar's* linking of the change in color to the high priest, as well as to Israel's prayers, may be based, in part, on *Midrash Tehillim* 86:8, where this change depends on the efficacy of Israel's prayers: "When the strip of crimson wool hung at the entrance of the Sanctuary, if it turned white, they knew that their prayer had been heard."

As for the motif of the golden cord, it entered Jewish folklore and also found its way into Christian art. Based on the narrative in Luke 1:5-25, the fifteenth-century Aragonese painter Domingo Ram depicts the priest Zechariah (or Zacharias) entering the Holy of Holies with a gold chain attached to his right ankle. There he is informed by the angel Gabriel that he will father a son to be named John, who will become John the Baptist. Ram's "Annunciation to Zacharias" is preserved in the Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York;

[www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/25.120.929](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/25.120.929)) and reproduced in Mann, *Uneasy Communion*, 101. Mann suggests that Ram may have come from a *converso* background or had a Jewish assistant.

“Knotted cord” renders קטרא (*qitra*), literally “knot,” based on the root קטר (*qtr*), “to tie, bind,” which appears variously in the *Zohar*. The use of the neologism *qaftera* (in *Zohar* 3:102a) likely alludes to the “newness” of this motif. On the root *qftr*, see above, [note 94](#).

On the motif of the golden cord, see Zivotofsky, “What’s the Truth About... the Kohen Gadol’s Rope?” On the potential death of the high priest in the Holy of Holies, see Leviticus 16:2; M *Yoma* 5:1; *Tosefta Yoma* 2:13; JT *Yoma* 5:1, 42c; BT *Yoma* 53b; Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Yoma* 5:1, s.v. *she-lo la-hav’it*; Israel Lipschutz, *Tif’eret Yisra’el*, *Yoma* 5:1, par. 22; *Zohar* 3:102a; *ZH* 19a, 21a (both *MhN*). Cf. M *Yoma* 7:4; BT *Yoma* 19b.

On the connection between the high priest’s golden bells and his potential death, see Exodus 28:35; Nahmanides, ad loc.; cf. Rashi. Despite the evidence that the high priest did not wear any golden items when he entered the Holy of Holies (see above), according to several commentators the bells indicated whether the high priest had survived within; if they ceased tinkling, the stark silence announced his death. See Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, 23:186, quoting Nethanel ben Isaiah and Moses ben Gershom Gentili (Hefets).

[267](#). **He takes three steps...** And eventually offers up incense in the Holy of Holies. There he hears the cherubim singing and fluttering their wings.

On the union 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.’”

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, [notes 75-79](#).

The priest offered up incense in the Holy of Holies, although here the text specifies entering “the place that he enters” after his offering up incense. This puzzling sequence is confirmed in numerous manuscripts and the early printed editions. In later editions, the sentence “He offers up incense” follows the reference to the cherubim “singing and fluttering their wings, spreading them above.”

**[268](#). If the priest is worthy...** That the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, unite in joy, then a rapturous, fragrant light issues, spreading through the Holy of Holies and entering the nostrils of the high priest. Then his heart is calmed, for he knows that atonement has been granted, and there is no longer any opportunity for demonic or harsh forces to accuse Israel of sin.

According to a rabbinic tradition, thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. Here, the rivers turn into mountains. Balsam sometimes symbolizes *Binah*, who is known as the World that is Coming.

On rivers of balsam, see JT *Avodah Zarah* 3:1, 42c; *Bereshit Rabbah* 62:2; BT *Ta'anit* 25a; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 12, p. 238; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1; *Zohar* 1:4b, 7a, 88a (ST), 176a; 2:127a-b, 146b; 3:181a. On mountains of balsam, see *Zohar* 1:35a; 2:15a (*MhN*), 83a-b, 87b, 175b; 3:91a, 144b (*IR*). Cf. *Zohar* 2:177a (*SdT*s), 200b-201a; 3:131a (*IR*); and the reference to *mountains of spices* in Song of Songs 8:14. On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see above, [p. 243](#), [n. 122](#).

**[269](#). The priest opens his mouth in prayer...** According to M *Yoma* 5:1, the high priest offered a short prayer after leaving the Holy of Holies. Here, Rabbi Yitṣhak

indicates that he prayed while still inside, and then prayed again after leaving. See *Or Yaqar; Matoq mi-Devash*.

The quotation from Isaiah alludes here to the strip of crimson wool, which turned white if atonement was granted. See BT *Yoma* 67a (translated above, [note 266](#)): “Originally they would tie the strip of crimson wool inside the entrance of the Hall, and as soon as the goat reached the desert, it turned white, and they knew that the commandment concerning it had been fulfilled, as is said: *If your sins are like crimson, they will become white as snow* (Isaiah 1:18).”

“He backs away” renders ותב לאחורוי (*ve-tav la-aḥaroi*), which could also be rendered “he returns back,” but is here based on the rabbinic stipulation that when departing from the Holy of Holies the high priest does so respectfully, continuing to face it and not turning his back. See M *Yoma* 5:1; BT *Yoma* 53a; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Avodat Yom ha-Kippurim* 4:1; and especially the wording in the Sephardic version of the *Avodah* service: “ושב לאחורוי” (*ve-shav la-aḥorav*), and he backed away, his face toward the Holy [of Holies] and his back toward the Sanctuary.”

[270.](#) ***It shall be a perpetual statute...*** This verse is not interpreted here, but only considerably later. See below at [note 303](#). The full verse reads: *It shall be a perpetual statute for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves [or: your souls] and no manner of work shall you do, neither the native nor the sojourner who resides among you.*

[271.](#) ***(With) my soul I desire You in the night...*** The verse reads literally: *My soul, I desire You in the night; my spirit within me, I seek You at dawn.* The simple meaning is *With my soul I desire You..., with the spirit within me I seek You.* But Rabbi Ḥiyya wonders about the wording.

The full verse reads: *With my soul I desire You in the night, with my spirit within me I seek You at dawn. For when Your judgments reach the earth, inhabitants of the*



world learn righteousness. See *Zohar* 1:83a-b; 3:68a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 197.

**272. The blessed Holy One is the spirit and soul of all...** God is the essence of all, and can thus be described as *soul* or *spirit*. So Rabbi Ḥiyya construes the verse in Isaiah as addressed by Israel to God: *My soul, I desire You in the night; my spirit within me, I seek You at dawn.*

See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 197. In various sources, God is described as the ultimate soul, or the soul of souls. See Solomon ibn Gabirol, *Keter Malkhut* 4:47: “You are alive but not through... soul, for You are soul of soul.” See *Zohar* 1:103b, 245a-b; 3:109b (RM), 152a; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 110; 375, n. 97.

**273. When a person is sleeping in his bed...** During sleep, a person’s soul ascends to heaven and testifies about his daily activities. Rabbi Yose understands the verse as spoken by the body, yearning for its soul: *My soul, I desire you in the night...*

On the soul’s nightly journey, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:9, in the name of Rabbi Me’ir: “This soul fills the body, and when a person sleeps she ascends, drawing down life from above.”

See *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 34; *Midrash Tehillim* 11:6; *Zohar* 1:83a, 92a, 121b, 130a, 183a, 200a; 3:121b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:809-14.

**274. Assembly of Israel says...** *Shekhinah*, representing the people of Israel, utters this verse. First, She alludes to Israel’s sunken condition in the long *night* of exile, where they devour Gentile food. Yet still, She (and they) yearn for God, and to return to the Holy Land.

“Piping-hot bread” renders פִּיסְתָּא דְקוּטְרָא (*pista de-qutra*). *Pista* means “bread,” while *qutra* means “smoke.” For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Bei’ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 184, s.v. *pista de-qutra*; David ben Judah he-Ḥasid, *Mar’ot ha-Tsove’ot*, 8; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; Soncino;

*Sullam*. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3](#), [n. 5](#).

[275.](#) **Even though they subject My children...** Even though Israel is subjugated and persecuted, *Shekhinah* affirms that the Holy Spirit remains within Her and them. Thus, *My spirit* is still *within me*, and *I seek You at dawn*.

[276.](#) **Israel says...** As long as a person is alive, he should *desire God in the night*, since that is the time when the soul ascends.

Cf. *Zohar* 1:83a. For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

[277.](#) **when the Holy Spirit is aroused within me...** When a person is reanimated in the morning, he is eager to fulfill God's will.

[278.](#) **For when מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ (*mishpatekha*), Your judgments...** According to Rabbi Yitshak, the conclusion of the verse implies that when *Tif'eret*—known as מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*), “Justice” (or “Judgment”)—joins *Shekhinah* (symbolized by *the earth*), the world becomes fragrant and firmly established. Then, the inhabitants of the world can bear the Judgment of *Shekhinah* (who is known as *righteousness*).

See *Zohar* 1:241b; 3:80b, 198b. For the full verse in Isaiah, see above, [note 271](#).

[279.](#) **My soul... Assembly of Israel...** According to Rabbi Hizkiyah, *my soul* alludes to *Shekhinah*, while *my spirit* alludes to *Tif'eret* (known as the blessed Holy One). The verse in Isaiah addresses both of these *sefirot*, associating each one with its appropriate time, since *Shekhinah* rules during the night, and *Tif'eret* rules by day.

Cf. *Zohar* 1:83a-b. On the various aspects of soul, see above, [p. 100](#), [n. 305](#).

[280.](#) **At midnight, Rabbi Shim'on rose to study Torah...** On this midnight practice, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 228](#). On the episode beginning here, see Wolski, *A Journey into the “Zohar,”* 139–60.

**281. given them holy souls from a holier place...**

From the union of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*.

**282. Torah is called *delight*...** The full verse in Proverbs (spoken by Wisdom) reads: *I was by him as אָמוֹן (amon), a nursling [or: intimate, confidant, artisan]; I was a delight day after day, playing before Him at all times.* According to a midrashic tradition, this verse is spoken by the Torah, which served as God's blueprint for Creation, or His architect. See above, [p. 208, n. 1](#).

At midnight, God comes to delight with the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden. See above, [p. 74, n. 228](#).

Isaiah 58:14 reads in full: *Then you will delight על (al), upon [or: 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), upon [or: in] YHVH, is interpreted here hyperliterally: *above YHVH*—referring to *Binah*, who is *above Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*). The righteous draw delight from the stream of emanation issuing from *Binah*, so they *delight above YHVH*. Furthermore, *Tif'eret* (known also as the blessed Holy One) shares with the righteous in delighting from this stream. See *Zohar* 1:216a, 219a; 2:50b, 83a, 88a-b, 155b; 3:70b, 94b.

Isaiah 58:11 reads in full: *YHVH will guide you always; He will satisfy נַפְשֶׁךָ (nafshekha), your thirst [or: soul], בְּצַחְצְחוֹת (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 simple meaning of the rare word צַחְצְחוֹת (tsaḥtsaḥot) is *parched places*, but here Rabbi Shim'on understands it as "radiancies," based on the root צַחַח (tshḥḥ), "to gleam." See *Zohar* 1:113b-114a (*MhN*), 141a, 224b; 2:97a, 142b, 209a, 210b.

**283. כַּאֵיל (Ke-ayyal), As a deer...** *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel) is often compared to a deer. Here Rabbi Shim'on also links אֵיל (ayyal), *deer*, with אֵילוּתִי (eyaluti), *My*

*strength*, the latter referring to *Shekhinah's* potent protection of Israel.

On *Shekhinah* as a deer or doe, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 229](#). On *ayyal* and *eyaluti*, see *Zohar* 2:138b.

[284.](#) ***Yearns for streams of water...*** *Shekhinah* yearns for the stream of emanation, which is conveyed to Her by *Yesod* (known as Righteous One). The play on תַּעְרוּג (ta'arog), *yearns*, and לַעְרוּגָה (la-arugot), *to the beds of (spices)*, suggests yearning to be watered like a spice garden.

On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#). The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *My love has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to graze in the gardens and to gather lilies.*

[285.](#) ***Who are the springs?...*** The spring above is *Binah*, pictured also as a river issuing from *Hokhmah* (who is symbolized by *Eden*) *to water the garden of Shekhinah*. The streams of emanation gather in *Netsah* and *Hod*, who empty into *Yesod* (known as Righteous One). *Yesod* is represented by the *gazelle*, which accompanies the *deer* (*Shekhinah*), as in Deuteronomy 14:5: *deer and gazelle*. *Shekhinah* is also known as Righteousness.

[286.](#) ***does of the field*** The full verse reads: *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by gazelles or by does of the field, that you neither awaken nor arouse love until it so desires.*

[287.](#) אֵילוֹת (*ayyalot*), ***does—spelled deficiently: אֵיִלֵּת (ayyelet), doe*** According to the Masoretic text, the word אֵילוֹת (*ayyalot*), *does*, is not spelled deficiently but rather with a ו (vav). Rabbi Shim'on, however, indicates otherwise. The supposed deficient spelling אֵיִלֵּת can be read as *ayyelet, doe*, referring to *Shekhinah*.

For other instances of a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar's* reading, see above, [p. 8](#), [n. 24](#). On *Shekhinah* as the doe giving birth, see Vol. 6, p. 254, n. 449.

**288. Alternatively, *does of the field...*** Whereas previously (at [note 286](#)), Rabbi Shim'on referred to the simple sense of this phrase, now he suggests that *does of the field* alludes to the angels surrounding *Shekhinah* (who is symbolized by *the field* and the Throne). Both the blessed Holy One and *the voice of YHVH* symbolize *Tif'eret*, who causes the angelic *does* to give birth.

The context in Song of Songs (3:7-8) reads: *Here is the bed of Solomon! Sixty warriors surrounding it [or: 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 fear in the night.* See above, [note 101](#).

**289. Alternatively, יחולל (*yeholel*), brings on the birth pangs...** Now Rabbi Shim'on associates *yeholel* with חוללה (*holalah*), which in the verse from Job means *pierced*—based on the root חלל (*hll*)—but is here understood as *brought forth*, based on the root חיל (*hyl*), which is the root of *yeholel*. He is apparently alluding to the daily birth, or rebirth, of angels. See BT *Hagigah* 14a; *Shemot Rabbah* 15:6.

**290. And lays bare יערוה (*ye'arot*), the forests...** *Ye'arot* is here associated with יערה (*ya'rah*) and יער (*ya'ar*), “honeycomb.” The verse in Psalms now implies that God sweetly nourishes the angels surrounding *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *I have come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, companions! Drink and be drunk, lovers!* See above, [p. 1](#), [n. 2](#).

**291. My soul, I desire You in the night...** The simple sense of the verse is: *With my soul I desire You in the night; with the spirit within me I seek You.* But Rabbi Abba, wishing to preserve the literal meaning *My soul... my spirit*, contends that the verbs should be in the third person: *desires You... seeks You.* See above, [note 271](#).

**292. In whose hand is the soul of every living thing...** Based on this verse in Job, Rabbi Shim'on



apparently understands the verse in Isaiah as meaning: “You, in whose hand is *my soul*, *I desire You in the night*; You, in whose hand is *my spirit within me*, *I seek You at dawn*.”

**293. Soul and spirit join as one...** *Nefesh* (soul) and *ruah* (spirit) are two aspects of the human soul, which join together.

Cf. above, [note 279](#). On the various aspects of soul, see above, [p. 100](#), [n. 305](#).

**294. The perfect service...** Just as the soul and spirit cleave to the body, so should a person cleave to God, feeling the same love for Him as he does for his own soul and spirit. Now the verse in Isaiah implies: “Just as I desire *my soul*—or: Just as *my soul* cleaves to my body—*I desire You in the night*. Just as I desire *my spirit*—or: Just as *my spirit is within me*—*I seek You at dawn*.”

Cf. above, [note 272](#). On loving God with the soul, see Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 44.

**295. In the night...** One should rise at midnight to engage in Torah until dawn, thereby meriting a thread of *Hesed* (Love), the quality that is manifested in the morning.

On this midnight ritual, see above, [p. 74](#), [n. 228](#). On the thread of love, 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 directs His love*. Why? Because *in the night His song is with me* (Psalms 42:9).” *His song* is the song of Torah. See above, [p. 139](#), [n. 429](#).

**296. the world is sustained for their sake...** This principle is based on Proverbs 10:25: וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*). Although the simple sense of the verse is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*, it is understood midrashically as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*. See above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#).

The phrase “decrees above and below” refers to heavenly decrees and those by earthly rulers. On the



righteous having the power to annul heavenly decrees, see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 16b, where Rabbi Abbahu quotes God as saying: "I rule over humanity. Who rules over Me? The righteous one. For I issue a decree and he abolishes it." See above, [pp. 90-91](#), [n. 275](#).

**297. From Elijah...** His oath to King Ahab implies that only by Elijah's word will rain come. See *Zohar* 1:209a. The verse in Kings reads: *As YHVH lives, the God of Israel before whom I stand...*

**298. When holy souls come...** When holy souls are generated by the union of the divine couple and drawn into embryos by the righteous, only a few souls linger with God. At Creation, God animated all the angels and the holy souls, and some of the latter remain close to God until the moment of their descent.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *By the word of YHVH the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their array.*

**299. before whom עמדתי (amadi), I stood...** According to the simple sense of the verse, the verb עמדתי (*amadi*), literally *I stood*, means *I stand*. But Rabbi Shim'on reads it hyperliterally as proof that long before descending to earth, Elijah's soul *stood* before God in heaven.

See *Zohar* 1:233b; *ZH* 69a (*ShS*); Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 69a. The phrase *before whom I stood* reappears in 1 Kings 18:15 (spoken by Elijah) and in 2 Kings 3:14; 5:16 (spoken by Elijah's disciple, Elisha).

**300. Afterward he returned to his place...** When he rose to heaven, as described in 2 Kings 2:11: *As they [Elijah and Elisha] were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind to heaven.*

Elijah ascended without dying, whereas nearly all other human beings must die before their souls can ascend, "because what happened previously to the others"—that is,

to the select souls who stood close to God before descending into the world—“did not happen to them.” Elijah became “an angel above like those other ones [i.e., other angels] and [like] those who cleave most to the King [namely other select souls].”

In Jewish tradition Elijah became associated with the Messianic age (Malachi 3:23–24), and in rabbinic literature he is described as “still existing” (BT *Bava Batra* 121b) and revealing divine secrets to righteous humans (BT *Bava Metsi’a* 59b). Whenever necessary, Elijah descends again in order to carry out divine missions in the world. In Kabbalah mystical experiences are known as revelations of Elijah. See Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 19–21; *Zohar* 1:1b, 13a, 151a, 209a, 217a; 2:197a–b; 3:221a, 231a, 241b; *ZH* 59d, 62c (*ShS*), 63d (*ShS*), 70d (*ShS*), 73c (*ShS*).

Various sources allude to Elijah’s heavenly or angelic status. See *Midrash Tehillim* 8:7: “The bird of heaven (Psalms 8:9)—this is Elijah, who flies through the world as a bird.” In *Targum*, Ecclesiastes 10:20, and *Ma’yan Hokhmah* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:60), Elijah is identified as “Master of Wings.”

See BT *Berakhot* 4b; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 29, and David Luria, ad loc., nn. 66–67; *Zohar* 1:46b, 151b, 209a, 245b; 2:197a; 3:88b; *ZH* 84c–d (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *She’elot u-Tshuvot*, 60–63, 68–71; and Cordovero’s critique of De León in *Pardes Rimmonim* 24:14.

**301. in the Primordial Book of Adam...** This ancient source indicates that all angels (“holy spirits”) come from a certain holy place, whereas souls of the righteous derive from the union of the divine couple, so they ascend higher than the angels.

Concerning Enoch, Genesis 5:24 states: *He was no more, for God took him.* In postbiblical literature this verse is taken to mean that Enoch did not die but was rather transported by God through the heavens, a journey recorded extensively in the Enoch literature.

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 5:24; *Bereshit Rabbah* 25:1; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 5:24; Naḥmanides, Leviticus 18:4. On the Book of Adam, see above, [p. 49](#), [n. 148](#).

**[302. rungs of the righteous arose in the Will...](#)** God contemplated all these varieties of righteous souls before Creation.

See BT *Yoma* 38b, in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: “The blessed Holy One saw that the righteous are few, so He planted them in every generation.”

The phrase “the bundle of life” derives from 1 Samuel 25:29, recording Abigail’s blessing to David: *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.* 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...*” In the *Zohar*, “the bundle of life” often refers to *Shekhinah*. See above, [pp. 158-59](#), [nn. 490, 492](#).

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *For as the new heavens and the new earth that I will make shall stand before Me—declares YHVH—so shall your seed and your name stand.* Here, Rabbi Shim’on may be associating *stand* with the souls’ having stood before God. See David ben Judah he-Ḥasid, *Mar’ot ha-Tsove’ot*, 10; Scholem.

**[303. You shall afflict your souls...](#)** The affliction of fasting on Yom Kippur should be experienced primarily by the soul, not just by the body, so that Israel will submit their souls to God.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *It shall be a perpetual statute for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves [or: your souls] and no manner of work shall you do, neither the native nor the sojourner who resides among you.* See above at [note 270](#).

**304. one who eats and drinks on the ninth...** If one first feasts on the ninth of Tishrei, the sharp contrast of fasting on the next day brings greater affliction.

See the teaching transmitted by Rabbi Hiyya son of Rav of Difti in BT *Berakhot* 8b: “It is written: *You shall afflict yourselves* [or: *your souls*] *on the ninth of the month in the evening* (Leviticus 23:32). Now, do we fast on the ninth? We actually fast on the tenth! But this teaches you: Whoever eats and drinks on the ninth, Scripture accounts it to him as if he fasted on the ninth and the tenth.”

See BT *Pesaḥim* 68b, *Rosh ha-Shanah* 9a-b, *Yoma* 81b; Zedekiah Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, ed. Buber, 307, p. 287; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 164 (and Wolfson’s [note 8](#)); *Nitsotsei Orot*. Cf. above, [note 263](#).

**305. את נפשותיכם (Et nafshoteikhem), your souls...** The word *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, Rabbi Shim’on indicates that *et* serves to include the body (along with the soul), so that both will surrender to God and gain atonement. On the significance of *et*, see BT *Pesaḥim* 22b, *Hagigah* 12a-b.

**306. on this day He will effect atonement for you...** According to rabbinic tradition, the day of Yom Kippur itself effects atonement, even without the sacrifices (including the scapegoat); so why doesn’t the verse read simply *This day will effect atonement for you*? Because, Rabbi Shim’on explains, Yom Kippur symbolizes *Binah*, and thus *on this day*—that is, through *Binah*—*Keter* (known as the Holy Ancient One) will manifest Himself to *effect atonement for you*.

Cf. *Zohar* 2:185b. On the day of Yom Kippur itself effecting atonement, see *Sifra*, *Aḥarei Mot* 8:1, 83a; *Emor* 14:1, 102a; JT *Yoma* 8:9, 45c. Cf. M *Yoma* 8:9. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *For on this day purgation* [or: *atonement*] *will be effected for you* [or: *He will effect*

*purging (or: atonement) for you], to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure.*

**307. *There was a small city...*** This symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who being the last of the *sefirot* is considered *small*. Yet She can also be described as a *mighty city*, protected from demonic forces by great walls. She is symbolized as well by Jerusalem, and is identified with heavenly Jerusalem.

The verse in Hosea reads: *The Holy One is in your midst, and I will not enter the city*. According to rabbinic tradition, God participates in Israel's exile, and this verse is understood to mean that until Israel returns to Jerusalem, and God (*the Holy One*) is present once again with them there (*in your midst*), *He will not enter* heavenly Jerusalem (*the city*). From a kabbalistic perspective, the blessed Holy One will reunite fully with *Shekhinah* only when Israel returns from exile. See BT *Ta'anit* 5a; above, [p. 97](#), [n. 294](#).

The connection between Rabbi Abba's teaching and *You shall afflict your souls* is unclear. See *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the verses in Ecclesiastes, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:2; BT *Nedarim* 32b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:14-15; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 38; *Vayiggash* 1; *Midrash Tehillim* 41:1; *Zohar* 2:133a; *ZH* 48a, 70a (*ShS*), 80c-81a (*MhN*, *Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 99.

**308. *And few people within it...*** Only very few can attain *Shekhinah* and dwell in Her presence. The verses in Psalms read: *Who shall ascend the mount of YHVH, and who shall rise in His holy place? The clean of hands and the pure of heart, who has not borne My soul falsely and has not sworn in deceit.*

**309. *And a great king came to it...*** King *Tif'eret* comes to unite with Her.

**310. *And built upon it great siege works...*** The verse reads: *and built עליה (aleha), against it, great siege works*. Here, Rabbi Abba construes *aleha* as *upon it*—namely

upon *Shekhinah*. The blessed Holy One fortifies and enhances Her.

**311. *And there was found within it a poor wise man...*** Only one who is wise and devoted attains *Shekhinah*. Paradoxically, the description of this person as מסכן (*misken*), *poor*, actually alludes to his accumulated treasures of Torah, based on the expression ערי מסכנות (*arei miskenot*), *store-cities*. For the verse in Psalms, see above, [note 308](#).

**312. *Wise—for he attains this wisdom...*** He attains *Shekhinah*, who is the daughter of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) and thus known as Lower Wisdom.

Rabbi Abba interprets the verb מלט (*millat*), *he saved*, according a passive conjugation of the same root: אמלטה (*immaletah*), *let me flee to safety* [or: *slip away*]. Through wisdom, this person flees destruction and evil, finding safety in *Shekhinah*.

**313. *I said, 'Better wisdom than weapons'...*** Only wisdom and devotion enable one to enter the supernal realm of *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Ecclesiastes actually reads: *I said, "Better wisdom than might," but the poor man's wisdom is scorned and his words are unheard.* The wording *Better wisdom than weapons* appears two verses later (9:18).

**314. *Whoever listens to the words...*** See *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:10, in the name of Rabbi Helbo: "If you have heard Torah from the mouth of a scholar, let it seem to you as if your ears heard it from Mount Sinai."

On learning from anyone, see *M Avot* 4:1, in the name of Ben Zoma: "Who is wise? One who learns from every person." See *Zohar* 2:95a; 3:85b. The Zoharic Companions often encounter seemingly unimpressive characters (such as little children or donkey-drivers) who surprise them with wisdom.

On the verse in Deuteronomy, see *BT Berakhot* 63b: "Rabbi Yehudah opened further in honor of Torah, expounding, *'Be silent and listen, Israel. This day you have*



*become a people to YHVH your God.* Now, was it on that day that Torah was given to Israel? Was not that day the end of the forty years [of wandering]? However, this teaches you that Torah is as beloved every day to those who study it as on the day when it was given from Mount Sinai.'" See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:5.

**315. the King has cast away *Matronita*...** The blessed Holy One has dismissed *Shekhinah* and replaced Her with Lilith, the demonic female, who empowers the other nations to subjugate Israel. Lilith is pictured as *a slave-girl dispossessing her mistress (Shekhinah)* and obtaining the flow of emanation.

On Lilith, see above, [p. 117](#), [n. 357](#). On Lilith as a slave-girl supplanting *Shekhinah*, see *Zohar* 1:122a-b, 131b, 190b, 204a; 2:60b-61a, 96a-b, 117b-118b (RM); 3:266a, 279b (RM); *TZ*, intro, 2a, all of which quote the passage in Proverbs. See also *Zohar* 2:114b (RM); Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 120-22. Cf. *Zohar* 3:37b, 72a.

The full verse in Exodus reads: *Every first-born in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the slave-girl who is behind the millstones, and every firstborn of the beasts.* In the *Zohar* the phrase *behind the millstones* refers to the demonic realm. See 1:48a, 118a, 177a, 223b; 2:28a, 37b, 56b, 80a, 191b.

**316. A king without a *matronita*...** A king without a queen is not really king. Thus the blessed Holy One lacks power and authority as long as He is separated from *Shekhinah*.

The verse in Zechariah foretells the coming of King Messiah, and the simple sense of נֹשָׂא (*nosha*) is *victorious*. Here, Rabbi Shim'on understands the verse to mean that King *Yesod* (known as *righteous*) is coming to reunite with *Shekhinah* (identified as *daughter of Zion* and *daughter of Jerusalem*). Insisting on the passive sense of *nosha*, Rabbi Shim'on teaches that *Yesod* Himself will be *saved*. Until this

moment, “He was riding in a place not His”—joined with Lilith and nourishing her. Now He too is redeemed by reuniting with *Shekhinah*.

See *Tanḥuma, Aḥarei Mot* 12; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Aḥarei Mot* 18; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:24; *Zohar* 2:57b; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 73. On God’s own salvation, see also above, [pp. 141–42](#), [n. 434](#).

On the essential nature of the queen, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 5:19: “Is there a king without a queen?” See *Zohar* 3:5a, 77b. On the term *matronita*, see the Glossary. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#). The full verse in Zechariah reads: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king is coming to you, righteous and victorious is he, humble [or: poor] and riding on an ass—on a donkey, foal of a she-ass.*

[317.](#) ***poor and riding on an ass...*** As long as *Yesod* is separated from *Shekhinah*, He lacks the full flow of emanation from above and is *poor*—“unlike at first,” previously, when the couple was united. *Riding on an ass* implies that *Yesod* is influencing and sustaining lower demonic forces, who are identified with *an ass*. The last of the ten plagues in Egypt—the killing of the firstborn—symbolizes the slaying of the chief demonic power(s).

On the demonic nature of the ass (or donkey), see *Zohar* 1:166b, 172b; 2:6a, 64b–65a, 192b; 3:86b, 163b, 207a. Its association with Egypt derives from Ezekiel 23:20: *She [Jerusalem] lusted after their [Egypt’s] paramours, whose flesh is the flesh of donkeys and whose emission is the emission of stallions.* See above, [pp. 85–86](#), [n. 262](#). For the full verse in Zechariah, see the end of the preceding note. For the full verse in Exodus, see above, [note 315](#).

[318.](#) ***צדיק ונושע הוא (tsaddiq ve-nosha hu), Righteous One Himself is saved...*** *Yesod* is redeemed by reuniting with *Shekhinah*, who is known as Righteousness. See above, [note 316](#).

**319. The righteous one אבד (*avad*), perishes...** This is the simple meaning of the verse, but Rabbi Shim'on construes the verb *avad* as transitive: *loses*, implying that *Yesod* (Righteous One) *loses Shekhinah* and clings to the slave-girl Lilith.

See above, [pp. 104-5](#), [n. 318](#). The full verse in Isaiah reads: *The righteous one אבד (*avad*), perishes [or: is lost], and no one takes it to heart; devout people are taken away, while no one understands that because of evil the righteous one was taken away.*

**320. The righteous one is the foundation of the world...** The verse reads וצדיק יסוד עולם (*Ve-tsaddiq yesod olam*), whose simple sense is *The righteous one is an everlasting foundation*; but it is understood midrashically as *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*.

See BT *Hagigah* 12b: "The Sages say, '[The world] stands on twelve pillars....' And some say seven pillars.... Rabbi El'azar son of Shammua says, 'On one pillar, whose name is Righteous One, as is said: *The righteous one is the foundation of the world*.'" Here, Rabbi Yitshak wonders how to reconcile the second and third Talmudic views. See above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#).

**321. All is one entity...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that there are seven lower *sefirot* (*Hesed* through *Shekhinah*), but *Yesod* is their essential *foundation* and thus *the foundation of the world*.

**322. This slave-girl is destined to rule over the Holy Land...** The slave-girl Lilith displaces *Shekhinah* (*Matronita*) and rules over the Holy Land. Here the dominion of Lilith symbolizes Islamic rule over Palestine.

The association of Islam with a slave-girl reflects Genesis 21:10, where Sarah refers to Hagar and Ishmael as *this slave-girl and her son*. (Cf. *ibid.* 16:2). For other references to Muslim rule over the Holy Land, see *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* (ed. Friedlander) 30, (ed. Higger) 29;

*Zohar* 3:93b (2:32a in the standard editions). Cf. *Zohar* 1:119a; ZH 56b.

The full verse in Isaiah, referring to the corruption of Jerusalem, reads: *How has the faithful city become a harlot? She who was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers!* For Rabbi Shim'on, *righteousness* alludes to *Shekhinah*, who has been supplanted by the murderous Lilith. See above, [p. 336](#), [n. 17](#). On the verse in Zechariah, see above, [note 316](#).

**323. *It shall be for you a perpetual statute...*** The verse, describing Yom Kippur, could have read simply: *It shall be for you in the seventh month....* Why does Scripture include the phrase *a perpetual statute*? Rabbi Shim'on explains that this alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is the divine *statute* and decree, including and fulfilling all the edicts of King *Tif'eret*.

“Threshold” renders אִסְקוּפָא (*isquppa*), which may mean both “threshold” and “yard of a ship.” Cf. Greek *skaphe*, and אִסְקָפָא (*isqapha*), “skiff, light boat.” In ZH 3a (*MhN*), *isquppa* refers to the “threshold” beneath which household valuables were buried. See BT *Berakhot* 18b; Rashi on BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 11a, s.v. *tsinnor*; idem on Joshua 24:26. On *isquppa*, see also *Zohar* 1:46b, 67a; 2:83b; ZH 88c (*MhN*, *Rut*); *Bei'ur ha-Millim ha-Zarot*, 173; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 165, 388, n. 47; Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-Fshutah*, 10:369–70.

Rabbi Shim'on may be playing with עולם (*olam*), *perpetual*, and a different meaning of the root עלם (*'lm*), “to conceal.” On *Shekhinah* as *statute*, see *Zohar* 3:179b, 180b. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *It shall be a perpetual statute for you [or: It shall be for you a perpetual statute]: In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves [or: your souls] and no manner of work shall you do, neither the native nor the sojourner who resides among you.* See above, [notes 270](#), [303](#).

**324. on the tenth of the month—precisely...** Apparently referring to *Shekhinah*, the tenth *sefirah*. See *Zohar* 2:185b. Cf. 2:40b, where *the tenth of the month* symbolizes *Binah*. See *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

**325. You shall afflict your souls...** The verse specifies *souls* and not *bodies* because turning back to God depends on the soul.

According to BT *Berakhot* 8b (in the name of Rabbi Hiyya son of Rav of Difti), “Whoever eats and drinks on the ninth [of Tishrei], Scripture accounts it to him as if he fasted on the ninth and the tenth.” If one first feasts on the ninth, the sharp contrast of fasting on the next day brings greater affliction.

Rabbi Shim'on acknowledges that feasting on the ninth has also “been explained in a different way,” namely as demonstrating confidence that God will grant atonement on the following day. However, he indicates that the two reasons are valid and compatible, since feasting on the ninth both demonstrates joyous confidence and increases affliction on the following day. See above, [notes 303-4](#) and at [note 263](#).

**326. On this day all joy...** On Yom Kippur the Divine Mother, *Binah*, radiates joy and leniency, and illumines the lower *sefirot*. By afflicting their souls sincerely, the people of Israel stimulate the tempering of Judgment.

**327. My Master has already established...** Rabbi Abba refers to a teaching by his master, Rabbi Shim'on, about Israel's exile. The phrase “the essence of our Mishnah” apparently refers here to *Zohar* 2:175b, where Rabbi Shim'on says, “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!* (2 Samuel 20:1). What is meant by *every man* לְאֶהָלָיו (*le-ohalav*), *to his tent*? The place where idolatry dwells.”

The verse *We have no share in David* (etc.) 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 לְאֹהֶלָיו (*le-ohalav*), *to his tent*, is creatively read as if with two transposed letters: לְאֹהֶלָיו (*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. 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.

From a kabbalistic perspective, *We have no share in David* can indicate a denial of *Shekhinah*, or *Malkhut* (Kingdom), who is symbolized by the ideal king, David. This matches the midrashic interpretation of *David* as referring to the Kingdom of Heaven. *Jesse*, or *the son of Jesse*, may allude to *Yesod*. See *Zohar* 1:29b; 2:175b.

Rabbi Abba proceeds to offer another verse, from the book of Kings, delivered by the northern tribes of Israel who are rejecting King Rehoboam. Though their declaration begins identically, it concludes with a different element: *We have no share in David, no portion in Jesse's son—to your tents, O Israel! Now look after your own house, O David*. Rabbi Abba wonders how the wording *your own house, O David* relates to the symbolism of David as *Shekhinah*.

For the phrase “the essence of our Mishnah,” see BT *Bava Metsi'a* 18a, *Niddah* 45b; *Zohar* 1:121a (*Tos*). Cf. above, end of [note 34](#). On exile being caused by the denial of God, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1:1.

**328. She is called House of David...** Rabbi Shim'on explains that since *Shekhinah* is associated with David, She is known as House of David. She can also be pictured as



*House of Jacob*, since She contains the flow of emanation issuing from *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by Jacob.

**329. In the light of YHVH...** In the radiance of *Tif'eret*, who is known as *YHVH*. This radiant flow issues from *Hokhmah* (known as *Eden*) to water *the garden* of *Shekhinah*. Souls of the righteous enter this garden, where they delight with the blessed Holy One. Cf. above, [note 282](#).

**330. It has been taught...** Presumably, Rabbi Abba is now speaking. He wonders why the word אַךְ (*akh*), *yet*, appears in the first verse.

The full verse in Leviticus 23 reads: *Yet on the tenth of this seventh month is the Day of Purging [or: Atonement], a sacred assembly it shall be for you, and you shall afflict yourselves [or: your souls] and bring a fire offering to YHVH.* For the full verse in Leviticus 16, see above, [note 323](#).

**331. It comes to exclude...** Based on rabbinic hermeneutics, Rabbi Shim'on explains that the term אַךְ (*akh*), *yet*, serves to limit the application of a biblical command or to exclude a certain element. Since Leviticus 23:32 indicates that *you shall afflict your souls on the ninth*, the earlier verse (Leviticus 23:27) reads *Akh, Yet, on the tenth... you shall afflict your souls*, thereby excluding the affliction of fasting on the ninth.

According to a rabbinic explanation, the command *you shall afflict your souls on the ninth* actually refers to eating and drinking on that day, which then intensifies the affliction on the tenth. See above, [notes 304, 325](#).

The final clause, “for the matter depends *on the tenth*,” apparently alludes to *Shekhinah*, the tenth *sefirah*. See above, [note 324](#).

According to rabbinic tradition, the wording *Akh, Yet, on the tenth* limits atonement to those who have engaged in *teshuvah*. See *Sifra, Emor* 14:2, 102a; *Tosefta Yoma* 4:9; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 1, p. 14; BT *Shevu'ot* 13a, *Kareitot* 7a.

Leviticus 23:32 reads in full: *An absolute Sabbath it is for you, and you shall afflict yourselves [or: your souls] on the ninth of the month in the evening, from evening to evening you shall keep your Sabbath. Or:... and you shall afflict yourselves [or: your souls]; on the ninth of the month in the evening, from evening to evening, you shall keep your Sabbath.*

**332. If so—*Akh, Surely, on the first day...*** Rabbi Abba refers to a midrashic reading of the verse in Exodus. According to its simple sense, *Surely on the first day* refers to the first day of Passover, but it is interpreted as applying to the day preceding Passover. Furthermore, the term *akh* is understood as limiting the command to *remove leaven* by “dividing” the day into two: leaven must be entirely removed only from the beginning of the second half of the day. Here, Rabbi Abba indicates that it is forbidden to eat leaven only from the beginning of the second half of the day. See *Mekhilta, Pisha* 8; JT *Pesaḥim* 1:4, 27c; *Sanhedrin* 5:3, 22c; BT *Pesaḥim* 4b–5a, 28b.

But if *akh* serves to “divide,” then the wording *Akh, Yet, on the tenth... you shall afflict your souls... and no work shall you do on this very day* (Leviticus 23:27–28) should limit the prohibition of working on Yom Kippur to just half of the day!

The verse in Exodus reads in full: *Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; surely on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats חמץ (*ḥamets*), leavened stuff, that person will be cut off from Israel—from the first day to the seventh day.*

**333. Here, too, pertaining to *You shall afflict your souls...*** Rabbi Shim'on explains that in this verse “*akh* divides” in a different way: only during the second half of the day does one really experience the affliction of fasting. Cf. Zedekiah Anav, *Shibbolei ha-Leqet*, 307, p. 287, and Buber's note, ad loc.

**334. He will effect atonement...** Since this entire section of Leviticus is spoken by God, why doesn't the verb appear in the first person: *I will effect atonement*? Rabbi El'azar explains that the blessed Holy One (*Tif'eret*) is speaking the verse and *He will effect atonement* refers to the more concealed realm, *Binah* (known as Jubilee), who waters all the lower *sefirot*, thereby ensuring atonement and purification. Similarly, the wording *before YHVH* alludes to *Binah*, who precedes *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*).

On *Binah* as Jubilee, see Vol. 5, pp. 135–36, n. 381. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *For on this day purgation [or: atonement] will be effected for you [or: He will effect purging (or: atonement) for you], to purify you of all your sins; before YHVH you will become pure.*

**335. in the time to come, I will sprinkle...** In describing this final purification, God speaks through the prophet in the first person.

**336. He consulted the Torah...** Whose existence preceded the world, according to rabbinic tradition.

On God's consulting the Torah before creating the human being, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11; *Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3; *Midrash Aggadah*, Genesis 1:26; above, [p. 209, n. 2](#). Cf. the midrashic interpretation of Proverbs 8:30 in *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1; above, [p. 208, n. 1](#).

**337. before creating the world, the blessed Holy One created teshuvah...** *Teshuvah* means "return, turning back to God, repentance," and its scope includes "making amends." Without the opportunity of *teshuvah*, humanity would be subject to strict Judgment and the world would be doomed, so its creation needed to precede that of the world.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:4; BT *Pesaḥim* 54a, *Nedarim* 39b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 3; *Tanḥuma, Naso* 11; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Naso* 19; *Midrash Tehillim* 72:6; 90:12; *Midrash Mishlei* 8; *Zohar* 1:90a (ST), 134b; ZḤ 85a (*MhN, Rut*).

**338. If he returns to the supernal King...** To *Tif'eret*, known as *YHVH*, who is named in the verse from Psalms.

**339. From the depths—there is a hidden place above...** According to Rabbi Abba, *the depths* mentioned in this verse do not refer primarily to the depths of the human heart or the depths of despair, but rather to the cosmic depth, *Binah*. From Her, the streams of emanation flow. She is known as *Teshuvah* (Return), since all emerges from Her and ultimately returns to Her. Human *teshuvah* should be focused on this deep realm. From this depth, one should seek to draw forth the divine stream: *From the depths* [in which You are] *I call You* [forth]. See above, [p. 168](#), [n. 519](#). On *Binah* as *Teshuvah*, see above, [p. 95](#), [n. 290](#).

**340. When a person sinned...** When the Temple still stood in Jerusalem. The sacrificial offering and the priestly prayer stimulated the flow from *Binah* (known as *Teshuvah*), which brought blessing to the sefirotic lamps and purified the human sinner.

**341. The blessed Holy One generated ten crowns...** *Ein Sof* generated the ten *sefirot*, which share His essential nature and are inseparable from Him.

See *Zohar* 2:86a; 3:11b, 93b, 291b (*iz*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 98 (125); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:238–40. The phrase “like a flame bound to a burning coal” derives from *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:7. See *Zohar* 1:242a; *ZH* 42a.

**342. ten unholy crowns below...** Ten chief demonic forces, clinging to the residue of harsh Judgment in *Shekhinah*, who is known as Lower Wisdom.

On the ten demonic powers, see *Zohar* 1:167a; 2:30b; 3:41b; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:450–58. On the negative or demonic aspect of human nails, see above, [note 117](#).

**343. Ten types of these wisdoms...** See BT *Qiddushin* 49b, “Ten measures of sorcery descended to the world. Nine were taken by Egypt... and one by all the rest of the

world.” On Egyptian expertise in sorcery, see above, [p. 320, n. 213](#).

**[344.](#) When the Egyptians sought to gather an assemblage...** Of demons, “those evil species.”

**[345.](#) The people of Israel...** Being enslaved by the Egyptians, they strayed after them. On the שְׁעִירִים (*se'irim*), *goat-demons*, see above, [note 180](#).

**[346.](#) appear as goats, full of hair...** The word שְׁעִיר (*sa'ir*) means “hairy one, goat, demon, satyr.” See above, [note 180](#). On hair as signifying harsh or demonic powers, see above, [p. 305, n. 160](#).

**[347.](#) What is written of Isaac?...** When Jacob—disguised as his hairy brother, Esau—*approached Isaac his father* to steal the blessing of the firstborn, Isaac *felt him* and realized that the demonic power associated with his son’s hairiness could only be eliminated by the dew of heaven. This dew symbolizes the flow of emanation from *Tif'eret* (symbolized by heaven). Therefore Isaac blessed Jacob as follows: *May God give you of the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, abundance of grain and new wine* (Genesis 27:28).

On Esau’s hairiness, see above, [note 190](#). Genesis 27:22 reads in full: *Jacob approached Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hands of Esau.”*

**[348.](#) And the fat of the earth...** Signifying the richness of *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by earth. Isaac realized that his son needed *Shekhinah*’s richness, not the demonic filth clinging to Her. The union of the divine couple eliminates this filth and bestows complete blessing. On the demonic filth clinging to *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 342](#).

**[349.](#) The last of those lower, unholy crowns...** The last demonic crown corresponds to the last of ten types of sorcery mentioned in the verse from Deuteronomy. After the wicked die, their souls become demons, through whom

it is possible (though forbidden) to inquire of the dead, as explained below at [note 353](#).

The context in Deuteronomy (18:10-11) reads: *There shall not be found among you one who passes his son or his daughter through fire, a diviner of divinations, a soothsayer, or an augur or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or consults a ghost or familiar spirit, or inquires of the dead.* On eliciting ten types from this list, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 65:11; *Zohar* 1:167a; 2:30b (Vol. 4, p. 122, n. 198). On souls of the wicked becoming demons, see above, [p. 159, n. 494](#).

[350.](#) **If so, the wicked are well off...** Turning into demons who can roam the world does not seem an adequate punishment for the wicked.

[351.](#) **When souls of the wicked...** When they leave this world, they are first brought to Hell by demonic guardsmen. Afterward they join these demons, roaming through the world and misleading those who are so wicked that they can no longer turn back to God.

“Guardsmen” renders גרדיני (*gardinei*), which is based on the Castilian *guardián*, “guardian.” See Corominas, *Diccionario*, 3:246-48.

[352.](#) **they return to their graves...** Before being brought back to Hell, the souls of the wicked visit their graves and witness the decomposition of their bodies and mourn.

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, Miqqets* 4; *Zohar* 1:122b (*MhN*), 218b-219a, 226a; 2:142a; *ZḤ* 75c, 83a, 83d-84a (all three *MhN, Rut*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 396-97.

[353.](#) **brings that soul...** Of the person buried in the grave. Once reunited with its body, the soul speaks to the sorcerers.



**354. their nefesh is holy...** All three aspects of their souls—*nefesh*, *rush*, and *neshamah*—are holy. Each of these derives from and corresponds to a particular *sefirah* (“the pattern above”): *nefesh* derives from *Shekhinah*, *rush* from *Tif’eret*, and *neshamah* from *Binah*.

Genesis 1:24 reads in full: *God said, “Let the earth bring forth נפש חיה (nefesh hayyah), living beings [or: a living soul], of each kind and cattle and crawling things and beasts of the earth of each kind.” And it was so.* For Rabbi Yitshak, *the earth* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who brings forth the *nefesh* of Adam. See above, [pp. 118-19](#), [n. 359](#). On the three aspects of soul, see above, [p. 100](#), [n. 305](#).

**355. There are three rungs...** All people possess the lowest rung, *nefesh*, which animates them. One who is worthy attains the higher rung, *ruah*, which stimulates him to explore God’s ways. If he proves worthier, he attains the ultimate level, *neshamah*.

On the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:83b; cf. 3:112b, 122a. The full verse in Job reads: *מנשמת אלוה (Mi-nishmat Eloah), By the breath of God, they perish, ומרוח אפו (u-me-ruah appo), and by the blast of His nostrils [or: and by the breathing of His nostrils, or: and by the blast of His wrath], they are consumed [or: vanish].*

**356. the Book of King Solomon...** On this book, see above, [p. 55](#), [n. 164](#). Here the title also alludes to *Ecclesiastes*, which is traditionally attributed to Solomon.

Rabbi Yitshak questions the apparent redundancy of the verse: *the dead, who have already died*. He explains that it refers to the righteous who are no longer living, and who in their lifetimes devoted themselves to God so intensely that they *already died* to this world.

See BT *Shabbat* 83b, in the name of Resh Lakish: “The words of Torah endure only with one who kills himself for her.” See BT *Berakhot* 63b, *Gittin* 57b; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli’ezer* 13, p. 257; *Tanḥuma*, *Noah* 3.

Cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* B, 32, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince: “Do you want not to die? Die before you die. Do you want to live? Do not live until you live.” See BT *Tamid* 32a, where Alexander the Great poses a question to the elders of the south: “He said to them, ‘What shall a person do to live?’ They replied, ‘Let him kill himself.’”

The context in Ecclesiastes (4:2–3) reads: *I praise the dead, who have already died, more than the living, who are still alive. And better than both is one who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.* See *Zohar* 1:187b, 188b; 2:75a, 105b; 3:71b, 182a–b, 308b (*Tosefet*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 144–45.

**357. The blessed Holy One has made three abodes...** One is for the *nefesh* of the righteous, which after death is “not eliminated from this world,” but rather abides by its corpse. When the world suffers, these *nefashot* pray for the living and inform the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), who lie buried (or slumbering) in the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron, which according to the *Zohar* serves as an entrance to the Garden of Eden.

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 the souls of the righteous interceding, see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, § 63; BT *Ta’anit* 16a, 23b; *Bava Metsi’a* 85b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:10; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Margalioth), pars. 450, 452; *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki), par. 270; *Zohar* 1:224b–225b; 2:16b (*MhN*), 141b. Cf. BT *Sotah* 34b; below, [note 363](#).

On the Slumberers of Hebron, see Rashi on BT *Menahot* 100a, s.v. *Matitya*; Maimonides on M *Tamid* 3:2; *Zohar* 2:151b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 90. On the patriarchs as intercessors, see Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, § 63. On the Cave of Machpelah as an entrance to the Garden of Eden, see *Zohar* 2:151b; Vol. 3,

p. 525, n. 967. On the power of the righteous to determine how God will act, see above, [note 296](#).

**[358](#). the dead know the suffering of the world...** See BT *Berakhot* 18b; *Zohar* 1:81b (*ST*), 225a; 2:16b (*MhN*), 141b. The wicked are punished by having their *nefesh* cut off, so it does not remain by the grave.

**[359](#). The second abode...** Whereas the *nefesh* abides by its corpse, the *ruah* dwells in the Garden of Eden. The habitations and palaces here reflect both the physical world and the spiritual realm. Similarly, the *ruah* is clothed in an ethereal garment or body resembling her earthly body. See *Zohar* 1:224b; 2:141b. On the ethereal body, see above, [p. 77, n. 237](#).

**[360](#). The third abode...** The *neshamah* ascends to the Bundle of Life, apparently referring to *Shekhinah* (or to a realm directly beneath *Shekhinah*). From here she absorbs delight from an even higher source.

The verse in Isaiah reads: *Then you will delight* על יהוה (al YHVH), upon [or: in] YHVH. Here, al YHVH is interpreted hyperliterally: above YHVH—referring to *Binah*, who is above *Tif'eret* (known as YHVH). The *neshamah* draws delight from *Binah* Herself, so she delights above YHVH. See above, [note 282](#).

The expression “bundle of life” derives from 1 Samuel 25:29, recording Abigail’s blessing to David: *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*. 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...*” On the verse in Samuel and on *Shekhinah* as Bundle of Life, see above, [pp. 158–59, nn. 490, 492](#).

**[361](#). When the world is in need...** See above, [note 357](#).

**362. Every single Sabbath...** All three aspects of the soul ascend.

On the soul's ascent, based on the verse in Isaiah, see *Zohar* 1:115b-116a (*MhN*); 2:156b-157a, 144b-145a (*IR*), 159b, 182b; *ZH* 18b (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 30 (36). Cf. *Zohar* 1:62b.

**363. When the world needs mercy...** When the living come to the cemetery to implore the souls of the righteous to intercede for them, they join their *nefesh* to the *nefesh* of the righteous. The righteous souls are able to stimulate God's compassion because even when alive they had *already died* to the world, devoting themselves entirely to holiness.

See above, [notes 356-57](#). On the practice of going to the cemetery to implore the souls of the righteous, see BT *Ta'anit* 16a, 23b; *Sotah* 34b; *Bava Metsi'a* 85b; *Tosafot*, *Ta'anit* 16a, s.v. *yotse'in*; *Zohar* 1:225a-b; 2:16a-b (*MhN*), 141b; Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 34a, 70a; *Or Yaqar*; Vital; Joseph Caro, *Shulḥan Arukh*, *Orah Ḥayyim* 559:10, 568:10, 579:3, 581:4, 605:1; *Miqdash Melekh*; Giller, "Recovering the Sanctity of the Galilee," 154-69; Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos*, 265-75; Lichtenstein, *Mi-Tum'ah li-Qdushah*, 109-13, 218-71, 293-386, 419-55; Yisraeli, "Dilemmot Hilkhatiyyot be-Sefer ha-Zohar." Cf. Maimonides' critical remark in *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Avel* 4:4.

**364. I would be surprised...** Rabbi Ḥiyya thinks that only the Companions of Rabbi Shim'on are worthy and capable of communing with souls of the righteous and imploring them to seek divine compassion.

**365. Suffering informs them...** Human suffering itself informs the dead. Alternatively, in times of distress, people bring a Torah scroll to the cemetery, and the souls of the righteous become concerned about such dishonoring of the holy scroll. Then Torah informs them of the suffering.

This custom combines two elements that appear separately in BT *Ta'anit* 15b-16a: taking the Torah scroll out of the synagogue (in order to pray for rain in public) and going to the cemetery to arouse the dead to plead. See M *Ta'anit* 2:1; JT *Ta'anit* 2:1, 65a; *Zohar* 1:225a-b; *Or Yaqar*; Nissim Gerondi's criticism of this combined custom in his commentary on *Ta'anit* 16a; above, [note 363](#); Scholem. See BT *Berakhot* 18a (quoted below, [note 369](#)).

According to various halakhic authorities, it is forbidden to bring a Torah scroll to the cemetery. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Tefillin u-Mzuzah ve-Sefer Torah*, 10:6; Jacob ben Asher, *Arba'ah Turim, Yoreh De'ah* 282; Joseph Caro, *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah* 282:4.

[366.](#) **they all cry out over the Torah...** The souls of the righteous cry out. If the people turn back to God sincerely, then these souls go to inform the patriarchs (lying buried in Hebron), who help to secure divine compassion. But if there is no *teshuvah*, then the souls recount the people's sins. On "the Slumberers of Hebron," see above, [note 357](#).

[367.](#) **Even one, on that day...** One fast is sufficient, provided it is on the same day that people come to the cemetery. Then all the souls of the righteous there plead for them.

[368.](#) **Giscalá...** Or Gush Ḥalav, a city in Upper Galilee.

"A bundle" renders קטרא (*qitra*), whose root קטר (*qtr*) means "to bind, tie." On a torn Torah scroll, see BT *Yevamot* 96b.

[369.](#) **the living have come to mock us...** See BT *Berakhot* 18a: "A person should not walk in the cemetery with tefillin on his head or a Torah scroll in his arm and recite. If he does so, he transgresses under the category of *One who mocks the poor taunts his Maker* (Proverbs 17:5)... Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Yonatan were walking around in a cemetery, and Rabbi Yonatan's purple tassel [i.e., tzitzit] was trailing on the ground. Rabbi Ḥiyya said to

him, ‘Lift it up, so that [the dead] will not say, “Tomorrow they are coming to join us—and now they are shaming us!”’”

The mocking or shaming refers to the fact that the dead lack the obligation and privilege of fulfilling *mitsvot* of the Torah, possessed only by the living. See JT *Berakhot* 2:2, 4c-d; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:5.

**370. my companions and I hastened...** To the patriarchs, who lie buried in Hebron. When the patriarchs (together with the souls of the righteous from the graves) joined the spirits of the righteous in the Garden of Eden, they discovered (or divined) that the Torah scroll was defective, containing a single extra letter. Since the entire Torah is considered God’s name, this single defect “falsified the name of the King.” Consequently, the spirits in the Garden of Eden (and/or the patriarchs) said that the souls from the graves could not return to their corpses to help the living, and they were thrust out of the Heavenly Academy.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Every animal dividing its hoof, ושסעת ושסעת (ve-shosa’at shesa), cleaving a cleft of, two hooves, bringing up the cud, among animals—it you may eat.* According to the Masoretic text, the word ושסעת (ve-shosa’at), *cleaving*, is written with only an initial ו (vav), whereas this particular Torah scroll spelled it ושוסעת (ve-shosa’at), with a second vav.

See *Miqdash Melekh*; Scholem; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. Meir Abulafia, *Masoret Seyag la-Torah*, s.v. *prs*; *Minḥat Shai* on Deuteronomy 14:6, ad loc.; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:862. Cf. *Zohar* 1:225a. On the omission or addition of a single letter, see BT *Eruvin* 13a (quoted above, [note 228](#)); Nahmanides, *Commentary on the Torah*, intro, 7; *Zohar* 2:124a; 3:72b.

On “the Slumberers of Hebron,” see above, [note 357](#). On Torah as God’s name, see above, [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#).



[371.](#) **one elder who was among them...** Apparently, among the people who had come to the cemetery.

Rav Hamnuna Sava is a revered figure in the *Zohar*. On him and his book, see above, [p. 14](#), [n. 38](#). Some commentators understand ספרא (*sifra*), “the book,” as referring to Rav Hamnuna Sava’s Torah “scroll,” which was free of any scribal defect. See Soncino; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:862; Berg, *The Zohar*.

[372.](#) **they removed Rabbi El’azar from this grave...** According to one rabbinic tradition, Rabbi El’azar son of Rabbi Shim’on was initially buried in Giscala. However, his deceased father, who was buried nearby in Meron, appeared in a dream to the residents of Meron, directing them to remove El’azar’s body from Giscala and bring it next to him. See *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:23; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 11:2. Cf. BT *Bava Metsi’a* 84b.

In this narrative, Rabbi Hizkiyah and Rabbi Yeisa are still alive after Rabbi Shim’on’s death; whereas according to the *Idra Rabba* (*Zohar* 3:144a), both of them died during Rabbi Shim’on’s lifetime. See *Miqdash Melekh*; *Nitsotsei Orot*; *Sullam*; *Nitsotsei Zohar*; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 183, n. 148.

[373.](#) **why do we go to the dead?...** According to the verse in Deuteronomy, it is forbidden to consult the dead. For the full verse, see above, [note 349](#).

[374.](#) **You have not yet seen the wings of the Bird of Eden...** This Bird is apparently *Shekhinah*. Rabbi Hizkiyah’s remark implies that Rabbi Yeisa has not yet fathomed the deep meaning of the verse.

On the image of “the wings of *Shekhinah*,” see above, [p. 85](#), [n. 261](#). For various interpretations of the Bird here, see *Or Yaqar*; *Haggahot Maharḥu*; Soncino; *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:862; *Matoq mi-Devash*. Cf. the references to birds of Eden in *Zohar* 2:130b; Moses de León, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, 65b. On Rabbi Yeisa’s

inexperience, see *Zohar* 2:79b, 152b-153a; *ZH* 31a. Cf. *ZH* 85a-c (*MhN*)

Rabbi Hizkiyah explains that here *the dead* refers to wicked Gentiles who never experience the holy fullness of life. In contrast, the people of Israel, who are righteous, devote themselves to God so intensely that they *have already died* to this world in their lifetimes. Then, when they pass away, their souls remain alive. See above, [note 356](#).

See BT *Berakhot* 18a-b, in the name of Rabbi Hiyya: “The righteous... are called ‘living’ even in their death.... The wicked... are called ‘dead’ even in their lifetime.”

See JT *Berakhot* 2:2, 4d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 39:7; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 9:5; *Devarim Rabbah* (ed. Lieberman), p. 131; *Tanḥuma, Vezot Haberakhah* 7; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vezot Haberakhah* 7; *Zohar* 1:131b-132a; 207b; 2:106b; 3:182a-b; 297b (*IZ*)

[375](#). **when other nations visit their dead...** They do so through sorcery, as described above at [note 353](#).

[376](#). **Even though a righteous person has departed...** He endures in three worlds—his *nefesh* by the grave to help protect the living, his *ruah* in the Garden of Eden, and his *neshamah* in the Bundle of Life. See above, [notes 357-60](#).

The verse in Song of Songs now implies apparently that the righteous souls in all three *olamot*, *worlds*, love God. On the play on *alamot* and *olamot*, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 35b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 1:3; above, [note 66](#).

On the righteous attaining greater status after death, see BT *Hullin* 7b, in the name of Rabbi Hama son of Hanina: “The righteous are greater in their death than in their life.”

[377](#). **The soul of my lord will be bound...** Why does the verse read נֶפֶשׁ אֲדוֹנָי (*Nefesh adoni*), *The nefesh of my lord, will be bound in the bundle of life*, when it is really the highest level of soul, *neshamah*, that attains this exalted

state? Because the lower levels of soul are bound with *neshamah* and thereby attain *the bundle of life*. See above, [notes 357, 360, 362](#).

**[378. the exile of a Torah scroll...](#)** According to rabbinic tradition, when communities needed to pray for rain and their prayers had not been answered, at a certain stage they would take the ark with its Torah scroll out of the synagogue to the open space of the city and pray. Sometimes they might go from one synagogue to another. Here, Rabbi El'azar's reference to "another open space" apparently alludes to the more extreme practice of taking the Torah scroll to the cemetery. See M *Ta'anit* 2:1; BT *Ta'anit* 15b-16a; *Zohar* 1:225a-b; above, [note 365](#).

**[379. so that they may be aroused over it...](#)** So that souls of the righteous will be aroused by the presence of the Torah. See above, [notes 365-66](#).

**[380. When Shekhinah was exiled...](#)** According to a rabbinic tradition, *Shekhinah* departed from the Temple in ten stages, the final one being from the desert to Her place in heaven. Similarly, Torah may be exiled from synagogue to synagogue, then to an open public space, and finally to the graveyard, which resembles a desert, inhabited by those wandering from this world to the next.

On *Shekhinah*'s ten stages of departure, see *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A, 34; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 31a; *Zohar* 1:225a. Cf. *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 13:11 and *Eikhah Rabbah, Petihta* 25, which also list ten stages, though not including the desert. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 9, n. 27](#).

The full verse in Jeremiah reads: *If only I were given a wanderers' lodge in the desert, that I might abandon My people and leave them! For they all are adulterers, a band of traitors.*

**[381. The Babylonians are afraid...](#)** Of disrespecting the Torah by moving it even from synagogue to synagogue, and certainly not to an open space or to the cemetery.

On “the Babylonians,” see *Zohar* 1:96b, 224b–225a; 3:158a, 259a; Liebes, “Ziqqat ha-Zohar le-Erets Yisra’el,” 35–36. Cf. *Zohar* 3:231b.

**382. In my days...** Rabbi Shim’on himself stimulates divine compassion, so the world does not need to remove the Torah scroll from the synagogue.

See *Zohar* 2:15a (*MhN*); 3:288b (*IZ*). On the unique status of Rabbi Shim’on, see above, [p. 91](#), [n. 275](#).

**383. after their death even more than in their life...** As demonstrated by the verse, since Isaiah delivered this divine promise to King Hezekiah, who lived long after King David. Cf. *Zohar* 1:193b.

**384. making one equivalent to the other...** The verse seems to place God and David on the same level. Rabbi Yehudah explains that David attained the rung of *Shekhinah* and was thereby joined to the divine triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*—who are symbolized by the patriarchs, who are in turn identified with the Divine Chariot.

See *Bereshit Rabbah* 47:6, in the name of Resh Lakish, “The patriarchs themselves constitute the [Divine] Chariot.”

On the patriarchal chariot, see above, [p. 107](#), [n. 325](#). On David and the patriarchs, see Acts 2:29; *Mekhilta, Pisha* 1; BT *Berakhot* 16b, *Pesaḥim* 117b, *Mo’ed Qatan* 16b, *Sanhedrin* 107a; *Midrash Tehillim* 18:8, 25; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 57; Jacob ben Sheshet, *Ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittahon*, 384, 396, 440; *Zohar* 1:20b, 79b, 82a, 89b (*ST*), 99a, 125a, 154b, 248b, 2:31a, 132b, 144a; Moses de León, *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, 45 (54); Baḥya ben Asher on Genesis 32:10; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 6:265, n. 94. Cf. *Zohar* 1:186a; Vol. 2, p. 23, n. 164.

**385. Not like the deeds...** The full verse reads: *Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall you do, and not like the deeds of the land of Canaan into which I am bringing you shall you do, and according to their statutes you shall not walk.* The continuation of this

chapter in Leviticus contains a list of forbidden sexual relations.

**386. That the name of YHVH...** The name יהוה (YHVH) is “concealed” in the sense that it represents a more hidden *sefirah* (Tif’eret), and in the sense that it is not pronounced as it is written, but rather as the more “revealed” name אדני (Adonai), “My Lord,” which refers to a more revealed *sefirah* (Shekhinah).

Torah is pictured as one continuous name of God, and it includes both an explicit, simple meaning and a more profound, hidden sense.

The clause “There we learned” refers to parallels such as *Zohar* 2:230b; 3:75a, 98b, 159a. On God’s name being both concealed and revealed, see also *Zohar* 1:39b (*Heikh*); 2:178a; 3:65b, 72a–b, 146b, 289a (*IZ*); cf. 3:11a. On Torah as God’s name, see above, [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#). On the Torah being both revealed and concealed, see also *Zohar* 1:234b; 2:95a, 98b–99b; 3:71b–73a (the continuation of this passage), 152a; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, 50–65; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1077–89. On the significance of every element of Torah, see above, [p. 26](#), [n. 83](#).

**387. From the impudence of one righteous woman...** Tamar, who had been married to Judah’s firstborn son, Er. When Er died, his brother Onan should have married Tamar, according to the custom of levirate marriage, but Onan failed to consummate the act and *wasted* [his seed] *on the ground* (Genesis 38:9). When the youngest brother, Shelah, grew up, and Tamar saw that *she had not been given to him as wife* (ibid., 14), she took matters into her own hand and seduced her father-in-law, Judah. This eventually brought “many benefits to the world,” since Tamar and Judah’s son Perez became the ancestor of King David, from whom the Messiah will be descended.

See Ruth 4:18–22; *Zohar* 1:188a–b. On levirate marriage, see above, [note 32](#); Vol. 5, pp. 38–39, n. 108. On this *Zohar* passage, see Kara-Ivanov Kaniel, “*Panaha ha-Bo’arot shel ha-Shekhinah*.” Genesis 38:14 reads in full: *She took off her widow’s garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat by the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah had grown up and she had not been given to him as wife.*

**388. I have looked through the entire Torah...** See *Bereshit Rabbah* 85:7, in the name of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince: “We have searched through the entire Bible and have not found a place called פתח עינים (*petah einayim*), *the entrance to Enaim*. What is *petah einayim*? Well, this indicates that she [Tamar] lifted her eyes to the *petah*, opening, toward which all *einayim*, eyes, gaze, and said, ‘May it be the [Divine] Will that I not leave this house empty.’”

See *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 38:14; JT *Sotah* 1:4, 16d; *Ketubbot* 13:1, 35c; BT *Sotah* 10a; *Midrash Shemu’el* 7:4; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayeshev* 17; *Zohar* 1:1b; 2:218a.

**389. What prompted this righteous woman...** How could she seduce her father-in-law? Rabbi Abba explains that she had learned in Judah’s home the mysterious ways in which God conducts the world.

Rabbi Abba may be alluding here to the mysteries of reincarnation. According to the *Zohar*, if a married man dies childless, his soul 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 soul into the embryo. This process of reincarnation provides the spirit with another opportunity to engender new life.

After Tamar’s husband, Er, died, his brother Onan should have fulfilled the duty of levirate marriage, but he *wasted* [his seed] *on the ground* (Genesis 38:9). Then, when Tamar saw that [the youngest brother] *Shelah had grown*



up and she had not been given to him as wife (ibid., 14), she boldly seduced her father-in-law, Judah, because she wanted to ensure the reincarnation of the souls of his childless sons, Er and Onan. Nine months later, she gave birth to twin sons, Perez and Zerah, who were actually reincarnations of their uncles, Er and Onan. See *Zohar* 1:188a-b; above, [notes 32](#), [387](#); Vol. 5, pp. 38-39, n. 108.

**390. Bathsheba was destined...** 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 to be brought to him and they slept together. When David later learned that he had impregnated her, he arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle with the Ammonites. Then he married Bathsheba (who would later give birth to the future King Solomon). Immediately, God sent the prophet Nathan, who demonstrated to David by means of a parable that he had sinned gravely.

See 2 Samuel 11-12. Rabbinic tradition tries to justify David's adultery or at least mitigate its sinfulness. 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].'"

On David and Bathsheba, see BT *Shabbat* 56a; Rashi and *Tosafot*, ad loc.; *Zohar* 1:8a-b, 73b; 2:106b-107a; 3:38b, 78b.

**391. She sat בפתח עינים (be-phetaḥ einayim), by the entrance to Enaim...** Rabbi Abba identifies this *phetaḥ*, *entrance* [or: *opening*], as *Shekhinah*, who is the opening to the divine realm. She is also known as פתח האהל (*petah ha-ohel*), *the opening of the tent*, by which Abraham sat. The verse in Exodus now implies that *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*) hovers over *Shekhinah*, who is pictured as הפתח (*ha-petaḥ*), *the*

entrance. Finally, *Shekhinah* is known as *Tsedeq* (Righteousness), who figures in the verse from Psalms: פתחו (Pithu), *Open, for me the gates of righteousness.*

On *the opening of the tent* and also the verse in Psalms, see above, [p. 84](#), [n. 258](#). The full verse in Exodus 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 He will not allow the Destroyer to enter your houses to strike.* See above, [p. 85](#), [n. 260](#).

[392.](#) ***Einayim, eyes...*** The place name *Einayim* is interpreted midrashically as “eyes.” See *Bereshit Rabbah* 85:7: “What is פתח עינים (*petaḥ einayim*)? Well, this indicates that she [Tamar] lifted her eyes to the *petaḥ*, opening, toward which all *einayim*, eyes, gaze, and said, ‘May it be the [Divine] Will that I not leave this house empty.’” See above, [note 388](#).

[393.](#) ***תמנתה (timnatah), to Timnah...*** *The entrance to Enaim symbolizes Shekhinah, who is the opening that leads to (is on the road to) Tif'eret.* The latter is alluded to by the word תמנתה (*timnatah*), *to Timnah*, since *Tif'eret* is known as *YHVH*, or תמונת יהוה (*temunat YHVH*), *the image of YHVH*.

The verse in Numbers (spoken by God about Moses) reads: *Mouth to mouth I speak with him; and a vision, not in riddles; ותמונת (u-tmunat), and the image [or: likeness, form, figure, manifestation] of, YHVH he beholds.*

[394.](#) ***Tamar fulfilled the matter below...*** By seducing Judah, she engendered Perez and Zerah, and paved the way for the Davidic Kingdom, since Perez became the ancestor of King David.

See above, [notes 387](#), [389](#). The verse from Hosea links Judah to the Davidic kingdom.

**395. *Judah saw her and he took her for a whore...***

Rabbi Abba proceeds to interpret the narrative in Genesis as symbolizing the relationship between *Tif'eret* (represented by Judah) and *Shekhinah* (represented by Tamar). *Tif'eret*, as it were, mistook *Shekhinah* for Her demonic counterpart, Lilith, who is pictured as *an adulteress* and a whore. When *Shekhinah* is provoked by human wickedness, She becomes filled with harsh Judgment and hides Her benevolent aspect from humanity. Then Lilith is empowered—or, as it were, *Shekhinah* turns into Lilith—and the feminine force wreaks destruction. Tamar's covering her face is associated with the description of the adulteress in Proverbs: *she... wipes her mouth*.

See *Or Yaqar; Miqdash Melekh; Matoq mi-Devash*. On the relation between *Shekhinah* and the demonic realm, see above, [note 111](#). On *Shekhinah* and Lilith, see also above, [note 315](#).

The full verse in Genesis reads: *Judah saw her and he took her for a whore, for she had covered her face*. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Such is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, "I have done no wrong."* See above, [p. 294](#), [n. 120](#).

**396. *He turned aside to her...*** *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Judah) approaches *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Tamar). The wording אל הדרך (*el ha-derekh*), *by the way* [or: *road*], now alludes to *Yesod*, through whom the divine couple joins. *Tif'eret* conveys *Hesed* (symbolized by white), while *Shekhinah* derives from *Gevurah* (symbolized by red). The union of the divine couple assuages the harshness of *Shekhinah*.

On *Yesod* as *way*, see *Zohar* 1:29b, 48b; 2:137a. The full verse in Genesis reads: *He turned aside to her by the road and said, "Come on, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me for coming in to me?"*

**397. *הבה (Havah), Come on...*** According to Rashi on this verse, *havah* usually implies some form of preparation. See

also Rashi on Genesis 11:3; Exodus 1:10; Hosea 4:18; *Zohar* 1:75a; 2:18a (*MhN*). For the full verse, see the preceding note.

**398.** כלתו (*khallato*), **his daughter-in-law...** This word is associated here with a very different meaning of the root כלה (*klh*), “to complete, bring to an end, destroy.”

The expression “we translate this” normally refers to an Aramaic Targum, but the supposed rendering here —“that she was destruction”—does not appear in any extant Targum. See *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. *shts*; *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Zohorei Ya’bets*.

According to Rabbi Abba, *Tif’eret* was unaware of *Shekhinah*’s destructive quality because Her face was beaming in anticipation of their union, which would assuage Her harshness.

**399.** an actual כלה (*kallah*), **bride...** Alternatively, כלתו (*khallato*), *his daughter-in-law*, means *his bride*, since the noun *kallah* can convey either of these senses. *Shekhinah* is *Tif’eret*’s bride, and both of them derive from *Hokhmah*, who is symbolized by *Lebanon*.

Apparently, Rabbi Abba is now construing the verse as: *he did not know*—that is, *Tif’eret* was unaware of *Shekhinah*’s harshness—כי (*ki*), *because, she was his bride*. For other interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Miqdash Melekh*; *Matoq mi-Devash*.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *With me from Lebanon, bride; with me from Lebanon come! Descend from the peak of Amana, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards*. See *Zohar* 2:3a, 5b (*MhN*); 3:297a.

**400.** **What will you give me...** *Shekhinah* seeks adornments from Her partner, which will counteract any harshness.

**401.** **I myself will send a kid...** The king in the parable represents *Tif’eret*, who fathers Samael with the demonic slave-girl. When *Tif’eret* seeks to marry the noble

lady, *Shekhinah*, He promises Her that He will banish this unworthy son.

Now the verse in Genesis implies that *Tif'eret* (represented by Judah) will banish Samael (represented by a *kid*). Likewise, in the verse from Exodus, the *kid* represents Samael, who must not be “boiled” *in its mother’s milk*—that is, mingled with *Shekhinah*, the divine mother. All demonic forces derive from Samael, “the firstborn of beasts.”

On the term *matronita*, see the Glossary. On the kabbalistic significance of a *kid in its mother’s milk*, see *Zohar* 2:124b-125a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 315; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 146-47. On the demonic nature of the goat, see also above, [p. 161](#), [n. 498](#).

The phrase “firstborn of beasts” derives from Exodus 11:5, describing the last of the ten plagues: *Every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the slave-girl who is behind the millstones, and every firstborn of the beasts.* See above, [notes 315](#), [317](#).

**402. Only if you give a pledge...** Signs of blessing for *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*).

**403. Your seal and cord, and the staff...** These three items symbolize the sefirotic triad of *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, who convey the flow of blessing to *Shekhinah*.

**404. כמשלש חדשים (ke-mishlosh ḥodashim), about three months later...** When Tamar’s pregnancy became evident. The full verse reads: *It happened about three months later that Judah was told, saying, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the whore and what’s more, she’s conceived by her whoring.” Judah said, “Take her out to be burned.”*

According to a rabbinic interpretation, the phrase *ke-mishlosh ḥodashim*, *about three months later*, means less than three full months, but Rabbi Abba construes משלש (*mishlosh*) as *meshallesh*, “to triple.” After three full months (apparently referring to Nisan, Iyar, and Sivan), the fourth month began

—referring to Tammuz, in which traditionally the walls of Jerusalem were breached both in 586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. So the fourth month signifies a time of harsh Judgment, when *Shekhinah* draws from the demonic side.

On the phrase *ke-mishlosh ḥodashim*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 85:10; Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and David Kimḥi on Genesis 38:24. Rashi construes *mishlosh* as a verb. On the three months of the calendar, cf. *Zohar* 2:12a, 78b.

**405. the Bride is located on the Other Side** *Shekhinah* is dominated by the demonic force.

**406. Take her out to be burned...** *Tif'eret* (symbolized by Judah) declares that *Shekhinah* (symbolized by Tamar) will suffer the harshness of exile.

The verse in Lamentations reads: *He has cast down from heaven to earth תפארת ישראל (tif'eret yisra'el) the beauty [or: splendor] of Israel.* Here, Rabbi Abba interprets this to mean: *תפארת ישראל (Tif'eret Yisra'el), The beauty of Israel, has cast down earth [symbolizing Shekhinah] from heaven... [symbolizing Tif'eret together with the sefirot surrounding Him].* See above, [note 88](#).

The phrase “flames of noon” implies the fiercest flames. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#).

**407. As she was being taken out...** The full verse reads: *As she was being taken out, she sent a message to her father-in-law, saying, “By the man to whom these belong I have conceived.” And she said, “Recognize, please, whose are this seal and cord and this staff?”*

**408. It is not written from whom (these come)...** The seal, cord, and staff symbolize *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*, which do not merely come *from Tif'eret*, but are inherently His. See above, [note 403](#).

**409. צדקה ממני (Tsadeqah mi-menni), She is more in the right than I...** The word *tsadeqah*, *she is in the right* [or: *she is righteous*], alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is called *Tsadeq* (Righteousness, Justice) and sometimes *Tsedaqah* (Righteousness).



On the decisiveness of a name, see BT *Berakhot* 7b; *Zohar* 1:6a, 58b, 60a; 2:5a (*MhN*), 103a, 104a, 179b, 223a, 230a; 3:25a, 75b, 199b; *ZH* 72c, 73a (*ShS*). The full verse in Genesis reads: *Judah recognized, and said, "She is more in the right than I! For after all, I did not give her to Shelah, my son." And he knew her again no more.* On Shelah, see above, [note 387](#).

**410. *Mi-menni, From me...*** In the verse, the contextual meaning of this word is *than I*; but Rabbi Abba construes it differently: *from me*. *Tif'eret* Himself—more precisely, *Yesod*—is known as צדיק (*tsaddiq*), *righteous*, and He is characterized as צדקה (*tsedaqot*), *righteous deeds*.

The word צדקה (*tsadeqah*), *she is righteous*, is now divided into two elements: *Shekhinah's* more common name, צדק (*Tsedeq*), Righteousness (or Justice), plus the letter ה (*he*), signifying the sweetening She receives from the divine male. Together, these two elements form Her fuller name—צדקה (*Tsedaqah*), Righteousness—which *Tif'eret* declares came *mi-menni, from me*. On *Tsedeq* and *Tsedaqah*, see *Zohar* 3:291b-292a (*IZ*). On the verse in Psalms, see above, [pp. 92-93](#), [n. 283](#).

**411. All are linked with one another...** *Judah* signifies *Shekhinah's* husband, *Tif'eret*, while *her father-in-law* signifies *Tif'eret's* father, the supernal realm of *Hokhmah*.

**412. This portion affirms supernal wisdom...** Including the allusions to the sefirotic drama just explained by Rabbi Abba.

By seducing her father-in-law Judah, Tamar initiated a process that eventually produced the Davidic kingdom, since Judah and Tamar's son Perez became the ancestor of King David. Rabbi El'azar may be alluding as well to another secret: Tamar redeemed the souls of Judah's sons Er and Onan, enabling them to be reincarnated as Perez and Zerah.

Similarly, after Ruth's husband (Mahlon) died, she approached his relative, Boaz, who later consummated the

act of levirate marriage with her. Their son Obed later engendered Jesse, who engendered David. According to the *Zohar*, by uniting with Boaz, Ruth ensured that the soul of her deceased husband, Mahlon, would be reincarnated as Obed. See Ruth 4:18-22; *Zohar* 1:188a-b; above, [notes 387, 389](#).

**413. all is concealed and revealed...** Torah includes both hidden meanings and simple meanings, the former reserved for the select few, the latter revealed to all.

See Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, Introduction to Part 1; 1:26, 33, 35; *Zohar* 3:78a, 152a; above, [note 386](#); below, [note 432](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1077-78.

**414. That the name of YHVH may be recounted in Zion...** The actual *name of YHVH* was pronounced only in the Temple itself (*in Zion*), whereas outside (including the rest of *Jerusalem*), it was pronounced according to its appellation: אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*), "My Lord," which is equated here with *His praise*. See M *Sotah* 7:6; above, [note 386](#). *YHVH* symbolizes *Tif'eret*, while *Adonai* (as well as *praise*) symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

**415. Whoever omits a single letter...** Since the entire Torah is considered one continuous name of God, the omission of even a single letter "falsifies the supernal Holy Name."

See above, [notes 370, 386](#); [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#); Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 548; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 37; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 341-42.

Cf. BT *Eruvin* 13a, in the name of Rabbi Me'ir: "When I came to Rabbi Yishma'el, he said to me, 'My son, what is your work?' I replied, 'I am a scribe.' He said to me, 'My son, be careful in your work, for your work is the work of heaven. If perchance you omit a single letter or add a single letter, you would be destroying the whole world!'"

**416. The practice of the Egyptians...** They worshiped the slave-girl, Lilith. The Canaanites worshiped Lilith's

partner, Samael, who is identified with *the captive who is in the dungeon*. The fact that the Canaanites subjugated themselves to a *captive* matches the curse delivered to their progenitor, Canaan: *Slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers!*

On Lilith as slave-girl, see above, [note 315](#), discussing the parallel verse in Exodus 11:5: *Every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the slave-girl who is behind the millstones, and every firstborn of the beasts*. On the Egyptians and this demonic slave-girl, see *Zohar* 1:223b.

Exodus 12:29 (quoted here) records the fulfillment of the earlier declaration: *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*. See above, [note 401](#).

According to Genesis, after Noah's son Ham saw his father's nakedness (Genesis 9:22), Ham's son Canaan was cursed. The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall you do, and not like the deeds of the land of Canaan into which I am bringing you shall you do, and according to their statutes you shall not walk*. See above at [note 385](#).

"Sexual licentiousness" renders ערײן (*eryan*), the plural of עריותא (*aryeta, eryeta*), "nakedness, genitals." The Hebrew equivalent—עריות (*arayot*)—refers to various forbidden sexual relations, including incest, as listed in Leviticus 18 and 20.

[417. evil species...](#) Demonic forces. The verse in Deuteronomy refers to a person who has been executed for a capital offense, after which his body is hung. It 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*.

**418. Not like the deeds...** The full verse reads: *Not like the deeds of the land of Egypt in which you dwelt shall you do, and not like the deeds of the land of Canaan into which I am bringing you shall you do, and according to their statutes you shall not walk.*

**419. To seize the corners of the land...** At the time of Israel's redemption, God will shake out the land of Israel, removing all the wicked or unworthy who have been buried there. He will also purify *Shekhinah* ("another Holy Land"), who nourished the heavenly princes of the nations and was tainted by them.

The quotation from Job is from God's speech out of the whirlwind (38:12-13): *Have you ever commanded morning, assigned dawn its place, to seize the corners of the earth [or: land], that the wicked be shaken out of it?* The interpretation offered here by Rabbi Ḥiyya derives from *Pirgei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 34. See *Zohar* 1:181b; 2:10a, 17a (*MhN*); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 89. On the seventy heavenly princes of the nations, see above, [pp. 6-7, n. 21](#).

**420. Rabbi Shim'on was purifying the streets of Tiberias...** According to rabbinic sources, after emerging from thirteen years in a cave, Rabbi Shim'on and his son soaked their sore and sickly bodies in the spring-fed mineral baths of Tiberias. In gratitude for being healed and rejuvenated, Rabbi Shim'on proceeded to purify the city, which was considered impure because it had been built by Herod Antipas on the site of obliterated tombs. Once the corpses were reburied outside of Tiberias, the city was cleansed of defilement.

See JT *Shevi'it* 9:1, 38d; *Bereshit Rabbah* 79:6; BT *Shabbat* 33b-34a; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 11:16; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 10:8. On the specific reference to שוקי (*shuqei*), "streets" (or "markets"), see the last two sources; *Zohar* 2:37a; *ZH* 16a (*MhN*). On Rabbi Shim'on and Rabbi El'azar's time in the cave, see Vol. 4, p. 66, n. 291.

**421. Happy is the share...** Whoever is worthy of dwelling in the land of Israel draws down the flow of emanation from *Tif'eret* (known as Heaven), which descends upon *Shekhinah* (known as Earth). Upon departing this world, his soul joins *Shekhinah* (“the supernal Holy Land”).

However, 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. Such a person “makes the holy profane” by surrendering his soul in a foreign dominion, and seeks to make “the profane holy” by having his corpse interred in the Holy Land.

See JT *Kil'ayim* 9:4, 32c-d; *Ketubbot* 12:3, 35b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 96 (p. 1240); *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayḥi* 6; *Zohar* 1:225b-226a; 2:141a-b, 151a-b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 349-50; idem, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 57-58. On making “the holy profane and the profane holy,” see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 17; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Proverbs 960. Cf. below, [note 568](#).

**422. Whoever is worthy... His land purges His people...** The full verse reads: *O nations, gladden His people, for His servants' blood will He avenge, and vengeance wreak on His foes, וכפר אדמתו עמו (ve-kipper admato ammo), and purge His land, His people.* This last clause seems to mean *and purge His people's land*, but in rabbinic sources it is interpreted as: *His land purges His people*—that is, by living in the Holy Land one becomes purified.

See *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 333; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 32:43; JT *Kil'ayim* 9:4, 32c-d; *Ketubbot* 12:3, 35b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 96 (p. 1240); BT *Ketubbot* 111a; *Devarim Rabbah* 3:5; *Tanḥuma, Vayḥi* 3; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayḥi* 6; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1, 3a-b; *Midrash Tehillim* 85:2; *Midrash Mishlei* 10:1; 17:1; *Rut Zuta* 1:6.

On the final sentence, 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 image of coming “beneath the wings of *Shekhinah*,” see above, [p. 85](#), [n. 261](#).

**423. When Rav Hamnuna Sava went up there...** From Babylonia to the land of Israel. He told his disciples that he was going there so that when he passed away, his soul would be restored directly to God. Anyone who dies outside the Holy Land surrenders his soul to the Angel of Death.

See *Zohar* 2:151a-b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 89-90. For other interpretations of “restore the pledge of their Master to another,” see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On Rav Hamnuna Sava, see above, [p. 14](#), [n. 38](#). On the seventy heavenly princes of the nations, see above, [pp. 6-7](#), [n. 21](#).

The idiomatic phrase סליק להתם (*seleiq le-hatam*), “went up there,” is borrowed from the Babylonian Talmud, where it always means “went to the land of Israel.” Its appearance here indicates that the author is writing in the Diaspora. See *Zohar* 2:174b; *ZH* 81c (*MhN*, *Rut*); Scholem; idem, *Kabbalah*, 222.

**424. whoever activates any of those evil species...** By committing immoral acts or practicing sorcery. Such a person’s corpse will be rejected by the Land, and his soul will be rejected by the supernal Land, *Shekhinah*.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *Let sinners vanish from the earth [or: the land] and the wicked be no more. Bless, O my soul, YHVH. Hallelujah!*

**425. My laws you shall do...** The full verse reads: *My laws you shall do, and My statutes you shall keep—walking by them. I am YHVH your God.*

**426. Happy is the share of Israel...** To whom God has given the Torah, the Tree of Life. The holy insignia is the mark of circumcision.

Torah is identified with the Tree of Life, based on the description of wisdom in Proverbs 3:18: *A tree of life is she to those who grasp her.* See BT *Berakhot* 32b, 61b.



**427. It is forbidden to convey to them words of Torah...** Because the whole Torah is God's Name. Only those (males) who are circumcised—and thereby inscribed with the Holy Name—are permitted to learn Torah.

On the prohibition against teaching Torah to Gentiles (or the uncircumcised), see BT *Ḥagigah* 13a (quoted below, [note 429](#)); *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Mishpatim* 3; *Shemot Rabbah* 30:12; *Zohar* 2:111b; 3:91b. Cf. BT *Sanhedrin* 59a. On Torah as God's name, see above, [p. 80, n. 245](#).

In rabbinic literature, the mark of circumcision is identified with the ך (yod) of the divine name יְדַי (Shaddai), which is also the initial letter of יהוה (YHVH). See *Tanḥuma, Tsav* 14, *Shemini* 8; above, [p. 80, n. 246](#).

**428. This is the statute of the Passover offering...** Only those who have been circumcised are permitted to partake of the Passover lamb, since it alludes to “a holy matter,” namely to God “passing over” the entrance of the homes of the Israelites in Egypt and saving them from the death of the firstborn. All the more so, should the uncircumcised be forbidden to engage in Torah, which is God's very name.

The context in Exodus (12:43–45) reads: *This is the statute of the Passover offering: no foreigner shall eat of it. And any man's slave—purchased with silver—you may circumcise; then may he eat of it. A settler or hired worker shall not eat of it.* See *Zohar* 2:124a.

**429. It is forbidden to teach Torah to a Gentile...** See BT *Ḥagigah* 13a, in the name of Rabbi Ammi: “The words of Torah are not to be transmitted to a Gentile, for it is said: [*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.*” See above, [note 427](#). Here, Rabbi El'azar wonders about the apparent redundancy: *His words ...His statutes and laws.*

**430. a supernal holy portion...** Namely, Torah. The full verse in Proverbs reads: *For good teaching I have given you, do not forsake תורתִי (torati), My instruction [or: My Torah].*

**431. Because it is hidden...** Because Torah is essentially God's Name, its secret meaning is concealed, while its simple sense is revealed, "in the mystery of His Name"—that is, just as the name *YHVH* is concealed and not normally pronounced as it is written, but rather according to the more revealed name *Adonai*. See above, [note 386](#).

Similarly, "Israel exists on two rungs," the revealed rung of *Jacob* and the concealed rung of *Israel*. Thus, God, Torah, and Israel are interlinked, each reflecting concealed and revealed aspects.

The name יַעֲקֹב (*Ya'aqov*), *Jacob*, can allude to *Shekhinah*, perhaps because She is the עֲקֵב (*aqev*), *heel*, i.e., the end of the flow of emanation. The name *Israel* corresponds to *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). See *Zohar* 1:145b, 147b-148b (*ST*), 173b-174a, 176a, 177b, 210b; 2:174a; 3:210b-211b.

On the origins of the supposed Zoharic formula "The blessed Holy One, Torah, and Israel are all one," see Heschel, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, 199, 419, n. 59; Tishby, *Hiqrei Qabbalah u-Shluhoteha*, 3:941-60; Sack, *Be-Sha'arei ha-Qabbalah*, 103-9; Idel, "Shetei He'arot"; idem, *Absorbing Perfections*, 20, 497, n. 49.

**432. whoever is circumcised...** Such a person, occupying the rung of *Jacob*, is granted the revealed sense of Torah, including an abbreviated form of its laws and regulations. When he climbs to the rung of *Israel*, he partakes of the mysteries of Torah. Traditionally, חֻקִּים (*huqqim*), *statutes*, are the laws of Torah whose reason is not explained. According to Kabbalah, they represent a more mysterious element whose reason pertains to God's inner life.

On the simple and hidden meanings of Torah being intended for different groups, see above, [note 413](#). On kabbalistic reasons for the commandments, see Matt, “The Mystic and the Mizṗwot.” On *ḥuqqim*, see below, [notes 445-46](#).

[433](#). **Now if this is so for Israel...** If the teaching of Torah is restricted for Israel, then all the more so for Gentiles. See above, [notes 427, 429](#).

According to Rabbi Shim'on, the phrase in Jeremiah *My covenant* refers to both the covenant of circumcision and 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 with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth.*” See above, [p. 65, n. 200](#).

See M *Nedarim* 3:11: “Great is circumcision, because if not for that, the blessed Holy One would not have created His world, as is said: *Were it not for My covenant with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth.*” Cf. BT *Shabbat* 137b: “Were it not for the blood of the covenant [of circumcision], heaven and earth would not endure, as is said: *Were it not for My covenant with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth.*”

[434](#). **May the fathers of the world...** According to BT *Megillah* 3a, Onkelos the proselyte translated the Torah into Aramaic under the guidance of Rabbi Eli'ezer son of Hyrcanus and Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Ḥananiah. The reference here to Hillel and Shammai (who lived much earlier) may be influenced by the fact that Yonatan son of Uzzi'el, who translated the Prophets into Aramaic, was an outstanding pupil of Hillel, although in rabbinic literature (prior to the *Zohar*) there is no mention of his having been a convert.

See *Zohorei Ya'bits*. On Hillel and Shammai as “fathers of the world,” see M *Eduyyot* 1:4; and *Bereshit Rabbah* 12:14 (in the name of Rabbi Shim'on).

**435. The very first element of Torah...** Little children are taught the Hebrew alphabet, beginning with its first two letters: א ב (*alef, bet*). Even these basic components of Torah contain profound mysteries and allude to the Name of God.

On the letters of the alphabet as a single mystical name, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:5; Isaac the Blind, *Peirush Sefer Yetsirah*, 10; Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 132–33; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 29–30, n. 48; idem, “The Name of God,” 75, 168; idem, *Kabbalah*, 25; Liebes, *Torat ha-Yetsirah shel Sefer Yetsirah*, 116. Cf. Idel, *Absorbing Perfections*, 441.

**436. the tip of א (*alef*)** The shape of this letter consists of a diagonal line, with two shorter strokes branching off toward the top right and the bottom left. Rabbi Shim'on begins with the tip at the top right. *Alef*, the first letter, can symbolize the primordial *sefirah*, *Keter*, which includes the totality of emanation.

**437. Seventy-two holy names...** From the middle diagonal line—or “extension”—of א (*alef*), seventy-two divine names are suspended. On the seventy-two names, or the Name of Seventy-two, see above, [p. 160](#), [n. 496](#).

**438. Supports of above and below...** From the lower tip on the bottom left of א (*alef*) issue aspects of *Hokhmah* (including its thirty-two paths) and *Binah* (including Her streams of emanation).

According to M *Avot* 5:1, “by ten utterances, the world was created.” This decade corresponds to the Ten Commandments and the ten *sefirot*. See above, [p. 65](#), [n. 200](#). On the thirty-two paths of Wisdom, see *Sefer Yetsirah* 1:1–2.

**439. *alef* begins to extend into ב (*bet*)...** This second letter of the alphabet can symbolize the second *sefirah*,

*Hokhmah*. See *Zohar* 1:31b.

**440. Sustenance of all and faith of all...** All depends on the unification of the *sefirot*. One who is circumcised is linked there and partakes of holiness.

On the sefirotic significance of circumcision, see above, [p. 82](#), [n. 253](#). The verse in Leviticus refers to *the holy donation* offered to the priest. The verse in Jeremiah reads: *I planted you as a noble vine, of entirely faithful seed [or: entirely seed of truth]*.

**441. For YHVH will not abandon His people...** Because they are linked to Him by the sign of circumcision, which is identified as an element of God's Name. See above, [note 427](#).

**442. Torah is called 'covenant'...** See *Mekhilta, Pisha* 5: "*Covenant* means nothing but Torah, as is said: *These are the words of the covenant...* (Deuteronomy 28:69)."

On circumcision as *covenant*, see Genesis 17:10-11. On the passage in *Mekhilta*, see *Sifrei*, Numbers 111; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 17:2; BT *Shabbat* 33a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 3, p. 13; above, [note 433](#).

**443. Torah and Israel, fine...** Granted, that Torah is called 'covenant,' and that Israel—through circumcision—is called so.

**444. He remembered for them His covenant...** God's *covenant* is *Yesod*, the divine phallus, associated with the covenant of circumcision.

**445. חקותי (Huqqotai), My statutes...** Traditionally, חוקים (*huqqim*), *statutes*, are those commandments whose reason is not explained in the Torah, and here Rabbi Hizkiyah calls them "laws of the King." On the other hand, משפטים (*mishpatim*), *judgments*, are provided with reasons (or are so obvious that they require no stated reason), and these are called "decrees of Torah."

For various interpretations, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. On the distinction between *huqqim* and *mishpatim*, see *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 13:10, 86a; BT *Yoma* 67b;

*Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 7; Nahmanides on Leviticus 19:19; 26:15; Deuteronomy 6:20. Cf. the following note.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: אֵת מִשְׁפָּטַי (Et mishpatai), *My laws* [or: *judgments*], וְאֵת חֻקֹּתַי (ve-et ḥuqqotai), *and My statutes, you shall keep—walking by them. I am YHVH your God.* See above at [note 425](#).

**446. All those laws from the place called *Tsedeq, Righteousness...*** According to Rabbi Yehudah, ḥuqqotai, *My statutes*, pertain to *Shekhinah*, who is known as *Tsedeq* (Righteousness), and these are royal decrees whose reason is not provided. The other category of commandments—*mishpatim* (judgments)—pertain to *Tif'eret*, who is known as *Mishpat* (Judgment). These are royal decisions whose reason is explained or is so obvious that it need not be stated.

The expression “a place where two portions are joined with one another” may refer to *Yesod*, who links *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, or to the blending of the polar opposites *Ḥesed* and *Gevurah* in the realm of *Tif'eret*.

The verse in Psalms now alludes to *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*, known respectively as *tsedeq, righteousness*, and *mishpat, judgment*, who together form a *throne* for *Binah*. *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret* are characterized respectively by Justice and Compassion, and together are known also as חֹק וּמִשְׁפָּט (*ḥoq u-mishpat*), “statute and judgment.”

On *ḥoq* and *mishpat* as signifying *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*, see *Zohar* 2:40a, 60b; 3:113a. On *ḥoq* (statute) as being simply a divine decree, see *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 13:10, 86a; BT *Yoma* 67b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:1, 7; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 65a; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 8:1; *Tanḥuma, Mishpatim* 7, *Ḥuqqat* 3, 8; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 4, 26; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:1, 8; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:2; Rashi on Leviticus 19:19. Cf. the preceding note.

For various interpretations of this paragraph, see *Or Yaqar; Miqdash Melekh; Sullam; Matoq mi-Devash*. The verse in Psalm 89 reads: צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט (*Tsedeq u-mishpat*), *Righteousness and justice* [or: *judgment*] *are the*



*foundation of Your throne.* See above, [note 81](#). The context in Psalm 147 (19–20) reads: *He tells His words to Jacob, His statutes and laws [or: judgments] to Israel. He has not done so for any other nation, and the laws [or: judgments] they know not. Hallelujah!* See above, [note 429](#).

**447. Even though he is circumcised...** Even if a Gentile is circumcised, he is not fully Jewish unless he fulfills the *mitsvot*. Through circumcision, a convert, as it were, builds an altar to God. But if he rejects the *mitsvot*, his altar is *an altar of stones*—demonstrating the hardness of his heart. In such a case, the act of cutting off his foreskin—by “brandishing a sword,” as it were—is unsuccessful and “profanes” the altar.

On the prohibition against teaching Torah to Gentiles, see above, [notes 427, 429](#). On filth not ceasing, 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-worshipers, who did not stand at Mount Sinai—their filth did not cease.”

The full verse in Exodus reads: *If you make Me an altar of stones, you shall not build them of hewn stones, for your sword you would brandish over it and profane it.*

**448. for any goi, Gentile—unspecified...** The verse reads: *He has not done so for any goi, nation*—understood here as Gentile. The generalization *any goi* includes even a Gentile who has been circumcised, if he fails to fulfill the *mitsvot*. Such insincere converts are not to be given “even another element”—apparently referring to the simple sense of Torah, or perhaps its narratives—and certainly not the mysteries of Torah or the details or hidden reasons of its laws.

**449. THE SECTION OF SEXUAL LICENTIOUSNESS** “Sexual licentiousness” renders עריות (*arayot*), the plural of ערוה (*ervah*), “nakedness, genitals.” The term *arayot* refers to various forbidden sexual relations, including incest, as

listed in Leviticus 18 and 20. In rabbinic literature, Leviticus 18 is called פרשת עריות (*Parashat Arayot*), “The Section of Sexual Licentiousness.” (See JT *Yevamot* 2:4, 3d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:6.) This chapter of Leviticus forms the subject of this portion of the *Zohar*, which extends to the end of this volume. On *arayot* in Kabbalah and the *Zohar*, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1367–70; Idel, “Peirushim le-Sod ha-Arayot.”

[450.](#) **MATNITIN** Literally, “Our Mishnah.” On this term, see the Glossary; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 216; Gottlieb, *Mehqarim*, 163–214.

[451.](#) **Transmitting norms...** This piece of *Matnitin* conveys a cryptic description of dazzling angels, including how they execute judgment upon the world for sinful behavior such as sexual immorality.

The description incorporates elements from Ezekiel’s vision of the divine chariot-throne, which is carried by four *hayyot* (living beings), each situated at one corner of the Throne and each having four faces: a human face at the front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back. See Ezekiel 1:10: *The image of their face was a human face, and on the right the four of them had a lion’s face, and on the left the four of them had an ox’s face, and the four of them had an eagle’s face.* See above, [note 110](#).

Here the four angelic beings are pictured as “sharpened keys,” which open the storehouses of divine plenty and convey it to the world. Each one faces “in four directions,” as described by Ezekiel, yet all four move “in one direction,” conveying the Throne on its path. The last sentence may mean that each angel is multicolored and yet displays one particular color more prominently.

For various interpretations of this entire passage, see *Or Yaqar*; *Sullam*; *Matoq mi-Devash*. “Dazzling beings” renders טהירין (*tehirin*), which derives from the Aramaic root meaning “brightness, noon.” In the *Zohar*, *tehirin* often refers

to demons, but here to dazzling angels who oversee or inflict punishment. See above, [note 167](#). The description “blue [or: violet], purple, crimson,” derives from *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 25:4.

**452. Four heads, rising as one...** The four angelic heads join as they rise toward *Shekhinah*. Their unified head rises “out of a washing pool,” which may allude to the River of Fire, from which angels emerge daily. See BT *Ḥagigah* 14a: “Every single day ministering angels are created from a river of fire, chant song, and then cease to be.” See Daniel 7:10; above, [p. 165](#), [n. 511](#).

The phrase “two does, identical in size” apparently refers to each of the four identical double אופנים (*ofanim*), *wheels*, which in Ezekiel’s vision are located below and alongside each *ḥayyah* (living being) and move in perfect unison with them. See Ezekiel 1:16: *The appearance of the wheels and their design were like topaz and all four had the same shape; their appearance and design were as of one wheel being inside the other wheel.*

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *Your teeth are like a flock of הקצובות (ha-qetsuvot), newly shorn ewes [or: ewes similar in size], coming up from washing, all of them twinning [or: matching, identical] and none bereft among them.*

**453. Four wings covering the body...** According to Ezekiel 1:6, 8, each *ḥayyah* (living being) *had four wings... and human hands beneath their wings*. Here, the author adds that each hand was “engraved with five” fingers.

On the four wings, cf. Ezekiel 1:11. The description “comely in appearance and beautiful in form” derives from *Targum Onqelos*, Genesis 29:17 (describing Rachel) and 39:6 (describing Joseph). See *Zohar* 2:99a, 163a; *ZḤ Yitro* 39b (relating to Ezekiel’s vision).

**454. One youth, a boy...** The chief angel Metatron, who is often called נער (*na’ar*), “youth, lad, (heavenly)

servant.” He ministers to *Shekhinah*, who is Herself sometimes pictured as a divine sword.

The image of the male and female sword derives from an interpretation of 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.* According to *Bereshit Rabbah* 21:9, whirling means “turning” from one aspect into another: “*Whirling—changing: sometimes male, sometimes female; sometimes spirits, sometimes angels.*” See above, [p. 122](#), [n. 367](#).

The image of angels carrying an ephah (a measure of volume) derives from Zechariah 5:9, where the prophet sees two female figures carrying an ephah—apparently a container of that capacity—*between earth and heaven*. In verse 6, the ephah is described as *their eye in all the land*. Here in the *Matnitin*, the ephah serves as a universal standard to determine whether human acts of measuring are accurate and fair, or to gauge whether human behavior is just. The verse in Leviticus reads: *Scales of equity, weights of equity, an ephah of equity, and a hin of equity you shall have.*

On Metatron, see Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:626–31; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 377–81.

On Metatron as *na’ar*, “youth,” see 3 Enoch 4:10; BT *Yevamot* 16b; Vol. 4, p. 359, n. 563. Sometimes Metatron appears as an embodiment or manifestation of *Shekhinah*; see Vol. 5, p. 348, n. 450. On *Shekhinah* as “a sword,” see above, [p. 72](#), [n. 223](#).

**[455](#). An appearance of crystal lies on one sword...** The color red symbolizes harsh Judgment. The mighty warrior is Metatron, who embodies the power of *Shekhinah* and extends through many worlds.

The sixty other warriors execute Judgment on behalf of *Shekhinah* and Metatron. The context in Song of Songs (3:7–8) alludes to them: *Behold, the bed of Solomon! Sixty warriors surrounding her [or: it], 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.* See above, [note 101](#).

The “one worm who swims among fish of the sea” is a divine force roaming among the angelic “fish” within the ocean of *Shekhinah*. This worm possesses the power of the legendary worm *shamir*, whose name means “diamond.” The *shamir* was employed by King Solomon in building the Temple because it could cut through the hardest stone. Here, the worm causes all threatening rocks—harsh judgments—to split apart.

On the *shamir*, see M *Sotah* 9:12; BT *Sotah* 48b, *Gittin* 68a–b; *Zohar* 1:74a, 223b; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:53, n. 165. On Metatron as embodying *Shekhinah*, see the end of the preceding note. On the verse in Psalms, see above, [note 105](#).

**456. a voice issuing...** From the angelic warriors to warn humanity of the impending judgment and to stimulate them to *teshuvah*. But no one in the world heeds the warning or perceives the imminent danger. The structure of society is tottering—and the divine structure itself is unstable—because human wickedness weakens divine Love (on the right) and empowers harsh Judgment and demonic forces (associated with the left).

“Nakedness” renders עריין (*eryan*), the plural of עריהא (*aryeta* or *eryeta*), “nakedness.” As explained above ([note 449](#)), the Hebrew equivalent—ערייות (*arayot*)—refers to various forbidden sexual relations and can be rendered as “sexual licentiousness.” Here, *eryan* refers primarily to the consequences of such immoral behavior, including the disruption of the union of the divine couple, whose nakedness is thereby exposed. See below, [note 464](#).

**457. none above are blessed...** The flow of blessing and emanation—even within the divine realm—cannot proceed until the wicked are eliminated. The full verse in

Psalms reads: *Let sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Bless, O my soul, YHVH. Hallelujah!*

**458. Your father's nakedness... your mother's nakedness...** The biblical idiom לגלות ערוה (*le-gallot ervah*), “to expose nakedness (or genitals),” means to have forbidden sexual relations.

The full verse in Leviticus reads literally: *Your father's nakedness and your mother's nakedness you shall not expose. She is your mother; you shall not expose her nakedness.* In its simple sense, the first half means *The nakedness reserved for your father—that is, your mother's nakedness—you shall not expose.* See Levine, *Leviticus*, ad loc.; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, ad loc.

**459. Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest...** 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 (often primarily) their divine counterpart, *Shekhinah*, who sings to *Tif'eret*, the blessed Holy One.

The full verse reads: *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. In his shade I delight to sit, and his fruit is sweet to my palate.* On this verse, see *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:2; *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 355; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 33:26; BT *Shabbat* 88a; *Ester Rabbah* 9:2; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 12:10; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:3; *Shir ha-Shirim Zuta* on 2:3; *Shemot Rabbah* 17:2; *Zohar* 1:85a-b; 2:122a, 223b; 3:25a, 133b (*IR*), 286b. On Assembly of Israel as a title of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 3, n. 5](#).

**460. She praises Him by all...** The apple boasts three colors: the white of the pulp, the red of the skin, and the green of the leaves. Its blossom is fragrant, and its taste sweet. On the apple's healing effects, see BT *Avodah Zarah* 40b.



The apple's three colors correspond to the colors of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret* (white, red, and green, respectively). *Tif'eret* Himself (known as the blessed Holy One) includes the qualities of *Hesed* and *Gevurah*.

See Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 489; Azriel of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, 36; *Zohar* 1:85a, 142b; 2:122a; 3:133b (*IR*), 286b–287a. Cf. Vol. 4, pp. 471–72, n. 381.

The verse from Hosea actually describes the future condition of Israel. In Kabbalah, *Lebanon* often symbolizes *Hokhmah*. On the verse in Song of Songs 5, see *Eikhah Rabbah* (Buber), 1:16; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:16; *Tanḥuma, Ki Tissa* 18; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Vayetse* 22; *Shemot Rabbah* 17:2; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 28, p. 152; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:1.

**461. by comparing Her to a rose...** As in the immediately preceding verse in Song of Songs (2:2): *Like a rose among thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens*. Just as a rose can be both red and white, and is surrounded by thorns, so *Shekhinah* manifests both *Din* (Judgment) and *Hesed* (Love), and She is vulnerable to demonic forces.

In Song of Songs שושנה (*shoshanah*) probably means “lily” or “lotus,” though sometimes in the Midrash and the *Zohar* it connotes “rose.” See Vol. 6, p. 66, n. 33. On the verse in Song of Songs as being spoken by God in praise of Israel, see *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:2–7; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 2:2; *Tanḥuma, Hayyei Sarah* 3; *Midrash Tehillim* 80:1. For its use in the *Zohar*, see *Zohar* 1:1a, 137a; 2:189b; 3:37b–38a, 180b. On *Shekhinah* as a rose (or lily), see also *Zohar* 3:107a, 233b, 286b–287a.

**462. Rabbi Yehudah said...** The righteous stimulate the fragrance of *Shekhinah* and Her romance with *Tif'eret*. Conversely, the wicked empower the demonic Other Side and render *Shekhinah* vulnerable to it.

The verse in Lamentations reads: *He has cast down from heaven to earth the beauty [or: splendor] of Israel*.

Here, Rabbi Yehudah interprets this to mean *He has cast down earth* (symbolizing *Shekhinah*) *from heaven...* (symbolizing *Tif'eret* together with the *sefirot* surrounding Him). See above, [notes 88, 406](#).

**463. His left hand beneath my head...** The righteous stimulate the divine male arms (*Gevurah* on the left and *Ḥesed* on the right) to embrace *Shekhinah*. Conversely, the wicked cause the withdrawal of *Ḥesed*, which not only interrupts the divine embrace but empowers harsh Judgment on the left.

The verse in Song of Songs appears frequently in the *Zohar*. The verse in Lamentations reads: *He has withdrawn His right hand in the face of the enemy* [thereby enabling them to defeat Israel]. See *Mekhilta, Shirta* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:6; *Eikhah Rabbah, Petiḥta* 24; 2:6; *Tanḥuma, Beshallah* 15; *Zohar* 1:163b; 2:57a-b, 143b, 203a, 254a (*Heikh*); 3:201a, 237a.

**464. From here: A slanderer separates an intimate...** Rabbi Ḥizkiyah offers a different verse to demonstrate how human misconduct ruins the union between King *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*).

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer [or: whisperer] separates an intimate*. Here, Rabbi Ḥizkiyah applies the second half of the verse to one who acts wickedly and thereby separates the intimate divine couple. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:2, referring to the serpent's advice to Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge: "A *whisperer separates an intimate.... A whisperer*—[this is the serpent,] for he whispered rebelliously against his Creator, saying: [If you eat from the Tree of Knowledge,] *you surely will not die* (Genesis 3:4). *Separates* אלוף (*aluf*), *an intimate*—for he separated אלופו (*alufo*), Chief, of the world [that is, he caused the Divine Presence to depart from the world] and was immediately cursed." See above, [p. 67, n. 204](#).

The concluding verse (from Leviticus 18:7) refers, of course, to forbidden sexual relations with one's mother.

(See above, [note 458](#).) Here, remarkably, it alludes to disrupting the union of the divine couple, thereby exposing their nakedness (or genitals) and “stripping” or depriving them of one another and of the flow from above. See above, [p. 97, n. 295](#); below, [notes 473, 478](#).

**465. If there is an advocate in the world...** If the people of Israel behave well, and a heavenly advocate speaks in their favor, this affects *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*).

“Advocate” renders פקילטא (*peqilta*), a playful variation of פראקליטא (*peraqilita*), based on Greek *paraklet*, “advocate, intercessor.” “Accuser” renders קוטורגא (*qutorga*), a variation of קטיגורא (*qateigora*), based on Greek *kategor*, “accuser, prosecutor.”

**466. This may be compared to a king...** The king symbolizes King *Tif'eret*, who fathers Israel with *Shekhinah* (known as Assembly of Israel).

For similar parables, see *Bahir* 51 (76); *Zohar* 2:189a-b. Cf. 3:297b; above, [p. 22, n. 70](#). On *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* as Father and Mother, see above, [note 140](#).

The full verse in Proverbs reads: *Heed, my son, your father's instruction [or: exhortation, reproof, discipline, training], and do not forsake your mother's teaching*. See *Zohar* 2:85a; 3:213a.

**467. Matronita, as it were, is distanced with them...** *Shekhinah* suffers exile along with Her people because She failed to train them adequately by providing a measure (“a pint”) of discipline.

See *Zohar* 3:102b; *ZH* 7b, 84a (*MhN, Rut*). On *Shekhinah's* control and responsibility, cf. above, [p. 55, n. 165](#). On Her exile, see above, [p. 9, n. 27](#). On the commendation of discipline by force, see Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15.

“A pint” renders קיסטא (*qista*), which derives from Greek *xestes*, a measure about the size of a pint. See *Bereshit*

*Rabbah* 4:5; *Va-yiqra Rabbah* 12:1; *Zohar* 1:33a, 83a, 121b, 162a, 164a, 211a, 243a; 3:107a.

Cf. the saying “A pint of prevention is worth a gallon of cure.” This saying derives from the one attributed to Benjamin Franklin, which he apparently coined while organizing the first fire-fighting company in Philadelphia in 1736: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

**468. Words of King Lemuel..** Traditionally, *King Lemuel* is identified with King Solomon, whose mother was Bathsheba. In the *Zohar*, Bathsheba symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

On Lemuel as one of Solomon’s names, see above, [p. 295](#), [n. 123](#). On Lemuel and his mother, Bathsheba, see BT *Sanhedrin* 70b; *Tanḥuma*, *Shemot* 1; Ibn Ezra on Proverbs 1:8; 31:1; *Zohar* 1:248b–249a; *ZH* 7b. The verse in Proverbs 31 reads: *Words of Lemuel, king of Massa* [or: *Words of King Lemuel, an utterance*], *with which his mother admonished him*.

The name בַּת שֶׁבַע (*Bat Sheva*), “Bathsheba,” means literally “Daughter of Seven.” In the *Zohar* it often alludes to *Shekhinah*, the daughter of *Binah* (who is known as Seven, since She includes all seven lower *sefirot*). Alternatively, *Shekhinah* is called *Bat Sheva* because She receives the flow of all seven *sefirot* from *Binah* through *Yesod*, or because She includes all seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah* Herself.

**469. A wise son delights a father..** According to Rabbi Shim’on, the generalized wording *a father* includes the Divine Father, *Tif’eret*, who is delighted by Israel’s wisdom. However, Israel’s foolish and wicked behavior brings misery specifically to *his mother*, *Shekhinah*, since She is driven into exile on account of Israel’s sins.

The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Thus says YHVH: Where is your mother’s bill of divorce by which I sent her away? Or which of My creditors was it to whom I sold you off? Behold, it is for your sins that you were sold, and for your crimes your mother was sent away*. See above, [p. 36](#), [n. 108](#).

**470. when Solomon attained wisdom...** *Shekhinah* generated his soul and later granted him wisdom. In fact, She is called *wisdom of Solomon*. Having conveyed wisdom to him, She Herself increased or *excelled*, as indicated by the verse in Kings, which reads: ותרב חכמת שלמה (*Va-terev hokhmat Shelomoh*), *The wisdom of Solomon surpassed* [or: *excelled, increased*], *the wisdom of all the children of the East*.

On Solomon and Song of Songs, see above, [note 194](#). On Solomon and *Shekhinah*, and *Shekhinah* as *wisdom of Solomon*, see above, [note 125](#). On the verse in Kings, see *Zohar* 1:150a, 223a-b, 238a, 248b; 2:85a; 3:297a; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 342.

**471. She generated all of Israel...** All the members of Solomon's generation, bringing forth their souls and then inspiring them with wisdom.

**472. On the day that Solomon completed the House below...** As he finished building the Temple, *Shekhinah* prepared to dwell above with King *Tif'eret*. Joy filled the worlds because Solomon's spiritual mother, *Shekhinah*, guided him in wisdom.

On the earthly and heavenly abodes, cf. above, [pp. 1-2, n. 3](#). On the verse in Proverbs (*an utterance...*), see above, [note 468](#).

**473. And when this son...** When the people of Israel act sinfully, they ruin the divine union, thereby exposing the "nakedness of all," that is, the nakedness of *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*, who are each "stripped" and deprived of one another. See above, end of [note 464](#).

**474. Woe if I speak...** On the tension between revealing and concealing, see BT *Bava Batra* 89b, where Rabbi Yoḥanan son of Zakkai says, concerning the details of illegal practices, "Woe is me if I say it! Woe is me if I do not say it! If I say it, the deceivers will learn. If I do not say it, the deceivers will say, 'Scholars are not expert in our practices.'"

See M *Kelim* 17:16; *Tosefta Kelim (Bava Metsi'a)* 7:9; *Zohar* 2:95a, 100b, 123b, 257b (*Heikh*); 3:127b (*IR*); and 1:11b: “Rabbi Shim’on wept and exclaimed, ‘Woe is me if I speak! Woe is me if I do not speak! If I speak, the wicked will know how to serve their Lord. If I do not speak, the Companions will be deprived of this word.’”

See *Zohar* 2:100b: “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.”

[475.](#) אָהָא (**Ahah**), **Ah**,... The verse actually reads: *Ah, Lord YHVH, You are completely destroying the remnant of Israel!*

[476.](#) **when ה (he) is banished...** In the name יהוה (YHVH), the first ה (*he*) symbolizes *Binah*, while the second *he* symbolizes *Shekhinah*. When this second *he* (*Shekhinah*) is banished from the palace of King *Tif'eret*, the higher *he* (*Binah*) withholds the blessed flow of emanation because without the union of the divine couple, no blessing can appear. Fittingly, these two *hes* are included in the opening word of Ezekiel’s exclamation: אָהָא (*Ahah*), *Ah*.

On the link between blessing and the union of male and female, see BT *Yevamot* 62b–63a, in the name of Rabbi Hanilai: “Any man who has no wife is without joy, without blessing, without goodness.” See above, [p. 13](#), [n. 37](#).

[477.](#) **YHVH roars from on high...** *Tif'eret roars* and moans over the loss of *His abode, Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*).

See BT *Berakhot* 3a, in the name of Rav: “The night consists of three watches, and at each watch the blessed Holy One sits and roars like a lion, saying: ‘Woe to the children, on account of whose sins I destroyed My house and burned My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world!’” See above, [p. 106](#), [n. 322](#).

[478.](#) **on all sides there is nakedness...** Since the union of the divine couple has been ruined, both *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* are left exposed—“stripped” and deprived of one



another and of the blessed flow. Whereas previously streams of emanation had poured upon *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *the heavens*), and through Him to *Shekhinah*, now darkness and mourning prevail.

The verse in Isaiah actually reads: *I clothe the heavens in blackness, and make sackcloth their covering*. The same rewording as here appears in *ZH* 37d; *TZ* 21, 50a. For other instances of a difference between the Masoretic spelling or wording and the *Zohar's* reading, see above, [p. 8, n. 24](#).

**479. He is called ׀ (vai: vav yod), Woe...** When *Tif'eret* separates from *Shekhinah*, He is called by this name, which signifies the withdrawal of *Yesod* (the divine phallus) to *Tif'eret*.

*Tif'eret* (the blessed Holy One) is often symbolized by the letter ׀ (*vav*) in יהוה׀ (*YHVH*). Here, *Tif'eret* is associated with a large or upper *vav*, while *Yesod* is symbolized by a small *vav*. The pronunciation and full spelling of this letter's name—׀׀ (*vav*)—includes both *vavs*, thus alluding to both *sefirot*. While *Yesod* is symbolized by ׀ (*vav*), His head is symbolized by ׀ (yod), which constitutes the top of ׀ (*vav*). When *Shekhinah* “is distanced from the King,” and this head of *Yesod* no longer unites with *Shekhinah*, then “upper *vav*” (*Tif'eret*) draws *yod* (head of *Yesod*) to Himself, forming ׀׀ (*vai: vav yod*), “Woe.”

On the two *vavs*, see above, [p. 58, n. 176](#). On *yod* symbolizing *Yesod* or the head of *Yesod*, see *Zohar* 2:216b; 3:142a (*IR*), 215b, 220a. This symbolism is related to the fact that in rabbinic literature the mark of circumcision is identified with the ׀ (*yod*) of the divine name ׀דשׁ (*Shaddai*). See *Tanḥuma*, *Tsav* 14, *Shemini* 8; above, [p. 80, n. 246](#).

**480. Since the day that Jerusalem was destroyed...** See *M Sotah* 9:12, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a: “Ever since the day the Temple was destroyed, not a single day passes without a curse, dew has never descended as a blessing, and flavor has been eliminated from fruit.” See above, [pp. 96-97, n. 294](#).

**481. He said to him...** Rabbi El'azar asks his father about two exclamations very similar to וי (vai), "woe." Since all three are synonymous, what extra significance is there to these two?

**482. When the matter depends on teshuvah...** When there is still an opportunity to turn back to God in *teshuvah* and Israel fails to do so, *Binah*—symbolized by the upper ה (he) and known as *Teshuvah*—takes the two letters ו (vav) and י (yod), which symbolize respectively *Tif'eret* and the head of *Yesod*. Drawing them to Herself, She thereby forms וי (hoy: he vav yod), "alas."

On *Binah* as *he*, see above, [note 476](#). On *Binah* as *Teshuvah*, see above, [p. 95](#), [n. 290](#).

**483. וי (oy)...** Eventually, the people have proven so stubborn that there is no longer any opportunity for *teshuvah*. At this point, King *Tif'eret* withdraws even further, and the concealed primordial realm of *Keter*—symbolized by א (alef)—raises ו (vav) and י (yod) to Himself, forming וי (oy: alef vav yod), "woe." Now, the letter ה (he) does not appear at all, since *teshuvah* (symbolizing *Binah*, the upper *he*) is unavailable.

**484. the day is fading...** As the Temple was being destroyed, the people realized that *Binah*, the supernal *day*, had withdrawn and was *fading*. Normally, She would extend the possibility of *teshuvah* even to the most wicked, but now it was too late.

On God's right hand being extended to receive those who engage in *teshuvah*, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 30; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 41. Cf. *Mekhilta, Shirta* 5; *Mekhilta de-Rashbi*, Exodus 15:5; *Sifrei*, Numbers 134; *Midrash Tanna'im*, Deuteronomy 3:29; BT *Pesahim* 119a.

The full verse in Jeremiah includes the battle cry of the Babylonian army and the lament of the besieged residents of Jerusalem: "Prepare for battle against her! Arise, let us attack at noon!" "Woe, unto us, for the day is fading, for shadows of evening are stretching!"

See BT *Ta'anit* 29a: "On the seventh [of Av] the heathens [the Babylonians] entered the Temple, ate there, and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth. Toward dusk on the ninth, they set fire to it, and it continued burning all that day, as is said: *Woe to us, for the day is fading, shadows of evening are stretching!*" See *Tosefta Ta'anit* 3:10; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 27; *Zohar* 1:230a; 3:270a.

**485. For shadows of evening...** The dark forces of other nations were beginning to dominate Israel.

On the seventy heavenly princes of the nations, see above, [pp. 6-7](#), [n. 21](#). On the threatening or demonic nature of the *shadows of evening*, see *Zohar* 1:132b, 230a; 2:21b, 64b; 3:270a.

**486. Vav ascended high above...** *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *vav*) withdrew far above, and the inner Sanctuary was burned, the people along with *Shekhinah* were exiled, and the entire Temple destroyed. Then *Tif'eret* returned to His sefirotic position and saw the devastation on earth below yet also realized that the flow of emanation from *Binah* had ceased.

The full verse in Isaiah 22 reads: *YHVH God of Hosts called on that day for weeping and mourning, to tonsuring and girding with sackcloth.* See *Eikhah Rabbah*, *Petihta* 24; 1:23; BT *Hagigah* 5b, *Avodah Zarah* 3b; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 15:3; *Midrash Tehillim* 20:1; *Zohar* 1:210a.

The full verse in Isaiah actually reads: *I clothe the heavens in blackness, and make sackcloth their covering.* See above, [note 478](#).

**487. Then vav and yod flow toward one another...** *Tif'eret* (symbolized by *vav*) is unable to join *Shekhinah*, so instead He and *Yesod* (symbolized by *yod*) flow toward each other. Meanwhile, *Binah* (symbolized by upper *he*) conveys Her flow to the demonic Other Side. The lack of union between the divine couple eliminates blessing from the world.

On the link between blessing and the union of male and female, see above, [note 476](#). On the verse from Jeremiah, see above, [note 477](#).

**488. *The nakedness of your father's wife...*** The full verse reads: *The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not expose; it is your father's nakedness.* The simple sense of the concluding clause is: *it is the nakedness reserved for your father.* Cf. above, [note 458](#).

**489. All words of Torah are concealed and revealed...** They include both an explicit, simple meaning and a more profound, hidden sense. Similarly, God's name is both concealed and revealed: the name יהוה (YHVH) is "concealed" in the sense that it represents a more hidden *sefirah* (*Tif'eret*), and in the sense that it is not pronounced as it is written, but rather as the more "revealed" name אדוני (*Adonai*), "My Lord," which refers to a more revealed *sefirah* (*Shekhinah*).

Beyond this parallel between Torah and God's name, there is an essential connection, since the entire Torah is pictured as one continuous name of God. See above, [note 386](#).

In the last sentence, Rabbi Shim'on indicates that the simple sense of the verse in Leviticus is widely known, while its hidden meaning has been established by his kabbalistic circle.

**490. *your father's wife...*** As long as *Shekhinah* is together with King *Tif'eret* and nourishes Israel, She is appropriately called *your mother*—as in the preceding verse in Leviticus: *Your father's nakedness and your mother's nakedness you shall not expose. She is your mother; you shall not expose her nakedness.* Once *Shekhinah* has been exiled along with Israel far from the King, She is called *your father's wife*, emphasizing that despite Her exile She has never been actually divorced from Him.

See *Zohar* 2:216b, 255b (*Heikh*). Cf. 1:53b. The full verse in Isaiah reads: *Thus says YHVH: Where is your*

*mother's bill of divorce by which I sent her away? Or which of My creditors was it to whom I sold you off? Behold, it is for your sins that you were sold, and for your crimes your mother was sent away.*

“That She has been exiled” renders דאתגליא (*de-itgalya*), which in the preceding paragraph meant “that is revealed.” In this passage, Rabbi Shim'on plays several times on the different yet related senses of the Aramaic root גלי (*gly*)—Hebrew גלה (*glh*)—“to uncover, expose, go into exile.” See above, [p. 98](#), [n. 297](#).

**491. He commanded about Her twice...** In these two consecutive verses: Leviticus 18:7-8. The first one pertains to the time when *Shekhinah* and King *Tif'eret* are still united, and *Shekhinah* is nourishing you (Israel) as *your mother*. In this situation, the verse commands: *Your mother's nakedness you shall not expose*—that is, do not separate the divine couple by sinning.

The following verse pertains to the time when *Shekhinah* is exiled with you and She is called *your father's wife*—emphasizing that She has not been divorced from Father *Tif'eret*. In this case, Israel must be careful not to sin and thereby cause *Shekhinah* to withdraw from them, leaving both Her and themselves exposed—“stripped” of one another—and thereby making themselves vulnerable to their enemies in exile.

The conclusion of Leviticus 18:8—*it is your father's nakedness*—now implies: “Your Father is still watching over *Shekhinah*, whose nakedness is under His care.” Cf. above, [note 488](#).

On the meaning of “exposing nakedness,” see above, end of [note 464](#). On the verse in Isaiah, see above, [p. 36](#), [n. 108](#). For the full verse, see the preceding note.

**492. For YHVH your God walks about amid your camp...** Rabbi Shim'on takes this to mean that wherever Israel dwells, even—or especially—in exile, *Shekhinah*

accompanies them, protecting them. On the exile of *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#).

**493. The enemies of Israel cannot harm them...** Unless Israel weakens *Shekhinah* by how they act. Then the heavenly princes of other nations are empowered, and their earthly nations dominate Israel.

On the concept of weakening and strengthening God, see above, [p. 36](#), [n. 108](#). On the seventy heavenly princes of the nations, see above, [pp. 6-7](#), [n. 21](#). On God first punishing or defeating the heavenly princes and then dealing with their nations, see above, [p. 36](#), [n. 107](#).

**494. And your camp shall be holy...** One must not defile the limbs of his body, which constitute the soul's *camp*.

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *Do not make yourselves detestable through any swarming thing that swarms and do not become impure with them, ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), becoming impure, through them.* According to Rabbi Shim'on (based on a Talmudic passage), the lack of the letter א (*alef*) in the word ונטמתם (*ve-nitmetem*), *becoming impure*—which would normally be spelled ונטמאתם (*ve-nitmetem*)—allows for a different reading: ונטמתם (*ve-nittamtem*), *becoming dulled* [or: *obstructed*]. One who sins—for example, by eating forbidden food—obstructs himself thoroughly.

See BT *Yoma* 39a: “It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishma’el: ‘Sin dulls [or: obstructs] a person’s heart, as it is said: *Do not become impure with them, ונטמתם (ve-nitmetem), becoming impure, through them.* Do not read ונטמאתם (*ve-nitmetem*), *becoming impure*, but rather [per Munich MS] ונטמתם (*ve-nittamtem*), *becoming dulled* [or: *obstructed*].” See Ibn Ezra on Leviticus 11:43; *Zohar* 2:125b; 3:41b; Baḥya ben Asher on Leviticus 11:43.

On the grave consequences of even “wanting” to be defiled, cf. BT *Shabbat* 104a, in the name of Resh Lakish:



“If one comes to defile himself, they open the door for him; if one comes to purify himself, they assist him.”

On the 248 members of the human body (joints or bones covered with flesh and sinews), see M *Oholot* 1:8. “Members” renders שׂיפין (*shaiphin*)—singular, שׂיפא (*shaipha*)—a frequent Zoharic neologism that may be based playfully on the Talmudic line (BT *Sotah* 7b): על איבריה לשפא (*al eivreih la-shappa*), “His arm [or: limb] entered the casket.” Or perhaps the Zoharic sense of *shaipha* derives from BT *Hullin* 42b: “This joint of the thighbone דשאף (*de-shaf*), that slipped, out of its socket.”

See *Arukh*, s.v. *shaf*; Rashi, *Sotah* 7b, s.v. *la-shappa*; idem on Job 33:21, citing *Hullin* 42b; *Zohar* 3:170a; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 227; Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, s.v. *shappa*.

**495.** ערוות דבר (*ervat davar*), **nakedness of a thing...** The simple sense of this phrase is: *anything of nakedness*—that is, *anything indecent, unseemly, shamefully exposed*. But Rabbi Shim’on understands *davar* as *word*, alluding to *Shekhinah*, who represents the Divine Word. So now the verse means *And your camp shall be holy, so that He should not see among you nakedness of Shekhinah*—that is, Her being exposed and made vulnerable to demonic forces. Even in exile, She is still considered *your father’s nakedness*—pertaining to Father *Tif’eret* and under His watchful eye. See above, [note 491](#).

On *ervat davar* as “nakedness (or indecency) of a word,” see JT *Terumot* 1:6, 40d; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 24:7; *Zohar* 1:76a.

**496. For three things...** Israel’s conduct affects *Shekhinah* and either shortens or extends their exile. Cf. *Zohar* 2:3a-b: “There are three who thrust *Shekhinah* away from the world, preventing the blessed Holy One from dwelling in the world....” See BT *Hagigah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Yitshak: “Whoever sins secretly, it is as if he thrusts away [or: squeezes] the feet of *Shekhinah*.”

The expression מתניתא דילן (*matnita di-lan*), “our Mishnah,” refers to a secret, mystical Mishnah often cited in the *Zohar* and apparently known only to its own circle. See above, [note 34](#). This term is to be distinguished from the passages of the *Zohar* known as *Matnitin*, on which see the Glossary; above, [note 450](#).

**497. Rabbi Abba was traveling to Cappadocia...** Journeys *from* Cappadocia occur frequently in the *Zohar* and usually include an encounter with some interesting character. The only stories in the *Zohar* recounting a journey *to* Cappadocia are this one, its much shorter version in *Zohar* 1:213a (standard editions), and the story beginning in 1:243b.

Such Zoharic journeys from (or to) Cappadocia in eastern Asia Minor may be intentionally fantastic; alternatively, the author(s) may have imagined (or pretended) that Cappadocia was a Galilean village near Sepphoris, based on the phrase “Cappadocians of Sepphoris” in JT *Shevi’it* 9:5, 39a. According to a dream interpretation in *Bereshit Rabbah* 68:12, Cappadocia is not far at all from Palestine. See above, [p. 202](#), [n. 110](#). On this story, see Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 127–40.

**498. this one’s face testifies...** According to rabbinic tradition, a sinner’s face betrays his guilt. See BT *Shabbat* 55a; above, [p. 216](#), [n. 32](#); and the related story in *Zohar* 3:45b–47a.

“Sexual licentiousness” renders עריות (*aryeta*), literally “nakedness,” referring to various forbidden sexual relations, including incest, as listed in Leviticus 18 and 20. See above, [note 449](#).

**499. I see in his face...** Rabbi Abba is skilled in both physiognomy (determining temperament, character, and fate from physical appearance) and metoposcopy (determination based on lines, marks, and other features of the forehead). On these medieval sciences, see Vol. 4, pp. 392–93, n. 76.

**500. Rabbi Simlai** A third-century amora, who was born in Nehardea (in Babylonia), but spent most of his life in Lydda and also lived for some time in Galilee. The reference here to his being a doctor is apparently related (rather loosely) to the famous teaching attributed to him in BT *Makkot* 23b: “Six hundred and thirteen *mitsvot* were conveyed to Moses—365 negative commandments, corresponding to the number of solar days, and 248 positive commandments, corresponding to the members of the human body.” On the 248 bodily members (joints or bones covered with flesh and sinews), see M *Oholot* 1:8.

**501. A cure for the soul...** Showing him how to practice *teshuvah*.

**502. Were it not for your becoming deprived of teshuvah...** This apparently means “Were it not that you would be dissuaded from further *teshuvah* by my removing that mark [because then there would be little incentive]...” Alternatively, Rabbi Abba is saying, “Were it not that *teshuvah* is precluded by the gravity of your sin...”

The first interpretation accords better with the reading of numerous manuscripts (including M8, Pr13, V3, V6, V22): דִּיתְמוּנָה (*de-yitmena*), “that (you) would be deprived, of *teshuvah*.” The printed versions (supported by V17) read: דִּאתְמוּנָה (*de-itmena*), which can mean “that (you) have been deprived...,” although in the *Zohar*’s unique grammar this form can also indicate the future tense or the conditional or subjunctive mood.

For the first interpretation, see *Or Yaqar*; Soncino; and *Matoq mi-Devash*. For the second, see *Sullam*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1479; Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 128. On the question of whether *teshuvah* is possible for forbidden sexual relations, see M *Hagigah* 1:7; BT *Hagigah* 9b, *Yevamot* 22b; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 1:15; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 9:6. On the denial of the possibility of *teshuvah*, see above, [notes 483–84](#). For the different senses of the expression “to be denied (or dissuaded from) *teshuvah*,”

see *Tanḥuma*, *Noah* 4, *Ki Tissa* 17; Rashi on BT *Gittin* 55a; Maimonides, *Shemonah Peraqim*, 8; idem, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Avot* 5:16; *Zohar* 2:58b, 254b (*Heikh*); *Tosafot*, *Sotah* 39a, s.v. *ve-khi*.

**503.** אֵלְעֶזֶר (*El'azar*)... Meaning “God has helped.” On one’s name being decisive, see BT *Berakhot* 7b; above, [note 409](#).

**504. came upon him sitting...** Rabbi Abba, however, does not recognize El’azar, who is bemoaning the fact that inhabitants of the world ignore God and fail to comprehend the basis and purpose of their existence.

See BT *Hagigah* 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, 142a.

**505. Nor does a fool understand this...** Such a person fails to comprehend the conduct of *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence—who is known as זֹת (*zot*), *this*, because She is constantly present right here. *Shekhinah* renders Divine Judgment upon the world, but when foolish people see the righteous suffer and the wicked *flourish*, they fail to realize that in the future world these wicked ones will be punished and eliminated.

Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:1, in the name of Rabbi Akiva: “[God] deals strictly with the righteous, holding them to account for the few misdeeds they commit in this world, in order to lavish tranquility upon them in the world that is coming. He bestows tranquility upon the wicked, rewarding them for the minor *mitsvot* they perform in this world, in order to exact retribution from them in the time to come.”

See *Vayiqra Rabbah* 27:1; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9:1; *Tanḥuma*, *Emor* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Emor* 7; *Midrash Tehillim* 103:11.

On *Shekhinah* as *zot*, see above, [p. 39](#), [n. 117](#). On the verse in Malachi, see *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13:4; BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 17a; *Seder Eliyyahu Rabbah* 3, p. 15; *Midrash Tehillim*

18:33; *Zohar* 1:59a, 131a; 2:151a; ZH 25b (MhN). This verse reads in full: *You will trample the wicked, for they will be dust under the soles of your feet on the day that I am preparing—says YHVH of Hosts.*

**506. My deceit rises up against me...** El'azar quotes a verse alluding to his own experience, as described above at [notes 497-503](#).

By studying Torah, one engages in God's Name, since Torah is pictured as one continuous divine name. See above, [p. 80](#), [n. 245](#).

The full verse in Job reads: *You have shriveled me—it has become a witness.* כחשי (Khaḥashi), *My gauntness* [or: *my deceit*], *rises up against me, testifying* בפני (be-fanal), *against me* [literally: *to my face; in my face*].

**507. If a person transgresses decrees of Torah...** Then Torah ascends to heaven so as to accuse him, and descends to earth to punish him.

The image of angelic *eyes of YHVH* derives from Zechariah 4:10: *These seven are the eyes of YHVH, ranging over the whole earth.* Cf. 2 Chronicles 16:9.

On “ascending and descending,” cf. the account of Satan's activity in BT *Bava Batra* 16a: “He descends and leads astray, ascends and arouses wrath, obtains authorization and seizes the soul.” On facial marks indicating sinfulness, see above, [note 498](#).

**508. he draws a soul for him from the side of impurity...** His own impurity attracts an impure soul for his child, who then grows into a wicked person.

See *Zohar* 3:80a-b. Cf. BT *Nedarim* 20a-b. On God's response to the wicked, see above, [note 505](#).

**509. the blessed Holy One draws a thread of love...** Distinguishing him and ensuring that no demonic or human forces dare to harm him.

On the thread of love, 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 directs His love. Why? Because in the night His song is with me (Psalms 42:9).” His song is the song of Torah. See above, [p. 139](#), [n. 429](#). On the impure mark, see above, [note 498](#).*



**510. this evil inheritance...** The impure spirit, which makes his children wicked.

On the overwhelming power of *teshuvah*, see JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 16b: “Nothing withstands any master of *teshuvah*.” See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 3:14; *Zohar* 2:106a; 3:78b, 122b; ZH 19d (*MhN*). Cf. BT *Qiddushin* 40b.

**511. that one I call El'azar the Other...** He has been transformed through *teshuvah*, so he refers to his earlier self as El'azar the Other.

On the significance of altering one's name, see BT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 16b: “Rabbi Yitshak said, ‘Four things tear up a person's verdict: charity, crying out, change of name, and change of conduct.’” Here, the epithet אַהֲרָא (*aḥra*), “the Other,” may derive from Maimonides' wording in *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 2:4: “Among the ways of *teshuvah* are... changing one's name, by which one says: ‘אֲנִי אַהֲרָא (*ani aḥer*), I am another [person], no longer that person who did those deeds.’”

See above, [p. 43](#), [n. 132](#). In that passage, a man named Yehudah undergoes a transformation and is appropriately called Yehudah the Other. Here, El'azar keeps his name and calls his former self El'azar the Other! Alternatively, following the reading of several manuscripts, El'azar replies to Rabbi Abba's question about his name by saying, “El'azar—and I call myself El'azar the Other,” which fits Maimonides' formulation.

**512. It is I who met you** Rabbi Abba finally realizes who this fellow is. See above at [notes 497-503](#).

**513. He prostrated himself...** In gratitude, El'azar prostrates himself before Rabbi Abba and then offers him a sumptuous meal, whose main course is an especially tasty calf.

The ritual of the red cow is described in Numbers 19. After this cow was slaughtered, its ashes were mixed with water, forming *waters of lustration* (Numbers 19:9), which

were used to purify anyone who had come into contact with a human corpse.

“A double measure of festive bread” renders דנהמא טרטיסאי (*tartisa’ei de-nahma*). *Nahma* means simply “bread.” “A double measure of festive” combines two possible meanings of *tartisa’ei*. This word may reflect חרתי סאי (*tartei sa’ei*), “two measures,” or it could be an Aramaic version of טרטיסאות (*tartisa’ot*), which is a corruption of תיאטריות (*tei’atriyyot*), “theaters.” Possibly, the author intends a double meaning.

One manuscript (Pr13) reads: חרתי סאין (*tartei se’in*), “two measures.” *Sullam* suggests that *tartisa’ei* means “three measures,” apparently based on Latin *tertius*, “third.” Cf. Abraham’s instructions to Sarah when three men appear at his tent: *Hurry! Knead three סאימ (se’im), seahs, of choice semolina flour and make loaves* (Genesis 18:6). See BT *Shabbat* 119a and *Hullin* 111a, where Rabbah son of Rav Huna is offered “three seahs of oiled cakes.”

On the corrupt form *tartisa’ot*, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 67:3, p. 757 (in Theodor-Albeck’s manuscript variants); *Midrash Tehillim* 18:12 (Buber’s [note 62](#)); *Arukh ha-Shalem*, s.v. טרטיסאות (*tartisa’ot*) and תאטר (*tatr*).

“A third-born calf” renders עגלא תליחאה (*igla telita’ah*), a variation on עגלא תילחא (*igla tilta*), which actually means “a three-year-old calf,” matching the biblical term עגלה משלשת (*eglah meshuleshet*), a *three-year-old heifer* [or: *calf*] (Genesis 15:9). However, according to the ninth-century Gaon Natronai bar Hilai, *igla tilta* means “a calf that is third-born [that is, the third calf of its mother], which is the finest of all born to a cow.” This interpretation is variously adopted and disputed by medieval commentators on the Talmud. According to another interpretation, the phrase means “a calf that has reached a third of its full growth.” Cf. M *Bava Metsi’a* 5:4.

This kind of calf appears in a mystical context in a famous passage in BT *Sanhedrin* 65b: “Rav Ḥanina and Rav

Osha'ya sat every Sabbath eve, engaging in *Sefer Yetsirah*, and they created *igla tilta*, a three-year-old calf, and ate it."

An *igla tilta* is offered to various sages in the Talmud. See BT *Shabbat* 11a, 119b, 136a, *Eruvin* 63a, *Pesahim* 68b, *Ta'anit* 12b, *Megillah* 7a, *Huillin* 133a; ZH 22c (MhN). On this term, see Natronai Gaon, *Teshuvot*, 527; Rashi on *Shabbat* 11a, *Eruvin* 63a, *Pesahim* 68b, *Megillah* 7a, *Sanhedrin* 65b; *Tosafot* on *Gittin* 56a, *Bekhorot* 19a; Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah*, *Parah* 1:1; Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, s.v. *tilta*. Cf. *Zohar* 3:87a.

[514](#). **when I turned my head...** Suddenly, the man disappeared. On Rabbi Simlai, who healed El'azar spiritually after he was severely wounded, see above, [note 500](#).

El'azar is hesitant to suggest his own interpretation of the man's strange remark. See 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."

See *Kallah Rabbati*, 2; *Zohar* 1:5a; 2:37a, 86b-87a, 151b, 153a; 3:207b, 240b. 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."

[515](#). **She is really called בת שבע (Bat Sheva)...** Rabbi Abba explains that the cow's name alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is symbolized by the red cow.

The name בת שבע (*Bat Sheva*), "Bathsheba," means literally "Daughter of Seven." In the *Zohar* it often alludes to *Shekhinah*, the daughter of *Binah* (who is known as Seven,

since She includes all seven lower *sefirot*). (Alternatively, *Shekhinah* is called *Bat Sheva* because She receives the flow of all seven *sefirot* from *Binah* through *Yesod*, or because She includes all seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah* Herself.)

The mysterious man named the red cow *Bat Sheva* because so many details of the ritual of the red cow involve the number seven. See the description of this ritual in *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 4:2, attributed to Rabbi Hanan son of Pazzi: “Seven cows, seven burnings, seven sprinklings, seven washings, seven impure, seven pure, seven priests. If anyone says to you, ‘They [i.e., the seven priests] are lacking [two],’ tell him: Moses and Aaron are included in the total—*YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘This is the statute of the teaching’* (Numbers 19:1-2).”

In this midrashic passage, “seven cows” may refer to the seven instances of the word *cow* (or its equivalent: *purification offering*) in Numbers 19. These seven instances correspond to the seven red cows that were offered during the time of the two Temples, according to the view of the Sages in *M Parah* 3:5.

For various attempts to identify the precise biblical referents of all the “sevens” in this midrashic passage (seven cows, burnings, sprinklings, etc.), see Elijah ben Solomon (Gaon) of Vilna, *Adderet Eliyyahu*, Numbers 19:4; idem, *Yahel Or*; Buber’s edition of *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, 33a, n. 5 (quoting Elijah ben Solomon); Friedmann’s notes in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 58a-b; Mirkin’s notes in *Midrash Rabbah*, 10:221-22; Braude and Kapstein, *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*, 64-65 (based on Elijah ben Solomon); *Nitsotsei Zohar; Matoq mi-Devash*.

“Seven priests” purportedly refers to the number of times that the word *priest* appears in Numbers 19. One could easily object that actually there are only five such instances, but Rabbi Hanan solves this by indicating that Moses and Aaron are also included in the total, since they are named in the opening verse of the chapter. Aaron, of

course, was high priest, while according to rabbinic tradition Moses served as high priest during the seven days of the priestly ordination. See above, [p. 198](#), [n. 99](#). Cf. Psalms 99:6: *Moses and Aaron among His priests*.

In the opening lines of this *Zohar* paragraph, the wording “But come and see” probably means “Even though this is a deep secret, I will tell you.”

On the ritual of the red cow, see above, toward the beginning of [note 513](#). On the red cow symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see above, [p. 82](#), [n. 253](#). For parallels to the passage in *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, see *Tanḥuma, Ḥuqqat* 5; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Ḥuqqat* 9; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:2; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 14, 58a-b; and also *Zohar* 3:180b; Moses de León, *Sod Eser Sefirot Belimah*, 372-73.

The context in Numbers (19:1-2) reads: *YHVH spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “This is the statute of the teaching that YHVH has commanded, saying, ‘Speak to the Children of Israel, that they take you a perfect red cow that has no blemish and on which no yoke has been put.’”*

[516](#). **He first greeted me with peace...** El’azar is grateful that God reached out to him, stimulating him to engage in *teshuvah*—through his encounter with the mysterious man who mentioned “atonement,” or perhaps through the spiritual healing offered by Rabbi Simlai, or through his meeting Rabbi Abba. See above at [notes 497-503](#).

The verse in Isaiah reads: *Peace, peace for the far and the near—says YHVH—and I will heal them*. On this verse in the context of *teshuvah*, see BT *Berakhot* 34b, in the name of Rabbi Abbahu: “In the place where masters of *teshuvah* stand, the completely righteous cannot stand, as is said: *Peace, peace for the far and the near—for the far first, and then for the near* [i.e., God offers peace first to one who had sinned and was *far* before turning back to God, and only afterward to one who was completely righteous and always *near*].” See above, [p. 134](#), [n. 409](#).

[517.](#) **A man who lies with his sister...** The full verse actually reads: *A man who takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is חסד (hesed), a disgrace, and they shall be cut off before the eyes of their people. His sister's nakedness he has exposed; he shall bear his punishment [or: his guilt].* The homonym of *hesed*, “disgrace, shame,” paradoxically means “loving-kindness, love,” as when it appears later in this passage. The contradictory senses of *hesed* (“disgrace” and “loving-kindness”) may represent what Freud called “the anti-thetical meaning of primary words” in his essay of this title. See above, [pp. 32-33, n. 98.](#)

On Adam separating from Eve, see *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 26, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “For 130 years Adam separated from his wife, Eve; for once Abel was killed, Adam said, ‘Why should I engender children if they become cursed?’” See below, [note 519.](#) The figure of 130 years derives from Genesis 5:3: *Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and he engendered in his likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth.* The reading here in the *Zohar*—120 years—is likely a mistake (though possibly an intentional variation), probably influenced by the ideal antediluvian lifespan of 120 years. See Genesis 6:3; Deuteronomy 34:7. This reading is supported by most of the manuscripts, *Or Yaqar* (who calls it a scribal error), and the early printed editions, though two manuscripts read “130 years.” One manuscript (L27) reads “129 years,” apparently attempting to close the gap.

The *Zohar*'s misquotation here—*A man who lies with his sister*, instead of *A man who takes his sister*—appears also in Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 349.

[518.](#) **At the moment when death was decreed...** According to Rabbi Yose, Adam separated from Eve at an earlier point, right after they sinned in the Garden of Eden and death was decreed upon them.



“Terror” renders בעתותא (*bi’atuta*), “fright, dread.” The wording here plays on Isaiah 65:23: *They shall not engender לבהלה (la-behalah), for calamity [or: for panic, horror, terror, confusion].*

**519. Two female spirits used to come...** See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 26, in the name of Rabbi Simon: “For 130 years Adam separated from his wife, Eve; for once Abel was killed, Adam said, ‘Why should I engender children if they become cursed?’ What did he do?... Female spirits approached him and inflamed 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 ובנגועי בני אדם (uv-nig’ei venei adam), and with the afflictions of (the sons of) humankind [or: 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 inflamed themselves from her and she gave birth, while female spirits inflamed 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 *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 4:25; *Bereshit Rabbah* 24:6; BT *Eruvin* 18b; *Zohar* 1:19b, 34b, 47b-48a, 54a-55a, 169b; 2:178b-179a (*SdTs*), 231b; 3:48b; above, [notes 113](#) and [517](#); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:529-30; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 51-54.

“Supernal crowns” refers to the scribal decorative custom, when writing out a sacred text, of gracing the tops of certain letters with three tiny vertical strokes. According to Rabbi Yose, by placing a mezuzah on one’s door with the name שדי (*Shaddai*) displayed prominently and with such crownlets on its letters, a person is protected from the demons. Certain *Zohar* manuscripts include crownlets here on several letters of שדי (*Shaddai*). See L27, V3, and the

bracketed note in the *Zohar* text printed in *Or Yaqar*. On crownlets on the letter  $\psi$  (*shin*), see BT *Menaḥot* 29b; and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *sheloshah ziyyunin*.

Such crownlets also appear in the expanded Hebrew translation of this passage by David ben Judah he-Ḥasid in *Mar'ot ha-Tsove'ot*, 70: “Therefore a person must make a mezuzah for the doorway of his home, in which is written the Holy Name  $\text{יְדַי}$  (*Shaddai*) with supernal crowns. Then [demons] approach and see written on the mezuzah  $\text{דַּש}$  (*shin, dalet*), and they think it is the name  $\text{דַּש}$  (*shed*), demon. Immediately, they draw closer and reach the Name, and when they see it is  $\text{יְדַי}$  (*Shaddai*), they render honor to the Name of the King. Then they move far away from him. This is the secret of *No affliction will draw near your tent*. What is *affliction? Afflictions of the children of Adam*.”

See *Zohar* 3:266a; *ZH* 84d (*MhN*). Cf. Exodus 12:23; *Tosafot, Shabbat* 22a, s.v. *rav amar*; *Zohar* 3:263b (*Piq*), 265b. The full verse in Psalms reads: *No evil will befall you, nor affliction draw near your tent*.

**520. When Adam descended...** When he was created in the divine image, the angels and all earthly creatures acknowledged his dominion.

On the serpent's role in engendering Cain, see *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21 (according to David Luria's emendation, based on *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Genesis 35): “The serpent-rider [Samael] copulated with her and she conceived Cain. Afterward her husband, Adam, copulated with her and she conceived Abel.”

Cf. BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a, in the name of Rav Yosef: “When the serpent copulated with Eve, he injected her with  $\text{זוהמא}$  (*zohama*), filth [or: slime, lust].” See above, [pp. 121-22, n. 366](#).

In a number of passages, the *Zohar* indicates that Cain was formed from both the serpent's slime and Adam's seed. From the fallen angel Samael (identified with the serpent), Cain inherited traits of the upper world; from Adam, he

inherited traits of the lower world. Here, Rabbi Yose explains that this is why spirits and demons, who are associated with Cain, are half human and half angelic. Similarly, when other spirits and demons were born from the union of Adam and two female spirits (mentioned in the preceding paragraph), they also displayed both earthly and heavenly qualities.

On demons' human and angelic traits, see BT *Hagigah* 16a: "Six things have been said concerning the demons, three of which correspond to the ministering angels and three to human beings. Three correspond to the ministering angels: they have wings, they fly from one end of the world to the other, and they know what will happen in the future.... Three correspond to human beings: they eat and drink, they are fruitful and multiply, and they die." See *Zohar* 1:48a, 55a.

On Cain's human and angelic traits, see *Zohar* 1:54a; 2:231a; *ZH* 63c (*ShS*), 83b (*MhN, Rut*); David Luria, *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 21, n. 8. On the serpent's role in engendering Cain, see also *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 4:1 (per British Library MS 27031, ed. Clark); *Zohar* 1:36b-37a, 52a, 54b-55a; 2:167b, 178a (*SdTs*); 3:87a; *ZH* 8c-9b; Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 38-53.

On the creatures' subservience to Adam, see Genesis 1:26; BT *Shabbat* 151b; *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 11; *Zohar* 1:13b, 38a, 71a, 191a, 208a, 221b (standard editions); 2:55a; 3:107b; *ZH* 38c; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 309, 337-38. On the angels' subservience to Adam, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:10; *Qohelet Rabbah* on 6:10; *Zohar* 1:36b. On the generations of the wicked being descended from Cain, see *Pirquei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 22; *Zohar* 1:36b.

**521. After they were born from Adam...** After demonic spirits were engendered by Adam from his union with the two female spirits, he then engendered daughters (with those same two spirits, or with the spirits born from his previous union with the two original spirits). These

daughters were so strikingly beautiful that they attracted the attention of the fallen angels known as *the sons of Elohim*.

On the fallen angels, see above, [note 113](#). The verse in Genesis begins: *The sons of Elohim saw that בנות האדם (benot ha-adam), the daughters of humankind, were beautiful* Here, Rabbi Yose construes *benot ha-adam* as *the daughters of Adam*.

**522. Tubal-cain...** See Genesis 4:22: *As for Zillah, she bore Tubal-cain, who forged every tool of copper and iron. And the sister of Tubal-cain was Na'amah*. According to Genesis, Tubal-cain was the great-great-great-great-grandson of Cain.

Na'amah's name means "lovely." According to rabbinic tradition, the fallen angels were attracted by her beauty. In Kabbalah, Na'amah sometimes appears as the mother of Ashmedai, king of the demons. See *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Huqqat*, add. 1; *Midrash Aggadah* and *Midrash ha-Gadol*, Genesis 4:22; Nahmanides on Genesis 4:22; *Zohar* 1:9b, 19b, 55a; *ZH* 19d (*MhN*); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 246-48. Cf. above, [note 113](#).

"Those others below" apparently refers to lower demonic forces. Alternatively, it may refer to (or include) humans who are sometimes informed or misled by demons. See above, [p. 138](#), [n. 426](#); [pp. 161-62](#), [nn. 499-500](#).

**523. Tubal-cain introduced weapons of war...** As implied by Genesis 4:22: *Tubal-cain, who forged every tool of copper and iron*. See *Bereshit Rabbah* 23:3; Rashi on the verse.

Na'amah dwells in the ocean, but she comes at night to seduce men in their sleep—seizing their lust and not their semen ("nothing more"). Thereby she generates new demons, and these come to seduce women, who then generate other demonic spirits.

On Na'amah's seductive ways, see *Zohar* 1:19b (where she does take semen), 54b-55a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the*

*Zohar*, 3:1366–67. Cf. above, [note 519](#); below, [note 532](#). On her dwelling in the raging sea, cf. the description of Lilith in *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, ed. Yassif, 232; *Zohar* 1:19b; 3:19a (above, [p. 120](#), [n. 362](#)).

**524. They all go to Primordial Lilith...** Na'amah's partner. She sometimes kills babies, but when she then tries to be absorbed in the baby's spirit, three angels snatch it from her and bring it directly to God.

On Lilith, see *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, ed. Yassif, 231–34, 289–90; above, [p. 117](#), [n. 357](#). On the three angels, see the first passage in *Alfa Beita de-Ven Sira*, where these angels are identified. For the title Primordial Lilith, see *Zohar* 1:34b.

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* 2:96b, 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.

**525. You shall hallow yourselves...** In BT *Shevu'ot* 18b, this verse is applied to sanctifying oneself during sexual relations. The exact same wording appears in Leviticus 20:7, preceding a list of sexual prohibitions.

The context in Psalms (91:10–11) reads: *No evil will befall you, nor affliction draw near your tent. For His angels He will command for you, to guard you on all your ways.*

**526. Those others whom she kills...** How is Lilith able to kill a baby who has not been conceived impurely, that is, whose soul has not been drawn from the side of impurity? If after its death, the spirit of such a baby is rescued by the three angels (as described above at [note 524](#)), why don't these angels prevent Lilith from killing the baby in the first place?

**527. when a person does not sanctify himself...** During sexual union. Such a parent “does not intend to defile himself,” so Lilith has no power over the baby’s spirit; but since he “does not sanctify himself,” Lilith does have power to kill the baby.

**528. Na’amah goes out into the world to be inflamed by humans...** She may invade a man’s dream, arousing him sexually. Then if he awakens and unites with his wife, driven by his lust for Na’amah, the baby that is born “stems from the side of Na’amah.” Her partner, Lilith, is attracted to such a baby; she does not kill him but rather bonds with him.

**529. becomes impaired every new moon...** This may allude to epileptic seizures, which were thought to be brought on by certain phases of the moon. See *Zohar* 2:267b (*Heikh*); *Or Yaqar*.

**530. From new moon to new moon...** On this verse, cf. above, [note 362](#).

**531. King Solomon discovered in the Book of King Ashmedai...** Who is king of the demons and sometimes described as the son of Na’amah.

See above, [note 522](#). On King Solomon’s encounter with Ashmedai, and on the latter’s book, see above, [p. 121, n. 363](#).

**532. a nocturnal mishap...** In this verse the phrase *מקרה לילה* (*miqreh lailah*), literally *a night accident*, means “an involuntary nocturnal emission of semen.” According to the *Zohar*, such an act is caused by seductive demons, who are impregnated by these emissions and bear new demons.

See above, [p. 120, n. 362](#). Cf. above, [notes 519, 523](#). The root *קרה* (*qrh*) means “to meet encounter, happen to.” In Leviticus, the noun *קרי* (*qeri*) implies “hostile encounter, opposition.” In rabbinic usage *qeri* means “accident, mishap, pollution, nocturnal emission, seminal emission.” The rabbinic term *בעל קרי* (*ba'al qeri*), “master [or: owner] of



mishap,” often means one to whom a mishap happens, one who succumbs to nocturnal emission.

The full verse in Deuteronomy reads: *Should there be among you a man who becomes impure through a nocturnal mishap, he shall go outside the camp; he shall not enter the midst of the camp.*

The verse in Leviticus 11 reads: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am holy.* Cf. Leviticus 20:7: *You shall hallow yourselves and become holy, for I am YHVH your God.* See above, [p. 254](#), [n. 155](#). As mentioned above ([note 525](#)), in BT *Shevu'ot* 18b, the wording in Leviticus 11 is applied to sanctifying oneself during sexual relations.

**[533](#). After Cain and Abel departed...** As mentioned above (at [notes 517–18](#)), Adam separated from Eve for many years. Eventually, after Abel was killed by Cain and after the latter's death (or his imposed wandering), Adam resumed sexual relations with his wife. Together they engendered Seth, from whom generations of the righteous were descended.

According to a rabbinic tradition, Cain and Abel were each born together with a twin sister in order to ensure the propagation of the human species. The Book of Jubilees (chap. 4) indicates that others, including Seth, also married their sisters. Of course, Leviticus explicitly forbids such a marriage: *A man who takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is חסד (hesed), a disgrace.* But as mentioned above ([note 517](#)), the word *hesed* can mean both “disgrace” and “love.” A midrashic interpretation links the expression in Leviticus—*it is hesed*—with the verse from Psalms 89:3, soon quoted here: עולם חסד יבנה (olam hesed yibbaneh). This verse is normally understood to mean *Forever will love be established*, but it is now construed as *The world is built by love*. God lovingly and graciously permitted Adam's sons to marry their sisters—an act

condemned in the Torah—in order to “build the world.” What the Torah describes as *ḥesed*, a *disgrace*, was originally an act of *ḥesed*, *love*.

“Corresponding to the pattern above” refers to the divine siblings *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah*, born to *Binah*.

On Cain and Abel being born with twin sisters, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 22:2–3, 7; 61:4; BT *Yevamot* 62a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 1; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 21. According to the passages in *Bereshit Rabbah*, Abel was born with two twin sisters. According to *Targum Yerushalmi*, Genesis 45:2, only Cain was born with a twin sister.

On Cain (or both Cain and Abel) marrying their sisters, see *Sifra*, *Qedoshim* 10:11, 92d; JT *Yevamot* 11:1, 11d; *Sanhedrin* 5:1, 22c; 9:1, 26d; BT *Sanhedrin* 58b; *Pirḳei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* 21—all of which quote the verse from Psalms, on which see also the following note.

On the positive sense of *ḥesed* in Leviticus 20:17, see also Rashi, Naḥmanides, and Baḥya ben Asher on the verse; *Zohar* 3:7b (above, [p. 33](#), [n. 98](#)); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 349–50; above, [note 517](#). Cf. Proverbs 14:34; 25:10.

The clause “was enveloped in another spirit” apparently refers to Adam’s being wrapped in jealousy over Eve’s illicit partners, the male spirits who “inflamed themselves from her.” See *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:11 (quoted above, [note 519](#)); *Zohar* 1:54b–55a; 2:231b. On wrapping oneself in jealousy, see Isaiah 59:17. Alternatively, the clause implies that Adam was enveloped in a holy spirit, as opposed to the demonic spirits who had coupled with him while he was separated from Eve. See above, [note 519](#).

Seth’s birth is described in Genesis 5:3: *Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and he engendered in his likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth*. According to a midrashic interpretation, Seth alone was in Adam’s likeness, unlike both Cain and Abel. See BT *Eruvin*

18b; *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 22; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:7; *Zohar* 1:55a; 2:167b-168a, 231b; *ZH* 8c-9b.

On the generations of the righteous being descended from Seth, see *Pirqei de-Rabbi Eli'ezer* 22; *Zohar* 1:38a; *ZH* 63c (*ShS*). The expression “the secrecy of our Mishnah” refers to a secret, mystical Mishnah often cited in the *Zohar* and apparently known only to its own circle. See above, [note 34](#).

**534. After *Ḥesed* appears...** Originally the divine couple, *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, formed a single androgynous entity. The manifestation of *Ḥesed* initiated the splitting of this divine androgyne into male and female *sefirot*, who then reunited face-to-face. Their splitting is described as the emergence of “trunks” and the spreading of “branches.” Thereby, the two who had been “near” (or united with) one another moved “afar.” Afterward, the branch of *Shekhinah* grew and reunited face-to-face with the cosmic tree of *Tif'eret*.

“In the beginning,” the union of brother and sister was permitted so that the world could exist. This applies not only to Adam’s sons and their sisters, but also to “secrecy of the world”—that is, to the divine siblings *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, born to their parents, *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*. These incestuous relations were permitted based on the principle *The world is built by ḥesed, love*. But once the Torah was given to Israel, such unions were forbidden, as stated in Leviticus: *A man who takes his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is ḥesed, a disgrace, and they shall be cut off before the eyes of their people*. See the preceding note.

The original androgynous state of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* corresponds to the original androgynous human being. See above, [pp. 56-57](#), [n. 168](#); [p. 272](#), [n. 50](#).

As explained in the preceding note, the verse in Psalms reads עולם חסד יבנה (*olam ḥesed yibbaneh*), which is usually

understood to mean *Forever will love be established*, but midrashically it is construed as *The world is built by love*. On this verse, see (in addition to the sources cited in the preceding note) *Mekhilta, Shirta* 9; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan A*, 4; *Midrash Tehillim* 89:2; *Zohar* 1:230b; 2:79a, 166b; 3:133b (*IR*), 145b, 259b.

Maimonides employs the metaphor of root and branch to explain why incestuous union is forbidden. See *Guide of the Perplexed* (ed. Pines) 3:49: “It would be a most shameless thing if this act could take place between the root and the branch—I refer to sexual intercourse with the mother or the daughter. Based on the root and branch, sexual intercourse of one of the two with the other has been forbidden.... Being a brother or sister is like being root and branch.”

The image of root and branch recurs in various early kabbalistic discussions of incest, several of which quote Isaac the Blind. See Ezra of Gerona, *Peirush ha-Aggadot*, MS Vatican 441, 30a-b (quoted by Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1378, n. 136); idem, in *R. Asher ben David*, ed. Abrams, 315-16; idem, *Peirush le-Shir ha-Shirim*, 547; Azriel of Gerona, in MS Parma, De Rossi 1221, 287a (quoted by Idel, “Peirushim le-Sod ha-Arayot,” 119-20; [Naḥmanides?], *Megillat Setarim*, quoted by Scholem, “Peraqim mi-Toledot Sifrut ha-Qabbalah (8),” 417-18; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 347-50 (and Wolfson’s remarks, p. 348, n. 17). Idel analyzes the image of root and branch in detail in his article.

**535. *The nakedness of your father’s sister...*** The verse reads: *The nakedness of your father’s sister you shall not expose*. This verse appears at the beginning of this entire passage, above, [p. 518](#).

The expression “as revealed in concealment” alludes to the secret meaning of the prohibition against exposing *the nakedness of your father’s sister*. The phrase *your father’s sister* apparently alludes to *Shekhinah*, who is the wife-sister

of *Tif'eret*, pictured here as Father. (According to *Or Yaqar*, *your father's sister* alludes to *Binah*, who is the wife-sister of Father *Ḥokhmah*.)

On the kabbalistic sense of “exposing nakedness,” see above, [note 464](#). On the nakedness of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, [p. 97](#), [n. 295](#).

**[536](#). Upper ה (he) conceives in love and affection...**

The Divine Mother, *Binah*, is symbolized by the first ה (he), in יהוה (YHVH). She is united constantly with *Ḥokhmah*, who is symbolized by ם (yod), the initial letter of YHVH. *Binah* conceives from *Ḥokhmah* and then brings forth *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by the letter ם (vav) in YHVH. This Son, *Tif'eret*, suckles from His Mother.

Originally, *Tif'eret* and His mate, *Shekhinah*, form a single androgynous entity. The manifestation of *Ḥesed* initiates the splitting of this divine androgyne into male and female *sefirot* — *Tif'eret* (still symbolized by vav) and *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the second he in YHVH). Their splitting is described as the emergence of “trunks” and the spreading of “branches.” Then *Shekhinah* reunites face-to-face with the cosmic tree of *Tif'eret*, so vav joins with he.

See above, [notes 533–34](#). On the sefirotic significance of the letters of YHVH, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#). On the perpetual union of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, [pp. 4–5](#), [n. 12](#).

**[537](#). Yod with upper he...** As opposed to the face-to-face union of *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, which depends on *Ḥesed*, the perpetual union of *Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* depends only on the supernal realm of *Keter*, who is symbolized by מזלָא (*Mazzala*).

The expression “depend on *Mazzala*” derives from BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a (in the name of Rava): “Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but במזלָא (*be-mazzala*), on destiny.” The term *mazzala* has a wide range of meaning: “constellation, planet, planetary influence, zodiacal sign, destiny, fortune, guardian angel.” In the *Zohar*, *mazzala* is associated with the root נזל (*nzl*), “to flow,” and often refers

to the flow of emanation from *Binah*. Here, however (as in *Sifra di-Tsni'uta* and the *Idrot*), *mazzala* describes the higher streaming source of emanation in *Keter*. See above, [pp. 166-67](#), [n. 516](#).

**538. Yod is linked with he...** All of the *sefirot* are united, and *Shekhinah* (the second *he*) is united with all of them—or with all existence, conveying life and blessing. Anyone who separates the *sefirot* by evil action interrupts the essential flow and thereby harms the whole world. Such disruption of the divine union exposes the “nakedness of all,” stripping or depriving the *sefirot* of one another and of the continuous stream. See above, [notes 464](#), [473](#)473.

**539. Of the time to come...** Then the blessed Holy One will reunite with *Shekhinah*, who is now exiled with Her people. The verse in Zechariah seems to imply that only someday *YHVH will be one*, but now He is not! In a sense this is true, because wickedness ruins the divine union, separating *Shekhinah* (known as *Matronita*) from King *Tif'eret*. Consequently, the Divine Mother, *Binah*, no longer nourishes *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*), since She only does so when He can convey this nourishment to *Shekhinah*. Thus, *YHVH* is disconnected from both *Shekhinah* below and *Binah* above.

On the verse in Zechariah, see above, [p. 34](#), [n. 100](#). On the verse in Song of Songs, see above, [p. 7](#), [n. 22](#).

**540. But when Matronita will return...** When *Shekhinah* returns and reunites with King *Tif'eret*, then *YHVH [Tif'eret] will be one and His name [Shekhinah] one*.

In rabbinic literature Esau often represents Rome, and in medieval literature it often represents Christian rule.

**541. She takes vengeance on it for causing all this...** All of Israel's suffering in exile.

The wording in Obadiah—הַמְּלוּכָה (*ha-melukhah*), *the kingdom, will be YHVH's*—alludes to the reunion of *Shekhinah*, who is called *Malkhut* (Kingdom), with *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*). See *Zohar* 3:7b.



**542. *The nakedness of your father's brother...***

According to Rabbi Yehudah, *your father* is your divine father, *Tif'eret*, whose *brother* is the people Israel. Similarly, *your mother* is *Shekhinah*, who is identified with heavenly Jerusalem and whose sister is "Jerusalem below." Through incestuous sins such as those specified in these two verses, Israel brings about its own exile and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Yehudah is playing on the different yet related senses of the root גלה (*glh*)—"to uncover, expose, go into exile." See above, [p. 98](#), [n. 297](#).

On *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* as father and mother, see above, [note 140](#). The full verse in Psalm 122 reads: *For the sake of my brothers and my companions, let me say, "Peace be within you."* This verse is addressed to Jerusalem; but according to a midrashic interpretation, it is sung by God, who refers to the Israelites as *my brothers and my companions*. See above, [p. 32](#), [n. 97](#).

Leviticus 18:14 reads in full: *The nakedness of your father's brother you shall not expose—you shall not come near his wife; she is your aunt.* The simple sense of the opening phrase is: *the nakedness reserved for your father's brother*. Cf. above, [note 458](#).

Leviticus 18:13 reads: *The nakedness of your mother's sister you shall not expose.* Cf. Leviticus 20:19: *And the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's sister you shall not expose.*

**543. *If my brothers, why my companions...*** Why does the verse in Psalms mention both *brothers* and *companions*? Because *companions* signifies an inseparable relationship, such as that between Father *Hokhmah* and Mother *Binah*, who never part from one another.

*Shekhinah*, referred to as Lower Mother, is pictured as the bride of *Tif'eret*. Their union is not as constant as that of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, since it can be interrupted due to human wickedness.

On the perpetual union of the *companions* *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, see above, [pp. 4–5, n. 12](#). On *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* as siblings, see above, [note 534](#).

[544](#). **Sister, as we have established...** According to a midrashic reading of the verse in Song of Songs, a *little sister* refers to the Assembly of Israel, which in the *Zohar* symbolizes *Shekhinah*.

“Our anonymous Mishnah” refers here to a secret source known only to the mystics. (See above, [note 34](#).) This source records an anonymous teaching about the verse in Leviticus, questioning why *your sister* is described as *your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter*, implying that she could be the daughter of only one of them. Since (based on the teaching of Rabbi Shim’on that was just quoted) *father* and *mother* allude to *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, who never part from one another, then *your sister* (*Shekhinah*) is both *your father’s daughter* and *your mother’s daughter*—not *or your mother’s daughter*.

The reason, however, for the precise wording of the verse is that when the influence of *Hokhmah* is dominant in *Shekhinah*, She is called *your father’s daughter* and is named after Him; whereas when the influence of *Binah* dominates, She is *your mother’s daughter* and named accordingly. Essentially, however, *Shekhinah* derives from both inseparable parents, who are symbolized respectively by the first and second letters of the name יהוה (YHVH).

The full verse in Leviticus reads: *The nakedness of your sister, your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, born in the household [or: house] or born outside—you shall not expose her nakedness*. Here, *born in the house* refers to *Shekhinah’s* emanation from *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), who is associated with *house* in the verse from Proverbs: *By wisdom a house is built*. On the other hand, *born outside* refers to *Shekhinah’s* emanation from *Binah*, who is more revealed than *Hokhmah* and thus characterized as *outside*.

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What will we do for our sister on the day when she is spoken for?* In its simple sense, the clause *she has no breasts* means that her breasts are not yet formed; *when she is spoken for* means “when a suitor proposes to marry her.” On the midrashic and Zoharic interpretation of a *little sister*, see *Sifrei*, Deuteronomy 304; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 8:8; *Midrash Tehillim* 15:5; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 2:16; *Zohar* 2:80b; 3:296a. Cf. *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 3:11 (quoted above, [p. 32](#), [n. 97](#)).

On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#). On the verse in Proverbs, see above, [p. 56](#), [n. 166](#).

**545. Rabbi Abba said...** He offers a different interpretation. First of all, *By wisdom a house is built* means *By Ḥokhmah, Binah is fashioned*. *Binah* (who issues from *Ḥokhmah* and then “houses” Him) is also pictured as the river of emanation flowing from *Ḥokhmah* (who is symbolized by Eden). Consequently, the phrase *born in [or: of] the house* refers to *Shekhinah*’s emergence from *Binah*.

Originally, *Tif’eret* and *Shekhinah* issued from *Binah* as a single androgynous being, which subsequently split into male and female halves. The phrase *born outside* refers to this second stage of birth, when *Shekhinah* separated from *Tif’eret*, who is *outside* of *Binah* and is symbolized by the letter *ו* (*vav*) in *יהוה* (*YHVH*). *Tif’eret* forms the core of the configuration of *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* (or *Ḥokhmah*) through *Yesod*, which is known collectively as *Ze’eir Appin* (or *Ze’eir Anpin*), literally “short-tempered, irascible, impatient.” On this term, see above, [p. 93](#), [n. 285](#).

The context in Genesis (2:21–23) reads: *YHVH Elohim cast a deep slumber on the human, and he slept, and He took one מצלעותיו (mi-tsal’otav), of his ribs [or: sides], and closed the flesh in its place. YHVH Elohim built the rib [or: side] He had taken from the human into a woman and He brought her to*

*the human. The human said, "This one at last, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! This one shall be called Woman, for from man was this one taken."*

On צלע (*tsela*) as *side*, see above, [p. 119](#), [n. 360](#). On the original androgynous human being, see above, [pp. 56-57](#), [n. 168](#). On the androgynous divine being, see above, [note 534](#).

**546. 'brothers of the blessed Holy One' ... your mother's sister...** See above, [note 542](#).

The description of Jerusalem in Psalms now means that earthly *Jerusalem* is modeled on *Shekhinah* and thus *built* like She is built: *as a city that is bound together*. This last phrase alludes to *Shekhinah's* complete union with all six aspects of the blessed Holy One, that is, the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, whose core is *Tif'eret*. All these divine aspects are conveyed to *Shekhinah* through *Yesod*, who is known as Righteous One.

On the phrase *that is bound together*, see *Zohar* 1:183b; Moses de León, *Shushan Edut*, 346. On *Yesod* as Righteous One, see above, [p. 15](#), [n. 42](#).

**547. There tribes ascend...** The verse describes the twelve tribes of Israel making pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Here, they symbolize "twelve boundaries," lines, or potencies branching out from *Tif'eret*, the trunk of the cosmic Tree. *Tif'eret* inherits these twelve potencies from Father *Hokhmah* and Mother *Binah*, who are together known as יה (Yah)—an abbreviation of יהוה (YHVH)—since ך (yod) symbolizes *Hokhmah* and ה (he) symbolizes *Binah*. Thus the twelve boundaries are *the tribes of Yah*.

*Tif'eret* is the Son of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, and these twelve potencies issuing from His Father and Mother testify to His parentage—as implied by the phrase *a testimony to Israel*, namely to the parentage of *Tif'eret Yisra'el* (Beauty of Israel). Cf. *Zohar* 3:292b (IZ).

"Boundaries" renders תְּחֻמִּין (*tehumim*), "boundaries, limits, dominions." The phrase "twelve boundaries" recalls

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; 2:2a, 58b, 62b, 64b, 66b, 229b; 3:96b, 118b, 134b (*IR*), 148b, 209a; *ZH* 2a (*SO*), 55a, 62a (*ShS*), 63d (*ShS*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:917.

The full verse in Psalm 122 reads: *There tribes ascend, the tribes of Yah, עֲדוּת (edut), a statute [literally: a testimony], for [or: to] Israel, to praise the name of YHVH.* On the sefirotic significance of *testimony*, see *Zohar* 2:221b, 229b; 3:118b, 213b; *ZH* 26d, 45b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 285 (and Wolfson’s n. 2). On the significance of the letters of YHVH, see above, [p. 9](#), [n. 27](#).

**548. To praise the name of YHVH...** Understood now to mean: to convey the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*, who is known as God’s name. King David, who is intimately linked with *Shekhinah*—or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—inherited Her dominion. Fittingly, he sang this psalm for Her.

**549. All in supernal mystery...** The laws of forbidden sexual relations pertain also to the upper worlds because if a person causes a defect below—for example, by committing incest—he causes a defect in the *sefirot*.

The Mishnah (*Ketubbot* 5:6) discusses how often husbands of various professions are required to fulfill the commandment of עוֹנָה (*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.’”

Here Rabbi Hizkiyah indicates that the wise understand the inner workings of the *sefirot*, specifically that on Sabbath eve *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah* unite, generating pure souls. Since the wise “can focus their heart” on the divine union, they are able to draw down a pure soul when they unite with their wives at this opportune moment, thereby ensuring that the child who is subsequently born will be holy.

However, if the wise “cause a defect below”—by uniting with their wives during the weeknights—they cause a defect in *Shekhinah*, *Tif'eret's* Bride. This is now the meaning of the command in Leviticus: *The nakedness of כלתך (kallatekha), your bride, you shall not expose*—ruining Her union with *Tif'eret*. See above, [note 464](#).

Of course, in this verse the simple sense of *kallatekha* is *your daughter-in-law*, but the word can also be translated *your bride*, alluding to *Shekhinah*. Such a radical interpretation applies only to the kabbalists, “who know the ways of Torah,” whereas the plain, revealed meaning—*your daughter-in-law*—is intended for the masses. If any such man commits an act of incest with his *kallah*, “daughter-in-law,” he causes *Shekhinah* (the Divine *kallah*, “Bride”) to depart from Israel.

On the two different audiences (the elite and the masses), see above, [note 413](#). On causing a defect above, see above, [p. 36](#), [n. 108](#).

On the passage in BT *Ketubbot*, see *Zohar* 1:14a-b, 50a, 112a (*MhN*); 2:63b, 89a-b, 136a-b, 204b-205a; 3:49b, 81a, 82a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 120; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1232-33, 1357; Wolfson, “Eunuchs Who Keep the Sabbath.”

**550. The Holy Name is engraved...** The name יהוה (YHVH) is linked with all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Its initial letter, י (yod), is combined with א (alef), and vice versa; then, with ב (bet), and vice versa; and similarly with all the letters of the *alef bet* (alphabet). Various



other two-letter combinations follow. The form of each letter begins with the dot of ך (yod).

I have adopted the wording “yod with alef bet,” which appears in L27, M8, V6, V17. Instead of this, V3 (followed by the primary version in Mantua and Cremona) reads: “yod with alef,” which seems unlikely since this simply repeats the first element of the series. V22 reads here: “yod with bet.” The Cremona edition also offers an alternative reading of the whole series: “It seems in my [or: our] humble opinion: Yod with alef, alef with yod; yod with bet, bet with yod; yod with gimel, gimel with yod; yod with dalet, dalet with yod; yod with he, he, with yod; and so with all them, through all the letters of the Holy Name.” This sensible arrangement is adopted by *Sullam* and *Matoq mi-Devash*, but it has no basis in the manuscripts. The arrangement resembles the description of letter combinations in *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:5: “How did He weigh them and permute them? Alef with them all, and all of them with alef; bet with them all, and all of them with bet; and so on.”

The paragraph is obviously cryptic. *Or Yaqar* offers a complex interpretation, while *Miqdash Melekh* remarks simply, “We do not know the meaning of the permutation of these letters correctly.”

**551. He is included in yod...** He—the second letter of יהוה (YHVH)—symbolizes *Binah*, who is included in *Hokhmah*, symbolized by the primordial point of ך (yod), the first letter of יהוה (YHVH). *Binah* issues from *Hokhmah*, and subsequently both of them crown the sefirotic triad of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, who are symbolized by the patriarchs. *Binah* is opened by its streams of emanation, and She crowns the head of *Tif'eret*, who is symbolized by ם (vav), the third letter of יהוה (YHVH). *Tif'eret* harmonizes and balances the polar opposites *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, so all three patriarchal *sefirot* are included in Him. Being the sixth letter of the alphabet, vav includes all six letters from א (alef) to ם (vav), which correspond to the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. All of these originate in the

primordial point of *yod*, representing *Hokhmah*. On the sefirotic significance of the letters of *YHVH*, see above, [p. 9, n. 27](#).

**552. twelve other letters...** Apparently, the twelve letters from כ (*kaf*) through ת (*tav*). Alternatively, it could refer to the “twelve simple letters” identified in *Sefer Yetsirah* 5:1: ה (*he*), ו (*vav*), ז (*zayin*), ח (*het*), ט (*tet*), י (*yod*), ל (*lamed*), נ (*nun*), ס (*samekh*), ע (*ayin*), צ (*tsadi*), ק (*qof*). These are called “simple” because they do not have double forms, that is, with and without a *dagesh qal* (“light dot”), a feature represented in seven other letters such as ב (*bet*), ב (*vet*); כ (*kaf*), כ (*khaf*). The remaining three letters of the Hebrew alphabet—א (*alef*), מ (*mem*), and ש (*shin*)—are in a class of their own, identified in *Sefer Yetsirah* 3:1 as the fundamental letters known as “three mothers.” The problem with this interpretation of “twelve other letters” is that it includes *he*, *vav*, and *yod*: the first two of these are probably among the “six letters” mentioned in the preceding paragraph; and as for *yod*, it seems strange for this letter to be crowned with itself.

According to *M Avot* 5:1, “By ten utterances, the world was created.” This decade corresponds to the Ten Commandments and the ten *sefirot*. See above, [p. 65, n. 200](#).

The “paths of the supernal way” are the “thirty-two wondrous paths of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom)” mentioned at the opening of *Sefer Yetsirah* as including (or associated with) the ten *sefirot* and the twenty-two letters.

**553. Then another *he*...** The last letter, and second *he*, in יהוה (*YHVH*), symbolizing *Shekhinah*, who includes the flow of all the preceding *sefirot*. She is “engraved” by *Yesod*, the divine phallus, to give birth to souls below.

**554. All are engraved in forty-two letters...** Referring to the Name of Forty-two Letters. This name is mentioned in the name of Rav, though not recorded, in BT *Qiddushin* 71a. Hai Gaon indicates that it consists of the letters אבגיתך, 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 rather of the first forty-two letters of the Torah, from the ב (bet) of בראשית (*Be-reshit*), *In the beginning*, through the ו (vet) of והו (*vohu*), *empty* (or *void*) (Genesis 1:2).

The formulation of this name presented by Hai Gaon consists of seven sets of six letters each, which are apparently described here as “seven complete Sabbaths,” a phrase deriving from Leviticus 23:15: *You shall count from the morrow of the sabbath, from the day you bring the sheaf of elevation, seven complete sabbaths [or: weeks] shall they be.* According to *Or Yaqar*, although each of the seven sets comprising this name contains only six letters, the sets are still described as “complete Sabbaths” because the seventh element is concealed within them, just as the Sabbath is concealed within all six days of the week.

The seven sets of letters separate “into seventy letters,” associated here with the Name of Seventy-two. This complex name derives from three consecutive verses in Exodus 14:19–21, describing the scene at the Red Sea: *The angel of Elohim who was going before the camp of Israel moved and went behind them, and the column of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. And it 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. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and YHVH drove the sea with a mighty east wind all night, and He turned the sea into dry ground, and the waters were split.* In this *Zohar* passage, *Shekhinah* is pictured as the *angel of Elohim* (in the first of these three verses), journeying along with Israel.

According to a tradition, the 216 Hebrew letters composing these three verses are rearranged into 72 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. These 72 triads are known as the Name of Seventy-two. See *Zohar* 2:51b-52a; Vol. 4, pp. 257-64 and nn. 216, 221-26.

The Name of Seventy-two ascends to *Tif'eret*, symbolized by the letter *vav*. In the final sentence, "seven inscriptions" apparently alludes to seven sets of letters in this name. See *Zohar* 3:151a.

The relation between seventy and seventy-two pertains to the composition of the Sanhedrin, which included seventy members plus two scribes or witnesses. See M *Sanhedrin* 4:3; Nahmanides on Numbers 11:16; *Zohar* 1:43b (*Heikh*), 229a; 2:6a, 51b, 251a (*Heikh*); 3:34b; *ZH* 61d (*ShS*). The number seventy also suggests the tradition of seventy divine names, on which see above, [p. 200](#), [n. 104](#).

On the Name of Forty-two Letters, 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*), 130b, 132b, 175b, 180b, 187a, 234a-b; 3:172b; *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.

On the expression "our Mishnah," see above, [note 34](#). On *Shekhinah* as *angel of Elohim*, see above, [p. 160](#), [n. 496](#).

**[555](#). These twenty-two letters engraved in Torah...** Various letters among the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are associated with each of the ten *sefirot* (or "crowns"), identified here with the Ten Utterances. Consequently, the name יהוה (*YHVH*), which symbolizes all the *sefirot*, is "concealed by" (or "engraved with") other letters,

that is, it is not pronounced according to its own letters but rather according to the letters of אֲדֹנָי (*Adonai*).

See above, [note 386](#). On the Ten Utterances, see above, [note 552](#).

[556](#). **from the supernal book of Solomon...** One of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the authors of the *Zohar*. See above, [p. 55](#), [n. 164](#).

By copying these letters and sharing them with the Companions, Rabbi Shim'on enabled all of them to "succeed" in mystical knowledge and practice. Just as each sefirotic crown "lends its letters to its fellow," so Rabbi Shim'on shared the knowledge of these letters with his trusted disciples.

[557](#). **mysteries of His Holy Name that He does not reveal...** Even to the angels.

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai and entered the Cloud of Glory covering the mountaintop, he aroused the envy of the angels. The terrifying angel Gazriel accosted him first, threatening to devour him, but Moses was able to defend himself with a divine name of twelve letters, which God had transmitted to him at the Burning Bush at the beginning of his prophetic career. Moses employed this same strategy with every angel who confronted him.

A name of twelve letters is mentioned but not identified in BT *Qiddushin* 71a. Later it was associated with the three occurrences of YHVH in the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26). See *Bahir* 80 (111): "... numbering three, numbering twelve." According to *Or Yaqar*, the twelve-letter name here is יהוה אֲדֹנָי (Ehyeh YHVH Adonai). See *Zohar* 1:16a, 19b; 2:58a, 201b; 3:172b; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 92, 290, n. 32.

According to the *Zohar*, the angel Gazriel conveys the divine גֶּזַר דִּין (*gezar din*), "decree of judgment." On this angel, see *Zohar* 1:108a (*ST*); 2:248b (*Heikh*), 251a-b (*Heikh*); 3:3a (standard editions); *ZH* 68c (*ShS*), 90d (*MhN, Rut*); Margaliot, *Mal'akhei Elyon*, 46.

The final sentence (“We have already established these matters”) may refer to the parallel passage in *Zohar* 2:58a (where, however, the first angel is identified as Kemuel) or to earlier sources such as *Ma’yan Hokhmah* (*Beit ha-Midrash*, 1:58–61), which appears in a slightly different version in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20, 96b–98a. See also BT *Shabbat* 88b; *Zohar* 1:5a; 2:156b.

On Moses entering the cloud, see Exodus 24:18: *Moses entered within the cloud and went up the mountain*. On his earlier request to know God’s name(s), see *ibid.* 3:13: *Moses said to God, “Look, when I come to the Children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”*

**558. Among the adornments of *Matronita*...** The prohibitions against forbidden sexual relations protect and enhance *Shekhinah* Herself. Beneath the simple, “revealed” sense of these laws, which are essential to civilization, lies their concealed significance, namely that one who violates any of them exposes the nakedness of *Shekhinah* and *Tif’eret*, ruining their union.

See above, [notes 449, 464](#). The full verse in Leviticus reads: *The nakedness of a woman and her daughter you shall not expose. Her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter you shall not take to expose her nakedness: they are kindred; it is depravity.*

**559. The final statement of the Ten Utterances...** The last of the Ten Commandments is central, and even equivalent, to the entire Torah. However, even one who violates this essential commandment can still turn back to God because *teshuvah* is always available and effective, especially if one receives and accepts his punishment, as King David did after sinning with Bathsheba.

On that sin, see above, [note 390](#). On David’s punishment, see 2 Samuel 12:11–23. Cf. Psalms 51.



On the last of the Ten Commandments (in its entirety) being equivalent to all ten, see *Pesiqta Rabbati* 21, 107a. On it being equivalent to the entire Torah, see *Beit ha-Midrash* 6:117; *Zohar* 3:51a; *ZH* 44d.

On the overwhelming power of *teshuvah*, see JT *Pe'ah* 1:1, 16b: “Nothing withstands any master of *teshuvah*.” See above, [note 510](#).

**[560](#). why didn't David separate from Bathsheba...** Thereby renouncing his sinful deed.

**[561](#). Bathsheba was his...** Following a rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shim'on explains that Bathsheba was destined to be David's wife. See BT *Sanhedrin* 107a: “Rava expounded, ‘...Ever since the six days of Creation, Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, was destined 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 above, [note 390](#).

The clause “and her husband had died” seems obvious—of course, Uriah had died, as David had craftily arranged (see above, [note 390](#)). But here the mention of his death probably relates to another rabbinic tradition, which records the custom that soldiers going to war would give their wives conditional divorces, which became valid if they failed to return, thereby enabling their wives to remarry. Because Uriah fell in battle, Bathsheba was technically not married to him (at least when David married her and in a sense even retroactively when he first slept with her).

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 Nahmani 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; 2:106b-107a; Rashi and *Tosafot* on the passage in BT *Shabbat* 56a.

According to Rabbi Shim'on, David would have married Bathsheba earlier when she was still single, but he was “delayed” by marrying Michal, daughter of King Saul. This gave Uriah the opportunity to marry Bathsheba, through praying fervently for her, because according to a Talmudic teaching, even if a man’s mate has been decreed from above, if he has not yet found her, another suitor can “anticipate him by supplication” and obtain the other’s intended mate.

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.’” See *Zohar* 1:73b, 91b, 229a; 2:101a; 3:283b-284a.

From a kabbalistic perspective, Bathsheba was intended to be David’s wife because she symbolizes *Shekhinah*—or *Malkhut* (Kingdom)—and King David is linked to this *sefirah*. By marrying Bathsheba, the Davidic Kingdom became firmly established. On Bathsheba as symbolizing *Shekhinah*, see above, [note 515](#).

**562. I am YHVH...** The declaration appears frequently in this chapter of Leviticus (18:2, 4-6, 21, 30). For the interpretation here, see *Sifra, Aḥarei Mot* 9:1, 85c; *Vayiqra Rabbah* 23:9; *Zohar* 1:65b. Cf. *Sifrei*, Numbers 115; BT *Menahot* 44a; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 12, *Behar* 1; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Behar* 2.

The full verse in Isaiah describes the punishment of those who rebel against God, to be witnessed by the righteous: *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, and they will be a horror to all flesh.*

**563. *I put to death and I bring to life...*** The name *YHVH* signifies Compassion, whereas the name *Elohim* signifies Judgment. The former brings life, the latter puts to death.

On *YHVH Elohim* as the “complete name,” see *Bereshit Rabbah* 13:3; cf. 12:15. On *YHVH* and *Elohim* as signifying, respectively, Compassion and Judgment, see above, [p. 11, n. 31](#).

On the transformative power of the wicked, see *Bereshit Rabbah* 33:3, in the name of Rabbi Shemu’el son of Naḥman: “Woe to the wicked, who turn the Attribute of Compassion into the Attribute of Judgment!” See above, [p. 94, n. 287](#).

**564. *The wicked cause a defect above...*** Their wickedness makes *Shekhinah* vulnerable to demonic forces. On causing a defect above, see BT *Sanhedrin* 74a (in the name of Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai); above, [p. 36, n. 108](#).

**565. *Do not approach a woman in her menstrual impurity...*** On sexual relations with a menstruant, see Leviticus 15:19-24; Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:948-53. On menstruation in Kabbalah, see Koren, *Forsaken*.

On the idiom of “exposing nakedness,” see above, [note 458](#). On this verse, see *Zohar* 1:126b; 2:60b; 3:290b (*IZ*). On this *Zohar* passage, see Asulin, “Ha-Pegam ve-Tiqquno.”

**566. *The generation in which Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai dwells...*** Because they are so virtuous, *Shekhinah* dwells among them and secrets of Torah can be revealed.

“The mystery of this verse” refers to the verse in Leviticus quoted above. The verse in Numbers (spoken by God about Moses) reads: *Mouth to mouth I speak with him; וּמֵרָאָה (u-mar’eh), and a vision [or: and clearly, manifestly, in plain sight], not in riddles; and the image of YHVH he beholds*. See above, [note 124](#). On the relationship between Rabbi Shim’on and Moses, see Huss, *Ke-Zohar ha-Raqi’a*,

11–42. On Rabbi Shim'on's unique status, see above, [p. 91](#), [n. 275](#).

On the uniqueness of Rabbi Shim'on's generation, see above, [note 45](#). On their open or revealed quality, see above, [p. 284](#), [n. 88](#).

**567. one day Rabbi Yeisa posed the following...** He posed a mystical riddle to the other Companions.

Although its precise solution is fittingly unclear, the riddle certainly involves the transition from primordial unity to multiplicity. If one insists on a sefirotic solution, it could be something like this: The primordial egg, issuing from the divine bird, splits into four. Two (*Hokhmah* and *Binah*) ascend, one (*Tif'eret*) descends, and one (*Yesod*) spreads a flow into the sea of *Shekhinah*—or *Shekhinah* sprawls over the ocean of the world.

For a somewhat similar interpretation, see *Haggahot Maharḥu; Miqdash Melekh*. For other solutions to the riddle, see *Or Yaqar*; Samuel Vital, at the end of *Sha'ar Ma'amerei Rashbi*, ed. Ḥayyim Vital, 311a–d; Baer, *Be'er Eseq* 63, 72a–b (quoting a partly different solution by Cordovero); *Yahel Or; Sullam; Matoq mi-Devash*. For further discussion, see Asulin, “Ha-Pegam ve-Tiqquno,” 224–36.

The image of the cosmic egg figures prominently in Orphic myth, which displays various affinities with the *Zohar*. According to this myth, the cosmic egg is produced by the primal serpent. This serpent may be related to the uroboros (the serpent biting its tail), symbolizing an eternal cycle or the unity and renewal of life. See Leisegang, “The Mystery of the Serpent,” 16–41; Liebes, *Studies in Jewish Myth*, 79–86; Vol. 5, pp. 551–52, n. 13.

The description of “a bird abiding in fire” probably refers to the phoenix, the mythological bird who dies in a self-created fire every five-hundred-to-over-a-thousand years, burning into a pile of ashes, out of which a phoenix

chick is born. Thus the phoenix (like the uroboros) symbolizes rebirth, immortality, and renewal.

The phoenix is mentioned briefly in a riddle attributed to the Greek poet Hesiod (eighth-seventh centuries B.C.E.) and further described by the Greek historian Herodotus (fifth century B.C.E.). According to a midrashic tradition, the phoenix gained (or retained) immortality because it alone, among all the animals, refused to eat the forbidden fruit. *Bereshit Rabbah* 19:5 adds: “The School of Rabbi Yannai taught, ‘It lives a thousand years, at the end of which a fire issues from its nest, burning it up until as much as an egg is left of it, and it grows limbs and lives again.’”

See Job 29:18 (which may refer to the phoenix); 3 Baruch 6; BT *Sanhedrin* 108b; and Rashi, ad loc., s.v. *urshina*; *Midrash Shemu’el* 12:2; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), intro, 78a; Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:51, n. 151; 5:182, n. 37; Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix*; Niehoff, “The Phoenix in Rabbinic Literature”; Wazana, “Anzu and Ziz,” 125–29.

The wording “spreads a sprawl” renders an uncertain Aramaic phrase. Various witnesses (including Pr13, V3, V6, V22, *Or Yaqar*) record this as נביע נביעא (*nevi’a nevi’a*), “streams a flow.” Cremona and Mantua list *nevi’a nevi’a* as an alternative reading in parentheses, while presenting as the primary reading רביע ברביעא (*revi’a bi-rvi’a*), “sprawling in a sprawl (of the great sea),” which could fit the image of the phoenix. Cf. Liebes, *Studies in Jewish Myth*, 79–80. See also Ezekiel 29:3: *I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great sea serpent sprawling amidst his streams*. See *Zohar* 2:28a, 29a, 34a–35b.

**568. you have made the holy profane...** Turning the most profound secrets into a game of riddles, whereas God conveys wisdom to Rabbi Shim’on (as He did to Moses) *mouth to mouth... not in riddles*.

For the expression “you have made the holy profane,” see JT *Sukkah* 4:5, 54c; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:2 (on 1:1); *Qohelet Rabbah* on 7:1; *Pirḡei de-Rabbi Eli’ezer* (ed.

Higger) 36; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), *Va'era* 17; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 6, 23a; *Shemot Rabbah* 11:1; *Yalqut Shim'oni*, Proverbs 960, Daniel 1065; *Zohar* 3:72b, 146a. Cf. BT *Ḥagigah* 14a, *Sanhedrin* 38b.

**569. Before the egg splits...** Apparently meaning: before the secrets of this process are fully revealed. Later, Rabbi Yeisa was one of three Companions who died during the Assembly of Rabbi Shim'on, where some of the deepest mysteries were expounded.

See *Zohar* 3:144a-b (*IR*); and also 1:217a; 2:61b; above, [p. 239](#), [n. 103](#); Asulin, "Ha-Pegam ve-Tiqquno," 233. "Assembly" renders אָדָרָא (*iddera*), "threshing floor, barn, chamber." 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*. See above, [note 45](#). On the connotations of the term *iddera*, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, 93-107.

**570. In the days of Rabbi Shim'on...** Secrets of Torah were freely revealed and shared. However, once he died it became sinful to do so.

See above, [note 566](#). For the expression "Open your mouth and let your words shine," see JT *Berakhot* 3:4, 6c; BT *Berakhot* 22a; *Zohar* 2:4a; 3:105b; *ZH* 37c, 67c (*ShS*), 70c (*ShS*), 73c (*ShS*).

**571. When harsh judgments are aroused...** By human wickedness. The precise process of this arousal is one of the secrets reserved for the initiates. The exact line—"When harsh judgments are aroused... here is written *The secret of YHVH...*"—appears in *Idra Rabba* (The Great Assembly) in *Zohar* 3:142b (*IR*). Rabbi Yehudah feels compelled to reveal this secret here, since it pertains to the laws of forbidden sexual relations, specifically to Leviticus 18:19: *Do not approach a woman in her menstrual impurity*



to expose her nakedness. That verse opens this passage; see above at [note 565](#).

The full verse in Psalms reads: *The counsel [or: secret] of YHVH is for those who fear [or: revere] Him, and to them He reveals His covenant.* On this verse, see above, [p. 300](#), [n. 141](#).

### [572](#). **When the mighty Serpent above is aroused...**

When the demonic force is aroused by human sins, he conjoins with *Shekhinah* and contaminates Her. Consequently, Her divine partner, *Tif'eret*, separates from Her. *Shekhinah's* state of impurity resembles that of a menstruant.

See *Or Yaqar*; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:378; 2:468; Koren, *Forsaken*, 73–97. Cf. above, [pp. 343–44](#), [nn. 44–45](#). On the image of the serpent injecting slime, 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-worshipers, who did not stand at Mount Sinai—their filth did not cease.” See above, [pp. 121–22](#), [n. 366](#).

### [573](#). **One hundred twenty-five species of impurity...**

Out of this total, twenty-seven intense forces cling to human females during their menstrual period. If a man approaches a menstruant, he makes the Divine Female (*Shekhinah*) vulnerable to the Serpent. Not only is She contaminated, but the hair of the Divine Male (signifying harsh Judgment) grows, as do Her hair and nails. That sinful man below *has defiled YHVH's sanctuary*, namely *Shekhinah*.

On the fear of menstrual blood as a repository of demonic forces, see Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1:948–53. On the *Zohar's* strict attitude toward menstruation, see *Zohar* 2:3a–4a; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 32; Koren, *Forsaken*, 63–123.

On the negative association of the number 125, see *Shemot Rabbah* 42:8, in the name of Rabbi Tanḥum son of

Hanilai: “There were 125 hundredweights of gold in the [Golden] Calf, the numerical value of מִסְכָּה (*massekhhah*), *molten* [calf] (Exodus 32:4): מ (*mem*) is 40, ס (*samekh*) is 60, כ (*khaf*) is 20, and ה (*he*) is 5.” See Vol. 6, p. 91, n. 98.

On the number 27, see *Zohar* 1:73a: “twenty-seven conduits, sockets of doors covering the abysses.” On hair as signifying harsh forces, see above, [p. 305](#), [n. 160](#). On *Shekhinah*’s nails, cf. above, [note 113](#). On the negative or demonic aspect of nails, see BT *Mo’ed Qatan* 18a, *Niddah* 17a; above, [note 117](#).

The verse in Numbers reads: *A man who becomes impure and does not purify himself, that person will be cut off from the midst of the assembly, for he has defiled YHVH’S sanctuary.*

[574.](#) ***And enmity I will set...*** The verse records God’s curse against the serpent: *And enmity I will set between you and the woman, between your seed and hers. He will bruise you on the head, and you will bruise him in the heel.* Here, Rabbi Yehudah focuses on the numerical value of the word וְאִיְבָה (*ve-eivah*), *and enmity*, which equals twenty-four, implying that the Serpent injects this many species of impurity into *Shekhinah* when he conjoins with Her. Consequently, twenty-four harsh judgments are aroused in *Shekhinah* and the same number in a human menstruant.

[575.](#) ***When a woman wants to be purified...*** According to rabbinic law, seven days following the cessation of menstrual flow, a married woman must immerse in the *miqveh* (ritual bath) before marital relations can resume. It was customary for the woman to pare her nails before immersing. Here, Rabbi Yehudah insists that the menstruant must cut any additional hair that grew during the time of her impurity and also her nails, beneath which demonic filth has accumulated. This filth arouses the filthy slime of the Serpent, so nail parings should be hidden from view; one who eliminates them completely stimulates the divine quality of *Hesed*.

See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 18a: “Three things have been said regarding nails: One who buries them is righteous; one who burns them is חסיד (*hasid*), devout [i.e., even holier]; one who throws them away is wicked. What is the reason? Lest a pregnant woman step over them and miscarry.” Rabbi Yehudah’s reference to *Hesed* plays on the Talmudic mention of *hasid*.

See BT *Niddah* 17a. On the danger of throwing away nail parings, see also *Zohar* 2:172b, 208b. On the menstruant paring her nails, see Eleazar of Worms, *Roqeah*, *Hilkhoh Miqveh* 376; Asher ben Yehiel, *Massekhet Niddah*, *Hilkhoh Miqva’ot* 35; Jacob ben Asher, *Arba’ah Turim*, *Yoreh De’ah* 198; *Zohar* 3:248b. On the menstruant cutting her hair, see *Zohar* 3:127a; cf. 3:248b (*RM*); *Miqdash Melekh*.

**576. a token of remembrance for evil species...** Such as nail parings, which endanger passersby and can even be used for sorcery because of the evil forces “dangling from them.”

On the danger of treading on nail parings, see BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 18a (quoted in the preceding note): “Lest a pregnant woman step over them and miscarry.”

Such danger and harm may be caused by the mere remnant of filth on nail parings, which derives from *Shekhinah*’s impurity above. If so, how much more potential harm may result from direct contact or sexual relations with a menstruant, who is contaminated by the Serpent’s filthy slime. See above, [notes 572-73](#).

**577. Bring an atonement עלי (alai), for Me...** 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!” 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 because I diminished the moon.” 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.””

According to the *Zohar*, the diminution of the moon symbolizes the vulnerability of *Shekhinah* to demonic forces. In the Talmudic passage, *alai* means (Bring an atonement) “for Me,” but here Rabbi Shim’on reads it hyperliterally as “above Me,” that is, above *Tif’eret* (known as the blessed Holy One). Thereby, the roots of harsh Judgment in *Gevurah* or *Binah* (who lie “above” *Tif’eret*) will be purified, neutralizing the power of the Serpent and “sweetening” and renewing *Shekhinah*. See Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 189; above, [pp. 229–30](#), [n. 71](#).

Rabbi Shim’on quotes the verse from Isaiah because it speaks of the seraphim being *above Him*. 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 above Him* [or: *in attendance on Him*, or: *above it*, namely above the throne]. *Each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he flew.* See above, [pp. 293–94](#), [n. 119](#).

The verse in Numbers describes the band of Korah, the rebellious Levite, whose tribe symbolizes *Gevurah*. The expression *banding together* *לַע* (*al*), *against*, *YHVH* now implies that Korah and his gang were trying to arouse the Other Side—which stems from *Gevurah* (who issues from

*Binah*), who are *al, over, YHVH* (that is, above *Tif'eret*). See above, [p. 94](#), [n. 288](#).

[578.](#) **Here, too, “Bring an atonement *alai, above Me*”...** The new-moon offering purifies the roots of harsh Judgment in *Gevurah* or *Binah*, “above” *Tif'eret*. Furthermore, it preoccupies and assuages the demonic Serpent, who then leaves *Shekhinah*, “the place it occupies.” What originally caused Her to become vulnerable to the Serpent? The fact that the blessed Holy One diminished the moon, symbolizing Her. See above, [pp. 229–30](#), [n. 71](#). On assuaging demonic powers, see above, [note 115](#).

The verse in Leviticus now implies that if a man has sexual relations with a menstruant he empowers the Serpent to defile *Shekhinah*. See above, [note 573](#).

[579.](#) ***whose king is a free man...*** Rabbi Shim'on is *free* to reveal the deepest secrets.

On Rabbi Shim'on's boldness, see above, [note 96](#). Cf. above, [note 566](#). The context in Ecclesiastes (10:16–17) reads: *Woe to you, O land, whose king is a lad and whose princes dine in the morning! Happy are you, O land, whose king is בן חורים (ben ḥorim), a son of nobles [or: of noble birth, of free ones], and whose princes dine at the proper time—with restraint, not with guzzling!* On these verses, see *Zohar* 1:95b, 124b; 2:174b–175b.

[580.](#) ***They will follow YHVH...*** Rabbi Shim'on is godlike and he proclaims secrets as fearlessly as a lion roars.

On Rabbi Shim'on's divine status, see above, [note 93](#). On Rabbi Shim'on as a lion, see above, [note 96](#). On the verse in Hosea, see BT *Berakhot* 6b; *Zohar* 1:160a, 223a; ZH 21d (*MhN*).

[581.](#) ***From new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath...*** The parallelism between *new moon* and *Sabbath* seems to imply their equivalency, whereas normally the Sabbath is the holier of the two. But for Rabbi Shim'on, *new moon* symbolizes *Shekhinah*, and the Sabbath day symbolizes *Tif'eret*. When these two unite (as happens

especially on Sabbath and the new moon), they “attain a single rung.” The joy of this divine couple depends on the flow from the primordial realm of *Keter*, the Holy Ancient One. On the verse from Isaiah, see above, [notes 362, 530](#).

**582. A psalm, a song** ליום השבת (*le-yom ha-shabbat*), **for the Sabbath day...** According to *Midrash Tehillim* 92:3, the Sabbath day itself recited this psalm together with Adam. Cf. the Sabbath morning liturgy: “The Sabbath day exclaims in praise: *A psalm, a song for the Sabbath Day. It is good to praise YHVH.*”

Since for Rabbi Shim'on, *the Sabbath day* symbolizes *Tiferet* (known as the blessed Holy One), the verse in Psalms now implies that *Tif'eret* Himself offers praise for the radiance from *Keter* above, which stimulates the union of the divine couple. The celebration extends to earth below, where all those who welcome the Sabbath are endowed with an additional soul.

On this additional soul, see above, [pp. 204–5, n. 118](#). On the Sabbath day itself offering praise, see *Zohar* 1:60a; 3:284b; *ZH* 17b (*MhN*).

**583. So too at the renewal of the moon...** This monthly renewal symbolizes the illumination of *Shekhinah* by *Tif'eret*, conveying radiance from *Keter* above. Consequently, the new-moon offering reaches above—specifically to *Binah*, the source of Judgment, so that harsh Judgment may be assuaged. see above, [notes 577–78](#).

**584. על (al), besides, the perpetual ascent offering...** According to its simple meaning, the verse describes the special ascent offering of the Sabbath *al*, *besides* (in addition to), the daily ascent offering. But Rabbi Shim'on reads this hyperliterally: *al*, *above*, *the perpetual ascent offering*—implying that the priest bringing this Sabbath offering should direct his intention higher than on other days, when the perpetual ascent offering symbolizes *Shekhinah*.



See above, [p. 220](#), [n. 46](#). The full verse in Numbers reads: *The ascent offering from one Sabbath to the next, besides the perpetual ascent offering and its libation.*

**585. She prayed על (al), to, YHVH...** Here, too, Rabbi Shim'on reads *al* hyperliterally: *above YHVH*—that is, above *Tif'eret*. Since Hannah was seeking to have children, she directed her prayer to the highest realm, *Keter*, known also as *Mazzala*, Flux of Destiny, upon which the blessing of children depends.

See BT *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a (in the name of Rava): “Life, children, and sustenance do not depend on merit but במזלא (*be-mazzala*), on destiny.” See above, [note 537](#); *Zohar* 2:274b (*Tosafot*); *ZH* 36c; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 189.

**586. You cannot find a single word in Torah...** On the profound significance of every element of Torah, see above, [p. 26](#), [n. 83](#).

The full verse in Song of Songs reads: *His head finest gold, his locks תלתלים (taltallim), luxuriant [or: curly; wavy; date fronds], black as a raven.* As with most descriptions of the male lover in Song of Songs, this image is applied midrashically to God (and His gift of Torah). See BT *Eruvin* 21b: “קווצותיו תלתלים (*Qevutsotav taltallim*), *His locks luxuriant.* Rav Hisda said in the name Mar Ukba, “This teaches that one can expound on every single קוץ (*qots*), stroke [of the letters of Torah], תילי תילים (*tillei tillim*), heaps and heaps, of *halakhot.*”

See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 5:11; *Mishnat Rabbi Eli'ezer* 12, p. 235; *Tanḥuma, Bereshit* 1. Cf. BT *Menaḥot* 29b; *Midrash Shemu'el* 5:3.

**587. Cast your burden על (al), upon, YHVH...** Here, too, Rabbi Abba reads *al* hyperliterally: *Cast your burden above YHVH*. Based on the continuation of the verse—*and He will sustain you*—Rabbi Abba indicates that such a prayer must be directed *above YHVH*, to the realm of *Keter* (known as *Mazzala*, the Flux of Destiny), upon which sustenance depends.

See above, [note 585](#). The full verse in Psalms reads: *Cast your burden upon YHVH and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous totter.*

[588.](#) על זאת (*Al zot*), ***For this, let every devout one pray...*** The rabbis of the Talmud “have already established” various interpretations of what it means to pray *in a time of finding*, including finding a wife, attaining Torah, finding a tranquil death, or an honorable grave, and even finding a convenient toilet. But Rabbi Yehudah—who recited this verse frequently—discovers new meaning here. First of all, he reads *al zot* hyperliterally as *above this*—namely above *Shekhinah*, who is known as *this*. One should direct his prayer *above* Her to *Tif’eret* (known as YHVH), who is alluded to by the phrase לעת מצא (*le-et metso*), *in a time of finding*, since another verse reads: *Seek YHVH בהמצאו* (*be-himmatse’o*), *when He may be found*.

On the rabbinic interpretations of *in a time of finding*, see BT *Berakhot* 8a; JT *Berakhot* 4:1, 7b; *Bereshit Rabbah* 92:2; *Tanḥuma, Miqḡets* 10; *Tanḥuma* (Buber), 15. The full verse reads: *For this let every devout one pray to You מצא לעת* (*le-et metso*) [literally: *in a time of finding*], *in a time when [misfortune] befalls [or: in a time when You may be found]: only that the rush of mighty waters not reach him*. On the verse in Isaiah, see above, [note 56](#).

[589.](#) ***Alternatively, le-et metso, for a time of finding...*** When rivers of emanation issue from *Binah*, “finding” and nourishing the patriarchal triad of *Ḥesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif’eret*, thereby providing blessing for all.

[590.](#) ***Only that the rush of mighty waters...*** The simple sense is that one should pray *only that the rush of mighty waters אליו לא יגיעו* (*elav lo yaggi’u*), *not reach him*. But Rabbi Yehudah indicates that *the rush of mighty waters* alludes to the potent source of emanation in the depths of the highest *sefirot*. No one can attain that ultimate source, as implied by his creative reading of the verse: *Only the rush of mighty waters—elav lo yaggi’u, that they will not reach*.

**591. One thing I ask of YHVH...** Rabbi Yitshak indicates that in the world that is coming the righteous will bask in the flowing radiance of *Binah*, who is Herself called “the World that is Coming: constantly coming, never ceasing.” She is also described as *the beauty of YHVH*.

On *Binah* as the World that is Coming, see *Zohar* 3:290b (*IZ*); above, [p. 243](#), [n. 122](#). On Her description as *the beauty of YHVH*, see *Zohar* 1:197b, 219a; 2:31a–b, 57b, 127a, 170b; 3:161b; *ZH* 85b (*MhN, Rut*). Cf. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhoh Teshuvah* 8:4.

The full verse in Psalms reads: *One thing I ask of YHVH, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of YHVH all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty [or: delightfulness, loveliness] of YHVH ולבקר (ul-vaqqr), and to search [or: inquire, inspect, reflect], in His temple.*

**592. From here: No eye has seen...** Rabbi Hizkiyah offers a different proof-text to demonstrate the amazing gifts awaiting the righteous. But there seems to be a problem with this verse: it begins by addressing God in the second person—*You*—but then switches to the third person: *what He will do for one who awaits Him*. Why doesn’t it read *You will do....?* He explains that *He* refers to the hidden realm of *Keter*, who cannot be addressed directly in the second person and from whom issues the sefirotic flow of blessing.

Similarly, the verse from Isaiah (recording God’s promise to King Hezekiah to add *fifteen years to his life*) jumps from the first to third person: *הִנֵּנִי (Hineni), I hereby*, is immediately followed by *יֹסִיף (yosif), He will add*. According to Rabbi Hizkiyah, the reason for this anomaly is that *Tif’eret*, speaking to the king, assures him that *Keter* (who can only be referred to in the third person) will bestow *fifteen years of life*.

As mentioned above, *Keter* (known as *Mazzala*, Flux of Destiny) is the source of the “life, children, and sustenance.” So it is fitting that *He (Keter) will add fifteen*

*years to your life.* Thus when Hannah prayed to have a child, she directed her plea *al, above, YHVH, to Keter.* See above, [notes 585, 587](#).

On *Keter* as *He*, see *Zohar* 1:49a; 2:177b (*SdT*s); 3:129b (*IR*), 290a (*IZ*). *Binah* can also be referred to as *He*, and, in fact, as *Mazzala*. See Vol. 5, p. 137, n. 385; above, [p. 166, n. 516](#).

On the verse in Isaiah 64, 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].*” The verse reads: *No eye has seen, O God, but You, what You [literally: He] will do for one who awaits You [literally: Him].* See *Zohar* 3:239a-b, 267b; *ZH* 49d.

On the verse in Isaiah 38, see *ZH* 36c. The verse reads: *I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears.* הַנְּנִי יוֹסִיף (Hineni yosif), *I hereby add [literally: I hereby, He will add], fifteen years to your life.*