

## **Zohar (section 1)**

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## PROLOGUE

[Tr. note: This chapter, a preliminary exposition of Gen. I, serves to introduce the reader to the circle of R. Simeon and his colleagues, and to give him an idea of the scope and nature of their discussions. It is somewhat more discursive and fanciful than the main body of the Zohar.]

Rabbi Hizkiah opened his discourse with the text: As a lily among thorns, etc. (S.S. II, 2). 'What', he said, 'does the lily symbolise? It symbolises the Community of Israel. As the lily among thorns is tinged with red and white, so the Community of Israel is visited now with justice and now with mercy; as the lily possesses thirteen leaves, so the Community of Israel is vouchsafed thirteen categories of mercy which surround it on every side. For this reason, the term Elohim (God) mentioned here (in the first verse of Genesis) is separated by thirteen words from the next mention of Elohim, symbolising the thirteen categories of mercy which surround the Community of Israel to protect it. The second mention of Elohim is separated from the third by five words, representing the five strong leaves that surround the lily, symbolic of the five ways of salvation which are the "five gates". This is alluded to in the verse "I will lift up the cup of salvation" (Ps. CXVI, 13). This is the "cup of benediction", which has to be raised by five fingers and no more, after the model of the lily, which rests on five strong leaves in the shape of five fingers. Thus the lily is a symbol of the cup of benediction. Immediately after the third mention of Elohim appears the light which, so soon as created, was treasured up and enclosed in that b'rith (covenant) which entered the lily and fructified it, and this is what is called "tree bearing fruit wherein is the seed thereof": and this seed is preserved in the very sign of the covenant. And as the ideal covenant was formed through forty-two copulations, so the engraven ineffable name is formed of the forty-two letters of the work of creation.'

IN THE BEGINNING. R. Simeon opened his discourse with the text: The blossoms appeared on the earth, etc. (S. S. II, 12). "The blossoms", he said, 'refer to the work of creation. "Appeared on the earth,": when? On the third day, as it is written, "And the earth brought forth": they thus then appeared on the earth. "The time of pruning is come" alludes to the fourth day in which "the pruning of the overbearing" (Is. XXV, 5) took place. "And the voice of the turtle" alludes to the fifth day, as it is written, "Let the waters swarm, etc., to produce living creatures". "Is heard" points to the sixth day, as it is written, "Let us make man" (namely him who was destined to say first "we will do" and then "we will hear", for the expression

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in our text, na'aseh, "Let us make man", finds its echo in the expression "na'aseh (we will do) and hear" (Exod. XXIV, 7)); "In our land" implies the day of the Sabbath, which is a copy of the "land of the living" (the world to come, the world of souls, the world of consolations). The following is an alternative

exposition: "The blossoms" are the patriarchs who pre-existed in the thought of the Almighty and later entered the world to come, where they were carefully preserved; from thence they issued secretly to become incarnate in the true prophets. Thus when Joseph entered the Holy Land he planted them there, and thus they "appeared on the earth" and revealed themselves there. When do they become visible? When the rainbow betokens that "the time of pruning is come", to wit, the time when the sinners are due to be cut off from the world; and they only escape because "the blossoms appear on the earth": if not for their appearance the sinners would not be left in the world and the world itself would not exist. And who is it that upholds the world and causes the patriarchs to appear? It is the voice of tender children studying the Torah; and for their sakes the world is saved....'

IN THE BEGINNING. R. Eleazar opened his discourse with the text: Lift up your eyes on high and see: who hath created these? (Is. XL, 26). ' "Lift up your eyes on high": to which place? To that place to which all eyes are turned, to wit, Petah 'Enaim ("eye-opener"). By doing so, you will know that it is the mysterious Ancient One, whose essence can be sought, but not found, that created these: to wit, Mi (Who?), the same who is called "from (Heb. mi) the extremity of heaven on high", because everything is in His power, and because He is ever to be sought, though mysterious and unrevealable, since further we cannot enquire. That extremity of heaven is called Mi, but there is another lower extremity which is called Mah (What?). The difference between the two is this. The first is the real subject of enquiry, but after a man by means of enquiry and reflection has reached the utmost limit of knowledge, he stops at Mah (What?), as if to say, what knowest thou? what have thy searchings achieved? Everything is as baffling as at the beginning. In allusion to this, it is written "I, Mah, testify against thee, etc." (Lam. II, 13). When the Temple was destroyed a voice went forth and said: "I, Mah, have testified against thee day by day from the days of old," as it is written, "I called heaven and earth to witness against you." (Deut. XXX, 19.) Further, I, Mah, likened myself to thee; I crowned thee with holy crowns, and made thee ruler over the earth, as it is written, "Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty? etc." (Lam. II, 15), and again, "I called thee Jerusalem that is builded as a city compact together". Further, I, Mah, am equal to thee; in the same plight in which thou, Jerusalem, art here, so I am, as it were, above; just as the holy people does not go up to thee any more in sacred array, so, I swear to thee, I will not ascend on high until the day when thy throngs will again stream to thee here below. And this may be thy consolation, inasmuch as to this extent I am thy equal in all things. But now that thou art in thy present state "thy breach is great like the sea" (Ibid. 13). And lest thou sayest there is for thee no abiding and no healing, "Mi will heal thee" (Ibid.). Of a surety the veiled One, the most High, the sum of all existence will heal thee and uphold thee-Mi, the extremity of heaven above, Mah, as far as the extremity of heaven below. And this is the inheritance of Jacob, he being the "bolt that passes from extremity to extremity" (Exod. XXVI, 28), that is, from the higher, identical with Mi, to the lower, identical with Mah, as he occupies a position in the middle. Hence "Mi (Who)

created these”.’

Said R. Simeon, ‘Eleazar, son of mine, cease thy discourse, that there may be revealed the higher mysteries which remain sealed for the people of this world.’ R. Eleazar then fell into silence. R. Simeon wept a while and then said: ‘Eleazar, what is meant by the term “these”? Surely not the stars and the other heavenly bodies, since they are always visible, and were created through Mah, as we read, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made” (Ps. XXXIII, 6). Nor can it imply the things inaccessible to our gaze, since the vocable “these” obviously points to things that are revealed. This mystery remained sealed until one day, whilst I was on the sea-shore, Elijah came and said to me, “Master, what means ‘Mi (Who?) created these?’ “ I said to him, “That refers to the heavens and their hosts, the works of the Holy One, blessed be He, works through the contemplation of which man comes to bless Him, as it is written, ‘When I behold thy heavens, the work

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of thy fingers, etc. O Lord our God, how glorious is thy name in all the earth!’ “ (Ps. VIII, 4-10). Then he said to me, “Master, the Holy One, blessed be He, had a deep secret which He at length revealed at the celestial Academy. It is this. When the most Mysterious wished to reveal Himself, He first produced a single point which was transmuted into a thought, and in this He executed innumerable designs, and engraved innumerable gravings. He further graved within the sacred and mystic lamp a mystic and most holy design, which was a wondrous edifice issuing from the midst of thought. This is called MI, and was the beginning of the edifice, existent and non-existent, deep-buried, unknowable by name. It was only called MI (Who?). It desired to become manifest and to be called by name. It therefore clothed itself in a refulgent and precious garment and created ELeH (these), and ELeH acquired a name. The letters of the two words intermingled, forming the complete name ELoHIM (God). (When the Israelites sinned in making the golden calf, they alluded to this mystery in saying ‘Eleh (these are) thy Gods, O Israel’ (Exod. XXXII, 4).) And once MI became combined with ELeH, the name remained for all time. And upon this secret the world is built.” Elijah then flew away and vanished out of my sight. And it is from him that I became possessed of this profound mystery.’ R. Eleazar and all the companions came and prostrated themselves before him, weeping for joy and saying, ‘If we had come into the world only to hear this we should have been content.’ R. Simeon said further: ‘The heavens and their hosts were created through the medium of Mah (What?), as it is written, “When I behold thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, etc... ‘ O Lord our God (Adon), Mah, glorious is thy name in all the earth, whose majesty is rehearsed above the heavens.” (Ps. VIII, 4, 2). God is “above the heavens” in respect of His name, for He created a light for His light, and one formed a vestment to the other, and so He ascended into the higher name; hence “In the beginning Elohim (God) created”, that is, the supernal Elohim. Whereas Mah was not so, nor was it built up until these letters Eleh (from the name Elohim) were drawn from above below, and the Mother lent the

Daughter her garments and decked her out gracefully with her own adornments. When did she so adorn her? When all the males (of Israel) appeared before her in accordance with the command “all thy males shall appear before the Lord (Adon) God” (Exod. XXXIV, 23). This term Lord (Adon) is similarly used in the passage “Behold the Ark of the covenant of the Lord (Adon) of all the earth” (Jos. III, 11). Then the letter He (of Mah) departed and her place was taken by Yod (making Mi), and then she decked herself in male garments, harmonizing with “every male in Israel”. Other letters, too, Israel drew from on high to that place. Thus it says: “These (Eleh) I remember” (Ps. XLII, 5), i.e., I make mention with my mouth and I pour out my tears, and thus “I make them (the letters) flit” from on high “unto the house of Elohim” (Ibid.) to be Elohim (God) after his form. And with what? “With the voice of song and praise and amidst a festive throng” (Ibid.).’ Said R. Eleazar, ‘My keeping silence was the means of building the sanctuary above and the sanctuary below. Verily “speech is worth a sela, silence two”. Speech is worth a sela, namely, my exposition and remarks on the subject; but silence is worth two, since through my silence two worlds were built together.’

R. Simeon said: ‘We will go on to expound the conclusion of the verse, viz. He who bringeth forth by number their host (Is. XL, 26). There are two grades which have to be distinguished, one of Mah and one of Mi-one of the higher and the other of the lower sphere. The higher is singled out here in the words, “He who bringeth forth by number their host”. “He who” expresses something definite and absolute, a being universally recognized and without equal. (Corresponding to this is the expression “He who bringeth forth bread from the earth”: here also “He who” implies the universally acknowledged one, though here visualised as the lower grade; the two, however, are one.) “By number”: six hundred thousand are they, and they have in turn produced according to their kinds beyond all number. “All of them”, whether the six hundred -thousand or the rest of the hosts, “He calls by name”. This cannot mean by their names, for if it were so, it should have been written “by names”. What it means is that as long as this grade did not assume a name, and was still called Mi, it was unproductive, and did not bring into actuality the latent forces within it, each according to its kind. But as soon as it created ELeH (these), and assumed its rightful name and was called ELoHIM (God), then, by force of that name, it produced them in their complete form. This is the meaning of “calls by name”, to wit, He proclaimed His own name so as to bring about the emergence of each sort of being in its full form. (Analogous to this we read, “See, I have called by name” (Exod. XXXI, 2), to wit, I have bestowed my name on Bezalel (in the shadow of God) so that his work should emerge in perfection. Further, the words “by the abundance of powers,’ (Is. XL, 26) refer to the supreme grade whereto all the volitions ascend

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by a mysterious path. “And mighty of strength”: the word “strength” (KoaH) symbolizes the supernal World which assumed the name Elohim (God), as already said. “No one is missing” of the six hundred thousand

which emerged by the power of the Name. And because no one is missing, therefore whenever Israelites died on account of a national sin, the people were afterwards numbered, and it was found that the number of six hundred thousand had not been diminished even by one, so that the likeness to the supernal prototype was still complete; just as no one was missing above, so no one was missing here below.

IN THE BEGINNING. Rab Hamnuna the Venerable said: 'We find here a reversal of the order of the letters of the Alphabet, the first two words Bereshith bara-"in-the-beginning He-created"-commencing with beth, whereas the two words following, Elohim eth-"God the"-commence with aleph. The reason is as follows. When the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to make the world, all the letters of the Alphabet were still embryonic, and for two thousand years the Holy One, blessed be He, had contemplated them and toyed with them. When He came to create the world, all the letters presented themselves before Him in reversed order. The letter Tau advanced in front and pleaded: May it please Thee, O Lord of the world, to place me first in the creation of the world, seeing that I am the concluding letter of EMeTh (Truth) which is engraved upon Thy seal, and seeing that Thou art called by this very name of EMeTh, it is most appropriate for the King to begin with the final letter of EMeTh and to create with me the world. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her: Thou art worthy and deserving, but it is not proper that I begin with thee the creation of the world, since thou art destined to serve as a mark on the foreheads of the faithful ones (vide Ezek. IX, 4) who have kept the Law from Aleph to Tau, and through the absence of this mark the rest will be killed; and, further, thou formest the conclusion of MaWeTh (death). Hence thou art not meet to initiate the creation of the world. The Shin then came to the fore and pleaded: O Lord of the world, may it please Thee to begin with me the world, seeing that I am the initial letter of Thy name ShaDDal (Almighty), and it is most fitting to create the world through that Holy Name. Said He in reply: Thou art worthy, thou art good, thou art true, but I may not begin through thee the creation of the world, since thou formest part of the group of letters expressing forgery, ShekeR (falsehood), which is not able to exist unless the Koph and Resh draw thee into their company. (Hence it is that a lie, to obtain credence, must always commence with something true. For the shin is a letter of truth, that letter by which the Patriarchs communed with God; but koph and resh are letters belonging to the evil side, which in order to stand firm attach to themselves the shin, thus forming a conspiracy (QeSheR).) Having heard all this, the shin departed. Enters the Zade and says: O Lord of the world, may it please Thee to create with me the world, inasmuch as I am the sign of the righteous (Zadikim) and of Thyself who art called righteous, as it is written, "For the Lord is righteous, he loveth righteousness" (Ps. XI, 7), and hence it is meet to create the world with me. The Lord made answer: O Zade, thou art Zade, and thou signifiest righteousness, but thou must be concealed, thou mayest not come out in the open so much lest thou givest the world cause for offence. For thou consistest of the letter nun surmounted by the letter yod (representing together the male and the female principles). And this is the mystery of the creation of the

first man, who was created with two faces (male and female combined). In the same way the nun and the yod in the zade are turned back to back and not face to face, whether the zade is upright or turned downwards. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her further, I will in time divide thee in two, so as to appear face to face, but thou wilt go up in another place. She then departed. The letter Pe presented herself and pleaded thus: May it please Thee, O Lord of the world, to create through me the world, seeing that I signify redemption and deliverance (Purkana, Peduth), which Thou art to vouchsafe to the world. It is, hence, meet that through me the world be created. The Lord answered: Thou art worthy, but thou representest transgression (Pesha), and moreover thou art shapen like the serpent, who had his head curled up within his body, symbolic of the guilty man who bends his head and extends his hand. The letter 'Ayin was likewise refused as standing for iniquity ('Awon), despite her plea that she represents humility. ('Anavah). Then the Samekh appeared and said: O Lord

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of the world, may it please Thee to create through me the world, inasmuch as I represent upholding (Semikah) of the fallen, as it is written, "The Lord upholdeth all that fall" (Ps. CXLV, 14). The Lord answered her: This is just the reason why thou shouldst remain in thy place, for shouldst thou leave it, what will be the fate of the fallen, seeing that they are upheld by thee? She immediately departed. The

Nun entered and pleaded her merits as being the initial letter in "Fearful (Nora) in praises" (Ex. XV, 11), as well as in "Comely (Nawa) is praise for the righteous" (Ps. XXXIII, 1). The Lord said: O Nun, return to thy place, for it is for thy sake (as representing the falling, Nofelim) that the Samekh returned to her place. Remain, therefore, under her support. The Nun immediately returned to her place. The Mim came up and said: O Lord of the world, may it please Thee to create by me the world, inasmuch as I commence the word Melekh (King) which is Thy title. The Lord replied: It is so assuredly, but I cannot employ thee in the creation of the world for the reason that the world requires a King. Return, therefore, to thy place, thou along with the Lamed and the Kaph, since the world cannot exist without a MeLeKh (King). At that moment, the Kaph descended from its throne of glory and quaking and trembling said: O Lord of the universe, may it please Thee to begin through me the creation of the world, seeing that I am Thine own Kabod (honour). And when Kaph descended from its throne of glory, two hundred thousand worlds began to shake, the throne trembled, and all the worlds quaked and were about to fall in ruins. Said to her the Holy One, blessed be His Name: Kaph, Kaph, what doest thou here? I will not create the world with thee. Go back to thy place, since thou standest for extermination (Kelayah). Return, then, to thy place and remain there. Immediately she departed and returned to her own place. The letter Yod then presented herself and said: May it please Thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe me first place in the creation of the world, since I stand first in the Sacred Name. The Lord said to her: It is sufficient for thee that thou art engraven and marked in Myself and that thou art the



channel of My will; thou must not be removed from My Name. The Teth then came up and said: O Lord of the universe, may it please Thee to place me at the head in the creation of the world, since through me Thou art called Good (Tob) and upright. The Lord said to her: I will not create the world through thee, as the goodness which thou representest is hidden and concealed within thyself, as it is written, "O how abundant is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee" (Ps. XXXI, 20). Since then it is treasured within thyself, it has no part in the world which I am going to create, but only in the world to come. And further, it is because thy goodness is hidden within thee that the gates of the Temple sank into the ground, as it is written, "Sunk (Tabe'u) in the ground are her gates" (Lam. II, 9). And furthermore, the letter Heth is at thy side, and when joined you make sin (HeT). (It is for that reason that these two letters are not to be found in the names of any of the tribes.) She departed immediately. Then the Zayin presented herself and put forth her claim, saying, O Lord of the World, may it please Thee to put me at the head of the creation, since I represent the observance of the Sabbath, as it is written, "Remember (Zakhor) the day of the Sabbath to keep it holy" (Ex. XX, 8). The Lord replied: I will not create the world through thee, since thou representest war, being in shape like a sharp-pointed sword, or a lance. The Zayin immediately departed from His presence. The Vau entered and put forth her claim, saying: O Lord of the world, may it please Thee to use me first in the creation of the world, inasmuch as I am one of the letters of Thy name. Said the Lord to her: Thou, Vau, as well as He', suffice it to you that you are of the letters of My name, part of the mystery of My name, engraven and impressed in My name. I will therefore not give you first place in the creation of the world. Then appeared the letter Daleth as well as the letter Gimel and put forth similar claims. The Lord gave them a similar reply, saying: It should suffice you to remain side by side together, since "the poor will not cease from the land" (Deut. XV, 11), who will thus need benevolence. For the Daleth signifies poverty (Dalluth) and the Gimel beneficence (Gemul). Therefore separate not from each other, and let it suffice you that one maintains the other. The Beth then entered and said: O Lord of the world, may it please Thee to put me first in the creation of the world, since I represent the benedictions (Berakhoth) offered to Thee on high and below. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her: Assuredly, with thee I will create the world, and thou shalt form the beginning in the creation of the world. The letter Aleph remained in her place without presenting herself. Said the Holy One, blessed be His name: Aleph, Aleph, wherefore comest thou not before Me like the rest of the letters? She answered: Because I saw all the other letters leaving Thy presence without any success. What, then, could I achieve there? And further, since

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Thou hast already bestowed on the letter Beth this great gift, it is not meet for the Supreme King to take away the gift which He has made to His servant and give it to another. The Lord said to her: Aleph, Aleph, although I will begin the creation of the world with the beth, thou wilt remain the first of the letters. My unity

shall not be expressed except through thee, on thee shall be based all calculations and operations of the world, and unity shall not be expressed save by the letter Aleph. Then the Holy One, blessed be His name, made higher-world letters of a large pattern and lower-world letters of a small pattern. It is therefore that we have here two words beginning with beth (Bereshith bara) and then two words beginning with aleph (Elohim eth). They represent the higher-world letters and the lower-world letters, which two operate, above and below, together and as one.'

BERESHITH (In the beginning). Said R. Yudai: 'What is the meaning of Bereshith? It means "with Wisdom", the Wisdom on which the world is based, and through this it introduces us to deep and recondite mysteries. In it, too, is the inscription of six chief supernal directions, out of which there issues the totality of existence. From the same there go forth six sources of rivers which flow into the Great Sea. This is implied in the word Bereshith, which can be analysed into BaRa-SHiTH (He created six). And who created them? The Mysterious Unknown.' R. Hiya and R. Jose were walking along the road. When they reached the open country, R. Hiya said to R. Jose, 'What you said about Bereshith signifying bara-shith (created six) is certainly correct, since the Torah speaks of six primordial days and not more. The others are hinted at but not disclosed; nevertheless, from what is told us we can perceive the following. The Holy and Mysterious One graved in a hidden recess one point. In that He enclosed the whole of Creation as one who locks up all his treasures in a palace, under one key, which is therefore as valuable as all that is stored up in that palace; for it is the key which shuts and opens. In that palace there are hidden treasures, one greater than the other. The palace is provided with fifty mystic gates. They are inserted in its four sides to the number of forty-nine. The one remaining gate is on none of its sides and it is unknown whether it is on high or below: it is hence called the mysterious gate. All these gates have one lock, and there is one tiny spot for the insertion of the key, which is only marked by the impress of the key. It is this mystery which is implied in the words "In the beginning created God", "In the beginning" (Bereshith): this is the key which encloses the whole and which shuts and opens. Six gates are controlled by this key which opens and shuts. At first it kept the gates closed and impenetrable; this is indicated by the word Bereshith, which is composed of a revealing word (shith) with a concealing word (bara). Bara is always a word of mystery, closing and not opening,' Said R. Jose: 'Assuredly it is so, and I have heard the Sacred Lamp say the same, to wit, that bara is a term of mystery, a lock without a key, and as long as the world was locked within the term bara it was not in a state of being or existence. Over the whole there hovered Tohu (chaos), and as long as Tohu dominated, the world was not in being or existence. When did that key open the gates and make the world fruitful? It was when Abraham appeared, as it is written, "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth behibaream" (when they were created) (Gen. II, 4). Now, BeHiBaReAm is an anagram of BeABeRaHaM (through Abraham), implying that what was hitherto sealed up and unproductive in the word bara has by a transposition of letters become serviceable, there has

emerged a pillar of fruitfulness: for BaRa has been transformed into AiBeR (organ), which is the sacred foundation on which the world rests. Further, in the same way, as AiBraHaM contains AiBeR, a transformation of BaRA, so it is with the splendour of the name of the Most High and most Concealed One. This is implied in the words MI BaRA AiLeH. Add the other sacred name MaH. Transpose BaRA into AiBeR. We have AiLeH on one side and AiBeR on the other side. Add the He (of MaH) to AiBeR and the Yod (of MI) to AiLeH. When we take now the Mim of both MI and MaH and join each to each we have complete the sacred name AeLoHiM and also the name

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ABRaHaM. According to another view, the Holy One, blessed be He, took MI and joined it to AiLeH, so that there was shaped AeLoHiM; similarly He took MaH and joined it to AiBeR and there was shaped ABRaHaM. And thus He made the world unfold itself, and made the name complete, as it had not been hitherto. This is meant by the verse "These are the generations (i.e. unfoldings) of the heaven and of the earth BeHiBaReaM (when they were created)". That is, the whole creation was in suspense until the name of ABRaHaM was created, and as soon as the name of Abraham was completed the Sacred Name was completed along with it, as it says further, "in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven".

R. Hiya then prostrated himself on the earth, kissed the dust, and said weeping: 'Dust, Dust, how stiffnecked art thou, how shameless art thou that all the delights of the eye perish within thee! All the beacons of light thou consumes and grindest into nothingness. Fie on thy shamelessness! That Sacred Lamp that illuminated the world, the mighty spiritual force by whose merits the world exists, is consumed by thee. Oh, R. Simeon, thou beacon of light, source of light to the world, how hast thou turned to dust, thou leader of the world whilst alive!' After falling for a moment into a reverie, he continued, 'O dust, dust! pride not thyself, for the pillars of the world will not be delivered into thy power, nor will R. Simeon perish within thee.'

R. Hiya then arose weeping and set out in company with R. Jose. He fasted from that day for forty days, in order that he might see R. Simeon. 'Thou canst not see him' was all the answer to his supplication. He then fasted another forty days, at the end of which he saw in a vision R. Simeon and his son R. Eleazar discussing the very subject which R. Jose had just explained to him, while thousands were looking on and listening. Meanwhile, there appeared a host of huge winged celestial beings upon whose wings R. Simeon and his son R. Eleazar were borne aloft into the heavenly Academy, whilst those beings remained at the threshold, awaiting them. Their splendour was constantly renewed, and they radiated a light exceeding that of the sun. R. Simeon then opened his mouth and said, 'Let R. Hiya enter and behold what the Holy One, blessed be He, has prepared for the rejoicing of the righteous in the world to come. Happy is he who enters here without misgiving, and happy is he who is established as a strong pillar in the world to come.' On entering he (R. Hiya) noticed that R. Eleazar

and the other great scholars that were sitting near him stood up. He drew back in some embarrassment, and sat down at the feet of R. Simeon. A voice thereupon went forth, saying, 'Lower thine eyes, raise not thy head and do not look.' He lowered his eyes and discerned a light shining afar. The voice went forth again, saying 'O, ye unseen celestials, ye open-eyed who sweep to and fro throughout the world, behold and see! O, ye terrestrial beings who are sunk deep in slumber, awake! Who among you laboured to turn darkness into light and bitter into sweet before you entered here? Who among you awaited every day the light that shall break forth what time the King shall visit his beloved gazelle, when He will be glorified and called King by all the kings of the world? He who did not thus wait every day in the world below will have no share here.' Meanwhile he beheld a number of his colleagues gather round, even all the mighty pillars of wisdom, and he saw them ascend to the heavenly Academy, while others in turn descended. At the head of them all he saw the chief of the winged angels, who approached him and solemnly declared that he had heard 'from behind the curtain' that the King visits each day and remembers his gazelle which is trodden in the dust, and that at the moment He does so He strikes the three hundred and ninety heavens so they all quake and tremble

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before Him: for her fate He sheds tears hot as burning fire, which fall into the great sea. From these tears arises and is sustained the presiding genius of the sea, who sanctifies the name of the Holy King, and who has pledged himself to swallow up all the waters of the creation and to gather them all within himself on that day when all the nations shall assemble against the holy people, so that they shall be able to pass on dry land. Anon he heard a voice proclaiming, 'Make room, make room, for King Messiah is coming to the Academy of R. Simeon.' For all the righteous there have been heads of Academies on earth, and have become disciples of the heavenly Academy, and the Messiah visits all these Academies and puts his seal on all the expositions that issue from the mouths of the teachers. The Messiah then entered wearing heavenly diadems, with which he had been crowned by the heads of the Academy. All the colleagues stood up, along with R. Simeon, from whom a light shot up to the empyrean. The Messiah said to him, 'Happy art thou, for thy teaching mounts on high in the form of three hundred and seventy illuminations, and each illumination subdivides itself into six hundred and thirteen arguments, which go up and bathe themselves in streams of pure balsam. And the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself places His seal on the teaching of thy Academy and of the Academy of Hezekiah, King of Judah, and of the Academy of Ahijah of Shiloh. I come not to set my seal in thy Academy, since it is the chief of the winged angels who comes here; for I know that he does not visit any but thy Academy.' After that R. Simeon told him what the chief of the winged angels had so solemnly declared. Thereupon the Messiah fell a-quaking, and he cried aloud, and the heavens quivered, and the great sea quaked and the Leviathan trembled, and the world was shaken to its foundations. His eye then fell upon R. Hiya, who was sitting at the

feet of R. Simeon. 'Who has brought here this man,' he asked, 'who still wears the raiment of the other world?' R. Simeon answered, 'This is the great R. Hiya, the shining lamp of the Torah.' 'Let him then,' said the Messiah, 'be gathered in, together with his sons, and let them become members of the Academy.' R. Simeon said, 'Let a time of grace be granted to him.' A time of grace was then granted to him, and he went forth from thence trembling, with tears running from his eyes, saying as he wept, 'Happy is the portion of the righteous in that world and happy is the portion of the son of Yohai who has merited such glory. It is concerning such as he that it is written, "That I may cause those who love me to inherit a lasting possession; and their treasures will I fill" (Prov. VIII, 21.)'

IN THE BEGINNING. R. Simeon opened his discourse with the text: And I put my words in thy mouth (Is. LI, 16). He said: 'How greatly is it incumbent on a man to study the Torah day and night! For the Holy One, blessed be He, is attentive to the voice of those who occupy themselves with the Torah, and through each fresh discovery made by them in the Torah a new heaven is created. Our teachers have told us that at the moment when a man expounds something new in the Torah, his utterance ascends before the Holy One, blessed be He, and He takes it up and kisses it and crowns it with seventy crowns of graven and inscribed letters. When a new idea is formulated in the field of the esoteric wisdom, it ascends and rests on the head of the "Zaddik, the life of the universe", and then it flies off and traverses seventy thousand worlds until it ascends to the "Ancient of Days". And inasmuch as all the words of the "Ancient of Days" are words of wisdom comprising sublime and hidden mysteries, that hidden word of wisdom that was discovered here when it ascends is joined to the words of the "Ancient of Days", and becomes an integral part of them, and enters into the eighteen mystical worlds, concerning which we read "No eye hath seen beside thee, O God" (Ibid. LXIV, 3). From thence they issue and fly to and fro, until finally arriving, perfected and completed, before the "Ancient of Days". At that moment the "Ancient of Days" savours that word of wisdom, and finds satisfaction therein above all else. He takes that word and crowns it with three hundred and seventy thousand crowns, and it flies up and down until it is made into a sky. And so each word of wisdom is made into a sky which presents itself fully formed before the "Ancient of Days", who calls them "new heavens", that is, heavens created out of the mystic ideas of the sublime wisdom. As for the other new expositions of the Torah, they present themselves before

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the Holy One, blessed be He, and ascend and become "earths of the living", then they descend and become absorbed into one earth, whereby a new earth emerges through that new discovery in the Torah. This is implied in the verse, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I am making, rise up before me, etc." (Ibid. LXVI, 22). It is not written "I have made", but "I am making", signifying continual creation out of the new ideas discovered in the Torah. Further, it is written,

"And I have placed my words in thy mouth, and with the shadow of my hand have I covered thee, to plant a heaven and to lay the foundations of an earth" (Ibid. LI, 16). It does not say "the heaven", but "a heaven". ' Said R. Eleazar: 'What signifies "with the shadow of my hand have I covered thee"? ' He replied: 'When the Torah was delivered to Moses, there appeared myriads of heavenly angels ready to consume him with their fiery breath, but the Holy One, blessed be He, sheltered him. Similarly now when the new word ascends and is crowned and presents itself before the Holy One, blessed be He, He covers and protects that word, and also shelters the author of that word, so that the angels should not become aware of him and so be filled with jealousy, until that word is transformed into a new heaven and a new earth. That is the meaning of the passage "and with the shadow of my hand have I covered thee, to plant a heaven and to lay the foundations of an earth". From this we learn that each word of which the purpose is not obvious contains some lesson of special value, as it is written: "And with the shadow of my hand have I covered thee." Why is it covered and hidden from our view? For an ulterior purpose, to wit, "to plant a heaven and to lay the foundation of an earth", as already explained. The verse continues: "And to say to Zion thou art 'Ami, my people" (Ibid.). This means, to say to those gates of study and those words of Zion (distinction) "thou art 'Ami". The word 'Ami (my people) may be read 'Imi (with me), meaning "to be a collaborator with Me"; for just as I made heaven and earth by a word, as it says: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made" (Ps. XXXIII, 6), So dost thou. Happy are those who devote themselves to the study of the Torah! You should not think, however, that all this applies even to one who is no true scholar. Not so. When one who is a stranger to the mysteries of the Torah makes pseudo-discoveries based on an incomplete understanding, that "word" rises, and is met by the perverse One, the Demon of the false tongue, who emerges from the cavern of the great abyss and makes a leap of five hundred parasangs to receive that word. He takes it and returns with it to his cavern, and shapes it into a spurious heaven which is called Tohu (chaos). That Demon then traverses in one swoop the whole of that heaven, a space of six thousand parasangs. As soon as that heaven is formed, the Harlot emerges, and lodges herself in it, and joins forces with it, and issuing from thence she slays thousands and tens of thousands. For as long as she is lodged in that heaven she has authority and power to swoop through the world in the twinkling of an eye. This is implied in the words, "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity" (Is. V, 18). The word for "iniquity", 'Avon, being of the masculine gender, designates the Demon. In the next part of the verse, "and sin, as it were, with a cart rope", the word for "sin", hattaah, being of the feminine gender, signifies the female, the Harlot who rushes to execute slaughter on the sons of men. Concerning her we also read, "For she hath caused to fall many deadly wounded" (Prov. VII, 26), namely, that hattaah (sin) who slays the sons of men. And the ultimate cause is the unripe scholar who is not qualified to teach and yet does so. May God save us from him!' Said R. Simeon to the colleagues: 'I beseech you not to let fall from your mouth any word of the Torah of which you are not certain and which you have not learnt correctly from a

“great tree”, so that you may not be the cause of that Harlot slaying multitudes of the sons of men.’ They answered in unison, ‘God forbid, God forbid!’ R. Simeon proceeded: ‘See now, it was by means of the Torah that the Holy One created the world. That has already been derived from the verse, “Then I was near him as an artisan, and I was daily all his delight” (Prov. VIII, 30). He looked at the Torah once, twice, thrice, and a fourth time. He uttered the words composing her and then operated through her. That is a lesson for men, how to study the Torah properly. This lesson is indicated by the verse, “Then did he see, and declare it; he established it, yea, and searched it out.” (Job. XXVIII, 27). Seeing, declaring, establishing and searching out correspond to these four operations which the Holy One, blessed be He, went through before entering on the work of creation. Hence the account of the creation commences with the four words Bereshith Bara Aelohim Aith (“In-the-beginning created God the”), before mentioning “the heavens”, thus signifying the four times which the Holy One, blessed be He, looked into the Torah before He performed His work.’

R. Eleazar was journeying to visit his father-in-law, R. Jose, son of R. Simeon son of Lakunya

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. He was accompanied by R. Abba, and another man was leading their baggage-ass behind them. Said R. Abba, ‘Let us open a discourse on the Torah, the time and place being propitious.’ R. Eleazar then began thus: ‘It is written: Ye shall keep my Sabbaths (Lev. XIX, 30). Consider this: the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world in six days and each day revealed a part of His work, and functioned through the energy imparted to it. But none of the work was actually disclosed nor the energy functioning until the fourth day. The first three days were undisclosed and imperceptible, but when the fourth day came the product and energy of all of them was brought out into the open. Fire, water, and air, as three primordial elements, were still in suspense, their activity not having become visible until the earth disclosed them and so made knowable the workmanship of each one of them. You may object that in the account of the third day it is written, “Let the earth put forth grass”, as well as “And the earth put forth”. The answer is that, though ascribed to the third day, this actually took place on the fourth day, and it was included in the account of the third day merely to indicate the unbroken continuity of the creation. From the fourth day onwards He disclosed His work and produced an artificer for the function of each one (for the fourth day is the symbol of the fourth leg of the celestial Throne). Furthermore, the activities of all the days, whether of the first or the second triad, were made dependent on the day of the Sabbath, as it is written, “And on the seventh day God finished.” This is the Sabbath, and this is the fourth foot of the celestial Throne. What, then, you may ask, is implied in “My Sabbaths ye shall observe”, which seems to point to two Sabbaths? The answer is that the plural form indicates the eve of Sabbath and the Sabbath itself, which merge into each other without a break.’

At this point the driver who was following them

interposed with the question: ‘What is meant by “And ye shall reverence my sanctuary” (Ibid.)?’ R. Abba replied: ‘This designates the sanctity of the Sabbath.’ ‘What then,’ he said, ‘is the sanctity of the Sabbath?’ ‘It is the sanctity which was conferred upon it from above.’ ‘If that is so’ (argued the stranger) ‘thou makest the Sabbath to possess no sanctity of its own but only such as rests on it from above.’ ‘It is indeed so’ (said R. Abba), ‘as it is written, “And call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord honourable” (Is. LVIII, 13), where the “Sabbath” and the “holy of the Lord” are mentioned each separately.’ ‘What, then, is the “holy of the Lord”?’ ‘It is the holiness which descends from above to rest on it.’ ‘But’ (argued the stranger) ‘if the holiness emanating from on high is called “honourable”, evidently the Sabbath itself is not so called, and yet it is written, “And thou shalt honour it” (Ibid.)’ Said R. Eleazar to R. Abba, ‘Cease arguing with that man, for he seems to know some mystery of which we are ignorant.’ They then said to him: ‘Say what thou hast to say.’ He commenced thus: ‘It is written: ’eth Shabthothai (“My sabbaths”) (Lev. XIX, 30). The particle eth indicates that in the precept of the Sabbath is to be included the limit of the Sabbath walk, which is two thousand cubits in all directions.”My Sabbaths” is a reference to the higher Sabbath and the lower Sabbath, which are two joined together as one. There was still one Sabbath left unmentioned. Feeling humiliated, she pleaded before the Creator, saying, “O Lord of the universe, since the time when Thou didst create me, I have been called merely ‘day of Sabbath’, but surely a day must have for companion a night.” Said the Lord to her, “O my daughter, thou art Sabbath, and Sabbath I will call thee. But I will confer on thee an even more glorious crown.” He then made proclamation, “And ye shall fear my sanctuary” (Ibid.). This is a reference to the Sabbath of the eve of Sabbath, which inspires fear, and upon which fear rests. And it is the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself who identified Himself with her, saying “I am the Lord” (Ibid.). I have further heard’ (continued the stranger) ‘the following exposition from my father. He stressed the particle eth as signifying the limit of the Sabbath walk. “My Sabbaths,” he said, denotes the circle and the square within[Tr. note: The circle, square, and point were used by the Cabbalists to symbolise the three highest Sefiroth. ], and corresponding to these two the sanctification recital consists of two parts, one the verses Genesis II, 1-3, commencing Vaikhulu (and were completed) and the other the sanctification proper (Kiddush). Vaikhulu contains thirty-five words, and the Kiddush contains thirty five words, making together seventy, corresponding to the seventy names of the Holy One, blessed be He, by which the congregation of Israel is crowned. On account of this circle and square, the Sabbaths here referred to come under the injunction of the word “keep” used in the second version of the Ten Commandments (Deut. V, 12) as it is written here, “ye shall keep my Sabbaths”. For the other, the highest Sabbath does not come under the injunction of Shamor (keep), but is under that of Zakhor (remember), which is used in the first version of the Ten Commandments (Exod. XX, 8), since the Supreme King is hinted at in the word Zakhor (remember). For this reason He is called “the King with whom Peace dwells”, and His peace is within the injunction of zakhor (remember). And this is why there is no contention in

the supernal realm, because of the twofold peace here below, one for Jacob and one for Joseph, as it is written, "Peace, Peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near" (Is. LVII, 19): "to him that is far off" refers to Jacob

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, "and to him that is near" refers to Joseph. "To him that is far" is parallel to "From afar the Lord appeared unto me" (Jer. XXXI, 3), as well as to "And his sister stood afar off" (Exod. II, 4); "and to him that is near" is parallel to "new gods who came up since a near time" (Deut. XXXII, 17). "From afar" signifies the supernal point which is situated in His palace, and in regard to which it is said "ye shall keep", thus bringing it under the injunction of shamor (keep). "And my sanctuary ye shall fear" refers to the point which is situated in the centre and which is most to be feared, as the penalty of transgression is death, as it is written, "Everyone that profaneth it shall surely be put to death" (Ex. XXXI, 14); i.e. those who penetrate into the space of the circle-square, treading on the spot where the central point is situated and damaging it-these shall surely be put to death. Of this it is written, "Ye shall fear." That point is called Ani (I) (Lev. XIX, 30), and upon it rests the unknown, the Most High, the unrevealed One which is TETRAGRAMMATON (the Lord), both being one.' R. Eleazar and R. Abba came up to the stranger and kissed him. They said: 'With all this profound knowledge thou hast displayed, is it meet that thou shouldst journey behind us? Who art thou?' they asked him. 'Do not ask,' he said, 'but let us proceed on our way and together let us discourse on the Torah. Let each one say some word of wisdom to illumine our way.' They asked him, 'Who charged thee to make this journey as an ass-driver?' He said to them, 'The letter Yod waged war with the letters Kaph and Samekh, to make them join me. The Kaph refused to leave its place, since it could not exist for a moment elsewhere. The Samekh refused to move from its place lest it should cease to support those that fall. The Yod then came to me all alone and kissed and embraced me. He wept with me and said, "My son, what shall I do for thee? I will go and load myself with a plentitude of good things and of precious, sublime and mystic symbols, and then I will come to thee and help thee and put thee in possession of two celestial letters superior to those that have departed, to wit the word Yesh (plentiffulness), consisting of a celestial Yod and a celestial Shin, so that thou wilt become possessed of stores of riches of all kinds. Go then, my son, and load thy ass." This is why I am travelling in this manner.' R. Eleazar and R. Abba rejoiced; they also wept and said to him, 'Go, ride in front and we will follow thee on the ass.' He said to them, 'Have I not told you that it is the command of the King that I should continue thus until he who will ride on an ass shall appear?' They said to him, 'Thou hast not told us thy name, nor thy habitation.' He answered, 'My habitation is a good one and an exalted one for me-a mighty and imposing tower suspended in the air. In that tower there reside the Holy One, blessed be He, and a certain poor man: and that is my place of habitation. But I have left it and am become an ass-driver.' R. Abba and R. Eleazar gazed at him, and he discoursed to them words as sweet as manna and honey. They said to him, 'If thou

wouldst tell us the name of thy father we would kiss the dust of thy feet.' He said to them, 'Why so? It is not my habit to pride myself on a knowledge of the Torah, but my father inhabited the great sea, he was a huge fish who embraced the great sea from one end to the other; he was mighty and noble and ancient of days so that he would swallow up all the other fishes in the sea and then release them again alive and filled with all the good things of the world. Like a mighty swimmer he could traverse the whole sea in one second. He shot me out like an arrow in the hand of a bowman and hid me in the place I told you of, and he himself returned to his place and is hid in that sea.' R. Eleazar pondered a little and said, 'Thou art the son of the sacred lamp, thou art the son of the venerable Rab Hamnuna, thou art the son of the light of the Torah, and yet thou drivest behind us!' They both wept together and they kissed him and went forward on their way. They further said to him, 'May our master be pleased to let us know his name.' He thereupon began to discourse on the verse: And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, etc. (II Sam. XXIII, 20). 'This verse', he said, 'has been well explained-in addition to its literal meaning-to signify high mysteries of the Torah. "Benaiah the son of Jehoiada" (i.e. son of God, son of knowing-God) contains an allusion to wisdom, and is a symbolic appellation which influences its bearer. "The son of a living man" indicates the "Zaddik, the life of the universe". "Mighty of deeds" signifies the Master of all actions and of all celestial hosts, since all proceed from him; He is the "Lord of hosts", the insignia of all His hosts, yet distinguished and exalted above all. He is "mighty of deeds, from Kabzeel", as if to say: "that great and most mighty tree, from what place comes it, from what grade does it issue? From Kabzeel" (lit. gathering of God), from the highest and hidden grade

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where "no eye hath ever seen, etc." (Is. LXIV, 3), a grade which contains the whole and which is the focus of the supernal light, and from which everything issues. That light is the sacred and hidden temple (Hekal) wherein is concentrated that divine essence from which all the worlds draw sustenance, and all divine hosts are nourished and so subsist. "He smote the strong lion of Moab" is a reference to the two Temples that existed for His sake and drew their strength from Him, namely, the first Temple and the second Temple. But as soon as He departed, the flow of blessing from above ceased; "He", as it were, "smote" them, destroyed them, made an end of them, and the sacred Throne was overturned, as it is written, "as I was among the captives" (Ezek. I, 1), implying that that divine essence called "I" was in captivity. "On the river Khebar" (Ibid.) (Khebar=long ago) means the stream that was once flowing, but the waters and sources of which were cut off so that it flows no more as formerly. The same is implied in the verse "and the river faileth and drieth up" (Job. XIV, 11): "faileth", referring to the first Temple, and "drieth up" to the second Temple. And so "He smote the two strong lions of Moab" (Moab- Meab, of the father), namely the Temples of the Father in heaven, by whom they were now destroyed, so that all lights which illuminated Israel were now darkened. Further, "He went down and smote the lion": formerly when that stream flowed down to here below, Israel was free from

care, offering peace-offerings and sin-offerings to atone for his soul; and from on high descended the image of a lion visible to all, crouching on his prey, consuming the offerings like a mighty giant. All the dogs kept themselves out of sight, fearing to venture abroad. But when sin prevailed He descended to the regions here below and slew that lion, not desiring any more to provide his portion as formerly. He, as it were, slew him: "He smote the lion", most assuredly, "into the pit", that is to say, in the sight of the "evil monster". The same evil monster, seeing this, sent a dog to consume the offerings. The name of the lion is Ariel, as his face is that of a lion; and the name of the dog is Baladon (not-man), for it is a dog and has the face of a dog. "In a day of snow", that is, in the day when on account of Israel's sins sentence was pronounced by the Court on high. (The same is implied in the verse "She is not afraid of the snow for her household" (Prov. XXXI, 21), that is to say, of the judgement on high; why so? "for all her household are clothed with scarlet", and hence can endure the strongest fire.) Such is the mystical meaning of this verse. The next verse reads: "And he smote an Egyptian, a man of good appearance, etc." The mystical meaning of this verse is that every time Israel sins, God leaves them and withholds from them all the blessings and all the lights which illumined them. "He smote an Egyptian": this signifies the light of Israel's great luminary, to wit, Moses, who is called an Egyptian, as it is written, "And they said, an Egyptian delivered us, etc." (Exod. II, 19), for there he was born, there he was brought up and there he was vouchsafed the higher light. "A man of good appearance" (mar'eh) also signifies Moses, of whom it is written "ou-mar'eh (by clear appearance) and not in dark speeches" (Num. XII, 8); so too "man" (ish), as he is called "man of God" (Deut. XXXIII, 1), the husband, as it were, of the Divine glory, leading it whereso he would upon the earth, a privilege no other man had ever enjoyed. "And the Egyptian had a spear in his hand," to wit, the divine rod that was delivered into his hand, as we read: "With the rod of God in my hand" (Exod. XVII, 9), which is the same rod that was created in the twilight of the Eve of Sabbath, and on which there was engraven the Divine Name in sacred letters. With the same rod Moses sinned by smiting the rock, as we read: "And he smote the rock with his rod twice" (Num. XX, 11). The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him "I have not given the rod for that purpose; by thy life, from henceforward it will not be in thy hand any more." Immediately "He went down to him with a rod", i.e. He judged him rigidly, "and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand," for from that moment he lost it and never more regained it. "And slew him with his spear," i.e. through the sin of smiting the rock with that rod he died without entering the Holy Land, and thereby that illumination was withheld from Israel. "He was more honourable than the thirty" (II Sam. XXIII, 23) alludes to the thirty celestial years from which he was taken to be sent down below. "But he attained not to the first three", that is, they (the patriarchs) came to him and gave him whatever he craved, but he did not come to them; and although he did not enter into their number, yet "David put him into his service", that is, David never detached him from his heart,

nor will there ever be any separation between the two. David turned his heart towards him, but he did not turn his towards David, in the same manner as the moon addresses her praises and hymns towards the sun, drawing him to herself to set up, as it were, his abode with her. This is implied in the words "And David put him into his service".

R. Eleazar and R. Abba prostrated themselves before the stranger. Of a sudden they saw him not. They arose and looked on every side, but they saw him not. They sat down and wept and were unable to exchange a word. After a while R. Abba said: 'It is assuredly true as we have been taught, that whenever the righteous on their journey busy themselves with expositions of the Torah, they are favoured by visits from the other world; for it is clear that it was the venerable Rab Hamnuna who appeared to us from the other world to reveal to us all these things, and now before we could recognize him, he has vanished.' They arose and tried to drive the asses, but could not make them go, and again tried, but could not. They became frightened and left the animals behind. That spot is called until this day 'Asses' place.

R. Eleazar commenced to discourse thus: O how great is the abundance of thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, etc. (Ps. XXXI, 20). 'How great is the heavenly bounty which the Holy One, blessed be He, hath reserved for those who excel in righteousness, who shun sin and devote themselves to the study of the Torah, when they ascend to the world to come. It is not written simply "thy goodness", but "abundance of thy goodness", the same expression as in the verse "They utter the fame of the abundance of thy goodness" (Ps. CXLV, 7), to wit, the delight which the righteous enjoy in the world to come in the presence of the Everlasting who is "abundant in goodness towards the house of Israel" (Is. LXIII, 7). We may also find enshrined in this passage a mystery of wisdom, in which all other mysteries are enclosed. We translate: "O Mah, great is thy goodness, etc." Mah ("How" or "What") has already been explained. Rab ("abundant" or "great") alludes to the strong and mighty tree: there is another and a smaller tree, but this one is tall, reaching into the highest heaven. "Thy goodness" alludes to the light that was created on the first day. "Which thou hast laid up for those who fear thee", since He has treasured it up for the righteous in the world to come: "which thou hast wrought" alludes to the higher Gan-Eden (Garden-of-Eden, Paradise), as it is written, "The place, O Lord, which thou hast wrought for thy dwelling" (Exod. XV, 17), to wit, "Thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee". "In the sight of the sons of men" alludes to the lower Gan-Eden where all the righteous abide, as spirits clad in a resplendent vesture resembling their corporeal figure in this world; this is meant by "in the sight of man", i.e. presenting the likeness of the people of this world. They stay there for a time, then rise in the air and ascend to the celestial Academy, which is the Gan-Eden above; then they rise again and bathe in the dewy rivers of pure balsam, and then descend and remain below, and sometimes they appear to men to perform for them miracles in the manner of angels, as we have just seen the light of the "Sacred Lamp", without, however, being vouchsafed an insight into the mysteries of Wisdom, so far as we

could have wished.' R. Abba said: 'It is written, "And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judg. XIII, 22). Although Manoah was ignorant of the object of the apparition, he nevertheless argued, "Since it is written 'for man shall not see me and live' (Exod. XXXIII, 20), and as we certainly saw Him, we shall therefore die." And we were privileged to see that light which accompanied us, and we are still alive, because the Holy One, blessed be He, sent it to us in order to reveal to us the mysteries of Wisdom. Happy is our portion!

They continued their journey and reached a certain hill at sunset. The branches of the trees on the hill began to shake and rustle and broke forth into hymns. Whilst walking, they heard a resounding voice proclaim: 'Holy sons of God, who are interspersed among the living of yonder world, ye who are the lamps of the Academy, reassemble into your places to regale yourselves, under the guidance of your Master, in the study of the Torah.' In fear and trembling they stopped and sat down. Meanwhile, a voice went forth again and proclaimed: 'O, ye mighty rocks, exalted hammers, behold the Lord, lo, Him whose appearance is as a brodered pattern of many colours, mounted on His throne: enter then into your place of assembly.' At that moment they heard a loud and mighty sound issuing from between the branches of the trees, and they uttered the verse: 'The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars' (Ps. XXIX, 5). R. Eleazar and R. Abba fell upon their faces and a great fear came over them. They then arose in haste and went on their way, and heard nothing more. They left the hill, and when they reached the house of R. Simeon the son of Lakunya they saw there R. Simeon the son of Yohai, and they rejoiced

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exceedingly. R. Simeon said to them, 'Assuredly ye traversed a path of heavenly miracles and wonders, for as I was sleeping just now I had a vision of you and of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, who was sending you two crowns by the hand of a certain elder to crown you withal. Assuredly the Holy One, blessed be He, was on that path. Further, I saw your faces as if transfigured.' R. Jose remarked: 'Well have ye said that "the sage is superior to the prophet".' R. Eleazar then approached and put his head between the knees of his father and told him all that had happened to them. R. Simeon trembled and wept. 'O Lord, I have the report of thee, and I am afraid' (Habak. III, 2), he said. 'This verse did Habakkuk exclaim at the time when he reflected on his own death and his resurrection through Elisha. Why was he named HaBaKkuK? Because it is written, "At this season when the time cometh round, thou shalt be embracing (HoBeKeth) a son" (II Kings IV, 16), and he-Habakkuk-was the son of the Shunammite. He received indeed two embracings, one from his mother and one from Elisha, as it is written, "and he put his mouth upon his mouth" (Ibid. 34). In the Book of King Solomon I have found the following: He (Elisha) traced on him the mystic appellation, consisting of seventy-two names. For the alphabetical letters that his father had at first engraved on him had flown off when the child died; but when Elisha embraced him he engraved on him anew all those letters of the seventy-two names. Now the number of

those letters amounts to two hundred and sixteen, and they were all engraved by the breath of Elisha on the child so as to put again into him the breath of life through the power of the letters of the seventy-two names. And Elisha named him Habakkuk, a name of double significance, alluding in its sound to the twofold embracing, as already explained, and in its numerical value (H. B. K. V. K. =8. 2. 100. 6. 100) to two hundred and sixteen, the number of the letters of the Sacred Name. By the words his spirit was restored to him and by the letters his bodily parts were reconstituted. Therefore the child was named Habakkuk, and it was he who said: "O Lord, I have heard the report of thee, and I am afraid" (Habak. III, 2), that is to say, I have heard what happened to me, that I tasted of the other world, and am afraid. He then commenced to supplicate for himself, saying, "O Lord, Thy work which Thou hast accomplished for me, "in the midst of the years", I pray, "let its life be". For he who is bound up with the cycles of past years has life bound up with him. "In the midst of the years make it known", to wit, that stage in which there is no life.' R. Simeon then wept and said: 'I also from what I have heard am seized with fear of the Holy One, blessed be He.' He then raised his hands above his head and said, 'What a privilege it was for you to see face to face the venerable Rab Hamnuna, the light of the Torah-a privilege I have not been granted.' He then fell on his face and saw him uprooting mountains, and kindling the lights in the temple of the Messiah. R. Hamnuna, addressing him, said, 'Master, in this other world thou wilt be the neighbour of the teachers of the Law in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He.' From that time onward R. Simeon named R. Eleazar his son and R. Abba Peniel (face of God), in allusion to the verse, "For I have seen God face to face" (Gen. XXXII, 31).

IN THE BEGINNING. R. Hiya opened his discourse thus: The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord; A good understanding have all they that do hereafter. His praise endureth for ever (Ps. CXI, 10). He said: 'Instead of "the beginning of wisdom" it would be more appropriate to say "the end of wisdom is the fear of the Lord", since the fear of the Lord is the final object of wisdom. The Psalmist, however, speaks of the highest order of wisdom, which can only be reached through the gate of the fear of God. This is implied in the verse "Open to me the gates of righteousness.... This is the gate of the Lord..." (Ps. CXVIII, 19-20). Assuredly, without entering through that gate one will never gain access to the most high King. Imagine a king greatly exalted who screens himself from the common view behind gate upon gate, and at the end, one special gate, locked and barred. Saith the king: He who wishes to enter into my presence must first of all pass through that gate. So here the first gate to super-Wisdom is the fear of God; and this is what is meant by reshith (beginning). The letter Beth (=2) indicates two things joined together, namely two points, one shrouded in mystery and one capable of being revealed; and as they are inseparable they therefore are both joined in the single term reshith (beginning), i.e. they are one and not two, and he who takes away the one takes away the other as well. For He and His name are one, as it is written "That they may know that thou and thy name of Lord art alone" (Ps. LXXXIII, 19). Why is this first gate called "the fear of the Lord"? Because it is the

tree of good and evil. If a man deserves well it is good, and if he deserves ill it is evil.

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Hence in that place abides fear, which is the gateway to all that is good. "Good" and "understanding" are two gates which are as one.' R. Jose said: 'The term "A good understanding" alludes to the tree of life which is the knowledge of good without evil. "To all that do hereafter": these are "the sure mercies of David" (Is. LV, 3), viz. they who support the study of the Torah. For they who support the study of the Torah are, we may say, doing something, whereas those who are merely occupied in its study are for the time being not doing. Through this activity "his praise endureth for ever", and the Throne abides on its base securely.'

R' Simeon was sitting and studying the Torah during the night when the bride was to be joined to her husband. [Tr. note: i.e. the eve of Pentecost.] For we have been taught that all the members of the bridal palace, during the night preceding her espousals, are in duty bound to keep her company and to rejoice with her in her final preparations for the great day: to study all branches of the Torah, proceeding from the Law to the Prophets, from the Prophets to the Holy Writings, and then to the deeper interpretations of Scripture and to the mysteries of Wisdom, as all these represent her preparations and her adornments. The bride, indeed, with her bridesmaids, comes up and remains with them, adorning herself at their hands and rejoicing with them all that night. And on the following day she does not enter under the canopy except in their company, they being called the canopy attendants. And when she steps under the canopy the Holy One, blessed be He, enquires after them and blesses them and crowns them with the bridal crown: happy is their portion!

Hence R. Simeon and all the companions were chanting the Scripture with exultation, each one of them making new discoveries in the Torah. Said R. Simeon to them, 'O my sons, happy is your portion, for on the morrow the bride will not enter the bridal canopy except in your company; for all those who help to prepare her adornments to-night will be recorded in the book of remembrance, and the Holy One, blessed be He, will bless them with seventy blessings and crown them with crowns of the celestial world.' R. Simeon opened his discourse thus: The heavens declare the glory of God, etc. (Ps. XIX, 2). He said: 'The inner meaning of this verse is as follows. When the bride awakes on the morn of her wedding day, she begins to prepare her ornaments and decorations with the aid of the companions who have rejoiced with her all that night, as she with them. On that day there assemble in her honour hosts upon hosts, awaiting each one of those who have helped in her adornment on the previous night. As soon as the bride beholds her spouse, "the heavens declare the glory of God". "The heavens" are the bridegroom, who enters under the bridal canopy. "Declare" (meSaPeRim) signifies that they radiate a brilliance like that of a sapphire, sparkling and scintillating from one end of the world to the other. "The glory of El" (God) signifies the glory of the bride which is called El (God), as it is written "and El (God) hath indignation every day" (Ps. VII, 12); all

the days of the year it is called El (God), but now when she enters under the bridal canopy it is called Glory. It is also at the same time still called El (God), signifying glory on glory, splendour on splendour, and dominion on dominion. Thus, at that time when heaven enters into the canopy and irradiates her, all those companions who joined in her adornment have their names recorded there above, as it is written, "and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ibid. XIX, 2), the words "his handiwork" being an allusion to those who have entered into a covenant with the bride. The confederates of the covenant are called "the works of his hands", as we read "the work of our hands establish thou it" (Ps. XC, 17) This is an allusion to the covenant that is engraven on man's body.'

Rab Hamnuna discoursed thus: Suffer not thy mouth to bring thy flesh into guilt (Eccl. V, 5). 'This is a warning to man not to utter with his mouth words that might suggest evil thoughts and so cause to sin the sacred body on which is stamped the holy covenant. For he who does this is dragged into Gehinnom. The angel presiding over Gehinnom is called Duma, and there are tens of thousands of angels of destruction under him. He stands at its door, but those who have carefully guarded the sign of the holy covenant he has no power to touch. David, after his affair with Uriah, was in great fear. Duma entered into the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, and said:

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"O Lord of the universe, it is written in the Torah: 'And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, etc.' (Lev. XX, 10), and it is also written 'And with thy neighbour's wife, etc.' (Ibid. XVIII, 20). Now, David has misused the sign of the holy covenant; what shall be done to him?" Said the Holy One, blessed be His name: "David is pure, and the holy covenant remains untouched inasmuch as at the creation of the world it was revealed before Me that Bath-Sheba was assigned to him."

' "If before Thee it was revealed, yet it was not revealed to him."

"And further, what was done was done lawfully, since every one who goes out to war first gives a bill of divorcement to his wife."

' "Even so, he ought to have waited three months, which he did not."

' "That rule only applies where there is a risk that she may be pregnant. In this case, however, it is known to Me that Uriah never came in unto her, in witness whereof My name is sealed in his, as he is sometimes called URiYaH and sometimes URiYaHU to show that he never had intercourse with her."

' "O Lord of the universe, I must repeat my plea. If to Thee it was manifest that Uriah never came in unto her, was it manifest unto David? He ought then to have waited three months. Further, if David was aware that he never came near her, why then did he send an order to him to go home and visit his wife, as it is written, 'Go down to thy house and wash thy feet' (II



Sam. XI, 8)?”

“He certainly was not aware of it, and indeed he waited even more than three months, namely, four months, as we have been taught: The twenty-fifth day of Nisan David called the people to arms, and the people assembled under Joab on the seventh of Sivan, when they went and smote the Ammonites. They remained there the months of Sivan, Tamuz, Ab, and Elul, and on the twenty-fourth of Elul happened the incident of Bath-Sheba. And on the day of Kippur (Atonement) the Holy One, blessed be He, forgave him that sin. According to another account, on the seventh day of Adar David called the people to arms, and they assembled on the fifteenth of Iyar, and on the fifteenth of Elul happened the incident of Bath-Sheba, and the day of Kippur he was vouchsafed the message: ‘The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die’ (Ibid. XII, 13), to wit, thou shalt not die at the hand of Duma.”

“O Lord of the universe, I have still one argument, that he himself pronounced his doom, saying: ‘As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this deserveth to die’ (Ibid. 5). He thereby condemned himself, and my charge against him stands.”

“Thou hast no power over him since he made confession to Me and said ‘I have sinned against the Lord’, although he was not guilty. As for his sin in the matter of Uriah, I prescribed a penalty for him which he suffered immediately.

Duma returned then crestfallen to his place. It is in regard to this that David said: “Unless the Lord had been my help, but a little would have been wanting that my soul had dwelt in duma” (silence) (Ps. XCIV, 17). That is, if the Lord had not been my advocate, “it wanted but little, etc.” Only by the hairbreadth which is between me and the “Sinister Power” did my soul escape from the clutches of Duma. A man should therefore be on his guard not to let slip an incautious word like David, since he will not be able to plead with Duma “that it was an error” (Eccl. V, 5), like David, who was vindicated by the Holy One, blessed be His Name; “wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?” (Ibid.), i.e. the flesh of the holy covenant which the man has defiled and which, as a punishment, is stretched in Gehinnom at the hand of Duma.’

[R. Simeon resumed:] “The words “And the firmament showeth his handiwork” (Ps. XIX, 2) are an allusion to the companions who kept the bride company and are the custodians of her covenant. Every one of them He telleth and inscribeth. The “firmament” here mentioned is that one wherein are the sun, the moon, the stars, and constellations, and which constitutes the Recording Book. He telleth and inscribeth every one of them as denizens of the heavenly Palace, whose desires shall always be accomplished. “Day unto day uttereth speech” (Ibid. 3); each sacred day of the heavenly days utters the praises of the companions and repeats each word of exposition which was exchanged between them: day unto day expresses that word and extols it. “And night unto night revealeth knowledge” (Ibid.): that is, all the

forces ruling in the night extol to one another the deep knowledge of the companions, and become their devoted friends. “There is no speech, there are no words, neither is their voice heard” (Ibid. 4): this refers to worldly conversation, which is not heard by the holy King, nor does He desire to hear it. But as for those words of wisdom, “their line is gone out through all the earth” (Ibid. 5), they trace

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the measure and the plan of all celestial and all terrestrial habitations: it is indeed through those words that the heavens were made, and it is through the praises sung in those words that the earth was made. Nor think that they rest only in one spot: we are told “and their words to the end of the earth” (Ibid.). Who, then, inhabits the heavens made by them? “In them hath he set a tent for the sun” (Ibid.): the sacred sun has made his habitation in them and is crowned in them. Thus we read “And he is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber” (Ibid. 6), gaily coursing through those heavens. When he emerges from them and hastens to another tower in another place, “his going forth is from the end of the heavens” (Ibid. 7), he issues from the supernal world, which is as the “extremity of heaven” above. “His circuit” (Ibid.) is the extremity of heaven” below, viz. the circuit of the year, which goes completely round and extends from the heaven to our firmament. “And there is nothing hid from his heat” (Ibid.), i.e. from the heat of this circuit, and from the circuit of the sun, which embraces every side; from this “nothing is hid”, i.e. no one of all the upper grades is hid from him, since all come round to him, and not one is hidden “from his heat” when he returns to them in full strength. All this praise and laudation is on account of the Torah (Law), as we read, “The Law of the Lord is perfect, etc.” (Ibid. 8-10). We find in this passage six times the mention of the Lord (tetragrammaton) as well as six verses from “The heavens declare” up to “The Law of the Lord is perfect”. Likewise the first word of the Torah, Bereshith (in the beginning) consists of six letters, and the rest of the first verse, “created God the heaven and-the earth”, also consists of six words. The six verses of our text correspond to the six letters, and the six mentions of the Name correspond to the six words.’

Whilst they were sitting there entered his son, R. Eleazar, and R. Abba. He said to them: ‘Of a certainty the face of the Shekinah has arrived, and it is for this reason that I named you Peniel, because you have seen the Shekinah face to face. And now that you have learnt the secret of the verse concerning Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, an exposition indeed emanating from the Ancient and Holy One, as well as of the verse following, I am going to expound to you another even more mysterious verse in another passage.’ He then opened his discourse thus: ‘It is written, And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high (I Chr. XI, 23). There is here the same hidden meaning as in the verses just mentioned. By “the Egyptian” is meant that well-known figure who was “very great in the land of Egypt in the eyes of the servants, etc.” (Exod. XI, 3). He was great and honoured, as Rab Hamnuna explained. In the heavenly Academy, however, the words ish middah (man of dimension) were explained

as “one whose dimensions extended from one end of the world to the other”, which were the dimensions of the first man, Adam. Those “five cubits”, then, must have been such as to extend from one end of the world to the other. To return, however: “And in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam” (I Chr. XI, 23). This alludes to the divine rod which was in Moses' hand, and on which there was engraved the divine ineffable Name radiating in various combinations of letters. These same letters were in possession of Bezalel, who was called “weaver”, and his school, as it is written: “Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart... of the craftsman and the skilled workman, and the weaver, etc.” (Exod. XXXV, 35). So that rod had engraved on it the ineffable Name on every side, in forty-two various combinations, which were illumined in different colours. The rest of the verse is as he already explained. Happy is his portion! Come, dear friends, come and let us renew the preparations of the bride in this night. For everyone who keeps vigil with her in this night will be guarded above and below and will complete the year in peace. It is of them that it is written: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them: O consider and see that the Lord is good.” (Ps. XXXIV, 8-9).’

R. Simeon opened his discourse thus: ‘It is written, In the beginning God created. This verse must be well laid to heart, for he who affirms that there is another god will be destroyed from the world. It is written: Thus shall ye say unto them: The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens. (Jer. X, 11). Why has this verse

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been written in Aramaic, with the exception of the last word? It cannot be because the holy angels do not pay attention to Aramaic and do not understand it, for then all the more was it appropriate for this verse to be written in Hebrew, so that the angels should acknowledge its doctrine. The true reason certainly is that the angels, since they do not understand Aramaic, shall not come to be jealous of man and do him evil. For in this verse the holy angels are comprised, as they are called Elohim (gods, powers), and yet they have not made heaven or earth. Instead of wear'ka (and the earth) there should have been written the proper Aramaic word wear'a. Arka, however, is one of the seven nether earths, the place inhabited by the descendants of Cain. When Cain was banished from the face of the earth, he descended into that land and there propagated his kind. That earth consists of two sections, one enveloped in light, the other in darkness, and there are two chiefs, one ruling over the light, the other over the darkness. These two chiefs were at perpetual war with each other, until the time of Cain's arrival, when they joined together and made peace; and therefore they are now one body with two heads. These two chiefs were named 'Afrira and Kastimon. They, moreover, bear the likeness of holy angels, having six wings. One of them had the face of an ox and the other that of an eagle. But when they became united they assumed the image of a man. In time of darkness they change into the form of a two-headed serpent, and crawl like a serpent, and swoop into the

abyss, and bathe in the great sea. When they reach the abode of Uzza and Azael they stir them up and rouse them. These then leap into the “dark mountains”, thinking that their day of judgement has come before the Holy One, blessed be His Name. The two chiefs then swim about in the great sea, and when night comes they fly off to Na'amah, the mother of the demons (shedim), by whom the first saints were seduced; but when they think to approach her she leaps away six thousand parasangs, and assumes all shapes and forms in the midst of the sons of men, so that the sons of men may be led astray after her. These two chiefs then fly about through the world, and return to their abode, where they arouse sensual desires in the descendants of Cain to bear children. The heaven above that earth is not like ours, nor are the seasons of seed and harvest the same as ours, but they only return after cycles of many years. “These Elohim”, then, “who have not made heaven and earth [may] perish from” the upper earth of the universe, so that they should have no dominion there, should not traverse it and should not cause men to pollute themselves “through anything that chanceth by night”; and for that “they will perish from the earth and from underneath the heaven” which were made in the name of Eleh, as has been explained above. It is for that reason that this verse has been written in Aramaic, so that the angels should not think that they are alluded to and so bring accusations against us. This, too, is the secret of the last word, to wit, Eleh, which being a sacred name, could not be altered into Aramaic.’

R. Eleazar said to his father: ‘Regarding what is written in the same passage, Who will not fear thee, O King of the Gentiles? For it befitteth thee (Jer. X, 7), is this such a high eulogy?’ His father said to him: ‘Eleazar, my son, this passage has been variously explained, but for its full meaning we must go to its continuation, which reads: For among all the wise men of the Gentiles, and in all their royalty, there is none like unto thee. (Ibid.) The purpose of this verse is to express the view of the sinners, who fancy that God does not know their thoughts, and to answer them according to their folly. Once,’ he continued, ‘a Gentile philosopher came to visit me and argued with me thus: You say that your God rules in all the heights of heaven, and that all the heavenly hosts and legions cannot approach Him and do not know His place. If so, then this verse, saying “For among all the wise men of the Gentiles, and in all their royalty there is none like unto thee”, does not extol Him very highly, for what special glory is there for Him not to find among perishable men His like?’

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And further, you infer from the passage which says “And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses” (Deut. XXXIV, 10), that only in Israel hath there not arisen, but among the other nations of the world there did arise one like him; and on this analogy I am justified in inferring that only among the wise of the Gentiles there is none like Him, but among the wise of Israel there is. If that is so, such a God, the like unto whom is to be found among the wise men of Israel, cannot be all-powerful. Look closely into the verse and you will find that it bears out my inference. I replied to

him: Indeed, what you say is actually true. Who raises the dead to life? Only the Holy One alone, blessed be He; yet Elijah and Elisha came and raised the dead to life. Who causes rain to fall? Only the Holy One alone, blessed be He; yet Elijah came and kept back the rain and then made it descend again, through his prayer. Who made heaven and earth? The Holy One alone, blessed be He; yet Abraham came and they were firmly established for his sake. Who regulates the course of the sun? None but the Holy One, blessed be He; yet Joshua came and ordered it to stand still in its place and it stood still, as it is written, "And the sun stood and the moon stayed" (Jos. X, 13). The Holy One blessed be He, issues decrees, but similarly Moses issued decrees, and they were fulfilled. Further, the Holy One, blessed be He, pronounces judgements and the righteous of Israel annul them, as it is written, "The righteous ruleth the fear of God" (II Sam. XXIII, 3). And further, He commanded them to follow literally in His ways, and to be like Him in every way. That philosopher then went to K'far Shekalim and became a proselyte, and was given the name of Jose Katina (humble), and he studied the Torah diligently until he became one of the most learned and pious men of that place.'

'Now,' continued R. Simeon, 'we must look more closely into this verse. We remark at once that another passage says: "All the nations are as nothing before him" (Is. XL, 17). What special glorification is then here expressed? Is He only the King of the Gentiles and not the King of Israel? the explanation is this. We find in every place in the Scriptures that the Holy One, blessed be He, has desired to be glorified only by Israel and has attached His name to Israel only; so it is written: "The God of Israel", "the God of the Hebrews" (Exod.V, 1, 3), and further: "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel" (Is. XLIV, 6). The nations of the world therefore said: We have another Patron in heaven, since your King has dominion only over you alone and not over us. Hence the verse comes and says: "Who would not fear thee, O King of the Gentiles? Forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations", alluding thereby to the great chiefs in heaven appointed over the Gentiles. The expression "and in all their royalty there is none like unto thee" alludes to the celestial government, inasmuch as there are four rulers on high who, by the will of God, rule over all the other nations; and for all that, not one of these has the power to do the smallest thing except as He commands them, as it is written: "And he doth according to his will in the host of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. IV, 32). "The wise ones of the Gentiles" are, then, the heavenly superintendents from whom they draw their wisdom; and the phrase "and in all their royalty" implies the heavenly over-lords of the nations, as has just been explained. This is the plain meaning of the passage. But in ancient books I have found it expounded as follows. Although these heavenly hosts and legions (who are "the wise of the nations and their royalty") have the control of the affairs of this world and have each their mission allotted to them, who of them can accomplish the least thing "like unto thee"? For Thou excellest in Thy work on high and below above all of them. "There is not like unto thee, O Lord", that is, What Holy Unknown is there who acts and is like Thee above and below, and is on an equality with Thee in all

respects? The work of the Holy King is heaven and earth, but "they are vanity, and their costly idols cannot profit" (Is. XLIV, 9). Of the Holy One, blessed be He, it is written, "In the beginning God created etc.", but of the lower royalty it is written "And the earth was chaos and confusion".

Said R. Simeon to the companions: 'Come all you that participate in this bridal festivity, let each one of you prepare a decoration for the bride.' To R. Eleazar his son he said: 'Eleazar, offer a present to the heavenly bride so that on the morrow thou mayest be deemed worthy to behold her when she enters under the bridal canopy amidst the songs and hymns of the heavenly retinue.' R. Eleazar then opened his discourse thus: Who is this that cometh up ('Olah) out of the wilderness? (S. S. III, 6). The words Mi (Who?) and zoth (this) denote the separate holinesses of the two worlds joined in firm bond and union; and this union is said to be 'olah (a burnt-offering), and so holy of holies. For Mi is holy of holies, and zoth through its union with this becomes a burnt-offering ('olah), which is holy of holies. "Out of the wilderness," because she had to come forth from there in order to become the heavenly bride and to enter under the nuptial canopy. Further, the term midbar (wilderness) signifies speech, as we read, "and thy speech (oumidbarekh) is comely" (Ibid. IV, 3): by that midbar which is the utterance

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of the lips she goes up. Further, we have been taught as follows: It is written "these mighty gods; these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness" (bamidbar) (I Sam. IV, 8). What does this verse mean? Was it only in the wilderness that the Lord showed them all His great deeds, and not in inhabited country? Not so, only the term bamidbar means "by means of the word", analogous to the expression "and thy speech (oumidbarekh) is comely" (S. S. IV, 3), or to the expression "and from the word (oumimidbar) did the mountains arise" (Ps. LXX, 7). Similarly here, "she rises up out of the word", that is, by means of uttered words she mounts up and nestles between the wings of the Mother, and then by the same means she descends and rests on the heads of the holy people. Her ascent is effected thus. At the beginning of the day, when a man rises in the morning, it is his duty to bless his Master as soon as he opens his eyes. The pious men of old used to have by them a cup of water, and when they awoke in the night they washed their hands and rose and occupied themselves in the study of the Torah, having first pronounced the appropriate blessing. When the cock crows it is precisely midnight, and at that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, is to be found in company with the righteous in the Garden of Eden (Gan-Eden). It is therefore proper then to pronounce the benediction and study the Torah; but one may not pronounce the benediction with unclean hands. So, too, at any time that one rises up from his sleep. For whilst a man is asleep his soul departs from him and an impure spirit comes forth and settles on his hands and defiles them: hence one may not pronounce a blessing without first washing them. Why then, one may ask, is it forbidden, after one has been in a privy, to pronounce a blessing or to read even one word of

the Torah, even in the daytime, without washing the hands, although one has not been asleep, so that one's soul did not depart, and one's hands have not been defiled by an evil spirit? Why is it forbidden even if one's hands are quite clean? The answer is: woe to those who pay no heed to the majesty of their Master, and do not realise on what this world is founded. There is in every privy a spirit which feasts on filth and excrement, and settles forthwith on the fingers of a man's hands.'

R. Simeon further discoursed as follows: 'He who rejoices on the festivals but does not give to the Holy One, blessed be He, His due share, is selfish, the Satan tries to injure him and accuses him before heaven, compasses his downfall, and causes him endless trouble. To give the portion of the Holy One, blessed be He, means to make glad the poor, according to one's ability. For on these days the Holy One, blessed be He, goes to look at those broken vessels of His: He comes to them, and, seeing that they have nothing with which to rejoice on the festival, He weeps over them and reascends on high with intent to destroy the world. The members of the heavenly Academy then present themselves before Him and plead: "O Lord of the universe, Thou art called gracious and merciful, let Thy compassion be moved upon Thy children." The Lord makes answer: "Verily I have made the world only on the foundation of mercy, as it is written: 'I have said, the world is built on mercy' (Ps. LXXXIX, 3), and the world is established on it." Then the heavenly angels proceed: "O Master of the universe, behold so-and-so, who eats and drinks and is in a position to give charity but neglects to do so." Then the Accuser comes and, having claimed and obtained permission, sets out in pursuit of that man. Whom have we in the world greater than Abraham, whose benevolence extended to all creatures? Once, we are told, he prepared a feast, as it is written: "And the child grew, and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned" (Gen XXI, 8). To that feast Abraham invited all the great men of the age. Now we have been taught that whenever a banquet is given, the Accuser comes to spy out whether the owner has first dispensed charity and invited poor people to his house. If he finds that it is so, he departs without entering the house. But if not, he goes in and surveys the merry-making, and having taken note that no charity had been sent to the poor nor had any been invited to the feast, he ascends above and brings accusations against the owner. Thus, when Abraham invited to his feast the great men of the age, the Accuser came and appeared at the door in the guise of a poor man, but no one took notice of him. Abraham was attending on the kings and magnates; Sarah was giving suck to all their babes; for people did not believe that she had born a child, and said that it was only a foundling from the street, and so all the guests brought their infants with them, and Sarah suckled them in the presence of all, as it is written, "Who would have said

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unto Abraham that Sarah should give children suck?" (Ibid. 7) (note the plural "children"). The Accusing Angel was still standing at the door when Sarah said: "God

hath made laughter for me" (Ibid. 6). The Accusing Angel then presented himself before the Holy One, blessed be He, and said to Him: "O Master of the world, Thou hast said 'Abraham is my friend'; behold, he has made a feast and has not given anything to Thee nor to the poor, nor hath he offered up to Thee so much as one pigeon; and further, Sarah said that Thou hast made mock of her." The Lord made answer: "Who in this world can be compared to Abraham?" Nevertheless the Accusing Angel did not stir from thence until he had spoilt all the festivity; and the Lord after that commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac as an offering, and it was decreed that Sarah should die from anguish on account of her son's danger-all this because Abraham did not give anything to the poor.'

R. Simeon further discoursed thus: 'It is written, Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord. (Is. XXXVIII, 2.) Observe how powerful is the might of the Torah, and how it surpasses any other force. For whoso occupies himself in the study of the Torah has no fear of the powers above or below, nor of any evil haps of the world. For such a man cleaves to the tree of life, and derives knowledge from it day by day, since it is the Torah that teaches man to walk in the true path, and gives him counsel how to repent and return to his Master so that He may annul the evil decreed against him; nay, even if it has been further decreed that it shall not be annulled, yet it is annulled and no longer threatens that man in this world. Hence it is incumbent upon a man to occupy himself in the study of the Torah day and night without cessation, in accordance with the text, "and thou shalt meditate therein day and night" (Jos. I, 8); and if he abandons such study, it is as though he abandoned the tree of life. Here, then, is a wise counsel for man. When a man goes to bed of a night, he should acknowledge wholeheartedly the kingship of heaven, and should entrust his soul to the keeping of heaven: he will then immediately be guarded against all diseases and evil spirits, and they will have no power over him. In the morning, when he rises from his bed, he should bless his Master, proceed to His house, bow down before His sanctuary with awe, and then offer up his prayer. For this, he must take counsel of the holy patriarchs, as it is written: "But as for me, in the abundance of thy lovingkindness will I come into thy house: I will bow down towards thy holy temple in the fear of thee" (Ps. V, 8). This verse has been interpreted to imply that a man should not enter the Synagogue without first taking counsel of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for the reason that it is they who instituted prayer to the Holy One, blessed be He. Thus, in the verse just mentioned, the words "but as for me, in the abundance of thy lovingkindness will I come into thy house" are an allusion to Abraham; "I will bow down towards thy temple", to Isaac; "in the fear of thee", to Jacob. It is fitting, then, to invoke their names first and then enter the synagogue to offer up one's prayer. Of such a one it is written: "And he said unto me, Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Is. XLIV, 3).

R. Phineas was a frequent visitor at the house of R. Rehumai, who lived on the shore of the lake of Gennesareth. He was a man of note, well advanced in years, and had lost his sight. Said he one day to R. Phineas: 'Verily I have heard that our colleague Yohai

possesses a precious jewel. [Tr. note: His son, R. Simeon.] I did look at that jewel, and it flashed like the radiance of the sun when he emerges from his sheath, and flooded the world with a light which radiated from heaven to earth and spread to the whole world, until the Ancient of Days was duly enthroned. That light is wholly contained in thy household, and from that light there emanates a tiny and tenuous ray which is shed abroad and illumines the whole world. Happy is thy portion! Go forth, my son, go forth and try to find that gem which illumines the world, for the hour is propitious.' R. Phineas took his leave and embarked in a boat in the company of two other men. He noticed two birds which were flying to and fro over the sea, and cried to them: 'Birds, birds, ye that fly about over the sea, have ye seen anywhere the resting-place of the son of Yohai?' He paused a while and then said: 'Birds, birds, go your way and bring me answer.' They flew away and disappeared in the distance, but before R. Phineas left the boat they returned, and one of them was holding in its mouth a written note stating that the son of Yohai had left the cave together with his son Eleazar. R. Phineas then went to visit him, and found him sadly changed, with his body full of sores. He wept

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and said: 'Woe unto me that I see thee thus!' He replied: 'Happy is my portion that thou seest me thus, for otherwise I would not be what I am.' R. Simeon then opened his discourse on the precepts of the Torah. He said: 'The precepts of the Torah which the Holy One has given to Israel are all laid down in the first chapter of Genesis in summary. In the Beginning God created. [Tr. note: The remainder of this chapter is more in the style of the Ra'yah Mehemnah than of the Zohar.] This contains the first precept of all, to wit, the fear of the Lord, as it is written: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. CXI, 10), as well as: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. I, 7). It is the beginning and the gateway of faith, and on this precept the whole world is established. There are three types of fear: two have no proper root, while the third is the real fear. There is the man who fears the Holy One, blessed be He, in order that his children may live and not die, or lest he be punished in his body or his possessions; and so he is in constant fear. Evidently this is not the genuine fear of God. Another man fears the Holy One, blessed be He, because he is afraid of punishment in the other world and the tortures of Gehinnom. This is a second type which is not genuine fear. The genuine type is that which makes a man fear his Master because He is the mighty ruler, the rock and foundation of all worlds, before whom all existing things are as nought, as it has been said: "and all the inhabitants of the earth are as nought" (Dan. IV, 32), and place his goal in that spot which is called yir'ah (fear).' R. Simeon here wept and said: 'Woe to me if I tell and woe to me if I do not tell! If I tell, then the wicked will know how to worship their Master; and if I do not tell, then the companions will be left in ignorance of this discovery. Corresponding to the "holy fear" there is an "evil fear" below which scourges and accuses, and which is a lash for punishing the wicked. Now he whose fear is of punishment and accusation is not endowed with that fear of God which leads to life. The fear which rests upon him is that evil fear of the

lash, but not the fear of the Lord. For this reason the spot which is called "the fear of the Lord" is also called "the beginning of knowledge". Hence this precept is laid down here, as it is the principle and root of all the other precepts of the Torah. He who cherishes fear observes the whole Torah, and he who does not cherish fear does not observe the other precepts of the Torah, since it is the gate of all. Therefore it is written: Bereshith, through a beginning, that is, fear, God created heaven and earth. For he who transgresses this transgresses all the precepts of the Torah; and his punishment is to be scourged by the evil lash. This is implied in the words: "And the earth was chaos and confusion (tohu wabohu), and darkness was upon the face of the abyss." This is an allusion to the four kinds of punishment which are meted out to the wicked: tohu (chaos) alludes to strangulation, as it is written: "a line of (tohu) chaos" (Is. XXXIV, 11), meaning a measuring cord. Bohu (confusion) alludes to stoning ("stones of confusion", *ibid.*) by the stones which are sunk in the great abyss for the punishment of the wicked; "Darkness" is burning, as it is written: "And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain did burn with fire," (Deut. V, 20), also: "and the mountain burned with fire into the heart of heaven and darkness, etc." (*Ibid.* IV, 11): this is the fire that rests on the heads of the wicked to consume them. The "wind" alludes to beheading by the sword, which whirls round the wicked like a tempest, as it is said: "and the flaming sword which is turned every way" (Gen. III, 24). These punishments are meted out to those who transgress the precepts of the Torah, and the words which allude to them follow immediately after the word "beginning", which symbolises the fear of God, which is the summary of all the precepts. Then follow all the other precepts of the Torah.

'The second precept is the one which is indissolubly bound up with the precept of fear, namely, love; that a man should love his Master with a perfect love, that which is called "great love". This is implied in the command: "walk before me, and be thou wholehearted" (Gen. XVII, 1), to wit, in love. This is implied also in the verse: And God said, Let there be light, which alludes to the perfect love, called great love. Herein, then, is the precept for man to love his Master truly.' Said R. Eleazar, 'Father, I have heard a definition of perfect love.' His father said to him 'Expound it, my son, whilst R. Phineas is present, for he truly practises it.' R. Eleazar then explained thus: ' "Great love" is the love which is complete through the union of two phases, without which it is not

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genuine love; and this is signified by the dictum that the love of the Holy One, blessed be He, has two aspects. There is, for instance, the man who loves Him because he has riches, length of life, children, power over his enemies, success in all his undertakings—all these form the motive of his love. Should the Holy One, blessed be He, turn the wheel of fortune against him and bring suffering upon him, he will change and his love will be no more. This kind of love has no root. Perfect love is the kind which remains steadfast in both phases, whether of affliction or prosperity. The right way of loving one's Master is expressed in the traditional

teaching which says: “even if he deprive thee of thy life”. This is, then, perfect love, embracing two phases. It was for this reason that the light of creation which first emerged was afterwards withdrawn. When it was withdrawn suffering emerged, in order that there might be this perfect love.’ R. Simeon embraced his son and kissed him; R. Phineas also came and kissed him and blessed him, saying: ‘Of a surety, the Holy One, blessed be He, sent me hither, and this is the meaning of the “tiny light” which I was told was somewhere in my household and would illumine the whole world.’ Said R. Eleazar: ‘Assuredly, fear must not be forgotten in any of the precepts, least of all in this precept of love, which requires the association of fear. How is this to be achieved? In this way. Love, as has been said, may in one phase be inspired by favours, such as riches, length of life, children, plenty, and affluence. In such cases a man should be ever haunted by the fear lest sin may cause a reversal. Of such a one it is written: “Happy is the man that feareth always” (Prov. XXVIII, 14), since he combines fear and love. The “adverse influence” (sitra ahra) which brings suffering and chastisement is therefore necessary in the world, since it rouses in man fear: for through chastisement a man becomes filled with the true fear of God, and does not harden his heart; for if he does, then “he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into evil” (Ibid.), to wit, into the hands of that “adverse influence” which is called “evil”. Thus we have a love which is complete in both phases, and from this results a true and perfect love.

‘The third precept is to acknowledge that there is a God, all-powerful and ruler of the universe, and to make due proclamation of his unity every day, as extending in the six supernal directions, and to unify them all through the six words contained in the Shema Israel, and in reciting these to devote oneself wholly to God. The word Ehad therefore must be dwelt on to the length of six words. This is implied in the passage, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place: that is, let the grades beneath the heaven be unified in it so as to form one whole, perfect in all the six directions. With God's unity one must further associate fear, for which reason one must dwell on the dalet, the last letter of Ehad, the dalet being for that reason written larger than the other letters. And this is implied in the words “and let the dry land be seen”, that is, let the dalet, which is a “dry land”, be associated with that unity. After forming this union on high it is necessary to repeat the process for the lower world through all its multiplicity in the six lower directions. This is expressed in the verse we recite after the Shema, viz. “Blessed-be the-name-of the-glory-of His-Kingdom for-ever and-ever”, which contains another six words expressive of the unity. In this way, what was dry land becomes fertile soil to produce fruits and flowers and trees. This is implied in the passage: “And God called the dry land earth”, that is, by the manifestation of God's unity here below the earth was duly perfected. It is for this reason that in the account of the third day the expression “that it was good” appears twice, once for the manifestation of the unity above and once for the manifestation of the unity below. As soon as that unity was made manifest at both ends, the text says “Let the earth put forth grass”, that is, the earth was then fitted to produce fruits and flowers according to its capacity.

‘The fourth precept is to acknowledge that the Lord is God, as we read: “Know this day, and lay it to thy heart that the Lord, he is God” (Deut. IV, 39); namely, to combine the name Elohim (God) with the name Tetragrammaton (Lord) in the consciousness that they form an indivisible unity. And this is the inner meaning of the text: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven. The omission of the vau from the word emoroth (lights) points to complete unity, to the black light and the white light being only two manifestations of one indivisible light.

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The same is symbolised by the “white cloud by day” and the “cloud of fire by night” (Exod. XIII, 21); the two phases of day and night are complementary to each other, both forming one whole, in order-as we read- “to give light upon earth”. Herein consisted the sin of the primeval serpent who united below but divided above, and so caused the mischief we still lament. The right way, on the contrary, is to recognise diversity below but unity above, so that the black light becomes wholly merged above and afterwards unified in respect of its diverse elements, and so is kept away from the evil power. It is therefore necessary for man to acknowledge that “God” and “the Lord” are one and the same without any cleavage whatever: “The Lord he is God” (I Kings XVIII, 39); and when mankind will universally acknowledge this absolute unity, the evil power (sitra ahra) itself will be removed from the world, and exercise no more influence on earth. This is hinted in the word meoroth, which is made up of or (light), surrounded by moth (death), just as the brain, symbolic of light, is enveloped in a membrane symbolic of the baneful power (sitra ahra) which is death. Should the light (or) be removed, the letters on either side would coalesce and form death (moth)....

‘The fifth precept. It is written: And God said, Let the waters swarm with the movement of living creatures. This verse contains three precepts-to labour in the study of the Torah, to beget children, and to circumcise a male child on the eighth day by removing the foreskin. It behoves a man to labour in the study of the Torah, to strive to make progress in it daily, so as thereby to fortify his soul and his spirit: for when a man occupies himself in the study of the Torah, he becomes endowed with an additional and holy soul, as it is written: “the movement of living creatures”, that is, a soul (nefesh) derived from the holy centre called “living” (hayah). Not so is it with the man who does not occupy himself with the study of the Torah: such a man has no holy soul, and the heavenly holiness does not rest upon him. But when a man earnestly studies the Torah, then the motion of his lips wins for him that “living soul” and he becomes as one of the holy angels, as it is written: “Bless the Lord, ye angels of his” (Ps. CIII, 20), to wit, those who occupy themselves in the study of the Torah, and who are therefore called His angels on earth. The same are alluded to in the words: “and let birds fly on the earth”. So much for his reward in this world. As regards the other world, we have been taught that the Holy One, blessed be He, will provide them with wings as of eagles, enabling them to fly across the whole universe, as it is written: “But they that wait for

the Lord shall renew their strength, then shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Is. XLIV, 31). This, then, is the interpretation of that which is written: "Let the waters swarm with the movement of living creatures": the Torah, which is symbolised by water, possesses the virtue of implanting in her devotees a mobile soul derived from the place called "living" (hayah), as has already been said. David alluded to this when he said: "Create in me a clean heart, O God", so that I may be devoted to the Torah, and thus "renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. LI, 12).

'The sixth precept is to be fruitful and multiply. For he who performs this precept causes the stream (of existence) to be perennially flowing so that its waters never fail, and the sea is full on every side, and new souls are created and emerge from the "tree" (of life) and the celestial hosts are increased in company with those souls. This is implied in the words: Let the waters swarm with the movement of living souls. This is an allusion to the holy and imperishable covenant, to the perennially rushing stream, the waters of which continually swell and produce new swarms of souls for that "living" (hayah). Along with the souls as they arise there appear many winged beings who fly about all over the world, and whenever a soul descends into this world the winged being that issued together with it from that tree accompanies it. Two accompany each soul, one on its right hand, and one on its left. If the man is worthy they constitute themselves his guardians, as it is written: "For he will give his angels charge over thee" (Ps. XCI, 11), but if not, they act as his accusers.' Said R. Phineas: 'Three

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is the number of angels who keep guard over a man who is worthy, as it is written: "If there be for him an angel, an intercessor, one among a thousand, to vouch for man's uprightness" (Job. XXXIII, 23). "If there be for him an angel" signifies one; "an intercessor" signifies another one; "one among a thousand to vouch for man's uprightness" is a third one.' R. Simeon said: 'Five angels, since it is written further: "And He is gracious unto him, and saith". "And he is gracious unto him" implies one, "and saith" implies another one.' R. Phineas replied: 'It is not so, as the expression "And he is gracious unto him" refers only to the Holy One, blessed be He, no one else having the power to dispense grace.' Said R. Simeon: 'You are right. Now' (he continued) 'he who refrains from propagating his kind derogates, if one might say so, from the general form in which all individual forms are comprehended, and causes that river to cease its flow and impairs the holy covenant on all sides. Of such a one it is written, "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have rebelled against me" (Is. LXVI, 24)-' against me" assuredly. This is the punishment for the body, and as for his soul, she will not enter at all "within the curtain", and will be banished from the next world.

'The seventh precept is to circumcise the male child on the eighth day after birth and thereby to remove the defilement of the foreskin. The "living" (hayah) of which we have spoken forms the eighth grade in the scale, and hence the soul which has flown away from it must appear before it on the eighth day. And in this way it is

made clear that this is really a "living soul", emanating from that holy "living" and not from the "unholy region". And this is alluded to in the words: Let the waters swarm, which in the Book of Enoch are explained thus: Let the water of the holy seed be stamped with the stamp of the "soul of the living", which is the form of the letter yod impressed on the holy flesh in preference to all other marks. The words, "and let winged beings fly on the earth" are a reference to Elijah, who traverses the universe in four swoops in order to be present at the initiation of the child into the holy covenant. It is proper to prepare for him a seat and to proclaim, "This is the throne of Elijah"; otherwise he will not be present. The words "And the Lord created the two great fishes" refer to the two operations, circumcision and uncovering, which represent the male and female principles; "and every living soul that moves" refers to the stamping of the sign of the holy covenant, which is a holy living soul, as has been explained. "Wherewith the waters swarmed": to wit, the supernal waters which were drawn towards that distinguishing mark. And it is for that reason that the Israelites were stamped with that sign of holiness and purity; for just as the supernal holy beings are marked in such a way as to distinguish between the "holy region" and the impure "unholy region", so the Israelites are marked in order to distinguish between the holy people and the idolatrous nations who are derived from the impure "unholy region", as has been already explained. And in the same way as the Israelites themselves are marked, so are the clean animals and birds permitted to them for food marked off from the other animals and birds eaten by the Gentiles. Happy the portion of Israel!

'The eighth precept is to love the proselyte who comes to be circumcised and to be brought under the wings of the "Divine Presence" (Shekinah), which takes under its wings those who separate themselves from the impure "unholy region" and come near unto her, as it is written: Let the earth bring forth a living soul according to its kind. Think not that the same "living soul" which is found in Israel is assigned to all mankind. The expression "after its kind" denotes that there are many compartments and enclosures one within the other in that region which is called "living", beneath its wings. The right wing has two compartments, which branch out from it for two other nations who approach Israel in monotheistic belief, [Tr. note: Al. "are most closely related to Israel."] and therefore have entrance into these compartments. Underneath the left wing there are two other compartments which are divided between two other nations, namely Ammon and Moab. All these are included in the term "soul of the living". There are besides under each wing other concealed enclosures and divisions from whence there emanate souls which are assigned to all the proselytes who enter the fold-these are indeed termed "living soul", but "according to its kind": they all enter under the wings of the Shekinah, and no farther. The soul of Israel, on the other hand, emanates from the very body of that tree and from thence flies off into the very bowels of that earth. This is hinted in the words: "For ye shall be a delightful land" (Mal. III 12). It is for that reason that Israel is called a "darling son", for whom the bowels, as it were, of the Shekinah yearn, and that the children of Israel are called "those who are born from the womb", and not merely from the outer wings. Furthermore,

the proselytes have no portion in the celestial tree, much less in the body of it; their portion is only in the wings and no more. The righteous proselytes, therefore, rest underneath the wings of the Shekinah and are united to it there, but penetrate no further, as has already been explained. Therefore we read: Let the earth bring forth a living soul according to its kind, namely, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind, that is to say, all derive their soul from that source called "living", but each according to its kind, from the grade appropriate to itself.

'The ninth precept is to show kindness to the poor and to provide them with their needs, as it is written: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; that is, "let us make man", as a compound being, including the male and female, "in our image", to wit, the rich; "after our likeness", to wit, the poor. For the rich are from the male side and the poor from the female. For as the male and the female act in cooperation, showing compassion to each other and mutually exchanging benefits and kindnesses, so must man here below act rich and poor in co-operation, bestowing gifts upon each other and showing kindness to each other. We have seen the following mystical observation in the Book of King Solomon. He who of his own impulse shows pity to the poor will retain for ever unchanged the original form of the first man, and by that impress of the likeness of Adam he will exercise dominion over all creatures of the world. This is implied in the words: "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, etc." (Gen. IX, 2), that is, all and every one will be in fear and in dread of that image which characterises man. For this is a noble precept, by means of which man can rise in the image of Adam above all other creatures. This we know from Nebuchadnezzar who, in spite of the dream that he had seen, as long as he showed mercy to the poor suffered no evil effects; but as soon as he selfishly neglected the poor, what do we read about him? "While the word was in the King's mouth, etc." (Dan. IV, 28), his image changed and he was driven from men....

'The tenth precept is to put on tephillin (phylacteries), and thereby to attain in oneself the perfection of the divine image, according to that which is written: And the Lord created man in His own image.' R. Simeon discoursed in this connection on the text "Thy head upon thee is like Carmel" (S. S. VII, 6). 'This verse,' he said, 'has already been explained in a way, but its true meaning is as follows: "Thy head upon thee is like Carmel" alludes to the phylactery worn on the head above, containing four sections of the Torah which represent each one of the four letters of the Divine Name (Tetragrammaton) of the most high King. Our teachers have told us that the verse: "that the name of the Lord is called upon thee, and they shall be afraid of thee" (Deut. XXVIII, 10) alludes to the phylactery worn on the head which represents the Divine Name in order of its letters. Thus, the first section, "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, etc." (Exod. XIII, 2) represents the Yod, which is the first of all the supernal sanctities; "whatsoever openeth the womb" (Ibid.) is an allusion to the slender stroke underneath

the yod which opens the womb to bring forth fitting fruit. The second section, "And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee, etc." (Ibid. 5) represents the He, significant of the palace the womb of which was opened by the Yod. It is through fifty mysterious gates and forecourts and enclosures that the Yod makes an opening and enters that palace, causing the sound to issue from the great Shofar. For the Shofar was closed on all sides and the Yod came and opened it to cause the emission of its sound; and as soon as he opened it he emitted a blast as a signal for the freeing of the slaves. It was at the blowing of that Shofar that the Israelites went forth from Egypt. And the same will be repeated at the end of days. Indeed, every deliverance is preceded by the blowing of that Shofar. Hence the deliverance from Egypt is included in this section, since it resulted from that Shofar when under the pressure of the Yod it opened its womb and produced its sound as a signal for the deliverance of the slaves. So much as regards the He, the second letter of the Divine Name. The third section contains the mystery of the unity in the proclamation: "Hear, O Israel, etc." (Deut. VI, 4), and is represented by the Vau, which is the summary of all, expressive of absolute unity, combining and absorbing all. The fourth section "And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken, etc." (Ibid. XI, 13-21) presents the two influences

to which the Congregation of Israel-the manifestation of God's power below-is subjected. This, then, is represented by the second He, which takes up the previous letters and contains them. The phylacteries are thus literally the counterpart of the letters of the Divine Name. Hence "Thy head upon thee is like Carmel" is an allusion to the phylactery worn on the head; and the "hair (dallath, lit. poverty) of the head" signifies the phylactery worn on the hand, which is poor in comparison to that worn on the head above, but which nevertheless has its own perfection like that which it symbolises above. "The King is held captive in the tresses thereof", that is, the heavenly King is duly enshrined in these compartments of the Tephillin through the Divine Name therein contained in manner due. Thus he who equips himself with them is a man made in the image of God, for just as the letters of Holy Name are united to express the divine essence, so in a degree they are united by him (through the phylacteries). "Male and female he created them" is a reference to the phylactery of the head and the phylactery of the hand, which together make one whole.

'The eleventh precept is to give the tithe of the produce of the land. This includes two precepts, one the tithing of the land and the other the giving of the first fruits of the trees; for it is written: Behold I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth. The expression "I have given" is applied to tithe in the passage: "And unto the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel" (Num. XVIII, 21), and it is written besides: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's" (Lev. XXVII, 30).

'The twelfth precept is to bring as an offering the



fruits of the tree, which is alluded to in the words: and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, that is, although whatever is consecrated to God may not be eaten by man, yet God permitted them (the Levites) to enjoy all His tithe and the first fruit of the tree. I have given to you; that is, to you and not to the generations in the future.

'The thirteenth precept is to redeem the first-born son so as to attach him firmly to life. For every man is attended by two angels, one of life and one of death, and by redeeming his first-born son the father ransoms him from the angel of death, who therefore has no power over him. This is hinted in the words: And God saw everything that he had made, to wit, creation as a whole, and, behold it was good; this alludes to the angel of death. Through the act of redemption, then, the life-angel is strengthened, whilst the death-angel is weakened. By means of this redemption the child obtains life, as has already been stated; the evil power leaves him and has no more hold on him.

'The fourteenth precept is to observe the Sabbath day, which was the day of rest from all the works of Creation. This precept comprises two parts, one to rest on the Sabbath, and one to invest it with holiness. We have to observe that day as a day of rest, as has already been said, for the reason that it was a day of rest from the beginning, the whole work of Creation having been completed before this day was sanctified. After the day was sanctified there was left a residue of spirits for which no bodies had been created. Why, it may be asked, could not God have waited to sanctify the day until He had created bodies for those spirits? The reason is that from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil there went forth the "evil power" to seize control of the world, and so a number of diverse spirits set out to acquire for themselves bodies by force. As soon as the Holy One, blessed be He, saw this, He raised out of the tree of life a wind that blew and lashed against the other tree so that the "beneficent power" arose and the day was sanctified. For the creation of bodies and the stirring of spirits on that night comes about under the influence of the "beneficent power" and not of the "evil power". Had the "evil power" forestalled on that night the "beneficent power", the world could not exist, on account of the evil spirits, for an instant. But the Holy One, blessed be He, provided the cure in advance; He hastened the sanctification of the day before the evil power prevailed, and so the world was established, and instead of the evil power becoming master of the world as it thought to be, on that night it was the "beneficent power" which obtained the victory, and therefore sacred bodies and spirits are being built up on that night under the influence of the "beneficent power". It is for that reason that the marital intercourse of the wise and learned men who know this

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is weekly, from Sabbath to Sabbath. It is, moreover, the night on which the "evil power", being supplanted by the "beneficent power", roams about the world, accompanied by his many hosts and legions, and pries into all places where people perform their conjugal intercourse immodestly and by the light of a candle, with the result that the children born of such intercourse

are epileptics, being possessed by spirits of that "evil power," which are the nude spirits of the wicked, called demons (shedim); these are pursued and killed by the demon Lilith. As soon as the day is sanctified the evil power becomes weakened and withdraws into hiding all the night and day of the Sabbath, with the exception of Assimon and his band, who roam about to spy out indecent intercourses and then go and hide themselves in the cave of the great abyss. As soon as Sabbath ends, innumerable hosts and companies of them commence to fly and roam to and fro through the world, and it is to ward them off that the recitation of the Hymn against Calamities (Ps. XCI) has been instituted, so as to destroy their power over the holy people. When, after issuing precipitately to obtain dominion over the holy people, they see them engaged in prayer and hymns, reciting the "Separation" (Habdalah) in the course of the prayer and afterwards over the cup, they flee and wander about until they reach the wilderness. May the Merciful One deliver us from them and from the evil power! Our teachers, of blessed memory, said: There are three persons who bring evil upon themselves. One is the man who utters a curse against himself; a second, he who throws on the floor pieces of bread of the size of an olive; the third, he who lights his candle at the close of the Sabbath before the congregation has reached the recital of the "Sanctification" at the close of the service, for thereby he causes the fire of Gehinnom to be kindled by that light before its time. There is a place in Gehinnom assigned for those who profane the Sabbath, and those who undergo there their punishment curse the man who has lighted a candle before the time and pronounce against him the verse: "Behold the Lord will hurl thee up and down with a man's throw, yea, he will wind thee round and round" (Is. XXII, 17). For it is not lawful to kindle a light at the close of the Sabbath before Israel has pronounced the "Separation Blessing" in the prayer and the "Separation Blessing" over the cup, as until that time it is still Sabbath, and the sanctity of the Sabbath still rests on us. At the moment, however, when we recite the "Separation Blessing" over the cup, all the armies and camps which have charge over the weekdays return each to its place and to its appointed service. For with the entrance of the Sabbath and at the moment when it is sanctified, holiness awakens and spreads its dominion over the world, and worldliness is divested of its rule, and until the close of the Sabbath they do not return to their place; and even when the Sabbath closes they do not return to their places until the Israelites pronounce the words, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who separateth the holy from the profane." Then holiness withdraws and the armies appointed over the weekdays rouse themselves and return each to its place and office. But yet they do not assume control until they become illumined through the light of the candle, for which reason they are called "fiery lights", because they spring from the fiery element, which gives them the power to rule over the terrestrial world. All this is only when a man lights a candle before the congregation has finished the recital of the "Sanctification" at the close of prayer. But when he waits until the close of that recital, the wicked in Gehinnom acknowledge the justice of the Holy One, blessed be He, and confirm for that man the blessings which the congregation recite in the words "So God give thee of the dew of heaven,

etc.” (Gen. XXVII, 28), as well as: “Blessed shalt thou be in the field, etc.” (Deut. XXVIII, 3).

“Happy is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the day of evil” (Ps. XLI, 2). We should have expected “in the evil day”; but the expression “the day of evil” alludes to the day when the “evil power” obtains permission to seize man’s soul. Hence, “Happy is he that considereth the poor”, to wit, the man sick of soul, so as to heal him of his sins before the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He. According to an alternative interpretation, “the day of evil” alludes to the last day of judgement of the world from which such a one will be delivered, as it says: “in the day of evil the Lord will deliver him”, to wit, the day when the world is placed in the power of that evil one to chastise it. [Tr. note: The text breaks off here abruptly.]

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### **BERESHITH**[Tr. note: v. Appendix I.]

At the outset the decision of the King made a tracing in the supernal effulgence, a lamp of scintillation, [Tr. note: al. ‘darkness’; al. ‘measurement’]. and there issued within the impenetrable recesses of the mysterious limitless a shapeless nucleus [Tr. note: al. ‘vapour’.] enclosed in a ring, neither white nor black nor red nor green nor of any colour at all. When he took measurements, he fashioned colours to show within, and within the lamp there issued a certain effluence from which colours were imprinted below. The most mysterious Power enshrouded in the limitless clave, as it were, without cleaving its void, remaining wholly unknowable until from the force of the strokes there shone forth a supernal and mysterious point. Beyond that point there is no knowable, and therefore it is called Reshith (beginning), the creative utterance which is the starting-point of all.

It is written: And the intelligent shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever (Dan. XII, 3). There was indeed a “brightness” (Zohar). The Most Mysterious struck its void, and caused this point to shine. This “beginning” then extended, and made for itself a palace for its honour and glory. There it sowed a sacred seed which was to generate for the benefit of the universe, and to which may be applied the Scriptural words “the holy seed is the stock thereof” (Is. VI, 13). Again there was Zohar, in that it sowed a seed for its glory, just as the silkworm encloses itself, as it were, in a palace of its own production which is both useful and beautiful. Thus by means of this “beginning” the Mysterious Unknown made this palace. This palace is called Elohim, and this doctrine is contained in the words, “By means of a beginning (it) created Elohim.” The Zohar is that from which were created all the creative utterances through the extension of the point of this mysterious brightness. Nor need we be surprised at the use of the word “created” in this connection, seeing that we read further on, “And God created man in his image” (Gen. I, 27). A further esoteric interpretation of the word Bereshith is as follows. The name of the starting-point of all is Ehyeh (I shall be). The holy name when inscribed at its side is Elohim, but when inscribed by circumscription [Tr. note:

i.e. between the two Ehyeh’s. v. Ex. III, 4.] is Asher, the hidden and recondite temple, the source of that which is mystically called Reshith. The word Asher (i.e. the letters, Aleph, Shin, Resh from the word Bereshith) is anagrammatically Rosh (head), the beginning which issues from Reshith. So when

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the point and the temple were firmly established together, then Bereshith combined the supernal Beginning with Wisdom. Afterwards the character of that temple was changed, and it was called “house” (bayith). The combination of this with the supernal point which is called rosh gives Bereshith, which is the name used so long as the house was uninhabited. When, however, it was sown with seed to make it habitable, it was called Elohim, hidden and mysterious. The Zohar was hidden and withdrawn so long as the building was within and yet to bring forth, and the house was extended only so far as to find room for the holy seed. Before it had conceived and had extended sufficiently to be habitable, it was not called Elohim, but all was still included in the term Bereshith. After it had acquired the name of Elohim, it brought forth offspring from the seed that had been implanted in it.

What is this seed? It consists of the graven letters, the secret source of the Torah, which issued from the first point. That point sowed in the palace certain. three vowel-points, holem, shureq, and hireq, which combined with one another and formed one entity, to wit, the Voice which issued through their union. When this Voice issued, there issued with it its mate which comprises all the letters; hence it is written Eth hashammim (the heavens), to wit, the Voice and its mate. This Voice, indicated by the word “heaven”, is the second Ehyeh of the sacred name, the Zohar which includes all letters and colours, in this manner. Up to this point the words “The Lord our God the Lord” (Tetragrammaton Elohenu Tetragrammaton) represent three grades corresponding to this deep mystery of Bereshith bara Elohim. Bereshith represents the primordial mystery. Bara represents the mysterious source from which the whole expanded. Elohim represents the force which sustains all below. The words eth hashammim indicate that the two latter are on no account to be separated, and are male and female together. The word eth consists of the letters aleph and tau, which include between them all the letters, as being the first and last of the alphabet. Afterwards he was added, so that all the letters should be attached to he, and this gave the name attah (Thou); hence we read “and Thou (ve-attah) keepest all of them alive” (Neh. IX, 6). Eth again alludes to Adonai (Lord), who is so called. Hashammim is Tetragrammaton in its higher signification. The next word, ve-eth, indicates the firm union of male and female; it also alludes to the appellation ve-Tetragrammaton (and the Lord), both explanations coming to the same thing. Ha-aretz (the earth) designates an Elohim corresponding to the higher form, to bring forth fruit and produce. This name is here found in three applications, and thence the same name branches out to various sides.

Up to this point only extend the allusions to the Most

Mysterious who carves out and builds and vivifies in mysterious ways, through the esoteric explanation of one verse. From this point onwards bara shith, "he created six", from the end of heaven to the end thereof, six sides which extend from the supernal mystic essence, through the expansion of creative force from a primal point. Here has been inscribed the mystery of the name of forty-two letters.

And the intelligent shall shine (Dan. XII, 3). This "shining" corresponds to the movement given by the accents and notes to the letters and vowel-points which pay obeisance to them and march after them like troops behind their kings. The letters being the body and the vowel-points the animating spirit, together they keep step with the notes and come to a halt with them. When the chanting of the notes marches forward, the letters with their vowel-points march behind them, and when it stops they also stop. So here: "the intelligent" correspond to the letters and the vowel-points; "the brightness" to the notes; "the firmament" to the flow of the chant through the succession of notes; while "they that turn to righteousness" correspond to the pausal notes, which stop the march of the words and bring out clearly the sense. These "cause to shine" letters and vowels, so that they all flow together in their own mystical manner through secret paths. From this impetus the whole was extended. Again, the words "and the intelligent shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" may be referred to the pillars and sockets of the "celestial palanquin" (apiryon). [Tr. note: v. p. 110.] The "wise and intelligent" as the supernal pillars and sockets, since they ponder with understanding all things needful for the upholding of the palace. This use of the term "intelligent" (maskilim) has its parallel in the passage: "Blessed is he that considereth (maskil) the poor" (Ps. XLI, 2). "They will shine", for if they do not shine and give light, they cannot well consider and ponder the needs of the palace. "As the brightness of the firmament",

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namely, of that firmament which rests upon those "intelligent" we have mentioned, and of which it is written, "And over the head of the Hayyah there was the likeness of a firmament, like the colour of the terrible ice" (Ezek. I, 22). "The brightness" is that which illumines the Torah, and which illumines also the heads of the Hayyah, those heads being the "intelligent", who shine continually and ever contemplate the "firmament" and the light which issues therefrom, to wit, the light of the Torah which radiates perpetually without cease.

NOW THE EARTH HAD BEEN VOID AND WITHOUT FORM. The word hoithah (was), being a pluperfect, implies that the earth had been previously. There was snow in the midst of water, from the action of which was produced a slime. Then a mighty fire beat upon it and produced in it a refuse. So it was transformed and became Tohu (chaos), the abode of slime, the nest of refuse, and also Bohu (formlessness), the finer part which was sifted from the Tohu and rested on it. The word "darkness" in the text alludes to this mighty fire. This darkness covered the Tohu, namely the refuse, and was buoyed up by it. The "spirit of God" is a holy spirit that proceeded from

Elohim Hayyim (living God),

and this "was hovering over the face of the waters". When this wind blew, a certain film detached itself from the refuse, like the film which remains on the top of boiling broth when the froth has been skimmed off two or three times. When Tohu had thus been sifted and purified, there issued from it "a great and strong wind rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks", like that which Elijah saw (I Kings XIX, 11, 12). Similarly Bohu was sifted and purified, and there issued from it earthquake, as with Elijah. 'Ihen what we call "darkness" was sifted, and there was contained in it fire, just as to Elijah there appeared "after the earthquake fire". When what we call "spirit" was sifted, there was contained in it a still, small voice. Tohu is a place which has no colour and no form, and the esoteric principle of "form" does not apply to it. It seems for a moment to have a form, but when looked at again it has no form. Everything has a "vestment" except this. Bohu, on the other hand, has shape and form, namely, stones immersed in the chasm of Tohu, but sometimes emerging from the chasm in which they are sunk, and drawing therefrom sustenance for the world. Through the form of their vestment they draw sustenance from above to below, and ascend from below above, and therefore they are hollow and strong. These are suspended in the expanse; that is to say, sometimes they are suspended in the expanse when they rise out of the chasm, and sometimes they are hidden, to wit, on the "day of cloud", when they draw waters from the abyss to supply therewith Tohu, for then there is joy that Tohu was spread in the universe. "Darkness" is a black fire, strong in colour. There is a red fire, strong in visibility; a yellow fire, strong in shape; and a white fire, the colour which includes all. "Darkness" is the strongest of all fires, and this it was which took hold of Tohu. "Darkness" is fire, but fire is not darkness, save when it takes hold of Tohu. The symbol for this is, "his eyes were dim so that he could not see, and he called Esau, etc." (Gen. XXVII, 1). Here, too, "the countenance of the evil one was darkened" because it countenanced the evil one. Hence this fire is called "darkness" because it rested upon Tohu and took hold of it; this is the inner meaning of the words "and darkness on the face of the abyss". "Spirit" is the voice which rests on Bohu, and grasps it and guides it as required. This is symbolised in the words "The voice of the Lord is on the waters" (Ps. XXIX, 3); and so, too, "the spirit of the Lord was hovering over the face of the waters". By "face of the waters" is meant stones sunk in the abyss, so called because waters issue from them. Thus each was provided as befitted. Tohu is under the aegis of the name Shaddai; Bohu, under that of Zebaoth; Darkness, under that of Elohim; Spirit, under that of Tetragrammaton. We now understand what happened to Elijah: "there was a strong wind breaking the mountains, but the Lord was not in the wind", because this name was not in it, since Shaddai presides over it through the mystic nature of Tohu. "After the wind there was a quaking, but the Lord was not in the quaking", since over it presides the name of Zebaoth, through the mystic nature of Bohu (which is called "quaking" (ra'ash), because it quakes continually. "After the quaking there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire", because over it presides the name Elohim from the side of darkness. "And after the fire

there was a small still voice"; and here at last was found the name Tetragrammaton. There are in this verse four clauses corresponding to the four so-called "sections of the body" and "limbs" which, being four, are resolvable into twelve. Here, too, is the graven name of twelve letters which was transmitted to Elijah in the cave.

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[Note: The first 27 lines of the English translation do not correspond to the Hebrew text. Line 28 of the English text corresponds to the passage beginning on line 5 of the Hebrew text.]

AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT; AND THERE WAS LIGHT. From this point we can begin to discover hidden things relating to the creation of the world in detail. For up to this point the Creation has been described in general, and lower down the general description is repeated, so that we have a combination of general-particular-general. [Tr. note: i.e. according to the Rabbinical system of hermeneutics, the 'general' (heaven-and-earth) is of the same nature as the 'particular' (days), being like them the product of a 'saying']. Up to this point the whole was suspended in the void in direct dependence on the limitless. When, however, energy had been extended through the supernal palace alluded to in the name Elohim, the term "saying" is used in connection with it, in the words "And God said". For to that which is beyond no detailed "saying" is ascribed; for although the word Bereshith is a creative utterance (maamar), the actual words "and said" are not used in connection with it. This expression "and said" (vayomer) opens the door to inquiry and understanding. We define this "saying" as an energy that was culled, as it were, in silence from the mystic limitless through the mystic power of thought. Hence "and God said" means that now the above-mentioned palace generated from the holy seed with which it was pregnant. While it brought forth in silence, that which it bore was heard without. That which bore, bore in silence without making a sound, but when that issued from it which did issue, it became a voice which was heard without, to wit, "Let there be light." Whatever issued came forth under this category. The word Yehi (let there be) indicates that the union of the Father and Mother symbolised by the letters Yod He became now a starting-point (symbolised by the second Yod) for further extension.

LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT. These words imply that there had already been light. This word, awr (light), contains in itself a hidden significance. The expansive force proceeding from the hidden recesses of the secret supernal ether opened a path and produced from itself a mysterious point (or, rather, the En Sof (Limitless) clave its own ether and disclosed this point), Yod. When this expanded, that which was left of the mysterious AWIR (ether) was found to be AWR (light). When the first point had developed from it, it showed itself upon it, touching and yet not touching it. When it expanded, it emerged into being, and thus was light (awr) left from ether (awir); and this is what we mean by saying that it "had been" previously; and so it remained. It went up and was stored away, and there was left of it one dot, which continually approaches by

invisible paths the other point, touching and yet not touching, illuminating it in the manner of the first point from which it issued. Therefore the whole is linked together, and it illumines both one and the other. When it ascends, all ascend and are attached to it, and it reaches the place of En Sof, where it is stored away, and all becomes one. This dot of the word Awr is Light. It extended, and there shone forth in it seven letters of the alphabet, which did not solidify and remained fluid. Afterwards Darkness issued, and there issued in it seven other letters of the alphabet, and they too were not solidified and remained fluid. There then issued the Firmament, which prevented discord between the two sides. In it there issued eight other letters, making twenty-two in all. Seven letters jumped from one side and seven from the other, and all were graven in this Firmament, where they remained for a time fluid. When the firmament solidified, the letters were also solidified, and took material shape. Thus there was graven there the Torah to shine abroad. "Let there be light": to wit, El Gadol (great God), that which emerged from the primal ether. "And there was": this signifies Darkness, which is called Elohim. "Light": signifying that the Left was included in the Right, and so from that which we call El was produced Elohim. Right was included in Left and Left in Right.

AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT THAT IT WAS GOOD. This is the Central Column: Ki Tob (that it was good) threw light above and below and on all other sides, in virtue of Tetragrammaton, the name which embraces all sides. AND GOD DIVIDED: He put away strife, so that the whole was in perfect order. AND GOD CALLED. The word called here means called to" or "invited". God summoned to issue forth from this complete Light which was in the centre a certain radiance which is the foundation of the world, and on which worlds are established. From that complete Light, the Central Pillar, extended the foundation, the Life of worlds, which is day from the side of the Right. AND THE DARKNESS HE CALLED NIGHT. He summoned to issue from the side of Darkness a kind of female moon which rules over the night and is called night, and is associated with Adonai, the Lord of all the earth. The Right entered into the complete Pillar of the centre united with the Left, and the primal point thereupon ascended on high and there seized

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the energy of three dots, the holem, the shureq, and the hireq, the seed of holiness (for no seed has been sown save from this source).

The whole was then united in the Central Pillar, and it produced the foundation of the world, which therefore is called Kol (all), because it embraces the whole in the radiation of desire. Meanwhile the Left flamed forth with its full power, producing at all points a kind of reflection, and from this fiery flame came forth the female moonlike essence. This flaming was dark because it was from Darkness. These two sides produced these two grades, one male and one female. Unity was retained in the Central Pillar from that surplus of light which was in it. For since that Central Pillar was complete in itself and made peace on all sides, additional light was lent to it from above and from all

sides through the universal joy in it. From that additional joy came forth the foundation of worlds, which was also called Musaf (additional). From this issue all the lower powers and spirits and holy souls, alluded to in the expressions, "Lord of hosts" (Tetragrammaton Zebaoth) and "God the God of spirits" (Num. XVI, 22). "Night" is "the Lord of all the earth" from the side of the left, from Darkness. It was because the desire of Darkness was to merge itself in the Right, and it was not strong enough, that night spread from it. When night began to spread, and before it was complete, Darkness went and merged itself in the right, and the night was left defective. Just as it is the desire of Darkness to merge itself in Light, so it is the desire of night to merge itself in day. Darkness abated its light, and therefore it produces a grade which was defective and not radiant. Darkness does not radiate save when it is merged in Light. So night which issued from it is not light save when it is merged in day. The deficiency of night is only compensated by the Musaf. What is added in one place is subtracted from the other. The Musaf contained a symbolism of the supernal point and of the Central Pillar, and therefore two letters were added in respect of it which were lacking in respect of the night, viz. the vau yod of vayikra (and he called). Herein is an allusion to the name of seventy-two letters, the tracing of the supernal crown.

AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS. Here in the particular (day) there is an allusion to the separation of the upper from the lower waters through that which is called "the Left". Here, too, discord was created through that which is called "the Left". For up to this point the text has alluded to the right, but now it alludes to the left; and therefore there was an increase of discord between this and the right. It is the nature of the right to harmonize the whole, and therefore the whole is written with the right, since it is the source of harmony. When the Left awoke there awoke discord, and through that discord the wrathful fire was reinforced and there emerged from it the Gehinnom, which thus originated from the left and continues there.

Moses in his wisdom pondered over this and drew a lesson from the work of creation. In the work of creation there was an antagonism of the left against the right, and the division between them allowed the Gehinnom to emerge and to fasten itself to the left. Then the Central Column, which is the third day, intervened and allayed the discord between the two sides, so that the Gehinnom descended below, and the Left became absorbed in the Right and there was peace over all. Similarly the quarrel of Korah with Aaron was an antagonism of the left against the right. Moses, reflecting on what had happened during the Creation, said: 'It seems proper to me to compose the difference between the right and the left.' He therefore endeavoured to effect an accord between the two. The left, however, was not willing, and Korah proved obdurate. Moses thereupon said: 'Assuredly the Gehinnom is embittering this quarrel. The left ought to strive upwards and absorb itself in the right. Korah has no wish to attach himself to the higher influences and to merge himself in the right. Let him, then, descend below in the impetus of his wrath.' The reason why Korah refused to allow the quarrel to be composed by

the intervention of Moses was that he had not entered upon it for a truly religious motive, and that he had scant regard for the glory of God, and refused to acknowledge His creative power. When Moses perceived that he had thus placed himself outside the pale, he "was very wroth" (Num. XVII, 15). He was "wroth" because he was not able to compose the quarrel; he was "very wroth" because they denied the creative power of God. Korah denied

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this power wholly, both in the higher and the lower sphere, as implied in the phrase: "when they strove against the Lord" (Num. XXVI, 9). Hence Korah clave to that which was meet for him. A dispute that was composed on the pattern of the supernal dispute, that became more and not less worthy as it proceeded, and that perpetuated itself rightfully, was that between Shammai and Hillel. The Holy One, blessed be He, approved of their dispute, for the reason that its motive was lofty and that it therefore resembled that which took place at the Creation. Hence, like the latter, the dispute between Shammai and Hillel has survived to this day. Korah, on the other hand, denied the Creation, fought against heaven itself and sought to confute the words of the Torah. He certainly was of the following of the Gehinnom, and therefore remained attached to it. All this is brought out in the Book of Adam. It says there that when Darkness asserted itself, it did so with fury, and created the Gehinnom, which attached itself to it in that quarrel we have mentioned. But as soon as the wrath and the fury abated there arose a quarrel of another kind, to wit, a quarrel of love. Thus the dispute fell into two distinct parts. It is the way of the righteous to enter on a dispute stiffly and end it amicably. Korah continued the dispute as he began it, in wrath and passion; and therefore clung to Gehinnom. Shammai conducted his dispute in that spirit of calm which should follow on the first burst of passion; it therefore became a quarrel of love and obtained the approval of Heaven. This is indicated by our text. It says first: "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide, etc." This refers to the beginning of quarrel, the outburst of passion and violence. There was a desire for reconciliation, but meanwhile the Gehinnom arose before the wrath and passion cooled down. Then "God made the firmament, etc."; that is, there emerged a quarrel of love and affection which made for the permanence of the world. And in this category is the dispute between Shammai and Hillel, the result of which was that the Oral Law approached in a loving mood the Written Law, so that they mutually supported each other.

As regards separation, it always proceeds from the left. Here it is written, "and let it separate", as well as, "and he separated"; and in connection with Korah it is written, "Is it a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, etc."; and it is also written, "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi" (Deut. X, 8). In all these texts we find separation associated with the second (day or tribe), which is the place of the left. It may be objected that Levi was the third and not the second tribe; separation, then, should have been associated, not with Levi, but with Simeon, he being the second.

The answer is that in the eyes of Jacob (who, on the first night of his nuptials, was unaware that Leah was substituted for Rachel) Levi was the second (from Leah). Hence the separation of the tribe of Levi was perfectly correct. There is a "separation" on every outgoing of the Sabbath, between the powers that have sway on week-days and on the Sabbath respectively. As soon as the Sabbath ends, there ascends from the Gehinnom, from the grade called Sheol, a party of evil spirits who strive to mingle among the seed of Israel and to obtain power over them. But when the children of Israel perform the ceremonies of the myrtle and the cup of blessing, and recite the separation prayer (Habdalah), that evil spirit departs to his place in Sheol, the region where Korah and his accomplices abide, as it is written: "And they and all that appertained to them went down alive into the Sheol" (pit) (Num. XVI, 33). These, too, did not descend to the Sheol before the Israelites had performed a separation (Habdalah), as it is said: "Separate yourselves from among this congregation" (Ibid. 21). "Separation" is thus associated with the second, which is symbolic of the left, at its first impetus, when it first enters on a quarrel in wrath and violence, giving birth to Gehinnom before the fury subsides. It was on the second that, before the discord was allayed, the Gehinnom was created. Then also were created all the angels who revolted against their Master, and whom the fire of the Gehinnom consumed and destroyed; likewise all those others who vanish away and do not endure and are consumed by fire.

LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT: i.e. let there be a gradual extension. Thereupon El (God), the "right cluster", [Tr. note: al. 'shoulder': in either case a designation of the grade Hesed (kindness).] El Gadol (Great God), spread forth from the midst of the waters to complete this name El and to combine with this extension, and so El was extended into Elohim (=El+H, Y, M). These H, Y, M, extended and became reversed so as to form lower waters, Y, M, H. This extension which took place on the second day is the upper waters. The he, yod, mim, form hayam (the sea), which is the upper waters. The reversal of these letters, yamah (seaward), is the lower waters. When they were firmly established, all became one whole, and this name was extended to a number of places. The upper waters are male and the lower waters female. At first they were commingled, but afterwards they were differentiated into upper and lower waters. This is the meaning of "Elohim upper waters", and this is the meaning of "Adonai lower waters"; and this is the meaning of upper He and lower He. It is further written: AND GOD MADE THE FIRMAMENT. That is to say, this extension took this name. Elohim is the upper waters, and the lower waters

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are Adonai; nevertheless, since the upper waters were completed by the lower, this name spread to the whole.

Even after the separation between the waters, the discord did not cease till the third day, when peace was restored and everything was settled in its place. It is on account of this strife, necessary as it was for the existence of the world, that the phrase "that it was

good" is not applied to the work of the second day, because it was not completed. So long as the upper and lower waters were commingled, there was no production in the world: this could only be when they were separated and made distinct. They then produced, and in this way, although on the second day there was separation and discord, the third day brought complete harmony. This is the name which is graven with the lettering of Tetragrammaton, to reconcile the upper with the lower waters, the upper with the lower He; the insertion of the Vau between them harmonises the two sides. Symbolic of this is the crossing by the Israelites of the Jordan (Josh. III, 16): "the waters (of the Jordan)" corresponds to the upper waters; "rose up in one heap" corresponds to the lower waters, which descended into the sea, whilst the Israelites passed between the two.

Five "firmaments" are mentioned in this section, and the Life of the World passes among them and leads them, and they are all interwoven. But for this discord, however, which was composed by the mediator, they would not have been intertwined or harmonised. They correspond to the five hundred years to which the Tree of Life clings in order to become a source of growth and fruitfulness to the world. All the waters of creation which issue from the original source branch out from its foot. King David similarly takes the whole and subsequently distributes it, as we read: "And he distributed among all the people, even among the whole multitude, etc." (II Sam. VI, 19); likewise we read: "That thou givest them they gather" (Ps. CIV, 28); also: "She rises also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to the household (Prov. XXXI, 15).

At the time when discord was stirred by the violence of the left, the Avenging Spirit was reinforced. There issued from it (two) demons which immediately became solidified without any moisture, one male and one female. From them were propagated legions of demons, and to this is due the inveteracy of the unclean spirit in all those demons. It is they who are symbolised by the foreskin (orlah); the one is called Ef'eh (adder) and the other is called Nahash (serpent), the two, however, being but one. The Ef 'eh bears offspring from the Nahash after a period of seven years' gestation. Herein is the mystery of the seven names borne by the Gehinnom as well as by the "evil tempter" (yetser-hara'); and from this source impurity has been propagated in many grades through the universe. All this proceeds from the mystic power of the left, which dispenses good and evil, thereby rendering the world habitable. Here we have the engraven Name of eighteen letters, which presides over the gentle and beneficent rains for the well-being of the world.

AND GOD SAID, LET THE WATERS FLOW: The word flow (yikavvu) implies that they were to go in a line (kav) so as to take a straight path. For from the first mystic point the Whole issues in secret, until it reaches and is gathered in to the supernal Palace, and from there it issues in a straight line to the other grades, until it comes to that place which collects the whole in a union of male and female; this is the "Life of worlds." THE WATERS: to wit, those that issue from on high, from under the upper He'. FROM UNDER THE HEAVEN: this is the lesser Vau (hence the word

yikavva is spelt with two vau's, one for "the heaven" and one for "under the heaven"). In consequence: LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR. This is the lower He. This is disclosed and all the rest is undisclosed; from this last we conclude by inference to that which is undisclosed. TO ONE PLACE: so called because it is here that the whole of the upper World is linked into one.

It is written: The Lord (Tetragrammaton) is one and his name is One (Zech. XIV, 9). Two unifications are here indicated, one of the upper World in its grades, and one of the lower World in its grades. The unification of the upper World is consummated at this point. The Life of Worlds was there firmly based, and through its unity the upper World was bound together, and therefore it is called "one place". All grades and all members were gathered there and became in it one without any separation; nor is there any grade in which they are embraced in one unification save this. In it, too, they all mysteriously conceal themselves in one desire. In this grade the disclosed World is linked with the undisclosed. The disclosed World is similarly unified below, and the disclosed World is, in fact, a lower world. Hence such expressions as: "I saw the Lord" (Is. VI, 1), "And they saw the God of Israel" (Ex. XXIV, 10), "And the glory of the Lord appeared" (Num. XIV, 10: XVII, 7), "So was the appearance of the brightness round about; this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezek. I, 28). This, too, is the inner meaning of the words here, "and let the dry land appear". The same is referred to in the words, "My bow I have set in the cloud" (Gen. IX, 13): to wit, from the day on which the world was created. On the day

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of cloud, when the bow, "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" appeared, the Left arose in might. Then "Rachel went forth and had pain in childbirth". With her appeared Michael on one side, Raphael on another, and Gabriel on a third, these being the colours which appeared in the "likeness". Hence "the appearance of the brightness round about", to wit, the radiance which is hidden in the pupil of the eye, becomes "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord", to wit, corresponding colours, so that the lower unity is formed in correspondence with the upper unity. This is signified by the formula, "The Lord our God the Lord" (Deut. VI, 4). The mysterious and undisclosed colours which are linked "in one place" form one higher unity; the colours of the bow below in which are united white, red, and yellow, corresponding to those other mysterious colours, form another unity, signified by the formula "and his name is One". Further, the form "Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever" signifies the lower unity, while the upper unity is signified by the form "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is one." These forms correspond, each having six words. [Tr. note: i.e. in the original Hebrew.]...

LET THE EARTH PUT FORTH GRASS, HERB, ETC. At this behest the "earth" put forth a host through those waters which were gathered together in one place and flowed mysteriously through it, so that there issued in it hidden celestial beings and sacred existences which are upheld and sustained and

constantly renewed by the faithful among mankind through the worship they offer to their Master. This mystery is indicated by the verse: "Who causeth the grass to spring up for the B'hema" (cattle), etc. (Ps. CIV, 14). This refers to Behemoth that crouches on a thousand mountains and for whom these mountains produce each day what is here called "grass", by which is meant those angelic beings whose existence is ephemeral, and who were created on the second day as destined food for that Behemoth, which is "fire consuming fire". The Psalmist continues, "and herb for the service of man", indicating by "herb" the angelic orders named Ofanim (wheels), Hayyoth (animal-shaped), and Cherubim, all of whom are upheld, sustained, and confirmed whenever mortal beings come to worship their Master with sacrifices and prayers, in which consists the "service of man", and as they are reinforced by virtue of that service of man, there springs up food and sustenance for the world, as it is written: "to bring forth bread out of the earth" (Ibid.). The same is implied here by the words HERB YIELDING SEED. For "grass" does not yield seed, but is only destined for food for the sacred fire, whereas "herb" helps to maintain the world. All this has for its purpose "to bring forth bread from the earth", i.e. to provide, by virtue of the service offered to their Master by human beings, food and sustenance out of the earth for this world, so that the heavenly blessings should descend on mankind. FRUIT TREE BEARING FRUIT. One degree above another, these combining male and female. Just as "fruit tree" produced the host of "trees bearing fruit", so the latter in turn produced "Cherubim and Pillars". "Pillars" are those that go up in the smoke of the sacrifices and derive their strength therefrom, and hence are called "pillars of smoke", and all of them exist permanently for the "service of man", whereas the "grass" has no permanence, being destined to be consumed as food, as it is written: "Behold now Behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox" (Job XL, 15). The words "fruit tree bearing fruit" indicate the form of male and female in combination. Their faces are "like the face of a man" (Ezek. I, 10), but they are not like the Cherubim, having large faces covered with beards, whereas the Cherubim have little faces like those of tender children.

All forms are comprised in these, because they are "large faces". On them are traced forms like the tracings of the Divine Name on the four cardinal points, East, West, North, and South. Michael is imprinted on the South, and all faces are turned towards him, viz. "the face of a man... the face of a lion... the face of an ox... the face of an eagle" (Ibid.). "Man" implies the union of male and female, without which the name "man" (Adam) is not applied. By him are formed the figures of the chariot of God, as it is written: "(On) the chariot of God are myriads of thousands of Shin'an (angels)" (Ps. LXVIII, 15): the word SHIN'AN expresses by means of its initials all the figures, the Shin standing for Shor (ox), the Nun for Neshar (eagle), and the Aleph for Aryeh (lion), and the final Nun representing by its shape man,

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who walks erect, and who mystically combines male and female. All those thousands and myriads of angels

issue from those symbolised by the name Shin'an, and from these types they diverge in their several groups, each to its appropriate side. These four are all interlaced and intertwined in one another, to wit, ox, eagle, lion, man. Their activity is directed by four graven names, which they ascend to contemplate. "Ox" ascends to seek guidance and gaze in the face of "Man". There ascends with him a certain name crowned and engraved in two mystic forms, which represent the name El (God). Then it turns back and the throne engraves and traces it and it is imprinted thereon to be under the guidance of this mystic name. "Eagle" ascends to seek guidance and gaze in the face of "Man". There ascends with it another name, which is crowned and engraved in two mystic forms, to shine forth and to mount and be crowned on high; this represents the attribute "Great". Then it turns back and the throne engraves it and it is imprinted thereon to be under the guidance of this mystic name. "Lion" ascends to seek guidance and to gaze in the face of "Man". Another name ascends with it and is crowned and engraved in two mystic forms to be endowed with strength and power, representing the attribute of "Mighty". It turns back and the throne engraves it and it is imprinted thereon to be under the guidance of this mystic name. "Man" contemplates all of them, and all ascend and contemplate him. Thus they all become engraved in this form in the one mystic name known as "Tremendous" (Nora). Thus it is written concerning them, "And the likeness of their faces is as the face of man" (Ezek. I, 10). They are all embraced in that likeness, and that likeness embraces them all. In virtue of all this the Holy One, blessed be He, is called the Great, Mighty, and Tremendous God, since these names are engraved above on the supernal chariot which is comprised in the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, which is the name that comprises all. These likenesses are engraved on the throne, and the throne is

decorated with them, one to the right, one to the left, one in front, and one behind, corresponding to the four quarters of the world. The throne when it ascends is stamped with these four likenesses. These four supernal names bear along the throne, and the throne is comprised in them, and collects a harvest of longing desires. When it has collected these desires, it descends with its burden like a tree laden with branches on all sides and full of fruit. As soon as it descends, these four likenesses come forth in their several shapes emitting bright flashes which scatter seed over the world. Hence it is written, "herb yielding seed", because these scatter seed over the world. But of the issuing forth of the likeness of man which comprises all the other likenesses it is written, "fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, the seed of which is in it on the earth". It produces no seed save for propagation. The term "in it" should be noticed. It teaches us that man may not emit his seed idly. This is hinted in the word "verdure", which does not "yield seed", and hence has no permanency like the others, not having any likeness which can be shaped or engraved in any manner at all. Such things show themselves but to vanish: they have not acquired form and likeness, and have no permanency; they exist only for a moment and then are consumed in that fire which devours fire, and are continually renewed and devoured.

Man here below possesses an ideal form and likeness, but he is not so permanent as those supernal beings. These are formed in their proper shape without any outer covering to modify it. Hence they are changeless; whereas man below assumes form through the medium of an outer covering. Hence he endures for a while, and every night the spirit is divested of that garment and ascends and is consumed by that consuming fire, and then reverts to its former state and takes the same outer shape again. Hence they have not the same permanency as those supernal forms, and in allusion to this it is written, "new every morning" (Lam. III, 23), i.e. human beings who are renewed every day.

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The reason is that "great is thy faithfulness" (Ibid.)- great and not little. "Great is thy faithfulness": assuredly great, since it can support all the creatures of the world and comprise them all in itself, upper and lower alike. It is of infinite expanse, it absorbs all and becomes no fuller. This is alluded to in the verse, "All the rivers run into the sea, yet is the sea not full, etc." (Eccl. I, 7). They run into the sea, and the sea receives and swallows them and is not filled, and then it restores them to their former state. Hence "great is thy faithfulness". In the account of this (third) day it is written twice "that it was good", the reason being that this day became intermediary between two opposing sides, and removed discord. It said to this side "good", and to the other side "good", and reconciled the two. Hence we find twice written in the account of it, "and he said". Connected with this day is the secret of the name of four letters engraved and inscribed, which can be made into twelve (by permutations), corresponding to the four images on the four sides inscribed on the holy throne.

AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHTS, ETC. The word for "lights" (meoroth) is written defectively, as if me'eroth (curses), for the reason that the children's disease, croup, was through them created. For after the primordial light was withdrawn there was created a "membrane for the

marrow", a k'lifah, and this k'lifah expanded and produced another. As soon as this second one came forth she went up and down till she reached the "little faces". [Tr. note: v. p 79.] She desired to

cleave to them and to be shaped as one of them, and was loth to depart from them. But the Holy One, blessed be He, removed her from them and made her go below. When He created Adam and gave him a partner, as soon as she saw Eve clinging to his side and was reminded by his form of the supernal beauty, she flew up from thence and tried as before to attach herself to the "little faces". The supernal guardians

of the gates, however, did not permit her. The Holy One, blessed be He, chid her and cast her into the depths of the sea, where she abode until the time that Adam and his wife sinned. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, brought her out from the depth of the sea and gave her power over all those



children, the "little faces" of the sons of men, who are liable to punishment for the sins of their fathers. She then wandered up and down the world. She approached the gates of the terrestrial paradise, where she saw the Cherubim, the guardians of the gates of Paradise, and sat down near the flashing sword, to which she was akin in origin. When she saw the flashing sword revolving, she fled and wandered about the world and, finding children liable to punishment, she maltreated and killed them. All this is on account of the action of the moon in diminishing her (original) light. When Cain was born this klifah tried for a time without success to attach herself to him, but at length she had intercourse with him and bore spirits and demons. Adam for a hundred and thirty years had intercourse with female spirits until Naamah was born. She by her beauty led astray the "sons of God", Uzza and Azazel, and she bore them children, and so from her went forth evil spirits and demons into the world. She wanders about at night time, vexing the sons of men and causing them to defile themselves. Wherever these spirits find people sleeping alone in a house, they hover over them, lay hold of them and cleave to them, inspire desire in them and beget from them. They further inflict diseases on them without their being aware—all this through the diminution of the moon. When the moon was restored, the letters of meoroth (lights) were reversed to form imrath (word), as it is written, "the word (imrath) of the Lord is tried, he is a shield to those that trust in him" (Ps. XVIII, 31), i.e. He is a shield against all those evil spirits and demons that wander about the world at the waning of the moon, unto those that hold fast to their faith in the Holy One, blessed be He. King Solomon, when he "penetrated into the depths of the nut garden" (as it is written, "I descended into the nut garden", S. S. VI, 11), took a nut-shell (klifah) and drew an analogy from its layers to these spirits which inspire sensual desires in human beings, as it is written, "and the delights of the sons of men (are from) male and female demons" (Eccl. II, 8). This verse also indicates that the pleasures in which men indulge in the time of sleep give birth to multitudes of demons. The Holy One, blessed be He, found it necessary to create all these things in the world to ensure its permanence, so that there should be, as it were, a brain with many membranes encircling it. The whole world is constructed on this principle, upper and lower, from the first mystic point up to the furthest removed of all the stages. They are all

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coverings one to another, brain within brain and spirit within spirit, so that one is a shell to another. The primal point is the innermost light of a translucency, tenuity, and purity passing comprehension. The extension of that point becomes a "palace" (Hekal), which forms a vestment for that point with a radiance which is still unknowable on account of its translucency. The "palace" which is the vestment for that unknowable point is also a radiance which cannot be comprehended, yet withal less subtle and translucent than the primal mystic point. This "palace" extends into the primal Light, which is a vestment for it. From this point there is extension after extension, each one forming a vestment to the other, being in the relation of

membrane and brain to one another. Although at first a vestment, each stage becomes a brain to the next stage. The same process takes place below, so that on this model man in this world combines brain and shell, spirit and body, all for the better ordering of the world. When the moon was in connection with the sun, she was luminous, but as soon as she separated from the sun and was assigned the charge of her own hosts, she reduced her status and her light, and shells upon shells were created for covering the brain, and all for the benefit of the brain. Hence meoroth is written defectively. All this was for the benefit of the world, and hence it is written, "to give light upon the earth".

AND GOD MADE THE TWO GREAT LIGHTS. The word "made" signifies the due expansion and establishment of the whole. The words "the two great lights" show that at first they were associated as equals, symbolising the full name Tetragrammaton Elohim (although the latter part is not revealed, but is known inferentially). The word "great" shows that at their creation they were dignified with the same name, so that through them the name of the Whole was called Mazpaz Mazpaz, [Tr. note: If the Hebrew alphabet is inverted, M=Y, Z=H, P=V.] the two highest names of the thirteen categories of mercy. [Tr. note: v. Ex. XXXIV, 6.] These were invested with greater dignity, and they are placed at the head because they derive from on high and ascend for the benefit of the world and for the preservation of worlds. Similarly the two lights ascended together with the same dignity. The moon, however, was not at ease with the sun, and in fact each felt mortified by the other. The moon said "Where dost thou pasture?" (S. S. I, 7). The sun said "Where dost thou make thy flock to rest at noon? (Ibid.) How can a little candle shine at midday?" God thereupon said to her, "Go and diminish thyself." She felt humiliated and said "Why should I be as one that veileth herself?" (Ibid.). God then said "Go thy way forth in the footsteps of the flock." Thereupon she diminished herself so as to be head of the lower ranks. From that time she has had no light of her own, but derives her light from the sun. At first they were on an equality, but afterwards she diminished herself among all those grades of hers, although she is still head of them; for a woman enjoys no honour save in conjunction with her husband. The "great light" corresponds to Tetragrammaton, and the "lesser light" to Elohim, which is the last of the degrees and the close of the Thought. At first it was inscribed above among the letters of the sacred Name, in the fourth letter thereof, but afterwards it took a lower rank with the name Elohim; nevertheless, it still ascends in all directions above in the letter He in the union of the letters of the sacred Name. Afterwards degrees extended on this side and on that. The degrees that extended upwards were called "the dominion of the day", and the degrees that extended downwards were called "the dominion of the night". "The stars" are the remainder of the forces and the hosts which, countless in number, are all suspended in that "firmament of the heaven" which is the "life of the universe", as it is written, "and God placed them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth..." This is the lower earth, which derives light from them as they from above. On this (the fourth) day the kingdom of David was established, the fourth leg and support of the (divine) throne, and the letters (of the divine Name)

were firmly fixed in their places. Yet withal until the sixth day, when the likeness of man was fully formed, the throne was not firmly fixed in its place; but then at last both the upper and the lower thrones were established, and all the worlds were settled in their places, and all the letters were fixed

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in their spheres by the extension of the primordial vapour. The fourth day was "rejected of the builders", because on it this luminary degraded itself and abated its radiance, and the outer shells were reinforced. All those radiating lights are suspended in that firmament of the heaven, that by them the throne of David may be established.

Those lights are formative agents in the lower world to perfect the shape of all those who are included in the term "man". This is the name given to every interior shape; and thus every shape which is comprised in this extension is called "man", which properly indicates man's spirit emanating from the realm of holiness, to which his body is a vestment, as we read, "Thou clothest me in skin and flesh" (Job X, 11). Hence we often meet the expression "flesh of man", implying that the real man is within and the flesh which is his body is only a vestment. The lower beings which have been compounded with this spirit assume shapes which are clothed in another vestment, such as the forms of clean animals, ox, sheep, goat, deer, etc. They would fain partake of the vestment of man, corresponding to their inner nature, but their forms are covered by the name applied to their bodies; so we find "flesh of ox", "ox" being the inner element of that body, while the "flesh" is the vestment; and so with all. Similarly with the "other side": the spirit which is found in the idolatrous nations issues from the realm of uncleanness and is not, properly speaking, "man"; therefore it is not covered by this name and has no portion (in the future world). Its body, which is the vestment of that unclean thing, is unclean flesh, and the spirit is unclean within the flesh that clothes it. Therefore as long as that spirit is within that body it is called "unclean". When the spirit emerges from that covering it is not called "unclean", and the vestment does not bear the name of man. The lower beings compounded with this spirit assume shapes which clothe themselves in another vestment, such as the forms of unclean animals, of which the Law says "this shall be unclean to you", such as the pig and unclean birds, and beasts of that side. The spirit is covered by the name of the body in which it is clothed, and the body is called "flesh of pig"-pig within the flesh which clothes it. Consequently these two groups are sharply separated, one side being embraced under the category "man" and the other under the category "unclean", and the individuals flock each to its kind and return to their kind. Thus the supernal lights radiate in that "firmament of the heaven" to fashion in the lower world the requisite shapes, as it is written, "and God set them in the firmament of the heaven... and to rule by day and by night".

It is fit and proper that two lights should rule, the greater light by day and the lesser light by night. The lesson we derive is that the male rules by day to regulate his household and to bring food and

sustenance into it. When night arrives, the female takes command, and she rules the house, as it is written, "she rises while it is still night and giveth food to her house" (Prov. XXXI, 15)-she and not he. Thus the dominion of the day belongs to the male and the dominion of the night to the female. Further it is written, AND THE STARS. As soon as the wife has given her orders and retired with her husband, the direction of the house is left to the maidens, who remain in the house to look after all its requirements. Then when day comes the man again duly takes command.

"And God made the two lights." There are two kinds of luminaries. Those which ascend above are called "luminaries of light", and those which descend below are called "luminaries of fire". These latter belong to the lower sphere and rule over the weekdays. It is for this reason that at the expiry of Sabbath a blessing is said over the lamp, because rule is then restored to these luminaries. Man's fingers symbolise the mystic grades of the upper world, which are divided into front and back. The latter are outside, and are symbolised by the finger-nails, and therefore it is

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permissible to look at the finger-nails at the expiry of Sabbath by the light of the candle. But it is not permissible to look at the fingers from the inside by the light of the candle. This is hinted in the verse, "Thou shalt see me from the back, thou shalt not see my face" (Ex. XXXIII, 23). Therefore a man should not look at his fingers from the inside when he recites the blessing "Creator of the light of the fire". On the Sabbath day God rules alone by means of those inner grades upon His throne of glory, and all of them are comprised in Him and He assumes dominion. Therefore on this day He accorded rest to all worlds. As part of the legacy of this day the holy and unique people has inherited the "luminaries of light" from the side of the Right, which is the primal light that was on the first day. For on the Sabbath day those luminaries of light shine alone and have dominion, and from them everything is illumined below. When Sabbath expires the luminaries of light are withdrawn and the luminaries of fire assume sway each in its place. They rule from the expiry of one Sabbath till the commencement of the next. For this reason it is proper to use the light of the lamp at the expiry of Sabbath.

It is said of the Hayyoth that "they run to and fro" (Ezek. I, 14), and so no eye can follow them. The Hayyoth which disclose themselves are those in the midst of which there is an Ofan (wheel), which is Metatron, who is more exalted than all the other hosts. The Hayyoth which are never disclosed are those which are under the two undisclosed letters Yod, He', which rule over Vau, He', these being the pedestal of the former. The most mysterious and incomprehensible essence rules over all and is mounted upon all. The Hayyoth which disclose themselves are below those which remain undisclosed and derive light from them and follow them. The celestial Hayyoth are all comprised in the "firmament of the heaven", and are referred to in the words "let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven", "and they shall be for lights in the firmament of the heaven". They are all

suspended in that firmament. But there is also a firmament above the heavens of which it is written, "and a likeness upon the heads of the Hayyah, a firmament like the ice, etc." (Ezek. I, 22). This is the first He' beyond which it is impossible for the human mind to penetrate, because what is further is enveloped in the thought of God, which is elevated above the comprehension of man. If that which is within the Thought cannot be comprehended, how much less the Thought itself! What is within the Thought no one can conceive, much less can one know the En Sof, of which no trace can be found and to which thought cannot reach by any means. But from the midst of the impenetrable mystery, from the first descent of the En Sof there glimmers a faint undiscernible light like the point of a needle, the hidden recess of thought, which even yet is not knowable until there extends from it a light in a place where there is some imprint of letters, and from which they all issue. First of all is Aleph, the beginning and end of all grades, that on which all the grades are imprinted and which yet is always called "one", to show that although the Godhead contains many forms, it is still only one. This is the letter on which depend both the lower and the upper entities. The top point of the Aleph symbolises the hidden supernal thought, in which is contained potentially the extension of the supernal firmament. When Aleph issues from that firmament in a form symbolising the commencement of Thought, there issue in its middle bar six grades, corresponding to the hidden supernal Hayyoth which are suspended from the Thought. One is the light which shone and was withdrawn. This is the "heat of the day" which Abraham felt when he was sitting at "the door of his tent", the door which opens the way from below to above, and on which shone "the heat of the day". A second light is that which fades away at eventide, to restore what was the object of Isaac's prayer, as it is written, "Isaac went forth into the field to meditate at eventide" (Gen. XXIV, 63). A third light is that which combines these other two,

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and shines for healing, and it is hinted at in the verse which says of Jacob that "the sun rose upon him, etc." (Gen. XXXII, 32). Of a surety it was after he had attained the degree of "eventide". From this point he was "halting on his thigh", i.e. he attained imperfectly to the conception of the "strength (Nezah) of Israel". It is written "on his thigh" and not "on his thighs"; this is the fourth degree, by which no prophet was inspired till Samuel came, of whom it is written, "and also the strength (Nezah) of Israel, etc." (I Sam. XV, 29). Thus he restored to its pristine strength that which was weak from the time that Jacob was injured by the guardian angel of Esau. "He touched the hollow of his thigh." When he came to Jacob, he derived strength from that "eventide" which is associated with the attribute of stern justice. Jacob, however, being embraced in that grade, was proof against him. "He saw that he could not prevail against him and he touched the hollow of his thigh." He found a weak spot in the thigh, because that is outside of the trunk, which is the symbolical name of Jacob, whose body was therefore under the protection of two degrees symbolised by the name "man". So when the angel found a point of attack outside the trunk, straightway "the hollow of Jacob's thigh sank",

and no man received prophetic inspiration from that source till Samuel came. Joshua derived prophetic inspiration from the majesty of Moses, as it is written, "thou shalt confer of thy majesty upon him" (Num. XXVII, 20); this, then, is the fifth grade. Nezah is the left thigh, the grade of Jacob, and therefore David came and united it with the right, as it is written, "bliss in thy right hand is Nezah". The reason why Jacob's thigh was weak was because the side of impurity touched it and deprived it of its strength; and it remained weak till the time of Samuel. Hence Samuel spoke of the Nezah of Israel; and hence, too, he spoke always with severity. Later, however, God brought him under the aegis of Hod, after he had anointed kings. On this account he is ranked with Moses and Aaron, since he combined two lower grades, as they combined two upper grades, though all the grades are linked with one another. [Tr. note: Here in the text follows a passage (up to behai' alma, p. 22a) dealing with the prophetic grades of Moses and Jacob as typified respectively by the 'Jubilee' and the 'Shemitah'. It has been omitted from the translation as being both highly technical and in the nature of a digression.]

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[Note: The first 16 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation]

All those supernal lights exist in their image below—some of them in their image below upon the earth; but in themselves they are all suspended in the "firmament of the heaven". Here is the secret of two names combined which are completed by a third and become one again.

AND GOD SAID, LET US MAKE MAN. [Tr. note: The commentator, Derekh Emeth, remarks that from here to 29a (Bereshith teninan) is obviously, from its style, not an intrinsic part of the Zohar. It seems, however, to fill a gap in the Zoharic exposition, and therefore most of it has been translated.]

It is written, "The

secret of the Lord is to them that fear him" (Ps. XXV, 14). That most reverend Elder opened an exposition of this verse by saying 'Simeon Simeon, who is it that said: "Let us make man?" Who is this Elohim?' With these words the most reverend Elder vanished before anyone saw him. R. Simeon, hearing that he had called him plain "Simeon", and not "Rabbi Simeon", said to his colleagues: 'Of a surety this is the Holy One, blessed be He, of whom it is written: "And the Ancient of days was seated" (Dan. VII, 9). Truly now is the time to expound this mystery, because certainly there is here a mystery which hitherto it was not permitted to divulge, but now we perceive that permission is given.' He then proceeded: 'We must picture a king who wanted several buildings to be erected, and who had an architect in his service who did nothing save with his consent. The king is the supernal Wisdom above, the Central Column being the king below: Elohim is the architect above, being as such the supernal Mother, and Elohim is also the architect below, being as such the Divine Presence (Shekinah) of the lower world. Now a woman may not do anything without the consent

of her husband. When he desired anything built in the way of emanation (aziluth), the Father said to the Mother by means of the Word (amirah), "let it be so and so", and straightway it was so, as it is written, "And he said, Elohim, let there be light, and there was light": i.e. one said to Elohim, let there be light: the master of the building gave the order, and the architect carried it out immediately; and so with all that was constructed in the way of emanation. When he came to the "world of separation", which is the sphere of individual beings, the architect said to the master of the building: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." Said the master of the building: "Truly, it is well that he should be made, but he will one day sin before thee, because he is foolish: so it is written, 'A wise son rejoiceth his father, and a foolish son is a heaviness to his mother' (Prov. X, 1)." She replied: "Since his guilt is referred to the mother and not the father, I desire to create him in my likeness." Hence it is written, "And Elohim created man in his image", the Father not being willing to share in his creation. Thus in reference to his sin it is written,

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"and through your transgression your Mother is dismissed" (Is. L, 1). Said the king to the mother, "Did I not tell thee that he was destined to sin?" At that time he drove him out and drove out his mother with him; and so it is written, "A wise son rejoiceth his father and a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." The wise son is Man formed by emanation, and the foolish son is man formed by creation (beriah).'

The colleagues here interrupted and said, 'Rabbi, Rabbi, is there such a division between Father and Mother that from the side of the Father Man has been formed in the way of emanation, and from the side of the Mother in the way of creation?' He replied, 'My friends, it is not so, since the Man of emanation was both male and female, from the side of both Father and Mother, and that is why it says, "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light": "let there be light" from the side of the Father, "and there was light" from the side of the Mother; and this is the man "of two faces". This "man" has no "image and likeness". Only the supernal Mother had a name combining light and darkness-light, which was the supernal vestment and which God created on the first day and then stored away for the righteous, and darkness, which was created on the first day for the wicked. On account of the darkness, which was destined to sin against the light, the Father was not willing to share in man's creation, and therefore the Mother said: "let us make man in our image after our likeness". "In our image" corresponds to light, "after our likeness", to darkness, which is a vestment to light in the same way that the body is a vestment to the soul, as it is written, "Thou didst clothe me with skin and flesh." ' He then paused, and all the colleagues rejoiced and said: "Happy is our lot that we have been privileged to hear things which were never disclosed till now.'

R. Simeon then proceeded, taking as his text: See now that I, I am he, and Elohim is not with me, etc. (Deut. XXXII, 39). He said: 'Friends, here are some profound mysteries which I desire to reveal to you now

that permission has been given to utter them. Who is it that says, "See now that I, I am he"? This is the Cause which is above all those on high, that which is called the Cause of causes. It is above those other causes, since none of those causes does anything till it obtains permission from that which is above it, as we pointed out above in respect to the expression, "Let us make man". "Us" certainly refers to two, of which one said to the other above it, "let us make", nor did it do anything save with the permission and direction of the one above it, while the one above did nothing without consulting its colleague. But that which is called "the Cause above all causes", which has no superior or even equal, as it is written, "To whom shall ye liken me, that I should be equal?" (Is. XL, 25), said, "See now that I, I am he, and Elohim is not with me", from whom he should take counsel, like that of which it is written, "and God said, Let us make man".' The colleagues here interrupted him and said, 'Rabbi, allow us to make a remark. Did you not state above that the Cause of causes said to the Sefirah Kether, "Let us make man"?' He answered, 'You do not listen to what you are saying. There is something that is called "Cause of causes", but that is not the "Cause above all causes" which I mentioned, which has no colleague of which it should take counsel, for it is unique, prior to all, and has no partner. Therefore it says: "See now that I, I am he, and Elohim is not with me", of which it should take counsel, since it has no colleague and no partner, nor even number, for there is a "one" which connotes combination, such as male and female, of whom it is written, "for I have called him one" (Is. LI, 2); but this is one without number and without combination, and therefore it is said: "and Elohim is not with me".' They all rose and prostrated themselves before him, saying, 'happy the man whose Master agrees with him in the exposition of hidden mysteries which have not been revealed to the holy angels.'

He proceeded: 'Friends, we must expound the rest of the verse, since it contains many hidden mysteries. The next words are: I kill and make alive, etc. That is to say, through the Sefiroth on the right side I make alive, and through the Sefiroth on the left side I kill; but if the Central Column does not concur, sentence cannot be passed, since they form a court of three. Sometimes,

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even when they all three agree to condemn, there comes the right hand which is outstretched to receive those that repent; this is the Tetragrammaton, and it is also the Shekinah, which is called "right hand", from the side of Hesed (kindness). When a man repents, this hand saves him from punishment. But when the Cause which is above all causes condemns, then "there is none that delivers from my hand".' Withal the colleagues explained the word Elohim in this verse as referring to other gods, and the words "I kill and make alive" as meaning "I kill with my Shekinah him who is guilty, and preserve by it him who is innocent." What, however, has been said above concerning the Supreme Cause is a secret which has been transmitted only to wise men and prophets. See now how many hidden causes there are enveloped in the Sefiroth and, as it were, mounted on the Sefiroth, hidden from the comprehension of human beings: of them it is said, "for

one higher than another watcheth" (Eccl. V, 7). There are lights upon lights, one more clear than another, each one dark by comparison with the one above it from which it receives its light. As for the Supreme Cause, all lights are dark in its presence.

Another explanation of the verse "Let us make man in our image after our likeness" was given by the colleagues, who put these words into the mouth of the ministering angels. Said R. Simeon to them, 'Since they know what has been and what will be, they must have known that he was destined to sin. Why, then, did they make this proposal? Nay more, Uzza and Azael actually opposed it. For when the Shekinah said to God "Let us make man", they said, "What is man that thou shouldst know him? Why desirest thou to create man, who, as thou knowest, will sin before thee through his wife, who is the darkness to his light, light being male and darkness female?" The Shekinah answered them: "You yourselves shall commit the very crime of which you accuse him"; and so it is written, "and the sons of God saw the daughters of man that they were comely", and they went astray after them and were degraded by the Shekinah from their holy estate.' Said the colleagues: 'Rabbi, after all, Uzza and Azael were not wrong, because man was really destined to sin through woman.' He replied, 'What the Shekinah said was this: "You have spoken worse of man than all the rest of the heavenly host. If you were more virtuous than man, you would have a right to accuse him. But whereas he will sin with one woman, you will sin with many women, as it is written, 'and the sons of God saw the daughters of man'- not a daughter, but daughters; and further, if man sinned, he was ready to repent and to return to his Master and repair his wrong.'" ' Said the colleagues, 'If so, why was he after all created?' He replied: 'If God had not created man in this way, with good and evil inclination, which correspond to light and darkness, created man would have been capable neither of virtue, nor of sin; but now that he has been created with both, it is written, "see, I have set before thee this day life and death" ' (Deut. XXX, 19). They said to him: 'Still, why all this? Would it not have been better that he should not have been created and so not have sinned, thereby causing so much mischief above, and that he should have had neither punishment nor reward?' He replied: 'It was just and right that he should be created in this way, because for his sake the Torah was created in which are inscribed punishments for the wicked and rewards for the righteous, and these are only for the sake of created man.' They said: 'Of a truth we have heard now what we never knew before. Certainly God created nothing which was not required.' What is more, the created Torah

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is a vestment to the Shekinah, and if man had not been created, the Shekinah would have been without a vestment like a beggar. Hence when a man sins it is as though he strips the Shekinah of her vestments, and that is why he is punished; and when he carries out the precepts of the Law, it is as though he clothes the Shekinah in her vestments. Hence we say that the fringes (tsiith) worn by the Israelites are to the Shekinah in captivity like the poor man's garments, of which it is said, "for that is his only covering, it is his

garment for his skin, wherein shall he sleep?" (Ex. XXII, 26).

Prayer which is not whole-hearted is pursued by numbers of destructive angels, according to the Scriptural expression: "all her pursuers have overtaken her, etc." (Lam. I, 3). Therefore it is well to preface one's prayer with the verse, "but he is merciful and forgiveth iniquity, etc." (Ps. LXXVIII, 38). The word "iniquity" signifies Samael, who is the serpent; "he will not destroy" signifies the destroyer; "he turneth his anger away" refers to the demon Af (anger); "and doth not stir up all his wrath" refers to the demon Hemah (wrath). To these powers are attached many destructive angels, which are under seven chiefs with seventy under-chiefs, dispersed in every firmament, and under them are myriads of others. When an Israelite wearing fringes and phylacteries prays with devotion, then the words of the Scripture are fulfilled: "All the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is called upon thee and they shall fear thee" (Deut. XXVIII, 10). We have agreed that "the name of the Lord" refers to the phylactery of the head; and when the destructive angels see the name of Tetragrammaton on the head of him who is praying, they at once take to flight, as it is written, "a thousand shall fall at thy side" (Ps. XCI, 7).

Jacob foresaw the oppression of the last captivity in the end of days, and therefore "he prayed in that place and tarried there because the sun had set" (Gen. XXVIII, 11), i.e. the night of captivity had come. David, referring to the captivity, said "hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness". He saw the Shekinah parched and withered and dried, and was in deep sorrow on its behalf. When he saw Israel returning in joy, he composed ten kinds of chants, and at the end of all he exclaimed: "A prayer for the poor man when he fainteth" (Ps. CII, 1). This is the prayer which comes before God before all the others. Which is the "prayer of the poor man"? This is the evening prayer, which is single, without a husband; and because she is without a husband she is poor and dry. Like her is the just man, poor and parched; this is the seed of Jacob, which is in subjection to all nations and resembles the evening prayer, which typifies the night of captivity. The Sabbath prayer is a kindness to this poor man. Therefore a man when reciting the Amidah prayer during the weekdays should stand like a poor man at the king's gate on account of the Shekinah, and he should clothe it with the vestment of the fringes, and he should stand in his phylacteries like a beggar at the gate when he begins with the word Adonai (Lord). When he opens his mouth to utter the evening prayer an eagle comes down on the weekdays to take up on its wings the evening prayer. This is the angel called Nuriel when coming from the side of Hesed (Kindness), and Uriel when coming from the side of Geburah (Force), because it is a burning fire. For the morning prayer also a lion comes down to receive it in his winged arms: this is Michael. For the afternoon prayer an ox comes down to take it with his arms and horns: this is Gabriel. On Sabbath God himself comes down with the three patriarchs to welcome his only daughter. At that moment the celestial beings who are called by the name of the Lord exclaim "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be exalted, ye everlasting doors," and straightway the doors of seven palaces fly open. The

first palace is the palace of love; the second, of fear; the third, of mercy; the fourth, of prophecy through the clear mirror

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; the fifth, of prophecy through the hazy mirror; the sixth, of righteousness; the seventh, of justice. [Tr. note: From here to razin t'mirin on 24b is a dissertation on the relation of prayer to the various Sefiroth, involving much manipulation of Hebrew letters and vowel-points, and therefore unsuitable for translation.]

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[Note: The translation resumes on line 29 of the Hebrew text.]

THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH. We have laid down that the expression "these are" denotes that those mentioned before are henceforth of no account. In this case what is referred to is the products of *tohu* (emptiness) hinted at in the second verse of the first chapter, "and the earth was *tohu* and *bohu*". These it is of which we have learnt that "God created worlds and destroyed them". On account of this the earth was "dazed" (*tohah*) and "bewildered" (*bohah*), as if to say, "How could God create worlds to destroy them? It were better not to create them." Similarly it is said of the heavens, "the heavens have vanished like smoke" (Is. LI, 6). But in fact we have here an indication of what is meant by the expression "destroyed them" showing that God does not really destroy the works of His hands. The explanation is this. God created the world by means of the Torah, that is to say, in so far as it is called *Reshith*. By this *Reshith* He created the heavens and the earth, and He supports them by it, because the word *Bereshith* contains the word *brith* (covenant); this covenant is referred to in the verse: "Were it not for my covenant with the day and night, I had not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jer. XXXIII, 25). This heaven is that of which it is said "the heavens are the heavens of the Lord" (Ps. CXV, 16), and this earth is the "land of the living" comprising seven lands of which David said: "I will walk before the Lord in the lands of the living" (Ibid. CXVI, 9). Afterwards He created a heaven and an earth

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resting on *Tohu* (emptiness), and having no foundation, i.e. "covenant", to support them. For this reason God sought to give to the nations of the world the Law containing the covenant of the circumcision, but they were not willing to accept it, and consequently the earth remained parched and desolate. Hence we read: "Let the waters be gathered to one place, and let the dry land appear." By "the waters" we understand in this connection the Torah; by "one place" we understand Israel, whose souls are attached to that place of which it is written, "blessed is the glory of the Lord from his place". The glory of the Lord is the lower *Shekinah*; "his place" is the upper *Shekinah*; and since their souls are from that quarter, the name of the Lord rests upon them, and it is said of them, "for the portion of the Lord is his people". In this way "the waters were gathered to

one place". The Torah is the salvation of the world, and the Gentiles who did not accept it were left dry and parched. It is in this way that God created worlds and destroyed them, viz. those who do not keep the precepts of the Law; not that He destroys His own works, as some fancy. For why indeed should He destroy His sons, of whom it is written: *behibar'am* (when they were created) in this passage, which may be analysed into *behe' beraam*, "He created them by means of He" (symbolising the attribute of mercy)? This refers to those of the Gentiles who embrace Judaism. Moses, before leaving Egypt, sought to enrol proselytes, thinking that they were of those who had been thus created through the letter *He'*, but they were not sincere, and therefore they caused him to be degraded, as it is written, "Go, get thee down, for the people (i.e. thy proselytes) have dealt corruptly" (Ex. XXXII, 7). There are five sections among the "mixed multitude", *Nefilim*, *Gibborim*, *Anakim*, *Refaim*, and *Amalekites*. The *Amalekites* are those who are left from the time of the Flood, from those of whom it is written, "and he blotted out all living substance"; those who have been left from this class in this fourth captivity make themselves leaders by main force, and are scourges to Israel; of them it is written, "for the earth was full of violence because of them". These are the *Amalekites*. Of the *Nefilim* (lit. fallen ones) it is said: "and the sons of God saw the daughters of man that they were fair" (Ibid.). These form a second category of the *Nefilim*, already mentioned above, in this way. When God thought of making man, He said: "Let us make man in our image, etc." i.e. He intended to make him head over the celestial beings, who were to be his deputies, like Joseph over the governors of Egypt (Gen. XLI, 41). The angels thereupon began to malign him and say, "What is man that Thou shouldst remember him, seeing that he will assuredly sin before Thee." Said God to them, "If ye were on earth like him, ye would sin worse." And so it was, for "when the sons of God saw the daughters of man", they fell in love with them, and God cast them down from heaven. These were

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*Uzza* and *Azael*; from them the "mixed multitude" derive their souls, and therefore they also are called *nefilim*, because they fall into fornication with fair women. For this, God casts them out from the future world, in which they have no portion, and gives them their reward in this world, as it is written, "He repays his enemies to their faces" (Deut. VII, 10). The *Gibborim* (mighty ones) are those of whom it is written: "they are the mighty ones... men of name" (Gen. VI, 4). They come from the side of those who said "Come, let us build a city and make to us a name" (Gen. XI, 4). These men erect synagogues and colleges, and place in them scrolls of the law with rich ornaments, but they do it not for the sake of God, but only to make themselves a name, and in consequence the powers of evil prevail over Israel (who should be humble like the dust of the earth), according to the verse: "and the waters prevailed very much upon the earth" (Gen. VII, 19). The *Refaim* (lit. weak ones), the fourth section of the "mixed multitude", are those who, if they see Israel in trouble, abandon them, even though they are in a position to help them, and they also neglect the Torah and those

who study it in order to ingratiate themselves with the non-Jews. Of them it is said, "They are Refaim (shades), they shall not arise" (Is. XXVI, 14); when redemption shall come to Israel, "all their memory shall perish" (Ibid.). The last section, the Anakim (lit. giants), are those who treat with contumely those of whom it is written, "they shall be as necklaces (anakim) to thy neck". Of them it is said, "the Refaim are likewise counted as Anakim", i.e. they are on a par with one another. All these tend to bring the world back to the state of "tohu and bohu", and they caused the destruction of the Temple. But as "tohu and bohu" gave place to light, so when God reveals Himself they will be wiped off the earth. But withal redemption will not be complete until Amalek will be exterminated, for against Amalek the oath was taken that "the Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation" (Ex. XVII,16).

The following is another explanation of the words: "These are the generations of heaven and earth." The expression "these are" here corresponds to the same expression in the text: "these are thy gods, O Israel" (Ex. XXXII, 4). When these shall be exterminated, it will be as if God had made heaven and earth on that day; hence it is written, "on the day that God makes heaven and earth". At that time God will reveal Himself with the Shekinah and the world will be renewed, as it is written, "for as the new earth and the new heaven, etc." (Is. LXVI, 22); At that time "the Lord shall cause to spring from the ground every pleasant tree, etc.", but before these are exterminated the rain of the Torah will not descend, and Israel, who are compared to herbs and trees, cannot shoot up, as is hinted in the words: "no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field, etc." (Gen. II, 5), because "there was no man", i.e. Israel were not in the Temple, "to till the ground" with sacrifices. According to another explanation, the words "no shrub of

the field was yet in the earth" refer to the first Messiah, and the words "no herb of the field had yet sprung up" refer to the second Messiah. Why had they not shot forth? Because Moses was not there to serve the Shekinah-Moses, of whom it is written, "and there was no man to till the ground". This is also hinted at in the verse "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet", "the sceptre" referring to the Messiah of the house of Judah, and "the staff" to the Messiah of the house of Joseph. "Until Shiloh cometh": this is Moses, the numerical value of the two names Shiloh and Moses being the same. It is also possible to refer the "herbs of the field" to the righteous or to the students of the Torah...

[Note: The last 8 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

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[Note: The Hebrew text of this page does not correspond entirely to the English translation.]

AND THE LORD GOD FORMED MAN. "Man" here refers to Israel, whom God shaped at that time both for this world and for the future world. Further, the word vayizer (and he formed) implies that God brought them

under the aegis of His own name by shaping the two eyes like the letter Yod and the nose between like the letter Vau.... Forthwith at that time He planted Israel in the holy Garden of Eden, as it is said: "and the Lord God planted" (Gen. II, 8). The two names here refer to the Father and the Mother; the "Garden" is the Shekinah on earth, and "Eden" is the supernal Mother; "the man" is the Central Column; the Shekinah was to be his plantation, his spouse who was never to depart from him and was to be his perpetual delight. Thus God at that time planted Israel as a holy shoot, as it is written, "the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, in which I glory".

AND THE LORD GOD CAUSED TO GROW. The two names may be referred to the Father and the Mother; "every pleasant tree" refers to the Zaddik; "good to eat" refers to the Central Column, through which He provided food for all, and from which alone the Zaddik is nourished, as the Shekinah from him. These have no need of the lower world, but, on the contrary, all below are nourished from him. For in this period of captivity the Shekinah and "the Life of the universe" are only nourished by the eighteen blessings of Israel's prayer, but at the time he will be food for all. AND THE TREE OF LIFE. This means that at that time the Tree of Life will be planted in the Garden, so that "he shall take also of the Tree of Life and eat and live for ever" (Gen. III, 22). The Shekinah will no longer be in the power of the "evil influence", i.e. the mixed multitude who are "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil", and shall no longer receive into itself anyone unclean, to fulfil what is written, "the Lord alone shall lead him and there shall be no strange god with him" (Deut. XXXII, 12). For this reason proselytes will no longer be admitted in the days of the Messiah. The Shekinah will be like a vine on which there cannot be grafted any shoot from another species, and Israel shall be "every tree pleasant to see", and their former beauty shall be restored to them, of which we are told: "He cast from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel" (Lam. II, 1). "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil" shall be thrust from them and shall not cleave to them or mingle with them, for of Israel it is said: "and of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ye shall not eat". This tree is the "mixed multitude", and God pointed out to them that through mixing with them they suffered two losses, of the first and of the second Temple, as it is said: "and on the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt surely die". They caused the Zaddik to be left parched and desolate by the loss of the first Temple, which is the Shekinah in heaven, and by the loss of the second Temple, which is the Shekinah on earth. Hence it is written, "and the river shall be drained dry"; i.e. the river vau shall dry in the lower he, so as to deprive it of the flow of yod issuing from En-Sof. But as soon as Israel shall go forth from captivity, that is, the holy people alone, then that river which was dried up shall become "the river that goes forth from Eden to water the garden". This river is the Central Column; "goes forth from Eden" is the supernal Mother; "to water the garden" is the Shekinah on earth. In reference to that time it is said of Moses and Israel, "Then thou shalt delight in the Lord", and the words shall be fulfilled, "then Moses shall sing" (Ex. XV, 1).

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[Note: The Hebrew text of this page does not correspond entirely to the English translation.]

... Further, the river “shall part from thence and become four heads” (Gen. II, 10). The first of these is Hesed (Kindness), which is the right arm. From this shall drink the camp of Michael, and with it the tribe of Judah and his two accompanying tribes. The second is Geburah (Force), and from it shall drink the camp of Gabriel, and with it the tribe of Dan and his two accompanying tribes. The third is Nezah (Victory), the right leg, and from it shall drink the camp of Nuriel, and with it the tribe of Reuben and his two accompanying tribes. The fourth is Hod (Majesty), the “left leg” (referred to in what was said of Jacob, that “he halted on his left thigh”), and from it shall drink the camp of Raphael, whose mission is to heal the ills of the captivity, and with it the tribe of Ephraim and his two accompanying tribes. [Tr. note: Here follows a digression (up to abathreh, p. 27a) on a saying of R. Akiba about the esoteric study, too technical for translation into English.]

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[Note: The Hebrew text of this page does not correspond entirely to the English translation.]

AND THE LORD GOD TOOK THE MAN AND PUT HIM IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, ETC. From whence did he take him? He took him from the four elements which are hinted at in the verse “and from there it parted and became four heads”. God detached him from these and placed him in the Garden of Eden. So does God do now to any man created from the four elements when he repents of his sins and occupies himself with the Torah; God takes him from his original elements, as it is said, “and from there he parts”, i.e. he separates himself from the desires which they inspire, and God places him in his garden, which is the Shekinah, “to dress it”, by means of positive precepts, “and to keep it”, by means of negative precepts. If he keeps the law, he makes himself master of the four elements, and becomes a river from which they are watered, and they obey him and he is their ruler. But if he transgresses the law, they are watered from the bitterness of the tree of evil, which is the evil inclination, and all his limbs are full of bitterness; but when the members of the body are kept holy from the side of good, it may be said of them that “they came to Marah and were not able to drink waters from Marah, for they were bitter” (Ex. XV, 23). Similarly, the study of the Talmud is bitter compared with that of the esoteric wisdom, of which it is said, “And God showed him a tree” (Ibid.); this is a tree of life, and through it “the waters were sweetened”. Similarly of Moses it is written, “And the staff of God was in his hand.” This rod is Metatron, from one side of whom comes life and from the other death. When the rod remains a rod, it is a help from the side of good, and when it is turned into a serpent it is hostile, so that “Moses fled from it”, and God delivered it into his hand. This rod typifies the Oral Law which prescribes what is permitted and what is forbidden. When Moses struck the rock God took it back from him, and “he went down to him with a rod” (II Sam. XXXIII, 21), to smite him with it, the “rod” being

the evil inclination, which is a serpent, the cause of the captivity. A further lesson can be derived from the words “and from there it parted”: happy is the man who devotes himself to the Torah, for when God takes him from this body, from the four elements, he is detached from them and ascends to become the head

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of the four Hayyoth, as it is written, “and they shall bear thee on their hands” (Ps. XCI, 12).

AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED THE MAN, SAYING. It is agreed that the term “command” in the Scripture always has reference to the prohibition of idolatry. This sin has its root in the liver, which is the seat of anger, and it has been laid down that “to fall into a passion is like worshipping idols”. The expression “the man” designates bloodshed, on the analogy of the verse: “by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. IX, 6). This sin has its root in the gall, the sword of the angel of death, after the verse: “her latter end is bitter like gall, piercing like a two-edged sword” (Prov. V, 4). The expression “saying” refers to incest, which has its root in the spleen, as it is written, “Such is the way of the adulterous woman, she eats and wipes her mouth” (Ibid. XXX, 20). Although the spleen has no mouth or suckers, yet it absorbs the black turbid blood of the liver; so the adulterous woman wipes her mouth and leaves no trace. The murderer is incited by the bile and sucks from the blood of the heart. All who see bile recoil from it, but unchastity is covered in darkness, in the black blood of the spleen. Whoever sins by murder, idolatry, and incest bans his soul through the liver, the gall, and the spleen, and is punished in Gehinnom in these three members, through three chief demons, Mashith (destroyer), Af (anger), and Hemah (wrath)... Before Israel went into captivity, and while the Shekinah was still with them, God commanded Israel: “thou shalt not uncover thy mother's nakedness” (Lev. XVIII, 7), and this captivity is the uncovering of the nakedness of the Shekinah, as it is written, “On account of your sins your mother has been put away” (Is. L, 1), i.e. for the sin of unchastity Israel has been sent into captivity and the Shekinah also, and this is the uncovering of the Shekinah. This unchastity is Lilith, the mother of the “mixed multitude”. It is they who separate the two He's of the sacred name, and prevent the Vau from entering between them; so it is written, “the nakedness of a woman and her daughter thou shalt not uncover”, referring to the upper and lower Shekinah. When the “mixed multitude” are between the one He and the other, the Holy One, blessed be He, cannot link them together, and consequently “the river becomes dry and parched”—dry in the upper He and parched in the lower He, in order that the “mixed multitude” may not be nourished by the Vau, which is the Tree of Life. Therefore the Vau does not link together the two He's when the mixed multitude is between them, and the letter Yod is not able to draw near to the second He'; thus the precept “thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter-in-law” is transgressed. Further, they separate the Yod from the upper He, and so break the command “thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's wife”, the Yod being the father, the first He the mother, Vau the son and the second He the daughter. Therefore it is



ordained with regard to the upper He, "thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's wife"; "the nakedness of thy sister the daughter of thy father" refers to the lower He; "her son's daughter and her daughter's daughter" refers to the He and He which are the children of He; "the nakedness of the father's brother" refers to the Yod, which is the product of the letter Yod, a brother to Vau. In a word, when the "mixed multitude" are mingled with Israel, the letters of the name Tetragrammaton cannot be joined and linked together; but as soon as they are removed from the world, then it is said of the letters of God's name that "On that day the Lord shall be one and his name one" (Zech. XIV, 9). This is why Adam, who is Israel, is closely linked with the Torah, of which it is said, "It is a tree of life to those who take hold on it"; this tree is the Matron, the Sefirah Malkhuth (Kingship), through their connection with which Israel are called "sons of kings". On this account God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. II, 18). This help is the Mishnah (the oral Law), the handmaid of the Shekinah. If Israel deserve well, it is a help to them in the captivity from the side of the permitted, the clean, and the proper; if they do not deserve well, it is a hindrance to them from the side of the unclean, the unfit, and the forbidden, the clean, the permitted, and the fit signifying the good inclination, and the unfit, the unclean, and the forbidden signifying the evil inclination. Thus the Mishnah resembles the woman, who has both pure and impure blood of menstruation. But the Mishnah is not the spouse of his real union, for real union is denied to him until the "mixed multitude" shall be removed from the earth. On account of this Moses was buried outside of the Holy Land....

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Note: The English translation resumes at the end of line 2 of the Hebrew text.]

AND THE LORD GOD FORMED FROM THE GROUND ALL THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD AND ALL THE FOWL OF THE HEAVEN. Said R. Simeon, 'Alas for the stupidity and the blindness of men who do not perceive the mysteries of the Torah, and do not know that by "the beasts of the field and the fowl of the heaven" are designated the unlearned. Even those of them who are "a living soul" are of no service in the Captivity to the Shekinah or to Moses who is with her, for all the time that she is in exile he does not quit her.' Said R. Eleazar, 'Are we justified in applying what is said of Adam to Moses and

Israel?' R. Simeon answered: 'My son, is it you who speak thus? Have you forgotten the text, "He announceth the end from the beginning" (Is. XLVI, 10)?' He replied: 'You are certainly right; and that is why we are told that Moses did not die, and that he was called Adam; and in reference to him in the last captivity it is written, "and for Adam he found no help", but all was "against him". So, too, of the Central Column it is written, "and for the man he found no help", viz. to bring the Shekinah out of captivity; therefore it is written, "And he turned this way and that and saw that there was no man" (Ex. II, 12), Moses being after the pattern of the Central Column. At that time "the Lord God

caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man" (Gen. II, 21). "Lord God" designates the Father and the Mother; the "deep sleep" is the "captivity", as it is said, "and a deep sleep fell upon Abraham" (Ibid. XV, 12). "And he took one of his sides." Whose sides? What is referred to is the maidens of the Matron. The Father and the Mother took one of these, a white side, fair as the moon, "and closed up the place with flesh"; this is the flesh of which it is written, "seeing that he also is flesh" (Gen. VI, 3), which refers to Moses.

AND THE LORD GOD BUILT THE SIDE. Here is an allusion to the law of the deceased husband's brother, in regard to whom the Sages said, "If he refuses to build once, he shall not build any more", as it is written, "thus shall be done to the man who shall not build his brother's house" (Deut. XXV, 9). But of God it is written, "And the Lord God built", i.e. the Father and the Mother built the son, as it is written, "God buildeth Jerusalem", i.e. Vau, which is the son, is built by Yod He, which are the Father and Mother. Hence it says, "And the Lord God built the side which he had taken from the man", viz. the Central Column, "and brought it to the man", i.e. he brought to the side which he had taken from He its maiden, and of her it is said, "And I shall be to her, saith the Lord, a wall of fire round about" (Zech. II, 9). It is because the future Temple will be built on this rock by the hands of the Holy One, blessed be He, that it will endure for all generations. Of this Temple it is written, "greater shall be the glory of this latter house than of the former", for the former was built by the hands of man, but this one shall be built by the hands of the Holy One, blessed be He.... The words "and the Lord God built the side" can also be applied to Moses, in so far as he is from the side of Hesed (Kindness). "And he closed the place of it with flesh": flesh being red, symbolises Geburah (Force), and so in Moses both were combined. THIS TIME BONE OF MY BONE AND FLESH OF MY FLESH. This is said of the Shekinah, the betrothed maiden, by the Central Column, as though to say, "I know that this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; so this of a surety shall be called woman, from the supernal realm, which is Mother, for she was taken from the realm of the Father, which is Yod." And as with the Central Column, so with Moses below. At that time every Israelite will find his twin-soul, as it is written, "I shall give to you a new heart, and a new spirit I shall place within you" (Ezek. XXXVI, 26), and again, "And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel III, 1); these are

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the new souls with which the Israelites are to be endowed, according to the dictum, "the son of David will not come until all the souls to be enclosed in bodies have been exhausted", and then the new ones shall come. At that time the mixed multitude shall pass away from the world, and it will be possible to say of Moses and of Israel, each in reference to his twin-soul, "and the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed", because unchastity shall pass away from the world, namely those who caused the captivity, the mixed multitude. Of them it is further said, AND THE SERPENT WAS MORE SUBTLE THAN ANY BEAST OF THE FIELD WHICH THE LORD GOD HAD MADE; i.e. they are more subtle for evil than all the Gentiles,

and they are the offspring of the original serpent that beguiled Eve. The mixed multitude are the impurity which the serpent injected into Eve. From this impurity came forth Cain, who killed Abel.... From Cain was descended Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, as it is written, "And the sons of the Kenite the father-in-law of Moses" (Jud. I, 16), and according to tradition he was called Kenite because he originated from Cain. Moses, in order to screen the reproach of his father-in-law, sought to convert the "mixed multitude" (the descendants of Cain), although God warned him, saying, "They are of an evil stock; beware of them." Through them Moses was banished from his proper place and was not privileged to enter the land of Israel, for through them he sinned in striking the rock when he was told to speak to it (Num. XX, 8); it was they who brought him to this. And withal God takes account of a good motive, and since Moses' motive in converting them was good, as has been said, therefore God said to him, "I shall make thee a nation greater and mightier than he" (Ibid. XIV, 12). In regard to them it is written, "Whoso hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Ex. XXXII, 33), for they are of the seed of Amalek, of whom it is said, "thou shalt blot out the memory of Amalek" (Deut. XXV, 19): it was they who caused the two tablets of the Law to be broken, whereupon, AND THE EYES OF BOTH OF THEM WERE OPENED AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED, i.e. Israel became aware that they were sunk in the mire of Egypt, being without Torah, so that it could be said of them "and thou wast naked and bare".... Next it says, AND THEY SEWED FIG LEAVES, that is to say, they sought to cover themselves with various husks from the "mixed multitude"; but their real covering is the fringes of the Tzitzith and the straps of the phylacteries, of which it is said, AND THE LORD GOD MADE FOR THE MAN AND HIS WIFE COATS OF SKIN AND COVERED THEM; this refers more properly to the phylacteries, while the fringes are designed in the words AND THEY MADE FOR THEMSELVES GIRDLES.

AND THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD, ETC. This alludes to the time when Israel came to Mount Sinai as it is written, "Hath a people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, etc." The mixed multitude then perished, those who said to Moses, "Let not God speak with us lest we die" (Ex. XX, 16). These are the prototypes of the unlearned (Am haaretz), of whom it is said, "cursed is he that lieth with any manner of beast" (Deut. XXVII, 21), because they are from the side of the serpent, of which it is said, "cursed art thou from among all the beasts" (Gen. III, 14). Various impurities are mingled in the composition of Israel, like animals among men. One kind is from the side of the serpent; another from the side of the Gentiles, who are compared to the beasts of the field; another from the side of mazikin (goblins), for the souls

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of the wicked are literally the mazikin (goblins) of the world; and there is an impurity from the side of the demons and evil spirits; and there is none so cursed among them as Amalek, who is the evil serpent, the "strange god". He is the cause of all unchastity and murder, and his twin-soul is the poison of idolatry, the

two together being called Samael (lit. poison-god). There is more than one Samael, and they are not all equal, but this side of the serpent is accursed above all of them.

AND THE LORD GOD CALLED TO THE MAN AND SAID, WHERE ART THOU? The word aiekah (where art thou) has the same letters as the word aikah (how), which commences the book of Lamentations, and thus foreshadows the destruction of the Temple and the lamentation over it. But in the days to come God will sweep away all evil growths from the world, as it is written, "He hath swallowed up death for ever" (Is. XXV, 8), and everything shall be restored to its rightful place, as it is written, "On that day the Lord shall be one and his name one" (Zech. XIV, 9).

IN THE BEGINNING.[Tr. note: v. Appendix, p. 383.]

We have been taught that wherever the name Solomon occurs in the Song of Songs, it refers to "the King to whom peace belongs", while the term "king", simply, refers to the Female. The lower is contained in the upper, and the mnemonic is that the lower is heir to the upper, so that both are as one, together constituting beth (=bayith, house), as it is written, "With wisdom a house (bayith) is builded" (Prov. XXIV, 3). Now it is written: The king Solomon made him a palanquin of the trees of Lebanon (S. S. III, 9). The "palanquin" is the maintenance of the lower world through the agency of the upper world. Before God created the world, His name was enclosed within Him, and therefore He and His name enclosed within Him were not one. Nor could this unity be effected until He created the world. Having, therefore,

decided to do so, He traced and built, but the aim was not attained until He enfolded Himself in a covering of a supernal radiance of thought and created therefrom a world. He produced from the light of that supernal radiance mighty cedars of the upper world, and placed His chariot on twenty-two graven letters which were carved into ten utterances and infixed there. Hence it is written, "from the trees of Lebanon", and it is also written, "the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted" (Ps. CIV, 16). It says in our text, "King Solomon made for himself." The words "for himself" indicate that He made it for His own behoof, for His own advantage, to display His glory, to show that He is one and His name one, as it is written, "and they shall know that it is thou alone whose name is the Lord" (Ps. LVIII, 19). Through the blows of His light various realms were made intelligible. He glanced at this side above, He glanced to the right, He turned to the left and descended below, and so to all four cardinal points. Thus His kingdom spread above and below and in all four directions, since a certain supernal stream flowed downwards and formed a great sea, as it says, "all the rivers flow into the sea and the sea is not full" (Eccl. I, 7), for it gathers the Whole and draws it into its midst, as it is written, "I am the rose of Sharon" (S. S. II, 1), Sharon being the basin of the great sea which draws to itself all the waters of the World and absorbs them. Thus the one discharges and the other collects, and one shines through the other in a specified manner. Of this relationship it is written, "By wisdom is the house built"; hence the beth (=2) of Bereshith, implying that

the upper house is built in wisdom and the lower one also. The upper house, which is the greater, makes the world habitable, and is called Elohim; the lower one is called simply "king". It is written, "The king shall rejoice in Elohim" (Ps. LXIII, 12): to wit, when the supernal Geburah (Force) bestirs itself to embrace him and draw him to himself, so that all should be one. Again, the words may be taken to refer to the gladness of the stream which issues in one hidden and secret path and enters as two which are one, thus rendering the world complete and whole. Or again, "The king shall rejoice in Elohim", i.e. the lower world rejoices in the upper recondite world which sent forth life to all, which was called the life of the king. This is the foundation

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of the house. This house built the house of the world, and built a world. This is what is meant by "in the beginning God created": "in the beginning", to wit, in Wisdom.

When it collected the whole into itself, it became the great sea, a sea of which the waters were congealed, those waters which had flowed in from the upper source, as we indicate by the verse, "From the womb of Whom (Mi) came forth the ice" (Job. XXXVIII, 29), its waters congealing in it in order to draw in others. This ice was a frozen sea the waters of which did not flow until the force of the South reached it and drew it to itself. Then the waters which were congealed in the side of the North were relaxed and commenced to flow; for it was on the side of the North that the waters were frozen, and on the side of the South that they thawed and began to flow, in order to water all the "beasts of the field", as it is written, "they give water to all the beasts of the field" (Ps. CIV, 11). These are called hare bather (mountains of separation), and all are watered when the side of the South begins to approach and to make the water flow. Through the streaming of this supernal energy all were in gladness. When it so pleased the thought of the Most Mysterious, a river flowed forth therefrom, and when one joined the other by a path which cannot be traced either above or below, herein was the beginning of all, and Beth (= second), which is plain "king", was completed from this beginning, and one was like the other. With this energy God created the heavens, a hidden point the waters of which flow forth without, and produced therefrom a voice which is called the voice of the Shofar. Hence it says, "God created the heavens", to wit, the voice of the Shofar. The heavens control the life of the supernal King upon the earth (as indicated by the catchword, "the son of Jesse is alive upon the earth", since life depends upon the son of Jesse). It is through Vau that life flows to it, and it controls all and the earth is fed therefrom; hence it is written, "and (v-) the earth", the vau being added to control the sustenance of the earth. The word eth refers to something in the upper world, to wit, the power of the totality of the twenty-two letters, which Elohim produced and gave to the heavens (as it says, "with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals"); hence, "the (eth) heavens", to associate and combine one with the other, so as to be established together by the "life of the king", that the heavens should be fed therefrom. The words "and (ve-eth) the earth" indicate the union of

male and female, which were traced with individual letters, and the "life of the king" which flowed from the heavens, the heavens pouring them forth to maintain the earth and all its denizens.

In this way the so-called supernal Elohim made a heaven and earth for permanency, and produced them together by the supernal energy, the starting-point of all. The supernal essence then descended to a lower grade, and this latter made a heaven and earth below. The whole process is symbolised by the letter beth. There are two Worlds and they created worlds, one an upper world and one a lower world, one corresponding to the other; one created heaven and earth and the other created heaven and earth. In this way the letter beth signifies two further worlds; one produced two worlds and the other produced two worlds; and all through the energy of the supernal reshith. When the upper descended into the lower, it was filled from the channel of a certain grade which rested on it, corresponding to that hidden, secret and recondite path above, the difference being that one is a narrow path and the other a way. The one below is a way, like "the way of the righteous which is as a shining light" (Prov. IV, 18), whereas the one above is a narrow path, like, "the track which the vulture knoweth not" (Job XXVIII, 7). The mnemonic for the whole is the verse, "who maketh a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters" (Is. XLIII, 16); and similarly it is written, "Thy way is in the sea and thy path is in great waters".

When the upper world was filled and became pregnant, it brought forth two children together, a male and a female, these being heaven and earth after the supernal pattern. The earth is fed from the waters of the heaven which are poured into it. These upper waters, however, are male, whereas the lower are female, and the lower are fed from the male and the lower waters call to the upper, like a female that receives the male, and pour out water to meet the water of the male to produce seed. Thus the female is fed from the male, as it is written, "and the earth", with the addition of vau, as we have explained.

Letters were imprinted

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on the fabric of the Whole, on the upper and on the lower fabric. Afterwards the letters were distinguished and inscribed in the Scripture-beth in Bereshith bara, and aleph in Elohim eth. Beth is female, aleph male. As beth created, so aleph produced letters. "The heavens" are the totality of twenty-two letters. The letter he produced the heavens to give them life and to water them and the earth. The letter vau produced the earth to give it food and to provide for it its requirements. The word ve-eth (and) signifies that vau took eth, which embraces the twenty two letters, and the earth absorbed them, as it is written, "all the rivers go to the sea", and was thus fed. Thus the heavens and the earth are united and the earth is fed. When the flaming fire goes forth and the Left is awakened, smoke also goes up, as it says, "Now mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire" (Ex. XIX, 18); because when fire descends, smoke and fire are intermingled, and so the whole is on the side of

the left. This is the inner meaning of the verse, "Yea, my hand hath laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens" (Is. XLVIII, 13), i.e. by the power of the Right above; for the heavens are male and the male comes from the side of the right, and the female from the side of the left.

It says: Lift up your eyes on high and see, Who hath created these (Is. XL, 26). This is the limit of inquiry. For Wisdom was completed from ayin (nothing), which is no subject of inquiry, since it is too deeply hidden and recondite to be comprehended. From the point at which its light begins to extend it is the subject of inquiry, although it is still more recondite than anything beneath, and it is called the interrogative pronoun, "Who?" Hence, "Who (Mi) created these", and also, "From the womb of Whom (Mi) came forth the ice"; as much as to say, that about which we can inquire but find no answer. We have analysed the word Bereshith into the letter beth and the word reshith. Is reshith a creative utterance, or are we to say that Bereshith is the creative utterance? The truth is that so long as its energy had not emerged and spread and everything was still latent in it, it was Bereshith, and that was a creative utterance. But when being emerged and spread from it, it was called reshith, and that became a creative utterance. Similarly, the interrogative Mi created eleh (these); but subsequently when it extended and completed itself, it became Yam (sea), and created a lower world after the pattern of the upper, the two being represented by the letter beth (= 2). It is written: While the king sat at his table, my spikenard sent forth its fragrance (S. S. I, 12). This describes how the King delights himself in the company of the lower king, in their affectionate companionship in the celestial Eden, in that hidden and concealed path which is filled from him and issues in certain specified streams. "My spikenard gave its fragrance": this is the lower king, who created a lower world after the pattern of the upper. So there goes up a goodly fragrance to direct and to perform, and it acquires power and shines with supernal light.

The world was created in two fashions, with the right and with the left, in six supernal days. Six days were created to illumine, as it says, "for into six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth", and they trod out paths and made sixty openings into the great abyss, to conduct the waters of the streams into the abyss. Hence the Rabbinic dictum that "the openings (under the altar) were from the six days of creation", and they brought peace to the world.

**AND THE EARTH WAS VOID AND WITHOUT FORM.** This describes the original state-as it were, the dregs of ink clinging to the point of the pen-in which there was no subsistence, until the world was graven with forty-two letters, all of which are the ornamentation of the Holy Name. When they are joined, letters ascend

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and descend, and form crowns for themselves in all four quarters of the world, so that the world is established through them and they through it. A mould was formed for them like the seal of a ring; when

they went in and issued, and the world was created, and when they were joined together in the seal, the world was established. They struck against the great serpent, and penetrated under the chasms of the dust fifteen hundred cubits. Afterwards the great deep arose in darkness, and darkness covered all, until light emerged and cleft the darkness and came forth and shone, as it is written, "He uncovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death" (Job XII, 22). The waters were weighed in a balance. Fifteen hundred times three fingers flowed into the balance, half for preservation and half to go below. At first one side of the balance rose and the other fell. When, however, the lower side was raised by the hand, the balance was even and did not incline to left or right; hence it is written, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?" (Is. XL, 12). At first all the powers of the earth were latent and not productive, and the waters were frozen in it and did not flow. They only spread abroad when a light from above was shed upon the earth, for when this struck it with its rays its powers were released. So it says, "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." This is the supernal primordial light which was already existing; from this came forth all powers and forces, and through this the earth was firmly established and subsequently brought forth its products. When this light shone on what was below, its radiance spread from one end of the world to the other; but when it observed the sinners of the world, it hid itself away, and issued only by secret paths which cannot be discovered.

**AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT THAT IT WAS GOOD.** We have learnt that every dream which contains the term tob (good) presages peace above and below, provided the letters are seen in their proper order... [Tr. note: Here follow some lines on the inner significance of the letters of the word tob, viz. teth, representing the ninth grade (from the end, i.e. Wisdom) vau, the heavens, and beth, the two worlds.] These three letters were afterwards combined to signify "the Righteous one (Zaddik) of the world", as it is written, "Say of the righteous one that he is good", because the supernal radiance is contained therein.

**IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED.** The word reshith (beginning) refers to the supernal Wisdom; the letter beth (i.e. bayith, house) designates the world, which is watered from that stream which enters it, and which is alluded to in the verse, "A stream went forth from Eden to water the garden." This stream gathers all the waters from a supernal hidden source, and flows perennially to water the Garden. (This hidden source is the First Temple.) In reshith all the letters were enclosed by a secret path hidden within it. From this source went forth two entities, as it is written, "the heavens and the earth". The earth was at first included in the heavens, and they emerged together, clinging to one another. When the first illumination came, the heavens took the earth and put it in its place. Thereupon the earth, being separated

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[Note: The text of our translation varies somewhat from that of the Hebrew.]

from the side of the heavens, was amazed and dumbfounded, desiring to cleave to the heavens as before, because she saw the heavens bathed in light while she was enveloped in darkness. At length, however, the celestial light descended upon her, and from her place she looked at the heavens face to face; and so the earth was firmly established. Light came forth on the right side and darkness on the left, and God afterwards separated them in order again to unite them, as it is written, "And God divided the light from the darkness." This does not mean that there was an absolute separation, but that day came from the side of light, which is the right, and night from the side of darkness, which is the left, and that, having emerged together, they were separated in such a way as to be no longer side by side but face to face, in which guise they clung to one another and formed one, the light being called day and the darkness night, as it says, "And God called the light day and the darkness he called night." This is the darkness that is attached to night, which has no light of its own, although it comes from the side of the primordial fire which is also called "darkness". It remains dark until it is illumined from the side of day. Day illumines night, and night will not be light of itself until the time of which it is written, "the night shineth as the day, the darkness is even as the light" (Ps. CXXXIX, 12).

[Tr. note: There seems to be here a lacuna in the text.]

R. Eleazar came forward first and expounded the verse: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth, even the Lord upon many waters (Ps. XXIX, 3). He said, "The voice of the Lord" is the supernal voice presiding over the waters, which flow from grade to grade until they are all collected in one place and form one gathering. It is this voice which sends them forth each in its course, like a gardener who conducts water through various channels to the requisite spots. "The God of glory thundereth": this is the side that issues from Geburah (Force), as it is written, "Who can understand the thunder of his mighty deeds (geburatov)?" (Job. XXVI, 14). "The Lord upon many waters": this is the supernal Wisdom, which is called Yod, and which is "upon the many waters", the secret source that issues therefrom.'

R. Simeon explained the difference, and said: 'It is written, "Close by the border shall the rings be, for places for the staves" (Ex. XXV, 27). The "border" is a secret place accessible only by one narrow path known to a few. It is, therefore, filled with gates and lit with lamps. This is the future world, which, being hidden and stored away, is called misgereth (border, lit. closed). The "rings" are the supernal chain of water, air, and fire, which are linked with one another and emerge from one another like so many rings of a chain. They all turn to the "border", with which is connected that supernal stream which waters them, and with which they are thus connected. Further, these supernal rings are "places for the staves", to wit, the lower chariots, of which some are from the side of fire, some of water, and some of air, so that they should be a chariot to the ark. Hence anyone who approaches should proceed only as far as the staves, but should not penetrate further, save those who are qualified to minister within,

and to whom permission has been given to enter for that purpose.'

R. Jose propounded the question: "What are the "six days of Bereshith" of which the Rabbis speak so often?" R. Simeon answered: "These are, in truth, "the cedars of Lebanon which he has planted". As the cedars spring from Lebanon, so these six days spring from Bereshith. These are the six supernal days which are specified in the verse: "Thine, O Lord, are the Greatness (Gedulah), the Might (Geburah), the Beauty (Tifereth), the Victory (Nezah), and the Majesty (Hod)" (I Chron. XXIX, 11). The words "For all" refer to the Zaddik (righteous one), who is Yesod (foundation of the world)....

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The word Bereshith we interpret to mean "the second, i.e. Hokmah (Wisdom) is the starting-point", because the supernal Kether (Crown), which is really first, is too recondite and therefore is not counted; hence the second is the starting-point. Again, the word be-reshith indicates that there are two reshith's, because as the upper Wisdom is a reshith (starting-point), so the lower Wisdom is a reshith. Further, we reckon Bereshith as a maamar (creative utterance), and six days issued from it and are comprised in it, and bear the names of those others. The next words, Created Elohim, are analogous to the verse "and a river went forth from Eden to water the garden", i.e. to water it and keep it and attend to all its needs. Thus this Elohim is Elohim Hayyim (the living God), and we render "Bereshith created Elohim" by means of that stream, as the agent for producing the world and vivifying it. Further, the two words eth hashamaim (the heavens) signify the fitting union of male and female. After this a lower world was created through the agency of the heavens, and through it Elohim gave being to all. More precisely, the heavens produced eth, which is the Whole. When the Whole was settled in its place, this last link in the chain became in turn a starting-point (reshith), through which Elohim released the stream, and the waters began to flow to the lower world, so that we can now render "by means of reshith God created", viz. the lower world; by its means He produced radiances and gave being to all.' R. Judah said: 'In allusion to this it is written, "should the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?" (Is. X, 15). Surely it is the craftsman who is entitled to boast. So here, seeing that by means of this reshith the supernal Elohim created the heavens, it is God to whom the glory belongs....'

AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT. This is the original light which God created. This is the light of the eye. It is the light which God showed to Adam, and through which he was able to see from one end of the world to the other. It was the light which God showed to David, who on seeing it burst forth into praise, saying, "Oh, how abundant is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee" (Ps. XXXI, 20). It is the light through which God showed to Moses the Land of Israel -from Gilead to Dan. When God foresaw that three sinful generations would arise, namely the generation of Enosh, the generation of the Flood, and the generation of the Tower of Babel, He put it away so that

they should not enjoy it, and gave it to Moses for the first three months after he was born when his mother hid him. When he was brought before Pharaoh God withdrew it from him, and only restored it to him when he stood upon the mountain of Sinai to receive the Torah. From that time he had the use of it for the rest of his life, so that the Israelites could not approach him till he put a veil over his face (Ex. XXXIV, 30).

LET THERE BE LIGHT, AND THERE WAS LIGHT. Anything to which the term *vayehi* (and there was) is applied is found in this world and the next world. R. Isaac said: 'The radiance which God produced at the time of the Creation illumined the world from one end to the other, but was withdrawn, in order that the sinners of the world might not enjoy it, and it is treasured up for the righteous, i.e. for the *Zaddik*,

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as it is written, "light is sown for the *Zaddik*" (Ps. XCVII, 11); then worlds will be firmly established and all will form a single whole, but until the time when the future world shall emerge this light is hidden and stored up. This light issued from the darkness which was carved out by the strokes of the Most Recondite; and similarly from that light which was stored away there was carved out through some hidden process the lower-world darkness in which light resides. This lower darkness is what is called "night" in the verse, "and the darkness he called night" (Gen. I, 5). Hence the Rabbinical exposition of the text: "He uncovereth deep things out of darkness" (Job. XII, 22)', on which R. Jose said: 'This cannot be the original darkness, since all the supernal crowns

contained therein are still undisclosed, and we call them "deep things". The term "uncovereth" can be applied to those supernal mysteries only in so far as they are contained in that darkness which is in the category of night. For all those deep and hidden things which issue from (God's) thought and are taken up by the Voice are not disclosed till the Word reveals them. This Word is Speech, and this Speech is called Sabbath, because this Speech seeks to dominate and not to let any other do so. It is this Speech which comes from the side of darkness that discloses hidden things from that darkness.' Said R. Isaac: 'If so, what is the meaning of the text, "And God divided the light from the darkness"?' He replied: 'Light produced day and darkness produced night. Afterwards He joined them together and they were one, as it is written, "And there was evening and there was morning one day", i.e. night and day were called one. As for the words, "And God divided the light from the darkness", this means that He prevented dissension between them.' Said R. Isaac: 'Up to this point the male principle was represented by light and the female by darkness; subsequently they were joined together and made one. The difference by means of which light is distinguished from darkness is one of degree only; both are one in kind, as there is no light without darkness and no darkness without light; but though one, they are different in colour.' R. Simeon said: 'The world is created and established on the basis of a covenant, as it is written, "If not for my covenant with the day and night, I had not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jer. XXXIII, 25). This

covenant is the *Zaddik* (righteous one), the foundation of the world, and therefore the world is established on the covenant of day and night together, as stated in our text, the "ordinances of heaven" being those which flow and issue forth from the celestial Eden.' R. Simeon discoursed here on the text: From the (place of) the voice of those who mediate between the water drawers, there they shall rehearse the kindnesses of the Lord, etc. (Judges V, 11). 'This voice', he said, 'is the voice of Jacob, which rests between those who draw waters from on high, and takes hold of both sides and unites them in itself. "There they shall rehearse the kindnesses of the Lord": i.e. there is the place for faith to cleave fast; there the kindnesses of the Lord draw sustenance. The verse proceeds: "The kindnesses of him who is generous to Israel." This is the "Righteous One of the world", who is everlasting and holy, and who draws in to Himself the stream of the Whole and disperses the supernal waters into the great sea. "In Israel": because Israel inherited this covenant, and God gave it to them for an everlasting inheritance. When Israel deserted it through performing the ceremony of circumcision without drawing back the flesh, there was applied to them the verse, "then the people of the Lord went down to the gates" (Ibid.): these are the gates of righteousness in which they sat without entering further. Of that time

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it is written, "and the children of Israel forsook the Lord" (Judges II, 12), until Deborah came and restored the proper performance of the ceremony. Hence Deborah speaks of herself as a "mother in Israel", to indicate that she brought down the supernal waters from above to establish both worlds through Israel, thus showing that the world rests only on this covenant. We see from all this how three issue from one and one is established on three; one enters between two, two give suck to one, and one feeds many sides, and so all are one. Hence it is written, "and there was evening and there was morning one day", i.e. a day that embraces both evening and morning, thus indicating the covenant of day and night and rendering the whole a unity.'

AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS, AND LET IT DIVIDE WATERS FROM WATERS. R. Judah said: 'There are seven firmaments above, all in the realm of supernal holiness, and the Holy Name is completed through them. The firmament mentioned here is in the midst of the waters; it rests upon other Hayyoth, separating the upper from the lower waters. The lower waters call to the upper and drink them in through the medium of this firmament, because all the upper waters are collected in it, and it then transmits them to these Hayyoth, and so they draw from there. It is written: "A garden shut up is my sister, my bride, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (S. S. iv, 12). This firmament is called a "garden shut up", because the whole is enclosed and embraced in it. It is called a "spring shut up", because the supernal stream as it courses enters it but cannot issue, the waters being congealed. For the north wind blows on them, and so they become congealed and cannot issue, being made into ice; nor would they ever issue were it not for a wind from the South which breaks up the ice. The appearance of this highest

firmament is like that of the ice which collects all the waters. Similarly it collects waters and separates the upper from the lower waters. When we said above that it was in the middle, this refers to that firmament which was produced from this one, but this one is above and rests on the heads of the Hayyoth.’ Said R. Isaac: ‘There is a membrane in the inside of the human body which separates the upper from the lower part of the trunk, and which imbibes from the upper part and distributes to the lower part; so is this firmament between the waters....’ R. Abba illustrated from the text: ‘Who lays the beams of his upper chambers in the waters, etc.’ (Ps. CIV, 3), the “waters” mentioned here being the supernal waters through which the “house” was built up, as it is written, “through wisdom a house is builded and through understanding it is established” (Prov. XXIV, 3). In the following clause, “Who makes the clouds his chariot”, R. Yesa divided the word abim (clouds) into ab (cloud), and yam (sea), interpreting it to mean “the cloud”, viz. darkness from the Left, “resting on this sea”. “Who walketh upon the wings of the wind”: this is the spirit of the supernal sanctuary.... R. Jose said: ‘It is written, “and he meteth out waters by measure” (middah), implying that God literally measured them out, so that they were for the well-being of the world when they came from the side of Geburah (Force).’ R. Abba said: ‘When the scholars of old came to this place, they used to say: “The lips of the wise move but they say nothing lest they bring down punishment on themselves”.’ R. Eleazar said: ‘The first of the letters was flitting over the face of the ethereal expanse, and was crowned above and below, and went up

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and down, and the waters were graven into their shapes and were settled in their places, and enfolded in one another; and so all the letters were combined with one another and crowned with one another until a firm building was erected on them. When they were all built and crowned, the upper waters and the lower waters, which were still mingled together, produced the habitation of the world. And the waters continued going up and down until this firmament came into being and separated them. The division took place on the second (day), on which was created Gehinnom, which is a blazing fire, and which is destined to rest upon the heads of sinners.’ Said R. Judah: ‘From this we learn that every division (of opinion) in which both sides act for the glory of heaven endures, since here we have a division which was for the sake of heaven. Through the firmament the heavens were established, as it is written, “and God called the firmament heaven”, since this divides the more from the less holy, like the curtain in the Tabernacle.’

LET THE WATERS UNDER THE HEAVEN BE GATHERED: i.e. those “under the heaven” only. TO ONE PLACE: i.e. to the place which is called “one”, namely, the lower sea, which completes the formation of One, and without which God would not be called One. R. Yesa said: “ ‘One place’ is the place of which it is written, “my covenant of peace shall not be removed” (Is. LIV, 10), for this takes the Whole and casts it into the sea, whereby the earth is established, as it is written, AND LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR, which is

the earth, as it is written, AND GOD CALLED THE DRY LAND EARTH. The earth is called “dry” because it is “bread of the poor one” (Yesod), and it remains dry until this place fills it, and then the waters commence to flow from their sources.’

AND THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF THE WATERS CALLED HE SEAS. This is the upper reservoir of the waters where they are all collected and from which they all flow and issue forth. R. Hiya said: ‘The gathering place of the waters is the Zaddik (righteous one), because it is written in connection with it, AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD, and it is written elsewhere, “say ye of the righteous that he is good” (Is. III, 10).’ R. Jose said: ‘This Zaddik is also referred to in the words, “he called seas”, because he takes all the streams and sources and rivers and he is the source of all; hence he is called “waters”. Hence it says: AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. And since the Zaddik is designated with the words “that it is good”, there is a gap between the first and the third days, and on the day between it is not written, “that it was good”, since on the third day the earth brought forth produce from the impulse of that Zaddik, as it is written, AND GOD SAID, LET THE EARTH PUT FORTH GRASS, HERB YIELDING SEED, AND FRUIT TREE BEARING FRUIT AFTER ITS KIND. By “fruit tree” is meant the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which put forth blossoms and fruit. “Bearing fruit” is the Zaddik, the basis of the world. “After its kind” means that all human beings who have in them the spirit of holiness which is the blossom of that tree are stamped as being of its kind. This stamp is the covenant of holiness, the covenant of peace, and the faithful enter into that kind and do not part from it. The Zaddik generates, and that tree conceives and brings forth fruit after his kind, i.e. after the kind of the producer, so as to be like him. Blessed he that resembles these his mother and his father. The holy seal is therefore set upon him on the eighth day that he may resemble his “mother” (who is the eighth grade), and the flesh is turned back to show the holy seal in order that he may resemble the “father”. So by “fruit tree” we understand the mother, by “producing” the father, by “fruit” the holy covenant, and by “to its kind”, the resemblance to the father. WHOSE SEED IS IN IT UPON THE EARTH. Instead of zar’o (whose seed), we may read zera’vau (the seed of Vau), which has literally been cast upon the earth. Blessed is the lot of Israel, who are holy and resemble the holy angels, wherefore it is written, “and thy people are all righteous” (Is. LX, 21), truly righteous, for from such they issue and such they resemble. Happy they in this world and in the world to come.’

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R. Hiya said: ‘It is written, “God maketh the earth by his strength” (Jer. X, 12). He who “maketh the earth” is the Holy One, blessed be He, above; “by his strength” means by the Zaddik; “he establishes the universe”, this is the earth beneath; “by his wisdom”, refers to Zedek (justice). Also it is written, “makes the earth”, and not “made”, because God constantly regulates the earth and its activities through the agency of His “strength”, as just explained...’ R. Isaac said: ‘It is written, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were

made and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts." The "heavens" mentioned here are the lower heavens, which were made by the word of the upper heavens, through the spirit which sent forth a voice until it reached that stream which issues and flows perennially. By "all their hosts" is meant the lower world, which exists through that "breath", which is male. A similar lesson is derived from the verse, "Who watereth the mountains from his upper chambers, the earth is full of the fruit of thy works" (Ps. CIV, 13). The "upper chambers" we have already explained, and the term can be further illustrated by the verse, "Who lays the beams of his upper chambers in the waters." The expression "the fruit of thy works" alludes to that stream which ever flows and issues forth; hence it is written, "Yielding fruit whose seed is in it," as explained.'

LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVEN TO GIVE LIGHT UPON THE EARTH. The word meoroth (lights) is written defectively. R. Hizkiah says that this indicates that this firmament is the home of the rigour of justice. R. Jose says that the defective spelling indicates the lowest, namely the moon, which is the cause of croup in children. It is also the cause of other misfortunes, because it is the smallest of all the luminaries, and sometimes it is obscured and receives no light at all. IN THE FIRMAMENT OF HEAVEN. This is the firmament which includes all the others, since it receives all lights and it illumines the one which has no light of its own. R. Isaac said: 'Even that firmament which has no light of its own is called by us "the kingdom of heaven" and "the land of Israel" and "the land of the living". It is the heaven which illumines this firmament. Hence the word meoroth is written defectively, to show that without Vau there would be death to the world. Everything is included in it, and through it Lilith also finds a place in the world. (We derive this from the recurrence of the word "there" in the sentences: "the small and the great are there" (Job. III, 19). "The Lord shall be with us there in majesty" (Is. XXXIII, 21), and "Lilith reposes there" (Is. XXXIV, 14).)' R. Eleazar said: 'The word meoroth (lights), being written defectively, indicates a shining body which has no light of its own, but only reflects the light of other more luminous bodies. It is written: "Behold, the ark of the covenant, the Lord of all the earth" (Josh. III, 11). The ark here is the "unclear mirror"; the covenant is the "clear mirror". The ark is the receptacle for the Written Torah, whereas the covenant is the sun that illumines it. The covenant is the "lord of all the earth"; and on its account the ark is also called

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Adon (lord), which is the same as Adonai (the Lord). Observe that stars and planets exist through a covenant which is the firmament of the heaven, in which they are inscribed and engraved.' R. Yeha the Elder used to explain thus: 'The words "let there be lights" refer to the moon, which is suspended in the firmament of the heaven. The words "and let them be for lights" indicate the sun. "They shall be for seasons", because seasons, holydays, new-moons and Sabbaths are determined by them. There are seven planets corresponding to seven firmaments, and by all the world is regulated. The supernal world is above them. There are two worlds, an upper world and a lower

world, the lower being on the pattern of the upper. There is a higher king and a lower king. It is written: "The Lord reigneth, the Lord hath reigned, the Lord will reign for evermore", i.e. "the Lord reigneth" above, "the Lord hath reigned" in the middle, "the Lord will reign" below.' R. Aha said: "'The Lord" refers to the supernal Wisdom; "reigneth", to the supernal world which is the world to come. "The Lord hath reigned" refers to the "beauty of Israel"; "the Lord will reign" signifies the ark of the covenant. At another time David reversed the order and said, "The Lord is king for ever and ever" (Ps. X, 16), i.e. "the Lord is king", below, "for ever", in the middle, "and ever", above, for there is the reunion and the perfection of all. God "is king" above, and "will reign" below.' R. Abba said: 'All those lights are collected in the firmament of the heaven to give light on the earth. What is this firmament that gives light upon the earth? It is, of course, that stream which flows and issues forth from Eden, as it is written, "And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden." For when the moon is dominant and is illumined by that stream which flows and issues forth, all the lower heavens and their hosts receive increased light, and the stars which have charge of the earth all function and cause plants and trees to grow, and enrich the earth, and even the waters and the fishes of the sea are more productive. Many emissaries of divine justice also traverse the world, because all are in good spirits and full of energy when there is gladness in the king's palace, and even the beings which hover on the outskirts are glad and fly about the world; and therefore it is necessary to take special care of young children.'

AND GOD SET THEM IN THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVEN. R. Aha said: 'When all of them were there they rejoiced in one another. Then the moon diminished its light in presence of the sun; all the light which it receives from the sun is to shine upon the earth, as it is written, "to give light upon the earth".' R. Isaac said: 'It is written, "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of the seven days" (Is. XXX, 26). These seven days are the seven days of the Creation.' R. Judah said: 'They are the seven days of the consecration of the Tabernacle, when the world was restored to its original completeness, and the moon was not impaired by the evil serpent. This will again be at the time when "God shall swallow up death for ever" (Is. XXV, 8), and then "the Lord will be one and his name one".'

LET THE WATERS SWARM WITH SWARMS OF LIVING CREATURES. R. Eleazar said: 'These are the lower waters, which brought forth species corresponding to those above, so that there was a lower order and a higher order.' R. Hiya said: 'It was the upper waters which brought forth a "living soul", to wit, the soul of the first man, as it is written, "and the man became a living soul" (Gen. II, 7). AND FOWL TO FLY ABOVE THE EARTH. These are the emissaries from the upper world which appear to men in visible shape. For there are others of whose existence man knows only by conjecture.

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These latter are referred to in the next verse in the words, "every winged fowl after its kind". The words



“after its kind” are used in connection with the latter and not with the former, because the latter never take the forms of another species, whereas the former do. Nevertheless, they do differ one from another. AND GOD CREATED THE GREAT SEA MONSTERS. These are the Leviathan and its female. AND EVERY LIVING CREATURE THAT CREEPETH. This is the soul of the creature which creeps to the four quarters of the globe, to wit, Lilith. WHEREWITH THE WATERS SWARMED, AFTER ITS KIND. It is the waters which nourish them. For when the wind blows from the South, the waters are released and flow to all sides, and ships pass to and fro, as it is written, “there go the ships, there is Leviathan whom thou hast formed to sport therein” (Ps. CIV, 26). EVERY WINGED FOWL AFTER ITS KIND: this refers, as already said, to the angels, as in the verse, “for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter” (Eccl. X, 20),’ R. Jose said: ‘They all have six wings, and never change their shape; hence it is written of them, “to their kind”. i.e. that they are always angels. It is these who sweep through the world with six beats of their wings, who observe the actions of men and record them above; hence the Scripture says, “even in thy thought curse not the king, etc.” (Ibid.).’ R. Hizkiah said: ‘Just as it is written here, “living creature that creepeth”, so elsewhere (Ps. CIV, 20) it is written, “wherein creep all the beasts (haytho) of the field.” Just as here we interpret the word hayah of Lilith, so there we interpret the word haytho of the Hayyoth. For they all have sway when she has sway; they commence to chant at each of the three watches of the night and go on without cessation, and of them it is written, “Ye that are the Lord’s remembrancers, take ye no rest” (Is. LXII, 6).

R. Simeon arose and spoke thus: ‘My meditation disclosed to me that when God came to create man, all creatures trembled above and below. The sixth day was proceeding on its course when at length the divine decision was formed. Then the source of all lights shone forth and opened the gate of the East, for thence light issues. The South displayed in full power the light which it had inherited from the commencement, and joined hands with the East. The East took hold of the North, and the North awoke and spread forth and called aloud to the West to come and join him. Then the West went up into the North and united with it, and afterwards the South took hold of the West, and the South and the North, which are the fences of the Garden, surrounded it. Then the East approached the West, and the West was rejoiced and said to the others, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”, embracing like us the four quarters and the higher and the lower. Then the East united with the West and produced him. Hence our Sages have said that man emerged from the site of the Temple. Further, the words “let us make man” may be taken to signify that God imparted to the lower beings who came from the side of the upper world the secret of forming the divine name “Adam”, which embraces the upper and the lower in virtue of its three letters, aleph, dalet, and mim final. When these three letters descended below, together in their complete form, the name Adam was found to comprise male and female. The female was attached to the side of the male until God cast him into a deep slumber, during which he lay on the site of the Temple. God then sawed her off from him and adorned

her like a bride and brought her to him, as it is written, “And he took one of his sides and closed up the place with flesh.” (Gen. II, 21). I have found it stated in an old book that the word “one” here means “one woman”, to wit, the original Lilith, who was with him and who conceived from him. Up to that time, however, she was not a help to him, as it is written, “but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.” Observe that Adam came last of all, it being fitting that he should find the world complete on his appearance.’

AND NO PLANT OF THE FIELD WAS YET IN THE EARTH ETC. R. Simeon said further: ‘These are

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the great trees which were planted out later, but as yet were tiny. We have stated that Adam and Eve were created side by side. Why were they not created face to face? Because “the Lord God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth” (Gen. II, 5), and the union of heaven and earth was not yet firmly established. When the lower union was perfected and Adam and Eve were turned face to face, then the upper union was consummated. We know this from the case of the Tabernacle, of which we have learnt that another tabernacle was erected with it, and that the upper one was not raised till the lower one was raised; and similarly here. Further, since all was not yet in order above, Adam and Eve were not created face to face. The order of verses in the Scripture proves this: for first we read, “For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth”, and then “there was not a man to till the ground”, the meaning being that man was still defective, and only when Eve was perfected was he also perfected. This is further indicated by the fact that in the word vayisgor (and he closed) the letter samekh, which means “support”, occurs for the first time in this section, as if to say that they now supported one another, as male and female. Similarly the lower and the upper world mutually support one another. For until the lower world was completed, that other world of which we have spoken was not completed. When this lower world was turned face to face to the upper, it became a support to the upper, for previously the work had been defective, because “the Lord God had not caused rain to fall upon the earth”. Next, A MIST WENT UP FROM THE GROUND, to repair the deficiency below, by “watering the whole face of the ground”. The rising of the mist signifies the yearning of the female for the male. According to another explanation, we supply the word “not” from the previous clause after “mist”, the meaning being that God did not send rain because a mist had not gone up, etc., it being necessary for the impulse from below to set in motion the power above. So vapour first ascends from the earth to form the cloud. Similarly, the smoke of the sacrifice rises and creates harmony above, so that all unite, and in this way there is completion in the supernal realm. The impulse commences from below, and from this all is perfected. If the Community of Israel did not give the first impulse, the One above would not move to meet her, for by the yearning from below completion is effected above.’

THE TREE OF LIFE ALSO IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN, AND THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF

GOOD AND EVIL. The Tree of Life, according to a tradition, extends over five hundred years' journey, and all the waters of Creation issue from its foot. This tree was in the middle of the Garden, and it collected all the waters of Creation, which afterwards flowed from it in different directions. For the perennially flowing stream rests upon this Garden and enters it, and the waters issuing from it divide into numbers of streams below which water the "beasts of the field", just as the waters originally issued from the supernal world and watered the celestial "mountains of pure balsam". THE TREE OF GOOD AND EVIL- This tree was not in the middle. It is called by this name because it draws sustenance from two opposite sides, which it distinguishes as clearly as one distinguishes sweet and bitter, and therefore it is called "good and evil". All those other plants rest upon it. Other supernal plants are also attached to it, which are called "cedars of Lebanon"; these are the six supernal days, the six days of the Creation which we have mentioned, which were indeed saplings which God first planted and then transferred to another place,

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where they were firmly established. R. Abba here remarked: 'How do we know that Adam and Eve were also planted out? From the verse, "the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, wherein I glory" (Is. LX, 21). They are called "the work of God's hands," because no other creatures were concerned in their formation. We have been taught that the plants at first were like the antennae of grasshoppers, and their light was feeble, until they were planted and firmly established, when their light was augmented and they were called "cedars of Lebanon". Adam and Eve also when they were first planted were not swathed

in light nor did they emit a sweet odour; of a surety they were uprooted and replanted and duly established.'

AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED. According to our teachers, the word "commanded" here contains a prohibition of idolatry; "the Lord", of blasphemy; "God", of the perversion of justice; "the man", of murder; "saying", of adultery and incest; "from all the trees of the garden", of robbery; "thou mayest freely eat", of eating flesh from a living animal; and so we agree. OF ALL THE TREES OF THE GARDEN THOU SHALT SURELY EAT. This means that he was permitted to eat them all together, for, as we see, Abraham ate, Isaac and Jacob ate, and all the prophets ate and remained alive. This tree, however, was a tree of death, in so far that he who ate-it by itself was bound to die, since he took poison. Hence it says, IN THE DAY THAT THOU EATEST THEREOF THOU SHALT SURELY DIE, because thereby he would be separating the shoots. R. Judah asked R. Simeon: 'What is the meaning of the dictum of the teachers, that Adam drew his foreskin?' He said: 'It means that he removed the holy covenant from its place; he abandoned the holy covenant and clung to the orlah and allowed himself to be seduced by the serpent.' The words OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE (Gen. III, 3) signify the woman, of whom it is written, "Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold of the nether world" (Prov. V, 5). On this tree there was

fruit, but not on a certain other. R. Jose said: 'That tree which we mentioned was nurtured and fostered from above, and rejoiced thereat, as it says: "A river went forth from Eden to water the garden." The "garden" designates woman; this river entered it and watered it, and up to this point there was complete unity, for it is from this point onward that there is separation, as it is written, "and from there it parted".'

AND THE SERPENT. R. Isaac said: 'This is the evil tempter'. R. Judah said that it means literally a serpent. They consulted R. Simeon, and he said to them: 'Both are correct. It was Samael, and he appeared on a serpent, for the ideal form of the serpent is the Satan. We have learnt that at that moment Samael came down from heaven riding on this serpent, and all creatures saw his form and fled before him. They then entered into conversation with the woman, and the two brought death into the world. Of a surety Samael brought curses on the world through Wisdom and destroyed the first tree that God had created in the world. This responsibility rested on Samael until another holy tree came, namely Jacob, who wrested the blessings from him, in order that Samael might not be blessed above and Esau below. For Jacob was the reproduction of Adam, and he had the same beauty as Adam. Therefore as Samael withheld blessings from the first tree, so Jacob, who was such another tree as Adam, withheld blessings, both upper and lower, from Samael; and in doing so Jacob but took back his own. It is written: AND THE SERPENT WAS SUBTLE. This serpent is the evil tempter and the angel of death. It is because the serpent is the angel of death that it brought death to the world.' AND HE SAID TO THE WOMAN, YEA (af). R. Jose said: He commenced with af, and he brought af (wrath) upon the world. He said

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to the woman: "With this tree God created the world; eat therefore of it, and ye shall be like God, knowing good and evil, for through this knowledge he is called God." Said R. Judah: 'This was not the way he spoke, for had he said that God created the world through this tree, he would have spoken correctly, for the tree was really "like the axe in the hand of him that hews with it". What he said, however, was that God ate of the tree and so built the world. "Therefore," he went on, "eat you of it and you shall create worlds. It is because God knows this that He has commanded you not to eat of it, for every artisan hates his fellow of the same craft." ' R. Isaac said: 'The speech of the serpent was one tissue of falsehoods. His first remark, "Surely God hath said that ye shall not eat of all the trees of the garden" was a lie, because God had said, "of all the trees of the garden thou shalt surely eat", and all was permitted to him.' R. Jose said: 'With reference to the dictum quoted above, that God prohibited to Adam idolatry, injustice, murder, incest, and so forth, why should all this have been necessary, seeing that Adam was

still alone in the world? The answer is that all these prohibitions had reference to the tree alone, and were applicable to it. For whoever takes of it causes separation and associates himself with the lower hordes which are attached to it. He renders himself guilty of idolatry, murder, and adultery. Of idolatry,

because he acknowledges the superior chieftains; of bloodshed, because that is inspired by this tree, which is of the side of Geburah (Force), under the charge of Samael; and of adultery, because the tree is of the female principle and is called "woman", and it is forbidden to make an appointment with a woman without her husband, for fear of suspicion of adultery. Hence all the prohibitions had reference to this tree, and when he ate of it he transgressed them all.' R. Judah said: 'The way in which the serpent seduced Eve was as follows. He said to her: "See, I have touched the tree and yet am not dead; you also put your hand on it and you will not die" (for it was he who added on his own account the words neither shall ye touch it). AND THE WOMAN SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. R. Isaac said that 'saw here means "perceived", to wit, through the pleasant odour that the tree emitted, which inspired in her a desire to eat of it. R. Jose said that she really "saw". Said R. Judah to him, 'How can this be, seeing that it says later that "their eyes were opened"? ' He answered: 'This "seeing" means really that she made a mental picture of the tree, seeing it and yet not seeing. THAT IT WAS GOOD. She saw that it was good, but this was not enough for her, so SHE TOOK OF ITS FRUIT, but not of the tree itself; she thus attached herself to the place of death, and brought death upon the world, and separated life from death. This sin, too, is the cause of the menstruation which keeps a woman apart from her husband.' (The Voice should never be separated from the Utterance, and he who separates them becomes dumb, and, being bereft of speech, returns to dust. R. Simeon said: 'It is written: "I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, having no good things to say, and my sorrow was stirred" (Ps. XXXIX, 3). This is the exclamation of the Community of Israel in exile; for then Voice is separated from Utterance, and no word is heard, and therefore Israel is "dumb with silence, etc." And Israel further say: "To thee praise is silent" (Ps. LXV, 2), i.e. the psalm of David is silent in exile and without voice.) According to a tradition, Eve pressed grapes and gave to Adam, and in this way brought death into the world. For death is attached to this tree. Its sway is by night,

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and during that time all creatures taste of death save those faithful ones who first entrust their souls to God, so that they are in due course restored to their place; hence it is written, "And thy faithfulness is at night" (Ps. XCII, 3).'

AND THE EYES OF BOTH OF THEM WERE OPENED. R. Hiya says, their eyes were opened to the evil of the world, which they had not known hitherto. Then they knew that they were naked, since they had lost the celestial lustre which had formerly enveloped them, and of which they were now divested. AND THEY SEWED FIG LEAVES. They strove to cover themselves with the (delusive) images from the tree of which they had eaten, the so-called "leaves of the tree". AND THEY MADE THEMSELVES GIRDLES. R. Jose said: 'When they obtained knowledge of this world and attached themselves to it, they observed that it was governed by those "leaves of the tree". They therefore sought in them a stronghold in this world, and so made

themselves acquainted with all kinds of magical arts, in order to gird themselves with weapons of those leaves of the tree, for the purpose of self-protection.' R. Judah said: 'In this way three came up for judgement and were found guilty, and the terrestrial world was cursed and dislodged from its estate on account of the defilement of the serpent, until Israel stood before Mount Sinai.' Afterwards God clothed Adam and Eve in garments soothing to the skin, as it is written, HE MADE THEM COATS OF SKIN ('or). At first they had had coats of light ('or), which procured them the service of the highest of the high, for the celestial angels used to come to enjoy that light; so it is written, "For thou hast made him but little lower than the angels, and crownest him with glory and honour" (Ps. VIII, 6). Now after their sins they had only coats of skin ('or), good for the body but not for the soul.

When they begat children, the first-born was the son of the (serpent's) slime. For two beings had intercourse with Eve, and she conceived from both and bore two children. Each followed one of the male parents, and their spirits parted, one to this side and one to the other, and similarly their characters. On the side of Cain are all the haunts of the evil species, from which come evil spirits and demons and necromancers. From the side of Abel comes a more merciful class, yet not wholly beneficial-good wine mixed with bad. The right kind was not produced until Seth came, who is the first ancestor of all the generations of the righteous, and from whom the world was propagated.

From Cain come the shameless and wicked sinners of the world. R. Eleazar said: 'When Cain sinned, he was in great terror because he saw before him figures like armed warriors coming to kill him. When he repented, he said: BEHOLD THOU HAST DRIVEN ME OUT THIS DAY FROM THE FACE OF THE GROUND, AND FROM THY FACE SHALL I BE HID. By these words he meant: "I shall be kept away from my proper building." R. Abba said: 'The word "face" here has the same meaning as in the verse, "and he hid not his face from him" (Ps. XXII, 25), i.e. providential care. Consequently he said, WHOSOEVER FINDETH ME SHALL SLAY ME. Therefore THE LORD APPOINTED A SIGN FOR CAIN. This sign was one of the twenty-two letters of the Torah, and God set it upon him to protect him.'

R. Judah said: 'Cain rose up against Abel and killed him because he inherited his nature from the side of Samael, who brought death into the world. He was jealous of Abel on account of his female, as indicated by the words, "and it came to pass when they were in the field", the word "field" signifying woman.' On R. Hiya objecting that, according to the text, Cain was wroth because his offering was not accepted, R. Judah answered that this was a further reason. R. Judah further expounded the words, "If thou doest well, shall there not be an uplifting?" 'The word "uplifting",' he said, 'means the dignity which is due to a first-born, provided his actions warrant it. In the next clause, "If thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door", this door

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is the door on high from which issue the chastisements

for evil deeds in this world. The "sin" which couches at that door is the angel of death, who is ready to punish thee. The word "door" (petah, lit. opening) further contains an allusion to the New Year, the day of judgement, on which Adam was born.' "Unto thee is his desire", i.e. he will not be content until thou art destroyed. "And thou shalt rule over him": the word "thou" contains a mystic allusion to the Almighty, who is also called "Thou". There is a dictum that God is supreme only when the wicked are destroyed, but our text indicates that when the angel of death destroys them, God "rules over him" to prevent him from ruining the world. R. Judah, however, explained the words "thou shalt rule over him" to mean "through repentance".

R. Jose said: 'When the descendants of Cain spread through the world, they used to cut up the soil, and they had traits in common both with the upper and the lower beings.' R. Isaac said: 'When Uzza and Azazel fell from the abode of their sanctity above, they saw the daughters of mankind and sinned with them and begat children. These were the Nefilim (giants), of whom it is said, THE NEFILIM WERE IN THE EARTH (Gen. VI, 4).' R. Hiya said: 'The descendants of Cain were "the sons of God" (Ibid. 2). For Cain was born from Samael and his aspect was not like that of other human beings, and all who came from his stock were called "sons of God".' R. Judah said that the Nefilim were also called so. THE SAME WERE THE MIGHTY MEN. There were sixty on the earth, corresponding to the number above, as it is written, "I'lhreescore mighty men are about it" (S.S. III, 7). WHICH WERE OF OLD, THE MEN OF NAME. R. Jose saw in the word "name" an indication that they were from the upper world, while R. Hiya saw in the word me'olam ("of old" or "from the world") an indication that they were from the terrestrial world, and that from there God moved them.

R. Yesa asked the meaning of the words THIS IS THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM (Gen. V, 1). Said R. Abba to him: 'There is here a very recondite allusion. According to the Rabbinical dictum, "three books are opened on New Year, one of the wholly righteous,

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etc." One is the supernal book from which issued the Whole, and from which issues also writing. The middle book unites the higher and the lower; it embraces all sides and is called the Written Torah of the first man. The third book is called that of the generations of man, and this is the book of the completely righteous. IN THE DAY THAT GOD CREATED MAN IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD: for thereby indeed the whole was completed above and below, and both were established after one pattern. MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM: the one included in the other. R. Abba said: 'God did indeed send down a book to Adam, from which he became acquainted with the supernal wisdom. It came later into the hands of the "sons of God", the wise of their generation, and whoever was privileged to peruse it could learn from it supernal wisdom. This book was brought down to Adam by the "master of mysteries", preceded by three messengers. When Adam was expelled from the

Garden of Eden, he tried to keep hold of this book, but it flew out of his hands. He thereupon supplicated God with tears for its return, and it was given back to him, in order that wisdom might not be forgotten of men, and that they might strive to obtain knowledge of their Master. Tradition further tells us that Enoch also had a book, which came from the same place as the book of the generations of Adam.... [Tr. note: Here follows a highly allusive passage identifying Enoch with "the lad" (v. Prov. XXII, 6), i.e. Metatron.] This is the source of the book known as "the book of Enoch". When God took him, He showed him all supernal mysteries, and the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden and its leaves and branches, all of which can be found in his book. Happy are those of exalted piety to whom the supernal wisdom has been revealed, and from whom it will not be forgotten for ever, as it says, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and his secret to make them know it." '

AND THE LORD SAID, MY SPIRIT SHALL NOT STRIVE WITH MAN FOR EVER, FOR THAT HE ALSO IS FLESH. R. Aha said: 'At that time the stream which perennially flows used to draw forth the celestial spirit from the tree of life and pour it into the tree which harbours death, and so the spirit was continued in the body of men for great length of days, until they turned out bad and inclined to sin. Then the celestial spirit departed from that tree at the moment of the soul's entry into the sons of men.' R. Eleazar said that the word beshagam (for that he) signifies Moses, who caused the moon to shine, and this enabled men to abide in the world for great length of days. AND HIS DAYS SHALL BE A HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS. This is an allusion to Moses, through whose agency the Law was given and who thus bestowed life on men from the tree of life. And in truth had Israel not sinned, they would have been proof against death, since the tree of life had been brought down to them. All this was through Moses, who is called beshagam, and hence we have learnt: Moses did not die, but he was gathered in

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from the world, and caused the moon to shine", being in this respect like the sun, which also after setting does not expire, but gives light to the moon. According to another explanation we translate, "for that it, to wit, the spirit, is also flesh", i.e. it is long converted into flesh, in the sense of following the body and seeking the pleasures of this world.

R. Isaac said: 'The generations which followed in the steps of Seth were all pious and righteous. Subsequently, as mankind spread and multiplied, they learnt the arts of war, which they practised until Noah came and taught them the arts of peace and agriculture; for at first they used not to sow or reap, but afterwards they found this necessary, as it is written, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, etc. (Gen. VIII, 22).'

R. Eleazar said: 'God will one day re-establish the world and strengthen the spirit of the sons of men so that they may prolong their days for ever, as it is written, "For as the days of a tree shall be the days of

my people, etc.” (Is. LXV, 22), and also, “He hath swallowed up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people shall he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it” (Ibid. XXV, 8). [Tr. note: Here closes the second exposition of the section Bereshith. A third commences on the fifth line of p. 39b, goes on to the eighth line of p. 40a, and is then interrupted and resumed towards the end of p. 45b. Pp. 38a-39b and 40a-45b contain a dissertation, or rather three allied dissertations, on the abodes of the righteous in Paradise, and of the angels (Hekaloth and Medorin), and on the halls of prayer (also called Hekaloth). These really constitute a separate work called Hekaloth, and therefore have not been included in this translation.]

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Note: This page is not translated in our text as explained in the Translator's note on page 37b.]

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Note: This page is not translated in our text as explained in the Translator's note on page 37b.]

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IN THE BEGINNING.[Tr. note: Gen. I, 1.] R. Judah said: There were two houses, the first house and the second house, one higher and one lower. There are two he's, one higher and one lower; all, however, form only one. The higher beth opens the gates to every side, and when combined with reshith forms the “beginning” in the list of the component parts of the building. R. Isaac said in the name of R. Eleazar: ‘This Bereshith is the comprehensive form in which all forms are embraced. This is the inner meaning of the words, “this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord” (Ezek. I, 28); to wit, the appearance in which the six others are discernible. Hence we analyse the word Bereshith into bara shith (created six). When the six colours enter into this appearance, it makes itself ready to reflect them, and through them to keep the world going. Yet the credit for this must be ascribed not to this grade alone, but to all the six.’ R. Jose quoted here the verse, The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land (S. S. II,12). ‘ “The flowers”,’ he said, ‘allude to the six grades. The words “they appear on the earth” mean that they are forms which are reflected by the grade so called. It is then that “the time of singing is come”, to wit, of praise and laudation.’ R. Abba said: ‘The uppermost world is shrouded in mystery and all its attributes likewise, because it forms a day separate from all other days. When it created and produced, it produced those other six. On account of its incomprehensibility, the Scripture opens with the word Bereshith, “it created six”, without saying what created. But when it came to the lower creation, it gave a name to the creator, who was now discoverable, and said: “Elohim created the heavens and the earth.” Thus the first, which is the higher, remains shrouded in mystery, while the lower is disclosed, so that the work of the Holy One, blessed be He, should be ever both hidden and disclosed. Similarly, the holy name is also, in the esoteric doctrine, both hidden and disclosed.’

THE (eth) HEAVENS: the particle eth indicates that the lower heavens were also created for the lower world. Similarly, the word ve-eth in AND THE EARTH points to the lower earth and all its products after the supernal pattern.

NOW THE EARTH WAS FORMLESS AND VOID, as we have explained. “The earth” here is the upper earth, which has no light of its own. It “was” at first in its proper state, but now “void and without form”, having diminished itself and its light. Tohu (formlessness), bohu (void), “darkness”, and “spirit” were the four elements of the world which were comprised in it. Hence, “the earth was formless and void and darkness and spirit”.

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Note: Our translation resumes 3 lines from the bottom of the Hebrew text for this page.]

AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT R. Isaac said: 'We learn from these words that God uprooted those shoots of which we have spoken [Tr. note: v. p. 131] and replanted them; hence the expression "and there was light", implying that light had already existed.' R. Judah confirmed this idea from the verse "light is sown for the Zaddik" (Ps. XCVII, 11), this being the one mentioned in the verse "Who aroused Righteousness (zedek) from the East, etc." (Is. XLI, 2).

AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT AND DIVIDED. Said R. Isaac: 'This implies, as we have explained, that he foresaw the works of the wicked and stored the light away.' R. Abba said: 'He saw its radiance flashing from one end of the world to the other, and concluded that it was better

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to store it away in order that sinners might not have the benefit of it.' R. Simeon said: 'The expression "God saw the light that it was good" means really "God decided that the light should be only good", that is, that it should never be an instrument of wrath (cf. "that it was good in the eyes of the Lord to bless Israel", Num. XXIV, 1); and this is proved by the end of the verse, "And God divided the light from the darkness." For although He afterwards united light and darkness, yet this light continued to emanate from the supernal radiance, and through that radiance to bring gladness to all. This also is the Right Hand through which the most deeply graven letters[Tr. note: The letters Yod, He, Vau, of the sacred name.] are crowned, as has been explained. The treasuring up of this primal light is referred to in the verse, "How great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee" (Ps. XXXI, 20).

AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING, ONE DAY: evening from the side of darkness and morning from the side of light; and because they are joined together, the Scripture speaks of "one day". R. Judah said: 'The reason why it is written "and there was evening and there was morning" for each day is to show that there is no day without night and no night without day, and the two cannot be separated.' R. Jose said: 'The day in which the primal light emerged extended into all the other days; hence the word "day" is repeated with all of them.' R. Eleazar said: 'We learn this from the fact that the term "morning" is used in connection with all of them, and "morning" proceeds only from the side of the primal light.' R. Simeon said: 'The first day accompanies all the others, and all are embraced in it, to show that there is no break between them and they all merge into one another.' Another explanation of the words "let there be light" is: "let there be an extending of this light

downwards, to form the angels, who were created on the first day, and who have permanent existence on the right side." Further, the word eth in the fourth verse may be taken to indicate that the "unclear mirror" was created along with the "clear mirror". R. Eleazar says that it points to the creation of all the angels, who proceed from the side of light and who all continue to shine as brightly as at first.

LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS. R. Judah said: 'By this the "upper waters" were separated from the "lower waters", the firmament being an extending of the waters, as has been explained. Similarly, "let it divide", to wit, the "upper waters" from the "lower waters".'

AND GOD MADE THE FIRMAMENT: the word made indicates that God exercised upon it particular care, and invested it with great power. R. Isaac said: 'On the second day was created Gehinnom for sinners; on the second day, too, was created conflict. On the second day the work begun was not finished, and therefore the words "and it was good" are not used in connection with it. Not till the third day was the work of the second finished; hence in the account of that day we find twice the expression "that it was good", once in reference to its own proper work, and once in reference to that of the second day. On the third day the deficiency of the second day was made good: discord was removed on it, and mercy was extended to the sinners in Gehinnom, the flames of which were moderated. Hence the second day is embraced in and completed by the third.' While studying one day with R. Simeon, R. Hiya said to him: 'You say that light was on the first day and darkness on the second, and the waters separated and discord arose on it-why was not the whole work finished on the first day, when the Right still comprised the Left?' He answered: 'That is the very reason why there was discord, and hence it was necessary for the third day to intervene and to restore their amity.'

LET THE EARTH PUT FORTH GRASS: this indicates the union of the upper with the lower waters so as to bear fruit. The upper waters generate, and the lower call to them as the female to the male, because the upper waters are male and the lower female. R. Simeon said: 'All this takes place both above and below.' Said R. Jose, 'If so, seeing that we have posited Elohim hayyim (living God) above, are we to posit plain Elohim below? Not so, but the truth is that generation is only below

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(according to our explanation of the words "these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created (behibaream)", or, as we explain, "which were created with he"), while the one above is the father of all; the other is a creation, and therefore it is the earth which brought forth products (toledoth), being made pregnant like a female by a male.' R. Eleazar said: 'All forces were latent in the earth from the first, but it did not bring forth its products till the sixth day, as it is written, "let the earth bring forth living soul". True, it is written that on the third day "the earth brought forth grass", but this only means that it brought

its forces into a state of preparedness, and all its products remained latent in it till the due time. First it was "void and without form", then it was duly prepared and furnished with seeds and with grass, plants, and trees, and finally it put them forth. Similarly the luminaries did not emit their light till the due time.'

LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVEN. The omission of the vau from the word meoroth (so that it can be read meeroth (curses)) indicates the inclusion of the evil serpent which befouled the moon and separated it from the sun, thus causing the earth to be cursed (Gen. III, 17). The word yehi, being in the singular, shows that the word 'lights' refers to the moon, while 'the firmament of the heaven' refers to the sun. Thus the whole expression indicates that both were meant to be coupled together so as to illumine worlds both above and below, as shown by the expression 'above' ('al) the earth. All calculation (of time) is by the moon. R. Simeon said: 'Measurements and the determination of seasons and intercalary days are all made by the moon, and not by the higher spheres.' Said R. Eleazar to him: 'Is that so? Do not our colleagues make all kinds of calculations and measurements (by the higher spheres)?' He answered, 'No. Calculation is made by the moon, and this is a basis for proceeding further.' R. Eleazar further objected that it is written 'and they shall be for signs'. R. Simeon answered that the word for signs (othoth) is written defectively (showing that only one is meant), while the expression 'they shall be' alludes to the many phases of the moon, which make it as it were a storehouse full of various objects, though it is always the one moon which is the basis of reckoning. Consider this. There is a certain point which is the beginning of number, and which cannot be further analysed. There is one point above, unrevealed and unknowable, which is the starting-point for numbering all entities hidden and recondite. Corresponding to it there is a point below which is knowable and which is the starting-point for all calculation and numbering; here, consequently, is the place for all measurements and determinations of seasons and intercalary days and festivals and holy-days and Sabbaths. Israel who cleave to God reckon by the moon, and so they ascend above, as it is written, 'and ye who cleave unto the Lord your God, etc.' (Deut. IV, 4).

LET THE WATERS TEEM WITH SWARM OF LIVING CREATURES. R. Eleazar said: 'We have already explained that these (lower) waters teemed and produced, like those above; and so it is agreed. AND BIRDS TO FLY ABOVE THE EARTH. The form yeofef (to fly) is peculiar. R. Simeon said: 'There is here a mystic allusion. "Birds" refers to the angel Michael, of whom it is written, "And one of the Seraphim flew to me" (Is. VI, 6). "To fly" refers to Gabriel, of whom it is written, "The man Gabriel whom I had seen at first in a vision being caused to fly quickly." (Dan. IX, 21). UPON THE EARTH: R. Abba says, This is Raphael (lit. healer of God), who is charged to heal the earth, and through whom the earth is healed so as to furnish an abode for man, whom also he heals of his maladies. ON THE FACE OF THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVEN: this is Uriel. (All these names can be found in the text.) Hence the text proceeds: AND GOD CREATED THE GREAT SEA-MONSTERS. Said R. Eleazar: 'These are the

seventy great chieftains appointed for the seventy nations, and for this they were created, to be in control of the earth. AND EVERY LIVING CREATURE THAT MOVETH: these designate Israel, whose

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souls actually are derived from the 'living' (hayah) of which we have spoken, and who are called 'one nation on the earth'. WHICH THE WATERS BROUGHT FORTH ABUNDANTLY AFTER THEIR KINDS. This designates those who study the Torah. AND EVERY WINGED FOWL AFTER ITS KIND: these are the righteous among them, in virtue of whom they are 'living soul'. According to another explanation, these are the angels sent as God's messengers into the world, of whom we have already spoken. R. Abba said that 'living soul' designates Israel because they are children to the Almighty, and their souls, which are holy, come from Him. From whence, then, come the souls of other peoples? R. Eleazar said: 'They obtain souls from those sides of the left which convey impurity, and therefore they are all impure and defile those who have contact with them.'

AND THE LORD SAID, LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH LIVING SOUL, ETC. This includes all the other animals (except man), each after its kind. R. Eleazar said: 'The repetition of the words "after its kind" confirms what we have said before, that "living soul" refers to Israel, who have holy living souls from above, and "cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth" to he other peoples who are not "living soul", but who are as we have said.'

LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS, i.e. partaking of six directions, compounded of all, after the supernal pattern, with limbs arranged so as to suggest the esoteric Wisdom, altogether an exceptional creature. 'Let us make man': the word adam (man) implies male and female, created wholly through the supernal and holy Wisdom. 'In our image, after our likeness': the two being combined, so that man should be unique in the world and ruler over all.

AND GOD SAW ALL (eth kol) THAT HE HAD MADE, AND BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD. Here the word 'very' makes good the omission of the words 'that it was good' in the account of the second day. On the second day death was created, and, according to our colleagues, the expression 'very good' refers to death, 'And God saw, etc.' Assuredly He had seen all before, but the Scripture here indicates by the accusative particle eth that God now saw also all the generations which were to be, and everything which was to happen in the world in each generation before it came into existence. 'Which he had made': these words indicate all the works of the creative period (recounted in the section Bereshith), in which was created the foundation and basis of all that was to be and come to pass in the world subsequently. God foresaw all, and placed all potentially in the work of the creation. The word hashishi (the sixth) here contains the definite article, which was not used in numbering the other days. This is to indicate that when the world was finished the male and female were united so as to form a single whole-

he' with 'sixth', which is the foundation. 'Were finished': this indicates that they were completed in every detail; they were completed from every side, and fully equipped with everything.

R. Eleazar discoursed on the text: How great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, thou hast wrought for them that put their trust in thee, before the sons of men (Ps. XXXI, 20). He said: 'God created man in the world and gave him the faculty to perfect himself in His service and to direct his ways so as to merit the enjoyment of that celestial light which God has hidden and reserved for the righteous, as it is written, "Eye has not seen, O Lord, besides thee what thou wilt do for him that waits for thee" (Is. LXIV, 3). It is through the Torah that man can make himself worthy of that light. For whoever studies the Torah every day is earning a share in the future world, and is even accounted a builder of worlds, because through the Torah the world has been built and completed; so the Scripture says, "The Lord founded the earth with Wisdom (i.e. the Torah), he established the heavens with Understanding" (Prov. III, 19), and again, "And I (the Torah) was a craftsman with him, and I was his delight every day" (Ibid. VIII, 30). Thus whoever studies the Torah completes the world and preserves it. Further, God made the world through a breath, and through a breath it is preserved—the breath of those who assiduously study the Torah, and still more the breath of school-children, when reciting their lesson. By "great goodness" in this verse is meant the stored-up blessing, and by "those that fear Thee", those that fear sin. "Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee": the implied object of "wrought" is the work of creation.' R. Abba says, it is the Garden of Eden, which God has cunningly wrought upon the earth after the supernal pattern for the righteous to seize and hold

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; hence it is written "before the sons of men", since this one is in the presence of men, while the other is in the presence of the holy angels. R. Simeon said: 'The Garden of Eden above is said to be "before the sons of men" because in it are gathered the righteous who perform the will of their Master'.

AND WERE FINISHED: implying that all the work which was to be done, both above and below, was finished. THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH: above and below. R. Simeon said: 'These words designate the general fabric of the Written Law, and the general fabric of the Oral Law. The words AND ALL THEIR HOSTS designate the details of the Torah, the seventy alternative explanations of the Torah; while the words AND THEY WERE COMPLETED imply that the two Torahs are complementary to one another. Or again, "heaven and earth" may be interpreted as the general and the particular, and "all their hosts" as the inner meanings of the Torah, its rules concerning clean and unclean, etc. AND GOD FINISHED BY MEANS OF THE SEVENTH DAY: this is the Oral Law, which is the "seventh day", and through which the world was completed and the whole is preserved. HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD MADE, but not the whole of HIS work, because it was the Written Torah which produced the Whole through the power of the Writing which issued

from Wisdom. The words "on the seventh day" are used here three times, viz. "and God finished on the seventh day", "and he rested on the seventh day", and "and God blessed the seventh day". The "seventh day" in the first of these quotations is the Oral Torah, because with this seventh day the world was completed, as we have said. "And he rested on the seventh day" refers to the "Foundation of the world". In the book of R. Yeba the Elder it says that this is the Jubilee, and hence it is written here "from the whole of his work" because the Whole issues from it. We, however, interpret it of the Foundation, because this is the chief source of rest and contentment. And "God blessed the seventh day" refers to the High Priest, who blesses all, and who always takes the first share, as we have learnt: "The High Priest takes the first share, and blessings open with him, and he is called seventh." R. Yesa the Elder says: These two mentions of the "seventh day" refer one to the Foundation of the world and one to the Column of the centre. AND HE SANCTIFIED IT: the word otho (it) means also "his sign" (cf. II Sam. XV, 25), and so refers to the place in which the sign of the covenant is fixed. This is the abode of all the celestial sanctifications, and from it they descend upon the community of Israel to bestow upon it all kinds of luxuries and dainties. This may be illustrated from the verse "From Asher his bread is fat, and he shall give the dainties of a king" (Gen. XLIX, 20). "Asher" we interpret as the perfect covenant. "His bread is fat" means that what was bread of affliction has been converted into bread of luxury. The "king" is the community of Israel, to whom it gives all the luxuries in the world. FOR ON IT HE RESTED: in it all find rest and contentment, upper and lower, and in it is the Sabbath for rest. WHICH GOD CREATED TO MAKE: As "remembering" finds its fulfilment in "keeping", so here "creating" is implemented by "making", to establish firmly the work of the world; "to make" indicates the world's artificer, through whom the whole is carried on.' R. Simeon further explained the verse as follows. He said: 'It is written, Who keepeth the covenant and the kindness (Deut. V, 10). "Who keepeth" indicates the community of Israel; "the covenant" indicates the Foundation of the world; "kindness" indicates Abraham. The community of Israel is that which keeps the covenant and the kindness, and it is called "keeper of Israel", and guards the gate of the Whole, and on it depend all the works of the world. This it is which "God created to make", i.e. to perfect and finish off the whole, and to bring forth spirits and souls and even spirits and demons. Do not think that these also are not for the good of the world, for they serve for the punishment of the wicked, whom they find out and admonish; for he who proceeds towards the left becomes entangled in the left side, and is set upon by them. Hence they are of use.

'We read that God said with regard to Solomon, "I will

chasten him with the rod of men and with the plagues of the children of men" (II Sam. VII, 14). These "plagues of the children of men" are the demons. They were created just at the moment when the Sabbath was sanctified. [Tr. note: v. p. 59.] and they were left spirit without body. These are the creatures which were not



finished; they are from the left, dross of gold, and because they were not finished and remained defective, the holy name is not mentioned in connection with them, and they do not cleave to it, and are in great terror of it. The holy name does not rest upon anything defective. Hence a man who departs from life defective through not having left a son behind him cannot attach himself to the holy name, and is not admitted within the curtain, because he is defective, and a tree which has been uprooted must be planted over again; for the holy name is perfect on every side, and no defect can attach to it. Those creatures we have mentioned are rejected both above and below, and therefore they have no sure place either above or below. It is these which are meant by the words "which God created to make", i.e. they were not made into finished beings either above or below. You may ask, seeing that they are spirits, why were not these beings finished off above? The answer is that they were not finished below on the earth, and therefore they were not finished above. They all have their origin in the side of the left; they are invisible to men and hover round them to do them mischief. They have three features in common with the angels and three in common with human beings, as has been laid down elsewhere. After they had been created, they were left behind the millstones of the chasm of the great abyss during the night and the day of Sabbath. When the sanctity of the day expired, they came out into the world in their unfinished state and commenced flying about in all directions. They became a great danger to the world, because with them the whole of the left side roused itself and the fire of Gehinnom began to flash, and all the denizens of the left side commenced to roam about the world. They sought to clothe themselves in bodies, but were not able. Hence we

require protection against them, and therefore the recital of the "hymn of accidents" (Ps. XCI) has been prescribed for every occasion when danger is threatened from them. For when the Sabbath is sanctified on Friday evening, a tabernacle of peace descends from heaven and is spread over the world. This tabernacle of peace is the Sabbath, and when it comes down, all evil spirits and demons and all the creatures which defile hide themselves within the orifice of the millstones of the chasm of the great abyss. For when sanctity spreads over the world, the spirit of uncleanness remains inactive, since the two shun one another. Hence the world is under special protection (on the Sabbath eve), and we do not require to say the prayer "who keepeth his people Israel for ever, amen". This prayer has been prescribed for week-days, when protection is needed. But on Sabbath a tabernacle of peace is spread over the world, which is thus sheltered on all sides. Even the sinners in Gehinnom are protected, and all beings are at peace, both in the upper and lower spheres, and therefore we conclude our prayer this day with the words "who spreads a tabernacle of peace over us and over all his people Israel and over Jerusalem". (The reason why Jerusalem is mentioned is because it is the abode of the tabernacle.) Thus it behoves us to invite that tabernacle to spread itself over us and to rest upon us

and to shield us as a mother shields her children, so that we should feel secure on every side. See now, when Israel by reciting this blessing invite this tabernacle of peace to their homes as a holy guest, a divine sanctity comes down and spreads its wings over Israel like a mother encompassing her children. Then all evil spirits disappear from the world, and Israel are at rest under the sheltering sanctity of their Master. Further, this tabernacle of peace imparts new souls to her children. For souls have their abode in her and issue from her, and so when she comes down and spreads her wings over her children, it sheds a new soul on each one of them.' R. Simeon said further: 'It is on this account that, as we have learnt, Sabbath is a mirror of the future world. For this same reason, too, the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee mirror one another. This additional soul descends from the mystic force implied in the word zachor (remember) upon the tabernacle of peace, being taken

from the future world, and the tabernacle gives it to the holy people, who are gladdened by it and enabled to forget all worldly matters and all their troubles and sorrows, thus realising the words of the prophet, "on the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy trouble, and from the hard service, etc." (Is. XIV, 3). Therefore on Friday night a man should have a fullcourse meal, to show that this tabernacle of peace has been formed by a union of all principles, provided only that he leaves himself enough for one meal the next day, or, according to others (and this is more correct), for two meals. All the more so, of course, if he has more than enough left for the next day. For children two dishes are enough; [Tr. note: al. Two dishes should be the minimum.] and so the colleagues agreed. The function of lighting the Sabbath light has been entrusted to the women of the holy people: as the colleagues put it, "woman put out the light of the world and brought darkness, etc."; and so we agree. There is, however, a more esoteric reason. This tabernacle of peace is the Matron of the world, and the souls which are the celestial lamp abide in her. Hence it behoves the matron to kindle the light, because thereby she is attaching herself to her rightful place and performing her rightful function. A woman should kindle the Sabbath light with zest and gladness, because it is a great honour for her, and, further, she qualifies herself thereby to become the mother of holy offspring who will grow to be shining lights of learning and piety and will spread peace in the world, and she also procures long life for her husband. Hence she should be very careful to observe this ceremony. Observe that the words "remember" and "keep" in the commandment of the Sabbath (Ex. XX, 8, and Deut. V, 12). Both apply equally to the day and to the night; nevertheless "remember" has a more special application to the man and "keep" to the woman, whose chief observance is at night.'

AND THE LORD GOD BUILT (vayiven) THE SIDE WHICH HE HAD TAKEN FROM THE MAN, ETC. Said R. Simeon: 'It is written, God understandeth the way thereof and he knoweth the place thereof (Job XXVIII, 23). This verse may be taken in many ways. One is that the word "understood" (hevin) has the same sense

as vayiven in the second chapter of Genesis. Hence the “side” here is the Oral Law, which forms a “way”, as it is written, “who maketh a way in the sea” (Is. XLIII, 16). Similarly, “place” here can be interpreted as the Written Law, which is a source of knowledge. The double name “Lord God” is used to show that it was completed in all details, Hence it is called both Hohmah (wisdom) and Binah (understanding). “The side” (zela) is the unclear mirror, as it is written, “they rejoiced at my halting (be-zal’i) and gathered together” (Ps. XXXV, 15). “Which he took from the man”: because the Oral Law issued from the Written Torah. INTO A WOMAN: to be linked with the flame of the left side, because the Torah was given from the side of Geburah. Further, ishah (woman) may be analysed into esh he (fire of he), signifying the union of the two. AND HE BROUGHT HER TO THE MAN: as much as to say that the Oral Torah must not be studied by itself, but in conjunction with the Written Torah, which then nourishes and supports it and provides all its needs. (We have similarly explained the words “and the earth”.) We learn from this passage that when a man gives his daughter in marriage, up to the time of the wedding the father and mother are responsible for her upkeep, but once she is married the husband has to support her and provide all her necessities. For it first says here that the Lord God built up the side, i.e. that the Father and Mother provided for her, but afterwards “he brought her to the man”, that they might be closely united to one another, and the man might thenceforth provide all her requirements.

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According to another explanation this verse has a deep esoteric meaning, viz. that the primal point is unknowable save to God, who “understands its way”, i.e. the future world, while “He”, i.e. the great inscrutable called hu (he) “knows its place”.

AND THE LORD GOD FORMED THE MAN. At this point he was completely formed so as to partake both of the Right and of the Left. We laid down before that he was wholly under the aegis of the good inclination: now God formed him with both good and evil inclination-with the good inclination for himself, and the evil inclination to turn towards the female. Esoterically speaking, we learn from here that the North is always attracted to the female and attaches itself to her, and therefore she is called isha (i.e. esh he’, fire of he’). Observe this. The good inclination and the evil inclination are in harmony only because they share the female, who is attached to both, in this way: first the evil inclination sues for her and they unite with one another, and when they are united the good inclination, which is joy, rouses itself and draws her to itself, and so she is shared by both and reconciles them. Hence it is written, “and the Lord God formed man”, the double name being made responsible both for the good and the evil inclination. THE MAN: as we have explained, male and female, together and not separated, so as to turn face to face. Hence it is written DUST FROM THE GROUND. The use of the word “ground” (adamah) here must be explained. When the wife is joined with the husband she is called by the name of the husband; thus the correlatives ish (man) and ishah, zaddik (righteous one), and zedek, ‘ofer (buck) and ‘efar, zebi

(hart), and zibia. So, too, with the words asher (which) and asherah. It says, ‘Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah (grove) of any kind of tree beside the altar of the Lord thy God which (asher) thou shalt make thee.’ Are we to suppose that anywhere else it is permitted? The truth is that the He’ is called Asherah, after the name of its spouse, Asher, and the meaning of the verse is therefore: ‘thou shalt not plant another asherah by the side of the altar which is established upon this.’ Observe that throughout the Scriptures the worshippers of the sun are called servants of Baal and the worshippers of the moon servants of Asherah; hence the combination ‘to Baal and Asherah.’ If this is so (that Asherah is the name of the He’), why is it not used as a sacred name? The reason is that this name brings to mind the words of Leah, ‘happy am I, for the daughters will call me happy (ishruni)’, but this one is not ‘called happy’ by other nations, and another is set up in its place; nay more, it is written, ‘all that honoured her despise her’ (Lam. I, 8). But the real altar is one that is made of earth, as it is written, ‘An altar of earth thou shalt make for me. Hence dust from the earth. AND HE BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE. The breath of life was enclosed in the earth, which was made pregnant with it like a female impregnated by the male. So the dust and the breath were joined, and the dust became full of spirits and souls. AND THE MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL. At this point he attained his proper form, and became a man to support and nourish the living soul.

AND THE LORD GOD BUILT. Here also the full name of the Deity is used, indicating that the father and mother provided for her until she came to her husband. THE SIDE: ‘black but comely’; she was the ‘unclear mirror’, but the father and mother tricked her out so as to make her acceptable to her husband. AND BROUGHT HER TO THE MAN. From this we learn that it is incumbent on the father and mother of the bride to transfer her to the charge of the bridegroom; so we read ‘my daughter I have given to this man’ (Deut. XXII, 16). From that point the husband is to come to her, since the house is hers; so it is written ‘and he came to her’ (Gen. XXIX, 23), ‘and he came in to Rachel’ (Ibid.). Of the father and mother it is written that they ‘brought’, but of the husband that he ‘came’, to show that he must obtain her permission. We make a similar reflection on the verse, ‘And he prayed in the place and tarried there.’ (Gen. XXVIII, 11), viz. that Jacob sought permission first. From this we learn that a man who desires his wife’s society

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must first entreat and coax her; and if he cannot persuade her, he must not stay with her, for their companionship must be loving and unconstrained. It says further of Jacob that ‘he tarried there because the sun had set’, which shows that sexual intercourse is forbidden during the day. Further it says that ‘he took of the stones of the place and put it under his head’. From this we learn that even a king who has a bed of gold with precious coverings, if his wife prepares for him a bed of stones, must leave his own bed and sleep on the one which she prepares, as it is written, ‘and he lay down in that place. Observe that it says here AND THE MAN SAID, THIS TIME, ETC., to show that he spoke to

her lovingly so as to

draw her to him and to win her affections. See how tender and coaxing is his language-'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh'-to prove to her that they were one and inseparable. Then he began to sing her praises: THIS SHALL BE CALLED WOMAN, this is the peerless and incomparable one; this is the pride of the house, who surpasses all other women as a human being surpasses an ape. This one is perfect in all points, and alone merits the title of woman. Every word is inspired by love, like the verse 'Many daughters have done valiantly, but thou excellest them all' (Prov. XXXI, 29). THEREFORE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER AND CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE, AND THEY SHALL BE ONE FLESH: all this, too, was to win her affection and to draw her closer.

AND THE SERPENT WAS SUBTLE. After the man had addressed all these words to the woman, the evil inclination awoke, prompting him to seek to unite with her in carnal desire, and to entice her to things in which the evil inclination takes delight, until at last THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD, AND THAT IT WAS A DELIGHT FOR THE EYES AND SHE TOOK OF THE FRUIT THEREOF AND ATE-giving ready admission to the evil inclination-AND GAVE ALSO UNTO HER HUSBAND WITH HER: it was she now who sought to awaken desire in him, so as to win his love and affection. This account shows the proceedings of human beings after the model of those above. Said R. Eleazar, 'If so, what are we to make of the evil inclination seizing the female above?' He said: 'It has already been observed that one set (Left and Right) is above and one set below, viz. the good inclination and the evil inclination; the good inclination on the right and the evil inclination on the left. The Left above seizes the female to join with her in the body, as it is written, "his left hand under my head, etc." (S. S. II, 6). In this way the passage can be interpreted as applying both above and below. The rest of the points are not at all recondite, and a child almost could elucidate them; and the colleagues have noted them.'

R. Simeon was once going to Tiberias accompanied by

R. Jose and R. Judah and R. Hiya. On the way they saw R. Phineas coming towards them. When they met, they dismounted and sat down under a large tree. Said R. Phineas, 'Now that I am sitting here, I should like to hear some of those wonderful ideas to which you daily give utterance.' R. Simeon thereupon opened a discourse with the text, And he went on his journeys from the South even unto Bethel, unto the place where his tent was at first, between Bethel and Ai, (Gen. XIII, 3). He said: 'The word "journeys" is used here where we might have expected "journey", to indicate that the Shekinah was journeying with him. It is incumbent on a man to be ever "male and female", in order that his faith may be firm, and that the Shekinah may never depart from him. What, then, you will say, of a man who goes on a journey and, being absent from his wife, is no longer "male and female"? His remedy is to pray to God before he starts his journey, while he is still "male and female", in order to draw to himself the presence of

his Master. When he has offered his prayer and thanksgiving and the Shekinah rests on him, then he can depart, for through his union with the Shekinah he has become "male and female" in the country as he was "male and female," in the town, as it is written: "Righteousness (zedek, the female of zaddik) shall go before him and shall place his footsteps on the way" (Ps. LXXXV, 14). Observe this. All

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the time that a man is on his travels he should be very careful of his actions, in order that the celestial partner may not desert him and leave him defective, through lacking the union with the female. If this was necessary when his wife was with him, how much more so is it necessary when a heavenly partner is attached to him? All the more so since this heavenly partner guards him on the way all the time until he returns home. When he does reach home again, it is his duty to give his wife some pleasure, because it is she who procured for him this heavenly partner. It is his duty to do this for two reasons. One is that this pleasure is a religious pleasure, and one which gives joy to the Shekinah also, and what is more, by its means he spreads peace in the world, as it is written, "thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace, and thou shalt visit thy fold and not sin" (Job. V, 24). (Is it a sin, it may be asked, if he does not visit his wife? The answer is that it is so because he thereby derogates from the honour of the celestial partner who was joined with him on account of his wife.) The other is, that if his wife becomes pregnant, the celestial partner imparts to the child a holy soul, for this covenant is called the covenant of the Holy One, blessed be He. Therefore he should be as diligent to procure this gladness as to procure the gladness of the Sabbath, which is the partner of the Sages. Hence "thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace", since the Shekinah comes with thee and abides in thy house, and therefore "thou shalt visit thy house and not sin", by performing with gladness the religious duty of conjugal intercourse in the presence of the Shekinah. In this way the students of the Torah who separate from their wives during the six days of the week in order to devote themselves to study are accompanied by a heavenly partner in order that they may continue to be "male and female". When Sabbath comes, it is incumbent on them to gladden their wives for the sake of the honour of the heavenly partner, and to seek to perform the will of their Master, as has been said. Similarly again, if a man's wife is observing the days of her separation, during all those days that he waits for her the heavenly partner is associated with him, so that he is still "male and female". When his wife is purified, it is his duty to gladden her through the glad performance of a religious precept. All the reasons we have mentioned above apply to this case also. The esoteric doctrine is that men of true faith should concentrate their whole thought and purpose on this one (the Shekinah). You may object that, according to what has been said, a man enjoys greater dignity when he is on a journey than when he is at home, on account of the heavenly partner who is then associated with him. This is not so. For when a man is at home, the foundation of his house is the wife, for it is on account of her that the Shekinah departs not from the house. So our teachers have understood the verse, "and he brought her to the

tent of his mother Sarah" (Gen. XXIV, 67), to indicate that with Rebecca the Shekinah came to Isaac's house. Esoterically speaking, the supernal Mother is found in company with the male only at the time when the house is prepared, and the male and female are joined. Then the supernal Mother pours forth blessings for them. Similarly the lower Mother is not found in company with the male save when the house is prepared and the male visits the female and they join together; then the lower Mother pours forth blessings for them. Hence the man in his house is to be encompassed by two females, like the Male above. There is an allusion to this in the verse "Unto ('ad) the desire of the everlasting hills" (Gen. XLIX, 26). This 'ad is the object of the desire of the "everlasting hills", viz. the supreme female, who is to prepare for him and beatify and bless him, and the secondary female, who is to be conjoined with him and to be supported by him. Similarly below, when the man is married the desire of the "everlasting hills" is towards him, and he is beatified by two females, one of the upper and one of the lower world-the upper one to pour blessings upon him, and the lower one to be supported by him and to be conjoined with him. So much for the man in his house. When, however, he goes forth on a journey, while the celestial Mother still accompanies him, the lower wife is left behind: so when he comes back he has to take measures to encompass himself with two females, as we have said.' Said R. Phineas: 'Even the angels above would not dare to open

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their mouths before thee.'

R. Simeon proceeded: 'In the same way the Torah is situated between two houses, one recondite and on high, and the other more accessible. The one on high is the "Great Voice" referred to in the verse, "a great voice which did not cease" (Deut. V, 19)' This Voice is in the recesses and is not heard or revealed, and when it issues from the throat it utters the aspirate without sound and it flows on without ceasing, though it is so tenuous as to be inaudible. From this issues the Torah, which is the voice of Jacob. The audible voice issues from the inaudible. In due course speech is attached to it, and through the force of that speech it emerges into the open. The voice of Jacob, which is the Torah, is thus attached to two females, to this inner voice which is inaudible, and to this outer voice which is heard.

Strictly speaking, there are two which are inaudible and two which are heard. The two which are not heard are, first, the supernal Wisdom which is located in the Thought and is not disclosed or heard; and secondly the same Wisdom when it issues and discloses itself a little in a whisper which cannot be heard, being then called the "Great Voice", which is very tenuous and issues in a whisper. The two which are heard are those which issue from this source-the voice of Jacob and the articulation which accompanies it. This "Great Voice" which cannot be heard is a "house" to the supernal Wisdom (the female is always called "house"), and the articulation we have mentioned is a "house" to the Voice of Jacob, which is the Torah, and therefore the Torah commences with the letter beth, which is, as it were, a "house" to it.' R. Simeon here drew a parallel

between the creation of heaven and earth and of woman. ' "In the beginning God created", he said, 'corresponds to "And the Lord God built the side"; "the heavens" corresponds to "and he brought her to the man"; "and the earth" corresponds to "bone from my bone", since this one assuredly is "the land of the living".'

R. Simeon further gave an exposition of the verse: The Lord said unto my lord, Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool (Ps. CX, 1). "The Lord saith unto my lord": 'to wit, the upper grade said to the lower, "sit at my right hand", in order that the West should be linked with the South and the Left with the Right so as to break the power of the Gentiles. Or again, "The Lord" is (the celestial) Jacob, and "to my lord" is "the ark of the covenant, the lord of all the earth" (Josh. III, 11). According to another explanation, "the Lord" refers to the Jubilee and "my lord" to the Sabbatical Year (cf. Ex. XXI, 5, "I love my lord"). The words "sit at my right hand" are appropriate, because the Right is located in the Jubilee, and the Sabbatical Year craves to be linked with the Right. When it first came into being, the Sabbatical Year was not linked securely (to the supreme power) through either the Right or the Left. So when it sought to secure itself, the supreme power stretched forth its right arm to meet it and created this world. It is because it is from the side of the Left that it has no sure basis till the time of the seventh millennium, when at length it will be linked through the Right. Then the Sabbatical Year, between the Right and the Left, will be securely based, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and it will not depart from there for ever. According to this explanation, we must take the words "sit at my right hand" to refer only to a specified period, viz. "till I make thine enemies thy footstool", but not in perpetuity; for when that event has come to pass, it will not depart from there for ever, as it is written, "for thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left" (Is. LIV, 3), all being united. Similarly we can interpret the text "the heavens and the earth" to mean that the higher Shekinah and the lower Shekinah will be joined in the union of male and female; this has already been explained, as the colleagues have noted.'

They now rose to depart, but R. Simeon said: 'I have still one thing more to tell you. It says in one place "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire" (Deut. IV, 24), and in another place "Ye that clave to the Lord your God are all of you alive this day" (Deut. IV, 4). The apparent contradiction between these texts has already been discussed among the colleagues, but here is another explanation. It has already been established among the colleagues that there is a fire which consumes fire and destroys it, because there is one sort of fire stronger than another. Pursuing this idea, we may say that he who desires to penetrate to the mystery of the holy unity should contemplate the flame which rises from a burning coal or candle. The flame cannot rise save

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from some concrete body. Further, in the flame itself there are two lights: one white and luminous, and the other black, or blue. The white light is the higher of the

two and rises steadily. The black or blue light is underneath the other, which rests on it as on a pedestal. The two are inseparably connected, the white resting and being enthroned upon the black. (Herein is the inner significance of the fringe of blue.) This blue or black base is in turn attached to something beneath it which keeps it in flame and impels it to cling to the white light above. This blue or black light sometimes turns red, but the white light above never changes its colour. The lower light, which is sometimes black, sometimes blue, and sometimes red, is a connecting link between the white light to which it is attached above and to the concrete body to which it is attached below, and which keeps it alight. This light always consumes anything which is under it or which is brought in contact with it, for such is its nature, to be a source of destruction and death. But the white light which is above it never consumes or destroys and never changes. Therefore Moses said, "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire", literally consuming all that is beneath him; that is why he said "thy God" and not "our God", because Moses was in that white light above which does not consume or destroy. Now observe. The impulse through which this blue light is set aflame and attaches itself to the white light comes only from Israel, who cleave to it from below. Further, although it is the nature of this blue or black light to consume everything that is in contact with it beneath, yet Israel are able to cleave to it from below and still exist; so it is written, "and ye that cleave to the Lord your God are all of you alive this day". Your God and not our God: to wit, that blue or black flame which consumes and destroys all that cleaves to it from below; yet you cleave and are still alive. Above the white light and surrounding it is still another light scarcely perceptible, symbolical of the supreme essence. Thus the ascending flame symbolises the highest mysteries of wisdom.'

R. Phineas approached and kissed him, saying, 'Blessed be God who led my steps here.' They then accompanied R. Phineas on his way for three miles. When they came back, R. Simeon said: 'What I told you before furnishes a symbol of the sacred unification. The second he of the holy name is the blue or black light which is attached to Yod, He, Vau, which are the white shining light. Sometimes this blue light is not he' but daleth; that is to say, when Israel do not cleave to it from below so as to make it burn and cling to the white light, it is daleth, but when they give it the impulse to cling to the white light, it is he. For where male and female are not found together, he is eliminated and only daleth is left (hence in Deut. XXII, 15, the word na'ar is used for "maiden" instead of na'arah, because she is not united with the male). But when the chain is complete, the he' cleaves to the white light and Israel cleave to it and feed its light without being destroyed. This is the secret of the sacrifice. The ascending smoke kindles the blue light, which then attaches itself

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to the white light, so that the whole candle is completely alight. Since it is the nature of this blue light to destroy and consume everything which is in contact with it underneath, when the sacrifice is pleasing and the candle is completely alight, then, as in the case of

Elijah, "the fire of the Lord descends and consumes the burnt-offering" (I Kings XVIII, 38), this being a manifestation that the chain is complete, the blue light both cleaving to the white light and consuming the fat and flesh of the burnt-offering beneath it, for it does not consume what is beneath it save when it ascends and attaches itself to the white light. Then there is peace in all worlds, and the whole forms a unity. When the blue light has consumed all that is beneath it, the priests, the Levites, and the laity assemble at its foot with chanting, with meditation, and with prayer, the lamp burns above them, the lights are welded into one, worlds are illumined, and both those above and those below are blessed. Hence it is that "ye, even while cleaving to the Lord your God, are all alive this day". The word atthem (you) here is preceded by the letter vau (and), to show that whereas the fat and the flesh which cleave to the flame are destroyed by it, you cleave to it and are still alive.'

All colours seen in a dream are of good presage, except blue; this is ever consuming and destroying, being the tree in which death is located. It spreads over the lower world, and because all things are situated beneath it, therefore they are perishable. It is true that it also pervades the heaven, and there are many objects there which are imperishable. These, however, are constituted of this blue light, whereas the lower ones are of coarser material, and constitute a lower world on which the upper one rests. Hence the blue light consumes and destroys them. [Tr. note: From this point to 52a ad fin. is a Cabbalistic interpolation on the origin of the Serpent.]

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Note: Our translation of the Hebrew text resumes with the fifth line from the bottom of page 52a]

AND THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD WALKING IN THE GARDEN. (Note the form mithalech (walking) instead of the usual mehalech.) Until he sinned, man was gifted with the wisdom of celestial illumination, and he did not for an instant quit the Tree of Life. But when he was seduced by his desire to know what was below, he weakly followed it until he became separated from the Tree of Life, and knew evil and forsook good: hence the Scripture says 'for thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness,

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evil shall not sojourn with thee' (Ps. V. 5). He who is drawn after evil may not abide with the Tree of Life. Before they sinned, the human pair used to hear a voice from above, and were endowed with the higher wisdom; they stood erect with heavenly radiance, and knew no fear. When they sinned, they were not able to stand up even before an earthly voice. A similar thing happened later with the Israelites. When Israel stood before Mount Sinai, the impurity of the serpent was removed from them, so that carnal passion was suppressed among them, and in consequence they were able to attach themselves to the Tree of Life, and their thoughts were turned to higher things and not to lower. Hence they were vouchsafed heavenly

illuminations and knowledge which filled them with joy and gladness. Further, God girt them with cinctures of the letters of the Holy Name, which prevented the serpent from gaining power over them or defiling them as before. When they sinned by worshipping the calf, they were degraded from their high estate and lost their illumination, they were deprived of the protective girdle of the Holy Name and became exposed to the attacks of the evil serpent as before, and so brought death into the world. After their sin, it is related that 'Aaron and the children of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him' (Ex. XXXIV, 30). Before that, however, we are told that 'Israel saw the great hand' (Ibid. XIV, 31) on the Red Sea, and that at Mount Sinai they all saw celestial lights and were illumined with the vision of clear prophecy, as it is written, 'And all the people saw the voices' (Ibid. XX, 18), and by the Red Sea they saw God and did not fear, as it is written, 'This is my God and I will praise him' (Ibid. XV, 2). But after they sinned, they were not able to look even on the face of the deputy (Moses). How was this? Because 'the children of Israel were deprived of their ornament from Mount Sinai', to wit, of the armour with which they were girt on Mount Sinai in order that the evil serpent should not have power over them. After this had been stripped from them we read that 'Moses took the tent and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp' (Ibid. XXXIII, 7). R. Eleazar explained the connection thus: 'When Moses perceived that Israel had been deprived of their heavenly armour, he said, "Of a surety the evil serpent will now come to dwell among them, and if the sanctuary remains here among them it will be defiled", and he therefore took the tent and pitched it outside, far from the camp.' 'And he called it the tent of meeting.' It had been such before, but had been called the 'tent', simply. The epithet 'of meeting' was now given to it, according to R. Eleazar, in compliment, according to R. Abba, in disparagement. R. Eleazar defended his view on the ground that moed (meeting, appointed time) is the word used of the day when the moon is in full career, when its holiness is increased and it is free from defect; so here, Moses gave the tent this name to show that it had been removed from the contagion of the people. R. Abba argued that the simple name 'tent, has the same implication as in the verse 'a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes of which shall never be plucked up' (Is. XXXIII, 20), i.e. that it designates something which confers eternity on the world and saves it from death, whereas the epithet 'meeting' is used in the same sense as in the phrase 'a house of meeting for all flesh' (i.e. the grave, Job XXX, 23), and indicates that now the life which it conferred was only for a limited period. At first it was unimpaired, but now it was impaired; at first the sun and the moon were in continuous union, but now their union was only from season to season (moed); hence the name 'tent of season' (moed).

R. Simeon was one night studying the Torah in company with R. Judah, R. Isaac, and R. Jose. Said R. Judah to him: 'We read that "the Israelites took off their ornament from Mount Horeb", and we go on to assert that they thereby brought death upon themselves, and once more placed themselves in the power of the evil serpent from whose clutches they had previously escaped. This may be true of the Israelites; but what of

Joshua, who had not sinned? Are we to say that he was deprived of the armour which he received with them, or not?

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If not, why did he die like other people? If you say he was deprived, what was the reason, seeing that he had not sinned, as he was with Moses when the people sinned? And if you say that he did not receive the same crown on Mount Sinai as the rest of the people, again, what was the reason?' R. Simeon in reply quoted the text: For the Lord is righteous, he loveth righteousness, he is upright, men shall behold his face (Ps. XI, 7). He said: 'This verse has been variously explained by our colleagues, but it may be taken in this way. "For the Lord is righteous": to wit, He is righteous and His name is Righteous (Zaddik) and therefore He loves righteous deeds. He is also upright, as it is written, "righteous and upright is he" (Deut. XXXII, 4); and therefore all the inhabitants of the world behold His face, that they may amend their ways and walk in the straight path. For when God judges the world, He passes sentence only according to the conduct of the majority. Now when Adam sinned by eating of the forbidden tree, he caused that tree to become a source of death to all the world. He also caused imperfection by separating the Wife from her Husband. This imperfection was exhibited in the moon, until the time when Israel stood before Mount Sinai, when the moon was freed from its defect, and was in a position to shine continually. When Israel sinned by making the calf, the moon reverted to its former imperfection, and the evil serpent was able to seize her and draw her to him. When Moses saw that Israel had sinned and that they had been deprived of their holy armour, he knew full well that the serpent had seized the moon to draw her to him, and that she had become defective, and he therefore took her outside. Thus she has reverted to the defective state into which she was brought by the sin of Adam, and therefore no man can live permanently save Moses, who controls her, and whose death was due to a different cause. Hence she had not power to bestead permanently even Joshua, although he retained his holy armour; and it was therefore that Moses called her "tent of appointed time" (moed), to wit, the tent in which is an appointed time for all living. To speak more esoterically: there is a Right above and there is a Right below; there is a Left above and there is a Left below. There is a Right above in the realm of supernal holiness, and there is a Right below located in the "other side". There is a Left above in the realm of supernal holiness to procure indulgence for the moon, so as to link her to the holy place and enable her to shine. There is a Left below which estranges the upper realm from her and prevents her from reflecting the sun's light and drawing near to him. This is the side of the evil serpent, who, when this Left of the lower realm bestirs itself, draws the moon to himself and separates her from the upper world, so that her light is darkened. She then causes death to descend like a stream on all that is below; she cleaves to the serpent and departs from the Tree of Life, and so brings death on all the world. At such time the sanctuary is defiled till an appointed time when the moon is repaired and shines again. Hence the name "tent of appointed time" (moed), and hence it is that Joshua died only through the instigation of the serpent,

which came up to the tent and rendered it imperfect as at first. This is the inner meaning of the verse, "And Joshua the son of Nun, a lad (naar), departed not from out the tent" (Ex. XXXIII, 11). Although he was a "lad" (i.e. attendant) beneath qualified to receive the (celestial) light, he did not depart from out the tent: he shared in its imperfection; although he still had the holy armour, yet when the moon became imperfect, he also was not delivered from the same power which caused that imperfection. Similarly when Adam sinned, God took from him the armour of the bright and holy letters with which he had been encompassed, and then he and his wife were afraid, perceiving that they had been stripped; so it says AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED. At first they had been invested with those glorious crowns which gave them protection and exemption from death. When they sinned, they were stripped of them, and then they knew that death was calling them, that they had been deprived of their exemption, and that they had brought death on themselves and on all the world.'

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Note: The beginning passage about fig leaves is not found in our Hebrew text.]

AND THEY SEWED FIG LEAVES TOGETHER. This means, as explained elsewhere, that they learnt all kinds of enchantments and magic, and clung to worldly knowledge, as has been said. At that moment the stature of man was diminished by a hundred cubits. Thus a separation took place (of man from God), man was brought to judgement, and the earth was cursed, all as we have explained.

AND HE DROVE OUT THE MAN. R. Eleazar said: We naturally suppose that "he" is the subject and "man" the object. The truth is, however, that "man" is the subject and the object is the accusative particle eth, so that we render "and the man drove out eth". Hence it is written, "And God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden", for the reason that he had divorced eth, as we have explained. AND HE PLACED: the subject is still "man"; it was he who fixed the Cherubim in this place, who closed the path to Paradise, who subjected the world to chastisement, and drew upon it curses from that day onward. THE FLAME OF A SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY: this refers to those beings who are ever in readiness to chastise the world, and who take all manner of shapes, being sometimes male, sometimes female, sometimes flaming fire and sometimes irresistible winds. All this is TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE TREE OF LIFE, so that man should not do any more mischief there. The "flaming sword" denotes those punitive spirits who heap fire on the heads of the wicked and sinners (in hell). They take various forms according to the offences of those who are punished. The word "flaming" (lahat) here has its analogy in the verse, "the day that cometh shall burn them up" (ve-lihat, Mal. III, 19). The "sword" is that mentioned in the verse, "The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, etc." (Is. XXXIV, 6). R. Judah said: 'All those punitive spirits that we have mentioned, that assume so many various forms, are charged to maltreat and harry in this world the sinners who deliberately transgress the precepts of their Master. For

when a man sins, he draws towards himself numbers of evil spirits and emissaries of punishment, before whom he quails in fear. Solomon was conversant with the mysteries of Wisdom, and God set upon his head the crown of royalty, and the whole world feared him. When, however, he sinned, he drew towards himself numbers of evil and punitive spirits, of whom he was much frightened, so that they were able to maltreat him and to take away his (precious) possessions. In truth, a man by his actions is always drawing to himself some emissary from the other world, good or evil according to the path which he treads. So Adam drew to himself an emissary of defilement who defiled him and all mankind after him. This was the evil serpent who is himself unclean and defiled the world. Our Sages have taught that when he draws the soul out of a man, there is left an unclean body which renders the whole house unclean, and all those that touch it, as it is written, "He that touches a dead body, etc." (Num. XXX, 11). The reason is that when he takes the soul and renders the body unclean, permission is given to all the unclean spirits, which are akin to the evil serpent, to rest upon it, and so the whole place where the evil serpent is present becomes defiled. Further, when men sleep on their beds at night-time and night spreads her wings over the world, they are having a foretaste of death, and in consequence the unclean spirit is let loose in the world, carrying pollution. In particular it rests upon a man's hands and defiles them, so that when he wakes up and his soul is restored to him, everything which he touches with his hands is rendered unclean. Hence a man should be careful when dressing not to take his garments from a person who has not washed his hands, because in this way he draws upon himself the unclean spirit and becomes defiled. This spirit is authorised to settle in every place where there is the merest trace of the side from which it issues. Hence a man should not let water be poured over his hands by one who has not yet washed his own hands, because in this way he draws on himself the unclean spirit, from contact with the one who pours water over him.

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Therefore a man should be on his guard on every side against the side of this evil serpent, which otherwise will gain the better of him. God has promised one day to remove it from this world, as it is written, "I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" (Zech. XIII, 2), and also "He will swallow up death for ever" (Is. XXV, 8).'

AND THE MAN KNEW EVE HIS WIFE. R. Abba discoursed in connection with this verse on the text: Who knoweth the spirit of man which goeth upwards, and the spirit of the beast which goeth downward to the earth? (Eccl. III, 21). He said: 'This verse can bear many constructions, and so it is with all the words of the Torah: they can all bear several meanings, and all good, and the whole Torah can be expounded in seventy ways, corresponding to seventy sides and seventy wings. We will, however, expound thus. When a man walks in the path of truth, he goes towards the right and attracts to himself a holy spirit from above, which in turn ascends with holy intent to attach itself to the upper world and to cleave to the supernal holiness. When, however, a man walks in the path of evil, he

draws to himself an unclean spirit belonging to the left side, which renders him impure; so it is written, "ye shall not make yourselves unclean with them that ye should be defiled thereby" (Lev. XI, 43), i.e. he that first defiles himself is led further into defilement. Further, when a man walks in the right path and attracts to himself a spirit of holiness from above and cleaves to it, he also draws a spirit of holiness on to the son whom he bears into the world, so that he is like to be endowed with the sanctity of his Master (as it is written, "if ye sanctify yourselves, ye shall be holy" (Lev. XI, 44)). Contrariwise, when the man goes to the side of the left and draws to himself the impure spirit and clings to it, he also draws a spirit of uncleanness on to the son that issues from him, so that he is like to be defiled by the impurity of the left side. This is what is meant by the words, "Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, namely that one which ascends on high, etc." When a man cleaves to the right, the spirit mounts aloft, but when he cleaves to the left, the side of the left, which is the spirit of uncleanness, descends from above and fixes its abode in a man's body, and the son whom he begets in that state of impurity is his son from that unclean spirit. Now Adam clave to that unclean spirit, and his wife clung to it at first and received defilement from it. Hence when Adam begat a son, that son was the son of the impure spirit. Thus there were two sons—one from the unclean spirit, and one after Adam had repented. Thus one was from the pure side and one from the impure.' R. Eleazar said: 'When the serpent injected his impurity into Eve, she absorbed it, and so when Adam had intercourse with her she bore two sons— one from the impure side and one from the side of Adam; and Abel bore a resemblance to the higher form and Cain to the lower. Hence it was that their ways in life were different. It was natural, too, that Cain, coming from the side of the angel of death, should kill his brother. He also adhered to his own side, and from him originate all the evil habitations and demons and goblins and evil spirits in the world.' R. Jose said: 'Cain was the nest (Qina) of the evil habitations which came into the world from the impure side. Afterwards both Cain and Abel brought sacrifices, each from his appropriate side; hence it is written, AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END OF DAYS THAT CAIN BROUGHT OF THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND, ETC. R. Simeon said: This "end of days" is the same as "the end of all flesh" (Gen. VI, 13), who is also the angel of death. Cain brought his offering from this "end of days"; this is indicated by the expression in the text "from the end" (mi-ketz).

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CAIN BROUGHT OF THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND: this is parallel to "of the fruit of the tree" in God's words to Adam.' R. Eleazar said: 'We can apply to Cain the verse, "Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be done to him" (Is. III, 11). "The reward of his hands" refers to the angel of death, who is drawn towards them and clings to them so as to slay or defile them. Thus Cain offered from the side appropriate to him. AND ABEL ALSO BROUGHT OF THE FIRSTLINGS: to amplify the higher side which comes from the side of holiness. Hence THE LORD HAD RESPECT UNTO ABEL AND TO HIS OFFERING, BUT TO CAIN AND TO HIS OFFERING HE HAD NOT

RESPECT, i.e. God did not accept it, and therefore CAIN WAS VERY WROTH AND HIS COUNTENANCE (presence) FELL, because his presence was not received, being from the side of the left. On the other hand, God received Abel, and therefore it is written, AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN THEY WERE IN THE FIELD, ETC. 'Field is here a designation for woman; Cain was jealous of the twin sister that was born with Abel (according to the interpretation placed by us on the words "and she bore in addition", IV, 2).' IF THOU DOEST WELL, SHALL THERE NOT BE UPLIFTING? This has already been explained, viz. the word se'eth (uplifting) means, according to R. Abba, 'thou shalt mount above and shalt not descend below'. R. Jose said: 'We accept this explanation, which is a good one, but I have also heard another, viz. "this attachment of the impure spirit shall depart (lit. be lifted) from thee and leave thee". If not, then SIN COUCHETH AT THE DOOR. By "door" is meant the heavenly tribunal which is the door through which all enter, as it is written, "open to me the doors of righteousness" (Ps. CXVIII, 19). By "sin coucheth" is meant that the side which clung to thee and was drawn towards thee is lying in wait for thee to exact punishment from thee.' Said R. Isaac: 'When Cain wanted to kill Abel, he did not know how to make him give up the ghost, and he bit him like a snake, as our colleagues have explained. God then cursed him, and he wandered about the world without being able to find any resting-place until, clapping his hands on his head, he repented before his Master. Then the earth found a place for him in one of its lower levels.' R. Jose said: 'The earth allowed him to stay on its surface, as it is written, "And the Lord set upon Cain a sign".' R. Isaac said: 'That is not so. The earth found a place for him in a certain lower level, as it is written, "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground", implying that he was banished from the surface but not from underground. The level on which he found a resting-place was Arka, of the denizens of which it is written, "these shall perish from the earth and from beneath the heavens" (Jer. X, 11). There was fixed his habitation, and this is what is meant by the words, AND HE DWELT IN THE LAND OF NOD ON THE EAST OF EDEN. Said R. Isaac further: From the time that Cain killed Abel Adam separated from his wife. Two female spirits then used to come and have intercourse with him, and he bore from them spirits and demons that flit about the world. This need cause no surprise, because now also when a man dreams in his sleep, female spirits often come and disport with him, and so conceive from him and subsequently give birth. The creatures thus produced are called "plagues of mankind"; they appear always under the form of human beings, but they have no hair on their heads. It is they who are referred to in the verse, "and I shall chastise him with the rod of men and with the plagues of the sons of men" (II Sam. VII, 14). In the same way male spirits visit womenfolk and make them pregnant, so that they bring forth spirits which are also called "plagues of the sons of men".

After a hundred and thirty years, Adam again felt drawn

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with desire towards his wife, and he begat from her a



son whom he called Seth. This name symbolises an end, being composed of the two last letters of the alphabet in regular order.' R. Judah said: 'This name symbolised the reincarnation of the spirit which had been lost, being of the same letters as the word shath (set) in the sentence "God hath replaced (shath) for me another seed instead of Abel" ' . R. Judah further said: The words AND HE BEGAT IN HIS OWN LIKENESS AFTER HIS IMAGE indicate that his other sons were not fully after his likeness, but that this one reproduced his qualities both of body and soul. This accords with what R. Simeon said in the name of R. Yeba, the Elder, that his other sons were engendered in defilement through the attachment of the serpent and of its rider, Samael, and therefore they were not a complete reproduction of Adam. We said before, it is true, that Abel was not from the same side as Cain; nevertheless, both were alike in this, that they were not endowed with the full human figure.' R. Jose said: 'This view is borne out by the language of the text, which in regard to the birth of Cain says, "And Adam knew his wife and she conceived and she bore Cain", and so of Abel, "and she again bore his brother Abel", but of Seth it says, "and he bore in his likeness after his image".' R. Simeon said: 'For a hundred and thirty years Adam separated from his wife, and during that time he begat many spirits and demons, through the force of the impurity which he had absorbed. When that impurity was exhausted, he turned once more to his wife and begat from her a son, of whom it is written, "he begat in his own likeness after his image". For when a man goes to the side of the left and walks in impurity, he draws to himself all kinds of impure spirits, and an unclean spirit clings to him and refuses to leave him, since these spirits cling only to those that cling to them first. Happy the righteous who walk in the straight path, they being the truly righteous; their children are also blessed, and of them it is written, "for the upright shall dwell in the earth" (Prov. II, 21).'

AND THE SISTER OF TUBAL CAIN WAS NAAMAH. R. Hiya said: 'Why does the Scripture particularly mention Naamah? The reason is that she was the great seducer not only of men, but also of spirits and demons.' R. Isaac said: 'The "sons of God" mentioned in the Scripture (Gen. VI, 4), who were Uzza and Azael, were seduced by her.' R. Simeon said: 'She was the mother of the demons, being of the side of Cain, and it is she who in company with Lilith brings epilepsy on children.' Said R. Abba to him: 'Did you not say before that her function is to seduce men?' He replied: 'That is so; she disports herself with men, and sometimes bears spirits from them. And she still exists to seduce men.' Said R. Abba to him: 'But do these demons not die like human beings? How then comes she to exist to the present day?' He replied: 'It is so. Lilith and Naamah and Iggereth, the daughter of Mahlath, who originated from their side, will all continue to exist until the Holy One, blessed be He, sweeps away the unclean spirit, as it is written, "I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" (Zech. XIII, 2).'

Said R. Simeon: 'Alas for the blindness of the sons of men, all unaware as they are how full the earth is of strange and invisible beings and hidden dangers, which could they but see, they would marvel how they themselves can exist on the earth. This Naamah was the mother of the demons, and from her originate all

those evil spirits which mix with men and arouse in them concupiscence, which leads them to defilement. It is because such a hap comes from the side of the unclean spirit that it entails the need of purification by ablution, as our colleagues have explained.'

THIS IS THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM, i.e. those who inherited his likeness. Said R. Isaac: 'God showed Adam the visages of all future generations, of all the wise men and all the kings that were destined to rule over Israel. When he saw David, who was destined to die as soon as he was born, he said, "I will lend him seventy years from my life", and so it came to pass. It was to this that David referred when he said: "For Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad

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through thy work, I will triumph in the works of thy hands" (Ps. XCII, 5), the expression "work" and "works of thy hands" in this passage referring to Adam, who was made by God and not by flesh and blood. Hence Adam's days fell short by seventy years of the thousand which he ought by right to have lived. God also showed him the wise men of each generation. When he came to R. Akiba and saw his great learning, he rejoiced, but when he saw his martyrdom he was sorely grieved. Nevertheless, he exclaimed: "How precious in mine eyes are thy companions, O God, how mighty are the chiefs of them" (Ps. CXXXIX, 17). "This is the book": literally so, as we have explained, viz. that when Adam was in the Garden of Eden, God sent down to him a book by the hand of Raziel, the angel in charge of the holy mysteries. In this book were supernal inscriptions containing the sacred wisdom, and seventy-two branches of wisdom expounded so as to show the formation of six hundred and seventy inscriptions of higher mysteries. In the middle of the book was a secret writing explaining the thousand and five hundred keys which were not revealed even to the holy angels, and all of which were locked up in this book until it came into the hands of Adam. When Adam obtained it, all the holy angels gathered round him to hear him read it, and when he began they exclaimed: "Be thou exalted, O Lord, above the heavens, let thy glory be above all the earth" (Ps. LVII, 12). Thereupon the holy angel Hadarniel was secretly sent to say to him: "Adam, Adam, reveal not the glory of the Master, for to thee alone and not to the angels is the privilege given to know the glory of thy Master." Therefore he kept it by him secretly until he left the Garden of Eden. While he was there he studied it diligently, and utilised constantly the gift of his Master until he discovered sublime mysteries which were not known even to the celestial ministers. When, however, he transgressed the command of his Master, the book flew away from him. Adam then beat his breast and wept, and entered the river Gihon up to his neck, so that his body became all wrinkled and his face haggard. God thereupon made a sign to Raphael to return to him the book, which he then studied for the rest of his life. Adam left it to his son Seth, who transmitted it in turn to his posterity, and so on until it came to Abraham, who learnt from it how to discern the glory of his Master, as has been said. Similarly Enoch possessed a book through which he learnt to discern the divine glory.'

MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM. R. Simeon said: 'Profound mysteries are revealed in these two verses. [Tr. note: i.e. this one and Gen. 1, 27.] The words "male and female he created them" make known the high dignity of man, the mystic doctrine of his creation. Assuredly in the way in which heaven and earth were created man was also created; for of heaven and earth it is written, "these are the generations of the heaven and the earth", and of man it is written, "these are the generations of man"; of heaven and earth it is written, "when they were created", and of man it is written, "on the day when they were created": "Male and female he created them." From this we learn that every figure which does not comprise male and female elements is not a true and proper figure, and so we have laid down in the esoteric teaching of our Mishnah. Observe this. God does not place His abode in any place where male and female are not found together, nor are blessings found save in such a place, as it is written, AND HE BLESSED THEM AND CALLED THEIR NAME MAN ON THE DAY THAT THEY WERE CREATED: note that it says them and their name, and not him and his name. The male is not even called man till he is united with the female.' R. Judah said: 'Since the destruction of the Temple, blessings have not reached the world, but they go astray every day, as it is written, "The righteous loses", to wit, the blessings which used to rest upon him, as it is written, "blessings on the head of the righteous". AND CALLED HIS NAME SETH. It is to Seth that all the generations which have survived in the world and all the truly righteous of the world trace their descent.' R. Jose said: 'The two last letters of the alphabet were left in their order after the others had been reversed

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through Adam's transgression, and therefore when he repented he grasped at these two and called the son who was born in his likeness Seth, a name formed of the last two letters of the alphabet in proper order. Nevertheless, the other letters of the alphabet remained in the inverse order, and not till Israel stood before Mount Sinai did they recover their proper order as on the day when the heaven and earth were created, and the earth was once more securely established.' R. Abba said: 'On the day that Adam transgressed the command of his Master, heaven and earth were like to have been uprooted from their place, being based as they are only on the covenant, as it is written, "But for my covenant day and night, I had not set the statutes of heaven and earth" (Jer. XXXIII, 25), and Adam broke the covenant, as it is written, "And they like Adam transgressed the covenant" (Hos. VI, 7). And had not God foreseen that Israel would one day stand before Mount Sinai to confirm this covenant, the world would not have been preserved.' R. Hizkiah said: 'Whoever confesses his sin thereby procures forgiveness from God. See now, when God created the world, He made this covenant and established the world upon it, as it is written Bereshith, which we interpret as bara shith, "he created the foundation", to wit, the covenant on which the world rests, and which is also called shith, because it is a trough from which blessings flow forth to the world. Adam broke this covenant and removed it from its place. This covenant

is symbolised by the small letter Yod, the root and foundation of the world. When Adam begat a son, he confessed his guilt and called the child Seth; he did not venture to insert a Yod and call him "Shith", because he had broken the covenant so symbolised. In recompense, God propagated mankind from Seth, and made him the forefather of all the righteous who have lived since. Note also this. When Israel stood before Mount Sinai, there entered between these two letters (shin and tau) a symbol of the covenant, to wit, the letter beth, and God gave to Israel the word formed of all three letters, which is SaBbaTH, as it is said: "And the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath throughout their generations a perpetual covenant." In this way these two letters finally obtained their original potency, which had remained in suspense until the world was brought into its complete state and the holy covenant entered between them.' R. Jose said: 'These two letters were indeed fully reinstated through the letter beth, but all the letters commenced to return to their proper order with the birth of Seth, and so in every generation until Israel stood before Mount Sinai, when they were finally restored.' R. Judah said: 'They had already been restored below, and in every generation the world was held together by the letters though they were not yet properly settled in their places; but when the Torah was given to Israel, then everything was put right.'

R. Eleazar said: 'In the time of Enosh, men were skilled in magic and divination, and in the art of controlling the heavenly forces. Adam had brought with him from the Garden of Eden the knowledge of "the leaves of the tree", but he and his wife and their children did not practise it. When Enosh came, however, he saw the advantage of these arts and how the heavenly courses could be altered by them, and he and his contemporaries studied them and practised magic and divination. From them these arts descended to the generation of the Flood and were practised for evil purposes by all the men of that time. Relying upon these arts, they defied Noah, saying that divine justice could never be executed upon them, since they knew a way to avert it. The practice of these arts commenced with Enosh, and hence it is said of his time, THEN WAS THE NAME OF THE LORD CALLED UPON PROFANELY. R. Isaac said: All the righteous men that were among them sought to restrain them, such as Jered, Methuselah, and Enoch, but without success, and the world became full of sinners who rebelled against their Master saying, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him?" (Job XXI, 15). This is not so foolish as it sounds, for they knew all the arts we have mentioned and all the ruling chieftains in charge of the world, and on this knowledge they relied, until at length God disabused them by restoring the earth to its primitive state

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and covering it with water. Later, He again restored it and made it productive, since He looked upon it with mercy, as it is written, "The Lord sat at the Flood"- "the Lord" signifying the attribute of mercy. In the days of Enoch even children were acquainted with these mysterious arts.' Said R. Yesa: 'If so, how could they be so blind as not to know that God intended to bring the

Flood upon them and destroy them?' R. Isaac replied: 'They did know, but they thought they were safe because they were acquainted with the angel in charge of fire and the angel in charge of water, and had means of preventing them from executing judgement on them. What they did not know was that God rules the world and that punishment proceeds from Him. They only saw that the world was entrusted to those chieftains and that everything was done through them, and therefore they took no heed of God and His works until the time came for the earth to be destroyed and the Holy Spirit proclaimed every day, "Let sinners be consumed out of the earth and let the wicked be no more" (Ps. CIV, 35). God gave them a respite all the time that the righteous men Jered, Methuselah, and Enoch were alive; but when they departed from the world, God let punishment descend upon them and they perished, as it says, "and they were blotted out from the earth" (Gen. VII, 23).'

AND ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD, AND HE WAS NOT, FOR GOD HAD TAKEN HIM. R. Jose illustrated this verse from the passage: While the king was still with his company at table, my spikenard sent forth its fragrance (S. S. I, 12). 'This verse', he said, 'can be expounded as referring to the ways of God. When God sees that a man who cleaves to Him and with whom He abides will one day degenerate, He takes him from the world prematurely, culling, as it were, the odour while it is still sweet; hence it is written, "while the King was with his company, my spikenard gave up its scent." The King is God; the company is the good man who cleaves to Him and walks in His ways; the spikenard indicates the good deeds on account of which he is removed from the world

before his time. Of such a case did King Solomon say: "There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, that there be righteous men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, etc." (Eccl. VIII, 14). How there are "righteous men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked" we have just explained, viz. that because their deeds are good, God removes them from the world before their time and before they become liable to punishment. The rest of the verse, "there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous", means that God gives them a respite and is long-suffering with them. Thus the good die early in order that they may not degenerate, and the wicked live on in order that they may have a chance to repent, or in order that a virtuous progeny may issue from them. See now, Enoch was virtuous, but God saw that he would degenerate, and therefore gathered him in in time, as one "gathers lilies" (S. S. VI, 2) because of their good scent. "And he was not, for God had taken him." This means that he did not live to a great age like his contemporaries, because God took him before his time.' R. Eleazar said: 'God removed Enoch from the earth, and took him up to the highest heavens, and there presented to him wonderful treasures, including forty-five mystical key-combinations of graven letters which are used by the highest ranks of angels, as has been explained elsewhere.'

AND THE LORD SAW THAT THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN WAS VERY GREAT IN THE EARTH, AND

THAT EVERY IMAGINATION OF THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART WAS ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY. R. Judah quoted in this connection the verse: For thou art not a God who hath pleasure in wickedness, evil shall not sojourn with thee (Ps. V, 5). He said: 'One lesson that may be derived from this verse is that if a man cleaves to the evil imagination and follows after it, not only does he defile himself thereby, but he is led further into defilement, as has already been stated. The men of the time of the Flood committed all kinds of sin, but the measure of their guilt was not full until they wasted their blood (i.e. seed) upon the ground. We know this from the fact that the word ra' (evil) is used here,

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and also in the verse, "and Er the son of Judah was evil (ra') in the sight of the Lord" (Gen. XXXVIII, 7).' Said R. Jose: 'Is not evil (ra') the same as "wickedness" (resha')?' He said: 'No. A man is called "wicked" (rasha') if he merely lifts his hand against his neighbour without doing him any harm, as it is written, "And he said to the wicked one (rasha'), why wilt thou smite thy neighbour?", the future tense (wilt smite) implying that he had not yet done anything to him. But only he is called "evil" (ra') who corrupts his way and defiles himself and the earth, and so lends force to the unclean spirit which is called ra' (whence it is said that "all their thoughts were for evil", ra'). Such a one will never enter the heavenly palace nor gaze upon the Shekinah, for by this sin the Shekinah is repelled from the world. We know this from Jacob, who, when the Shekinah departed from him, concluded that there was some stain attaching to his offspring, on account of which the unclean spirit had acquired strength and the light of the moon had been impaired: for this sin defiles the sanctuary. If on this account the Shekinah departed from Jacob, how much more certain is it that it will depart from one who corrupts his way and defiles himself, so giving power to the unclean spirit. Hence when a man defiles himself he is called ra'. Further, when a man defiles himself, he is not favoured with visitation (in dreams) from the Holy One, blessed be He, but on the contrary he is subject at all times to the visits of the spirit called ra', as it is written, "he who sleeps sated (i.e. without evil passion) will not be visited by evil" (Prov. XIX, 23) (as much as to say that when he walks in the right path he will not be visited by Ra'.) Hence it is said of the men of the blood that their thoughts were only evil, and the Psalmist said, "evil shall not sojourn with thee". Those who commit this sin are called ra' and not rasha'. Hence, too, it is written, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will not fear evil (ra'), for thou art with me".'

AND IT REPENTED THE LORD THAT HE HAD MADE MAN UPON THE EARTH, AND IT GRIEVED HIM AT HIS HEART. R. Jose illustrated from the verse: Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope (Is. V, 18). He said: 'Those who "draw iniquity" are the men who sin before their Master every day, and in whose eyes the sins they commit are like gossamer threads, which are of no account and are not noticed by God. And so they go on until they make their guilt as strong as a cart rope which cannot be broken. See now, when the time comes for God to pass sentence on sinners, although

they have provoked Him every day, He is yet unwilling to destroy them, and though He sees their deeds, He is yet indulgent towards them because they are the work of His hands, and therefore He gives them a respite. When at last He does come to execute judgement upon them, He is, as it were, grieved, since they are the work of His hands, although it is written, "Honour and majesty are before him, strength and joy are in his place" (Ps. XCVI, 6).' R. Jose said: 'Observe that it says, "He was grieved to his heart". The seat of the grief was the heart and no other place, "heart" having here the same sense as in the verse, "according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind" (I Sam. II, 35).' R. Isaac said: 'The word "repented" here has the same sense as in the sentence, "And the Lord repented of the evil which he had said he would do unto his people" (Ex. XXXII, 14). R. Yesa says that the word *niham*, used of God, means "repent", as has been remarked, implying that God bethinks Himself that the sinners are the work of His hands, and therefore pities them and is grieved because they sin before Him. R. Hizkiah says that it means "is consoled", implying that when God resolves to destroy the wicked, He comforts Himself for their loss like one who resigns himself to the loss of some article, and once He has done so, justice takes its course and repentance no longer avails; for up to that point the decision may still be reversed. No only so, but judgement is executed with additional rigour, until the sinners are utterly destroyed. The text tells us as much; for the words "the Lord was comforted" indicate that God resigned Himself, and the words "he was grieved to his heart" that He allowed justice to take its course without mercy.' R. Hiya said: 'The words "God was comforted because he had made man" refer to the time when man was first created on the earth, in the supernal image, and God rejoiced because the angels praised Him saying,

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"Thou hast made him (man) little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour" (Ps. VIII, 6). But afterwards when man sinned, then God "was grieved", because now the angels could say that they had been right in protesting against his creation, saying: "What is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou visitest him?" (Ibid. 5).' R. Judah said: 'God was grieved because the execution of judgement is always displeasing to Him. Thus we read that Jehoshaphat when going out to war "appointed those that should sing.... Give thanks unto the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever" (II Chron. XX, 21), and R. Isaac has explained that the reason why the words "for he is good" do not appear in this chant, as in other passages where it is given, is because He was about to destroy the works of His hands before Israel. Similarly, at the time when Israel crossed the Red Sea, when the angels came as usual to chant their praises before God on that night, God said to them: "The works of my hands are drowning in the sea, and will you chant praises?"; hence it says, "and this (angel) drew not near to that one all the night" (Ex. XIV, 20). Thus whenever destruction of the wicked takes place, there is grief for them above.' R. Abba said: 'God had already been grieved when Adam sinned before Him and transgressed His commandment. He said to him: "Woe to thee that thou hast weakened the heavenly power,

for at this moment thou hast quenched a light"; and forthwith He banished him from the Garden of Eden, saying: "I put thee in the garden to bring offerings, but thou hast impaired the altar so that offerings cannot henceforth be brought on it; henceforth therefore it is thy doom to labour at the ground."'

God also decreed that he should die. Taking pity on him, however, God allowed him when he died to be buried near the Garden of Eden. For Adam had made a cave near the Garden, and had hidden himself there with his wife. He knew it was near the Garden, because he saw a faint ray of light enter it from there, and therefore he desired to be buried in it; and there he was buried, close to the gate of the Garden of Eden. So it is that when a man is about to depart from life, Adam, the first man, appears to him and asks him why and in what state he leaves the world. He says: "Woe to thee that through thee I have to die." To which Adam replies: "My son, I transgressed one commandment and was punished for so doing; see how many commandments of your Master, negative and positive, you have transgressed". R. Hiya said: 'Adam exists to this day, and twice a day he sees the patriarchs and confesses his sins, and shows them the place where once he abode in heavenly glory. He also goes and looks at all the pious and righteous among his descendants who have attained to celestial glory in the Garden of Eden. All the patriarchs then praise God, saying: "How precious is thy lovingkindness, O God, and the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings" (Ps. XXXVI, 8).' R. Yesa said: 'Adam appears to every man at the moment of his departure from life to testify that the man is dying on account of his own sins and not the sin of Adam, according to the dictum, "there is no death without sin". There are only three exceptions, namely, Amram, Levi, and Benjamin, who were deprived of life through the prompting of the primeval serpent; some add also, Jesse. These did not sin, and no ground could be assigned for their death save the prompting of the serpent, as we have said.

'All the generations contemporary with Noah committed their sins openly, in the sight of all. R. Simeon was one day walking through the gate of Tiberias when he saw some men drawing the bow tight over earthenware pots. He cried: "What! do these miscreants dare to provoke their Master thus openly?" He scowled at them, and they were thrown into the sea and drowned. Take note that every sin which is committed openly repels the Shekinah and causes her to remove her abode from this world. The contemporaries of Noah committed their sins openly and defiantly, and so they drove the Shekinah away from the world, in punishment for which God removed them from the world, in accordance with the maxim, "Take away the dross from the silver, and there cometh forth a vessel for the finer; take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness" (Prov. XXV, 4 and 5).'

AND THE LORD SAID, MY SPIRIT SHALL NOT STRIVE WITH MAN FOR EVER, FOR THAT HE ALSO IS FLESH. R. Eleazar said: 'When God created the universe, He ordained that this world should be served

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from the world above. Hence when mankind are virtuous and walk in the right path, God puts in motion the spirit of life from above until it comes to the place where Jacob abides. From there the life descends further until the spirit reaches the world in which David is located; and from there blessings descend on all here below, who through the streaming of the spirit from above are able to maintain their existence. Now, however, that men sinned, the streaming ceased, so that the spirit of life no longer descended on this world for the benefit of its denizens. "For that he also is flesh," i.e. in order that, through being shed over this world, the spirit might not benefit the serpent, the lowest of the grades, which might also have grasped hold of it; and the holy spirit ought not to mix with the unclean spirit. The reference in "he also" is to the primeval serpent, as in the verse, "the end of all flesh comes before me" (Gen. VI, 13), which R. Simeon explains to mean the angel of death. HIS DAYS SHALL BE A HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS: a period of grace for the continued union (of body and soul). THE NEFILIM WERE IN THE EARTH. R. Jose says, following a tradition, that these were Uzza and Azazel, whom, as already mentioned, God deprived of their supernal sanctity. How, it may be asked, can they exist in this world? R. Hiya answers, that they were of the class of spirits referred to in the words "And birds which fly on the earth" (Gen. I, 20), and these, as we have said, appear to men in the form of human beings. If it is asked, how can they transform themselves? The answer is, as has been said, that they do in fact transform themselves into all kinds of shapes, because when they come down from heaven they become as concrete as air and take human shape. These are Uzza and Azazel, who rebelled in heaven, and were cast down by God, and became corporeal on the earth and remained on it, not being able to divest themselves of their earthly form. Subsequently they went astray after women, and up to this day they exist and teach men the arts of magic. They begat children whom they called Anakim (giants), while the Nefilim themselves were called "sons of God", as has been elsewhere explained.

AND THE LORD SAID, I WILL DESTROY MAN WHOM I HAVE CREATED FROM THE FACE OF THE GROUND. R. Jose quoted in this connection the verse, For my thoughts are not your thoughts (Is. LV, 8). He said: 'When a man wants to take vengeance on another, he keeps his counsel and says nothing, for fear that, if he discloses his intention, the other will be on his guard and escape him. Not so God. Before punishing the world, God proclaims His intention once, twice, and three times, because there is none who can stay his hand and say to Him, "what doest Thou?", and in vain would one attempt to guard against Him. So now God said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth"; He proclaimed His intention to them by the hand of Noah, and warned them several times, but they would not listen. Then at last He executed judgement on them and exterminated them.

AND HE CALLED HIS NAME NOAH SAYING, THIS SHALL COMFORT US, ETC. How did Noah's father know this? In this way. When God cursed the earth, Adam said to Him,

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"Sovereign of the Universe, how long shall the earth be subject to this curse?" God replied: "Until a descendant of yours shall be born circumcised, like yourself." So they waited until at last a child was born circumcised and marked with the holy sign. When his father saw this, and observed the Shekinah hovering over him, he called him Noah, [Tr. note: lit. 'rest'.] in anticipation of his future career. For up to his time men did not know the proper way to sow or reap or plough, and they used to work the ground with their hands. But when Noah came, he taught them the arts of husbandry, and devised for them the necessary implements. Hence it is written: "This one shall comfort us for our work and for the toil of our hands." It was indeed Noah who liberated the earth from its curse; for up to his time they used to sow wheat and reap thorns and thistles; hence Noah is called "a man of the ground" (Gen. IX, 20). R. Judah said: 'The word ish (man) is applied to him because he was righteous, and through the sacrifice which he brought he liberated the earth from its curse. We see, then, how he received his name in anticipation of the future.' R. Judah once expounded the text: Come, behold the works of the Lord, [Tr. note: So our texts (Tetragrammaton) But it is obvious from what follows that the Zohar read Elohim (God).] who hath made desolations in the earth (Ps. XLVI, 9). 'If,' he said, 'it had been the works of Tetragrammaton, then they would have brought more life into the world, but being the works of Elohim, they made desolation in the world.' Said R. Hiya to him: 'As you have raised this point, I take leave to differ from you. In my opinion, whichever name is used the result is beneficial; and in this verse we should, as our colleagues have pointed out, read not shammoth (desolations), but shemoth (names).' R. Isaac said: 'You are both right. As R. Hiya says, if the world had been created through the name which connotes mercy (Tetragrammaton), it would have been indestructible; but since it has been created through the name which connotes justice (Elohim), "desolations have been placed in the earth", and rightly so, since otherwise the world would not be able to endure the sins of mankind. Consider also this. When Noah was born, they gave him a name which connoted consolation, in the hope that it would work out its own fulfilment for them. His relation to God, however, is expressed by the same letters in the reverse order, viz. HeN (favour), as it is written, "and Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord",.' Said R. Jose: 'The names of the righteous influence their destiny for good, and those of the wicked for evil. Thus the anagram of Noah's name is hen (favour), and we find it written of him, "and Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord"; whereas the anagram of the name of Er the (wicked) son of Judah is ra' (evil), and of him it is written, "and Er was evil in the sight of the Lord" (Gen. XXXVIII, 7). When Noah grew up, and saw how mankind were sinning before God, he withdrew himself from their society and sought to serve his Master, so as not to be led astray by them. He was especially diligent in the study of the book of Adam and the book of Enoch which we have mentioned, and from them he learnt the proper forms in which to worship God. This explains how it is that he knew it was incumbent upon him to bring an offering; it was these books which revealed to him the basis on which the

existence of the world depends, to wit, the sacrifices, without which neither the higher nor the lower world can endure.'

R. Simeon was once travelling in company with his son R. Eleazar and R. Jose and R. Hiya. As they were going along steadily, R. Eleazar said, 'This is a favourable opportunity for hearing some explanation of the Torah.' R. Simeon thereupon commenced a discourse on the text: Also when the fool walketh by the way, his understanding faileth him, etc. (Eccl. X, 3). He said: 'If a man desires that his journey should be agreeable in the sight of God, he should, before he starts, take counsel of God and offer the appropriate prayer, according to the Rabbinical dictum based on the verse, "When righteousness goeth before him, then he shall set his feet on the way" (Ps. LXXXV, 14), for then the Shekinah is not parted from him. But of him who does not believe in his Master it is written,

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"Also when the fool walketh in the way, his understanding (lit. heart) faileth him." By "heart" is here designated the Holy One, blessed be He, who will not accompany him on the way nor lend him His support, because he is a man who does not believe in his Master and did not seek His support before starting on the journey. Likewise on the journey itself he does not busy his thoughts with the Torah, and for this reason also it is said that "his heart faileth him", because he does not walk with his Master and is not found in His path. Further, "he saith to all, it is folly": that is, when he does hear a word of true doctrine, he says it is folly to pay attention to it; like the man who was asked about the sign of the covenant imprinted on the flesh, and replied that it was no article of faith, whereupon R. Yeba the Elder frowned on him and he became a heap of bones. We, therefore, being on this journey with the support of the Almighty, are beholden to discuss some point of Torah.' He thereupon took the text: Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth, unite my heart to fear thy name (Ps. LXXXVI, 11). He said: 'This verse seems to conflict with the Rabbinical dictum that a man's whole career is in the hands of heaven, save his choice of virtue or vice. If this is so, how could David make such a request as this of God? What David really asked, however, was only that God should teach him His ways, that is, open his eyes to know the right and proper way; then he would himself be able to walk in the way of truth without turning aside right or left. As for the expression "my heart", this has the same significance as in the verse "the rock of my heart and my portion" (Ps. LXXIII, 26). All this I entreat, he said, in order to fear Thy name, to cleave to Thy fear and to keep to the straight path. The words "to fear thy name" refer to David's allotted place in which the fear of God is located. Consider this. Every man who fears God is secure in his faith, since he is whole-hearted in the service of his Master. But he who does not constantly fear his Master is not truly possessed of faith, nor is he accounted worthy of a share in the future world.' R. Simeon further discoursed on the text: But the path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. IV, 18). He said: 'Happy are the righteous in this world and the world to come, since God desires to glorify them. For their path

is as "the shining light", that is to say, that radiant light which God created at the beginning of things, and which He set aside for the righteous in the future world. This "shineth more and more", for its brightness continually augments. But of the wicked it is written, "The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble" (Ibid. 19). In truth they do know; but they walk in a crooked path, and will not stop to reflect that one day God will judge them in the future world, and chastise them with the punishments of Gehinnom. Then they will bewail themselves every day, saying, "Woe to us that we did not incline our ears and listen." But as for the righteous, God will illumine them in the future world and will give them their due reward in a place which eye has never beheld, as it is written, "Eye hath not seen beside thee, O God, what thou

wilt do for him that waits for thee" (Is. LXIV, 3). Also, "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me" (Is. LXVI, 24); and again, "And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet" (Mal. III, 21). Happy are the righteous in this world and in the world to come; of them it is written, "the righteous shall for ever inherit the earth" (Is. LX, 21), and also, "verily the righteous shall praise thy name, the upright shall dwell in thy presence" (Ps. CXL, 14). Blessed is the Lord for ever, Amen and Amen.'

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## NOAH

THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH. R. Hiya opened with the text: And thy people are all righteous, they will inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands wherein I glory (Is. LX, 21). He said: 'Happy are the people of Israel, who occupy themselves with the Torah and are familiar with its paths, through following which they will merit the world to come. For all Israelites have a portion in the world to come, for the reason that they observe the covenant on which the world is established, and of which it is said: "If my covenant be not (observed) day and night, it were as if I had not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jer. XXXIII, 25). Hence Israel, who have accepted the covenant and observe it, have a portion in the world to come. Furthermore, they are therefore called righteous. We learn this from Joseph, who, by reason of his having observed the covenant, is known as "Joseph the righteous".'

R. Eleazar said: 'The term "These are", as we have learnt, always implies that something spoken of before in the text is now of no account. Now it is written above in the account of the Creation [Tr. note: Where also we find the expression 'these are the generations, (Gen. II, 4).] that "A river went out from Eden to water the garden and from thence it was parted, etc." (Gen. II, 10). That stream which flows perennially entered the Garden to water it from the supernal waters, and brought gladness to it, making it produce fruit and seed for the universal content; and so the stream gladdened the Garden, as it is written, "And he rested on the seventh day" (Ibid. 3). Thus the words "these are the generations" imply that this brought forth products and

no other. So it was with Noah in the lower world. Noah was the sacred covenant below corresponding to that above, and hence is called "Man of the earth". The inner meaning which we learn from this is that Noah had need of an ark with which to become united in order thereby to preserve the seed of all species, as it is written, "To preserve seed". This ark is the Ark of the Covenant, and Noah with the ark below corresponded to a similar union above. The word "covenant" is used in connection with Noah, as it is written, "And I will establish my covenant with thee", and before the covenant was established with him he did not enter the ark, as it is written, "And I will establish my covenant with thee and thou shalt come into the ark." Thus his ark represented the Ark of the Covenant, and Noah and the ark together were a symbol of the supernal pattern. And since this covenant above brought forth products, so Noah below also bore generations. Hence it says, "These are the generations of Noah."

NOAH WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN. Assuredly so, after the supernal pattern. It is written, "The Righteous one is the foundation of the world" (Prov. X, 25), and the earth is established thereon, for this is the pillar that upholds the world. So Noah was called Zaddik (righteous) below. All this is implied in the words NOAH WALKED WITH GOD, meaning that he never separated himself from Him, and acted so as to be a true copy of the supernal ideal, a "Zaddik the foundation of the world", an embodiment of the world's covenant of peace. And it is thus that NOAH FOUND FAVOUR IN THE EYES OF GOD. PERFECT HE WAS IN HIS GENERATIONS: this refers to his descendants; he perfected them all, and he was more virtuous than all of them. Again, the words "He was perfect" indicate that he was born circumcised (cf. of Abraham, "Walk before me and be perfect, i.e. circumcised" Gen. XVII, 1). IN HIS GENERATIONS: and not in those of his contemporaries, for all future generations issued from him only. Consider this. From the day that the world was created, Noah was the first man fitted to be joined in union with the ark and to enter it, and until they were joined the world had not yet reached a stable condition. But once this had happened we read "From these all the earth was overspread" (Gen. X, 32). These words are analogous to the expression "And from thence the river parted" (Ibid. II, 10), of the Garden of Eden, which indicate that from this point there was a parting and diffusion of progeny into all quarters of the world. The two cases are analogous in every way. Hence it says: "These are the generations"; assuredly "these", as it was he who was the foundation of the world that brought forth

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generations to abide on the earth.' R. Abba then approached and kissed him, saying: 'The lion in his might has pierced through the rock and broken it asunder. Your exposition is certainly the right one, as can also be deduced from the measurements of the ark.'

THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH. R. Judah discoursed on the text: The good man is gracious and lendeth, he ordereth his affairs according to justice (Ps. CXII, 5). ' "The good man" refers to the

Holy One, Blessed be He, since He is called "good" (as well as "Man"), as it is written, "The Lord is good to all" (Ibid. CXLV, 9), as well as "The Lord is a man of war" (Exod. xv, 3). Thus God is gracious and lends to that quarter which has no possession of its own, but derives its sustenance from Him. This idea is further developed in the sentence "He ordereth his affairs according to justice", indicating that that quarter is granted sustenance only according to justice, as it is written, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne" (Ps. LXXXIX, 15). According to another explanation, the "good man" refers to the Righteous one (Zaddik), as it is written, "Say ye of the righteous one that he is good" (Is. III, 10). R. Jose said that it refers to Noah, as it is written, "Noah was a righteous man." R. Isaac said that it refers to the Sabbath, since the psalm in praise of the Sabbath commences with the words "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord" (Ps. XCII, 2). R. Hiya said: 'It is the Zaddik who produces offspring in the world. Who constitute this offspring? The souls of the righteous, these being the fruit of the handiwork of the Holy One, blessed be He.' R. Simeon said: 'When the Holy One, blessed be He, puts on his crowns, he receives them from above and from below: above, from the region of absolute remoteness; below, he is crowned by the souls of the righteous. The result is an increment of life-energy from above and below, embracing the place of the sanctuary on all sides, and causing the cisterns to become full and the sea to be replenished, and providing sufficiency for all. It is written: "Drink water out of thine own cistern, and running water out of thine own well" (Prov. V, 15). Why speak first of a cistern (bor), which is naturally waterless, and then of a well (beer), which is a fountain bubbling with water? In truth, both are one: this first refers to a certain region which is beset by poverty, and is thus called "cistern", as not possessing anything of its own save what is given to it: that region is called daleth (poverty, also the fourth letter of the alphabet). In time, however, it becomes a well, filled on all sides with bubbling water; it then typifies the letter he, being filled from on high

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and bubbling up from below. It is filled from above in the way already explained, while its bubbling from below is from the souls of the righteous. (According to another interpretation, "drink water out of thine own cistern" refers to King David, who said, "Oh that one would give me water to drink of the cistern of Bethlehem" (II Sam. XXIII, 15); and "running waters" refers to Abraham; "out of the midst" refers to Jacob, he representing the centre; "thine own well" signifies Isaac, who is called "well of living waters". Thus in this verse is a reference to the sacred and honoured team of the three patriarchs with King David associated with them.) As the desire of the female towards the male only awakes when a certain spirit enters into her and the flow ascends to meet that of the male, so the congregation of Israel only conceives a longing for the Holy One, blessed be He, when it is permeated with the spirit of the righteous. It is then that its energy rises from below to meet the energy from above so as to form a perfect union. There flows from this a universal content, and it is then that the Holy One, blessed be He, walks familiarly among the souls of the righteous.

See now, all the offspring of the Garden of Eden did not issue from the Righteous one until he entered into that ark of which we have spoken and became one with it—that ark which contained all in embryo. Similarly Noah the righteous man did not beget offspring to populate the world until he entered the ark in which all (life) was gathered and safely stored and from which it afterwards emerged to multiply in the world and to have an abiding existence on earth. Had not these creatures been through the ark they would not have endured in the world. And all this was planned after the supernal pattern. As they emerged from the Ark there on high, so they emerged from the ark here below. And thus the world then obtained the character of permanency which it had not possessed before. Hence the expression “And running waters out of the midst of thy well”, which is echoed by the verse “And Noah begat three sons.” ‘

AND THE EARTH WAS CORRUPTED BEFORE GOD. Said R. Judah: ‘What does the phrase “before God” signify? ‘ It signifies that they perpetrated their crimes openly in the eyes of all.’ Said R. Jose: ‘I interpret it in a reverse sense, namely, that at first “the earth was corrupted before God”, that is, that they committed their sins secretly, so as to be known only to God but not to man. They finished, however, by coming out into the open, as it is written, AND THE EARTH WAS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE, indicating that there was not a place in the whole earth which did not witness their sins.’ R. Abba said: ‘From the time that Adam transgressed the command of his Master, all the succeeding generations were called “sons of Adam” in a derogatory sense, as much as to say, “the sons of the man who transgressed his Master’s commands”. But when Noah appeared, mankind were called by his name, to wit, “the generations of Noah”, in an honourable sense, since he secured for them permanent existence in the world, and not “the generations of Adam”, since he had caused them to be driven from the world and brought death to all.’ Said R. Jose to him: ‘But in a later passage (Gen. XI, 5) it is written, “and the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of Adam had built”— Adam and not Noah.’ R. Abba replied: ‘It was because he was the first sinner. Better had it been for him that he should not have been created, so as not to be mentioned in this verse. See now, it is written: “A wise son causeth his father to rejoice” (Prov. X, 1). When a son is good, people mention his father’s name with praise; but if he is bad, they mention his father with reproach. So it was with Adam. He transgressed the command of his Master, and therefore when later men arose who rebelled against their Master, they were designated by the Scripture “the sons of Adam”, that is, the sons of the first man who rebelled against his Master and transgressed His commands. Hence “these are the generations of Noah”—these and not the former ones; these who entered into and emerged from the ark and brought forth generations to people the world; but they are not the generations of Adam, who emerged from the Garden of Eden without bringing any progeny forth from thence. For indeed, if Adam had brought offspring with him out of the Garden of Eden, these would never have been destroyed, the light of the moon would never have been darkened, and all would have lived for ever; and not even the angels would have equalled them in illumination and wisdom,

as we read, “In the image of God he created him” (Gen. I, 27). But since,

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through his sin, he left the Garden by himself and bore offspring outside it, these did not endure in the world, and this ideal was, therefore, not realised.’ Said R. Hizkiah: ‘How could they have begotten children there, seeing that, had the evil inclination not enticed him to sin, Adam would have dwelt for ever in the world by himself and would not have begotten children? In the same way, if Israel had not sinned by making the golden calf, they would not have borne children and no new generations would have come into the world” R. Abba replied: ‘If Adam had not sinned, he would not have begotten children from the side of the evil inclination, but he would have borne offspring from the side of the holy spirit. But now, since all the children of men are born from the side of the evil inclination, they have no permanence and are but short-lived, because there is in them an element of the “other side”. But if Adam had not sinned and had not been driven from the Garden of Eden, he would have begotten progeny from the side of the holy spirit—a progeny holy as the celestial angels, who would have endured to eternity, after the supernal pattern. Since, however, he sinned and begat children outside the Garden of Eden, these did not take root, even in this world, until Noah arose, who was a righteous man and entered the ark, so that from the ark there went forth all the future generations of mankind, who spread thence into the four quarters of the earth.’

AND GOD SAW THE EARTH AND BEHOLD IT WAS CORRUPT. It was corrupt because “all flesh had corrupted its way”, in the sense we have explained. R. Hiya adduced the following text: And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way (Jonah III, 10). ‘See now,’ he said, ‘when the sons of men are righteous and observe the commands of the Torah, the earth becomes invigorated, and a fullness of joy pervades it, because then the Shekinah rests upon the earth, and there is thus gladness above as well as below. But when mankind corrupt their way and do not observe the commands of the Torah, and sin before their Master, they, as it were, thrust the Shekinah out of the world, and the earth is thus left in a corrupt state. For the Shekinah being thrust out, another spirit comes and hovers over the world, bringing with it corruption. It is in this sense that we say that Israel “gives strength unto Elohim”, that is, to the Shekinah, and thereby makes the world more secure. Should, however, Israel-God forbid—prove sinful, then, in the words of the Scripture, “God withdraws himself above the heavens” (Ps. LVII, 6). Why? Because “they have prepared a net for my footsteps, my soul is bent down”, through their violence and causeless hatreds, “they have digged a pit before me” (Ibid. 7). The same thing happened with the generation of the Flood, whose violent acts led to mutual hatred and contention among them. We might think that the same applies to the Land of Israel. Our teachers, however, have laid down that no other spirit rests upon the Land of Israel, nor has it any guardian angel save God alone. There was, however, one occasion when another spirit did rest upon it in order to destroy the people. That was in the time of David, when, as it is written, “David saw the angel of the



Lord... having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem" (I Chron. XXI, 16), and thus destruction came upon the land.' R. Eleazar said: 'Even then it was the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself, the term "angel" here having the same meaning, as in the passages "the angel who redeemed me" (Gen. XLVIII, 16), and the angel of God removed (Ex. XIV, 19). Be it for good or for ill, the Holy One, blessed be He, always has sway over it personally. For good, so that it should not be delivered into the hands of the "higher chieftains", and so that all the inhabitants of the world should be ashamed of their wicked deeds; for ill, so that the nations should not have the gratification of ruling over it. It is true, the Scripture says in one place, "For she hath seen that the heathen are entered into her sanctuary" (Lam. I, 10), and have destroyed the House, from which it may be inferred that if those alien chiefs had not had sway, the Temple would not have been destroyed. This, however, must not be stressed; for the Scripture also says, "For thou hast done it" (Ibid. I, 21), and "The Lord hath done what he hath devised" (Ibid. II, 17).' R. Hiya continued: 'It is written here, in connection with Noah, "And God saw the earth and behold it was corrupt." Contrast with this the verse "And God saw their deeds, and they had repented of their evil ways" (Jonah III, 10). There the earth called to God, reaching out towards heaven, and beautifying her face, as it were, like a woman trying to please her husband; so the earth tried to please God by raising up for Him righteous children. But here, when the generation of the Flood did not repent of their sins, it is written, "And God saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt", like a faithless wife who hides her face from before her husband. But when mankind committed sin upon sin openly and flagrantly, then the earth became brazen-faced like an abandoned female without any sense of shame, as it is said on another occasion, "And the earth was defiled under its inhabitants" (Is. XXIV, 5). Hence this is the connection here: "God saw that the earth was corrupted", why? "Because all

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flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth".'

R. Eleazar went to see R. Jose, the son of R. Simeon, the son of Lakunia, his father-in-law. The latter, as soon as he saw him, spread out for him a carpet under a canopy, on which they sat down. He asked his son-in-law, 'Did you happen to hear from your father the interpretation of the verse: The Lord hath done that which he devised, he hath performed his word that he commanded in the days of old (Lam. II, 17)?' He answered, 'Our colleagues have interpreted it thus. They take the words bitza imratho ("He hath performed his word") to mean "He rent his purple cloak"- that cloak which "he commanded from days of old", that is, which He had appointed from the beginning of things. On the day the Temple was destroyed He rent that purple cloak which was His glory and ornament.' Said R. Jose: 'What of the words "the Lord hath done that which he (had already) devised"? Does a king devise evil against his sons before they sin?' R. Eleazar replied: 'Imagine a king who possessed a precious vase, and who, being constantly apprehensive lest it should be broken, had it ever under his eyes, and never lost sight of it for a

moment. One day his son came and provoked him to anger, so that in his rage he took up the vase and broke it in pieces. In this way the Lord "hath done that which he had already devised". From the day when the Temple was built, the Holy One, blessed be He, used to contemplate it fondly, and every time He came to the sanctuary, He used to put on the purple cloak we have mentioned. But when Israel sinned, and provoked their King, the Temple was destroyed, and the mantle was rent. Only on that occasion did God mourn the destruction of the wicked, but at any other time the Holy One, blessed be He, takes joy in nothing so much as in the destruction of the world's sinners, and of those who have provoked Him to anger, as it is written, "And when the wicked perish there is joy" (Prov. XI, 10). So throughout the generations, whenever justice is executed on sinners, there is joy and thanksgiving before the Holy One, blessed be He. But, you may say, is there not a dictum of the Rabbis that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not rejoice when he executes judgement on sinners? The truth is that He does take joy in the destruction of the wicked, but only when He has been longsuffering with them and they have still remained unrepentant. But if He exacts punishment from them before that time, before the measure of their sins has been completed (cf. "For the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full", Gen. XV, 16), then there is no joy before Him, but, on the contrary, He is grieved at their destruction. Another difficulty here arises:

if their time has not come, why should punishment be at all inflicted on them? But, indeed, they themselves are to blame for this. For the Holy One, blessed be He, never inflicts punishment on the wicked before the full time, except when they interfere with Israel in order to do them harm. It is then that He inflicts punishment upon them before the full time, and it is then that their destruction grieves Him. It was for this reason that He drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and destroyed the enemies of Israel in the days of Jehoshaphat, and inflicted punishment on others; they were all destroyed before the full time on account of Israel. But if the time of respite expires without their showing any sign of repentance, then their destruction is a cause of joy and glory before Him. Nevertheless, it was not so with the destruction of the Temple; for on that occasion, although Israel had filled up the cup of provocation, there was no joy before Him, and since that time there has been no joy, neither above nor below.'

FOR YET SEVEN DAYS, AND I WILL CAUSE IT TO RAIN UPON THE EARTH FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS. R. Judah said: 'What is the point of mentioning the exact period? The answer is that forty is the appropriate number for the punishment of sinners, in accordance with the ordinance, "Forty stripes he may give him, he shall not exceed" (Deut. XXV, 3). Further, this number corresponds to the four quarters of the world, so that there were ten for each quarter. For since man was created from the four quarters of the world, and the decree went forth, "And I will blot out every living substance that I have made from the face of the earth", forty were required for this purpose.' R. Isaac studied regularly with R. Simeon. One day he asked him: 'With reference to the passage "And the earth was corrupt",

if men sinned, why should the earth be called corrupt?' R. Simeon replied: 'We find a parallel in the passage, "And the land was defiled, therefore I did visit the iniquity thereof upon it" (Lev. XVIII, 25), where the same problem arises. The explanation is that mankind constitute the essence of the earth, so that they infect the earth with their own corruption. This is made clear by the language of the Scripture in the passage, "And God saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth." For indeed all the other sins of man, involving but his own corruption, admit of repentance. But the sin of onanism is one by which man corrupts both himself and the earth; and of such a one it is written, "The stain of thine iniquity remains before me" (Jer. II, 22), also "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, evil shall not sojourn with thee" (Ps. V, 5), and it is further written, "And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him" (Gen. XXXVIII, 7), as explained elsewhere.' R. Judah further asked, "Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, punish the world with water, and not with fire or any other element?' R. Simeon replied: 'There is a mystical reason, based on the fact that they "corrupted their ways". As their sin consisted in not allowing the upper and lower waters to meet in conjunction, as they ought, so were they punished with water. Further, the waters of the Deluge were burning hot, and caused their skins to peel off, this being a meet punishment for the sin they committed in wasting the warm fluid. It was all measure for measure. The words in the text, "All the fountains of the great deep were broken open" refer to the lower waters, and the words "And the windows of Heaven were opened" refer to the upper waters. Thus were the two waters combined as a fit punishment for their sins.'

R. Hiya and R. Judah, while once going on their travels, came to some huge mountains, in the ravines of which they found human bones left over from the generation of the Flood. They measured a bone and found to their amazement that it was three hundred paces long. They said: 'This bears out what our colleagues have said, that the men of the time of the Flood did not fear the vengeance of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written, "They said unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways" (Job XXI, 14), and that one of the things they did was to stop up with their feet the fountains of the deep, until the waters which bubbled up became too hot for them to endure, so that they finally succumbed and fell to the ground and died.'

AND NOAH BEGAT THREE SONS.[Tr. note: This paragraph is out of place. It should properly follow 'begat three sons' on p. 196.] Said R. Hiya to R. Judah: 'Let me tell you what I have heard regarding this text. A man once entered the recesses of a cavern, and there issued two or three children together, who differed from one another in their character and conduct: one was virtuous, a second vicious, and a third average. Similarly we find three strands of spirit which flit about and are taken up into three different worlds. The neshamah (spiritual soul) emerges and enters between

the gorges of the mountains, where it is joined by the ruah (intellectual spirit). It descends then below where the nefesh (vital spirit) joins the ruah, and all three form a unity.' R. Judah said: 'The nefesh and the ruah are intertwined together, whereas the neshamah resides in a man's character-an abode which cannot be discovered or located. Should a man strive towards purity of life, he is aided thereto by a holy neshamah, whereby he is purified and sanctified and attains the title of "saint". But should he not strive for righteousness and purity of life, he is animated only by the two grades, nefesh and ruah, and is devoid of a holy neshamah. What is more, he who commences to defile himself is led further into defilement, and heavenly help is withdrawn from him. Thus each is led along the path which he chooses.'

AND GOD SAID TO NOAH, THE END OF ALL FLESH IS COME BEFORE ME. R. Judah illustrated this passage from the verse: Lord, make me know mine end, and the measure of my days what it is; let me know how short lived I am (Ps. XXXIX, 5). He said: 'David said before the Holy One, blessed be He, "There are two 'ends', one on the right and one on the left, these being the two paths by which men proceed towards the other world." The end on the right is referred to in the words "at the end of the right" (Daniel XII, 13); and the end on the left in the words "He setteth an end to darkness, and the ending of all things does he search out" (Job XXVIII, 3). "End" here is the angel of destruction, who is also the serpent, and who is called "End of all flesh". When the doom of destruction is hanging over the world, this "searches out" and explores every avenue through which it can bring accusations against the world so as to reduce men to despair.'

The term "end of the right", as already said, is based on the phrase "at the end of the right" in the book of Daniel. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Daniel, "Thou shalt go towards the end, and wilt rest" (Dan. XII, 13). Daniel asked: "Rest in this world or in the next world?" "Rest in the next world", was the answer (cf. "They will rest in their beds", Is. LVII, 2), "and thou shalt stand up to thy lot at the end of days". Daniel asked, "Shall I be among the resurrected or not?" God answered, "And thou wilt stand up." Daniel then said, "I know full well that the dead will rise up in various classes, some righteous and some wicked, but I do not know among whom I shall be found." God answered, "To thy lot." Daniel then said, "As there is a right end and a left end, I do not know whether I shall go to the right end (l'qets hayamin) or to the end of days (l'qets hayamin)." The answer was, "To the end of the right (l'qets hayamin)." Similarly, David said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "make me to know my end", that is, he wished to know to which end he was allotted, and his mind was not at rest till the good tidings reached him, "Sit at my right hand" (Ps. CX, 1). So to Noah also the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "The end of all flesh is come before me." The term "end", as we have seen, alludes to the angel of death, who reduces men to despair, and who is indeed the end of all flesh. "Is come before me":

from this we learn that though the wicked go half-way to meet him and draw him to themselves, yet only after he receives authorisation does he take a man's soul: he cannot take it before. Hence we read "is come before me", to wit, to obtain permission to darken the faces of mankind, and so "I will destroy them with the earth". Hence the command given to Noah, MAKE THEE AN ARK OF GOPHER WOOD, to save thyself therein and so that he should not have power over thee. There was also another reason. We have a dictum that when death rages in a town or in the world at large, no man should show himself in the street, because the destroying angel is then authorised to kill indiscriminately. Hence the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Noah, "It behoves thee to take heed to thyself and not show thyself before the destroyer, so that he may have no power over thee." You may perhaps say that there was not here any destroying angel, but only the onrush of the overwhelming waters. This is not so; no doom is ever executed on the world, whether of annihilation or any other chastisement, but the destroying angel is in the midst of the visitation. So here there was indeed a flood, but this was only an embodiment of the destroyer who assumed its name. Hence the command given to Noah to hide himself and not to show himself abroad. But, you may object further, the ark was exposed to full view in the midst of the world through which the destroyer was roaming. The answer is that this made no difference, since, as long as the face of a man is not seen by the destroyer, he has no power over him. We learn this from the precept given at the time of the Exodus, "and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning" (Ex. XII, 22), the reason being that the destroyer was then abroad with power to destroy anyone who showed himself. For the same reason Noah withdrew himself and all under his charge into the ark, so that the destroyer had no power over him.'

R. Hiya and R. Jose in the course of their travels came to the mountains of Kurdistan, and observed there some deep ravines which had been left from the Flood. Said R. Hiya: 'These ravines are vestiges of the days of the Flood, and the Holy One, blessed be He, has left them throughout the generations so that the sins of the wicked should not be blotted out from before Him. For just as God causes the memory of those who do His will to endure on high and here below from generation to generation, so He ordains that the evil memory of the sins of the wicked who have not obeyed Him shall not pass away but remain for all generations, as it is written, "The stain of thine iniquity remains before me" (Jer. II, 22).'

R. Jose discoursed on the text: Cry thou with a shrill voice, oh daughter of Gallim! Hearken, oh Laish! Oh thou poor Anathoth! (Is. X, 30). He said: 'Our companions have already interpreted this verse in their own way, but in truth it refers to the Community of Israel, called "the daughter of springs" (Gallim), on the analogy of the expression, "A spring (gal) shut up" (S. S. IV, 12). The term "spring" has special reference to those streams that converge and flow into the Garden, as it is written, "Thy shoots are a garden (pardes) of pomegranates" (Ibid. 13). The term laisha is akin to the term laish in "the lion (laish) perisheth for lack of prey" (Job IV, 11). Why is the Community of Israel called "lion

"? It might be in allusion to "the lion which is mighty among beasts" (Prov. XXX, 30), or again to "the lion perisheth for lack of prey". But indeed, the two aspects are combined in it. At one time it is laish (he lion), filled with the lower-world energy emanating from the higher-world energy; and then again it is reduced to the state of "a lion perishing for lack of prey", when the rivers dry up and do not come to replenish her, at which time she is rather called laisha (lioness).

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The name laisha is further explained by the words which immediately follow, aniah anathoth, which properly mean 'poorest of the poor'. The word anathoth is found with a similar meaning in the passage "of the priests that were in Anathoth" (Jer. I, 1). Another example of the word used in this sense is in the verse "Anathoth, get thee unto thine own fields" (I Kings II, 26). The meaning of this verse is as follows. So long as King David was alive, Abiathar was wealthy and prosperous; but after David died, Solomon ordered him to get to his own fields, calling him "Anathoth". Why did he give him this name? It cannot be because this was the name of the town he came from, since it is written, "and one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped" (I Sam. XXII, 20), which proves that he belonged to Nob, the city of the priests. Some, indeed, are of opinion that Anathoth and Nob are two names of the same place, the name "Anathoth" having been given to it on account of the poverty and destitution to which it had been reduced by Saul through the slaughter of all its priestly inhabitants. This, however, is incorrect, as Anathoth was distinct from Nob. The real reason why Solomon called Abiathar "Anathoth" is to be found in the words "and because thou wast afflicted (hithanitha) in all wherein my father was afflicted" (I Kings II, 26); thus the name "Anathoth" alludes to the poverty and affliction which he underwent in the time of David.'

R. Hiya said: 'The world was in a state of poverty and misery from the time Adam transgressed the command of the Almighty until Noah came and offered up a sacrifice, when its prosperity returned.' R. Jose said: 'The world was not properly settled, nor was the earth purged from the defilement of the serpent, until Israel stood before Mount Sinai, where they laid fast hold of the Tree of Life, and so established the world firmly. Had not Israel backslided and sinned before the Holy One, blessed be He, they would never have died, since the scum of the serpent had been purged out of them. But as soon as they sinned, the first tablets of the Law were broken—those tablets which spelt complete freedom, freedom from the serpent who is the "end of all flesh". When the Levites rose up to slay the guilty, the evil serpent went in front of them, but he had no power over Israel, because they were girt with a certain armour which protected them against his attacks. When, however, God said to Moses, "Therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee" (Ex. XXXIII, 5), this was the signal that they were placed in the power of the serpent (this is indicated by the form vayithnaselu, which shows that they were stripped by the hand of another). The ornaments referred to are those which they received at Mount Horeb at the time when the Torah was given to Israel.' R. Hiya said: 'Why

did not Noah, being a righteous man, cause death to vanish from the world? The reason is that the scum of the serpent had not yet been removed from the world, and further, that his generation did not believe in the Holy One, blessed be He, and all of them clung to the "lower leaves of the tree", and were clothed with an unclean spirit. Furthermore, they persisted in their sins, and followed their evil inclination as before, and the holy Torah, which is the Tree of Life, had not yet been brought down to the earth. Moreover, Noah himself drew death into the world, through his own sin, of which it is written, "And he drank of the wine and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent" (Gen. IX, 21), as elsewhere explained.' As they were going along they saw a man coming towards them. Said R. Jose: 'This man is a Jew.' When he came up to them they asked him who he was. He said: 'I am on a religious errand from the village of Ramin, where I live. As it is near the Feast of Tabernacles, we require a palm branch with its accessories. I am therefore on my way to pluck them.' They all then walked on together. The Judean said to them: 'In regard to these four plants which we take in order to propitiate the Almighty, have you heard why we require them precisely on the Feast of Tabernacles?' Said R. Jose to him: 'Our colleagues have already discussed this question. But if you have any explanation of your own, tell us.' He replied: 'The place where we live is indeed only a little hamlet, but all its inhabitants diligently study the Torah under the guidance of a learned teacher, R. Isaac the son of Jose by name, of Mehozah, who every day gives us some fresh explanation of points in the Torah. Regarding this festival, he explained that this is the fitting period for Israel to obtain dominion over the chiefs who have charge of the nations of the Gentiles, and who are called by them "the proud waters" (Ps. CXXIV, 6). In order to obtain dominion over them, we come with a symbolic representation of the Divine name by means of the four plants, which we also take for the purpose of placating the Almighty

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so as to procure for ourselves a plenitude of sacred waters with which to pour a libation on the altar. He further told us that on the New Year there is in the world "a first stirring". What is meant by "a first stirring"? This is the lower-world tribunal which bestirs itself to bring the world to judgement, as God then sits in judgement over the world. This tribunal continues in session until the Day of Atonement, when the face of the moon is bright, and the slanderous serpent leaves the world alone, being occupied with the he-goat which has been offered to him-an appropriate offering, as the goat is from the "impure region". Being occupied with that goat, he does not come near the sanctuary. This goat performs the same function as the goat offered up on the New Moon, with which also the serpent occupies himself, allowing the moon to grow bright. In consequence, all Israel find favour in the eyes of the Almighty, and their guilt is removed. He further discoursed to us on another mystery which it is not permitted to disclose save to those of excellent wisdom, saintliness, and piety.' 'What is it?' asked R. Jose. 'I cannot say unless I first test you,' replied the Jew. They then proceeded on their way, and after a time he said: 'When the moon approaches the sun, the

Holy One, blessed be He, stirs up the northern side, and it grasps the moon lovingly and draws her towards itself. Then the South awakens from the other side, and the moon rises and joins the East. She thus draws sustenance from two sides, and noiselessly receives blessings; and thus it is that the moon is blessed and attains her fullness. Now as there is a symbolical attribution of members to the (supernal) Adam, so there is to the (supernal) Female, and so, too, there is the symbolism of another Adam under the moon, and also of a Female. As the Left Arm above grasps the Female and lovingly draws her to him, so below the serpent, which is the left arm of the unclean spirit, and joined with it he that rides on it, draw near to the moon and draw her tightly to them, so that she becomes defiled. Israel, therefore, here below offer up a goat, to which the serpent is drawn away. The moon then purges herself, ascends on high, and unites herself to the higher sphere to receive blessing, and her lower face, which was darkened, becomes bright. So here on the Day of Atonement, since the evil serpent is occupied with the he-goat, the moon breaks loose from him, and earnestly pleads the cause of Israel, and watches over them like a mother over her children, so that the Holy One, blessed be He, blesses them from above and forgives their sins. Afterwards, when Israel celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, the "right side" is awakened on high, so that the moon may attach herself to it and her face may become completely bright. She then shares out blessings to all those presiding chiefs of the lower world, so that they may be fully occupied with their own portions, and not attempt to draw sustenance from the side from which Israel obtained their portion. The same thing happens here below. When all the other nations receive their blessings, they are fully occupied with their own portions, and so do not come and meddle with Israel or covet the portion of their heritage. Israel for this reason cause blessings to flow to all those presiding chiefs, in order that they may be absorbed with their own portions and not meddle with that of Israel. And when the moon obtains her due fill of blessings, Israel come and draw sustenance from her all by themselves; and of this it is written, "on the eighth day there shall be to you a solemn gathering" (atsereth, Num. XXIX, 35). This "gathering" indicates the gathering of all the blessings from above, from which no other nation draws sustenance save Israel; hence "there shall be to you a gathering", to you, and not to the other nations and presiding chiefs. And for this reason Israel entreats Heaven to grant a plenitude of rain, so as to accord the nations their share of blessings, that they may be fully occupied therewith, and not meddle in the festivity of Israel, who imbibe the superior blessings. Concerning this day it is written, "My beloved is mine and I am his" (S. S. II, 16), and there is no third one with us. The following parable will make this clearer. A king once invited his favourite to a special feast on an appointed day, thus making known to him

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that he stood high in the favour of the king. The king, however, was apprehensive lest in the midst of the feast all the governors of his provinces might put in an appearance, sit down to table, and partake of the repast intended for his beloved friend. What did he do?

He first treated his governors and ministers to a repast of meat and vegetables. Afterwards he sat down with his favourite to that special banquet where all the finest delicacies of the world were spread before them; and whilst alone with the king the favourite laid before him all his petitions and requests, which the king granted. Thus the king enjoyed the company of his friend alone and undisturbed. So it is with Israel in their relation to the Holy One, blessed be He, and hence it is written, "the eighth day shall be to you a gathering".' Said R. Hiya and R. Jose: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, has led our footsteps in the right path. Happy those who occupy themselves with the Torah.' With these words they came up to him and embraced him. R. Jose applied to him the verse, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Is. LIV, 13).

When they came to a certain field, the stranger discoursed thus. 'In the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah it is written, "And the Lord (Tetragrammaton) caused to rain, etc." (Gen. XIX, 24), whereas throughout the narrative of the Flood the term Elohim (God) is used exclusively. What is the reason for this difference? We have been taught that the term V-Tetragrammaton (and the Lord), wherever written indicates the Deity presiding over his Court of Justice, whereas the term Elohim (God) is used when the Deity judges alone. Now the destruction of Sodom was limited to one locality, and did not involve the whole world, hence it was decreed in open court, as indicated by the term V-Tetragrammaton (and the Lord); whereas the Flood overwhelmed the whole world, and therefore had to be decreed by the Deity alone, in concealment, as it were; hence the term Elohim. (As for Noah and his companions, they were only saved through being carefully concealed from sight.) In this light we explain the verse "The Lord sat at the Flood" (Ps. XXIX, 10), that is, He sat as it were all by Himself, on the analogy of the expression "He shall sit alone" (Lev. XIII, 46). Now it is because Noah was completely hidden from sight that, after the world had suffered its doom and the wrath of the Deity had been appeased, we read AND GOD (ELOHIM) REMEMBERED NOAH, for Noah having been so long out of sight had to be specially brought to mind. From this passage we derive the mystical doctrine that the Holy One, blessed be He, is sometimes discoverable and sometimes undiscoverable. He is discoverable when presiding over the lower Court. He remains undiscoverable in the spot whence all blessings flow. Hence those possessions of a man which are hidden from sight are receptive of the heavenly blessing; whereas things which are exposed to view attract the notice of the accuser, and are subject to the influence of him who is named "Evil of eye". There is a deep mystery which connects all this with the supernal pattern.' R. Jose, with tears in his eyes, said: 'Happy is the generation in which R. Simeon flourishes, for it is through his merit that we have been privileged to hear so sublime a discourse as this.' R. Jose said further, 'God must have sent that man on this road to impart to us these ideas.' When they came to R. Simeon and repeated to him all they had heard, he said, 'Of a truth he spoke well.'

R. Eleazar, studying one day with his father, R. Simeon, asked him, 'Did the "End of all flesh" derive

nourishment from the sacrifices which Israel used to offer on the altar?' His father replied: 'All alike derived sustenance from them, both above and below. Consider this. The priests, the Levites, and the Israelites are called Adam (Man), through the unison of the holy liturgies which proceed from them. Whenever a sheep or a lamb, or any animal, was brought as an offering, it was required of those who brought it, before it was offered on the altar, to recite over it all sins and evil intentions and thoughts, and to make confession of them, and it is thus that the creature is designated a b'hemah (animal) throughout, in that it carries these sins and evil thoughts. As in the case of the Azazel (scapegoat) offering it is written, "And he shall confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, etc." (Lev. XVI, 21), So it is here: the one offering brought on the altar bears a twofold burden. Consequently each part goes to its fitting place, the one qua "man" and the other qua "beast", as we read, "Man and beast thou dost save, O Lord" (Ps. XXXVI, 7). Baked meal-offering or other meal-offerings are the means of invoking the Holy Spirit on the service of the priests, the song of the Levites, and the prayer of the Israelites; and from the smoke that rises up from the oil and the flour all the accusers replenish themselves,

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so that they are powerless to pursue the indictment which has been delivered into their hands. Thus we see that things have been so arranged in the mystery of faith that the adversary should have his share in the holy things, and that the requisite portion should ascend even to the Limitless.'

R. Simeon said: 'When praying, I raise my hand on high, that when my mind is concentrated on the highest, there is higher still that which can never be known or grasped, the starting-point that is absolutely concealed, that produced what it produced while remaining unknowable, and irradiated what it irradiated while remaining undisclosed. It is the desire of the upward-striving thought to pursue after this and to be illumined by it. In the process a certain fragment is detached, and from that fragment, through the pursuit of the upward-striving thought, which reaches and yet does not reach it, there is a certain illumination. The upward-striving thought is thus illumined by a light undisclosed and unknowable even to that thought. That unknowable light of Thought impinges on the light of the detached fragment which radiates from the unknowable and undisclosed, so that they are fused into one light, from which are formed nine Palaces (Hekaloth). These Palaces are neither lights nor spirits nor souls, neither is there anyone who can grasp them. The longing of the nine illuminations which are all centred in the Thought-the latter being indeed counted as one of them-is to pursue these Palaces at the time when they are stationed in the thought, though they are not (even then) grasped or known, nor are they attained by the highest effort of the mind or the thought. All the mysteries of faith are contained in those Palaces, and all those lights which proceed from the mystic supreme Thought are called EN SOF (Limitless). Up to this point the lights reach and yet do not reach: this is beyond the attainment of mind and thought. When Thought illumines, though from what

source is not known, it is clothed and enveloped in Binah (understanding), and then further lights appear and one is embraced with the other until all are intertwined. The symbolism of the sacrifices consists, then, in this. When the whole ascends one part is knit with the other and its elements shine through one another, so that all ascend and the thought is embraced in the limitless. The light from which the upward-striving thought is illumined is called En-Sof, and from it all radiation proceeds and on it is based the whole of existence. Happy the portion of the righteous in this world and in the world to come. In regard, then, to the "end of all flesh", just as there is unison above with joy (at the time of the sacrifice), so also below there is joy and appeasement. There is thus satisfaction both above and below, and the Mother of Israel watches lovingly over her children. Consider this. At every New Moon the "End of all flesh" is given a portion over and above that of the daily offering, so as to divert his attention from Israel, who are thus left entirely to themselves and in full freedom to commune with their King. This extra portion comes from the he-goat (sa'ir), being the portion of Esau, who is also called sa'ir, as it is written, "Behold Esau my brother is a hairy (sa'ir) man" (Gen. XXVII, 11). Esau thus has his portion and Israel their portion. Hence it is written, "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his own treasure" (Ps. CXXXV, 4). Consider this point. The whole desire of this "End of all flesh" is for flesh only, and the tendency of flesh is ever towards him; it is for this reason that he is called "End of all flesh". Such power, however, as he does obtain is only over the body and not over the soul. The soul ascends to her place, and the body is given over to its place, in the same way as in an offering the devotion of him who offers ascends to one place, and the flesh to another. Hence the righteous man is, of a truth, himself an offering of atonement. But he who is not righteous is disqualified as an offering, for the reason that he suffers from a blemish, and is therefore like the defective animals of which it is written, "they shall not be accepted for you" (Lev. XXII, 25). Hence it is that the righteous are an atonement and a sacrifice for the world.'

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[Note: The first 4 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

AND NOAH WAS SIX HUNDRED YEARS OLD. Why is Noah's age specified here? The reason is that if he had not reached this age, he would not yet have been qualified to enter the ark and become united with it. Hence, after the measure of the world's sins had been completed, God respited them until Noah, having lived to the age of six hundred years, reached his full development and attained the condition of "a man righteous and perfect". Then it was that he entered the ark, and reproduced the supernal pattern.

AND I, BEHOLD I DO BRING THE FLOOD OF WATERS. Note the repetition of the term "behold I" after "I". The explanation is as follows: Wherever the term ani (I) is used of the Deity, it signifies, as it were, the relation of a body to a soul which inspires it. For this reason it is figuratively called "the sign of the

covenant" in the passage "I (ani) behold (am) my covenant with thee" (Gen. XVII, 4), i.e. "I" who am manifest and in course of becoming known; "I" the throne to the Essence on high; "I" who exact vengeance from generation to generation. The word va'ani (and I) embodies male and female in conjunction; afterwards the male is noted separately, as being held in readiness to execute judgement, in the word "behold I" (hineni). I DO BRING THE FLOOD OF WATERS. If "flood", why also waters? The truth is that the term "flood" here indicates the angel of death, who was the chief agent of destruction, although he used the waters as his instrument. With reference to the word ani, our teachers have explained that the expression "I am (ani) the Lord" is equivalent to "I am faithful to recompense the righteous and to punish the wicked"; hence Scripture always uses the term ani (I) in recording God's promise to the righteous to reward them and His threat to the wicked to punish them in the world to come. TO DESTROY ALL FLESH: to wit, through the world's destroying angel, as already explained; the same that is referred to in the verse "And he will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you" (Ex. XII, 23). Hence "to destroy all flesh" means, from the side of "the end of all flesh". For as soon as the time of grace expired which God granted them till Noah should reach the age of six hundred years, then the moment arrived to "destroy all flesh".

R. Simeon discoursed on the text: I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world (Is. XXXVIII, 11). 'How obtuse,' he said, 'are the sons of men who do not know nor pay heed to the words of the Torah, but think only of worldly matters, so that the spirit of wisdom is forgotten of them. For when a man departs from this world, and goes to give an account to his Master of all his actions in this world while body and soul were still joined together, he sees many strange things on his way, and at length meets Adam, the first man, sitting at the gate of the Garden of Eden, ready to welcome with joy all those who have observed the commands of their Master. Round him are many righteous men, those who in this life have kept clear of the path to Gehinnom and followed the path to the Garden of Eden. It is these who are here called "inhabitants of the world". The word used for "world" here is not the usual holed, but hadel. The reason is that holed is akin to huldah (mole), a creature whose characteristic it is laboriously to heap up provision and leave it to it knows not whom. The term hodel, on the other hand, is derived from a root signifying "avoidance", and thus is a description of the righteous who avoid and keep far from the ways of Gehinnom and cling to those leading to the Garden of Eden. According to another interpretation, the expression "inhabitants of hodel" designates penitents who have resolutely kept clear of their former sins, and since Adam was the first penitent, he was given charge of all penitents, those who are called "sons of hodel" (avoidance), and he therefore sits at the gate of the Garden of Eden, welcoming with joy and gladness the righteous who take the path to the Garden of Eden. It says further in the same passage: "I will not see God". Naturally one cannot see God, but the expression is explained by the concluding words, "God in the land of

the living". When souls ascend to the place of the "bundle of life" (v. I Sam. XXV, 29), they feast their eyes on the beams of the "refulgent mirror" which radiates

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from the most sublime region. And were the soul not clothed in the resplendency of another (i.e. nonfleshly) garment, it would not be able to approach that effulgence. The esoteric doctrine is that in the same way as the soul has to be clothed in a bodily garment in order to exist in this world, so is she given an ethereal supernal garment wherewith to exist in the other world, and to be enabled to gaze at the effulgence of life radiating from that "land of the living". Hence it is that Moses was not able to draw near to the place of God and to fix his gaze on what was to be seen there until he was first enveloped in another garment, as we read: "And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount" (Ex. XXIV, 18), that is, he enveloped himself in the cloud, as in a garment, and then he "drew near into the thick darkness where God was" (Ex. XX, 18), and "was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (Ibid. XXIV, 18), and was able to see what he did see. In similar fashion the souls of the righteous in the other world clothe themselves in garments belonging to that world, so that they can endure to gaze on the light which is diffused in that "land of the living". This is what Hezekiah meant when he said "God, God in the land of the living" (Is. XXXVIII, 11). He was afraid that he would be found unworthy to gaze on that light because he had allowed the lifegiving stream to cease with him, through not begetting children. In his further words, "I shall behold Adam no more" (Ibid.), there is a reference to Adam the first man, as has already been explained. He spoke in this strain because the prophet had told him, "for thou shalt die and not live" (Ibid. 1), "die", that is, in this world, and "not live" in the other world. For he who does not beget children in this world is denied all the blissfulness we have mentioned, and he is not privileged to contemplate the glorious effulgence. If this was the case with Hezekiah, who came of pious ancestors, and was himself worthy, righteous and pious, how much more so must it be the case with one who has no such ancestral merit to support him, and has himself sinned before his Master? That garment of which we have spoken is the same which the companions call "the robe of the sages", with which they are clothed in the other world. Happy the portion of the righteous, for whom the Holy One, blessed be He, has treasured up blessings and delights in the other world! Of them it is written, "Eye hath not seen besides thee, O God, what thou shalt do for him that waiteth for thee" (Is. LXIV, 3).'

AND I, BEHOLD I, DO BRING THE FLOOD OF WATERS UPON THE EARTH. R. Judah discoursed on the text: These are the waters of strife, wherein the children of Israel strove with the Lord and he was sanctified in them (Num. XX, 13). He said: 'As this was not the only occasion when the children of Israel strove with the Lord, why is the epithet of "strife" attached to these waters in particular? The reason is that these waters gave added strength and confidence to the accusers. For there are sweet waters and bitter waters, clear waters and turbid waters, waters of peace and

waters of strife. These were waters of strife, because through them Israel drew upon themselves the unwelcome visitor through whom they became defiled; this is indicated in the word *vayiqadesh*.' Said R. Hizkiah: 'If this is so, we should have the plural *vayiqadeshu* (and they were defiled). The truth is that the singular refers not to the Israelites but to the moon, and the word *vayiqadesh* is not used here in a good sense.' R. Jose said: 'Woe to the wicked who will not repent of their sins before the Almighty while they are still in this world. For when a man repents of his sins and feels remorse for them, the Holy One, blessed be He, forgives them. But those who cling to their sins and refuse to repent of them will in the end descend to Gehinnom and never come up again. Thus because the generation of Noah were stubborn of heart and flaunted their sins openly and defiantly, the Holy One, blessed be He, punished them as here described.' Said R. Isaac: 'When a man sins in secret, if he repents, the Holy One, blessed be He, being merciful, relents and forgives him; but if not, He then publishes his sins before the world. We learn this from the treatment of the faithless wife (Sotah).[Tr. note: v. Numbers v.] Similarly here, the wicked were exterminated in sight of all. The manner of their death was as follows: scalding water spurted up from the abyss, and as it reached them it first burnt the skin from the flesh, and then the flesh from the bones; the bones then came asunder, no two remaining together, and thus they were completely blotted out.' R. Isaac said: 'The words "they were blotted out from the earth" is analogous to the expression "let them be blotted out of the book of the living" (Ps. LXIX, 29), thus indicating that they will not participate in the resurrection and will not rise in the Day of Judgement.'

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AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH THEE, R. Eleazar said: 'From this we learn that there is an establishment of the covenant on high co-ordinate with the establishment of the covenant here below. This we deduce from the expression "with thee".' R. Eleazar further said: 'We also learn from here that when there are righteous men in this world, the universe is more firmly established both above and below.' R. Simeon said: 'A recondite principle is here enshrined. As the desire of the male towards the female is intensified by jealousy, so is the desire of the Most High towards the Shekinah. Thus, when there is a righteous man in the world, the Shekinah attaches herself to him and never leaves him. This creates, as it were, jealousy on high, which provokes love towards her in the same way as the male is incited to love the female through jealousy; this is implied in the expression "And I will establish my covenant with thee", as much as to say: "Desire hath awakened through you." The same idea is contained in the words "but my covenant will I establish with Isaac" (Gen. XVII, 21). AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH THEE: in other words: "Thou shalt be the embodiment of my covenant in the world. and then: AND THOU SHALT COME INTO THE ARK. For had not Noah been righteous, he could not have entered the ark, as only the Righteous one (Zaddik) can become united with the ark, as has been explained.' R. Eleazar said: 'As long as men remain attached to that ark and do not loosen their hold of it,

there is no nation or language in the world that can harm them. Noah too kept fast hold of the covenant and observed it, and therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, preserved him; but all his contemporaries who did not keep the covenant were destroyed.' As has already been stated, the manner of their destruction corresponded exactly to the character of their crimes.

R. Judah studied regularly with R. Simeon. On one occasion they discussed the verse: And he repaired (lit. healed) the altar of the Lord that was thrown down (I Kings XVIII, 30). 'What', they asked, 'is meant by the term vayrappe (and he healed)?' 'The answer is this. In the days of Elijah, all Israel forsook the Holy One, blessed be He, and neglected the holy covenant. When Elijah became aware that the children of Israel had entirely neglected the covenant, he set himself to rectify the evil and to restore the covenant to its former vogue. Hence the expression, "And he healed the altar of the Lord that was thrown down", to wit, the established covenant that was utterly neglected. It is further written: "And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob" (this being the appropriate means of repairing the altar of the Lord), "unto whom the word of the Lord came saying, Israel shall be thy name" (Ibid. 31), implying that Israel was to be the name by which he could ascend on high and restore the covenant in its place. It is for this reason that Elijah said expressly, "for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant" (Ibid. XIX, 10), and, as a consequence, "thrown down thine altars" (Ibid.). Take note that as long as Israel observe the holy covenant, they thereby effect the stabilisation of the world above and below, as it is written: "If my covenant be not (observed) day and night, the ordinances of heaven and earth were as if I had not appointed them." (Jer. XXXIII, 25). The repairing, then, of the shattered altar was truly a healing, as it had for its purpose the reintegration of the spot to which faith attaches itself. Similarly with Phineas at the time when he was filled with zeal to punish the crime of Zimri: he also re-established the covenant in its place, and hence God said to him, "Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace" (Num. XXV, 12). This does not mean that the covenant was on account of Phineas, or that he was in conflict with the covenant, but that now it was firmly attached to its place. This is shown by the combination of the words "covenant," and "peace", as if to say, "Behold I give to him the peaceful confirmation of the covenant in its place", from which it had been torn by the transgressors. Hence, too, "and it shall be unto him and to his seed after him the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was jealous for his God".' (Ibid. 13). R. Simeon said: 'There is no sin in the world which so much provokes the anger of the Almighty as the sin of neglecting the covenant, as we read, "a sword that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant" (Lev. XXVI, 25). The proof is that in the generation of the Flood the measure of sin was not filled up until mankind became (sexually) perverted and destroyed their seed. And although they defrauded each other, as it is written,

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"And the earth was filled with violence", [Tr. note: lit. 'fraud', 'overreaching'.] and again "for the earth is filled

with violence through them", yet it was because "the earth was corrupt before God" that the doom was finally pronounced, "behold I will destroy (lit. corrupt) them". Thus they suffered measure for measure: they were doomed to corruption for having corrupted and perverted their ways. According to another view, it was the sin of violence which finally completed the measure of their guilt, as they used to overreach one another and were thus wicked both towards Heaven and towards their fellow men. For many are the guardians on high charged to lend ear to those who cry out for justice against their oppressors. Hence the words FOR THE EARTH IS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE THROUGH THEM are immediately followed by the words AND BEHOLD I WILL DESTROY THEM WITH THE EARTH. AND THE LORD SAID UNTO NOAH, COME THOU AND ALL THY HOUSE. Said R. Simeon: 'How is it that throughout this passage God is always designated Elohim save in this place, where we find the name Tetragrammaton, significant of the attribute of mercy? There is here an inner meaning which is at the same time a lesson. The lesson is that a woman should not admit a guest into her house without the consent of her husband. So here, when Noah wished to enter the ark, and to become united with her, it was not becoming for her to admit him before her Master gave his permission to enter and said: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Hence the name Tetragrammaton is used here, to designate what we call the husband of the ark. Similarly we learn that neither may the guest enter the house save with the consent of the husband, who is the master of the house, and hence it was only later that NOAH WENT IN. Note again the words: FOR THEE I HAVE SEEN RIGHTEOUS BEFORE ME IN THIS GENERATION. We learn from this the lesson that a man should not admit into his house any guest whom he suspects of wrong-doing, but only such a one as is above all suspicion in his eyes. It was in accordance with this principle that God said unto Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." We further learn that special permission must be obtained for the guest's household, as it is written: "Come thou and thy house".'

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Of David a psalm. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof (Ps. XXIV, 1). He said: 'We have been taught that the heading "Of David a psalm" in the Book of Psalms implies that David began to compose of himself and thereby induced the Holy Spirit to rest on him, whereas the heading "A psalm of David" implies the opposite, viz. that the Holy Spirit rested on him first, and under its inspiration he was moved to song. "The earth" here refers to the holy land of Israel, and by the words "and the fulness thereof" is meant the Shekinah, which is associated with fulness in the verses "for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (I Kings VIII, 2), and again, "and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Ex. XL, 35). This last passage means literally "the glory of the Lord was full" (male), i.e. full to overflowing, full from all sides both from the sun and the moon like a storehouse filled with all kinds of good things. Similar is the sense of the words "and the fulness thereof" here. The words "the world and they that dwell therein" refer to the rest of the world. According to another view, the words "the earth and the



fulness thereof" refer to the supernal Holy Land in which is the delight of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the words "the fulness thereof" refer to the souls of the righteous who fill this earth. What is meant by "the righteous filling the earth" is this. When the righteous multiply in the world, then the earth is truly productive and filled with goodness. But when the wicked multiply in the world, then it may be said that "the waters cease from the sea, and the river is drained dry" (Job XIV, 11), the "sea" being the Holy Land, which is watered by the supernal stream.'

R. Judah further said: 'When the sinners were destroyed in the time of Noah, God was very anxious for the preservation of the world, but could see no one who might save it from His wrath; for the whole efforts of Noah were required to save himself and to repopulate the world. So it is written: FOR THEE HAVE I SEEN RIGHTEOUS BEFORE ME IN THIS GENERATION, i.e. he was righteous only by comparison with his contemporaries.' R. Jose said:

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'The words "in this generation" are a tribute to Noah, as much as to say, surrounded as he was by that wicked generation, he yet remained as righteous and perfect a man as if he had lived in the generation of Moses. But he could not save the world, for the reason that there were not to be found ten righteous men in it (similarly we read of Sodom, "peradventure ten shall be found there", Gen. XVIII, 32), but only Noah and his three sons with their womenfolk.' R. Eleazar asked R. Simeon, his father: 'We have been taught that when the world becomes full of sin and is doomed to destruction, woe is then to the righteous man who is found in it, for he is first made answerable for its sins. How, then, was Noah able to escape the general doom?' His father replied: 'It has already been said that the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to people the world anew through him when he should issue from the ark. And further, the general doom could not reach him because he was securely stored away in the ark and concealed from sight, thus fulfilling the verse, "Seek righteousness, seek humility, it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (Zeph. II, 3). Because Noah sought righteousness, he was permitted to enter the ark, and thus "was hid in the day of the Lord's anger", and was placed beyond the reach of the Adversary.' The word *vayimahu* (and they were blotted out) contains a hint to the "saints of the Most High" [Tr. note: v. Daniel VII, 18.] of the secret power of the sacred letters of the alphabet, and their destructive potency when used in the reverse order.

R. Isaac expounded here the verse: He who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, that divided the water before him to make himself an everlasting name (Is. LXIII, 12). 'In these words', he said, 'is a reference to the merit of Abraham, which was the "right hand" and the "glory" of Moses and divided the water before him, in order that he might "make himself an everlasting name". Observe the difference between Moses and other men. When God said to Moses, "now therefore let me alone... and I will make of thee a great nation, etc." (Ex. XXXII, 10), Moses said immediately, "Shall I abandon Israel for my own

advantage? The world will say that I killed Israel and did to them as Noah did to his generation. For when God bade Noah save himself and his household in the ark from the universal destruction at the time of the Flood, he did not intercede on behalf of his generation, but let them perish." It is for this reason that the waters of the Flood are named after him, as it is written, "for this is as the waters of Noah unto me" (Is. LIV, 9). Moses thus said: "Everyone will think that I killed them because the Lord promised to make me a great nation. It is therefore better that I should die and that Israel should not be destroyed." Immediately, therefore, he besought mercy for his people, and mercy was indeed vouchsafed to them.' R. Isaac said further: 'How come Moses to begin his intercession with the words, "Why, O Lord, doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people?" (Ex. XXXII, 11) How could Moses ask such a question, knowing as he did that they had worshipped a strange god, as we read "they have made them a molten calf and have worshipped it, etc." (Ibid. 8)? In truth we are taught here that when endeavouring to appease a man who is angry with his neighbour for an offence committed against him, one should not magnify the offence, but, on the contrary, should seek to minimise it: whereas subsequently, when speaking to the offending person himself, one should emphasise the enormity of the offence, as Moses did when he said to Israel, "Ye have sinned a great sin" (Ibid. 30). Moses went so far in his intercession as to offer his own life, as it is written, "and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ibid. 32), with the result that the Holy One, blessed be He, forgave them, as it is written, "and the Lord repented of the evil" (Ibid. 14). But Noah did not do so, but was intent on saving himself only, leaving the world to its fate. Thus, whenever the world is called to strict account, the Holy One, blessed be He, says, "Alas that there is no one to be found like Moses, as it is written, "and his people remember... the days of Moses; where is he that brought us up out of the sea, etc.?" (Is. LXIII, 11). Moses is called "he that brought them up out of the sea" because their deliverance at that time was due to his prayer, as we read, "and the Lord said to Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me?" (Ex. XIV, 15). So, too, the words which follow, "where is he that put his holy spirit in the midst of them?" refer to Moses who planted

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the Shekinah in the midst of Israel. So, too, the words, "Who led them through the deeps", when the waters were cleft, and they went through the deeps on dry land. The whole achievement is ascribed to Moses because he risked his life for Israel.'

Said R. Judah: 'Although Noah was a righteous man, he was not so pious that God should think fit to save the world for his sake. Observe that Moses pleaded not his own merit, but that of the ancient patriarchs. Noah, however, did not possess this resource. Nevertheless, after God had said to him "and I will establish my covenant with thee", he should have entreated mercy for his fellow men, and should then have offered up the sacrifice which he brought later, in order to appease God's anger against the world.' Said R. Judah: 'What could he do? He was in fear for his own life, lest he should perish along with the wicked,



below. Their punishment was thus the same as that in Gehinnom, which consists of fire and water, and it continued until they were utterly destroyed. Meanwhile Noah was hidden in the ark, concealed from sight, so that the destroyer could not come near him, while the ark floated on the face of the waters, as we read: AND THEY BORE UP THE ARK, AND IT WAS LIFTED ABOVE THE EARTH. For forty days they suffered punishment, as it is written, AND THE FLOOD WAS FORTY DAYS UPON THE EARTH, and for the rest of the time they were gradually being exterminated, as it is written, AND THEY WERE BLOTTED OUT FROM THE EARTH. Woe to those sinners, since they will not rise from the dead on the day of the last judgement. This is indicated by the expression "and they were blotted out", which contains the same idea as the verse "Thou hast blotted out their name for ever and ever" (Ps. IX, 6).'

AND THEY BORE UP THE ARK, AND IT WAS LIFTED UP ABOVE THE EARTH. R. Abba connected this text with the verse: Be thou raised above the heavens, O Elohim, thy glory be above all the earth (Ps. LVII, 6). 'Woe,' he said, 'to the sinners who daily provoke their Master, and through their sins repel the Shekinah and cause it to disappear from the world, wherefore the Scripture says: "Be thou raised above the heavens, O Elohim" (the Shekinah being called Elohim). So here, the words, "and they bore up the ark" indicate that they thrust her forth, and the words, "it was lifted up above the earth", that she found no more rest in the world, and so departed altogether from it. And in the absence of the Shekinah there is no one to take thought for the world, with the result that divine justice is exercised upon it with rigour. But when the wicked are blotted out and removed from the world, the Shekinah again takes up her abode therein.' R. Jose put to R. Abba the question: 'Why, after the sinners in the land of Israel were wiped out, did the Shekinah not return to her former habitation?' R. Abba replied: 'It is because the remnant of the righteous did not remain there, for wherever these went the Shekinah descended and made

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her habitation with them. We thus see that in a strange land she does not separate from them; how much more would she cling to them had they remained in the Holy Land! All sins of mankind repel the Shekinah, particularly the sin of him who corrupts his way upon the earth. Therefore such a one will not see the face of the Shekinah, and will not gain entrance to the celestial Palace. For when the day comes on which the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise the dead to life, He will physically re-create all those dead who have been buried in strange lands. For if but one bone of them is left in the earth, this will be like the lump of leaven which causes the dough to rise, and on it the Holy One, blessed be He, will build up the whole body. But God will not restore their souls [Tr. note: The neshamah (v. pp. 203, 278).] to them save in the land of Israel, as it is written, "Behold I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel" (to which they will roll through subterranean passages), and then "I will put my spirit in you and you shall live" (Ezek. XXXVII, 12,

14). We see thus that only in the land of Israel will souls be provided for the resurrected. But those will be excluded who defile themselves and defile the earth, and of them it is written, "and they were blotted out of the earth". The word "earth" we take to mean here "the land of the living" (although some of the ancient sages question this), and the whole expression is analogous to the verse, "let them be

blotted out of the book of the living" (Ps. LXIX, 29).'

R. Simeon said to him: 'Undoubtedly they will have no portion in the world to come, since the expression "and they were blotted out of the earth" is the exact opposite of the expression "they shall inherit the land for ever" (Is. LX, 21); but they will be called up for judgement, as it is with reference to them that the Scripture says, "and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence" (Dan. XII, 2).'

AND HE BLOTTED OUT EVERY (eth-kol) LIVING SUBSTANCE WHICH WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. Said R. Abba: 'The particle eth signifies the inclusion of all those higher chieftains who control and superintend the earth: these are "the substance which was upon the face of the earth". For whenever the Holy One, blessed be He, executes judgement on the earth, those higher chieftains are brought to justice first, and only in the next place those who abide beneath the shelter of their wings. This is illustrated in the passage, "the Lord will punish the host of the high heavens on high", and then "and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Is. XXIV, 21). The punishment of these chieftains is, to be driven through burning fire, as it is written, "for the Lord thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God" (Deut. IV, 24); that is, fire consuming fire. The "living substance" of the upper regions were thus passed through fire, and those under their control through water; and so, first, HE BLOTTED OUT EVERY LIVING SUBSTANCE WHICH WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE GROUND, and then, BOTH MAN AND CATTLE AND FOWL OF THE HEAVEN, AND THEY WERE BLOTTED OUT FROM THE EARTH-to wit, all those beneath. AND NOAH ONLY WAS LEFT; the particle ach (only) shows that absolutely nothing was left save what was in the ark'. R. Jose said: 'It indicates that even Noah was not left intact, as he was injured by a blow from a lion, as elsewhere explained.'

AND GOD REMEMBERED NOAH AND EVERY LIVING THING AND ALL THE CATTLE THAT WERE WITH HIM IN THE ARK. R. Hiya quoted in this connection the verse: A prudent man seeth evil and hideth himself (Prov. XXII, 3) 'This verse,' he said, 'refers to Noah, who went into the ark and hid himself there, not, however, before the waters forced him in. It has already been said that before he entered the ark he caught sight of the angel of death going among the people and encircling them. As soon as he espied him, he went into the ark and hid himself there. Thus, "the prudent man saw evil and hid himself", i.e. Noah saw the angel of death and hid himself from him, going into the ark, as the Scripture says, "because of the waters of the flood".' R. Jose said that the reference of the verse is to what has been said above, viz. that when death is raging in the world the prudent man goes into hiding and does not venture abroad, so as not to be

seen by the destroying angel, who, once he has obtained leave, will destroy whomsoever he meets at large, and whoever passes before him in the open, as the latter part of the verse expresses it, "but the thoughtless pass on and are punished". According to another interpretation, the word abroo (pass on) means here "transgress", i.e. they transgress the precept of self-preservation and are therefore punished. According to yet another interpretation, while the first half of the verse refers to Noah, the second half refers to his contemporaries. When he had remained a sufficient time under cover,

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the Scripture says that GOD REMEMBERED NOAH. Said R. Simeon: Observe that all the time that judgement was being executed there was no remembering, but only after the chastisement had been completed and the wicked had been exterminated do we find mention of remembering. For as long as judgement hangs over the worlds there is no communion of man with God, and the destroying angel is rampant. But as soon as judgement has run its course and wrath has been allayed, everything returns to its previous state. Hence we read "and God remembered Noah", remembrance being centred in him since he was entitled "righteous".'

It is written : [Tr. note: Here, apparently, there should be a text-heading: AND GOD MADE A WIND PASS OVER EARTH, AND THE WATERS WERE ASSUAGED] Thou rulest the proud swelling of the sea, when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them (Ps. LXXXIX, 10). When

the stormy waves of the sea mount on high, and beneath them yawn the chasms of the deep, the Holy One, blessed be He, sends down a thread from the "right side" which in some mysterious way restrains the mounting waves and calms the rage of the sea. How is it that when Jonah was cast into the sea, and had been swallowed by a fish, his soul did not at once leave his body? The reason is that the Holy One, blessed be He, has dominion over the swelling of the sea, which is a certain thread from the "left" that causes the sea to heave, and rises with it. And if not for the thread of the "right side" it would never be removed, for as soon as this thread descends into the sea, and is fairly grasped by it, then the waves of the sea are stirred up, and begin to roar for prey, until the Holy One, blessed be He, thrusts them back to their own place, as it says, "when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them". (According to another interpretation, the term teshabhem (thou stillest them), is related to the word shabah (praise), and signifies here, "thou praisest them", because they mount to the top in their eagerness to see the outer world. The lesson to be learnt from this is that he who manifests an eagerness to examine things and to acquire new knowledge, although he lacks talent, merits praise and receives praise from all around him.) R. Judah said: 'While Noah was in the Ark, he was apprehensive lest God should never more remember him. He was, however, wrong, for after judgement had been executed, and the wicked had perished from the world, the Scripture tells us that GOD REMEMBERED NOAH. Said R. Eleazar: When

the world is being called to account, it is not advisable that a man should have his name mentioned on high, for the mention of his name will be a reminder of his sins, and will cause him to be brought under scrutiny. This we learn from the words of the Shunammite. It was on New Year's day, when God sits in judgement on the world, that Elisha asked her, "Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king?" (II Kings IV, 13), i.e. to the Holy One, blessed be He, for on that day He is, in a special sense, King, Holy King, King of Judgement. She answered, "I dwell among my own people" (Ibid.), as much as to say, "I do not wish to be remembered and to have attention drawn to me, save among my own people." He who keeps himself in the midst of his own people does not draw attention upon himself, and so escapes criticism. In the same way, as long as the heavenly wrath was raging in the world, Noah was not remembered; but as soon as judgement had been executed, then, as we read, "God remembered Noah".'

R. Hizkiah was going from Cappadocia to Lud, when R. Yesa met him. Said the latter to him, 'I am surprised at your walking all alone, seeing that we have been taught that no man should proceed on a journey unaccompanied.' R. Hizkiah replied, 'There is a youth accompanying me, and he is following on.' Said R. Yesa, 'I am still more surprised to find that you have for a companion one with whom you could not discuss points of the Torah, since we have been taught that he who makes a journey unaccompanied by discussions on; the Torah exposes himself to danger.' R. Hizkiah replied, 'It is certainly so.' Meanwhile the youth came up with them. Said R. Yesa to him, 'My son, where do you come from?' The lad answered, 'From the town of Lud, and when I heard that this learned man was proceeding thither, I offered him my service and company.' 'My son,' said R. Yesa, 'do you know any Torah-exposition?' 'I do,' was the reply, 'as my father used to teach me the section of the sacrifices, and I also used to listen attentively to the expositions he gave to my elder brother.' At the invitation of R. Yesa, he then commenced to discourse as follows.

AND NOAH BUILDED AN ALTAR UNTO THE LORD; AND TOOK OF EVERY CLEAN BEAST, AND OF EVERY CLEAN FOWL, AND OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS ON THE ALTAR. The altar that Noah made was the very same on which Adam, the first man, offered up sacrifice. Why did Noah bring burnt offerings,

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seeing that a burnt offering is brought only to counteract wrongful thoughts? Was, then, Noah guilty of such? In truth, Noah did harbour wrongful thoughts, since he said to himself, "Behold, the Holy One, blessed be He, has decreed the destruction of the world, and who knows but that through my being saved I have used up all the merit which I had accumulated?" He therefore hastened to build an altar unto the Lord. The altar was the very same on which Adam, the first man, offered up sacrifice, but as the wicked had wrenched it from its place, Noah had to rebuild it. AND OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS. It is written olath (burnt offering) defectively, which would indicate only one. This is explained by reference to the verse, "it is a

burnt offering, a fire offering for sweet savour to the Lord" (Lev. I, 17). A burnt offering has to be male, not female, as it says: "he shall offer it a male, without blemish" (Lev. I, 3). The word "fire offering" (isheh) seems to be superfluous, as we know there was fire on the altar. We should therefore read isha (lit. woman), and we learn from this that the female element must not be parted from the male, which is offered through it, so that the two are united. It was right for Noah to bring a burnt offering, since God had set him in the place of a male in relation to the ark. "The burnt offering is isheh", to wit, esh he (fire of he), indicating that the Left is joined with the Female (since the female is from the left and the male from the right) through the clinging of one to the other. Hence the female is called isheh, indicating the bond of love in which the Left is joined to her, so as to mount with her on high and be united with her there. Hence the words "a burnt offering, a fire offering", indicate the bond of the male and female.

AND THE LORD SMELLED THE SAVOUR OF APPEASEMENT. It is also written "a fire offering, a savour of appeasement" (Lev. I, 13). With reference to the term "fire offering" we have heard the following. Fire and smoke are joined together, there being no smoke without fire, as it is written: "Now Mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire" (Ex. XIX, 18). It is in this way. Fire, being very tenuous, issues from an inmost part, and then takes hold of some substance outside which is less tenuous, and by the junction of the two smoke is engendered: the reason being that fire has taken hold of something catching. An example is the warm breath that issues from the nostrils. Hence it is written, "They shall put incense in thy nose" (Deut. XXXIII, 10), i.e. they shall act so as to cause the fire to recede to its place, since through the smell of the incense the nose contracts inwardly, till the whole odour is drawn in and brought near to the thought, producing a pleasing sensation. Hence there results "a savour of appeasement", when the anger is appeased and calm is restored, since the smoke has been gathered in and condensed in the fire, and the fire has seized the smoke and both have been drawn further and further back until the anger is assuaged and a reunion is formed, called "appeasement": an appeasement of the spirit, a universal rejoicing, a radiance of lamps, a brightening of faces, and thus, AND THE LORD SMELT THE SAVOUR OF APPEASEMENT as one who smells and draws in the savour to the innermost spot.'

R. Yesa then approached the lad and kissed him, saying, 'To think that all these precious goods were in thy possession and I was unaware of it.' He further said, 'I will go out of my way to remain in thy company.' Whilst they proceeded R. Hizkiah said, 'On this road we are accompanied by the Shekinah. Let us, then, go forward confidently, since no harm can befall us on the way.' He then took hold of the lad's hand and they went along. They then said to him, 'Repeat to us one of those Scriptural expositions you have heard from your father.' The lad then began a discourse on the text: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth (S. S. I, 2). 'This,' he said, 'is a more burning desire, in which affection issues from the mouth with a fire unlike that which issues from the nostrils. For when mouth is

joined with mouth to kiss, fire issues from the strength of affection, accompanied by radiance of the countenance, by rejoicing on both sides and by gladsome union. "For thy love is better than wine" (Ibid.), to wit, than that wine which exhilarates and brightens the countenance, which makes the eyes sparkle and induces good feeling; not the wine that intoxicates, induces rage, beclouds the countenance, and inflames the eyes, the wine of rage. It is because this wine is exhilarating and cheering and induces love and affection that a libation of it is offered every day on the altar, of just such a quantity

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as would induce in him who drinks it a cheerful mood and a spirit of contentment, as it is written, "And the drink offering thereof shall be a fourth part of a hin" (Num. XXVIII, 7). "For thy love is better than wine" alludes thus to the wine that induces love and desire. And as here below, so is love awakened on high. For there are two lamps, and when the light of the one on high is extinguished, by the smoke that rises from the one below it is relit.' Said R. Hizkiah: 'Assuredly it is so, the lower and the upper world are interdependent; and since the destruction of the Temple there are no blessings, either on high or below, which proves their interdependence.' R. Jose said: 'Not only are there no blessings, but there are everywhere curses, as the supply of sustenance is now drawn from the "sinister side". Why so? Because Israel do not dwell now in the land, and thus do not perform the holy service which is required for lighting the (celestial) lamps and so obtaining blessings. Hence they are to be found neither on high nor here below, and the world is out of gear.'

I WILL NOT AGAIN CURSE THE GROUND ANY MORE FOR MAN'S SAKE. R. Hizkiah asked, 'What does this verse mean?' R. Yesa replied: 'I have heard from R. Simeon the following. So long as the supernal fire is gathering force, the smoke, which is the execution of judgement here below, rages more and more fiercely and is more and more destructive; for once the fire starts, there is no keeping it back until the judgement has been fully executed. But when punishment below is not intensified by punishment from above, it burns itself out without bringing the world to ruin. Hence it is written, lo osif (I will not add) as much as to say, "I will not lend any additional force and volume to the punishment below".'

Said the young lad, 'I have heard that the expression "for man's sake" alludes to the utterance, "cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. III, 17). For at the time when the earth was cursed for the sin of Adam, full dominion over her was granted to that evil serpent, the destroyer and exterminator of the world and its inhabitants. From the day, however, that Noah offered up sacrifices, and the Holy One, blessed be He, smelt their sweet savour, the earth was liberated from the dominion of the serpent and threw off his defilement. It is for this same reason that Israel bring offerings, so as to keep bright the countenance of the earth.' Said R. Hizkiah, 'This is correct, but nevertheless this liberation remained in suspense until Israel stood at Mount Sinai.' R. Yesa said: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, had already diminished the moon

and allowed the serpent to obtain sway, but on account of the sin of Adam she was actually cursed in order that the whole world might be cursed. But on that day the earth was freed of that curse, whilst the moon remained in her diminished state, save during the time when offerings are brought and Israel dwell in their own land.' R. Yesa asked the child, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'Abba'. He said to him, 'Abba (=father, chief) you shall be in everything, in wisdom and in years.' He further applied to him the verse. "Thy father and thy mother will be glad, and she that bore thee will rejoice" (Prov. XXIII, 25). R. Hizkiah said: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, will one day sweep away the unclean spirit, as it is written, "And the unclean spirit I will cause to pass out of the land" (Zech. XIII, 2), and further, "He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it" (Is. XXV, 8). The Holy One, blessed be He, will also one day restore the moon to its full light, and dissipate the darkness brought on her by the evil serpent, as it is written, "And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of the seven days" (Ibid. XXX, 26), the reference here being to the primordial light which the Holy One, blessed be He, stored away during the period of the creation.'

AND GOD (Elohim) BLESSED NOAH AND HIS SONS, AND SAID UNTO THEM: BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY, ETC. R. Abba began his discourse with the text: The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and no pain shall be added thereto (Prov. X, 22). ' "The blessing of the Lord" is bound up with the Shekinah, as she is in charge of the blessings of the world, and from her flow blessings for all. Observe that at first (Gen. VII, 1) it was written, AND TETRAGRAMMATON SAID TO NOAH, COME THOU AND ALL THY HOUSE INTO THE ARK, which conforms with what was said before, that the master of the house gave him permission to enter; whereas afterwards it was the wife who speeded him out of the ark, as it is written, AND ELOHIM (=Shekinah) SPOKE UNTO NOAH, SAYING: GO FORTH FROM THE ARK. From here we learn that it is the master

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of the house that takes in the guest and it is the wife that speeds him forth, but that she may not herself bid him enter. We learn further from here that it is proper for the guest on departing to leave presents for the mistress of the house, as she is always in the house and supervises it. It is fitting to give her those presents, not in her own hand directly, but through the agency of her husband, so as to enhance their mutual affection. This we deduce from the text: AND HE TOOK OF EVERY CLEAN BEAST AND HE OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS ON THE ALTAR. These were the presents for her which he gave, as it were, into the hands of the husband in order to enhance his love for his consort. Noah then received a blessing, as it is written, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, etc." All this is illustrated by the text, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich." As for the words "and no pain shall be added thereto", these allude to the pain mentioned in

the passage "in pain shalt thou eat of it" (Gen. III, 17), that is, in pain and perturbation, with sad and gloomy looks, since the moon was darkened, and so blessings were no more. Again "in pain" refers to the side of the impure spirit who kept back blessings from the world. But now "No pain will be added thereto"; the word "add" (yosif) here shows the inner meaning of the words, "I will not again (osif, lit. add) curse the earth any more."

AND THE FEAR OF YOU AND THE DREAD OF YOU SHALL BE UPON EVERY BEAST OF THE EARTH: as much as to say, "Henceforward you will assume the facial impress of man"; for up to that time their facial impress was not that of human beings. For at first: "in the image of God created he him" (Gen. I, 27), also "in the likeness of God made he him" (Ibid. V, 1); but when they sinned, their facial impress was changed from the supernal prototype, and through this transformation they became afraid of the beasts of the field. Whereas formerly all the creatures of the world, when looking up towards man, encountered the supernal sacred impress and thus were filled with fear and trembling, now after they sinned their appearances were transformed, and it was men who feared and dreaded the rest of the animal world. Thus it is that all who are mindful of their Master, who keep themselves from sin and do not transgress the precepts of the Torah, retain their visage unaltered from the supernal prototype, and hence all the creatures of the world fear them and tremble before them. But when men transgress the precepts of the Torah, their visages change, and they fear the other creatures and tremble before them; the beasts of the field obtain dominion over men because they do not see any more in them the true supernal image. Hence, now that the world was reinstated in its former position, He bestowed on them His blessing and granted them dominion over all the creatures, as we read: AND UPON ALL THE FISHES OF THE SEA: INTO YOUR HAND ARE THEY DELIVERED; that is, all, even to the fishes of the sea.' R. Hiya said: ' It is written "into your hand were they delivered" (nithanu), i.e. originally, for when the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He delivered all in man's hand, as it is written, "and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, etc." (Gen. I, 28).' In reference to the words "And God blessed Noah", R. Hizkiah discoursed on the text: Of David, Maskil. Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (Ps. XXXII, 1). He said: 'This verse contains deep mysteries of wisdom. For we have been taught that David, in offering praise to the Holy One, blessed be He, made use of ten varieties of praise, one of which was Maskil, which is one of the ten grades (of illumination), and the word here implies that David qualified himself to attain that grade. The verse proceeds: "Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." The words nesui pesha mean literally "whose transgression is uplifted". That is to say, when the Holy One, blessed be He, weighs the sins and the merits of men in the balance, happy then is he whose sins rise and mount in the one scale whilst his merits sink down the other. "Whose sin is covered": i.e. when the world is being chastised, that man will be concealed so that the destroyer will have no power over him, in the same way that Noah was concealed by the Holy One, blessed be He, so that he escaped the consequences that Adam's sin drew upon

the world. For that sin transferred dominion from man to the other creatures, making him fear them, and thus reversing the true order of things. Therefore when Noah went forth from the ark, the Holy One, blessed be He, blessed him, as it is written, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, etc."

AND YOU, BE YE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY. The women do not seem to have been included in this blessing, as it was only addressed to Noah and his sons. R. Simeon, however, said that the term *ve-athem* (and you) includes both male

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and female. And further, the particle *eth* preceding "his sons" signifies the inclusion of their spouses. It is because the women were included that God said: "Do you be fruitful and multiply", to propagate your kind. On this occasion the Holy One, blessed be He, gave them seven precepts of the Torah to them and to all their successors, until Israel stood at Mount Sinai, when they received all the precepts of the Torah in one code.'

AND GOD SAID TO NOAH... THIS IS THE TOKEN OF THE COVENANT WHICH I MAKE BETWEEN ME AND YOU... I HAVE SET MY RAINBOW IN THE CLOUD. The past tense "I have set" shows that the bow had already been there. In connection with this passage R. Simeon discoursed on the verse: And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone (Ezek. I, 26). 'Before this verse,' he said, 'we find the words, "And when they went I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty" (Ibid. 24). These are the four sacred and mighty beings called Hayyoth (animals), by whom the firmament is upheld, and whose wings are usually joined together to cover their bodies. When, however, they spread out their wings, a volume of sound swells forth, and they break out into songs of praise, "as the voice of the Almighty", which never becomes silent, as it is written, "so that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent" (Ps. XXX, 13). The tenour of their praises is, "The Lord hath made known his salvation, his righteousness hath he revealed in the sight of the nations" (Ps. XCVIII, 2). It says further: "A noise of tumult like the noise of a host" (Ezek. I, 24), i.e. like the sound of the holy camps when all the supernal armies assemble on high. What is it they declaim? "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Is. VI, 3). They turn to the south and say "holy", they turn to the north and say "holy", they turn to the east and say "holy", they turn to the west and say "blessed". And that firmament rests upon their heads, and in whatever direction it turns, their faces turn also. They turn their faces to the four cardinal points, and all revolve in a circle. The firmament is imprinted, at the four corners of a square, with four figures, of a lion, an eagle, an ox, and a man; and the face of a man is traced in all of them, so that the face of Lion is of Man, the face of Eagle is of Man, and the face of Ox is of Man, all being comprehended in him. Hence it is written: "As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man" (Ezek. I, 10). Further, the firmament with its enclosed square contains the gamut of all the colours. Outstanding are four colours, each engraved

with four translucent signs, both higher and lower. These when decomposed become twelve. They are green, red, white, and sapphire, which is made up of all these colours. Hence it is written, "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ibid. I, 28): containing, that is to say, all shades of all colours. The same is referred to in the text I HAVE SET MY BOW IN THE CLOUD. The bow here has a parallel in the text, "But his bow abode firm" (Gen. XLIX, 24), i.e. the covenant of Joseph, because he was a righteous man, had for its symbol the bow, since the bow is linked with the covenant, and the covenant and the righteous are integral in one another. And because Noah was righteous, the sign of his covenant was the bow. (The word *vayophozu*, mentioned in connection with Joseph, is akin to the term *paz* (fine gold) in the passage, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold" (Ps. XIX, 11), and it means that his arms shone with the lustre of the most desirable substance, they shone with the light supernal, since he had observed the covenant; hence he is named "Joseph the righteous".) And the rainbow is therefore called "covenant" because they embrace one another. Like the firmament it is a supernal resplendent glory, a sight of all sights, resembling the hidden one (the Shekinah), containing colours undisclosed and unrevealable. Hence it is not permitted to gaze at the rainbow when it appears in the heavens, as that would be disrespectful to the Shekinah, the hues of the rainbow here below being a replica of the vision of the supernal splendour, which is not for man's gaze. Hence when the earth saw the rainbow as a holy covenant, it was once more firmly established, and therefore God said, AND IT SHALL BE FOR A TOKEN OF A COVENANT BETWEEN GOD, ETC. The three primary colours and the one compounded of them, which we mentioned before, are all one symbol, and they all show themselves in the cloud. "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone" (Ezek. I, 26). This alludes to the "foundation stone" (*eben shethiah*), which is the central point of the universe and on which stands the Holy of Holies. "The likeness of a throne", i.e. the supernal holy throne, possessing four supports, and which is symbolic of the Oral Law. "And upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above" (Ibid.); this symbolises the Written Law. From here we learn that copies of the Written Law should rest

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on copies of the Oral Law (and not vice versa), because the latter is the throne to the former. "As the appearance of a man" refers to the image of Jacob, who sits on it.'

R. Judah one night, whilst staying at an inn in Matha-Mehasia, rose at midnight to study the Torah. At the time there happened to be there a certain Judean traveller who had with him two sacks of clothes. R. Judah began to expound the verse, "And this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house" (Gen. XXVIII, 22). 'That stone', he said, 'was the

foundation stone out of which the world evolved, and on which the Temple was built.' The Judean raised his head and said, 'How is this possible? This foundation stone was created before the world, to be the point from which the world evolved, and yet you say that it is referred to in the verse, "and this stone which I have set up for a pillar", which indicates that Jacob put it there, this being the same stone of which it is said, "and he took the stone that he had put under his head" (Ibid. 18). A further difficulty is that Jacob was in Bethel, whereas the foundation stone is in Jerusalem.' R. Judah, without turning his head, recited the verse, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos IV, 12), and also "Be attentive and hearken, O Israel" (Deut. XXVII, 9). 'We learn from here, he said, 'that the study of the Torah must be approached with proper preparation, not only of the mind but also of the body.' The Judean then arose and put on his garments, and seating himself beside R. Judah, said, 'Happy are ye righteous who give yourselves up to the study of the Torah day and night.' Said R. Judah to him, 'Now that you have properly attired yourself, say what you have to say, so that we may join together, as the study of the Torah requires a seemly garb as well as an attentive mind. Otherwise I could just as well lie in my bed and meditate. But we have been taught that even a single person who sits and studies the Torah has for his companion the Shekinah; and how could the Shekinah be here whilst I am in bed? Furthermore, the words of the Torah must be clearly articulated. Moreover, when a man gets up to study at midnight, at the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, comes to disport Himself with the righteous in the Garden of Eden, He and all the righteous in the Garden are listening to the words that issue from his mouth. Since that is so, that the Holy One, blessed be He, and all the righteous feel delight in listening to the words of the Torah at this time, should I remain lying in bed?' He then said to him, 'Now say what you have to say.'

The Judean then said, 'Regarding your remark that Jacob's stone was the foundation stone, I have asked you, first, how can that be, seeing that the foundation stone preceded the creation of the world, and was the one from which the world evolved, whereas Jacob's stone was put by him in its place, as it is written, "and the stone which I have put", also, "And he took the stone that he had put under his head." And secondly, how can the two be identified, seeing that Jacob was in Bethel and that the stone was in Jerusalem?'

R. Judah answered, 'The whole land of Israel was folded up beneath him, so that that stone was underneath him.' The Judean repeated his question, quoting again the expressions 'that he put'-'the stone which I had put'. Said R. Judah to him, 'If you know a better answer, say it.' The Judean then discoursed as follows.

'It is written, As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness (Ps. XVII, 15). King David felt great affection and attachment for this stone: it was of it that he said, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the corner stone" (Ibid. CXVIII, 22). And whenever he desired to gaze at the reflection of the glory of his Master, he first took that stone in his hand

and then he entered, as whoever wishes to appear before his Master can only do so through that stone, as it is written, "Herewith shall Aaron come into the holy place" (Lev. XVI, 3). It was David's boast that "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness", and he exerted himself in every way to appear before Him on high in proper guise by means of that stone. Now, Abraham instituted morning prayer and taught the world the character of his Master, and made that hour a propitious one for prayer. Isaac instituted afternoon prayer (minhah) and taught the world that there is a supreme Judge who can either pardon or condemn the world. Jacob instituted evening prayer. And it was in reference to this prayer, which he instituted for the first time as a proper method of propitiation, that he said in his own praise,

Note: The last four lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

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"And this stone which I had put for a pillar", as up to that time no one had erected one like it. This is implied in the expression, "and he put it as a matsebah" (erection, upstanding), implying that he set up again something which had been prostrate. He also "poured oil on its head", thus doing more than anyone else to restore it.' R. Judah thereupon embraced the Judean, saying, 'You have all this knowledge, and yet you occupy yourself with commerce and neglect that which gives life eternal!' He answered, 'Times are pressing, and I have two sons at school, and I have to work to provide their food and payment for their tuition, so that they may continue diligently to study the Torah.' He then resumed his discourse, taking the text: "And Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was established firmly" (I Kings II, 12). He said: 'What great achievement, it may be asked, is here ascribed to Solomon? The truth is that he prepared the foundation stone and set over it the Holy of Holies, and for this his kingdom was established firmly.'

The stranger further said: 'It is written: "And I will look upon it (the rainbow) that I may remember the everlasting covenant." This means that God's desire is constantly for the bow, and that he who is not visible therein will not enter into the presence of his Master. The inner meaning of the words, "And I will look upon it", is to be found in the words, "and set a mark upon the foreheads, etc." (Ezek. IX, 4), so as to be clearly visible.' (According to others, the mark was symbolic of the holy mark in the flesh.) R. Judah said, 'This is assuredly so, but the rainbow that appears in the sky has a profound mystic significance, and when Israel will go forth from exile that rainbow is destined to be decked out in all the finery of its colours, like a bride who adorns herself for her husband.' The Judean said to him, 'This is what my father said to me when he was on the point of departing this world: "Do not expect the coming of the Messiah until the rainbow will appear decked out in resplendent colours which will illumine the world. Only then expect the Messiah." We learn this from the words, "And I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant" (Gen. IX, 16). That is, at present the bow appears in dull colours, since it is only designed as a reminder that there shall be no



return of the Flood; but at that time it will appear in its full panoply of colours as a bride does for her husband, and that will be "to remember the everlasting covenant" The Holy One, blessed be He, will remember the covenant which is in exile and He will raise her from the dust, as it is written, "and they will seek the Lord their God and David their king" (Hos. III, 4); also, "But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise unto them" (Jer. XXX, 9), i.e. raise from the dust, in accordance with the text: "I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (Amos IX, 11). The "everlasting covenant" will thus be remembered to be raised from the dust. My father also said that it is for that reason that in Scripture the redemption of Israel and the remembrance of the rainbow are mentioned together, as it is written: "For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee" (Is. LIV, 9).'

AND THE SONS OF NOAH THAT WENT FORTH FROM THE ARK WERE SHEM, AND HAM, AND JAPHETH. R. Eleazar asked why the Scripture inserts the words "who went forth from the ark". Did, then, Noah have other sons who did not go forth from the ark? R. Abba said: "Yes: the children whom his sons bore afterwards; and the Scripture points out that these did not go forth from the ark." R. Simeon said: 'Had I been alive when the Holy One, blessed be He, gave mankind the book of Enoch and the book of Adam, I would have endeavoured to prevent their dissemination, because not all wise men read them with proper attention, and thus extract from them perverted ideas, such as lead men astray from the Most High to the worship of strange powers. Now, however, the wise who understand these things keep them secret, and thereby fortify themselves in the service of their Master.'

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Of the three sons of Noah that went forth from the ark, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Shem is symbolic of the right side, Ham of the left side, whilst Japheth represents the "purple", which is a mixture of the two. AND HAM WAS THE FATHER OF CANAAN. Ham represents the refuse and dross of the gold, the stirring and rousing of the unclean spirit of the ancient serpent. It is for that reason that he is designated the "father of Canaan", namely, of Canaan who brought curses on the world, of Canaan who was cursed, of Canaan who darkened the faces of mankind. For this reason, too, Ham is given a special mention in the words, "Ham, the father of Canaan", that is, the notorious world-darkener, whereas we are not told that Shem was the father of such-a-one, or that Japheth was the father of such-a-one. No sooner is Ham mentioned, than he is pointed to as the father of Canaan. Hence when Abraham came on the scene, it is written, "And Abraham passed through the land" (Gen. XII, 6), for this was before the establishment of the patriarchs and before the seed of Israel existed in the world, so that the land could not yet be designated by this honoured and holy name. Observe that when Israel were virtuous the land was called by their name, the Land of Israel; but when they were not worthy it was called by another name, to wit, the Land of Canaan. Hence it is written: AND HE SAID,

CURSED BE CANAAN, A SERVANT OF SERVANTS SHALL HE BE UNTO HIS BRETHREN, for the reason that he brought curses on the world, in the same way as the serpent, against whom was pronounced the doom, "Cursed art thou among all cattle" (Gen. III, 14).

THESE THREE WERE THE SONS OF NOAH. By these was established the whole world, and also the higher symbolism. AND OF THESE WAS THE WHOLE EARTH OVERSPREAD. Herein is a mystical allusion to the three supernal colours. For when that river that flows perennially watered the Garden by the power of those three supernal influences, there spread forth those terrestrial colours here below, each combined with the others, which show that the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, extends through all the heights and the depths, and that He is one above and below. R. Eleazar said: 'These three colours are themselves displayed in all those who issue from the side of holiness, and their reflection falls upon all those who issue from the side of the other spirit. And if you ponder the mystery of grades, you will find how the colours radiate to all sides until they enter the lower sphere through those twenty-seven mystic channels which are the sides of the doors that stop up the abyss. All this is known to the adepts in mystic lore. Happy the portion of the righteous whom the Holy One delights to honour and to whom He reveals the sublime mysteries of wisdom. Of them it is written: "The counsel of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Ps. XXV, 14).'

R. Eleazar here quoted the verse: "O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name, for thou hast done wonderful things, even counsels of old, in faithfulness and truth" (Is. XXV, 1). 'How greatly', he said, 'it behoves men to reflect on the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, and to offer up songs of praise to His glory, for when one knows how to offer praise to his Master in the manner appropriate, the Holy One, blessed be He, accomplishes his will. Such a man, furthermore, causes an increase of blessings on high and below. He, therefore, who knows how to offer praise to his Master and to proclaim His unity is held in affection on high and is beloved below; the Holy One, blessed be He, is proud of him, and of him it is written: "And he said unto me, thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Is. XLIX, 3).'

AND NOAH THE HUSBANDMAN BEGAN AND PLANTED A VINEYARD. R. Judah and R. Jose differed as to the origin of this vine. One said that it came from the Garden of Eden and Noah now planted it here. The other said that it had been on the earth before the Flood and Noah had plucked it and now replanted it. On the same day it blossomed, ripened, and brought forth grapes. Noah then pressed out from them wine, drank of it and became drunken. R. Simeon said: 'There is a mystical allusion in this verse. When Noah began to probe into the sin of Adam, not for purpose of practising it but in order to understand it, and so warn the world against it, he pressed grapes in order to make researches into that vineyard. But when he reached that point he was "drunken and uncovered"-he lost his (mental) balance and uncovered the breach of the world which hitherto had been closed up. WITHIN HIS TENT. It is written oholoh (lit. her tent), an allusion to the idea contained in the passage, "And come not

nigh the door of her house" (Prov. V, 8), "her tent" implying the tent of that vineyard. The same explanation applies to the case of the sons of Aaron, who, we have been taught, were drunk from wine (when they sinned). Who then, gave them wine at that place to drink? And is it conceivable that they would dare to get drunk at such a time? But in reality the wine which made them drunk was this same wine of Noah, as it is written, "and they offered strange fire before the Lord" (Lev. X, 1), an analogous term to which is found in the passage, "That they may keep thee from the strange woman" (Prov. VII, 5): all these terms allude to one and the same thing. The same sense, then, underlies the verse, "And he drank of the wine and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent." This, as explained, was observed by Ham, the father of Canaan, and Canaan seized the opportunity to work his will by removing from that righteous man the mystical symbol of the covenant; for this, according to tradition, is what he did. Therefore Noah said, CURSED BE CANAAN. since through him the curse returned to the world. A SLAVE OF SLAVES HE SHALL BE: these words correspond to those addressed to the serpent: "cursed art thou from all cattle, etc." (Gen. III, 14). Hence, while all others will be saved in the world to come, he will not be saved; all others will obtain their freedom, but not he. This is a mystery known to the adepts in the ways and paths of the Torah.'

R. Simeon further discoursed, beginning with the verse: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me (Ps. LI, 5). He said: 'How much must a man be on his guard against sinning before the Holy One, blessed be He, for each sin committed by man is recorded on high, and is not blotted out save by much repentance, as it is said, "For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me" (Jer. II, 22). For when a man commits a sin once before God, it leaves a mark, and when he repeats the same sin that mark is deepened, and after a third time it becomes a stain spreading from one side to the other, as expressed in the words, "thine iniquity is become a stain before me" (Ibid.). When David committed his great sin in taking Bath-Sheba, he thought that it would leave its mark forever, but the message came to him, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die" (II Sam. XII, 13); i.e. the stain has been removed.' R. Abba put this question to R. Simeon: 'Since we have been taught that Bath-Sheba was destined for King David from the day of the creation, how comes it that the Holy One, blessed be He, first gave her to Uriah the Hittite?' R. Simeon replied: 'Such is the way of the Holy One, blessed be He; although a woman is destined for a certain man, He first allows her to be the wife of another man until his time arrives. As soon as that time arrives, he departs from the world to make way for the other, although the Holy One, blessed be He, is loth to remove him from the world to make way for the other man before his time arrives. This is the inner reason why Bath-Sheba was given to Uriah first. Now reflect and you will find the reason for the Holy Land having been given to Canaan before Israel came there. You will find that the inner reason underlying the two is the

same. Observe, further, that David, although he confessed his sin and repented, could not obliterate from his heart and mind the memory of the sins that he had committed, especially of that concerning Bath-Sheba, and was always apprehensive lest one of them would prove a stumbling-block to him in the hour of danger. Hence he never removed them from his thoughts. According to another interpretation, the words "For I know my transgressions" indicate his knowledge of the diverse grades to which the various sins of men are to be referred, while the words "and my sin" (hatathi=my failing) refer to the defect of the moon, which did not emerge from her impurity until the time of Solomon, when her light once more became whole, so that the world became firmly established and Israel dwelt secure, as it is written: "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree" (I Kings V, 5). Nevertheless, as David said, "My deficiency is ever before me", and that will not be obliterated from the world until the Messiah will come, as it is said: "And the unclean spirit I will cause to pass out from the earth" (Zech. XIII, 2).'

HE WAS A MIGHTY HUNTER BEFORE THE LORD; WHEREFORE IT IS SAID: LIKE NIMROD A MIGHTY HUNTER BEFORE THE LORD. Truly he was a man of might, because he was clad in the garments of Adam, and was able by means of them to lay snares for mankind and beguile them. R. Eleazar said: 'Nimrod used to entice people into idolatrous worship by means of those garments, which enabled him to conquer the world and proclaim himself its ruler, so that mankind offered him worship. He was called "Nimrod", for the reason that he rebelled (marad=rebel) against the most high King above, against the higher angels and against the lower angels.'

R. Simeon said: 'Our colleagues are acquainted with a profound mystery concerning these garments.'

AND THE WHOLE EARTH WAS OF ONE LANGUAGE AND OF ONE SPEECH. R. Simeon began his discourse with the verse: And the house in its being built, was built of stone made ready at the quarry; and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house in its being built (I Kings VI, 7). He said: The phrase "in its being built" (behibbonotho) implies self-building, as though without the hands of artisans. Were not, then, Solomon with all his workpeople engaged in the work of building? It was here as with the candlestick, in regard to which we read, "And thou shalt make... of beaten work will the candlestick be made" (Ex. XXV, 31). If the candlestick was to be made of itself, why say "thou shalt make it"? In reality it was made of itself, by a miracle. So soon as the artisans set their hands to the work, it showed them how to proceed in a manner quite novel to them, the reason being that the blessing of the Almighty rested on their hands; and similarly here, in the building of the Sanctuary. It was built of its own accord, though seemingly by the hands of the labourers; it showed the workers a design which guided their hands and from which they did not turn their eyes until the whole building of the house was completed. Further it says: "Of stone made ready at the quarry" (I Kings VI, 7). The

word sh'lemah (made ready, complete) is written defectively, as though sh'lomoh (Solomon), for truly it was of Solomon; while massa (lit. transporting) implies that the hands of the workers were moved involuntarily, so that they did they knew not what. "And there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house in its being built" (Ibid.), because the shamir (stone-cutting insect) performed all the splitting without any sound being heard. No cutting-tools were thus required, the whole work being accomplished by a miracle.' Said R. Simeon, 'How precious are the words of the Torah! Happy is the portion of him who occupies himself with them and knows how to follow the path of truth! The Scripture says, "And the house in its being built." When the Holy One, blessed be He, wills that His glory should be glorified, there issues from His thought a determination that it should spread forth; whereupon it spreads from the undiscoverable region of thought until it rests in garon (throat), a spot through which perennially flows the mystic force of the "spirit of life". When the thought, after its expansion, comes to rest in that place, it is called Elohim hayyim (living God). It then seeks to spread and disclose itself still further, and there issue from that spot fire, air, and water, all compounded together. There also emerges "Jacob, the perfect man", symbolic of a certain voice that issues and becomes audible. Thus the thought that was hitherto undisclosed and withdrawn in itself is now revealed through sound. In the further extension and disclosure of the thought, the voice strikes against the lips, and thus comes forth speech which is the culmination of the whole and in which the thought is completely disclosed. It is thus clear that all is composed of that undisclosed thought which was withdrawn into itself, and that the whole is one essence. When the expansion has reached that stage, and speech has been generated by the force of that voice, then "the house in its being built", i.e. throughout the whole process of its construction, "is of complete stones", as has been explained. The word "transported" means that the thought issues from within and commences to transport itself outside; it issues from above and commences to transport itself below. "And there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron": this alludes to the lower grades, which all depend upon the Thought, and which are not heard or admitted inside when the Thought ascends on high to draw fresh sustenance. When she does so, all of them rejoice and draw sustenance and are filled with blessings. At that time all worlds are sustained as one unity without any division whatever. After they have taken their several portions they all disperse, each to its side and to its assigned function.

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Hence it says: "And the whole earth was of one language", and afterwards, "and it came to pass as they journeyed miquedem" (lit. from before), i.e. from that which is the starting-point of the world, "that they found a valley in the land of Shin'ar", for from there they spread out in all directions, and that spot is the starting-point of differentiation. It may be objected that differentiation started later, as we read, "a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted". The truth is that when they move from the first spot there is separation, and when they gather together

to draw sustenance there is no separation, and when they journey again there is separation. Hence it is written, "And it came to pass when they journeyed from the East that they found a valley", as has been explained.'

AND THE WHOLE EARTH WAS OF ONE LANGUAGE AND ONE SPEECH, i.e. the world was still a unity with one single faith in the Holy One, blessed be He. BUT AFTERWARDS THEY JOURNEYED AWAY miquedem (lit. from before), that is, from the One who is before all, from the foot of the world, who was the object of universal faith. AND THEY FOUND A PLAIN, that is, they made a discovery, by means of which they shook off their faith in the Most High. So it is written of Nimrod: AND THE BEGINNING OF HIS KINGDOM WAS BABEL, this being the starting-point from which he commenced to attach himself to other powers. Similarly here, "they found a plain in the land of Shin'ar", a place in which they conceived the idea of forsaking the Supernal Power for another power.

AND THEY SAID: COME, LET US BUILD US A CITY, AND A TOWER, WITH ITS TOP IN HEAVEN, AND LET US MAKE US A NAME. R. Hiya began his discourse with the text: And the wicked are like the driven sea (Is. LVII, 20). 'When can the sea be said to be "driven"? When it becomes violently disturbed and sways this way and that and is driven from its bed; it is then like a drunken man, reeling and staggering and heaving up and down. "For it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt" (Ibid.), i.e. it throws up all the dirt and foul matter of the sea on to the shore. So it is with the wicked who leave the straight path and reel and stagger in the crooked roads they have taken, like a man drunk with wine. And what is more, with every word which they utter in their rage there issues from their mouth filth and abomination so that they are utterly defiled.

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See now, they said: "Come let us build a city, and a tower, with its top in heaven." Underlying these words there was a plan of rebellion against the Holy One, blessed be He. It was a foolish scheme, born out of the stupidity of their heart.' R. Abba said, 'Foolish they certainly were, but at the same time they had a crafty design to rid themselves of the Supreme Power and to transfer His glory to another. Throughout, there is an allusion to the mysteries of religion. Thus, the words "Come, let us build a city and a tower" mean that when they reached that plain, which signifies the "strange power", and there was revealed to them the place of its dominion, which extends particularly over "the fishes of the sea", they said, "Here is a place where the beings of the lower world can abide in comfort." At once they said: "Come, let us build a city, and a tower, and let us make us a name." This place, they said, shall be to us a centre of worship, and no other; so "let us build a city and a tower"; what need is there for us to go up to the regions on high where we cannot derive any enjoyment? Behold, here is a place all made ready for us. Further they said: AND LET US MAKE A NAME, that is, an object of worship, LEST WE BE SCATTERED ABROAD, i.e. to other grades and

different quarters of the world.

AND THE LORD CAME DOWN TO SEE THE CITY AND THE TOWER. This is one of the ten occasions on which the Shekinah descended to earth. "To see" here means "to consider methods of punishment", as in the verse, "May the Lord see and judge" (Gen. XVI, 5). It is not written, "to see the people", but "to see the city and the tower". Why so? Because when the Holy One, blessed be He, sets out to execute judgement, He first surveys the upper ranks and then the lower ranks, and since this action of mankind affected also the regions on high, the first consideration was directed to those on high- This is implied in the words, "to see the city and the tower which the sons of man (Adam) built". Mankind are here called "sons of Adam", because it was Adam, the first man, who rebelled against his Master and brought death into the world. R. Simeon began his discourse with the verse: Thus

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saith the Lord God: The gate of the inner court that looketh towards the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath day it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened (Ezek. XLVI, 1). He said: 'If this verse is attentively considered, it is found to contain an allusion with which we are familiar. The reason why the gate is to be shut on the six working days is in order that the profane should not make use of the sacred; "but on the Sabbath day it shall be opened and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened", since in this case the sacred makes use of the sacred, and so the moon comes then to form a junction with the sun. The reason why that gate is not to be opened on the six working days is because from them this lower world draws sustenance, and they have control of the whole world with the exception of the Land of Israel: that land cannot be touched by them because the gate is shut. But on the Sabbath day and on the day of the new moon they are removed from control because the gate is open, and the world is in festivity and derives its sustenance from there, and is not under any other power. But think not that the six days have the sole dominion, even when they are in control, for we are told that that gate "looketh towards the east", i.e. the Eternal; for the Eternal, even before they assumed control, had the world under His observation, only the gate is not to be opened, so that the world should not receive sustenance from the sacred source save on Sabbath and new moons. Indeed, all the days are attached to the Sabbath day, from which they draw their sustenance, and on which all the gates are opened, and rest is vouchsafed to all on high and below. Similarly here, THE LORD CAME DOWN TO SEE, i.e. He descended from the sacred to the profane, in order to survey what they had built and what steps they had taken to establish an idolatrous worship.'

R. Isaac was once studying with R. Simeon and put to him the question: 'How could these people have been so foolish as to raise a rebellion against the Holy One, blessed be He, and what is more, with such unanimity?' R. Simeon replied: 'That has already been explained, and the answer is indicated in the words, "And it came to pass when they journeyed miqedem"

(from the Eternal), which means that they proceeded downwards, from above to below, from the Land of Israel to Babel. They said that that was just the right place to which to attach themselves, since there the divine chastisement could be successfully resisted. There, too, the whole world could obtain nourishment in abundance, for from the higher realm sustenance could only be procured with difficulty. And furthermore, they said, we will ascend into heaven and make war against it so as to prevent it bringing a flood on the world as before.'

AND THE LORD SAID: BEHOLD, THEY ARE ONE PEOPLE, AND THEY HAVE ALL ONE LANGUAGE, i.e. being united they may indeed succeed in their undertaking. Let, therefore, all the grades be dispersed, each in its own direction, and in this way mankind below will also be dispersed. Hence it is written: AND THE LORD SCATTERED THEM ABROAD FROM THENCE. Why was their language confounded? Because they all spoke the holy tongue, and this was of help to them. For in the utterance of prayer, it is Hebrew words which fully express the purpose of the heart, and thus help to the attainment of the desired goal; hence their tongue was confounded in order that they might not be able to express their desires in the holy tongue. Since the angels on high do not understand any language save the sacred language, therefore as soon as the language of the rebels was confounded they lost the source of their power. For whatever men utter below in the holy tongue all the hosts of heaven understand and take heed of, but any other language they do not understand. Hence as soon as the language of the builders was confounded THEY LEFT OFF TO BUILD THE CITY, since their strength was broken and they were unable to achieve their purpose. We read, "Blessed be the name of God from everlasting even unto everlasting; for wisdom and might are his" (Dan. II, 20). Truly His: for whenever the Holy One, blessed be He, allowed the deep mysteries of wisdom to be brought down into the world, mankind were corrupted by them and attempted to declare war on God. He gave supernal wisdom to Adam, but Adam utilised the wisdom disclosed to him

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to familiarise himself with the lower grades also, until in the end he attached himself to the yetzer-hara (evil tempter), and the fountains of wisdom were closed to him. After he repented before his Master, parts of that wisdom were again revealed to him, in that same book, but through that same knowledge people came later on to provoke God. He gave wisdom to Noah, who, indeed, worshipped by means of it the Holy One, blessed be He, but afterwards "he drank of the wine and was drunken and uncovered", as already explained. He gave wisdom to Abraham, who by means of it served the Holy One, blessed be He, but then he gave birth to Ishmael, who provoked the Holy One, blessed be He. The same with Isaac, from whom Esau was born. As for Jacob, he married two sisters. He gave wisdom to Moses, of whom it is written: "He is trusted in all my house" (Num. XII, 7). There was none like Moses, a faithful servant, who was cognisant of all the grades, but whose heart was not seduced by any

one of them from firm faith in the highest. He gave profound wisdom to Solomon, who called himself l'ithiel, l'ithiel v'ukhal (Prov. XXX, 1), as much as to say: "God is with me, and since wisdom is His, v'ukhal, I am able to do my own will." But afterwards "the Lord raised up an adversary for Solomon" (I Kings XI, 14). Thus we see that in virtue of the fragments which those people retained from that wisdom of the ancients, they provoked the Holy One, blessed be He, built a tower, and did various kinds of mischief, until they were scattered over the face of the earth, and there was no wisdom left with them for any purpose at all. But in the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause wisdom to be disseminated in the world, and the peoples will worship Him, as it is written: "And I will set my spirit within you" (Ezek. XXXVI, 27), but-in contrast with the generations of old, who used it for the ruin of the world-"I will cause you", the verse continues, "to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them" (Ibid.).

As R. Jose and R. Hiya were once walking together, R. Jose said: 'Let us begin some discourse on the Torah, and evolve some new idea.' R. Jose thereupon began with the verse: For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unseemly thing in thee, and turn away from thee (Deut. XXIII, 15). He said: 'The term for "walketh" is here mithhalekh, as in the passage, "walking (mithhalekh) in the garden towards the cool of the day" (Gen. III, 8) (in connection with Adam's eating of the forbidden tree). Mithhalekh is the term for the female, and corresponding to it for the male is the term mehalech. This is the same power that went in front of Israel whilst they were going through the wilderness, as it is written: "And the Lord went before them by day" (Ex. XIII, 21). It is this same power that goes in front of a man when he is on a journey, as it is written: "Righteousness shall go before him, and shall make his footsteps a way" (Ps. LXXXV, 14). It walks in front of a man when he is virtuous in order "to deliver thee and to give up thine enemies before thee", to wit, to rescue a man when journeying from the power of "the other one". Hence it is incumbent on a man to guard himself against sin and to purify himself. How purify himself? In the manner indicated in the words, "therefore shall thy camp be holy". The word qadosh (holy) here is singular, which shows that by the word "camp" we may understand the members of which the body is composed; these are "thy camp" which is to be "holy". By the term "unseemly thing" is indicated indecency, which is a thing most hateful to the Holy One, blessed be He. Further, the term dabar (thing, lit. word) alludes to the obscene word by which sinners besmirch and befoul themselves. Why all this? Because "He walketh before thee". If thou be remiss in regard to this, He will immediately "turn away from thee". Now, since we are walking along before Him in the road, let us occupy ourselves with words of the Torah. For when the Torah forms a crown over a man's head, the Shekinah does not depart from him.'

R. Hiya then discoursed as follows: 'It is written: "And the Lord said: Behold they are one people, and they have all one language" After this we read: "And it came to pass as they journeyed miqedem." The term

miqedem signifies "away from the Ancient One (qadmon) of the world". "That they found." We should have expected "saw"; but the word "found" is used to indicate that they found remnants of the secret wisdom that had been left there by the generation of the Flood, and with that they made their attempt to provoke the Holy One, blessed be He. As they said,

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so they did. Note what is written, "Behold, they are one people and they have all one language." Being of one mind, of one will, and speaking one language, "nothing will be withholden from them which they purpose to do". But, said God, I know what to do; I will confound for them the grades on high and their language below, and thus their work will stop. Now, seeing that, because they were all of one mind and one will and spoke the holy tongue, it is written of them "nothing will be withholden from them which they purpose to do", and the supernal judgement was powerless against them, how much more must this apply to us or any other of the companions who are occupied in the study of the Torah! R. Jose said: 'From here we learn that quarrelsome folk soon come to grief. For we see here that as long as the peoples of the world lived in harmony, being of one mind and one will, although they rebelled against the Holy One, blessed be He, the supernal judgement could not touch them; but as soon as they were divided, "the Lord scattered them abroad". Of the world to come, however, it is written: "For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. III, 9); also: "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be one, and his name one" (Zech. XIV, 9). Blessed be the Lord for ever. Amen and Amen!'

### LECH LECHA

R. Abba introduced this portion with a discourse on the text: Harken to me, ye obstinate of heart who are far from righteousness (Is. XLVI, 12). He said: 'How obstinate is the heart of sinners who see the paths and ways of the Torah and pay no heed to them, but harden their hearts and do not return in repentance to their Master, wherefore they are called "obstinate of heart". Also "far from righteousness", because they keep themselves far from the Torah. R. Hizkiah says, that it is because they keep themselves far from God; they refuse to draw near to God and therefore they are far from righteousness. And because they are far from righteousness, therefore they are far from peace, and they have no peace, as it is written. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Is. XLVIII, 22). The reason is that they are far from righteousness. See now, Abraham sought to draw near to God, and he succeeded. So it is written, "Thou didst love righteousness and hate wickedness" (Ps. XLV, 8), and it is further written, "Abraham who loves me" (Is. XLI, 8), i.e. Abram is said to have "loved God" because he loved righteousness; this was Abram's love of God, in which he excelled

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all his contemporaries, who were obstinate of heart and

far from righteousness, as has been said.'

R. Jose opened with the text: How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts (Ps. LXXXIV, 2). He said: 'It behoves men to consider well the importance of the service of the Holy One, blessed be He. For the mass of mankind do not know or reflect what it is that keeps the world or themselves in existence. For when God created the world, He made the heavens of fire and water mingled together but not compact, and afterwards they were made compact and firm by a divine spirit. From there God planted forth the world to rest upon supports, which themselves are kept up only by that spirit. When that spirit departs they all quiver and shake and the world trembles, as it is written, "Who shaketh the earth out

of her place and the pillars thereof tremble" (Job IX, 6). The whole is based upon the Torah. Thus when Israel devotes itself to the Torah the world is firmly established and they are secure and the supports are firmly fixed in their places. See now, at the moment when midnight arrives and the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden to disport Himself with the righteous, all the trees in the Garden sing praises before Him, as it is written, "Then sing the trees of the wood for joy before the Lord" (I Chron. XVI, 33). A herald proclaimeth lustily: "To you we speak, exalted holy ones; who is there among you whose ears are quick to hear and whose eyes are open to see and whose heart is alert to perceive, what time the spirit of all spirits culls the sweet effluence of the inner soul, and a voice goes forth from there saying, Disperse, ye hosts, to the four corners of the world?" Then

1. One mounts to one side.
2. One descends on that side.
3. One enters between the two.
4. Two crown themselves with a third.
5. Three enter into one.
6. One produces various colours.
7. Six of them descend on one side and six of them on the other.
8. Six enter into twelve.
9. Twelve bestir themselves to form twenty-two.
10. Six are comprised in ten.
11. Ten are fixed in one.

Woe to those that sleep with eyes fast closed and do not know or consider how they will arise in the Day of Judgement; for reckoning is exacted

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when the body is defiled, and the soul flits over the face of the transparent ether, now up and now down, and if the gates are not opened it is tossed about like a

stone from the sling. Woe to them! Who shall plead for them? For they shall not be admitted to this joyance, among the delightful habitations of the righteous their places shall be missing, they shall be delivered into the hands of Duma, they shall descend and not ascend. Of them it is written, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more" (Job VII, 9). At that moment a certain flash springs forth from the side of the North and strikes the four quarters of the world and comes down and alights between the wings of the cock, which is thereby awakened and begins to crow. But none are stirred save those truly pious ones who rise and remain awake and study the Torah, and then the Holy One, blessed be He, and all the righteous in the Garden of Eden listen to their voices, as it is written, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken for thy voice, cause me to hear it" (S. S. VIII, 13)

AND THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM. Just before this it is written, "And Haran died in the presence of Terah his father" (Gen. XI, 28). The connection is as follows. Up to that time no one had ever died in the lifetime of his father. Haran, however, was killed at the time when Abram was cast into the furnace. Then it says, "And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, etc.... and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees." We should expect "and they went forth with him", referring to Terah; why, then, does it say "with them"? The reason is that Terah and Lot went forth with Abram and Sara, who led the way in departing from that sinful district; for when Terah saw that Abram was rescued from the fire, he began to be guided by Abram, and therefore we read, "and they went forth with them", i.e. Terah and Lot with Abram and Sara. Also it was "to go into the land of Canaan", where they wanted to go. We learn further from this text that whoever makes an effort to purify himself receives assistance from above. For no sooner is it written, "to go to the land of Canaan" than we read "and God said to Abram, Get thee forth"; this message was not given to him until he made the first move himself. For the upper world is not stirred to act until an impulse is given from the lower world. The prototype of this process is that the blackish light is not caught up by the white light until it has first itself begun to mount; [Tr. note: v. p. 163] but when it does so, forthwith the white light rests upon it, and therefore it is written, "O Lord, keep not thou silence, hold not thy peace and be not still, O God" (Ps. LXXXIII, 2), in order that the white light may never be withheld from the world. So, too, it says, "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence" (Is. LXII, 6), in order to give the impulse from below for the influence to descend from the upper world. Similarly the prophetic spirit rests upon man only when he has first bestirred himself to receive it. So here, too, when once Abram and his family had left Ur of the Chaldees, then God said to him, "Get thee forth"; the word "thee" here, says R. Eleazar, means "for thine own advantage, to prepare thyself, to perfect thy degree". "Get thee forth": that is, it is not fitting for thee to remain here among these sinners. The real truth of the matter is this.

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God inspired Abram with a spirit of wisdom so that he was able to discover by means of certain tests the

characters of all the inhabited countries of the world. He surveyed them and weighed them in the balance, and discovered the (heavenly) powers to which each is entrusted. When he came to the central point of the inhabited world he tried to weigh it, but obtained no response. He tried to find the power to which it was entrusted, but could not grasp it, though he weighed again and again. He noted that from that point the whole world was planted out, and he once more tested and weighed and found that the upper power in charge of it was one which could not be gauged, that it was recondite and hidden, and not like the (powers in charge of) the outlying parts of the inhabited world. He once more reflected, and came to the conclusion that as the whole world had been planted out in all directions from that point in the centre, so the power in charge of it was the one from which issued all the powers in charge of the other quarters of the world and to which they were all attached: hence "they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go to the land of Canaan". He then once more reflected and weighed in the balance and tested to find out the real truth about that place, but he could not get to the root of it. He felt himself baffled by the obscurity which surrounded it, and therefore "they came to Haran and abode there". The reason, as we have seen, is that Abraham was able to test all the upper powers that rule the world in all the quarters of the inhabited section, and did actually test them and find out which of the guiding powers among the stars and constellations had sway over which, and he weighed successfully all the inhabited parts of the globe. But when he came to this place he was met with a baffling obscurity which he could not penetrate. When God, however, perceived his efforts and his desire, He straightway revealed Himself to him and said: GET THEE FORTH, so as to know thyself and prepare thyself, FROM THY LAND: from that side of the inhabited world to which thou wast hitherto attached, AND FROM THY KINDRED, from that wisdom wherewith thou didst cast thy horoscope, noting the hour and second of thy birth and the star that was then in the ascendant, AND FROM THY FATHER'S HOUSE, that thou shouldst not heed thy father's house, even if thou couldst hope in virtue of thy father's house for some prosperity in this world; therefore get thee gone from this wisdom and from this consideration. That this explanation is right may be proved thus. They had left Ur of the Chaldees and were in Haran. Why, then, should God say to Abram, "Get thee forth from thy land and from thy kindred"? It must therefore be as we have explained. TO THE LAND WHICH I SHALL SHOW THEE: i.e. I shall show thee that which thou wast not able to discover; the power of that land so recondite and obscure.

AND I SHALL MAKE THEE A GREAT NATION, ETC. "I shall make thee", in compensation for "get thee gone"; AND I SHALL BLESS THEE, in compensation for "from my land"; AND I WILL MAKE GREAT THY NAME, in compensation for 'and from thy kindred'; AND BE A BLESSING, in compensation for "and from thy father's house". R. Simeon said: "I shall make thee a great nation"; from the side of the Right; "and I shall bless thee", from the side of the Left; "and I shall make great thy name", from the realm of the Centre; "and be thou a blessing", from the side of the Land of Israel. Here we have an allusion to the throne resting on four

supports, all of which were comprised in Abram. From this point blessings are transmitted to others also, who are sustained from here, as it is written, I SHALL BLESS THEM THAT BLESS THEE,

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AND CURSE THEM THAT CURSE THEE, AND ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED IN THEE. R. Eleazar was sitting one day before his father, R. Simeon, and with him were R. Judah and R. Isaac and R. Hizkiah. Said R. Eleazar to R. Simeon: In reference to this verse, GET THEE FORTH FROM THY LAND AND FROM THY KINDRED, since they all went forth, why was not Abram told that they should go? For though Terah was an idolater, yet since he had the good impulse to go forth with Abram, and since, as we know, God delights in the repentance of sinners, and Terah actually began the journey, why is it not written "get ye forth"? Why was it said to Abram alone "get thee forth"? R. Simeon replied: If you think that Terah left Ur of the Chaldees in order to repent of his past life, you are mistaken. The truth is that he was running away for his life, as his fellow-countrymen wanted to kill him. For when they saw that Abram was delivered (from the fiery furnace) they said to Terah, "It is you who misled us with those idols of yours", and it was through fear of them that Terah left. When he reached Haran he did not go any further, as it is written, "And Abram went as the Lord had said to him, and Lot went with him", but Terah is not mentioned. R. Simeon expounded in this connection the text, "And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm is broken" (Job XXXVIII, 15). The words "and from the wicked their light is withholden", he said, can be referred to Nimrod and his contemporaries, from whom Abram, who was their light, departed. Or we may refer them to Terah and his household, whose light was Abram. It does not say "light", but "their light", viz. the light that was with them. "The high arm is broken" refers to Nimrod, who led astray the whole of mankind. Therefore it is written lech lecha (lit. go for thyself), to give light to thyself and to all that shall follow thee from now onwards. R. Simeon further discoursed on the text, "Now they see not the light; it is bright in the skies, and a wind passeth and cleanseth them" (Job XXXVII, 21). "Now they see not the light", i.e. Abram's family saw not the light when God said to Abram, "Get thee forth from thy land and from thy kindred and from thy father's house". "It is bright in the skies" means that God willed to make Abram cleave to that supernal light and to shine there. "A wind passeth and cleanseth them": because subsequently Terah and all his household repented, as it is said, "and the souls which they had saved (lit. made) in Haran", referring to Terah's household, and further, "and thou shalt come to thy fathers in peace" (Gen. XV, 15), which shows that Terah joined Abram.

SO ABRAM WENT AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN TO HIM, ETC. Said R. Eleazar: 'It is not written "and Abram went forth", but simply "Abram went"; the first step was "going forth", as it is written, "and they went forth (vayez'u) from Ur of the Chaldees" (Gen. XI, 31), but the second step was "going", corresponding to God's command "Go (lech) thou" (Ibid. XII, 1). AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN TO HIM: i.e. because he had

received all those promises. AND LOT WENT WITH HIM: i.e. he attached himself to him to learn his ways, and in spite of this he did not learn them too well.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Happy are the righteous who learn the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, to walk in them and to go in fear of that Day of Judgement when man will be called to account before God.' To illustrate this, R. Eleazar expounded the text: "By his hand every man sealeth, that all men may acknowledge their works" (Job. XXXVII, 7). He said:

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'On the day when man's time arrives to depart from the world, when the body is broken and the soul seeks to leave it, on that day man is privileged to see things that he was not permitted to see before, when the body was in full vigour. Three messengers stand over him and take an account of his life and of all that he has done in this world, and he admits all with his mouth and signs the account with his hand as it is written, "every man sealeth with his hand": the whole account is signed with his hand so that he should be judged in the next world for all his actions, former and later, old and new, not one of them is forgotten (as it is written, "that every man should acknowledge his works"); and for all the deeds which he committed with his body and his spirit in this world he gives an account with his body and spirit before he leaves the world. For just as sinners are stiff-necked in this world, so they are stiff-necked even at the moment when they are on the point of departing from the world. Happy, therefore, is the man who learns in this world the ways of God to walk in them. But sinners, even though they observe the righteous, are too stiffnecked to learn from them. Therefore it behoves the righteous to importune them and, even though the sinner be stiffnecked, not to relax his hold of him, for if he let him go, he may depart and destroy the world. We see this from the case of Gehazi when driven out by Elisha. So, too, with Lot: as long as Abram was with him, he did not associate with the wicked, but as soon as he left him, what do we find? "So Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan"; and further, "and he moved his tent as far as Sodom", the inhabitants of which "were wicked and sinners against the Lord exceedingly". Said R. Abba to R. Eleazar, 'With reference to your observation that the text says "Abraham went", and not "went forth", what do you make of the end of the verse which says "when he went forth from Haran"?' Said R. Eleazar: 'The words "from Haran" are important; the journey was in the first instance a "going forth" from the land of his kindred. AND ABRAM TOOK SARAI HIS WIFE. The word "took"

signifies that he pleaded with her and persuaded her. For a man is not permitted to take his wife with him to another country without her consent. The word "take" is used in a similar sense in the texts "Take Aaron" (Num. XX, 25), and "Take the Levites" (Ibid. III, 45). So Abram spoke persuasively to Sarai, pointing out to her how wicked were the ways of their contemporaries. Further, Abram took LOT HIS BROTHER'S SON. Abram's reason for taking Lot with him was that he foresaw through the Holy Spirit that David was destined to issue from him. AND THE SOULS THAT THEY HAD GOTTEN IN HARAN: these were the male and female proselytes whose souls they had saved. Abram

converted the men and Sarai the women, and therefore they are spoken of as if they had made them.' Said R. Abba: 'If so, they must have been a great crowd, if you say that they all went with him.' Said R. Eleazar: 'That is so; and therefore the whole company that went with him were called

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"the people of the God of Abraham", and he travelled through the land without fear, as it is written, "And Abram passed through the land".' Said R. Abba to him: 'I interpret differently, viz. that the particle *eth* here signifies the augmentation of his merit by that of the souls that went with him, since one who puts another in the path of righteousness ever reaps benefit from his merit also. So it was the merit of those souls which were "made" in Haran that accompanied Abram.'

GET THEE FORTH. R. Simeon said: What is the reason that the first communion which God held with Abraham commenced with the words "Get thee forth" (*lech lecha*)? It is that the numerical value of the letters of the words *lech lecha* is a hundred, and hence they contained a hint to him that he would beget a son at the age of a hundred. See now, whatever God does upon the earth has some inner and recondite purpose. Abram was not cleaving to God as closely as he should have done, and therefore God said to him, "Get thee forth", alluding thereby to the place where he would be able to draw near to God, which was the first grade for entering before God; hence "get thee forth". Abram could not attain to this grade until he had entered the promised land; but there he was destined to attain it. Similarly with David, of whom it is written, "And David inquired of the Lord saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of

Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron." (II Sam. II, 1). Seeing that Saul was dead and the kingship belonged of right to David, why was he not at once declared king over all Israel? Here again there was an inner purpose: David was not qualified to become king until he had attached himself to the patriarchs who were buried in Hebron, and therefore he stayed there seven years in order to qualify himself completely for the kingship. Thus all was done with an inner purpose, and in order that there should be no flaw in his kingship. Similarly Abram did not enter into the covenant of God until he entered the land. Observe that the text says "And Abram passed through the land", where we should have expected "went through". We have here an allusion to the holy name of seventy-two letters with which the world is sealed, all of which are in this name. We read here "and he passed", and in another place we find "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed" (Ex. XXXIV, 6). In the book of the venerable R. Yesa we find: It is written here "And Abram passed through the land", and in another place it says "I will make all my goodness pass before thee" (Ex. XXXIII, 19), this being an allusion to the holiness of the land which emanates from a heavenly source.

UNTO THE PLACE OF SHECHEM, UNTO THE OAK OF MORETH, i.e. from one sphere to the other, as befitted. AND THE CANAANITE WAS THEN IN THE



LAND. This confirms what has previously been said, that up to that time the wicked serpent that was cursed and brought curses on the world held sway over the land, as it is written, "Cursed is Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Gen. IX, 25), and of the serpent, "Cursed art thou above all cattle" (Gen. III, 14). It was in that land that Abram drew near to God. For it is written here AND THE LORD APPEARED UNTO ABRAM: here was revealed to him what

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he could not previously find out, the hidden force that ruled over the (holy) land, and so HE BUILT THERE AN ALTAR TO THE LORD WHO APPEARED TO HIM. The words "who appeared to him", which seem to be superfluous, indicate that here was revealed to him that grade which rules over the land, and that he entered into it and was confirmed in it.

AND HE REMOVED FROM THENCE UNTO THE MOUNTAIN: The word ha-harah (to the mountain) can be rendered "to the mountain of he", implying that he now became acquainted with this and with all the grades planted there. AND PITCHED HIS TENT: here, again, the letter he in the word aholoh (his tent) indicates that he purified himself and acknowledged the kingship of heaven in all the grades attached to it. He acquired the certainty that God rules over all, and so he built an altar. There were, in fact, two altars, because here it was revealed to him that God is ruler over all, and he became acquainted with the higher wisdom, which he had not known previously. He therefore built two altars, one for the grade (of the Godhead) which was already known to him, and one for the grade which was still concealed. This can be seen from the text: it first says "And he built there an altar to the Lord who appeared to him", and afterwards it says "and he built an altar to the Lord", simply-with an allusion to the higher wisdom. Thus Abram proceeded from grade to grade until he reached his own rightful grade, as it is written, "And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South", the South (typifying wisdom) being the allotted portion of Abram, and there he finally fixed himself.

AND THERE WAS A FAMINE IN THE LAND: because up to now the power in charge of the land had not endowed the land with strength to produce food, since as yet it (the land) had not attained its complete development. So, seeing that the power in charge of the land was not endowing it with its rightful force and energy, ABRAM WENT DOWN TO EGYPT TO SOJOURN THERE. How did Abram know that the land was still defective? Because it was said to him, UNTO THY SEED WILL I GIVE THIS LAND. From this Abram knew that the land would not be invested with its appropriate holiness save through the grades of holiness which would be exhibited by his offspring.

AND ABRAM WENT DOWN TO EGYPT TO SOJOURN THERE. Why to Egypt? Because it is compared to the Garden of the Lord, as it is written, "Like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt". For there a certain stream (from the Garden) which is on the right descends and flows, as it is written, "The

name of the one was Pishon, that it is which compasseth the whole land of Havilah where there is gold" (Gen. II, 11). When Abram knew God and became perfect in faith, he sought to acquaint himself with all those grades (of wisdom) which are attached to the lower world, and since Egypt derived from the Right, he went down to Egypt. (We remark here that famine comes only when mercy ceases to temper justice.)

NOW IT CAME TO PASS THAT WHEN HE WAS COME NEAR TO ENTER INTO EGYPT. The word hikrib (came near) literally means "brought near"; as much as to say that he brought himself fittingly near to God. TO ENTER INTO EGYPT: i.e. to examine those other (worldly) grades so as to know how to avoid them and to shun the ways of the Egyptians. R. Judah said: 'Consider this. Because Abram went down to Egypt without first obtaining God's consent (for nowhere is it written that God told Abram to go down to Egypt), therefore his descendants were enslaved to the Egyptians four hundred years.' All that night he was filled with anxiety concerning Sarai, AND HE SAID TO SARAI HIS WIFE, BEHOLD NOW I KNOW THAT THOU ART A FAIR WOMAN TO LOOK UPON. Did he then not know it before? This confirms what we have learnt, that up to that time Abram had never looked closely at the features of Sarai on account of the excessive modesty which ruled their intercourse, but when he approached Egypt they were disclosed, and he saw how fair she was. According to another explanation, he knew it through the fact that, contrary to the usual experience, she looked as beautiful as ever after the fatigues of the journey. Another explanation is that Abram said so because he saw with her the Shekinah. It was on this account that Abram made bold to say subsequently, "she is my sister", with a double meaning: one the literal, the other figurative, as in the words "say to Wisdom, thou art my sister" (Prov. VII, 4). SAY NOW THOU ART MY SISTER. R. Yesa said: 'Abram knew that all the Egyptians were full of lewdness. It may therefore

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seem surprising that he was not apprehensive for his wife and that he did not turn back without entering the country. But the truth is that he saw with her the Shekinah and was therefore confident. THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH ME FOR THY SAKE: these words were addressed to the Shekinah, as if to say: "that God may entreat me well for thy sake. AND THAT MY SOUL MAY LIVE BECAUSE OF THEE: because through this (the Shekinah) man ascends and becomes privileged to enter on the path of life.'

NOW IT CAME TO PASS THAT WHEN ABRAM WAS COME TO EGYPT THE EGYPTIANS BEHELD THE WOMAN THAT SHE WAS VERY FAIR. R. Judah said: He brought her in a box, and they opened it to levy duty. When it was opened a light like that of the sun shone forth, as it says "that she was very fair". The word "very" indicates that they saw in the box another figure; for when they took her out, they saw a figure in the box as before. Hence the Scripture repeats, AND THE PRINCES OF PHARAOH SAW HER, and on this account THEY PRAISED HER TO PHARAOH.' R.

Isaac said: 'Woe to the sinners of the world who do not know and do not observe the work of the Holy One, blessed be He, nor do they reflect that all which takes place in the world is from God, who knows from the outset what will be at the end, as it is written, "declaring the end from the beginning" (Is. XLVI, 10). He looks ahead and lays a train now for developments in the distant future. Thus had not Sarai been taken to Pharaoh, he would not have been plagued, and it was his castigation which caused the subsequent castigation of the Egyptians. The word "great" is applied here to the plagues inflicted on Pharaoh and also to the "signs and wonders which God showed upon Egypt" (Deut. VI, 22), to indicate that here, as there, were ten plagues, and that just as God performed wonders for Israel by night, so He performed wonders for Sarai by night.' R. Jose expounded the text: Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me, my glory and the lifter up of mine head (Ps. III, 4). He said: 'What David meant was: "though the whole world should come to make war on me, thou, O Lord, art a shield about me". David further said to God: "Sovereign of the Universe, wherefore do not the Israelites conclude one of their blessings with my name as they do with the name of Abraham, [Tr. note: The first blessing of the Amidah.] of whom it is written 'I am thy shield' (Gen. XV, 1)?" God replied: "Abraham I have already tried and tested and found to be wholly steadfast." Said David: "If so, 'examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart' (Ps. XXVI, 2)." When he sinned in the matter of Bathsheba, David remembered what he had said, and he exclaimed " 'Thou hast proved mine heart, thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast tried me and hast not found, my thoughts should not have passed my mouth' (Ps. XVII, 3). I said, Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, and thou hast proved my heart; I said, Try my reins, and thou hast tried me; but thou hast not found me as I should be; would that what was in my mind had not passed my lips." (And with all this the Israelites do conclude a blessing with his name. [Tr. note: The third blessing after the Haftarah.]) Therefore David said: "'Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me, my glory and the lifter up of my head': this grade assuredly is my glory with which I am crowned." '

AND PHARAOH GAVE MEN CHARGE CONCERNING HIM, AND THEY SENT HIM ON HIS WAY. Assuredly God is a shield to the righteous to save them from falling into the power of men, and so God shielded Abram that the Egyptians should not have power to harm him and his wife. For the Shekinah did not leave Sarai all that night. When Pharaoh tried to approach her, the angel came and smote him. Whenever Sarai said "smite", he smote, and meanwhile Abram firmly trusted in God that He would allow no harm to come to Sarai, as it is written, "the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. XXVIII, 1). This is one of the trials which Abram endured without complaining against God. R. Isaac said that God purposely refrained from telling Abram to go down to Egypt, and allowed him to go of his own accord, in order that people might not be able to say that after making him go there He brought trouble on him through his wife. R. Isaac here expounded the text The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon (Ps. XCII, 13). 'Why is the righteous man compared to a palm tree? Because just as, if a palm

tree is cut down, it takes a long time for one to grow again, so if the world loses a righteous man, it is a long time before another arises in his place. Further, just as a palm tree does not grow unless the male be accompanied by the female, so the righteous cannot flourish save when they are male and female together, like Abram and Sarai. Again, "he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon": just as a cedar is pre-eminent and all can sit under it, so the righteous man is pre-eminent and all sit under him. The world is supported upon one righteous one, as it is written, "the righteous is the foundation of the world" (Prov. X, 25).' Said R' Judah, 'Is it not a dictum of the Rabbis that the world rests on seven supports, as it is written, "Wisdom hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov. IX, 1)?' R. Jose replied: 'That is so, but those others depend on one

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who is the real support of the world. This is the Zaddik who waters and refreshes the world and feedeth all, and of whom it is written, "Say of the Zaddik that he is good, for (through him) they eat of the fruit of their works" (Is. III, 10), and again, "The Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. CXLV, 9).'

R. Isaac said: 'The Scripture tells us that "a river went forth from Eden to water the garden" (Gen. II, 10). It is this river which is the support upon which the world rests. It waters the Garden and causes it to bear fruits which spring up and blossom in the world, and which uphold the world and make possible the study of the Torah. What are these fruits? They are the souls of the righteous which are the fruit of God's handiwork. Therefore every night the souls of the righteous mount on high, and at the hour of midnight the Holy One, blessed be He, comes to the Garden of Eden to disport Himself with them. With which of them? R. Jose said, with all: both with those whose abode is in the other world and with those who are still in their dwellings in this world-with all of them God disports Himself at midnight. For the world on high requires to be stirred by the impulse of the lower world, and so when the souls of the righteous leave this world and mount on high, they all clothe themselves with a supernal light, with a resplendent figure, and God disports Himself with them and delights in them, since they are the fruit of His handiwork, and for this reason Israel who are possessed of holy souls are called sons to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written, "Ye are sons to the Lord your God" (Deut. XIV, 1), that is, the fruit of His handiwork.' Said R. Yesa, 'You say that God disports Himself also with the souls in this world: how is this?' He answered, 'At midnight all the truly righteous arise to read the Torah and to sing psalms, and we have learnt that the Holy One, blessed be He, and all the righteous in the Garden of Eden listen to their voices, and in consequence a certain grace is imparted to them by day; so it is written, "The Lord will command his grace in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me" (Ps. XLII, 9). Hence it is that the praises which are sung at night constitute the most perfect praise. So when God was slaying the first-born in Egypt, the Israelites in their houses were singing praises and psalms to Him. See now, King David too used to get up in the middle of the night, as it is written,

“At midnight I will rise to give thanks to thee” (Ps. CXIX, 62). He did not remain sitting or lying in his bed, but he literally rose and stood up to compose psalms and praises. Therefore it is that King David lives for ever, and even in the days of the King Messiah he will be king, according to the dictum: “If the King Messiah will be from the living, David will be his name, and if he will be from the dead, David will be his name. “ He, as it were, awoke the dawn, as it is written, “Awake, my glory, awake, psaltery and harp; I myself will awake right early” (Ps. LVII, 9).

In the night when Sarai was with Pharaoh, the angels came to sing praises before God, but God said to them, “Go all of you, and deal heavy blows on Egypt, in anticipation of what I intend to do subsequently”; hence it is written, “And the Lord smote Pharaoh with great plagues.” Then, PHARAOH CALLED ABRAM, ETC. What gave him this idea, seeing that God did not say anything to him as He did later to Abimelech, as when He said, “And now restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet”, etc. (Gen. XX, 7)? Said R. Isaac, ‘The answer is contained in the words BECAUSE OF SARAI ABRAM'S WIFE: the angels as they smote him said “this blow is because of Sarai Abram's wife” and no more, and then he knew that she was Abram's wife, and straightway “Pharaoh called Abram and said, etc.” AND PHARAOH GAVE MEN CHARGE CONCERNING HIM: why so? In order that no man should come near to hurt them. AND THEY BROUGHT HIM ON THE WAY: i.e. they conducted him through the land of Egypt. Said God to him: So art thou destined to do to his descendants: thou shalt conduct them from thy land, as it is written, “And it came to pass when Pharaoh let go (beshallah, lit. escorted) the people” (Ex. XIII, 17).’ R. Abba said: ‘All this happened to Abram and he had to go through all this only in order that he and Sarai might acquire a great name in the world.

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For even in Egypt, a country of magicians from whom no man could escape, Abram distinguished himself, and he raised himself there to a higher eminence, as it is written, AND ABRAM WENT UP OUT OF EGYPT. To where did he ascend? INTO THE SOUTH.’ Said R. Simeon: ‘Observe that these words have an inner meaning, and indicate to us that Abram went down to the “lower degrees” in Egypt, and probed them to the bottom, but clave not to them and returned unto his Master. He was not like Adam, who, when he descended to a certain grade, was enticed by the serpent and brought death upon the world; nor was he like Noah, who, when he descended to a certain grade, was enticed and “drank of the wine and became drunk and was uncovered in the midst of his tent” (Gen. IX, 21). Unlike them, Abram came up again and returned to his place, to the upper grade to which he had been attached previously. This whole incident is related in order to show that he was steadfast in his attachment to Wisdom, and was not seduced, and returned to his former condition. “Into the South”: this is the higher grade to which he was attached at first, as it is written, “going on still to the South”. The inner significance of this narrative is that if Abram had not gone down to Egypt and been tested there, his portion would not

have been in the Lord. Similarly with his descendants, whom God desired to make a unique and perfect people and to bring near to Himself: if they had not first gone down to Egypt and been tested there, they would not have been God's chosen people. Similarly, too, if the Holy Land had not been first given to Canaan to rule over, it would not have become the lot and portion of the Holy One, blessed be He. In all these facts the same mystical purpose is to be observed.’

R. Simeon was once on a journey in company with his son R. Eleazar and R. Abba and R. Judah. As they were going along, R. Simeon said: ‘I marvel how indifferent men are to the words of the Torah and the problem of their own existence!’ He proceeded to discourse on the text: With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early (Is. XXVI, 9). He said: ‘The inner meaning of this verse is as follows. When a man lies down in bed, his vital spirit (nefesh) leaves him and begins to mount on high, leaving with the body only the impression of a receptacle which contains the heart-beat. The rest of it tries to soar from grade to grade, and in doing so it encounters certain bright but unclean essences. If it is pure and has not defiled itself by day, it rises above them, but if not, it becomes defiled among them and cleaves to them and does not rise any further. There they show her certain things which are going to happen in the near future: and sometimes they delude her and show her false things. Thus she goes about the whole night until the man wakes up, when she returns to her place. Happy are the righteous to whom God reveals His secrets in dreams, so that they may be on their guard against sin! Woe to the sinners who defile their bodies and their souls! As for those who have not defiled themselves during the day, when they fall asleep at night their souls begin to ascend, and first enter those grades which we have mentioned, but they do not cleave to them and continue to mount further. The soul which is privileged thus to rise finally appears before the gate of the celestial palace, and yearns with all its might to behold the beauty of the King and to visit His sanctuary. This is the man who ever hath a portion in the world to come, and this is the soul whose yearning when she ascends is for the Holy One, blessed be He, and who does not cleave to those other bright essences, but seeks out the holy essence in the place from which she (originally) issued. Therefore it is written, “With my soul have I desired thee in the night”, to pursue after thee and not to be enticed away after false powers. Again, the words “With my soul have I desired thee

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in the night” refer to the soul (nefesh) which has sway by night, while the words “with my spirit within me will I seek thee early” refer to the spirit (ruah) which has sway by day. “Soul “ (nefesh) and “spirit” (ruah) are not two separate grades, but one grade with two aspects. There is still a third aspect which should dominate these two and cleave to them as they to it, and which is called “higher spirit” (neshamah). (All these grades are arranged in wisdom, and contemplation of them throws light on the higher Wisdom.) This spirit enters into them and they cleave to it, and when it dominates, such a man is called holy, perfect, wholly devoted to God.

“Soul” (nefesh) is the lowest stirring, it supports and feeds the body and is closely connected with it. When it sufficiently qualifies itself, it becomes the throne on which rests the lower spirit (ruah), as it is written, “until the spirit be poured on us from on high” (Is. XXXII, 15). When both have prepared themselves sufficiently, they are qualified to receive the higher spirit (neshamah), to which the lower spirit (ruah) becomes a throne, and which is undiscoverable, supreme over all. Thus there is throne resting on throne, and a throne for the highest. From observing these grades of the soul, one obtains an insight into the higher Wisdom, and it is wholly through Wisdom that in this way certain mysteries are connected together. For nefesh is the lowest stirring to which the body cleaves, like the dark light at the bottom of the candle-flame which clings to the wick and exists only through it. When fully kindled it becomes a throne for the white light above it. When both are fully kindled, the white light becomes a throne for a light which cannot be fully discerned, an unknown something resting on that white light, and so there is formed a complete light. So with the man who attains perfection and is called “holy”, as in the verse “for the holy ones that are in the earth”. And so also in the upper world. Hence at the time when Abram entered the land God appeared to him and he received there a nefesh, and built an altar to the corresponding grade (of divinity). Then “he journeyed to the South”, receiving a ruah. Finally he rose to the height of cleaving to God through the medium of the neshamah, whereupon he “built an altar to the Lord”, indicating the most recondite grade corresponding to the neshamah. He then found that it was requisite for him to test himself and endow himself with grades, so he went down to Egypt. There he preserved himself from being seduced by those bright essences, and after testing himself he returned to his place: he “went up” from Egypt literally, strengthened and confirmed in faith, and reached the highest grade of faith. Thenceforth Abram was acquainted with the higher Wisdom and clung to God and became the right hand of the world. Hence it says AND ABRAM WAS VERY RICH IN CATTLE, IN SILVER, AND IN GOLD: “very rich”, from the side of the East; “in cattle”, from the side of the West; “in silver”, from the side of the South; “in gold”, from the side of the North.’ R. Eleazar and R. Abba and all the companions thereupon came and kissed his hands. R. Abba wept and said, ‘Alas, alas, when thou departest from the world, who shall cause the light of the Torah to shine forth? Happy the lot of the companions who hear these words of the Torah from thy mouth,’ Said R. Simeon, Let us proceed.

AND HE WENT ON HIS JOURNEYS, i.e. to revisit his place and his grades, until he reached the first grade where the first revelation had taken place. “On his journeys”: all those grades, grade after grade, as has been said.

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EVEN TO BETHEL: to prepare his place and to combine “the South” and “Bethel” in a complete unity, since from the South to Bethel comprised the whole gamut of Wisdom. UNTO THE PLACE WHERE HIS TENT HAD BEEN AT THE BEGINNING, to wit, Bethel, the “perfect stone”. The spot is further defined as THE

PLACE OF THE ALTAR WHICH HE HAD MADE THERE AT THE FIRST, as it was said, “to the Lord who appeared unto him”, and therefore now ABRAM CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD, in proof that he had attained to perfect faith. Note this. At first Abram proceeded from the lower to the higher, as it is written, “And the Lord appeared to Abram”, and again, “to the Lord who appeared to him”, and then “going on his journeys to the South”-grade after grade until he was endowed with the South which was his rightful portion. From thence he began to reverse the process and descended from the higher to the lower, so as to fix all in its proper place. On the return journey, too, the mention of his stages contains an allusion to the higher Wisdom. It is written, “And he went on his journeys from the South”, i.e. from the side of the Right, from the very beginning of the upper world, the mysterious and recondite, reaching to the Limitless (En Sof), and then descended stage by stage “from the South to Bethel”, where “Abram called on the name of the Lord”, i.e. he affixed the unity to its proper place, viz. “the place of the altar which he had made there at the first”: i.e. he had taken it from the lower to the upper grade, and now he brought it down by stages from the upper to the lower in order that it should not depart from those upper grades nor they from it and the whole should constitute an indissoluble unity. Then was Abram fully endowed, and he became the lot and the portion of God in real truth. Happy are the righteous who are crowned in God as God in them! Happy in this world and happy in the world to come! Of them it is written, “Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the earth for ever” (Is. LX, 21); and again, “The path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. IV, 18).

The travellers went on until they came to a field, where they sat down. R. Simeon then discoursed on the text: Turn unto me and have mercy upon me (Ps. LXXXVI, 16). He said: ‘This verse deserves careful study, for although we have already explained it more than once, yet it has still an inner meaning. How could David say to God, “Turn to me”? The truth is that he was referring to the grade with which he was endowed. Similarly he said Give thy strength to thy servant (Ibid.). The word “strength” refers to the supernal Force (Geburah), as in the verse “And he gave strength to his king” (Is. II, 19). The word “king”, used thus without qualification, refers to the Messiah, as also does the word “servant” in this passage. And save the son of thy handmaid. Why does he call himself the son of his mother and not of his father Jesse? This bears out what we have laid down, that when a man comes to ask something of heaven, he should only say that of which he is certain; hence he mentioned his mother and not his father. And further, tradition refers this verse to the Messiah, as we have said.’ R. Simeon proceeded:

AND THERE WAS A STRIFE BETWEEN THE HERDMEN OF ABRAM'S CATTLE. The omission of the letter Yod from the word rib (strife) indicates that Lot desired to revert to the idolatry of the inhabitants of the Country; this is confirmed by the end of the verse AND THE CANAANITE AND THE PERIZZITE DWELT THEN IN THE LAND. That Lot actually did revert to idolatry we know from the words AND LOT

JOURNEYED FROM THE EAST: the word mi-qedem (from the East) is equivalent to mi-qadmono (from the Ancient One) of the world (similarly it says of the men who built the Tower of Babel that they journeyed "from the East", Gen. XI, 1). As soon as Abram saw that this was in Lot's mind, straightway HE SAID TO LOT... SEPARATE THYSELF, I PRAY THEE, FROM ME; as if to say, thou art not worthy to associate with me. So Abram separated from him and refused to accompany or join him, since whoever associates with a sinner eventually follows in his footsteps and so brings punishment

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upon himself. We know this from Jehoshaphat, who through joining with Ahab would have brought punishment on himself had he not been saved by the merit of his ancestors. Therefore Abram refused to accompany Lot; and for all that Lot did not turn from his evil course, but CHOSE HIM ALL THE PLAIN OF THE JORDAN and journeyed mi-qedem, i.e. departed from the Ancient One of the world, and did not seek to perfect himself in faith like Abram. SO ABRAM DWELLED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, to cleave to the place where faith could be strengthened and to learn wisdom in order to cleave to his Master, whereas LOT DWELLED IN THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN and MOVED HIS TENT AS FAR AS SODOM, with those godless sinners who had abandoned faith, as it is written, NOW THE MEN OF SODOM WERE WICKED AND SINNERS AGAINST THE LORD EXCEEDINGLY. Thus each went his own way. Happy are the companions who devote themselves to the Torah day and night and seek converse with God; of them it is written, "Ye that cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day" (Deut. IV, 4).'

AND THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM AFTER THAT LOT WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM. In connection with this verse R. Abba discoursed on the following text: Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord (Jonah, I, 3). He said: 'Woe to the man who seeks to hide himself from God, of whom it is written, "Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" (Jer. XXIII, 24). Why, then, did Jonah seek to flee from Him? The reason is to be found in the verse "My dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the coverts of the steep place" (S. S. II, 14). "My dove" refers to the community of Israel; "the clefts of the rock" refers to Jerusalem, which is firm and eminent like a rock; "the coverts of the steep place" refer to the place which is called "holy of holies", the heart of the world. It is called "coverts" because there the Shekinah is concealed like a woman who converses only with her husband and never goes out. The community of Israel does not dwell outside its own place save in the time of exile, and because it is in exile, therefore other nations enjoy greater prosperity. When Israel were in their own land everything was as it should be, the heavenly throne was fully spread over them, and the liturgy which they performed pierced through the ether and ascended on high to its place. For Israel alone was qualified to serve God in that land, and therefore the Gentiles kept aloof, since they did not rule over it as now, but were nourished only by the "residue". You may say, How do you reconcile this with the fact that a number of (foreign) kings ruled over it at

the time when the Temple still existed. The answer is that in the time of the first Temple, before Israel defiled the land, the Gentiles did not rule over it but were nourished from the "residue". But when Israel sinned and defiled the land, they, as it were, drove the Shekinah from its place, and it went to another place, and therefore other nations were allowed to rule over the land. For no angel has control of the land of Israel, but only God. When Israel sinned and burned incense to other gods in the Holy Land, the Shekinah was driven from its place, and other gods were associated with it, and so other nations obtained dominion and the prophets died out, and all the higher grades ceased to rule, and dominion was not withdrawn from other nations, because they drew the Shekinah to themselves. Hence in the time of the second Temple the rule of the other nations did not cease, and even less so in the period of the Exile, when the Shekinah found herself among other nations where other chieftains exercise dominion, deriving their sustenance from the Shekinah, which has consorted with them. Thus we see that

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when Israel dwelt in their own land and maintained the Temple service, the Shekinah remained among them in privacy, and did not issue from her house openly. Therefore all the prophets who lived in those times drew their inspiration only from her place, as we have said. That was the reason why Jonah fled from the Holy Land, namely, that the prophetic inspiration should not come to him, and he should not have to take the Lord's message. But, you may say, did not the Shekinah reveal itself (to Ezekiel) in Babylon, which is outside the Holy Land? The answer is that, according to an authentic tradition, the words "came expressly" used at the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy indicate that this was without precedent from the day when the Temple was built, and this prophecy was for a special emergency. Further, the incident took place on the river Khebar (khebar=of old), so called because it was qualified for this from the beginning of the world, and the Shekinah had been constantly revealed on it, as it is written, "And a river went out from Eden to water the garden and from there it parted, etc." (Gen. II, 10). This was one of the four rivers, and there the Shekinah was revealed exceptionally to relieve Israel in their emergency; but at other times it did not appear there. Therefore Jonah left the Holy Land in order that the Shekinah might not rest upon him or appear to him, and hence it says "from the presence of the Lord", and again, 'for the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord" (Jon. I, 10). What is the point of all this? It is that just as, in the case of Jonah, the Shekinah did not reveal itself save in the fitting place, so in the case of Abram it did not reveal itself save when he was in fitting company. For from the day when Lot made up his mind to become a renegade, the Holy Spirit departed from Abram; but when Lot left him, straightway the Holy Spirit rested upon him: so it is written, AND THE LORD SAID UNTO ABRAM AFTER THAT LOT WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM. Furthermore, when Abram saw that Lot had reverted to his sinful ways, he was afraid and said to himself, "Perhaps through associating with this man I have lost the holy heritage with which God has endowed me";

hence, when Lot left him, God said to him, LIFT UP NOW THINE EYES AND LOOK FROM THE PLACE WHERE THOU ART. "The place where thou art" means "the place to which thou didst cleave before, and in which thou wast endowed with perfect faith". NORTHWARD AND SOUTHWARD AND EASTWARD AND WESTWARD: These are the same as the "journeys" referred to in verse 3, indicating, like them, the "higher degrees". Abram now received tidings that that perfect faith which he had acquired on his first passage through the land would not depart from him and his descendants for ever; hence it is written, FOR THE LAND WHICH THOU SEEST, TO THEE WILL I GIVE IT AND TO THY SEED FOR EVER: the words which thou seest" indicate the first grade which he had acquired originally, and which now included and exhibited all the other grades.'

R. Eleazar was once at an inn at Lud, where R. Hizkiah also happened to be. In the course of the night he got up to study the Torah, as did also R. Hizkiah. On seeing him, he said, 'An inn like this is always a meeting-place for the companions.' He then began to discourse on the text: As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons (S. S. II, 3). 'The apple tree,' he said, 'indicates the Holy One, blessed be He, being more delightful than all the other trees, and distinguished among them by its colours. So none can compare with Him; therefore "I delighted in his shadow"-in his shadow and not in that of the other guardian-angels, even from the time when Abram was in the world, Abram, who was attached to God in love, as it is written, "Abraham my friend" (Is. XLI, 8). His fruit was sweet to my taste refers to Isaac, who was a holy fruit. The words "In his shadow I delighted and sat down" may also be referred to Jacob, and the words "and his fruit was sweet to my taste" to Joseph, who produced holy fruit in the world.

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It is also possible to understand the words "Like an apple tree among the trees of the wood" of Abraham, who smelt sweetly like an apple tree, who was distinguished in faith above all his contemporaries, and who was marked out as unique both above and below, as it is written, "Abraham was one" (Ezek. XXXIII, 24). He was so called because no one else of his contemporaries attained to the virtue of faith in God.' Said R. Hizkiah to him: 'What of the words "And the souls which they made in Haran"?' He replied: 'These did not reach the higher grades which Abraham acquired.' later on he said to him: 'Another thing I have been told is that Abraham was not called "one" until he had associated with himself Isaac and Jacob. When he had done this and when all three were patriarchs, then Abraham was called "one", and then he became the apple tree distinguished above all the rest of the world.' He said: 'Your explanation is good. According to another explanation, the words "the apple tree", "my beloved", and "in his shadow" all equally indicate the Holy One, blessed be He. "I delighted and sat": to wit, on the day when God revealed Himself on Mount Sinai and Israel received the Torah and said, "We will do and we will hearken" (Ex. XXIV, 7). "His fruit is sweet to my taste" refers to the words of the Torah which are called "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb" (Ps. XIX,

11). Another explanation refers the "fruit" to the souls of the righteous, who are the fruit of the handiwork of the Almighty and abide with Him above. Listen to this. All the souls in the world, which are the fruit of the handiwork of the Almighty, are all mystically one, but when they descend to this world they are separated into male and female, though these are still conjoined. When they first issue forth, they issue as male and female together. Subsequently, when they descend (to this world) they separate, one to one side and the other to the other, and God afterwards mates them-God and no other, He alone knowing the mate proper to each. Happy the man who is upright in his works and walks in the way of truth, so that his soul may find its original mate, for then he becomes indeed perfect, and through his perfection the whole world is blessed.' Said R. Hizkiah: 'I have heard the following explanation of the verse "From me is thy fruit found" (Hos. XIV, 9). The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the Community of Israel, "From me assuredly is thy fruit found"-not my fruit, but thy fruit: the desire of the female produces a vital spirit and is embraced in the vehemence of the male, so that soul is joined with soul and they are made one, each embraced in the other. Afterwards they become two in this world, and thus through the force of the male is produced the fruit of the female. According to another explanation, the fruit of the male is produced through the desire of the female, since if not for the desire of the female for the male no fruit would ever be produced.'

NOW IT CAME TO PASS IN THE DAYS OF AMRAFEL KING OF SHINAR. R. Jose expounded in this connection the text: Who hath raised up one from the East, whom Righteousness calleth to follow him? (Is. XLI, 2). He said: 'This verse has been explained in various ways, but it also contains an esoteric allusion. God, we have learnt, has made seven firmaments on high, all of which acknowledge the glory of the Almighty and are capable of pointing the lesson of true faith. Now there is above these seven a hidden firmament which guides and illumines them. Of this one we cannot discover the true nature, however much we inquire and therefore it is designated by the interrogative particle Mi (Who), as has been pointed out: hence the Scripture says: "From the womb of Whom (Mi) came forth the ice" (Job XXXVIII, 29), which has been explained to refer to the highest firmament

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over the other seven. At the bottom again there is a firmament, the lowest of all, which has no light; and on that account the highest firmament joins with it in such a way as to insert in it the two letters of its own name, so that it is called Yam (sea), being, as it were, the sea of that highest firmament, because all the other firmaments serve as streams (to convey its light), and flow into this lowest one as into a sea; and it thereupon produces fruits and fishes after their kind, and in reference to this David said; "Lo, the sea great and wide, wherein are things creeping innumerable both small and great beasts" (Ps. CIV, 25). We now see what is meant by the words "Who raised up from the East". The one raised up was Abraham. The words "Righteousness calleth him to follow him" refer to the lowest firmament which has become "sea". It is this

which "giveth nations before him", which executes vengeance and overthrows the enemy. "He giveth nations before him": these are the peoples of the earth. "And maketh him to rule over kings": these are the guardian-angels of the nations above, for when God executes judgement on a people, He does so both below and above. "He pursueth them and passeth on safely" (Is. XLI, 3): this is Abram who pursued them while God passed before him and slew them, as it says, "Peace passeth on" (Ibid.), "Peace" referring to God. "Even by a way that he had not gone by his feet": if not with his feet, how then did Abram go on the clouds or with horses and chariots? No: what it means is that it was not an angel or a messenger, but God Himself, that went before Abram, the word "feet" here referring to the angels, who are subject to God, as in the verse "And his feet shall stand in that day" (Zech. XIV, 4). Another explanation of the verse is as follows. When God "awoke" the world to bring Abram and to draw him near to Himself, this was because Jacob was destined to issue from him and to establish twelve tribes who should all be righteous in the sight of God. "Whom he calleth in righteousness": because God was calling him constantly from the day that the world was created, as it is written, "calling the generations from the beginning" (Is. XLI, 4). "To his foot": i.e. to attach him to His service and to bring him near to Himself. R. Judah says: "Who aroused from the East" this refers to Abraham, who received his first impulse to seek God from the East. For when he saw the sun issuing in the morning from the East, he was first moved to think that that was God, and said "this is the King that created me", and worshipped it the whole day. In the evening when the sun went down and the moon commenced to shine, he said, "Verily this rules over the orb which I worshipped the whole day, since the latter is darkened before it and does not shine any more." So he served the moon all that night. In the morning when he saw the darkness depart and the East grow light, he said, "Of a surety there is a king who rules over all these orbs and orders them." So when God saw Abram's longing to find Him, He revealed Himself unto him and spoke with him, as it is written, "Righteousness called to him to follow him."

R. Isaac explained in connection with Abraham the verse: I am the Lord speaking righteousness, declaring what is right (Is. XLV, 19).

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He said: 'All God's words are truth and His acts are righteousness. For when God first created the world it was unstable and rocked to and fro. Said God to the world, Wherefore rockest thou? It answered: Sovereign of the Universe, I cannot be firm, because I have no foundation on which to rest. God thereupon said: Behold, I intend to raise up in thee a righteous man, Abraham, who will love Me. Hearing this, the world straightway became firmly established; therefore it is written, "these are the generations of the heavens and the earth behibaream (when they were created), which by a transposition of letters becomes beabraham (for the sake of Abraham).'" R. Hiya enlarged upon the words "declaring what is right". He said: 'The world continued to remonstrate with God, saying, "From this Abraham will issue descendants [Tr. note: The peoples

of Ishmael and Esau.] who will destroy the Temple and burn the Law." God replied: "He will also have one descendant, namely Jacob, who will be the father of twelve tribes who will all be righteous." Forthwith the world was established for his sake, and therefore God is said to be "declaring (the advent of) things that are right". R. Eleazar said: 'It has been noted that there is a difference between "speaking" (dober) and "declaring" (maggid). "Speaking" is from a revealed source, an outer grade, not of the highest; therefore it is applied here to "righteousness" (zedek). But "declaring" indicates the inner grade which controls that belonging to "speaking"; hence it says here "declaring things that are right" (mesharim), these referring to the higher grade in which is that of Jacob.' Said R. Isaac to him, 'Is there not a text "he declares to you his covenant" (Deut. IV, 13)?' He replied: 'The "covenant" also is a grade superior to that referred to in the expression "speaking righteousness". One must be careful too to note that although "speaking" is lower than "declaring", it still actually designates a high grade and is very pregnant in signification.'

R. Eleazar was once on the way to visit his father-in-law along with R. Hiya and R. Jose and R. Hizkiah. Said R. Eleazar, 'It is borne in upon me that stirring above is produced only in response to an impulse from below, and depends upon the longing of that below.' He illustrated this from the text: O God, keep thou not silence, hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God (Ps. LXXXIII, 2), which he expounded thus. 'David said: "O God, keep thou not silence." These words represent an impulse to Elohim to exert His sway. David said in effect: "Elohim, cease not to rouse the Highest and to associate thyself with the Right." Wherefore so? Because "thine enemies make a tumult, etc.", they have consulted together with one consent, against Thee do they make a covenant. "Therefore, O God, be not silent," as explained. For when Elohim is joined with the Right, then the enemies are crushed, as it is written, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power, thy right hand, O Lord, dasheth in pieces the enemy." Note that, when all those kings joined together to make war on Abram, they designed to make away with him. But so soon as they got possession of Lot, his brother's son, they went off (as it is written, AND THEY TOOK LOT, ABRAM'S BROTHER'S SON, AND HIS GOODS AND DEPARTED), the reason being that Lot closely resembled Abram, so that thinking they had Abram, they went off. The reason of their enmity to Abram was that Abram weaned men from idolatry and taught them to worship God. Also God incited them to make their invasion in order to aggrandise Abram and to attract him to his service. Esoterically speaking, when Abram started to pursue them, then God "did not keep silent" until the whole was linked up with Abram; then when the whole was linked up with Abram, then all those kings were crushed before him, as we have said.'

AND MELCHIZEDEK KING OF SALEM BROUGHT FORTH BREAD AND WINE. R. Simeon adduced here the text "In Salem also is his tabernacle" (Ps. LXXVI, 3). He said: 'When God decided to create the world, He first produced a flame of a scintillating lamp. He blew spark against spark, causing darkness and fire, and produced from the recesses

of the abyss a certain drop which He joined with the flame, and from the two He created the world. The flame ascended and encircled itself with the Left, and the drop ascended and encircled itself with the Right. They then crossed and changed places, going up and down alternately until they were closely interlocked, and there issued from between them a full wind. Then those two sides were made one, and the wind was set between them and they were entwined with one another, and so there was harmony above and harmony below; the grade was firmly established, the letter he was crowned with vau and vau with he, and so he ascended and was joined in a perfect bond. This is alluded to in the words "Melchizedek (lit. king of righteousness) king of Salem" (lit. completeness), i.e. the king who rules with complete sovereignty. When is he completely king? On the Day of Atonement, when all faces are illumined. According to another explanation, "Melchizedek" alludes to the lower world, and "king of Salem" to the upper world; and the verse indicates that both are intertwined inseparably, two worlds like one, so that the lower world also is the whole, and the whole is one. "Brought forth bread and wine": signifying that both of these are in it. AND HE WAS PRIEST OF GOD MOST HIGH: i.e. one world ministers to the other. "Priest" refers to the Right, and "Most High God," to the upper world; and hence a priest is required to bless the world. For this lower world receives blessings when it is associated with a High Priest; hence there is a special force in the words "and he blessed him and said, Blessed is Abram to the Most High God". After this model it behoves the priest on earth to intertwine his fingers when blessing in the synagogue in order that he may be linked with the Right and that the two worlds may be linked together. BLESSED IS ABRAM. The words of the text are a prototype of the formula of blessing (used by the Israelites). "Blessed is Abram" (in the sense we have given to it) corresponds to "blessed art Thou". "To the Most High God" corresponds to "O Lord our God". "Possessor of heaven and earth" corresponds to "king of the universe. Further, AND HE BLESSED HIM indicates the course of blessing from below to above; BLESSED IS THE MOST HIGH GOD indicates from above to below. AND HE GAVE HIM A TENTH OF ALL: so that he should cleave to the place where the link was formed with the lower world.'

As they were going along they came across R. Yesa and a certain Judean with him who was explaining the text "To David: Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul" (Ps. XXV, 1). He said: 'Why is the inscription of this psalm simply "to David" and not "A Psalm of David"? It is because the real meaning is "for the sake of David", i.e. of his grade. "Unto thee, O Lord", i.e. upward-striving; "my soul", i.e. David himself, his original grade; "I lift up": to wit, I cause to ascend, since David was ever striving to rise to a higher grade and to link himself to it firmly. Similarly it was for the sake of his grade that David uttered the words "To David: Bless the Lord, O my soul" (where the word eth indicates his desire to be linked above) "and all that is within me bless his holy name" (Ps. CIII, 1), referring to the "beasts of the field" which are called "inwards".' Said R. Eleazar to R. Yesa, 'I see that you have come in company with the

Shekinah.' He said, "Assuredly it is so. I have been walking with him three parasangs, and he has told me ever so many excellent things. I hired him as a porter, not knowing that he was the shining light which I have discovered him to be.' R. Eleazar then said to the man, 'What is your name?' He said: 'Joezer'. Whereupon he said: 'Let Joezer and Eleazar sit together.' So they sat down on a rock

in that field. The Judean then commenced to discourse on the text I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and thy sins I will not remember (Is. XLIII, 25). He said: 'The word "I" occurs here twice: once in reference to Sinai (cf. "I am the Lord thy God", Ex. XX, 2), and the other in reference to the creation of the world (cf. "I have made the earth and created man upon it", Is. XLV, 12), to show that there is no division between the upper and lower worlds. "That blotteth out thy transgressions": not merely removing them, so that they shall never be seen more. "For mine own sake": i.e. for the sake of the mercy which I dispense, as it is written, "For the Lord thy God is a merciful God" (Deut. IV, 31). Another explanation of the words "that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake" is as follows. Sinners in this world impair the influence of the upper world, for when they sin, mercy and the supernal light depart, and the stream of blessing does not descend to this world, and this grade (of mercy) does not take up the blessings from above in order to convey them to the lower world. Hence God acts "for His own sake", in order that the stream of blessing should not be withheld. Similarly it is written, "See now that I, I am he" (Deut. XXXII, 39), to show that there is no division between the upper and the lower. See now, in this way, when there are righteous men in the world, blessings are sent to all worlds. When Abram came, blessings were sent to the world, as it is written, "And I shall bless thee, and be thou a blessing, i.e. that blessing should be found both above and below for his sake. When Isaac came he taught the world that there is a judge executing judgement above to punish the wicked, and he invoked justice upon the world in order that its inhabitants might fear God. When Jacob came he obtained mercy for the world and perfected men's faith in God. Hence in the days of Abram MELCHIZEDEK KING OF SALEM (salem=completeness), i.e. God whose throne was then established in its place and whose sovereignty therefore became complete, BROUGHT OUT BREAD AND WINE, i.e. produced the appropriate food for the whole world, and did not withhold blessing from all the worlds; from the upper grades He brought forth food and blessings for all the worlds. AND HE WAS A PRIEST TO THE MOST HIGH GOD, the whole thus being in the most perfect order; to show that as the wicked upset the world and cause blessing to be withheld, so the righteous bring blessing to the world and for their sakes all its inhabitants are blessed. AND HE GAVE HIM A TENTH OF ALL, to wit, of those blessings which issue from "all", the source of all the blessings which descend upon the world. According to another explanation, God gave Abram a tenth, namely, the grade [Tr. note: Malkuth.] in which all the sources of faith and blessing are established, and which is the tenth, one out of ten and ten out of a



hundred; and from this point onwards Abram was fully confirmed from above.' Said R. Eleazar to him: 'What you say is right.' R. Eleazar further asked him what his business was. He said: 'I was a teacher of children in my town till R. Jose came, when they left me and went to him. Nevertheless the townfolk used to pay me my salary as before. Not wishing, however, to take money for nothing, I entered into the service of this Sage.' Said R. Eleazar: 'This is a case where my father's blessings are required.' They went to R. Simeon, and the Judean used to study all day before him. One day he was studying the subject of washing the hands, and said: 'Whoever does not wash his hands as required, although he is punished in the next world is also punished in this world, because he endangers his health. And similarly, he who washes his hands as required procures for himself blessings above which rest upon his hands, and is also blessed with wealth.'

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[Note: The first 5 lines of the English translation do not appear in our Hebrew text]

Afterwards R. Simeon caught sight of him washing his hands and using a great quantity of water, and he exclaimed: 'Fill his hands with thy blessings.' And so it came to pass, since he found a treasure and grew rich, and he used to study the Torah and give sustenance to the poor every day and smile upon them benignantly, so that R. Simeon applied to him the verse "And thou shalt rejoice in the Lord and glory in the Holy One of Israel."

AFTER THESE THINGS. R. Judah discoursed on the text: I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me (S. S. VII, 11). He said: 'The inner meaning of this verse is that the stirring below is accompanied by a stirring above, for there is no stirring above till there is a stirring below. Further, blessings from above descend only where there is some substance and not mere emptiness. We learn this from the wife of Obadiah, to whom Elisha said, "Tell me, what hast thou in the house" (II Kings, IV, 2), meaning that blessings from above would not descend on an empty table or an empty place. When she said: "Thy handmaid hath nothing in the house save a cruse of oil"-only enough to smear her little finger-he said to her: "You have relieved me, for I did not see how blessings were to descend from above on to an empty place, but since you have some oil, this will provide a place sufficient for the purpose." (The connection of "oil" with "blessing" is found in Psalm CXXXIII, where it says "like the good oil," etc., and then "for there the Lord commanded the blessing, life for evermore". It is true, the immediate comparison in the passage is with dew, not oil, but the two mean the same thing, as this dew was distilled by God from the supernal oil. Wine and oil belong respectively to the Left and the Right sides, and from the Right side blessings descend on the world, and from there the holy kingdom is anointed. Thus because it was fixed upon below, oil was first prepared above as the source of blessings. From the stirring

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of this supernal oil the lower oil was poured on David

and Solomon to bring blessings on their descendants. This is derived from a collation of the text "and the oil stood", in II Kings IV, 6, with the text "the root of Jesse which standeth for an ensign of the nations", Is. XI, 10.) We derive the same lesson from the fact that the table of shew-bread, from which issued blessings, was not to be left empty a single moment; and on that account we do not say grace over an empty table, since blessings from above do not rest on an empty table. To resume, then, the verse "I am my beloved's and towards me is his desire" indicates that "first of all I am my beloved's, and then, in consequence, his desire is towards me; first I prepare for him a place, and then his desire is towards me". The verse may also be explained by reference to the dictum that the Shekinah is not found in the company of sinners, but when a man exerts himself to purify himself and to draw near to God, then the Shekinah rests on him. So "I am my beloved's" to begin with, and then "his desire is towards me".'

AFTER THESE THINGS, i.e. after Abram pursued the kings and God slew them, Abram felt some qualms lest he had perchance forfeited some of his reward for converting men to the service of God, seeing that now some of his fellow creatures had been killed through him. Therefore God said to him: FEAR NOT, ABRAM, I AM THY SHIELD, THY REWARD IS EXCEEDING GREAT: you have received a reward for them, for none of them shall ever be accounted innocent. THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ABRAM IN A VISION SAYING. Vision is the grade in which all figures are beheld. R. Simeon said: 'Up to the time when Abram was circumcised, only one grade spoke with him; namely Vision, which is also mentioned in the verse "who seeth the vision of Shaddai" (Num. XXIV, 4). After his circumcision, all grades combined with this grade, and in this way God spoke with him.'

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It may be objected that according to our interpretation the verses "and the Lord appeared to Abram", "and Abram journeyed to the South", "and he built there an altar", indicate that he had attained to these higher grades; how, then, can you say that before he was circumcised these grades did not combine with this one to speak with him? The answer is that previously God gave wisdom to Abraham to cleave to Him and to know the true meaning of faith, but only this lower grade actually spoke with him; but when he was circumcised, all the higher grades joined this lower grade to speak with him, and thus Abraham reached the summit of perfection. See now, before a man is circumcised he is not attached to the name of God, but when he is circumcised he enters into the name and is attached to it. Abram, it is true, was attached to the name before he was circumcised, but not in the proper manner, but only through God's extreme love for him; subsequently He commanded him to circumcise himself, and then he was vouchsafed the covenant which links all the supernal grades, a covenant of union which links the whole together so that every part is intertwined. Hence, till Abram was circumcised, God's word with him was only in a vision, as has been said.'

Consider this. When God created the world, it was created only through a covenant, as it is written,

“Bereshith (b'rith esh, covenant of fire), God created”; and it is further written, “If my covenant of day and night stand not, if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth” (Jer. XXXIII, 25), since there is a covenant of union that day and night shall not be separated. R. Eleazar said: ‘When God created the world, it was on condition that if Israel when they came into the world should accept the Torah, it would be well, but if not, then the world should revert to chaos. Nor was the world firmly established until Israel stood before Mount Sinai and accepted the Torah. From that day God has been creating fresh worlds, to wit, the marriages of human beings, for from that time God has been making matches and proclaiming “the daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so”; these are the worlds which He creates.’

I AM A SHIELD TO THEE: this “I is the first grade to which he was attached at the start.

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AND ABRAM SAID, O LORD GOD: the two names indicate the union of the upper and the lower world. WHAT WILT THOU GIVE TO ME, SEEING THAT I GO CHILDLESS? i.e. not having a son, and we have learnt that he who has no son is called childless. The words “What wilt thou give to me” would seem to indicate some want of faith on the part of Abraham, but this is not so. God said to him: “I am thy shield,” to wit, in this world, “thy reward is very great”, to wit, in the next world. Abram, however, knew from the wisdom which he had acquired that a man who has not begotten a son is not rewarded with the future world, and he therefore said, “How canst thou give me (such a reward), seeing that I have not merited it?” (Hence we learn that a man who is not vouchsafed sons in this world is not granted in the future world the privilege of entering within the curtain.) Abram saw from his horoscope that he was fated not to have children; therefore HE BROUGHT HIM FORTH ABROAD; that is, God said to him: “Take no notice of that, for through my name thou shalt have a son ; hence it says SO (Koh) SHALL THY SEED BE. The word Koh indicates the Holy Name, which was now linked to him from that side. It is the gateway of prayer through which a man obtains his request; it is the side which comes from the side of Geburah (might), from which Isaac also came. The side of Geburah is called Koh, because from it come fruit and produce to the world, and not from the side of the stars and constellations. AND HE BELIEVED IN THE LORD: he clave to the higher and not the lower; he believed in the Lord and not in stars and constellations: in the Lord who had promised to give him great recompense in the future world. “He believed in the Lord”: namely in the grade which was vouchsafed him, that from there seed would come to him to bear children in the world. AND HE COUNTED IT TO HIMSELF FOR KINDNESS: i.e. although this koh was pure justice, Abram counted it as mercy. Another explanation is that he linked the upper with the lower to join them together, in this way. According to tradition, God told Abram that he would not beget till his name had been changed to Abraham. The question has been asked, did he not beget Ishmael while he was still Abram? The answer is that he did not beget the son who was promised him while he was still

Abram. Then he only bore for the lower world, but when he obtained the name Abraham and entered into the covenant he bore for the upper world. Hence Abram did not bear for the upper union, but Abraham did, as we have said, and he was linked above through Isaac.’

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NOW WHEN ABRAM WAS NINETY-NINE YEARS OLD, ETC. In connection with this verse R. Abba discoursed on the text: For who is God save the Lord, and who is a rock save our God? (II Sam. XXII, 32). He said: ‘These words of King David may be paraphrased: What (heavenly) ruler or chieftain is there who can do anything without the Lord, anything save what he has been commanded by the Holy One, blessed be He, since all are subject to Him and cannot do anything of themselves? And what mighty power is there that has any force in himself save what he derives from our God? Another explanation is that a vision shown by the stars is not like a vision shown by God, for they show a thing and God changes it. And again, “Who is a rock (tsur) save our God?” i.e. there is no fashioner (tsayar) who fashions form within form and finishes it in all its details and inserts in it the heavenly soul which bears likeness to the Deity. See now when desire brings man and woman together, there issues from their union a son in whom both their forms are combined, because God has fashioned him in a mould partaking of both. Therefore a man should sanctify himself at such time, in order that the form may be as perfect as possible.’ Said R. Hiya, ‘How great are the works of the Holy One, blessed be He, for man is fashioned as a microcosm of the world, and every day God creates a world by bringing the proper couples together, and He fashions the forms of the offspring before they are born. See now what R. Simeon has told us, in explanation of the verse “This is the book of the generations of Adam”, that God showed Adam every generation and its students, etc. This does not simply mean that he saw through the spirit of prophecy that they were destined to come into the world, like one who in wisdom foresees the future, but it means that he literally saw with his eyes the form in which they were destined to exist in the world. He was able to do this because from the day on which the world was created all the souls which were destined to come to life among mankind were existing before God in that very form which they were destined to assume

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on earth (in the same way that the righteous after death are clothed in a form similar to that which they wore in this world), and so Adam saw them with his eyes. Nor can it be thought that after he saw them they disappeared, for all God's creations exist before Him permanently until they descend below. Similarly when Moses said “with him that standeth here this day with us, etc.” (Deut. XXIX, 14), we understand him to have indicated that all who were yet to be born were there. (This point demands a little more consideration. The words of the text are, “him that standeth here... and him that is not here with us this day”. The word “standeth” is omitted from the second half of the clause to show that the future generations were in fact standing there, but

they were not visible. It may be asked, why were they not visible here in the same way that they were visible to Adam, seeing that here there was more reason. The reason is that when the Torah was given to Israel, they beheld and gazed upon other sights and other grades, and they yearned to contemplate the glory of their Master, and therefore they had no eyes but for that.) The same idea is expressed in the words of the Psalmist, "Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance" (Ps. CXXXIX, 16), viz. the other celestial form resembling the one on earth. Thus we understand the words "Who is a tsur like our God", i.e. who is so excellent a fashioner (tsayar) as God who fashioned all. It is also possible to explain the words "For who is God besides the Lord, etc." in a more esoteric way. The word for "God" here is El, which signifies the union of all grades. Now there is a text "El hath indignation every day" (Ps. VII, 12), which might lead us to suppose that it designates a separate grade. Hence it says here "Who is El without Tetragrammaton", indicating that El is never alone disjoined from Tetragrammaton; and similarly there is no "Rock" (signifying the attribute of justice) "without our God".

Until Abram was circumcised, God spoke to him only in a vision, as it says above, "The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision" (Gen. XV, 1). By "vision" we understand the grade in which all figures are apparent, and which symbolises the covenant. This seems to contradict what was said before, that till Abram was circumcised he was addressed only by that grade to which the other grades are not attached. The truth is that this grade is indeed the reflection of all the higher grades, and was rendered possible through that reflection; it reflects all the colours (symbolic of the divine attributes)-white at the right, red at the left, and a further colour compounded of all colours. In this reflection God stood over Abram and spoke with him, although he was not circumcised. Of Balaam it is said that he saw "the vision of Shaddai" (Num. XXIV, 4), and of Abraham that God spoke to him "in a vision", simply. The difference is that Balaam saw only those (angels) below the Almighty, whereas Abram saw the He in which all the celestial figures are reflected. Till Abram was circumcised, he was addressed only by that degree which we have mentioned; after he was circumcised, then THE LORD APPEARED UNTO ABRAM, i.e. all the other

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grades appeared over this grade, and this grade addressed him without reserve. Thus when Abram was circumcised he emerged from the unripe state and entered into the holy covenant, and was crowned with the sacred crown, and entered into the covenant on which the world is based, and thus the world was firmly established for his sake. For it is written, "But for my covenant, I had not set the ordinances of heaven and earth", and also "There are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created"-the word behibaream (when they were created) can be read anagrammatically both beabraham (for the sake of Abraham) and b'he b'raam (he created them with He), and both come to the same thing.

When God showed Adam all future generations, he

saw them all in the Garden of Eden in the form which they were destined to assume in this world. When he saw David-so we have been told-with no span of life at all apportioned to him, he was grieved, and gave him seventy years of his own; that is why Adam lived seventy years short of the thousand, the rest being given to David. The fact of David's only having seventy years from Adam, the first man, symbolises something in the higher world, as does everything here below.

Note that all the figures of souls that are to be born stand before God in pairs, and afterwards when they come to this world God mates them. R. Isaac says: 'God announces, The daughter of so-and-so for so-and-so.' R. Jose said: 'How can that be, seeing that, as the Scripture tells us, "there is nothing new under the sun"?' R. Judah said: 'It is true that God creates nothing new under the sun; but this is done above.' R. Jose further asked: 'Why is there a proclamation, seeing that, as we have been told by R. Hizkiah in the name of R. Hiya, a man's wife is assigned to him at the very moment when he is born?' Said R. Abba: 'Happy are the righteous whose souls are beatified before the Holy King before they come into this world. For we have learnt that when God sends souls into the world they are formed into pairs of male and female, and thus united are placed in the hands of an emissary who has charge of conception, and whose name is Night. After that they are separated, and subsequently taken down among mankind (not always both at the same time). When their time of marriage arrives, God, who knows each spirit and soul, joins them as at first, and proclaims their union. Thus when they are joined they become one body and one soul, right and left in unison, and in this way "there is nothing new under the sun". You may object that there is also a dictum that "a man only obtains the wife he deserves". This is so, the meaning being that if he leads a virtuous life he is privileged to marry his own true mate, whose soul emerged at the same time as his.' R. Hiya asked: 'Where should a man of good character look for his soul-mate?' He replied: 'There is a dictum that a man should sell all his property in order to obtain in marriage a daughter of a scholar, for the special treasure of God is deposited with the learned in the Torah. We have also learnt in the esoteric Mishnah that one whose soul is a second time on earth can through prayer anticipate another in marrying a woman who is really destined for him; this is the meaning of the warning of the colleagues, "it is permissible to affianc a woman on the festival, lest another through prayer anticipate him"; and they were right. The word "another" is used significantly; and it is for this reason that marriages constitute a difficult task for the Almighty, for in all cases "the ways of the Lord are right" (Hos. XIV, 10).' R. Judah sent a question to R. Eleazar. 'I know', he said, 'about marriages in heaven, but I would like to ask, from where do those whose souls are a second time on earth obtain their mates?' The reply R. Eleazar sent him was this: 'It is written: "How shall we do for wives for them that remain?" (Jud. XXI, 7), and again, "and you shall catch every man his wife, etc." (Ibid. 21). This story of the Benjaminites shows us how it can be done, and hence the dictum "lest another anticipate him through his prayers".'

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Said R. Judah: 'No wonder we say that marriages constitute a difficult problem for the Almighty! Happy the lot of Israel who learn from the Torah the ways of God and all hidden things, and even the most secret of His mysteries! "The Law of the Lord is perfect", says the Scripture. Happy the lot of him who occupies himself with the Torah without cessation, for if a man abandons the Torah for one moment, it is as if he abandoned eternal life, as it says, "For it is thy life and the length of thy days" (Deut. XXX, 20), and again, "For length of days and years of life and peace shall they add to thee" (Prov. III, 2).'

NOW ABRAM WAS NINETY YEARS OLD, ETC. R. Jose discoursed on the text: Thy people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever (Is. LX, 21). He said: 'Happy are Israel above all peoples, in that the Holy One, blessed be He, has called them righteous. For so we have learnt from tradition that there are a hundred and twenty-eight thousand winged creatures who flit about over the world ready to catch up any voice that they hear; for, as tradition tells us, there is nothing done in the world which does not produce a certain sound, and this soars to the firmament and is caught up by those winged creatures, who carry it aloft to be judged, whether for good or ill, as it is written, "For a bird of the heaven shall carry the voice and that which hath wings shall tell the matter" (Eccl. X, 20).' At what time do they judge the voice? R. Hiya said: 'At the time when a man is asleep in his bed, when his soul leaves him and testifies against him; it is then that the voice is judged, for so it says, "from her that lieth in thy bosom keep the doors of thy mouth" (Mich. VII, 5), because it is she who testifies against a man.' R. Judah said: 'Whatever a man does in the day his soul testifies against him at night.' We have learnt as follows: R. Eleazar says: 'At the beginning of the first hour of the night, when the day is expiring and the sun going down, the keeper of the keys of the sun finishes his process through the twelve gates that were open in the day, and they are all closed. A herald then proclaims to the guardians of the gates, "Each one to his place to lock the gates." When the herald has finished, all of them come together and go aloft without uttering a sound. Then the accusing angels below begin to stir and to fly about the world, and the moon begins to shine and the trumpeters sound a blast. At the second blast, the angels of song start up and chant before their Lord. Emissaries of chastisement also start up, and punishment commences in the world. Then the souls of men who are sleeping give their testimony and are declared guilty, but the Holy One, blessed be He, deals kindly with men and allows the soul to return to its place. At midnight, when the cock crows, a wind blows from the North, but at the same time a current from the South arises and strikes against it, causing it to subside. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, rises as is His wont to disport himself with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Happy the portion of the man who rises at that hour to study with zest the Torah, for the Holy One, blessed be He, and all the righteous listen to his voice; for so it is written, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken for thy voice, cause me to hear it" (S. S. VIII, 13). Nay more, God draws round him a certain thread of grace which secures him the protection both of the higher and the lower angels,

as it is written, "By day the Lord will command his grace, and at night I shall chant his song" (Ps. XLII, 9).'

R. Hizkiah said: 'Whoever studies the Torah at that hour has constantly a portion in the future world.' Said R. Jose to him: 'What do you mean by "constantly"?' He replied: 'I have learnt that at midnight, when the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden, all the plants of the Garden are watered more plentifully by the stream which is called

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"the ancient stream" and "the stream of delight", the waters of which never cease to flow. When a man rises and studies the Torah at this hour, the water of that stream is, as it were, poured on his head and he is watered by it along with the other plants of the Garden of Eden. Moreover, because all the righteous in the Garden listen to him, he is given a right to be watered by that stream, and in this way he has a portion constantly in the future world.'

R. Abba was journeying from Tiberias to meet other learned scholars at the house of his father-in-law. He was accompanied by his son, R. Jacob. Coming to Kfar Tarsha, they decide to spend the night there. Said R. Abba to his host, 'Have you a cock here?' He said, 'Why?' 'Because,' he said, 'I want to get up precisely at midnight.' He answered; 'You have no need of a cock for that. I have a water-clock by my bed from which the water issues drop by drop till exactly midnight, when all the water is emptied and the wheel swings back with a great noise which wakens the whole house. I made it for the sake of a certain old man who used to get up every night at midnight to study the Torah.' Said R. Abba, 'Blessed be God for sending me here.' At midnight the wheel of the water-clock swung back, and R. Abba and R. Jacob got up. They heard the voice of their host, who was sitting in the lower part of the house with his two sons and saying: 'It is written: Midnight I will rise to give thanks to thee because of thy righteous judgments (Ps. CXIX, 62). Since the word "at" is omitted, we may take "Midnight" as an appellation of the Holy One, blessed be He, who is addressed thus by David because He is to be found with His retinue at midnight, that being the hour when He enters the Garden of Eden to converse with the righteous.' Said R. Abba to R. Jacob: 'Truly we have now an opportunity to associate with the Shekinah.' So they went and sat by him, and said to him, 'Repeat what you just said, for it is excellent. Where did you get it from?' He replied: 'I learnt it from my grandfather. [Tr. note: Al. 'Old visitor'.] He told me that during the first three hours of the night the accusing angels below are actively going about the world, but at midnight precisely God enters the Garden of Eden and the accusations below cease. These nightly ceremonies above take place only at midnight precisely; we know this from what it says of Abraham, that "the night was divided for them" (Gen. XIV, 15); also from the words "and it came to pass at the middle of the night" in the account of the Exodus (Ex. XII, 29), and from many other places in the Scripture. David knew this, because-so the old man told me-his kingship depended on this; and therefore he used to rise at this hour and chant praises, and for this reason he addressed God as "Midnight". He also said, "I rise to give thanks to Thee for Thy righteous

judgements” because this is the fount of justice, and the judgements of earthly kings derive from here; therefore David never neglected to rise and sing praises at this hour.’ R. Abba came and kissed him, saying, ‘Of a surety it is so. Blessed be God who has sent me here! For night is the time of judgement in every place, as we have fully established, and as has been discussed in the presence of R. Simeon.’ The young son of the inn-keeper thereupon asked: ‘If so, why does it say “midnight”?’ He replied: ‘It is laid down that the heavenly Majesty rises at midnight.’ Said the boy: ‘I can give another explanation.’ Said R. Abba: ‘Speak, my child; for the voice of the Lamp [Tr. note: R. Simeon.] will speak through thy mouth.’ He thereupon said: ‘What I have heard is this. Night is in truth the time of the royal judgement, and that judgement extends to all parts alike. Midnight, however, is fed from two sides, from justice and from clemency; only the first half of the night is the time of judgement, but the second half is illumined from the side of clemency (hesed). Therefore David said “Midnight”.’ R. Abba rose and placed his hands on his head and blessed him. He said: ‘I thought indeed that wisdom was to be found only in a few favoured pious ones. Now I see that even children in the generation of R. Simeon are endowed with heavenly wisdom. Happy art thou, R. Simeon! Woe to the generation when thou departest from it!’

So they sat till

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morning studying the Torah. R. Abba then discoursed on the text: Thy people are all righteous, they shall for ever inherit the earth, a branch of my planting, etc. (Is. LX, 21). He said: ‘Our colleagues have pointed out that these words cannot be taken literally, seeing how many sinners there are in Israel who transgress the precepts of the Law. The meaning is, as we have learnt in the esoteric teaching of our Mishnah: “Happy are Israel who bring an acceptable offering to the Almighty by circumcising their sons on the eighth day. They thereby become the portion of the ‘Zaddik (Righteous One) who is the foundation of the world’, and are called righteous; and therefore ‘they shall for ever inherit the earth’. They are ‘the branch of my planting’: that is, a branch of those shoots which God planted in the Garden of Eden, and of which the ‘earth’ mentioned here is one; hence Israel have a goodly portion in the future world, as it is written ‘the righteous shall inherit the earth’ (Ps. XXXVII, 29).” We have further learnt: “The reason why the name Abraham occurs for the first time in connection with the circumcision is that when he was circumcised he became associated with the letter He, and the Shekinah rested on him.” ‘ Said R. Abba: ‘Happy are Israel in that God has chosen them from all peoples and has given them this sign of the covenant; for whoever has this sign of the covenant will not descend to Gehinnom if he guards it properly, not subjecting it to another power or playing false with the name of the King; for to betray this sign is to betray the name of God, as it is written, “they have dealt treacherously against the Lord in that they have born strange children” (Hos. V, 7).’ Said R. Abba further: ‘When a man takes up his son to initiate him in this covenant, God calls to the ministering angels and says, “See what a creature I have made in the world.” At that

moment Elijah traverses the world in four sweeps and presents himself there; and for this reason we have been taught that it behoves the father to prepare an extra chair for his honour, and to say “this is the chair of Elijah”; and if he neglects to do so, Elijah does not visit him nor go up and testify before the Almighty that the circumcision has taken place. Why has Elijah to testify? For this reason. When God said to him “What dost thou here, Elijah?” (I Kings XIX, 9), he answered, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of Hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant.” Said God to him: “As thou livest, wherever my sons imprint this sign upon their flesh, thou shalt be there, and the mouth which charged Israel with forsaking the covenant shall testify that they are observing it.” Our teachers have also taught that the reason why Elijah was punished was because he brought false charges against God’s children.’

By this time it was full daylight and they rose to go, but the host came to them and said: ‘Will you not finish the subject on which you were engaged to-night?’ They said to him: ‘What do you mean?’ He said: ‘To-morrow you have a chance of seeing the sponsor of the covenant, [Tr. note: Elijah.] for to-morrow is the celebration of the circumcision of my son, and my wife begs you to stay.’ Said R. Abba: ‘We are invited to a pious act, and if we stay, it will be to behold the divine presence.’ They accordingly stayed the whole of that day.

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When night came the host brought together all his friends and they studied the Torah all that night and not one of them slept. Said the host to them, ‘May it please you that each one should give an exposition of the Torah.’

Then one began on the text: For that there was an uncovering of flesh in Israel, for that the people offered themselves willingly, bless ye the Lord (Jud. V, 2). He said: ‘The reason why Deborah and Barak commenced their song with these words was as follows. The world, as we have been taught, rests only upon this covenant of circumcision, according to the verse in Jeremiah (XXXIII, 25), “If not for my covenant day and night, I had not set the ordinances of heaven and earth.” Hence as long as Israel observe this covenant, the heaven and earth go on in their appointed course. But if Israel neglect this covenant, then heaven and earth are disturbed, and blessing is not vouchsafed to the world. Now in the time of the Judges the Gentiles gained power over Israel only because they neglected this covenant, to this extent, that they did not uncover the flesh after circumcision: this is indicated by the words “And the children of Israel forsook the Lord.” Hence God delivered them into the hand of Sisera, until Deborah came and made all Israel vow to circumcise properly; then their enemies fell before them. Similarly, as we have learnt, God said to Joshua, “Do you not know that the Israelites are not circumcised properly, as the flesh has not been uncovered; how then can you expect to lead them into the land and subdue their enemies?” Hence God said to him, “Circumcise again the children of Israel a second time” (Josh. V, 2); and until the uncovering was performed, they did not enter the land and their

enemies were not subdued. So here, when Israel vowed to observe this sign, their enemies were overcome and blessing returned to the land.'

Another one then discoursed on the text: And it came to pass on the way at the lodging place that the Lord met him and sought to kill him. He said: 'By "him" is here meant Moses. Said God to him: "How can you think to bring Israel out of Egypt and to humble a great king, when you have forgotten my covenant, since your son is not circumcised?"' Forthwith "he sought to slay him": that is, as we have learnt, Gabriel came down in a flame of fire to destroy him, having the appearance of a burning serpent which sought to swallow him. The form of a serpent was chosen as emblematical of the king of Egypt, who is compared to a serpent (Ezek. XXIX, 3). Zipporah, however, saw in time and circumcised her son, so that Moses was released; so it is written, "And Zipporah took a flint and cut off the foreskin of her son", being guided by a sudden inspiration.'

Another then discoursed on the text: And Joseph said to his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you, and they came near (Gen. XLV, 4). He said: 'Seeing that they were already standing by him, why did he tell them to come near? The reason was that when he said to them "I am Joseph your brother", they were dumbfounded, seeing his royal state, so he showed them the sign of the covenant and said to them: "It is through this that I have attained to this estate, through keeping this intact." From this we learn that whoever keeps intact this sign of the covenant is destined for kingship. Another example is Boaz, who said to Ruth, "As the Lord liveth, lie down until the morning" (Ruth III, 13). By this adjuration he exorcised his passion, and because he guarded the covenant he became the progenitor of the greatest lineage of kings, and of the Messiah, whose name is linked with that of God.'

Another then discoursed on the text: Though an host should encamp against me,... in this (zoth) will I be confident (Ps. XXVII, 3). He said: 'We have learnt that the word zoth (this) alludes to the sign of the covenant, which is always on a man's person and also has its counterpart above. If so, it may be said, why should David alone be confident in it and not everyone else? The answer is that this zoth was attached to him in a peculiar degree, being the crown of the kingdom [Tr. note: i.e. of the Sefirah Malkuth, of which David's throne was the counterpart below.]. It was because David did not guard it properly that the kingship

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was taken from him for so long a time. For this zoth symbolises also the supernal Kingdom and Jerusalem the holy city, and when David sinned a voice went forth and said: "David, thou shalt now be disjoined from that with which thou wast united; thou art banished from Jerusalem and the kingship is taken from thee"; thus he was punished in that wherein he had sinned. And if David could be so punished, how much more so other men?' Another then discoursed on the text: Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had soon dwelt in silence (duma) (Ps. XCIV, 17). He said: 'We have learnt that that which saves Israel from descending to

Gehinnom and being delivered into the hands of Duma like other nations is this same covenant. For so we have learnt, that when a man leaves this world, numbers of angels swoop down to seize him, but when they behold this sign of the holy covenant they leave him and he is not delivered into the hands of Duma, so as to be sent down to Gehinnom. Both upper and lower (angels) are afraid of this sign, and no torture is inflicted on the man who has been able to guard this sign, because thereby he is attached to the name of the Holy One, blessed be He. So with David, when he was dethroned and driven from Jerusalem, he was afraid that he would be delivered into the hands of Duma and die in the future world, until the message came to him, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die" (II Sam. XII, 13). Then it was that he exclaimed "Unless the Lord had been my help, etc."'

Another one then discoursed as follows: 'What did David mean by saying (when fleeing from before Absalom): and he shall show me both himself (otho) and his habitation (II Sam. XV, 25)?' He said: 'Who is there that can see God? In truth the word otho here means not "him" but "his sign", and it is as we have learnt, that when David's punishment was decreed, and he knew that it was for not having guarded properly this sign (which is the sum and substance of all, and without the due observance of which no one can be called righteous), he prayed that God should show him this sign, fearing that it had parted from him, because on it depended both his throne and Jerusalem; hence he joined the sign and the habitation, meaning that the kingdom conferred by this sign should be restored to its place.'

Another then discoursed on the text: From my flesh shall I see God (Job XIX, 26). He said: 'The words "my flesh" are to be literally taken as the place where the covenant is imprinted, as we have learnt: "Whenever a man is stamped with this holy imprint, through it he sees God", because the soul (neshamah) is attached to this spot. So if he does not guard it, then of him it is written, "they lose the soul (neshamah) given by God" (Job IV, 9). If, however, he guards it, then the Shekinah does not depart from him. He cannot be sure of it till he is married, when at last the sign enters into its place. When the man and wife are joined together and are called by one name, then the celestial favour rests upon them, the favour (Hesed) which issues from the supernal Wisdom and is embraced in the male, so that the female also is firmly established. Further, it has been pointed out that the word for "God" in this passage, viz. Eloah, may be divided into El, signifying the radiance of Wisdom, the letter Vau, signifying the male, and the letter He, signifying the female; when they are joined, the name Eloah is used, and the holy neshamah is united to this spot. And since all depends on this sign, therefore it is written, "and from my flesh I shall see Eloah". Happy are Israel, the holy ones, who are linked to the Holy One, blessed be He, happy in this world and happy in the next: of them it is written, "Ye that cleave unto the Lord your God, are alive every one of you this day" (Deut. IV, 4).'

Said R. Abba: 'I marvel that with so much learning you are still living in this village.' They said to him: 'If birds are driven from their homes,

they do not know where to fly, as it is written, "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place" (Prov. XXVII, 8). It is in this place that we have learnt the Torah, because it is our habit to sleep half the night and to study the other half. And when we rise in the morning the smell of the fields and the sound of the rivers seem to instil the Torah into us, and so it becomes fixed in our minds. Once this place was visited with punishment for neglect of the Torah, and a number of doughty scholars were carried off. Therefore we study it day and night, and the place itself helps us, and whoever quits this place is like one who quits eternal life.' R. Abba thereupon lifted up his hands and blessed them. So they sat through the night, until at last they said to some boys who were with them: 'Go outside and see if it is day, and when you come back let each one of you say some piece of Torah to our distinguished guest.' So they went out and saw that it was day. One of them said: 'On this day there will be a fire from above.' 'And on this house,' said another. Said a third: 'There is an elder here who this day will be burnt with fire.' 'God forbid,' said R. Abba, who was greatly perturbed, and did not know what to say. 'A cord of the (divine) will has been grasped on earth,' he exclaimed. And it was indeed so; for on that day the companions beheld the face of the Shekinah, and were surrounded with fire. As for R. Abba, his countenance was aflame with the intoxication of the Torah. It is recorded that all that day they did not leave the house, which was enveloped in smoke, and they propounded new ideas as if they had on that day received the Torah on Mount Sinai. When they rose they did not know whether it was day or night. Said R. Abba: 'While we are here, let each one of us say some new word of wisdom in order to make a fitting return to the master of the house, who is making the celebration.'

Thereupon one opened with the text: Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, the holy place of thy temple (Ps. LXV, 5). 'This verse', he said, 'speaks first of courts, then of house, then of temple. These are three grades, one within the other and one above the other. At first a man "dwells in thy courts", and of him it may be said "he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy" (Is. IV, 3). As a next step "we are satisfied with the goodness of thy house", which is explained by the text "a house shall be built through Wisdom". (Note that it does not say "Wisdom shall be built as a house", which would imply that Wisdom itself is called "house", but "by Wisdom", with allusion to the verse "a river went forth from Eden to water the Garden".) Lastly, "the holy place of thy temple" (hekal) is the culmination of all, as we have been taught: the word hekal (temple) may be divided into he and kol (all), implying that both are in it in complete union. The opening words of the verse, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach thee", indicate that whoever brings his son as an offering before God pleases God therewith, so that God draws him near and places his abode in two courts. which He joins so as to form one (hence the

plural "courts"). Hence when the pious men who lived in this place in former times made this offering of their children, they used to begin by exclaiming, "Blessed he whom thou choosest and bringest near, he shall dwell in thy courts", while the company present replied, "We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, the holy place of thy temple." Afterwards the celebrant said the blessing, "who sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us to initiate the child in the covenant of our father Abraham", while those present responded, "As thou hast initiated him into the covenant, etc." This ritual is in accordance with the dictum: "A man should first pray for himself and then for his neighbour," as it is written, "and (the High Priest) shall make atonement for himself and for all the congregation of Israel"-for himself first and then for the congregation. To this custom we adhere, for so we think proper.' Said R. Abba: 'Assuredly it is so, and he who does not recite these words excludes himself from the ten canopies which God intends to raise for the righteous in the future world, and which all depend upon this. Hence it is that there are ten words in this verse, out of each of which, if recited with proper faith, is made a canopy. Happy your lot in this world and in the world to come, for the Torah is fixed in your hearts as if you had yourselves stood

at Mount Sinai when the Law was given to Israel.'

Another then discoursed on the text: An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings and thy peace offerings, etc. (Ex. XX, 24). He said: 'We have learnt that whoever makes this offering of his son is esteemed no less worthy than if he had offered to God all the sacrifices in the world, and had built an altar before Him. Therefore it is fitting that he should make a kind of altar in the shape of a vessel full of earth over which the circumcision may be performed, that so God may reckon it to him as if he had sacrificed on it burnt offerings and peace offerings, sheep and oxen, and be even better pleased therewith; for so it is written in the latter half of the text: "in every place where I record my name I will come to thee and bless thee", where the words "I will record my name" refer to the circumcision, of which it is written, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant" (Ps. XXV, 14). So much for the altar of earth. In the next verse we read: "And if thou make me an altar of stone." This alludes to the proselyte who comes from a stubborn and stony-hearted people. The text proceeds: "thou shalt not build it of hewn stones". This means that the proselyte must enter into the service of God, and that he must not be circumcised until he puts out of his mind the alien worship which he practised hitherto, and removes the stoniness of his heart. For if he is circumcised before he does this, then he is like a statue which, though hewn into shape, still remains stone. Hence "thou shalt not build it of hewn stones", since if he is still obdurate, "thou hast lifted up thy tool upon it and hast polluted it"; i.e. the act of circumcision is of no use to him. Wherefore happy is the lot of him who brings this offering with gladness and pleases God thereby; and it is fitting that he should rejoice in this boon the whole of the day, as it is written, "For all those

that put their trust in thee shall rejoice, they shall ever shout with joy, and they that love thy name shall exult in thee" (Ps. V, 12).'

Another then discoursed on the text: Now when Abram was ninety years (lit. year) and nine years old, the Lord appeared... and said unto him, I am God Almighty, walk before me, etc. (Gen. XVII, 1). 'This verse presents a number of difficulties. In the first place, it seems to imply that God only now appeared to Abram when he had attained this age, whereas God had already spoken to Abram on various occasions (v. Gen. XII, 1; XIII, 14; XV, 13). Again, the word "years" is mentioned twice, first in the singular (shannah) and then in the plural (shanim). The answer is, as our teachers have stated, that as long as Abram was closed in body, and therefore in heart, God did not fully reveal Himself to him, and hence it is not stated hitherto that God appeared to Abram. Now, however, God appeared to him because He was now about to expose in him this sign and holy crown, and further because God desired to bring forth from him holy seed, and this could not be so long as his flesh was closed; now, however, that he was ninety-nine years old and the time was drawing near for holy seed to issue from him, it was fitting that he himself should be holy first. Hence his age is stated on this occasion, and not on all the others when God spoke to him. Further, the expression "ninety year", instead of "ninety years", indicates that all his previous years counted for no more than one year, and that his life had been no life; but now that he had come to this point, his years were really years. Further we may ask, why is the term "God Almighty" (El Shaddai) used here for the first time? The reason is, as we have learnt, that God has made lower crowns which are not holy, and which, in fact, pollute, and with these are marked all who are not circumcised. The mark consists of the letters Shin and Daleth, [Tr. note: Forming the word Shed (demon).] and therefore they are polluted with the demons and cling to them. After circumcision, however, they escape from them and enter under the wings of the Shekinah, as they display the letter Yod, the holy mark and the sign of the perfect covenant,

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and there is stamped upon them the name Shaddai (Almighty), complete in all its letters. Hence we find written in this connection, "I am El Shaddai." It says further: "Walk before me and be perfect", as much as to say: "Hitherto thou hast been defective, being stamped only with Shin Daleth: therefore circumcise thyself and become complete through the sign of Yod." And whoever is so marked is ready to be blessed through this name, as it is written, "And God Almighty (El Shaddai) shall bless thee" (Gen. XXVIII, 3), to wit, the source of blessings, that dominates the "lower crowns" and inspires fear and trembling in them all. Hence all that are not holy keep afar from one who is circumcised, and have no power over him. Moreover, he is never sent down to Gehinnom, as it is written, "Thy people are all righteous, they shall for ever inherit the earth" (Is. LX, 21).' Said R. Abba: 'Happy are ye in this world and in the world to come! Happy am I that I am come to hear these words from your mouths! Ye are all holy, all the sons of the Holy God; of you it is written, "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another

shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord and surname himself by the name of Israel" (Ibid. XLIV, 5). Everyone of you is closely attached to the holy King on high: ye are the mighty chieftains of that land which is called "the land of the living", the princes of which feed on the manna of holy dew.'

Another then discoursed on the text: Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is a son of freedom and thy princes eat in due season (Eccl. X, 17). 'Just before this it is written: "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning." There is an apparent but not a real contradiction between these verses. The reference in the verse "happy art thou, O land," is to the supernal realm which has control over all the life above, and is therefore called "land of the living". Of this it is written, "a land which the Lord thy God careth for continually" (Deut. XI, 12), and again "a land where thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it" (Ibid. VIII, 9). Why so? Because "thy king is a son of freedom". By this is meant the Holy One, blessed be He, who is called a "son of freedom" because of the Jubilee, which is the source of freedom. It is true that, according to this explanation, we should expect to have in our text the word heruth (freedom) and not, as we actually find written, horin (free ones). The reason is, as we have learnt in our secret Mishnah, that when the Yod is united with the He, they produce "the river which issues from Eden to water the Garden" (Gen. II, 10). It is, in fact, misleading to say "when they unite", for they are indeed united, and therefore it is written ben horin. Hence "happy art thou, O land, when thy king is a ben horin, and thy princes eat in due season", with joy, with sanctity, and with God's blessing. On the other hand, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy prince is a child." This is the land of the lower world; for so we have learnt: "All the lands of the Gentiles have been committed to great chieftains who are appointed over them, and above all is he of whom it is written, 'I was a lad and am now old'" (Ps. XXXVII, 25), words which, according to tradition, were pronounced by the "Prince of the Globe". Hence, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a lad": i.e. woe to the world which derives sustenance from this side; for when Israel are in captivity, they, as it were, derive their sustenance from an alien power. Further, "when thy princes eat in the morning"; i.e. in the morning only and not the whole day, or any other time of the day. For so we have learnt, that at sunrise when men go forth and bow down to the sun, wrath is suspended over the world, and at the time of the afternoon prayer also wrath is suspended over the world. Why is this? Because "thy king is a lad", viz. he who is called "lad". But you, truly pious ones, sainted to those above, do not derive sustenance from that side, but from that holy place above. Of you it is written: "Ye who cleave to the Lord are alive all of you this day" (Deut. 1V, 4).'

R. Abba then discoursed on the text: Let me sing for my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard, etc. (Is. V, 1). He said: 'This passage presents many difficulties. In the first place it should rather be called a "reproof" than a "song". Then again why first "wellbeloved" and then "beloved"? Also, we find nowhere else mention of a place



called "Keren Ben Shemen" (horn of the son of oil). Our colleagues have expounded these verses in many ways, and all of them are good, but I explain them in this way. The word "wellbeloved" contains an allusion to Isaac, who was called so before he was born. For so we have learnt, that God showed great love for him in not allowing him to be born until Abraham his father had been circumcised and called perfect and had been completed by the addition to his name of the letter he. To Sarah, too, a he had been given. Here arises a question. We understand he for Sarah, but for Abram the added letter should have been not he but yod, he being a male. The reason is in truth a somewhat deep and recondite one. Abraham rose to the highest stage, and took as his additional letter the higher he, which symbolises the sphere of the male. For there are two symbolic he's, one higher and one lower, one associated with the male and the other with the female. Hence Abraham ascended with the he of the higher sphere, and Sarai descended with the he of the lower sphere. Further it is written, "thus (koh) shall be thy seed", and the word "seed" here, as we have learnt, is to be taken exactly (of Isaac). For it was he who entered into this covenant from his birth, and whoever enters from his birth really enters. It is for this reason that a proselyte who is circumcised is called "a proselyte of righteousness", because he does not come from the holy stock who have been circumcised; and therefore one who enters in this way is called by the name of the first pioneer "Abraham". Thus the letter he, too, was given to him; and if it had not also been given to Sarah, Abraham would of necessity have begotten on a lower level, in the same way as Koh, which begets on a lower level. But when he was given to Sarah, the two he's were joined together, and brought forth on a higher level, that which issued from them being yod; hence yod is the first letter of the name of Isaac, symbolising the male. From this point the male principle began to extend, and therefore it is written, "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called", and not in thee. Isaac bore on the higher level, as it is written, "Thou givest truth to Jacob" (Micah VII, 20), showing that Jacob completed the edifice. It may be asked: "Was Abraham attached only to this grade and no more?" If so, why does it say, "kindness (hesed) to Abraham"? (Ibid.) The answer is that hesed was his portion because he dealt kindly with mankind, but for bearing children, it was here that he was attached and here that he began. Hence it was that Abraham was not circumcised till he was ninety-nine years old; the inner reason for this is well known and has been explained in our Mishnah. For this reason, too, Isaac typifies stern justice, which was his portion, but for begetting he was called "kindness" (hesed). Hence Jacob crowned the edifice on this side and on that. In respect of the strivings of Abraham and Isaac for portions above he was the culmination; and in respect of the privilege which was granted to them to bear sons better than themselves he was also the culmination. Hence the Scripture says of him, "Israel in whom I glory" (Is. XLIX, 3). In him were united attributes both from the higher and the lower. Hence the word "song" is used in this passage. According to some, the word "wellbeloved" here refers to Abraham, who transmitted this inheritance; but it is more correct to refer it to

Isaac, as I do. To proceed: "the song of my beloved to his vineyard" refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, who is commonly called "beloved" (dod), as in the verse, "My beloved is white and ruddy" (S. S. V, 10). Thus, my wellbeloved unites with my beloved, who is male, and from him springs forth a vineyard, as it is written, "My wellbeloved had a vineyard." The Scripture further says that this vineyard sprang forth in "Keren-Ben-Shemen". This "Keren" is the same as the "horn" (keren) of the Jubilee, and it is united with the male that is called ben shemen (son of oil), which is the same as ben horin (son of freedom). "Shemen" is mentioned because it is the source of the oil for lighting the lamps (of understanding). This oil makes faces shine and kindles lamps until it is gathered in a horn, which is then called "the horn of the Jubilee". For this reason Royalty is always anointed from a horn; and the reason why the kingdom of David endured was because he was anointed from a horn and was true to it. The next words are, "he put a fence round it and stoned it":

i.e. he removed from himself and from his portion all the celestial chieftains and champions, and all the "lower crowns", and chose this vineyard for his portion, as it is written, "For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. XXXII, 9). Further, "He planted it with the choicest vine", as it says elsewhere, "I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed" (Jer. II, 21). (The word kuloh (wholly) in this sentence is written with he to point the same lesson as the text "thus (koh) shall be thy seed".) Our text closes with the words: "He built a tower in the midst of it"-the "tower" is that mentioned in the verse, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. XVIII, 10) "and also hewed out a wine press therein": this is the "gate of righteousness" mentioned in the verse, "Open to me the gates of righteousness" (Ps. CXVIII, 19). We learn from this that every Israelite who is circumcised has the entry into both the tower and the gate. He who makes this offering of his son brings him under the aegis of the Holy Name. On this sign, too, are based the heaven and earth, as it is written, "But for my covenant day and night, I had not set the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jer. XXXIII, 25). Our host of to-day has been privileged to see the Holy One, blessed be He, face to face this day. Happy we that we have lived to see this day, and happy thy portion with us. To this son that is born to thee I apply the words of the Scripture, "Every one that is called by my

name... I have formed him, yea I have made him" (Is. XLIII, 7); also the verse, "and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, etc." (Ibid. LIV, 13).'

They then rose and escorted R. Abba on his way for three miles. They said to him: 'Your host who made the ceremony deserves all the honour he has received, because his act was a doubly pious one.' He said: 'What do you mean?' They answered: 'This man's wife was formerly the wife of his brother, who died without children, and so he married her, and this being the first son, he calls him after the name of his dead brother.' [Tr. note: v. Deut. XXV, 5-10.] Said R. Abba: 'From now onwards his name shall be Iddi'; and in fact

he grew up to be the well-known Iddi bar Jacob. R. Abba then gave them his blessing and continued his journey. When he reached home, he informed R. Eleazar of all that had happened, but was afraid to tell R. Simeon. One day as he was studying with R. Simeon, the latter said: 'It is written: "And Abraham fell on his face and God spoke with him saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee." This shows that until he was circumcised, he used to fall on his face when God spoke with him, but after he was circumcised he stood upright without fear. Further, the words "behold, my covenant is with thee" show that he found himself circumcised.' Said R. Abba to him: 'Perhaps your honour will permit me to relate some excellent ideas which I have heard on this subject.' 'Speak,' he said. 'But I am afraid,' continued R. Abba, 'that the people who told me may suffer through my telling.' 'God forbid!' said R. Simeon. 'Remember the verse: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord".' He then told him what had happened, and related to him all that he had heard. Said R. Simeon: 'You mean to say that you knew all this and did not say a word to me? I order you during the next thirty days to do your very utmost to forget it. Does not the Scripture say: "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it"?' And so it came to pass. R. Simeon further said: 'I order that with these explanations they shall be banished to Babylon, I mean to say, among our colleagues in Babylon.' R. Abba was sorely grieved at this. One day R. Simeon, seeing him, said: 'Your looks betray some inward sorrow.' He replied: 'I am not grieving for myself, but for them.' He answered: 'God forbid they should be punished for anything except for speaking too openly. For this let them go into exile among the colleagues and learn from them how to keep things to themselves; for these matters are not to be divulged save among ourselves, since the Holy One, blessed be He, has confirmed our ideas, and made us the instruments for disclosing them.' R. Jose said: 'It is written, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, etc." (Is. LVIII, 8). This means that the Holy One, blessed be He, will one day proclaim with regard to his sons: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward".'

## VAYERA

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AND THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM. R. Hiya commenced to discourse on the verse: The flowers appear on the earth, the time of song is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land (S. S. II, 12). He said: 'When God created the world, He endowed the earth with all the energy requisite for it, but it did not put forth produce until man appeared. When, however, man was created, all the products that were latent in the earth appeared above ground. Similarly, the heaven did not impart strength to the earth until man came. So it is written, "All the plants of the earth were not yet on the earth, and the herbs of the field had not yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground" (Gen. II, 5), that is to say, all the products of

the earth were still hidden in its bosom and had not yet shown themselves, and the heavens refrained from pouring rain upon the earth, because man had not yet been created. When, however, man appeared, forthwith "the flowers appeared on the earth", all its latent powers being revealed; "the time of song was come", the earth being now ripe to offer up praises to the Almighty, which it could not do before man was created. "And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land": this is the word of God, which was not

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in the world till man was created. Thus when man was there, everything was there. When man sinned, the earth was cursed, and all these good things left it, as it is written, "cursed is the earth for thy sake" (Gen. III, 17), and again, "when thou tillest the ground it shall not give its strength to thee" (Ibid. IV, 12), and again, "thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to thee" (Ibid. III, 18). When Noah came, he invented spades and hoes, but afterwards he sinned through drunkenness, and the rest of the world also sinned before God, and the strength of the earth deserted it. So matters continued until Abraham came. Then once more "the blossoms appeared in the earth", and all the powers of the earth were restored and displayed themselves. "The time of pruning (zamir) came", i.e. God told Abraham to circumcise himself. When at length the covenant existed in Abraham through the circumcision, then all this verse was fulfilled in him, the world was firmly established, and the word of the Lord came to him openly: hence it is written, AND THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM. Said R. Eleazar: 'Until Abraham was circumcised, God did not speak with him save from a lower grade, whereon, too, the higher grades were not resting. But when he was circumcised, straightway "the blossoms appeared in the earth", to wit, the lower grades which the earth put forth, thereby establishing that lower grade we have mentioned; further, "the time of pruning came", to wit, the pruning of the boughs of orlah; and to crown all, "the voice of the turtle was heard in the land", to wit, the voice which issues from the innermost

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recess. This voice was now heard, and shaped the spoken words and gave them their perfect form. This is implied in the words here used, "and the Lord appeared to him". Already, before Abraham was circumcised, we are told that "the Lord appeared unto Abram" (Gen. XVII, 1), and if the word "him" in this sentence refers to Abraham, we may well ask, what advance had he made (in prophecy) by being circumcised? The answer is that the word "him" here has an inner meaning: it refers to the grade which now spoke with him. Now for the first time "the Lord appeared" to that grade; that is to say, the Voice was revealed, and associated itself with the Speech (dibbur) in conversing with him. Similarly in the words, AS HE SAT IN THE TENT DOOR IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY, the word "he" has an inner meaning, indicating that all the grades rested on this lower grade after Abraham was circumcised. Thus the words "And the Lord appeared unto him" contain a mystic allusion to that audible Voice which is united to Speech, and manifests

itself therein. "As he sat in the tent door" refers to the supernal world which was at hand to illumine him. "In the heat of the day." That is, it was the right side, to which Abraham clave, that illumined. According to another exposition, "in the heat of the day" indicates the time when the grades approach each other, impelled by mutual desire.'

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AND THERE APPEARED UNTO HIM. R. Abba said: 'Before Abraham was circumcised he was, as it were, covered over, but as soon as he was circumcised he became completely exposed to the influence of the Shekinah, which thereupon rested on him in full and perfect measure. The words "as he sat in the tent door" picture the supernal world hovering over this lower world. When is this? "In the heat of the day", that is, at a period when a certain Zaddik (righteous one) feels a desire to repose therein. Straightway "it lifts up its eyes and looks, and lo, three men stand over against it". Who are these three men? They are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who stand over this lower grade, and from whom it

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draws sustenance and nourishment. Thereupon "it sees and runs to meet them", since it is the desire of this lower grade to attach itself to them, and its joy is to be drawn after them. "And it bows down to the ground", to prepare a throne near them. Observe that the Almighty made King David one of the under-pillars of the supernal throne, the patriarchs being the other three. For he was a pedestal to them, yet when he is joined with them he becomes one of the pillars upholding the supernal throne; and on that account he reigned in Hebron for seven years, namely, in order that he might be closely associated with them, as explained elsewhere.'

R. Abba opened a discourse with the verse: Who shalt ascend into the mountain of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? (Ps. XXIV, 3). 'Mankind', he said, 'little realise on what it is that they are standing whilst in this world' For the days as they pass ascend and range themselves before the Almighty-namely, all the days of men's existence in this world. For all these have been created, and they all present themselves on high. That they have been created we know from the words of Scripture, "The days were fashioned" (Ps. CXXXIX, 16). And when the time comes for the days to depart from this world, they all approach the Most High King, as it is written, "And the days of David drew nigh that he should die" (I Kings II, 1), and again, "And the days of Israel drew nigh that he should die" (Gen. XLVII, 29). Man, however, whilst in this world, considers not and reflects not what it is he is standing on, and each day as it passes he regards as though it has vanished into nothingness. When the soul departs this world she knows not by what path she will be made to travel; for it is not granted to all souls to ascend by the way that leads to the realm of radiance where the choicest souls shine forth.

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For it is the path taken by man in this world that determines the path of the soul on her departure. Thus, if a man is drawn towards the Holy One, and is filled with longing towards Him in this world, the soul in departing from him is carried upward towards the higher realms by the impetus given her each day in this world.' R. Abba continued: 'I once found myself in a town inhabited by descendants of the "children of the East", and they imparted to me some of the Wisdom of antiquity with which they were acquainted. They also possessed some books of their Wisdom, and they showed me one in which it was written that, according to the goal which a man sets himself in this world, so does he draw to himself a spirit from on high. If he strives to attain some holy and lofty object, he draws that object from on high to himself below. But if his desire is to cleave to the other side, and he makes this his whole intent, then he draws to himself from above the other influence. They said, further, that all depends on the kind of speech, action, and intention to which a man habituates himself, for he draws to himself here below from on high that side to which he habitually cleaves. I found also in the same book the rites and ceremonies pertaining to the worship of the stars, with the requisite formulas and the directions for concentrating the thought upon them, so

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as to draw them near the worshipper. The same principle applies to him who seeks to be attached to the sacred spirit on high. For it is by his acts, by his words, and by his fervency and devotion that he can draw to himself that spirit from on high. They further said that if a man follows a certain direction in this world, he will be led further in the same direction when he departs this world; as that to which he attaches himself in this world, so is that to which he will find himself attached in the other world: if holy, holy, and if defiled, defiled. If he cleaves to holiness he will on high be drawn to that side and be made a servant to minister before the Holy One among the angels, and will stand among those holy beings who are referred to in the words, "then I will give thee free access among these that stand by" (Zech. III, 7). Similarly if he clings here to uncleanness, he will be drawn there towards that side and be made one of the unclean company and be attached to them. These are called "pests of mankind", and when a man leaves this world they take him up and cast him into Gehinnom, in that region where judgement is meted out to those who have sullied themselves and soiled their spirits. After that he is made a companion of the unclean spirits and becomes a "pest of mankind" like one of them. I then said to them: My children, all this is similar to what we learn in our Torah, nevertheless you should keep away from these books so that your hearts should not

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be led astray after those idolatrous services and after those "sides" mentioned here. Be on your guard lest, God forbid, you be led astray from the worship of the Holy One, since all these books mislead mankind. For the ancient children of the East were possessed of a wisdom which they inherited from Abraham, who transmitted it to the sons of the concubines, as it is



seven days, according to the degree of his defilement. And as Abraham prepared the means of purification for men in such a state, so did Sarah for women. The reason why Abraham did this was because he was himself pure and is designated "pure" (as it is written, "Who can bring forth a pure one from one impure?" (Job XIV, 4), which is a reference to Abraham, who was born of Terah). R. Simeon said that it was in order to confirm Abraham in his special grade, which is symbolised by water, that he set out to keep the world pure by means of water. The same symbolic meaning underlies the words uttered by him when he invited the angels to partake of food, to wit, "Let a little water be fetched", he wishing thereby to confirm himself in the degree symbolised by water. He therefore endeavoured to purify people in all respects—to cleanse them from idolatry and to cleanse them from ritual impurity. In the same way Sarah purified the women. The result was that all in their house were in a state of ritual purity. Wherever Abraham took up his residence he used to plant a certain tree, but in no place did it flourish properly save in the land of Canaan. By means of this tree he was able to distinguish between the man who adhered to the Almighty and the man who worshipped idols. For the man who worshipped the true God the tree spread out its branches, and formed an agreeable shade over his head; whereas in the presence of one who clung to the side of idolatry the tree shrank within itself and its branches stood upright. Abraham thus recognised the erring man, admonished him, and did not desist until he had succeeded in making him embrace the true faith. Similarly the tree received under its shade those who were clean, and not those who were unclean; and when Abraham recognised the latter, he purified them by means of water. Moreover, there was a spring of water under that very tree, and when a man came who required immediate immersion, the waters rose and also the branches of the tree: and that was a sign for Abraham that that man needed immersion forthwith. On other occasions the water dried up: this was a sign to Abraham that that man could not be purified before the lapse of seven days. Note that Abraham, in offering his invitation to the angels, said, "and recline yourselves under the tree": this was for the purpose of testing them, in the same way as he tested by the same tree any wayfarer who came. By the word "tree", he also referred to the Holy One, blessed be He, who is the tree of life for all, as though to say, "recline yourselves under His shade, and not under the shelter of strange gods". Note that Adam transgressed through eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and this brought death into the world. God then said, "and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also the tree of life etc." (Gen. III, 22). But when Abraham came, he remedied the evil by means of that other tree, which is the tree of life, and by means of which he made known the true faith to the whole world.

AND HE SAID: I WILL CERTAINLY RETURN UNTO THESE WHEN THE SEASON COMETH ROUND, ETC. R. Isaac said: 'Instead of "I will return", we should have expected here "he will return", since the visitation of barren women is in the hand of the Almighty Himself and not in the hand of any messenger, according to the dictum: "Three keys there are which have not been

entrusted to any messenger, namely, of child-birth, of the resurrection, and of rain." But the truth is that the words "I will return" were spoken by the Holy One, blessed be He, who was present there. This is corroborated by the use here of the term *vayomer* (and he said). For it is to be observed that wherever the verb *vayomer* (and he said), or *vayiqra* (and he called), occurs without a subject, then the implied subject is the Angel of the Covenant and no other. Examples are: "And he said, If thou wilt diligently hearken etc." (Ex. XV, 26); also: "And he called unto Moses" (Lev. I, 1); also: "And unto Moses he said" (Ex. XXIV, 1).

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In all these passages, as well as in our present passage, the unspecified subject of the sentence is the Angel of the Covenant.

AND, LO, SARAH THY WIFE SHALL HAVE A SON. Why not "and thou shalt have a son"? In order that Abraham should not think that possibly he should be from Hagar, like the previous one. R. Simeon here discoursed on the text: A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master (Mal. I, 6). He said: 'A conspicuous example of a son honouring his father is presented by Isaac at the time when Abraham bound him on the altar with the intent of offering him up as a sacrifice. He was then thirty-seven years old, whilst his father was an old man; and though he could easily, by a single kick, have liberated himself, he let himself be bound like a lamb in order to do the will of his father. A servant's honouring his master is illustrated by Eliezer's conduct on the occasion when he was sent by Abraham to Haran; he there followed out all the wishes of his master and paid him great respect, as it is written, "And he said, I am Abraham's servant; and the Lord blessed my master Abraham" (Gen. XXIV, 34-35). Here was a man who had with him silver and gold and precious stones and camels and was himself of a goodly presence; yet he did not present himself as a friend of Abraham or one of his kin, but openly declared, "I am the servant of Abraham", in order to extol his master and make him an object of honour in the eyes of his hearers. Hence the prophet proclaims: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master", as much as to say, "but ye Israel my children, ye feel ashamed to declare that I am your father or that ye are my servants". Hence the verse proceeds: "If then I be a father, where is my honour?" (Mal. I, 6). So when it says of Isaac, "And lo, a son", it means, "truly a son, a son proper, not an Ishmael, but a son who will pay due respect and honour to his father". Further it is said, "And Sarah thy wife shall have a son", because Isaac was indeed a son to Sarah, since it was on his account that she died, on his account she suffered anguish of soul until her life departed, and, further, on his account she is exalted at the time when the Holy One sits in judgement on the world, for on that day the Israelites read the portion: "And the Lord remembered Sarah as he had said" (Gen. XXI, 1), mentioning Sarah for the sake of Isaac. Truly he was "a son to Sarah". AND SARAH HEARD IN THE TENT DOOR, AND IT WAS BEHIND HIM. We should have expected "and she was behind him". But the inner meaning of the whole verse is that Sarah heard the "Door of the Tent", which is identical with the Holy One in the lower grade, making

the declaration, and that "He", to wit, the Holy One in the supernal grade, "was behind him" (the door), confirming the declaration. During the whole of her lifetime Sarah never heard any utterance from the Holy One save on that occasion. According to another interpretation, the expression "and he was behind him" refers to Abraham, who was behind the Shekinah.'

NOW ABRAHAM AND SARAH WERE OLD, THEY HAD ARRIVED IN REGARD TO DAYS. The expression they had arrived (ba'u) in regard to days" is equivalent to "their days had approached their allotted term", Abraham being a hundred years old and Sarah ninety. We may compare the expression "for the day arrived" (ba), i.e. the day had declined towards evening. IT HAD CEASED TO BE WITH SARAH AFTER THE MANNER OF WOMEN: but at that moment she experienced a rejuvenation. Hence her remark AND MY LORD IS OLD, as much as to say that he was unfitted to beget children on account of age. R. Judah here began a discourse with the verse: Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land (Prov. XXXI, 23). He said: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, is transcendent in His glory, He is hidden and removed far beyond all ken; there is no one in the world, nor has there ever been one, whom His wisdom and essence do not elude, since He is recondite and hidden and beyond all ken, so that neither the supernal nor the lower beings are able to commune with Him until they utter the words "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" (Ezek. III, 12). The creatures of the earth think of Him as being on high, declaring, "His glory is above the heavens" (Ps. CXIII, 4), while the heavenly beings think of Him as being below, declaring, "His glory is over all the earth" (Ps. LVII, 12), until they both, in heaven and on earth, concur in declaring, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place", because He is unknowable and no one can truly understand Him. This being so, how can you say, "Her husband is known in the gates"?

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But of a truth the Holy One makes Himself known to every one according to the measure of his understanding and his capacity to attach himself to the spirit of Divine wisdom; and thus "Her husband is known", not "in the gates" (bisha'arim), but, as we may also translate, "by measure", though a full knowledge is beyond the reach of any being.' R. Simeon said: 'The "gates" mentioned in this passage are the same as the gates in the passage, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates" (Ps. XXIV, 7), and refer to the supernal grades by and through which alone a knowledge of the Almighty is possible to man, and but for which man could not commune with God. Similarly, man's soul cannot be known directly, save through the members of the body, which are the grades forming the instruments of the soul. The soul is thus known and unknown. So it is with the Holy One, blessed be He, since He is the Soul of souls, the Spirit of spirits, covered and veiled from anyone; nevertheless, through those gates, which are doors for the soul, the Holy One makes Himself known. For there is door within door, grade behind grade, through which the glory of the Holy One is made known. Hence here "the tent door" is the door of righteousness, referred to in the words, "Open to me

the gates of righteousness" (Ps. CXVIII, 19), and this is the first entrance door: through this door a view is opened to all the other supernal doors. He who succeeds in entering this door is privileged to know both it and all the other doors, since they all repose on this one. At the present time this door remains unknown because Israel is in exile; and therefore all the other doors are removed from them, so that they cannot know or commune; but when Israel return from exile, all the supernal grades are destined to rest harmoniously upon this one. Then men will obtain a knowledge of the precious supernal wisdom of which hitherto they wist not, as it is written, "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Is. XI, 2). All these are destined to rest on this lower door which is the "tent door"; all too will rest upon the Messiah in order that he may judge the world, as it is written, "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, etc." (Ibid. 4). Thus when the good tidings were brought to Abraham, it was that grade which brought them, as we have deduced from the fact that the word vayomer (and he said) is used without a specific subject in the passage "And he said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round."

'Observe how the great love of the Almighty towards Abraham was manifested in the fact that Isaac was not born to him until he was circumcised. In this way it was made certain that his seed should be holy, according to the words of the Scripture, "wherein is the seed thereof after its kind" (Gen. I, 12). For had Abraham begotten before he was circumcised, his seed would not have been holy, as it would have issued from the state of orlah, and thus would have clung to that state here below; but after Abraham's circumcision the seed issued from the state of holiness and became attached to supernal holiness, and he begat children in the higher plane and thus became attached to his grade in the manner fitting.' R. Eleazar asked one day of his father, R. Simeon: 'In regard to the name Isaac, why did the Holy One give him that name before he came into the world, by commanding "And thou shalt call his name Isaac" (Gen. XVII, 19)?' R. Simeon answered: 'We have elsewhere stated that through Isaac fire supplanted water. For water comes from the side of Geburah (Force), and it is further required of the Levites that they should entertain that side with hymns and songs on divers instruments. Hence Isaac was joyousness, because he issued from that side and became attached to it. Observe that the word Yitzhak (Isaac) means "laughter", to wit, rejoicing because water was changed to fire and fire to water; hence he was called Isaac, and hence the Holy One called him

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so before he came into the world, and He announced that name to Abraham. You will see that in other cases the Holy One permitted the parents, even the mothers, to give names to their children. Here, however, the Holy One did not give permission to the mother to name the child, but only to Abraham, as it is written: "And thou shalt call his name Isaac"-thou and no other, so as to intermingle water with fire and fire with water and to range it on his side.'

Having related how Abraham was informed of the coming birth of Isaac, the Scripture proceeds: AND THE MEN ROSE UP FROM THENCE, AND LOOKED OUT TOWARD SODOM. Said R. Eleazar: 'Observe how merciful the Holy One, blessed be He, shows Himself towards all beings, and especially towards those who walk in His paths. For when He is about to execute judgement on the world, before doing so He puts in the way of His beloved the occasion of performing a good act. We have thus been taught that when the Holy One loves a man, He sends him a present in the shape of a poor man, so that he should perform some good deed to him, through the merit of which he shall draw to himself a cord of grace from the right side which shall wind round his head and imprint a mark on him, so that, when punishment falls on the world, the destroyer, raising his eyes and noticing the mark, will be careful to avoid him and leave him alone. So when the Holy One was about to execute judgement on Sodom, He first led Abraham to do a meritorious action by the present which He sent him, so as thereby to save Lot his brother's son from destruction. It is therefore written, "And God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow" (Gen. XIX, 29). It does not say that God remembered Lot, since he was saved through the merit of Abraham. What God remembered was the kindness which Abraham had shown to those three angels. Similarly, the charitable deeds which a man performs are remembered by the Holy One at the time when punishment impends upon the world, for every meritorious action is recorded on high, and when chastisement impends over that man the Holy One remembers the kindness he had performed with other men, as we read: "but charity delivereth from death" (Prov. XI, 4). The Holy One thus afforded Abraham in advance the occasion of a good action, so that by his merit he should deliver Lot from destruction.'

AND THEY LOOKED OUT TOWARD SODOM. This was immediately after "the men rose up from thence", that is, from the feast that Abraham had prepared for them, so performing a meritorious act. For although they were angels, his hospitality to them was a good action, since of the whole of the food offered them they left nothing over, purposely that Abraham should acquire merit thereby, as it is written, "and they did eat", the food having been consumed by their fire. It may be objected that the three angels were one of fire, one of water, and the third of air. The answer to this, however, is that they all partook of each other's essences, and hence "they did eat". Analogous to this is the passage "and they beheld God, and did eat and drink" (Ex. XXIV, 11). There it was truly eating, for they feasted themselves on the Shekinah. So here, "and they did eat" implies that they feasted themselves on that side to which Abraham was attached, and for that reason nothing remained of what Abraham put before them. For just as it behoves a man to partake of the cup of blessing (after a meal), that he merit the blessing from on high, so the angels also ate from what Abraham prepared for them that they might be privileged to feast on that which proceeds from the side of Abraham, for it is from that side that sustenance issues for all the celestial angels. AND THEY LOOKED OUT: with an impulse of mercy for the delivery of Lot. The word

vayashqifu (and they looked out) here is analogous with its kindred word in "Look forth (hashqifah) from thy holy habitation" (Deut. XXVI, 15), and as there the implication is an exercise of mercy, so here. AND ABRAHAM WENT WITH THEM TO BRING THEM ON THE WAY; that is, to escort them. R. Yesa said: 'This shows that Abraham was not aware that they were angels; for if he was, what need had he to see them off?' 'No,' answered R. Eleazar; 'although he knew, he kept to his usual custom with them, and saw them off. For it is highly incumbent on a man to escort a departing guest, for this crowns the good act. So whilst he was walking with them, the Holy One appeared to Abraham, as it is written, "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am doing?" The term V-Tetragrammaton (and the Lord) implies God with the attendance of the heavenly Court.'

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Thus we see that, when a man escorts his departing friend, he draws the Shekinah to join him and to accompany him on the way as a protection.'

AND THE LORD SAID, SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM THAT WHICH I AM DOING? R. Hiya quoted here the verse: For the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his counsel unto his servants the prophets (Amos III, 7). 'Happy,' he said, 'are those pious ones of the world in whom the Holy One finds delight, and whom He uses as His agents for all that He does in heaven or intends to do in this world, not hiding anything from them. For the Holy One desires to associate with Himself the righteous so that they may admonish and call the people to repentance in order that they may escape the punishment decreed by the judgement-seat on high, and, in any case, so that they should not be left with any loophole for complaining that the Holy One metes out punishment without justice.' R. Eleazar said: 'Woe to the guilty who are steeped in ignorance and refrain not from sin. Now, seeing that the Holy One, whose acts are truth and whose ways are justice, nevertheless does not execute His designs in the world before He reveals His intent to the righteous, so as not to give occasion to mankind for censuring His acts, how much more must the sons of men be on their guard so to act as not to leave any room for others to spread evil rumours against them. So it is written: "And ye shall be clean before the Lord and before Israel" (Num. XXXII, 22). It is thus incumbent on these righteous to act so that men shall not be able to complain against God, and to warn them betimes, if they are sinful, not to give an opening to the stern justice of God to descend upon them. And how are they to guard themselves? By repentance and good deeds.' R. Judah commented as follows: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, gave the whole land to Abraham

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as an everlasting heritage, as it is written: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee I give it, etc." (Gen. XIII, 15). That he saw the whole land is indicated in the words which precede: "lift up now thine eyes from the place where thou art, northward, etc." (Ibid. 14). And now the Holy One found it necessary to uproot those

places. He therefore said to Himself: "I have already given over the land to Abraham, he thus being the father of all its inhabitants [so it is written: 'for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee' (Gen. XVII, 5)], and so it is not fitting for me to inflict punishment on the children without first giving warning to their father, to 'Abraham my friend' (Is. XLI, 8). Hence, AND THE LORD SAID, SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM, ETC.? R. Abba said: Notice the unselfishness of Abraham. For although the Almighty notified him of the coming calamity, announcing VERILY, THE CRY OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH IS GREAT, and so on, and thus gave him a breathing-space before the final catastrophe, Abraham, nevertheless, did not plead for Lot to be delivered from the punishment. Why so? In order that it should not appear that he was asking a reward for his good deeds. But just for this reason did the Holy One send Lot forth and deliver him: it was for the sake of Abraham, as it is written, "And God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow" (Gen. XIX, 29). In the same place it mentions "the cities in which Lot dwelt" to indicate that they were all guilty, without any redeeming features, save Lot. We learn also from this that any place inhabited by wicked people is doomed to destruction. Lot dwelt only in one of these cities, not in all of them, but it was due only to his presence that they were not all destroyed before. And this, too, was not due to Lot's own merits, but to the merits of Abraham.' As to this point, R. Simeon said: 'Note that any service rendered to a righteous man procures protection for the doer. Nay more, even if he himself is sinful, yet by rendering service to a righteous man he is bound to learn some of his ways and practise them. So you see that Lot, by reason of having kept company with Abraham, although he had not adopted all his ways, had learnt to show kindness to people in imitation of Abraham, and this it was that enabled those cities to exist so many years after Lot settled among them.'

[Note: The last 6 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

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[Note: The first 12 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation. The first portion of our translation (up to "Seeing that Abraham") is apparently based on a variant reading.]

**I WILL GO DOWN AND SEE: IF IT IS ACCORDING TO THE CRY OF IT, THEN MAKE YE AN EXTERMINATION.** To whom was this command addressed? It cannot be to the angels, since that would mean that God was speaking to one party (Abraham) and giving command to another (the angels), which is not usual. The explanation is that it was really addressed to Abraham, in whose jurisdiction the cities were. But then why the plural, "make ye" ('asu) instead of the singular "make thou" ('ase)? The answer is that it was addressed both to Abraham and the Shekinah, which was all the time with him. According to another interpretation the command was given to the angels, who were standing there ready at hand to do execution. According to another interpretation, again, the proper reading is 'asu (they have made), and this accords with the translation of Onqelos. It says: "I will

go down and see." Are not all things revealed before the Almighty that there was need for Him to go down and see? The expression, however, "I will go down", implies descent from the grade of mercy to that of rigour, and by "and see" is meant the consideration of the kind of punishment to be meted out to them. "Seeing" in the Scriptures can be both for good and for ill. An example of the former use is: "And God saw the children of Israel, and God took cognizance of them" (Ex. II, 25); an example of the latter is "I will go down and see", i.e. to determine the mode of punishment. In regard to all this God said, "Shall I hide from Abraham, etc."

**SEEING THAT ABRAHAM WILL SURELY BECOME A GREAT AND MIGHTY NATION.** How comes this blessing to be inserted here? It is to teach us that the Holy One, even when He sits in judgement on the world, does not change His nature, since whilst sitting in judgement on one He is displaying mercy to others, and all at one and the same moment. R. Judah objected that it is written: "But as for me, let my prayer be to thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time" (Ps. LXIX, 14), which would seem to show that there are with God acceptable moments and unacceptable, that at one time He grants audience, at another time He does not, that the Almighty is now accessible, now inaccessible; and this is corroborated by the verse: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Is. LV, 6). In reply to this, R. Eleazar said that the verses cited apply to the prayers of an individual, whilst the lesson of our text applies to communal prayer; the former to a single locality, the latter to the world as a whole. Hence God here blessed Abraham because he was on a par with the whole world, as it is written: "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created" (Gen. II, 4), where the term behibaream (when they were created), by a transposition of letters, appears as beabraham (in Abraham). The numerical value of the letters of yiyah (will become) is thirty, which points to the traditional dictum that the Holy One provides for the world thirty righteous men in each generation in the same manner as He did for the generation of Abraham. R. Eleazar supported this from the verse: "He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the three" (II Sam. XXIII, 23). 'The thirty', he said, 'refers to the thirty righteous whom the Holy One has provided for the world without intermission; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada of whom it is written "He was the most honourable of the thirty" was one of them. "But he attained not to the three": i.e. he was not equal to those other three [Tr. note: The Patriarchs.] on whom the world subsists, neither being counted among them nor being deemed worthy to be associated with them and to have an equal share with them. Now since there were thirty righteous in the time of Abraham, as the term yiyah indicates, therefore God blessed him in their company.'

God said to Abraham, "Verily, the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great", as much as to say: I have taken note of their behaviour towards their fellow-men, which causes all men to avoid setting foot in Sodom and Gomorrah. So it is written: "The stream made a chasm for strangers, so they are forgotten of the foot that passeth by; they are the poorest of men, they move



away" (Job. XXVIII, 4). The stream divided to swallow up any stranger who ventured to enter Sodom; for if anyone was detected offering food or drink to a stranger, the people of the town would cast him into the deepest part of the river, as well as the recipient. Hence, "they are forgotten of the foot", i.e. men avoided it and never put foot into it; and as for those who happened to enter it—"they are the poorest of men, they move away", i.e. as no food or drink was given to them, their bodies became so emaciated that they scarcely looked any more like human beings, and hence "they moved away", i.e. people passed it by on one side. Even the birds of heaven

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avoided it, as it is written, "that path no bird of prey knoweth" (Ibid. 7). A universal outcry therefore went up against Sodom and Gomorrah and all the other towns that behaved like them. It is written here: "According to the cry of it." Why not of them, since two cities are mentioned here? This is explained as follows. From the side underneath the Hail-Stone vapours ascend to the shoulder (of the Divine Throne), where they gather themselves into one drop, and then descend into the chasm of the great abyss. There five become merged into one. When the voices of all of them are clear they unite into one. Then a voice ascends from below and mingles with them, and the combined cry keeps on ascending and clamouring for justice, until at last the Holy One appears to investigate the accusation. Hence R. Simeon says that the "it" here refers to the sentence of judgement, which demands execution day by day. This conforms with the tradition that for many years the sentence of judgement continued to demand reparation for the sale of Joseph by his brethren. Hence here also her cry went up for justice, and therefore it is written, "according to the cry of her". The word which follows, habbaah (which is come), really means "which is coming", i.e. coming continually.

AND ABRAHAM DREW NEAR, AND SAID: WILT THOU INDEED SWEEP AWAY THE RIGHTEOUS WITH THE WICKED? R. Judah said: 'Was there ever seen such a merciful father as Abraham? Observe that in regard to Noah it is written, "And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me... Make thee an ark of gopher wood" (Gen. VI, 13-14), but Noah remained silent: he said nothing, nor did he beseech for mercy (for his fellow-men). Abraham, on the contrary, as soon as the Holy One made announcement to him, "Verily, the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great... I will go down and see, etc.", immediately "drew near, and said: Wilt Thou indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" ' Said R. Eleazar: 'Even Abraham's action is not beyond cavil. He was, indeed, better than Noah, who did nothing, whereas he pleaded earnestly for the righteous that they should not perish with the guilty, beginning his plea with the number of fifty righteous and descending to ten; then, however, he stopped, without completing his prayer for mercy for all, saying, as it were, "I do not wish to draw upon the recompense due to me for my good deeds." The perfect example is given by Moses, who as soon as the Holy One said to him, "they have turned aside quickly out of the way... they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it" (Ex. XXXII,

8), straightaway "besought the Lord his God, etc." (Ibid. 11), concluding with the words "and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ibid. 32). And although the whole people had sinned, he did not stir from his place until God said: "I have pardoned according to thy word." Abraham was inferior in that respect, since he only asked for mercy in the event that there should be found righteous men, but not otherwise. Thus there never was a man who was so sure a bulwark to his generation as Moses, the "faithful shepherd".'

AND ABRAHAM DREW NEAR, that is, he made ready to plead, AND SAID: PERADVENTURE THERE ARE FIFTY RIGHTEOUS WITHIN THE CITY. Abraham began with the number fifty, which is the entrance to understanding, and ended with ten, which number is the last of all the grades. R. Isaac said: 'Abraham stopped at ten as the number symbolic of the ten days of Penitence between New-Year and the Day of Atonement. Reaching that number, Abraham said, as it were, "After this there is no more room for penitence", and therefore he did not descend further.'

AND THE TWO ANGELS CAME TO SODOM AT EVEN, ETC. R. Jose pointed out that the preceding verse, "And the Lord went his way as soon as

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he had left off speaking to Abraham", indicates that only when the Shekinah departed from Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place, did "the two angels come to Sodom at eve". (It says "two", because one of the angels departed with the Shekinah, leaving only two.) As soon as Lot saw them he ran after them. Why so? Did Lot, then, take into his house all wayfarers and offer them food and drink? Would not the townspeople have killed him, and meted out to him the same treatment as they did to his daughter? (For Lot's daughter once offered a piece of bread to a poor man, and when it was found out, the people of the town covered her body with honey, and left her thus exposed on the top of a roof until she was consumed by wasps.) The angels, however, came in the night, so that Lot thought that the townspeople would not notice it. Nevertheless, as soon as the visitors entered his house all the people assembled and surrounded the house.' R. Isaac put the question, "Why did Lot run after them?" R. Hizkiah and R. Yesa each gave an answer. One said that it was because he observed in them a likeness to Abraham; and the other, because he noticed the Shekinah hovering over them. This view is supported by the fact that of Abraham also it is written, "And he ran to meet them from the tent door", and the words there are taken to mean that Abraham saw the Shekinah.

AND LOT SAW AND RAN TO MEET THEM... AND HE SAID, BEHOLD NOW, MY LORDS, TURN ASIDE, I PRAY YOU. The expression "turn aside", instead of "draw near", implies that he took them by a roundabout way, so that the people of the town should not see them. R. Hizkiah here discoursed on the verse: For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven (Job XXVIII, 24). 'How incumbent it is', he said, 'upon the sons of men to contemplate the

works of the Almighty and to busy themselves in the study of the Torah day and night, for through him who thus busies himself the Almighty is glorified on high and below. The Torah indeed is a tree of life for all those who occupy themselves with it, affording them life in this world and

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in the world to come. "For he looketh to the end of the land", to give them food and to satisfy all their needs; for He continually holds it under His eye, as it is written. "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. XI, 12). This is, again, the land of which it is written, "she bringeth her food from afar" (Prov. XXXI, 14), and then she provides food and sustenance for all those "beasts of the field", for so it is written, "she riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household and a portion to her maidens" (Ibid. 15). It is further written: "Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest every living thing with favour" (Ps. CXLV, 16). According to another interpretation, "He looketh to the ends of the earth" so as to survey the works of each man and to examine the doings of mankind throughout the world: "and seeth under the whole heaven", i.e. He scans and scrutinises each individual. Thus when the Holy One saw the works of Sodom and Gomorrah, He sent upon them those angels to destroy them.' Thereupon, as it is written, "Lot saw," to wit, the Shekinah. Not that anyone can see the Shekinah really, but he saw a resplendent halo about their heads, and therefore we read: "And he said, Behold now, my lords (Adonay)", as has been already explained, and it was on account of the halo, the reflection of the Shekinah, that he said, "turn aside, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet". This was not the way that Abraham acted. For he first said: "wash your feet", and then: "and I will fetch a morsel of bread, etc." Lot, however, first said, "turn aside, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night", and then he said, AND WASH YOUR FEET AND YE SHALL RISE UP EARLY, AND GO ON YOUR WAY. His object was that the people should not become aware of their presence. AND THEY SAID, NAY, BUT WE WILL ABIDE IN THE BROAD PLACE ALL NIGHT. that being the custom for visitors to those cities, as no one would take them into his house. The verse proceeds: AND HE URGED THEM GREATLY. When the Holy One is about to execute judgement in the world, He sends one messenger for this purpose. Why, then, have we here two messengers, where one would have sufficed? The truth is that of the two angels one came to rescue Lot, and so only one was left to overthrow the city and destroy the soil.

THEN THE LORD CAUSED TO RAIN UPON SODOM AND UPON GOMORRAH, ETC. R. Hiya opened his discourse on this with the verse: Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel, etc. (Is. XIII, 9). He said: 'The words "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh" refer to the lower Court. The term "cometh" has thus the same force as in the passage, "according to her cry which is come upon me", both implying that the lower power cannot execute judgement until it comes and appears on high and receives authorisation. So, too, in the verse, "the end of all flesh is come before me".

According to another interpretation, "behold the day of the Lord cometh" refers to the destroying angel here below when he comes to take the soul of man. Hence "cruel, and full of wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation", referring to Sodom and Gomorrah; "and to destroy the sinners thereof

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out of it" (Ibid.), referring to the inhabitants of those cities. Immediately after we read, "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof, etc.", for He caused to rain upon them fire from heaven and exterminated them. Further on it is written: "I will make man more rare than fine gold, etc." (Ibid. 12), referring to Abraham, whom the Holy One exalted over all the peoples of the world.' R. Judah interpreted these verses as referring to the day on which the Temple was destroyed, as on that day both men and angels were plunged into gloom and the supernal and the lower realms and the heaven and the stars were darkened. R. Eleazar, again, interpreted these verses as referring to the day when the Holy One will raise the community of Israel from the dust. That day will be a day of note both above and below, as it is written, "and there shall be one day, which shall be known as the Lord's" (Zech. XIV, 7); that day will be the day of vengeance, the day which the Holy One, blessed be He, has appointed for taking vengeance on the idolatrous nations. For whilst the Holy One is taking vengeance on the idolatrous nations, He "will make a man more precious than gold", to wit, the Messiah, who will be raised and glorified above all mankind, and to whom all mankind will pay homage and bow down, as it is written, "Before him those that dwell in the wilderness will bow down... the Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute" (Ps. LXXII, 9-10). Observe that although this prophecy (in the book of Isaiah) was primarily intended for Babylonia, yet it has a general application, since this section commences with the words, "When the Lord shall have mercy on Jacob", and it is also written, "And peoples shall take them and bring them to their place."

AND THE LORD CAUSED TO RAIN UPON SODOM. The term V'-Tetragrammaton (and the Lord) signifies the grade of the lower Court which requires authorisation from on high. R. Isaac said that God showed mercy in the midst of punishment, as it is written, "from Tetragrammaton (the Lord) out of heaven". The exercise of mercy is recorded in the words: AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN GOD DESTROYED THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN, THAT GOD REMEMBERED ABRAHAM, AND SENT LOT OUT, ETC., from whom in course of time issued two entire nations, and who was destined to have among his descendants King David and King Solomon. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THEY HAD BROUGHT THEM FORTH ABROAD, THAT HE SAID, ETC. This is another proof that when punishment overtakes the world a man should not-as has already been said-let himself be found abroad, since the executioner does not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. For this reason, as has been explained, Noah shut himself in in the ark so as not to look out on the world at the time when judgement was executed. So also it is written, "And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning" (Ex. XII, 22). Hence the angel

said to Lot, ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE, LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE, ETC. R. Isaac and R. Judah were once walking on the road together. The latter remarked: 'Both the punishment of the Flood and the punishment of Sodom were of the kinds meted out in Gehinnom, where sinners are punished by water and by fire.' R. Isaac said: 'That Sodom suffered the punishment of Gehinnom is shown by the words of the Scripture, "And the Lord caused to rain upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven", the former proceeding from the side of water and the latter from the side of fire, both being punishments of Gehinnom inflicted upon sinners there.' R. Judah then said to him: 'The punishment of sinners in Gehinnom lasts twelve months, after which the Holy One raises them out of Gehinnom, where they have undergone purification. They remain then sitting at the gate of Gehinnom, and when they see sinners enter there to be punished, they beseech mercy for them. In time the Holy One takes pity on them and causes them to be brought to a certain place reserved for them. From that day onward the body rests in the dust and the soul is accorded

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her proper place. Observe that, as has been stated, even the generation of the Flood were punished with nothing else but with fire and water: cold water descended from above, whilst seething water bubbled up from below mingled with fire. They thus underwent the two punishments regularly meted out from on high; and so was Sodom also punished, namely, by brimstone and fire.' R. Isaac asked him: 'Will the generation of the Flood arise on the Day of Judgement?' R. Judah said: 'That question has already been discussed elsewhere; as regards the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, we can say that they will not arise. This is proved from the words of the Scripture, "and the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and a burning that is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah... which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath" (Deut. XXIX, 22), where the words "which the Lord overthrew" refer to this world, and the words "in his anger," to the world to come, while the words, "and in his wrath" refer to the time when the Holy One will bring the dead to life.' R. Isaac then said to him: 'Observe that just as the soil of their land was destroyed to all eternity, so were the inhabitants themselves destroyed to all eternity. And observe further how the justice of the Holy One metes out measure for measure: as they did not quicken the soul of the poor with food or drink, just so will the Holy One not restore them their souls in the world to come. And further, just as they neglected the exercise of charity which is called life, so has the Holy One withholden from them life in this world and in the world to come. And as they closed their roads and paths to their fellow-men, so has the Holy One closed to them the roads and paths of mercy in this world and in the world to come.' R. Abba said: 'All men will rise up from the dead and will appear for judgement. Of these it is written, "and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence" (Dan. XII, 2). God, however, is the fountain of mercy, and since He punished them in this world and they suffered for their sins, they have no longer to

suffer all the punishments of the next world.'

R. Hiya said: 'It is written: "And he sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt." The expression "the cities in which Lot dwelt" indicates that he tried to settle in each of the cities in turn, but none would keep him save Sodom, the king of which allowed him residence

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for the sake of Abraham. This is borne out by the passage, "and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom" (Gen. XIII, 12). BUT HIS WIFE LOOKED BACK FROM BEHIND HIM. We should have expected "from behind her". It means, however, "From behind the Shekinah". R. Jose said that it means "from behind Lot", as the destroying angel followed him. How, it may be asked, could he follow him, seeing that he had sent him away? The fact is that the angel kept behind Lot, destroying on the way, but he did not touch any spot till Lot had passed it. Hence he said, "look not behind thee", implying "for behind thee I am doing my work of destruction". But his wife looked back from behind him, thus turning her face to the destroying angel, and she became a pillar of salt; for as long as the destroying angel does not see the face of a man he does not harm him; but as soon as Lot's wife turned her face to look at him she became a pillar of salt.'

R. Eleazar and R. Jose were one day studying the verse: "A land which in it thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, which in it thou shalt not lack anything" (Deut. VIII, 9). Said R. Eleazar: 'The repetition of the term bah (in it) is to be noted. The reason is, as has been stated, that the Holy One has assigned all nations and countries to (celestial) chieftains and envoys, with the exception of the Land of Israel, which is under the governance of no angel or chieftain, but only under that of God Himself. For this reason He brought the people who have no ruler save Him into the land which has no ruler save Him. For the Holy One provides sustenance there first, and only then to the rest of the world. All the idolatrous nations suffer scarceness, but not so the Land of Israel: the Land of Israel receives the first supply, the residue being left for the rest of the world. Hence "A land which in it thou shalt eat bread without scarceness", and in a rich abundance: "in it" but in no other place; in it is the home of true faith and on it rests the heavenly blessing. Hence it is said that Sodom and Gomorrah were "like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt" (Gen. XIII, 10),

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that is, possessing luxurious abundance. So was Egypt also: as the garden of the Lord does not need to be watered by man, neither did Egypt, being amply supplied by the river Nile, which periodically rises and irrigates the whole land. The Scripture says in one place that "it shall be, that whoso of the families of the earth goes not unto Jerusalem... upon them there shall be no rain" (Zech. XIV, 17), i.e. as a punishment; but the passage continues: "And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not... there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the nations" (Ibid. 18).

Observe that it is not written “upon them there shall be no rain”, for the reason, that it never rains in Egypt, nor is there any need of rain there: hence, their punishment will be “the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the nations”. Similarly of Sodom it is written that “it was well watered everywhere” (Gen. XIII, 10); it possessed all the luxuries of the world, and its inhabitants were unwilling that other people should share them.’ R. Hiya said: ‘They deserved punishment both for their immorality and their uncharitableness. For whoever grudges assistance to the poor does not deserve to exist in this world, and he also forfeits the life of the world to come. Contrariwise, whoever is generous towards the poor deserves to exist in the world, and it is for his sake that the world exists, and the fulness of life is reserved for him in the world to come.’

AND LOT WENT UP OUT OF ZOAR, AND DWELT IN THE MOUNTAIN, AND HIS TWO DAUGHTERS WITH HIM, ETC. For what reason? Because Zoar was too near Sodom: hence he moved away further. R. Isaac discoursed on the verse: And they are turned round about by his devices, according to their work, etc. (Job XXXVII, 12). ‘This means’, he said, ‘that the Holy One, blessed be He, constantly turns the wheel of events, bringing hidden things to the top, and then again giving another turn and shaping things differently; and thus “by his devices” He is ever scheming and planning how to effect the change, and make a new pattern.

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All is “according to their work”, i.e. the variation takes place in accordance to the works and deeds of man. The verse continues: “according as he commandeth them upon the face of the habitable world”, that is, it is in accordance with man’s works that God shapes the course of events, in all that He ordains on the face of the world.’ R. Eleazar interpreted the words “and they are turned round about by His devices”, in the following manner. ‘The Holy One guides the course of events so as to bring to pass a seemingly stable state of things; but when the sons of men imagine that all before them is fixed and firmly established, then the Holy One turns His works into something altogether different from their former state. Further,’ he said, ‘we may translate not “devices”, but “device”, i.e. “instrument”, and compare God to a potter who, in turning his wheel, constantly fashions new vessels according to his fancy. So is the Holy One constantly reshaping His works, the instrument which constitutes His potter’s wheel, so to speak, being the lower world Judgement Court. And all is done in accordance with man’s works. If they are good, the wheel revolves to the right, making the course of events highly favourable to them; and however long the wheel revolves, punishment never settles on that side. Should men, however, turn to evil ways

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the Holy One imparts to His device a spin to the left, and all things now take a direction to the left, and the wheel gives to events a course unfavourable to the sons of men. So it goes on until they become penitent and retrace their evil ways. But the motive power of the

wheel is centred in the works of man; hence the phrase, “by His device, according to their work”, there being no permanency. In this case too God manipulated events so as to attain a certain end, and all that happened had its roots in the supernal sphere. God had brought Abraham near to Him, and there issued from him Ishmael. Ishmael was born before Abraham was circumcised, that is, before he was made perfect through the sign of the holy covenant. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, so devised that Abraham circumcised himself and entered the covenant and acquired his complete name of Abraham, and was crowned by the supernal he with the symbolical issuing of water from wind. As soon as the symbolism was completed and Abraham was circumcised, there issued from him Isaac, who was the holy seed and who was attached to the supernal spheres as symbolising fire from water, and who was not in any way linked to the “other side”. From Lot, again, and from his daughters there came forth two disparate nations who became attached to the side appropriate to them. We see here, again, how the Almighty contrives

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the course of things, turning them about so that everything should fit into the general scheme and fall into its proper place. For observe that it would have been more fitting for Lot that the Holy One should have produced these two nations from his union with his wife. It was, however, necessary that these nations should be attached to their predestined place, and for this wine had to play its part; and wine, indeed, was found ready at hand in that cavern. The mystical part played by wine here is similar to that regarding which we read, “and he drank of the wine, and was drunken” (Gen. IX, 21), as has already been explained elsewhere.

In regard to the names Moab and Ammon, R. Jose made the following comment. ‘The first-born daughter was boldfaced enough to call her son “Moab”, thereby proclaiming that he was meab, i.e. the issue of her own father; whereas THE YOUNGER SHE ALSO BORE A SON, AND CALLED HIS NAME BEN-AMMI: the mother out of delicacy gave him that name which being interpreted simply means “a son of my people”, without betraying who his father was. Further, the words AND HE KNEW NOT WHEN SHE LAY DOWN, NOR WHEN SHE AROSE, occur twice in this passage, first in reference to the younger daughter, and then in reference to the elder. In the former case the word b’qumah (when she arose) occurring in it is written plene, i.e. with the letter vau, which, moreover, is provided with a dot; this is to signify that heaven, as it were, was an accomplice to the act which ultimately was to bring about the birth of the Messiah. Contrariwise, the similar word in reference to the younger one is written defectively, without the letter vau, for the reason that none of her issue had any part in the Holy One, blessed be He.’ R. Simeon said: ‘The underlying meaning of the words “and he knew not” is that he was unaware that the Holy One intended to raise from her King David and Solomon and all the other kings and, finally, the Messiah.’ R. Simeon said further: ‘The expression “when she arose” has its counterpart in the words used by Ruth, “and she rose

up before one could discern another" (Ruth III, 14). For it was on that day that Lot's daughter could be said to have risen to the height of her destiny in that

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Boaz became attached to one of her lineage in order "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance", by means of which there were raised from her all those kings and the elect of Israel. Again, "And he knew not when she lay down" has its counterpart in the verse, "and she lay at his feet until the morning" (Ibid.).

'Observe the restraint of Abraham in not beseeching grace on behalf of Lot, even when the Holy One at first announced to him His determination to execute punishment on Sodom; nor after he BEHELD, AND, LO, THE SMOKE OF THE LAND WENT UP AS THE SMOKE OF A FURNACE did he intercede for Lot, or address to the Holy One any word about him. Neither did the Holy One mention this subject to Abraham, in order that the latter should not think that God had used up some of his merit in order to save Lot. It cannot be said that Lot was of no account in the eyes of Abraham, seeing that Abraham risked his life on his behalf in waging war against five powerful kings. But because of his love for the Almighty and, in addition, because he saw that Lot's conduct fell far short of the proper standard, Abraham did not plead that any indulgence should be shown to Lot for his sake. This is the reason why Abraham did not intercede on behalf of Lot either at the beginning or at the end.'

AND ABRAHAM JOURNEYED FROM THENCE TOWARD THE LAND OF THE SOUTH. All his journeyings were toward the side of the South,

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which he preferred to the other sides, in that it is the side of Wisdom. AND ABRAHAM SAID OF SARAH, HIS WIFE, SHE IS MY SISTER. It is a dictum of our teachers that a man should not rely on miracles, and even if the Holy One, blessed be He, has once performed a miracle for him he should not count on it another time, for miracles do not happen every day. And whoever runs into obvious danger may thereby exhaust all his merit previously accumulated. This has been made clear in explanation of the verse, "I am not worthy of all the mercies, and of all the truth, etc." (Gen. XXXII, 11). Now, seeing that Abraham had already had once a miraculous deliverance when he journeyed into Egypt, why did he put himself now again into a similar difficulty by saying "she is my sister"? The answer is that Abraham did in no way rely on himself, but he saw the Shekinah constantly in the abode of Sarah, and that emboldened him to declare "she is my sister", in the sense of the verse "Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister" (Prov. VII, 4).

AND GOD CAME TO ABIMELECH, ETC. Can that be? Does, then, the Holy One, blessed be He, come to the wicked? The same question is raised by the words, "and God came unto Balaam" (Num. XXII, 9), and again, "and God came to Laban" (Gen. XXXI, 24). In all these cases, however, it was, in fact, only a heavenly

messenger who was dispatched to them, and who in executing their message assumed that divine name (Elohim), since they were emissaries of justice. Hence: AND GOD CAME TO ABIMELECH IN A DREAM OF THE NIGHT, AND SAID TO HIM, BEHOLD, THOU SHALT DIE BECAUSE OF THE WOMAN WHOM THOU HAST TAKEN, ETC. R. Simeon here discoursed on the verse: The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment (Prov. XII, 19). 'The first part of the verse,' he said, 'alludes to Abraham, whose words on every occasion were truth; and the other part of the verse is an allusion to Abimelech. Twice Abraham said of Sarah, "she is my sister". On the first occasion he referred to the Shekinah, who was constantly with Sarah, and as Abraham

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was of the right side he could indeed say of the Shekinah "she is my sister", using the term in the same mystic sense as in the verse, "my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled" (S. S. V, 2). Abraham always called her "sister" because he was attached to her inseparably. Later he said: "And moreover she is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother." Was it really

so? In truth he was alluding all the time to the Shekinah. At first he said, "she is my sister" in conformity with the admonition, "Say to wisdom, Thou art my sister." Then he amplified this by saying "moreover she is my sister, the daughter of my father", i.e. the daughter of Supernal Wisdom, for which reason she is called "my sister" and also Wisdom-"but not the daughter of my mother"-i.e. from the place where is the origin of all, most hidden and recondite. "And so she became my wife", i.e. by way of fondness and affection, in the sense of the verse "and his right hand embrace me" (S. S. II, 6). Thus all his words contained mystic allusions. Observe that on the first occasion, when they went down to Egypt, he called her "my sister" in order to cleave all the more firmly to the true faith, and not to be led astray after outer grades; similarly now he continued to declare "she is my sister" because he had not deviated from the true faith. For Abimelech and all the inhabitants of the land followed strange worship, and therefore Abraham, entering there, made bold to say "my sister", claiming thereby the same indissoluble kinship as between brother and sister. For the marital bond can be dissolved, but not that between brother and sister. So whereas all the people of that land were addicted to the worship of the stars and constellations, Abraham, the true believer, avowed "she is my sister", as much as to say, "We two will never separate." We can apply here the words, "and for his sister a virgin (Lev. XXI, 3), which were spoken of the priest, but esoterically signify the abode where Abraham reposes. It is written: The Lord thy God thou shalt fear; him shalt thou serve; and to him shalt thou cleave, and by his name shalt thou swear (Deut. X, 20). The accusative particle eth

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points to the first grade, the region of the fear of God, and hence "thou shalt fear", for there a man must fear

his master, it being the Court of Justice. The words "him shalt thou serve" point to a higher grade which rests upon the lower grade, the two being inseparable. This is the place of the holy covenant, the object of service. "And to him shalt thou cleave" refers to the region of complete union, to wit, the body which rests in the centre; "and by his name shalt thou swear" refers to the seventh of the grades. Abraham, therefore, clave to the true faith when he went down into Egypt and also when he went to the land of the Philistines. He was like a man who wanted to go down into a deep pit but was afraid he would not be able to come up again. He therefore fastened a rope above the pit, and having thus assured his ascent, he went down. In the same way Abraham, when he was about to go down to Egypt, first secured his faith firmly, and thus having something to hold by he went down there; and he did the same when he went into the land of the Philistines. "The lip of truth", then, "is established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment", the "lying tongue" referring to Abimelech, who said, IN THE SIMPLICITY OF MY HEART AND THE INNOCENCY OF MY HANDS HAVE I DONE THIS. But what was the reply he received? YEA, I KNOW THAT IN THE SIMPLICITY OF THY HEART THOU HAST DONE THIS. but no mention was made of innocency of hands. NOW THEREFORE RESTORE THE MAN'S WIFE, FOR HE IS A PROPHET.

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: He guardeth the feet of his pious ones, etc. (I Sam. II, 9). ' "His pious one," he said 'is Abraham, whom God constantly kept under watchful care, whilst the word "feet" is an allusion to his wife, with whom God sent the Shekinah to guard her. According to another interpretation, the Holy One continually accompanied Abraham so that no one should do him any harm. "But the wicked shall be put to silence by the darkness" (Ibid.). These are the kings whom the Holy One had slain on that night when Abraham pursued them; the night, as it were, united with darkness to slay them, so that while it was Abraham who pursued, it was the darkness that killed. So it is written: "And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and he smote them" (Gen. XIV, 15). By "dividing" is here meant that the Holy One separated His attribute of mercy from that of justice in order to avenge Abraham. Instead of "and he smote them" we should have expected "and they smote them". But this is again a reference to the Holy One, "for man prevaileth not by strength", seeing that only Abraham and Eliezer were there.' R. Isaac put the question: 'Have we not been taught that a man should not court danger, in reliance on a miracle? And was not Abraham putting himself into extreme danger in pursuing the five kings and engaging in battle against them?' R. Judah replied: 'Abraham did not set out with the intention of joining battle, nor did he count upon a miracle. What impelled him to leave his house was the distress of Lot, whom he resolved to ransom, taking money with him for this purpose, and being prepared, in case he should not succeed, to die with him in captivity. But as soon as he set out he saw the Shekinah illumining the way before him, and hosts of angels encompassing him. Then it was that he began to pursue them, whilst the Holy One slew them. Hence the verse: "and the wicked are put to silence in darkness" (I Sam. II, 9).' R. Simeon said: 'The mystical

interpretation of the verse is as follows: "He guardeth the feet of his pious ones"; this refers to Abraham. But when Abraham set out Isaac joined him and so the enemies fell before him. But had not Isaac been associated with Abraham, they would not have been exterminated. So it is written: "But the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness, for man prevaileth not by strength", indicating that although strength resides always in the right side, if not for the help of the left side (darkness), the opponents could not be overcome.' According to another interpretation, "He guardeth the feet of his pious ones" signifies that when a man truly loves God, then God reciprocates his love in all his doings and guards him in all his ways, as it is written, "The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and for ever" (Ps. CXXI, 8). Observe how assiduous Abraham was in his love towards the Holy One; for wherever he went he had no regard whatever for himself

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and sought only to cleave to the Almighty. Hence God guarded the feet of "his pious ones", the term "feet" referring to Abraham's wife, in regard to whom it is written, "Now Abimelech had not come near her", also "Therefore suffered I thee not to touch her." We find also written in the case of Pharaoh, "And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues at the word of Sarai,' (Gen. XII, 17), implying that she, as it were, gave out the order and the Holy One administered the blows. Thus "He guardeth the feet of his pious ones." "But the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness": these are Pharaoh and Abimelech, to whom the Holy One administered punishment by night, while the words "For not by strength shall man prevail" refer to Abraham, on whose behalf God said, "Now therefore restore the man's wife, etc." '

AND THE LORD REMEMBERED SARAH AS HE HAD SAID, ETC. R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: And he showed me Joshua the High priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him (Zech. III, 1). 'This verse,' he said, 'must be carefully pondered. "Joshua the high priest" is Joshua the son of Jehozedek; "the angel of the Lord" before whom he was standing is the region of the "bundle of the souls" of the righteous, which is known as "the angel of the Lord"; "Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him" is the evil tempter who roams to and fro through the world to snatch up souls and to lure beings to perdition, angels as well as human beings. Joshua had been cast by Nebuchadnezzar into the fire, along with the false prophets; and that was the moment seized by Satan to bring accusations against him on high in order that he should be burnt along with them. For this is the way of the Satan, to reserve his indictment for the hour of danger, or for a time when the world is in distress. At such a time he has authority both to accuse and to punish even without justice, as it says: "But there is that is swept away without a just cause" (Prov. XIII, 23). Satan then was standing "to accuse him", to wit, to plead that either they should all be delivered or all burnt in the fire. For when the angel of destruction obtains authorisation to destroy, he does not discriminate between innocent and guilty. It is for this reason that when punishment falls upon a town a

man should flee from thence before he is overtaken. Here it was all the easier for the Satan, as the three were already joined as one in the fiery furnace, and he could thus demand a single treatment for them all, either to be burnt or to be saved. For a miracle is not performed

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in halves, delivering half and leaving half to be destroyed, but the whole is either miraculously saved or left to its doom. 'Said R. Jose to him: 'Is it really so? Did not God divide the Red Sea for the Israelites so that they could pass on dry land, while the same waters swept round on the Egyptians and drowned them, so that here you have a miraculous deliverance and a divine punishment at one and the same point?' R. Hiya replied: 'This was precisely why the miracle of the Red Sea presented such difficulties to the Almighty. For when God does punish and miraculously deliver at the same time, it is usually not in the same place or the same house. If that does happen it constitutes a heavy task for Him. On the same principle the Holy One does not punish the guilty until the measure of their guilt is full, as it is written, "for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full" (Gen. XV, 16), and again, "in full measure, when thou sendest her away, thou dost contend with her" (Is. XXVII, 8). Satan, therefore, demanded that Joshua should be burnt along with the others, until he said to him, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan" (Zech. III, 2). Who said this? It was the angel of the Lord. The text, it is true, runs: "The Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan." But observe that regarding Moses at the bush it is also written: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire" (Ex. III, 2), whilst a little later it is written, "And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see" (Ibid. 4). The truth is that sometimes the Scripture says "the angel of the Lord", sometimes simply "the angel", and sometimes again "the Lord". Hence here also it is written, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan," and not: "Behold, I rebuke thee." So whenever the Holy One sits on the Throne of Judgement to judge the world, Satan, the seducer of men and angels, is at hand to do mischief and to snatch up souls.'

R. Simeon was one day in the course of his studies examining the verse, "And the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd... and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley" (Deut. XXI, 3-4). 'According to the law,' he said, 'the neck must be broken with a hatchet.' Said to him R. Eleazar: 'What is the need of all this?' R. Simeon then wept and said: 'Woe to the world which has been lured after this one. For from the day that the evil

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serpent, having enticed Adam, obtained dominion over man and over the world, he has ever been at work seducing people from the right path, nor will the world cease to suffer from his machinations until the Messiah shall come, when the Holy One will raise to life those who sleep in the dust in accordance with the verse, "He will swallow up death for ever, etc." (Is. XXV, 8), and the verse, "And I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" (Zech. XIII, 2). Meanwhile Satan

dominates this world and snatches up the souls of the sons of men. Observe now the passage: "If one be found slain in the land, etc." (Deut. XXI, 1-9). Ordinarily it is through the angel of death that the souls of men pass out of their bodies, but with that man it was not so, but he that slew him made his soul depart from him before the time came for the angel of death to gather him in. Hence it is written: "And no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it" (Num. XXXV, 33). Is it not enough for the world that Satan should be continually on the watch to lead men astray and to formulate accusations against them, that one must needs increase his fury by depriving him of what is his due? But the Holy One is merciful towards His children, and so provided the offering of a calf as reparation for the soul of which Satan was deprived and as a means of pacifying the world's accuser. Herein is involved a deep mystery. The offerings of the ox, the cow, the calf, the heifer have all a deep mystical significance, and therefore we make reparation to him in the way mentioned in the text. Hence the declaration, "Our hands have not shed this blood, etc." (Deut. XXI, 7)-they have not shed this blood, and we have not caused his death; and by this means the accuser is thereby kept at a distance. All this constitutes good counsel given by the Holy One to the world. Observe that the same applies to New Year Day and to the Day of Atonement. That is the time when the world is on trial and Satan brings his accusations. Hence it is needful for Israel to give a blast on the trumpet and to emit a sound which is a compound of fire, water, and air; that sound ascends to the place of the Throne of Judgement, where the Court of Justice is sitting, and impinges on it and ascends further. As soon as the sound arrives from beneath, the voice of Jacob is reinforced on high, and the Holy One, blessed be He,

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is stirred to mercy. For corresponding to the sound uniting fire, water, and air, which Israel emits here below, there goes forth a blast from on high. Through the two blasts, the one on high and the other below, the world is fortified and mercy prevails. The accuser then, who thought to prevail in judgement and to obtain sentence on the world, becomes confounded; his strength fails and he is unable to achieve anything. The Holy One then, sitting in judgement, joins mercy to justice, and so the world is judged by mercy, and not rigorously. Observe the verse: "Blow the horn at the new moon, at the time of its covering for our feast day" (Ps. LXXXI, 4). The word ba-keseh (at the covering) means the time when the moon is invisible. For at that time the evil serpent is in power and is able to do hurt to the world. But when mercy is aroused, the moon ascends and is removed from that place, and so the evil serpent is confounded, loses his power and is unable to approach there. Hence on New Year Day it is necessary to confound him, so that he should be like one awakening from sleep and still half-conscious. Again, on the Day of Atonement it is requisite to pacify and propitiate him by means of the scapegoat which is brought to him, whereby he is induced to undertake the defence of Israel. But on New Year Day he becomes confused, and is unable to do anything. He sees the stirring of mercy ascending from below, the awakening

of mercy on high, and the moon between them, and he is thereby confounded, and remains bewildered and powerless, and so the Holy One dispenses His judgement to Israel in a spirit of mercy, and accords them as a time of grace those ten days between New Year Day and the Day of Atonement, for the acceptance of all those who repent of their sins and for forgiveness of their iniquities, by giving them a respite till the Day of Atonement. The Holy One had thus given Israel all these commandments to save them from falling into the wrong hands and from being judged with rigour, so that they should all come out innocent on earth,

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through His mercy which is like the mercy of a father towards his children. All depends on actions and words, as we have explained.'

AND THE LORD VISITED SARAH AS HE HAD SAID: thus fulfilling the words, "I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (Gen. XVIII, 10). A tradition teaches us that the term *paqad* (visited) is written in connection with women, and the term *zakhar* (remembered) in connection with men. Hence here it is written "And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said." The expression "as he had said" proves that the words "and he said", in the passage in Gen. XVIII, 10, refer to the Lord Himself, and no messenger. AND THE LORD DID UNTO SARAH AS HE HAD SPOKEN. Since the text has already said, "and the Lord visited Sarah", what need is there to add, "and he did unto Sarah"? The reason is this. It is one of our doctrines that the "fruit of the handiwork" of the Almighty springs from that river which flows forth from Eden. This "fruit of God's handiwork" is the souls of the righteous, and it is also the allotment (*mazzal*)[Tr. note: Lit. 'luck'; also 'flowing'.] from which flow all good fortune and rains of blessing, as it is written, "to water the garden" (Gen. II, 10), that is, to cause the stream to flow from on high and irrigate and fertilise the world below. For mankind depends on that allotment and not on any other source. Hence, besides "visiting" Sarah, God also "did" something in the region on high, since everything depends on that. Hence the two stages of "visiting" and "doing", with the name of "the Lord" mentioned with each, the whole forming one process.'

R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward (Ps. CXXVII, 3). 'The meaning', he said, 'is that children confer on a man the heritage of the Lord, by which he attaches himself to the Lord to all time. For the man who is privileged to have children in this world will through them be worthy to enter "behind the partition" in the world to come; and by leaving a son in this world a man's merits are enhanced in the world to come, and through him he enters into the "heritage of the Lord". What is the "heritage of the Lord"? It is the "land of the living", a name by which the Land of Israel is called, as is proved from the words of King David, "for they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the heritage of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods" (I Sam. XXVI, 19). Hence: "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord",

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that is, it is children who make a man worthy of the heritage of the Lord. "The fruit of the womb is a reward" refers to reward in the next world, for by the fruit of the womb a man merits the world to come. Again, "a heritage of the Lord are children", that is, the heritage of the fruit of the works of the Holy One is from above, from the tree of life, for it is from thence that a man is blessed with children, as we read, "From me is thy fruit found" (Hos. XIV, 9). "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be put to shame, etc." (Ps. CXXVII, 5): happy in this world and happy in the world to come. "They will not be put to shame when they speak with their enemies in the gate": who are the "enemies in the gate"? They are the accusing angels. For when a man departs from this world, there are numbers of such accusing angels who try to block his way and prevent him from reaching his place. But he passes through "the gate" because he has left hostages in this world by virtue of whom he is found worthy of a place in the next world. Thus, "they shall not be put to shame when they speak with their enemies in the gate".'

R. Judah and R. Jose were walking on the road. Said R. Judah to R. Jose: 'Open thy lips and say something in exposition of the Torah, since the Shekinah is accompanying thee. For whenever the Torah is studied earnestly, the Shekinah comes and joins, and all the more so on the road, where the Shekinah comes in anticipation, preceding those who cleave to their faith in the Holy One, blessed be He.' R. Jose then began to discourse on the verse: Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine in the innermost parts of thy house; thy children like olive plants, round about thy table (Ps. CXXVIII, 3). 'So long', he said, 'as a woman abides in the innermost parts of the house, she remains chaste and is fit to bear worthy children. She is like a vine, for just as a vine is never grafted with another kind but only with its own, so the worthy woman does not bear offspring from a strange man but only from her husband. Her reward is

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to have "children like olive plants, round about thy table". Just as the leaves of olive trees do not fall off but remain firmly attached to the twigs all the year round, so shall "thy children be like olive plants, round about thy table." The text proceeds: "Behold, surely thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord" (Ibid. 4). The term "surely" seems to be superfluous. It indicates, however, a further lesson, viz. that so long as the Shekinah stayed modestly in her own place, if one may be permitted the expression, then it could be said of her, "thy children like olive plants, round about thy table", referring to Israel during the time that they dwelt in the Land of Israel; "round about thy table" they were, eating and drinking and bringing offerings and feasting before the Holy One, blessed be He: both all those on high and all those below were blessed through them. But when the Shekinah departed, Israel were driven from the table of their father, and dispersed among the nations, and they continually cried out without anyone taking heed, excepting the Holy One, as it is written:



“And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, etc.” (Lev. XXVI, 44). We have seen how many saintly and holy men have perished through tyrannical decrees, all as part of Israel's punishment for not keeping the Law when they were in the Holy Land. It is written, “Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things” (Deut. XXVIII, 47). The words “because thou didst not serve with joyfulness” refer to the priests, who offered sacrifices and holocausts “with joyfulness”; “and with gladness of heart” alludes to the Levites; “by reason of the abundance of all things” is an allusion to the lay Israelites whose position was in the middle, and who received blessings from all sides. Again it is written, “Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast made great their joy” (Is. IX, 2), in allusion to the priests; “they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest” (Ibid.) indicates the lay Israelites whom the Holy One blesses with a good harvest of the field, from all of which they give a tenth; “as men rejoice when they divide the spoil” (Ibid.) refers to the Levites, who take a tenth from the threshing floor. According to another explanation: “Thou hast multiplied the nation” indicates Israel, who have faith in the Holy One; “Thou hast made great his joy” alludes to the first and supernal grade, to which Abraham attached himself, this being great and filled with joy; “they joy before thee”

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at the time when they go up to attach themselves to Thee, “according to the joy in harvest”, an allusion to the community of Israel, to which properly belongs the joy in harvest; “as men rejoice when they divide the spoil”, a reference to the joy evinced by the rest of the lower powers and chariot-riders when they divide the spoil and fall upon their prey in the forefront of all.’

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: It is a time to work for the Lord; they have made void thy law (Ps. CXIX, 126). It has been laid down that the term 'eth (time) is a designation of the community of Israel. Why is the community of Israel designated “time” ('eth)? Because all things with her are regulated by times and periods, when to come near the Deity, when to receive light (from above), and when to commune, as we read, “But as for me, let my prayer be unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time” (Ps. LXIX, 14). Thus, “the community must be made unto the Lord”, that is, it must be prepared and fitted to commune with God (so the word “made” is used in the verse “and David made himself a name” (II Sam. VIII, 13)), and this by means of those who labour in the study of the Torah. And why all this? Because “they have made void thy law”, for if “they had not made void thy law” there would never have been any estrangement between the Holy One and Israel.’ R. Jose said: ‘In this way is explained the verse: “I the Lord will in its time hasten it” (Is. LX, 22). The word b'itah (in its time) may be resolved into b'eth he (in the time of the letter He), i.e. “when the time arrives for the He to rise up from the dust I will hasten it”.’ Said R. Jose further: ‘Yet the community of Israel is to remain only one day in the dust and no more.’ Said R. Judah: ‘Tradition agrees with what you have said. But observe what we have learnt regarding this, namely, that when the community of Israel was exiled

from its home, the letters of the Divine Name, became, if one may say so, separated, the He flying apart from the Vau. We can thus understand the sentence, “I was dumb with silence” (Ps. XXXIX, 3), as through the separation of the Vau from the He there was no Voice, and thus Utterance was silenced. She therefore lies in the dust all the day of the He, that is, the whole of the fifth thousand (although they were already in exile before the beginning of the fifth thousand, which is symbolised by the He); and when the sixth thousand, which is symbolised

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by the Vau, begins, the Vale will resuscitate the He at six times ten (an allusion to the sixty souls), which means the Vau repeated ten times. The Vau will ascend to the Yod and redescend to the He. The Vau will be multiplied into the He ten times, making sixty, when it will raise the exiles from the dust. At every sixty years of the sixth thousand the He will mount a stage higher, acquiring greater strength. And after six hundred years of the sixth thousand there will be opened the gates of wisdom above and the fountains of wisdom below, and the world will make preparations to enter on the seventh thousand as man makes preparations on the sixth day of the week, when the sun is about to set. As a mnemonic to this we take the verse, “In the six hundredth year of Noah's life... all the fountains of the great deep were broken up” (Gen. VII, 11).’ Said R. Jose to him: ‘Your calculations lay down a much longer period than that arrived at by the companions, according to whom the exile of the community of Israel was only to last one day (i.e. a thousand years), as it says, “He hath made me desolate and faint all the day” (Lam. I, 13).’ R. Judah said in reply: ‘This is what I have learnt from my father concerning the mysteries of the letters of the Divine Name, and of the duration of the world as well as of the days of creation, all of which belongs to the same mystical doctrine. At that time the rainbow will appear in the cloud in radiant colours, like a woman that decks herself out for her husband, in fulfilment of the verse, “and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant” (Gen. IX, 16), a passage already explained elsewhere. “I will see it” with all its bright colours, and I will thus “remember the everlasting covenant”. Who is the everlasting covenant? It is the community of Israel. The Vau will join the He, and will resuscitate her from the dust. When the Vau shall move to join the He, heavenly signs will appear in the world, and the Reubenites will make war against all the world; and so the community of Israel will be raised from the dust, for the Holy One will remember her. In this way the Holy One will have dwelt with her in exile years to the number of Vau times Yod, that is, six times ten, after which she will be raised, and vengeance will be executed on the world, and the lowly will be exalted.’ Said R. Jose to him: ‘All you say is right, being

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mystically indicated by the letters, and we need not enter upon any other calculations regarding the end (qets). For in the book of the venerable R. Yeba we find the same calculation. The verse, “Then shall the land satisfy her Sabbaths” (Lev. XXVI, 34) is an allusion to

the mystical implication of the Vau, as indicated in a subsequent verse, "And I will remember my covenant with Jacob"[Tr. note: The name Jacob is in this verse exceptionally spelt plene, i.e. with a vau. v. infra, p. 369.] (Ibid. 42), and then it says, "and I will remember the land" (Ibid.), indicating the community of Israel. The word "will satisfy" (tirzeh) signifies that the Holy One will be favourable to her. As for the "one day" of which the companions have spoken, it is assuredly all hidden with the Holy One, and it is all found in the mystery of the letters of the Divine Name; for R. Jose here has revealed the end of the exile by means of these letters.' Said R. Judah: 'Observe that also when Sarah was visited, it was the grade of the divine essence symbolised by the Vau that visited her, as it is written, "And (Va) the Lord visited Sarah", for all is contained in the mystery of the Vau, and through it all things are to be revealed.' Said R. Jose: 'We have still a long time to be in exile until the day arrives, but all depends on whether the people will repent of their sins, as appears from the passage, "I the Lord will hasten it in its time" (Is. LX, 22), i.e. if they will be worthy, "I will hasten it", and if not, then "in its time".' The two then proceeded on their way. Suddenly R. Jose said: 'It comes to my memory that in this place I was once sitting with my father and he said to me: "When you will reach the age of sixty years you are destined to find in this place a treasure of sublime wisdom." I have lived to reach that age, and I have not found the treasure, but I wonder if the words spoken by us just now are not the wisdom that he meant. He further said to me: "When the celestial flame reaches the spaces between your fingers, it will escape from you." I asked him: "How do you know this?" He replied: "I know it by the two birds that passed over your head." ' At this point R. Jose left him and entered a cavern,

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at the farther end of which he found a book hidden in the cleft of a rock. He brought it out and caught sight of seventy-two tracings of letters which had been given to Adam the first man, and by means of which he knew all the wisdom of the supernal holy beings, and all those beings that abide behind the mill with turns behind the veil among the supernal ethereal essences, as well as all that is destined to happen in the world until the day when a cloud will arise on the side of the West and darken the world. R. Jose then called R. Judah and the two began to examine the book. No sooner had they studied two or three of the letters than they found themselves contemplating that supernal wisdom. But as soon as they began to go into the book more deeply and to discuss it, a fiery flame driven by a tempestuous wind struck their hands, and the book vanished from them. R. Jose wept, saying, 'Can it be, Heaven forefend, that we are tainted with some sin? Or are we unworthy to possess the knowledge contained therein?' When they came to R. Simeon they told him what had occurred. He said to them: 'Were you, perhaps, scrutinising those letters which dealt with the coming of the Messiah?' They answered: 'We cannot tell, as we have forgotten everything.' R. Simeon continued: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, does not desire that so much should be revealed to the world, but when the days of the Messiah will be near at hand, even children will discover the secrets of wisdom and

thereby be able to calculate the millennium; at that time it will be revealed to all, as it is written, "For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, etc." (Zeph. III, 9), the term az (then) referring to the time when the community of Israel will be raised from the dust and the Holy One will make her stand upright; then "will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Ibid.).'

Observe that although it is said of Abraham that he "journeyed still toward the South" (Gen. XII, 9), he did not attain to his rightful grade until Isaac was born. But as soon as Isaac was born, he attained this grade, through the close association and union

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of the two. For that reason he, and no other, called him Isaac, in order that water and fire should be merged together. Hence: AND ABRAHAM CALLED THE NAME OF HIS SON THAT WAS BORN UNTO HIM, WHOM SARAH BORE TO HIM, ISAAC: to wit, the son that was born to him as fire born from water.

AND SARAH SAW THE SON OF HAGAR THE EGYPTIAN, WHOM SHE HAD BORN UNTO ABRAHAM, MAKING SPORT. R. Hiya said: 'After recording the birth of Isaac, the Scripture never mentions Ishmael by name so long as he was still in the house of Abraham: dross cannot be mentioned in the presence of gold. Hence Ishmael is referred to here as "the son of Hagar the Egyptian", as it was not fitting that his name should be mentioned in the presence of Isaac.' Said R. Isaac: 'The words "and Sarah saw" imply that she looked at him disdainfully, as being the son not of Abraham but of Hagar the Egyptian, and, furthermore, only Sarah regarded him so, but not Abraham, as we read that THE THING WAS VERY GRIEVOUS IN ABRAHAM'S SIGHT ON ACCOUNT OF HIS SON-not the son of Hagar, but his son.' R. Simeon said: 'The Scripture really speaks in praise of Sarah. For what she saw was that he was indulging in idolatrous practices. Hence she said: Surely, this is not the son of Abraham, who follows in the footsteps of Abraham, but the son of Hagar the Egyptian, who is reverting to the type of his mother. Hence: AND SHE SAID UNTO ABRAHAM: CAST OUT THIS BONDWOMAN AND HER SON; FOR THE SON OF THIS BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH MY SON, EVEN WITH ISAAC. It cannot be supposed that Sarah was moved by jealousy of her or her son. For if so, the Holy One would not have supported her by saying, IN ALL THAT SARAH SAITH UNTO THEE, HEARKEN UNTO HER VOICE. The truth, therefore, is that she observed him worshipping idols, and performing the practices which his mother had taught him. Hence the words of Sarah, "For the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir", as much as to say: "I know that he will never enter the fold of the true faith and that he will have no portion with my son either in this world or in the world to come." Therefore God supported her, since He wished to keep the holy seed carefully separated, for that was the end for which He created the world, as Israel was already in His thought before the creation of the world. It was therefore that Abraham appeared in the world, so that the world could be sustained for his sake. Abraham and Isaac together

upheld the world, yet they were not firmly established until Jacob came into the world. When Jacob appeared, both Abraham and Isaac became firmly established and the whole world with them. From Jacob the holy people gradually emerged into the world, and so the whole of existence became duly established according to the holy pattern. Hence God said, "In all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall seed be called to thee", i.e. in Isaac and not in Ishmael.

The text proceeds: AND SHE DEPARTED AND STRAYED IN THE WILDERNESS OF BEERSHEBA. The term vatetha (and she strayed) indicates idolatry, like the kindred term in the verse, "They are vanity, work of delusion (tha'athuim, lit. "goings astray") (Jer. X, 15). Thus it was only for the sake of Abraham that the Holy One did not abandon her or her son. Observe that on the previous occasion when she fled from Sarah, it was said to her: "The Lord hath heard thy affliction" (Gen. XVI, 11); but now since she went astray after idols, although she lifted up her voice and wept, yet it says, FOR GOD HATH HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LAD WHERE HE IS. The expression "where he is" we interpret to imply that he was still a minor in the eyes of the heavenly court. For whereas in the human court, here below, the age of liability is reached at thirteen years, in the heavenly court it is reached only at twenty years; before that age, even if one is guilty, he is not punishable. Hence the phrase "where he is". Said R. Eleazar: 'If that be so, why should anyone be punished by dying before twenty? Before thirteen, it is true, he may die for the sins of his father, but why after thirteen?' R. Hiya replied: 'The Holy One has mercy on such a one so that he should die whilst still innocent, and obtain a reward in the other world, instead of dying in guilt and receiving punishment in that world.' R. Eleazar rejoined: 'But if he is already guilty before he reaches the age of

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twenty years, what are we to say? Since he has died (before reaching the age of punishment), how will he be punished?' R. Simeon replied: 'It is of such that it is written, "But there is that is swept away without judgement" (Prov. XIII, 23). For when chastisement descends on the world, then such a one is struck down by the destroying angel without express sentence pronounced either by the heavenly or the earthly tribunal, while Providence is not keeping watch over him. It is also written of such a one: "His own iniquities shall ensnare (eth) the wicked, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin" (Ibid. v. 22). The accusative particle eth amplifies the term "the wicked" so as to make it include one who has not yet come of legal age; of him, then, it is said, "His own iniquities shall ensnare the wicked", but not the heavenly tribunal, "and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin", but not by the earthly tribunal. Hence it says here: "For God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." '

R. Simeon discoursed on the verse: And I will remember my covenant with Jacob, etc. (Lev. XXVI, 42). 'The name Jacob', he said, 'is here written in full, with the letter vau. For what reason? In the first place as an allusion to the grade of Wisdom, the realm where

Jacob dwells. But the chief reason is because the passage speaks of the exile of Israel, intimating that the redemption of Israel will come about through the mystic force of the letter vau, namely, in the sixth millennium, and, more precisely, after six seconds and a half a time. When the sixtieth year shall have passed over the threshold of the sixth millennium, the God of heaven will visit the daughter of Jacob with a preliminary remembrance (p'qidah). Another six and a half years will then elapse, and there will be a full remembrance of her; then another six years, making together seventy-two years and a half. In the year sixty-six the Messiah will appear in the land of Galilee. A star in the east will swallow seven stars in the north, and a flame of black fire will hang in the heaven for sixty days, and there shall be wars towards the north in which two kings shall perish. Then all the nations shall combine together against the daughter of Jacob in order to drive her from the world. It is of that time that it is written: "And it is a time of trouble unto Jacob, but out of it he shall be saved" (Jer. XXX, 7). At that time all the souls in Guph will have been used up, and will need to be re-created. As a mnemonic of this we may use the verse: "All the souls of the house of Jacob that came into Egypt... all the souls were threescore and six" (Gen. XLVI, 26). In the year seventy-three all the kings of the world will assemble in the great city of Rome, and the Holy One will shower on them fire and hail and meteoric stones until they are all destroyed, with the exception of those who will not yet have arrived there. These will commence anew to make other wars. From that time the Messiah will begin to declare himself, and round him there will be gathered many nations and many hosts from the uttermost ends of the earth. And all the children of Israel will assemble in their various places until the completion of the century. The Vau will then join the He, and then "they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an offering unto the Lord" (Is. LXVI, 20). The children of Ishmael will at the same time rouse all the peoples of the world to come up to war against Jerusalem, as it is written, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, etc." (Zech. XIV, 2), also, "The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed" (Ps. II, 2); and further, "He that sitteth in heaven laugheth, the Lord hath them in derision" (Ibid. II, 4). Then the lesser Vau will rouse itself to unite (with the He) and renew the souls that had become old, so as to rejuvenate the world, as it is written, "May the glory of the Lord endure for ever, let the Lord rejoice in his works" (Ps. CIV, 31). The first part of this verse signifies that God's glory will attach itself to the world, and the latter half that He will cause souls to descend into the world and make them into new beings, so as to join the world into one. Happy are those who will be left alive at the end of the sixth millennium to enter on the Sabbath. For that is the day set apart by the Holy One on which to effect the union of souls and to cull new souls to join those that are still on earth, as it is written, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written unto life in Jerusalem" (Is. IV, 3).'

AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT GOD DID PROVE ABRAHAM, AND SAID UNTO HIM: ABRAHAM, AND HE SAID: HERE AM I. R. Judah

discoursed on the verse: Thou art my King, O God (Ps. XLIV, 5). 'This allocution', he said, 'signifies the complete union of all grades. "Command the salvation of Jacob" (Ibid.), to wit, the emissaries who perform God's behests

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in the world, that they may be all from the side of mercy and not from the side of stern justice; since there are messengers from the side of mercy and others from the side of justice. Those belonging to the side of mercy never execute a mission of punishment in the world. It may be asked, how can we reconcile with this the case of the angel who appeared to Balaam, and of whom we have been taught that he was first a messenger of mercy and then was changed into one of severity. In reality the character of his mission was not changed, as he was throughout a messenger of mercy on behalf of Israel, to protect them and plead for them, but this meant punishment to Balaam. For this is the way of the Holy One, that when He confers kindness on one, the same kindness may result in punishment for another. Similarly here, the same messenger who was one of mercy for Israel turned into one of punishment for Balaam. Hence David prayed, "Command the salvation of Jacob", as much as to say: "When messengers are sent into the world, order such as are of the side of mercy." ' R. Abba said: 'The words "command the salvation of Jacob" allude to those in exile, for whose redemption David prayed. Further, Jacob was the crown of the patriarchs, but if not for Isaac he would not have appeared in the world; hence the request "command the salvation of Jacob" refers primarily to Isaac, since the saving of his life was the salvation of Jacob.'

AND IT CAME TO PASS. Said R. Simeon: 'We have been taught that the expression "and it came to pass in the days" indicates that some trouble is about to be narrated, while the expression "and it came to pass", even without the addition of "in the days", presages a certain tinge of distress. AFTER THESE WORDS: this means, after the lowest grade of all the supernal grades, which is called "words" (d'barim), as in the passage, "I am not a man of words" (Ex. IV, 10). THAT ELOHIM PROVED ABRAHAM, i.e. the evil tempter came to accuse him before the Holy One, blessed be He. The text here is rather surprising, for instead of Abraham we should have expected here to read, "God proved Isaac", seeing that he was already thirty-seven years of age, and no longer under his father's jurisdiction. He could thus easily have refused without rendering his father liable to punishment. The truth, however, is that it was requisite, in order that Abraham might attain to perfection, that he should be invested with the attribute of rigour, which he had not exhibited up to that time. Now, however, water was united with fire and fire with water, and it was possible for him to dispense rigorous justice and make it part of his character. The evil tempter thus came to accuse Abraham on the ground that he could not be said to have perfected himself until he should have exercised rigour against Isaac. But observe that although only Abraham is explicitly mentioned as being proved, Isaac, nevertheless, was also included in the trial, as is implied by the amplifying particle *eth* before "Avraham",

which indicates Isaac. For Isaac was at that time in the grade of the lower Geburah (Force, Rigour); but after he had been bound and made ready to undergo the rigorous trial at the hand of Abraham, he was equipped in his own place together with Abraham, and so fire and water were joined and rose to a higher grade, and the discord was appeased. For who ever saw a father's heart turn from compassion to cruelty? But the object here was to assuage the discord between fire and water so that they should be settled in their places until Jacob appeared, when all was put in order, and the triad of the patriarchs was completed, and higher and lower creations were firmly established.

AND HE SAID, TAKE NOW THY SON. The word take does not mean "take forcibly", since Abraham was too old for that, but it has the same sense as in "take Aaron and Eleazar his son" (Num. XX, 25), signifying that he should use persuasion and gently lead him on to do the will of God. THY SON, THINE ONLY SON, WHOM THOU LOVEST. This

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has been explained elsewhere. AND GET THEE INTO THE LAND OF MORIAH: the meaning is similar to that of the passage, "I will get me to the mountain of myrrh" (S. S. IV, 6), i.e. to become invigorated in the appropriate place.

ON THE THIRD DAY ABRAHAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES, AND SAW THE PLACE AFAR OFF. As we have already been told that Abraham went to the place, all this seems superfluous. But the truth is that "the third day" means the third generation, i.e. Jacob, and the words "he saw the place from afar" are parallel to the expression "from afar the Lord appeared unto me" (Jer. XXXI, 3). Or again, "the place" alludes to Jacob, of whom it is written, "and he took one of the stones of the place" (Gen. XXVIII, 11). For Abraham scrutinised the "third day", which is the third grade, and he beheld Jacob, who was destined to descend from him. "Afar off", to wit, at some distant time, and not soon. R. Eleazar said to R. Judah: 'What credit is herein ascribed to Abraham, if whilst about to bind Isaac he saw that Jacob was destined to descend from him?' R. Judah replied: 'Indeed Abraham did see Jacob, since even before that Abraham was endowed with the higher Wisdom; and now he scrutinised the third day, which is the third grade, in order to make sure. And indeed he did see him, but now only "from afar", for the reason that he was going to bind Isaac, and he did not wish to question the ways of the Holy One. "Afar off", that is, he saw him through a "dim glass" only, and therefore only partially; for if the "clear glass" had been resting upon the "dim glass", Abraham would have seen him properly. The "clear glass" did not function on this occasion, because this is the grade of Jacob, who, not yet being born, had not reached that grade; and also in order that Abraham's reward might be all the greater. AND THEY CAME TO THE PLACE WHICH GOD HAD TOLD HIM OF, ETC. Here it is intimated that although Abraham had some vision of Jacob, yet he said to himself, "Assuredly the Holy One knows another way which will serve.' Forthwith, therefore, ABRAHAM BUILT THE ALTAR THERE. Before this it is written: AND ISAAC SPOKE UNTO ABRAHAM HIS

FATHER, AND SAID, MY FATHER. As explained elsewhere, the reason why Abraham did not respond to him immediately was because the normal compassion of a father towards a son left him, and hence he simply said: 'Here I am, my son', implying that the quality of mercy in him had been transmuted into rigour. AND ABRAHAM SAID. It is not written: "and his father said", which shows again that he was regarding him not as his father but as his adversary. GOD WILL PROVIDE FOR HIMSELF THE LAMB FOR A BURNT OFFERING, MY SON. He should have said: "provide for us", but what he meant was, "God will provide for Himself when necessary, but for the present it is going to be my son and nothing else." Forthwith, AND THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER. R. Simeon discoursed here on the verse: Behold, angels cry abroad, the angels of peace weep bitterly (Is. XXXIII, 7). 'These angels', he said, 'are superior angels who "cried abroad" because they no longer knew what to make of God's promise to Abraham at the time when "He brought him forth abroad" (Gen. XV, 5). The "angels of peace" are those other angels who were destined to go forth to meet Jacob, for whose sake the Holy One promised them peace, as it is written, "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him" (Ibid. XXXII, 2), and these are called "angels of peace". All these wept when they saw Abraham binding Isaac, the upper and the lower beings trembled and shook, and all on account of Isaac.

AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED UNTO HIM... ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM. There is in the text a disjunctive mark between the two Abrahams, to show that the latter was not like the former; the latter

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was the perfected Abraham, while the former was still incomplete. Similarly, in the passage where the name Samuel is repeated with a disjunctive line between (I Sam. III, 10), the second is the perfected Samuel, whilst the first was not yet so. The second Samuel was a prophet, but not the first. But when we come to "Moses, Moses" (Ex. III, 4), we do not find any pausal sign between, for the reason that from the day Moses was born the Shekinah never departed from him. R. Hiya said that the angel repeated Abraham's name in order to animate him with a new spirit, and spur him to a new activity with a new heart. R. Judah said: 'Isaac purified himself and in intention offered himself up to God, was at that moment etherealised and, as it were, he ascended to the throne of God like the odour of the incense of spices which the priests offered before Him twice a day; and so the sacrifice was complete. For Abraham felt distressed when the angel said to him, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad", thinking that his offering was not complete and that his labour, his preparations and the building of the altar had all been in vain. Straightway, however, ABRAHAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND LOOKED AND BEHELD BEHIND HIM A RAM, ETC. We have been taught that that ram was created at twilight (on the sixth day of Creation), and he was of the first year, as it is written, "one he-lamb of the first year" (Num. VII, 63), thus being according to requirement. But if so, how could he have been created at twilight? The truth is that from that time it was pre-ordained that that ram should be at hand at the

moment when Abraham should require it. The same applies to all those things said to have come into being "at twilight", which in reality means that they were then predestined to appear at the requisite moment.

R. Judah further discoursed on the verse: In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them (Is. LXIII, 9). He said: 'This is the translation of the k'ri, hut according to the k'thib we should translate, "He was not afflicted." The lesson to be derived from this variation is that Israel's affliction reaches the Holy One even in the place above which is beyond affliction or perturbation. "And the angel of his presence saved them." If He is together with them in their affliction, how can it be said that He saves them? Observe, however, that it is not written, "He saves them", but "he saved them", that is, He determined in advance to partake in their sufferings. For whenever Israel is in exile the Shekinah accompanies them, as it is written, "Then the Lord thy God will return (v'-shab) with thy captivity" (Deut. XXX, 3). According to another explanation, "The angel of his presence" signifies the Shekinah, which accompanies them in exile. Hence in the Scripture the words "and I have remembered my covenant" (Ex. VI, 5) are immediately followed by "and now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; moreover, I have seen" (Ex. III, 9). It is also written, "And God remembered his covenant" (Ibid. II, 24), referring to the Shekinah, "with Abraham" (Ibid.), symbolic of South-west, "with Isaac" (Ibid.), symbolic of North-west, "and with Jacob" (Ibid.), symbolising the complete and perfect union. The Holy One, blessed be He, will one day send forth a voice to proclaim to the world the words, "For he said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely; so he was their saviour" (Is. LXIII, 8). Blessed be the Lord for evermore, Amen and Amen.'

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## HAYE SARAH

AND THE LIFE OF SARAH WAS A HUNDRED AND SEVEN AND TWENTY YEARS. R. Jose discoursed on the verse: And they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging (Jonah I, 15). 'The question may here be asked,' he said, 'why it was the sea and not the earth that raged against him, seeing that he fled to prevent the Shekinah from resting upon him. In fact, however, it was appropriate that it should be so. Our teachers say that the sea resembles the sky and the sky resembles the Throne of Glory; hence the sea seized him and held him fast. For as he, in effect, fled from the sea, the sea was the proper agent to fill him with fear and trembling. "And they took up Jonah and cast him into the sea." Tradition says that as they took him up and plunged him into the water up to his thighs, the sea was assuaged, and when they lifted him up again the sea resumed its violence. This happened repeatedly, until finally Jonah said: "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea" (Ibid. I, 12). Forthwith they did so. No sooner was he cast forth into the sea than his soul took flight from him and ascended to the Throne of the King, before whom she was brought to judgement. She was then restored to Jonah, and then the fish swallowed him. The fish died, but afterwards came to life again.

This is the accepted explanation.

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In the same way, every night when a man retires to his bed his soul leaves him and ascends to be judged before the King's tribunal. If she is found deserving to continue in her present state, she is allowed to return to this world. In the judgement, good and evil actions are not weighed in the same way. No account is taken of evil deeds which a man is likely to perpetrate in the future, for so it is written, "for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is" (Gen. XXI, 17). But in regard to good actions, not only those already performed in the past are taken into consideration, but also those which a man is going to perform in the future; so that even if the present account would prove a man guilty, the Holy One in His bounty towards His creatures puts to his credit all his future good deeds, and the man is thus saved. Observe that when Jonah was cast forth into the sea, "the sea"-as we read-"stood still from raging". This means the supernal sea, which is said to "stand still" when its wrath is assuaged. For the heavenly tribunal, at a time when the world is under judgement, is like a pregnant woman who is convulsed with the pangs of childbirth, which cease, however, as soon as she is delivered of the child. Similarly the heavenly tribunal in time of judgement is agitated and convulsed, but once judgement is executed it becomes pacified and resumes with gladness its wonted calm, as it is written, "And when the wicked perish there is joy" (Prov. XI, 10). There is, indeed, a passage to the contrary, saying, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" (Ezek. XVIII, 23). This passage, however, speaks of those sinners who have not yet gone to the limit of provocation, whereas the previous passage speaks of those sinners whose measure is full.' AND THE LIFE OF SARAH WAS, ETC. How is it that the death of Sarah alone, among all women mentioned in the Bible, is recorded? R. Hiya said: 'Is that so? Do we not find it written, "And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrah" (Gen. XXXV, 19), and again, "and Miriam died there, etc." (Num. XX, 1), also, "and Deborah

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Rebekah's nurse died" (Gen. XXXV, 8), and finally, "and Shuah's daughter the wife of Judah died" (Ibid. XXXVIII, 1a 1?') Said R. Jose: 'The problem is, why is the record of Sarah's years given with so much particularity, such as we find in the case of no other woman? Why, moreover, to Sarah alone of all the women of Scripture was a whole section of the Torah devoted? There is an esoteric reason, namely, that Sarah reached that grade on which depend all the years and the days of a son of man.' R. Jose discoursed on the verse: And the abundance of the earth is in all (ba-kol), and a king to a laboured field (Eccl. V, 8). 'The abundance of the earth,' he said, 'is certainly in kol (the Whole), as that is the source from whence issue spirits and souls, and from which beneficence is vouchsafed to the world. By "king" we have to understand the Holy One, blessed be He, the most high King, who, if the field be tilled and cultivated properly, attaches himself to it. What is this field? It is the field mentioned in the words, "as the smell of a field

which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. XXVII, 27).' R. Eleazar said: 'Herein are contained various deep esoteric ideas. The term "king" here is an allusion to the Shekinah, who does not dwell in a house unless the master of the house is married and is united to his wife for the purpose of bearing offspring; the Shekinah then brings forth souls to plant in that house. Hence the King, or Shekinah, is only attached to a cultivated field, but to no other. According to another explanation we translate, "a king is subjected to a field". "King" in this case is an allusion to the God-fearing woman of whom it is written, "but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (Prov. XXXI, 30), while "field" alludes to the strange woman of whom it says, "that they may keep thee from the strange woman" (Ibid. VII, 5). For there are fields and fields. There is the field in which abide all blessings and sanctities, and of which it is said, "as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. XXVII, 27); and there is another kind of field which is the abode of desolation, impurity, war and slaughter. And that king is sometimes enslaved to such a field, as it says, "For three things the earth doth quake... for a servant when he reigneth

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and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress" (Prov. XXX, 21-2-3). Such a king is plunged in darkness until he purifies himself and regains the supernal sphere. It is for that reason that a he-goat is offered up on New-Moon days, namely, because that field has been estranged from the Divine King, so that no blessings from that King could rest upon it; so when the other king is enslaved to the field, we may apply the words, "for in the field he found her, etc." (Deut. XXII, 27). Thus when Eve came into the world she attached herself to the serpent, who injected his impurity into her, so that she brought death into the world and to her husband. Then came Sarah, who, though she went down, came up again, and never attached herself to the serpent, as we read, "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had" (Gen. XII, 1). Of Noah, too, it is written, "And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent" (Gen. IX, 21). And because Abraham and Sarah kept afar from the serpent, Sarah obtained life eternal for herself, her husband and all her descendants after her, who were bidden to "look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged" (Is. LI, 1). Hence the Scripture says, "and the life of Sarah was, etc.", a formula not used in the case of Eve or any other woman. For Sarah attached herself throughout to life, and thus life was made her own. AND THE LIFE OF SARAH WAS A HUNDRED YEARS AND TWENTY YEARS AND SEVEN YEARS. Each of these periods was marked by its own peculiar degree of virtue. R. Simeon said:

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'There is an inner significance in the fact that with the other numbers the word for "years" (shannah) is in the singular, whereas with the number seven it is in the plural (shanim). The hundred forms a unit because the Holy One is united with the highest and most mysterious by the secret of the hundred benedictions

pronounced each day. Similarly the number twenty symbolises the unity of the Thought with the Jubilee. Hence the singular shanah (year). Whereas the seven years correspond to the seven lower realms that issue separately from the mysterious supernal essence, and which, though they also form, in a sense, a unity, diverge in respect of the categories of justice and mercy into diverse sides and paths. This is not so in the supernal region. Hence, there we have "year", but here we have "years". But they are all called "life". Thus "the life of Sarah was" means "really was", having been created and established in the supernal regions.' R. Hiya said: 'It has been established that when Isaac was bound on the altar he was thirty-seven years old, and immediately after Sarah died, as it is written, "And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." Whence did he come? He came from Mount Moriah, after his binding of Isaac. These thirty-seven years from Isaac's birth to the time of his being bound were thus the real life of Sarah, as indicated in the expression "and the life of Sarah was (vayihyu)", the word VYHYV having the numerical value of thirty-seven.'

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: A Psalm. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath wrought salvation for him (Ps. XCVIII, 1). 'According to the companions, this verse was uttered by the cows, of whom it is said, "and the kine sang (vayisharnah) on the way" (I Sam. VI, 12). What they sang was this Psalm, commencing: "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things." It should here be observed that while everything that the Holy One has created sings songs and praises before Him, both on high and here below, the chanting of these cows was not of the kind that falls within this mystical category, but was due to the fact that they were bearing the sacred ark; for as soon as the ark was removed from them they reverted to their brutishness and began lowing after the manner of other kine. Hence it was assuredly the feeling of the ark on their backs

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that worked within them and made them utter song. The difference between "Psalm of David" and "To David a psalm" has been expounded elsewhere. Here, however, we have "Psalm" simply. The reason is that this Psalm is one destined to be sung by the Holy Spirit at the time when the Almighty will raise Israel from the dust. Hence the epithet "new song", since such a song will never have been chanted since the creation of the world.' Said R. Hiya: 'It is written, "there is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. I, 9), whereas this song is going to be something new, and is going to happen under the sun. How can this be? The truth is that this is the moon, and is thus both "new" and "under the sun". Why will there be a new song? Because "He hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath wrought salvation for him." For whom?

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For that grade that intones the chant, for on that grade He supports Himself, as it were, by His right hand and by His left hand. When will that Psalm be chanted?

When the dead will come to life and rise from the dust; then there will be something new that had never yet been in the world.' Said R. Jose: 'When the Holy One will avenge Israel on the nations, then will this Psalm be chanted. For after the resurrection of the dead the world will be perfectly renewed, and will not be as before, when death prevailed in the world through the influence of the serpent, through whom the world was defiled and disgraced. Observe this. It is written, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman" (Gen. III, 15). The term ebah (enmity) is akin to a similar word in the verse, "they are passed away as the ships of ebeh" (Job IX, 26), for on the great ocean there float numerous ships and boats of many kinds, and those in which the serpent sails are called "ships of ebeh" (enmity). The "woman" referred to here is the God-fearing woman; "thy seed" refers to the idolatrous nations; "her seed" to Israel; "he shall bruise thy head", to wit, the Holy One, who will one day destroy him, as it is written: "He will swallow up death for ever" (Is. XXV, 8), and also, "and I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" (Zech. XIII, 2). "In the head" means in the time to come when the dead will come to life; for then the world will be the "head", since it will be established by the "head", that is, the supernal world. "In the heel" means now in this world, which is merely "heel" and not endowed with permanence, and so the serpent bites and mankind is in disgrace. See, now, a man's days were created and are located in the supernal grades, but when they draw to the end of their term, when they reach the Scriptural limit of threescore and ten (Ps. XC, 10), there remains then no grade any more for them to abide in, and so "their pride is but travail and vanity" (Ibid.), and they are as nought. Not so the days of the righteous.

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They have a permanent abiding. Thus we read "And the life of Sarah was" (vayihyu, lit. "and they were" or "remained"); similarly, "And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life" (Gen. XXV, 7). You may object that similarly in the case of Ishmael it is written, "And these are the years of the life of Ishmael" (Ibid. 17). Ishmael, however, had in fact repented of his evil ways, and the days of his life thus attained permanency.' AND SARAH DIED IN KIRYATH-ARBA, ETC. R. Abba said: 'Of Sarah alone among all women do we find recorded the number of her days and years and the length of her life and the place where she was buried. All this was to show that the like of Sarah was not to be found among all the women of the world. You may object that we find a somewhat similar record in connection with Miriam, of whom it is written, "And Miriam died there, and was buried there" (Num. XX, 1). But the object there was to show the unworthiness of Israel, for whom water was made to flow forth only through the virtue of Miriam. Hence Miriam's death was not recorded with such full details as that of Sarah.'

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is a free man (Eccl. X, 17). 'This verse,' he said, 'the companions have already explained, but further lessons may be derived from it. Happy are Israel, to whom the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah, by the study of which all hidden paths should be made known to them and sublime

mysteries should be revealed to them. The “land” here is “the land of life”, and it is “happy” because its King showers upon it all the blessings pronounced upon it by the patriarchs. This is through the mystic influence of the Vau, who is always in readiness to pour on it blessing, and who is the “son of freedom” and “son of Jubilee”, who obtains for slaves their freedom. He is a scion of the supernal world, and the author of all life, of all illuminations, and all exalted states. All this does the first-born son draw towards that land. Hence, “Happy art thou, O land.” On the other hand, the words “Woe to thee, O land, when thy King is a boy” (Ibid.) refer to the nether earth and the nether world which draw their sustenance only from the dominion of the uncircumcised, and from that king called “boy”. [Tr. note: Metatron.] Woe to the land that has to draw its sustenance in this manner! For this “boy”

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possesses nothing of himself, but only such blessings as he receives at certain periods. But when these blessings are withheld from him, when the moon is impaired and darkness prevails, then woe to the world that needs to draw sustenance at that time! And how much the world has to endure before it obtains sustenance from him! ‘Observe, now, that in the words “And Sarah died in Kiryath-arba” there is an inner meaning, to wit, that Sarah’s death was not brought about by the tortuous serpent, which possessed no power over her as over the rest of mankind. For through him the people of the world have died since the sin of Adam, with the exception of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, who died, as it is written, “by the mouth of the Lord” (although this expression is not used in connection with Miriam, out of respect for the Shekinah). The Scripture, however, here indicates that Sarah died not merely in, but by the hands of Kiryath-arba (lit. city of four), so called because it is the same as Hebron, where David joined the patriarchs. Her death thus was brought about by the hands of no one save Kiryath-arba.

‘Observe that when the days of a man are firmly established in the supernal grades, that man has a permanent abiding in the world; but if not, those days gradually descend until they approach the grade wherein death resides. The angel of death then receives authority to take away the soul, traverses the world with one sweep, takes away the man’s soul, and pollutes his body, which remains permanently unclean. Happy are the righteous who have not polluted themselves and in whom no pollution has remained. In the centre of the heaven there is an illumined path, which is the celestial dragon, and in it are fixed multitudes of little stars which are charged to keep watch over the secret deeds of human beings. In the same way myriads of emissaries go forth from the primeval celestial serpent, by whom Adam was seduced, to spy out the secret deeds

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of mankind. Whoever, therefore, strives to live a life of purity is assisted from on high, and is encircled by the protecting hand of his Master, and is called saintly. On the other hand, when a man seeks to pollute himself,

hosts of demons, who lie in wait for him, hover over him and surround and pollute him, so that he is called unclean. They all walk in front of him and cry, “unclean, unclean”, as the Scripture says, “and he shall cry, Unclean, unclean” (Lev. XIII, 45).’

R. Isaac and R. Jose were walking from Tiberias to Lud. Said R. Isaac: ‘I marvel at the wicked Balaam, how all his actions proceeded from the side of impurity. We here learn the mystical lesson that all species of witchcraft are linked up with, and proceed from, the primeval serpent who is the foul and unclean spirit. Hence all sorceries are called n’hashim (lit. serpents). And whoever becomes addicted to them pollutes himself, nay more, he has first to become polluted in order to attract to himself the side of the unclean spirit. For it is a dictum of our teachers that corresponding to the impulses of a man here are the influences which he attracts to himself from above. Should his impulse be towards holiness, he attracts to himself holiness from on high and so he becomes holy; but if his tendency is towards the side of impurity, he draws down towards himself the unclean spirit and so becomes polluted. For this reason, in order to draw towards himself the unclean spirit from that supernal serpent, the wicked Balaam besmirched himself nightly by bestial intercourse with his ass, and he would then proceed to his divinations and sorceries. To begin with he would take one of the familiar serpents, tie it up, break

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its head, and extract its tongue. Then he would take certain herbs, and burn them as incense. He would then take the head of the serpent, split it into four sections, and offer it up as a second offering. Finally, he traced a circle round himself, mumbled some words, and made some gestures, until he became possessed of the unclean spirits, who told him all that they knew from the side of the heavenly dragon; and he thus continued his magical practices until he became possessed of the spirit of the primeval serpent. It is thus that we understand the passage, “he went not, as at the other times, to meet with n’hashim” (enchantments, lit. serpents) (Num. XXIV, 1).’ Said R. Jose: ‘Why is it that many kinds of magic and divination are only found in women?’ R. Isaac replied: ‘Thus I have learnt, that when the serpent had intercourse with Eve he injected defilement into her but not into her husband.’ R. Jose then went up to R. Isaac and kissed him, saying, ‘Many a time have I asked this question, but not until now have I received a real answer.’ R. Jose further asked him: ‘In which place and from whom did Balaam derive all his magical practices and knowledge?’ R. Isaac replied: ‘He learned it first from his father, but it was in the “mountains of the East”, which are in an eastern country, that he obtained a mastery of all the arts of magic and divination. For those mountains are the abode of the angels Uzza and Azazel whom the Holy One cast down from heaven, and who were chained there in iron fetters. It is they who impart to the sons of men a knowledge of magic. Hence the Scripture says: “From Aram Balak bringeth me, the King of Moab, from the mountains of the East” (Num. XXIII, 7).’ ‘But,’ said R. Jose, ‘is it not written, “and he went not as at the other times to meet with enchantments, but he set his face toward the



wilderness" (Ibid. XXIV, 1)?' Said R. Isaac to him: 'The lower side, which comes from the unclean spirit above, was the unclean spirit prevailing in the wilderness when Israel made the calf in order to defile themselves therewith; and Balaam tried every device of magic

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to uproot Israel, but without success.' Said R. Jose: 'You rightly said that when the serpent had carnal intercourse with Eve he injected into her defilement. We have, however, been taught that when Israel stood at Mount Sinai that defilement left them. But only Israel, who have received the Torah, were freed from it; whereas all the other nations, the idolaters, remained infected with it.' R. Isaac said: 'What you say is right. But observe that the Torah was only given to males, as it is written, "And this is the law which Moses set before the sons of Israel" (Deut. IV, 44), so that women are exempt from the precepts of the Torah. Furthermore, after they sinned they reverted to their former state of infection, of which it is more difficult for a woman to rid herself than for a man. Hence greater numbers of women are found to be addicted to magic and lasciviousness than men, as they come from the left side, and so are under the aegis of the divine rigour, and this side cleaves to them more than to men. Here is a proof of what I have just said, namely, that Balaam polluted himself first in order to draw unto himself the unclean spirit. During the period of a woman's menstruation a man must keep away from her, as then she is in close touch with the unclean spirit, and therefore at such a period she will be more successful in the use of magical arts than at any other time. Whatever thing she touches becomes unclean, and all the more so any man coming too near her. Happy are Israel, to whom the Holy One gave the Torah containing the precept, "and thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is impure by her uncleanness" (Lev. XVIII, 19).' R. Jose asked: 'Why is one who attempts to interpret the chirping of birds called nahash (magician, also "serpent")?' R. Isaac replied: 'Because such a one certainly comes from the left side, as the unclean spirit hovers over such a bird and imparts to it

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a knowledge of future events; and all unclean spirits are attached to the serpent (nahash)? from whom none can escape, since he is with everyone and will remain so until the time when the Holy One will remove him from the world, as already said, and as it is written, "He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, etc." (Is. XXV, 8), and also, "and the unclean spirit I will cause to pass out of the land" (Zech. XIII, 2).'

R. Judah said: 'Abraham recognised the cave of Machpelah by a certain mark, and he had long set his mind and heart on it. For he had once entered that cave and seen Adam and Eve buried there. He knew that they were Adam and Eve because he saw the form of a man, and whilst he was gazing a door opened into the Garden of Eden, and he perceived the same form standing near it. Now, whoever looks at the form of Adam cannot escape death. For when a man is about

to pass out of the world he catches sight of Adam and at that moment he dies. Abraham, however, did look at him, and saw his form and yet survived. He saw, moreover, a shining light that illumined the cave, and a lamp burning. Abraham then coveted that cave for his burial place, and his mind and heart were set upon it. Observe now with what tact Abraham made his request for a burial place for Sarah. He did not ask at first for the cave, neither did he indicate any desire to separate himself from the people of the land, but simply said: GIVE ME A POSSESSION OF A BURYING PLACE WITH YOU, THAT I MAY BURY MY DEAD OUT OF SIGHT. Although he addressed himself to the sons of Heth, we cannot suppose that Ephron was not present then, since it says: Now EPHRON WAS SITTING IN THE MIDST OF THE CHILDREN OF HETH. Abraham, however, did not at first say anything to him, but spoke only to them, as it says: AND HE SPOKE TO THE CHILDREN OF HETH, ETC. Now it cannot be imagined that Abraham wished to be buried among them, among the impure, or that he desired to mix with them. But Abraham acted tactfully, giving a lesson to the

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world. Though his whole desire was centred on that cave, he did not ask for it forthwith, but asked for something else of which he had no need, and he addressed his request to the others, not to Ephron himself. It was only after they said to him in the presence of Ephron: "Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince among us, etc." that he said, "hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, etc." Abraham as much as said: Do not think that I wish to separate from you as being superior to you. No, in the midst of you I desire to be buried, for as I am fond of you I do not wish to keep aloof from you.'

R. Eleazar said: 'Abraham came to enter the cave in this way. He was running after that calf of which we read, "and Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf" (Gen. XVIII, 7), and the calf ran until it entered a cave, and then Abraham entered after it and saw what we have described. Further, Abraham used to offer up his prayer daily, and in so doing used to proceed as far as that field, which emitted heavenly odours. Whilst there he saw a light issuing from the cave, so that he prayed on that spot, and on that spot the Holy One communed with him. On that account Abraham now asked for it, having always longed for it since then. Why did not he ask for it before that time? Because the people would not have listened to him, as he had no obvious need for it. Now that he needed it, he thought it was time to demand it. Observe that had Ephron seen inside the cave what Abraham saw, he would never have sold it to him. But he never saw there anything, since such things are never revealed except to their rightful owner. It was thus revealed to Abraham and not to Ephron: to Abraham, who was its rightful owner, but not to Ephron,

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who had no part or portion in it, and who therefore only saw darkness in it; and for that reason he sold it. Nay,

he even sold him more than he had mentioned in his original request. For Abraham only said, "that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he hath... for the full price let him give it to me", whereas Ephron said, "the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein", as he felt indifferent to the whole thing, not realising what it was.

'Observe that when Abraham entered the cave for the first time he saw there a bright light, and as he advanced, the ground lifted, revealing to him two graves. Adam then arose in his true form, saw Abraham and smiled at him. (Abraham thereby knew that there he was destined to be buried.) Abraham then said to him: "Could you tell me, is there not a tent for me close to you?" Adam replied: "The Holy One buried me here, and from that time until now I have been lying hid like a corn seed in the ground, until thou camest into the world. But from now there is salvation for me and for the world for thy sake. Hence it is written, AND THE FIELD AND THE CAVE THAT IS THEREIN AROSE, that is, there was literally an arising before the presence of Abraham, as up to that time nothing there had been visible, but now what had been hidden rose up, and thus the whole spot was devoted to its lawful purpose.' R. Simeon said: 'When Abraham brought Sarah in there for burial, Adam and Eve arose and refused to receive her. They said: "Is not our shame already great enough before the Holy One in the other world on account of our sin, which brought death into the world, that ye should come to shame us further with your good deeds?" Abraham made answer: "I am already destined to make atonement before the Almighty for thee, so that thou mayest nevermore be shamed before Him." Forthwith Abraham after this buried Sarah

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his wife, to wit, after Abraham had taken upon himself this obligation. Adam then returned to his place, but not Eve, until Abraham came and placed her beside Adam, who received her for his sake. Hence the text says, AND AFTER THIS, ABRAHAM BURIED (eth) SARAH HIS WIFE: the augmenting particle eth indicates that the burial included, as it were, Eve. Thus they were all settled in their proper places. Hence the Scripture says, "These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created (b'hibar'am)" (Gen. II, 4), which according to tradition, means "on account of Abraham" (b'Abraham). Now "the generations of the heaven and the earth" can only be Adam and Eve, they having been the direct issue of the heaven and earth and not of human parents, and it was they who became established through Abraham: before Abraham, Adam and Eve were not established in their places in the other world.'

R. Eleazar asked his father, R. Simeon, for an explanation of the term Machpelah (lit. "twofold", or "folded"). 'How is it,' he said, 'that first it is written "the cave of Machpelah", and subsequently "the cave of the field of Machpelah", implying that the field and not the cave was "Machpelah" (doubled)?' R. Simeon replied: 'The term Machpelah belongs properly neither to the cave nor to the field, but to something else with which both were connected. The cave belongs to the field,

and the field to something else. For the whole of the Land of Israel and of Jerusalem is folded up beneath it, since it exists both above and below, in the same way as there is a Jerusalem both above and below, both of the same pattern. The Jerusalem above has a twofold attachment, above and below; similarly the Jerusalem below is linked to two sides, higher and lower. Hence it is folded in two; and that field partakes of the same character, seeing that it is therein situated. The same reference is contained in the passage, "as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. XXVII, 27), to wit, both above

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and below. Hence its name, "field of folding", but not "folded field". Further, the esoteric implication of the term Machpelah relates it to the Divine Name, in which the letter He is doubled, though both are as one. It is, indeed, true that the cave was a twofold one, a cave within a cave, yet the name "cave of the field of Machpelah" has a different connotation, as already explained. Abraham, on his part, who knew its true character, in speaking to the children of Heth called it simply "cave of Machpelah", as if to imply merely "double cave", which it also was in fact. Scripture, however, describes it as "the cave of the field of Machpelah", this being its true description. For the Holy One has disposed all things in such a way that everything in this world should be a replica of something in the world above, and that the two should be united so that His glory should be spread above and below. Happy the portion of the righteous in whom the Holy One finds pleasure both in this world and in the world to come!' AND ABRAHAM WAS OLD, HE HAD COME INTO DAYS; AND THE LORD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS. R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Happy is the man whom thou choosest and bringest near, that he may dwell in thy courts (Ps. LXV, 5). 'This verse', he said, 'may be explained as follows. Happy is the man whose ways are found right before the Holy One and in whom He finds pleasure so as to bring him near to Himself. Observe how Abraham strove to come nearer and nearer to Him, making Him the object of his longing the whole of his days. Not just one day, or just every now and then, but by his works advancing day by day from grade to grade, until he rose, when he was old, to the higher grades proper to him. Hence we read that when Abraham was old he "came into days", i.e. he entered into those supernal days, the days familiar in the doctrine of true faith. Further, "the Lord blessed Abraham in all things (ba-kol)", the region called kol (all) being the source whence issue all boons and blessings. Happy are the penitent who in the space of one day, one hour, nay, one second, can draw near to

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the Holy One, as near as even the truly righteous in the space of many years. Abraham did not reach that high grade until he was old, as already said. So, too, David, of whom it is written, "and King David was old, he came into days" (I Kings I, 1). But the penitent immediately finds entrance, and is brought close to the Holy One, blessed be He.' R. Jose said: 'We have been taught that the place assigned to the penitent in the next world

is one where even the wholly righteous are not permitted to enter, as the former are the nearest of all to the King; they are more devoted and strive more intently to draw near to the King. For there are many abodes prepared by the Holy One, blessed be He, for the righteous in the next world, each one according to his grade. It is written: "Happy is the man whom thou chooseth, and bringest near, that he may dwell in thy courts", that is, those whom the Holy One brings near unto Him, those souls who mount from below on high so as to possess themselves of the heritage prepared for them; "that he may dwell in thy courts", to wit, the outer halls and grades, referred to in the words, "then I will give thee free access among these that stand by" (Zech. III, 7), i.e. a grade among the supernal holy angels. Those who attain that grade are messengers of the Lord, on an equality with the angels, and are constantly being used in the service of their Master, because in life they always strove to remain holy and keep afar from impurity. Contrariwise, whoever pollutes himself in this world draws to himself the spirit of uncleanness, and when his soul leaves him the unclean spirits pollute it, and its habitation is among them. For according to a man's strivings in this world is his habitation in the next world; kence such a man is polluted by the spirits of uncleanness and cast into Gehinnom. Thus whoever sanctifies himself and is on his guard against defilement in this world finds his habitation in the next world among the supernal holy

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angels, where they carry out God's messages. These are they who abide in the court—"the court of the Tabernacle" (Ex. XXVII, 9). But there are others who penetrate further, of whom David said, "we will be satisfied with the goodness of thy house" (Ps. LXV, 5). (The use of the term "we" here instead of "he", as we should have expected, is explained by the dictum that in the Temple Court no seats are permitted save to the kings of the Davidic dynasty.) Still further within is a compartment reserved for the pious of a higher grade, referred to in the verse, "and those that were to pitch before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, were Moses and Aaron and his sons, etc." (Num. III, 38). Thus there is in the next world a gradation of glorious abodes and resplendent lights, each outshining the other.

'As the works of the righteous differ in this world, so do their places and lights differ in the next world. Further, it has been laid down that even in this world, when men sleep at night and their souls leave them and flit about through the world, not every one alike rises to behold the glory of the Ancient of Days, but each one in proportion to a man's constancy of attachment to God and to his good deeds. The soul of the man who is besmirched, when it leaves the body asleep, meets with throngs of unclean spirits of the infernal orders traversing the universe, who take her up and to whom she clings. They disclose to her events about to come to pass in the world; occasionally they delude her with false information. This has been already stated elsewhere. But the soul of the worthy man, when it leaves him in sleep, ascends and cleaves its way through the unclean spirits, which cry aloud, "Make way, make way! Here is one not belonging to

our side!" The soul then ascends among the holy angels, who communicate to it some true information. When the soul is on its descent again, all those malignant bands are eager to meet it in order to obtain from it that information, in exchange for which they impart to it many other things. But the one thing it learnt from the holy angels is to those

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other things as grain to chaff. This is a rare privilege for one whose soul is still in this world. Similar adventures await the souls when they altogether leave the body to depart from this world. In their attempt to soar upwards they have to pass through many gates at which bands of demons are stationed. These seize the souls that are of their side and deliver them into the hands of Duma in order that he may take them into Gehinnom. They then seize them again and ascend, and make proclamation concerning them, saying, "These are they who transgressed the commands of their Lord." They then sweep through the universe and bring the souls back to Gehinnom. This procedure goes on for the whole of the first twelve months. After that they are assigned each to its appropriate place. On the other hand, the worthy souls soar upwards, as already explained, and are assigned the places corresponding to their merits. Happy, therefore, are the righteous, for whom many boons are reserved in the next world. But for none is a more interior abode reserved than for those who penetrate into the divine mystical doctrines and enter each day into close union with their Divine Master. Of such it is written, "What no eye hath seen, O God, beside thee, that will he do for those who wait for him" (Is. LXIV, 3). The word "wait" here has a parallel in the verse, "now Elihu had waited to speak unto Job" (Job XXXII, 4), and refers to those who are importunate for any word of esoteric wisdom, who study it minutely and patiently to discover its true significance and so to gain knowledge of their Lord. These are those in whom their Master glorifies Himself each day, who enter the company of the supernal holy angels, and pass through all the celestial gates without let or hindrance. Happy their portion in this world and the next!

'In this way Abraham penetrated into the Divine Wisdom and united himself with his Divine Master after he had duly prepared himself by a life of pious deeds. He thus merited those supernal days, and received blessings from the region whence all blessings flow, as it is written, "And the Lord blessed Abraham ba-kol" (in all things), where the term kol is the designation of the river the waters of which never fail.' R. Hiya said: 'Observe that Abraham abstained from intermarrying with other nations and from attaching himself to idolatrous peoples. For the women of idolatrous nations pollute their husbands and those who come into close contact with them. But Abraham, having penetrated into the mystic doctrines of Wisdom, knew the source whence the unclean spirits emerge to traverse the universe, and it was for this reason that he adjured his servant not to take a wife for his son from other nations.'

R. Isaac discoursed on the verse: And the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it (Eccl. XII, 7). He said: 'When the

Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, He took his dust from the site of the Temple and built his body out of the four corners of the world, all of which contributed to his formation. After that He poured over him the spirit of life, as it says, "and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. II, 7). Adam then arose and realised that he was both of heaven and of earth, and so he united himself to the Divine and was endowed with mystic Wisdom. Each son of man is, after the same model, a composite of the heavenly and the earthly; and all those who know how to sanctify themselves in the right manner in this world, when they beget a son cause the holy spirit to be drawn upon him from the region whence all sanctities emerge. Such are called the children of the Holy One; and as their bodies were formed in sanctity, so are they given a spirit from the supernal holy region. Observe that the day on which a man is about to depart from this world is a day of reckoning when the body and the soul in combination have to give an account of their works. The soul afterwards leaves him, and the body returns to the earth, both thus returning to their original source, where they will remain until the time when the Holy One will bring the dead to life again. Then God will cause the identical body and the identical soul to return to the world in their former state, as it is written, "Thy dead shall live, my dead bodies shall arise" (Is. XXVI, 19). The same soul is meanwhile stored up by the Holy One, thus returning to its original place, as it is written, "And the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Eccl. XII, 7). And at the time when the Holy One will raise the dead to life He will cause dew to descend upon them from His head. By means of that dew all will rise from the dust, as it says, "for thy dew is as the dew of lights" (Is. XXVI, 19), these being the supernal lights through which the Almighty will in future pour forth life upon the world. For

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the tree of life exudes life unceasingly into the universe. Life in the present dispensation is cut short through the influence of the evil serpent, whose dominion is symbolised by the darkened moon. Under the same influence the celestial waters, as it were, fail, and life is not dispensed in the world in proper measure. At that time, however, the evil tempter, who is none other than the evil serpent, will be removed from the world by the Almighty and disappear, as it is written, "and I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the earth" (Zech. XIII, 2). After he disappears the moon will no more be obscured, and the waters of the celestial river will flow on perennially. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of the seven days, etc." (Is. XXX, 26).'

Said R. Hizkiah: 'If it be so that all the dead bodies will rise up from the dust, what will happen to a number of bodies which shared in succession the same soul?' R. Jose answered: 'Those bodies which were unworthy and did not achieve their purpose will be regarded as though they had not been: as they were a withered tree in this world, so will they be regarded at the time of the resurrection. Only the last that had been firmly planted and took root and prospered will come to life, as it

says, "For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters... but its foliage shall be luxuriant, etc." (Jer. XVII, 8). This alludes to the body that struck deep root, produced fruit and prospered. But of the former body which remained fruitless, which did not take root, which was unworthy and did not achieve its end, it is written, "For he shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, etc." (Ibid. 6), i.e. he will not be included in the resurrection, and will not see the light stored up at the Creation for the delectation of the righteous, regarding which it says, "And God saw the light that it was good" (Gen. I, 4), and also, "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise, etc." (Mal. III, 20). The Holy One will thus in the future raise the dead to life again, and the good principle will prevail in the world and the Evil One will vanish from the world, as already said, and the previous bodies will be as though they never had been.' Said R. Isaac: 'For such bodies the Holy One will provide other spirits, and if found worthy they will obtain an abiding in the world, but if not, they will be ashes under the feet of the righteous, as it is written, "and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, etc." (Dan. XII, 2). All then will rise up and will be ranged before the Holy One, who will enumerate them, as it were, as it says, "He that bringeth out their host by number" (Is. XL, 26). Observe that it has been laid down that the dead of the Land of Israel will be the first to rise, and of them it is written, "Thy dead shall live" (Ibid. XXVI, 19). On the other hand, the words "my dead bodies shall arise" (Ibid.) allude to the dead of other lands, since instead of "shall live" it says "shall arise". The living spirit, in fact, will only infuse the bodies in the Land of Israel. "Thy dead", then, "shall live". But the other dead bodies will rise without the spirit of life, and only after they shall have rolled themselves underground and reached the Land of Israel will they receive souls-only there, but not in other realms-so that they may be really resurrected.' R. Eleazar and R. Jose were one night studying the Torah. Said R. Eleazar: 'Observe that at the time when the Holy One will bring the dead back to life, all the souls mustered before Him will bear each a form identical with the one it bore in this world. The Holy One will bring them down, and will call them by their names, as it says, "He calleth them all by name" (Ibid. XL, 26). Every soul will then enter into its own place, and the dead will be fully resurrected, and the world will thus reach its consummation. Of that time it is written, "And the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth" (Ibid. XXV, 8), which is a reference to the evil tempter, who darkens the faces of men and leads them astray.'

R. Jose, interposing, said: 'How is it that a man whilst the spirit of life is in him is not a source of defilement, whereas after his soul leaves him he becomes a source of defilement?' R. Isaac replied: 'Assuredly this is the law, and the explanation given is that the evil tempter, in the act of taking away the spirit of a man, defiles it, and thus the body is left in a state of defilement. This, however, is not the case with idolatrous nations. For since they carry defilement during life, as their souls are derived from the side of defilement, when this defilement is removed the body remains without any defilement whatever. For this reason

whoever forms an attachment with a woman of any of the idolatrous nations becomes defiled, and the offspring born from such an attachment receives a defiled spirit. It may be asked why, seeing that the father is an Israelite, the offspring should receive a defiled spirit. The reason is that as soon as the father attached himself to that woman, defilement entered into him. Now if the father became defiled through the unclean woman, how much more must the offspring born of her be defiled to its very spirit. Such a man, moreover, transgresses the precept of the Torah, contained in the words, "For thou shalt bow down to no other god; for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. XXXIV, 14), i.e. He is jealous for the sanctity of the holy covenant.'

R. Eleazar said: 'Observe that, as has been stated elsewhere, our father Abraham, after he acquired Wisdom, determined to keep separate from all other nations and not to enter into matrimonial alliance with them. Hence we read: AND I WILL MAKE THEE SWEAR BY THE LORD, THE GOD OF HEAVEN AND THE GOD OF EARTH, THAT THOU SHALT NOT TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CANAANITES, ETC. The words "daughters of the Canaanites" are parallel to the expression "daughters of a strange god" (Mal. II, 11). So, too, the word "I" (Anokhi) which follows is a reference to the Deity, as in the verse, "I (Anokhi) made the earth." The purpose of this injunction was to save Isaac from being defiled by them. For whoever impairs the sanctity of the holy covenant by contact with a woman of an idolatrous nation causes the defilement of a certain other place, alluded to in the passage, "For three things the earth doth quake, etc." (Prov. XXX, 21). And although Abraham adjured his servant by the holy covenant, he did not feel satisfied until he had made supplication on his behalf to the Holy One, blessed be He, saying: THE LORD, THE GOD OF HEAVEN... MAY HE SEND HIS ANGEL BEFORE THEE, ETC. , to wit, the angel of the covenant", so that the covenant might be preserved in its sanctity, and not be defiled among the nations. He continued: BEWARE THOU THAT THOU BRING NOT MY SON BACK THITHER . Why so? Because Abraham knew that none among those nations had knowledge of the true God like himself, and so he desired that Isaac should not settle among them, but should continue to dwell with him, so that he might constantly learn the ways of the Holy One, and turn neither to the right nor to the left.' R. Jose said: 'Of a certainty the merits of Abraham stood his servant in good stead, for on the very day on which he set out he reached the fountain, as it says, AND I CAME THIS DAY UNTO THE FOUNTAIN .

R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law (Ps. CXIX, 18). 'How devoid of discernment,' he said, 'are those sons of men who abide in ignorance of the Torah and pay no regard to its study. For it is the Torah that spells life and freedom and felicity in this world and in the world to come. It is life in this world, earning for its devotees fulness of days, as it says, "the number of thy days I will fulfil" (Ex. XXIII, 26), as well as length of days in the world to come; for the Torah is the

very fulness of life, life of bliss without any gloom; it is freedom in this world, complete freedom; for when a man applies himself to the study of the Torah all the nations of the world cannot prevail against him. Such a one also obtains deliverance from the angel of death, who has no power over him. (You may object, What of the martyrs who suffered in times of persecution, such as R. Akibah and his colleagues? These suffered, however, under a special decree from on high in accordance with a special purpose.) Assuredly, had Adam held fast to the tree of life, which is nothing else but the Torah, he would not have brought death upon himself and upon the rest of the world. Hence, in connection with the giving of the Law it is written, "Heruth (freedom) on the tables" (Ex. XXXII, 16), as explained elsewhere. And had Israel not sinned and forsaken the tree of life they would not have brought death anew into the world. Hence God could say to them, in the words of the Psalmist, "I said, Ye are godlike beings, and all of you sons of the Most High" (Ps. LXXXII, 6), but ye have done hurt to yourselves, and so: "verily like Adam shall ye die, etc." (Ibid.). Thus whoever applies himself to the study of the Torah is not subject to the power of the evil serpent, the darkener of the world.' R. Yesa put the question: 'If that is so, why did Moses die, he having committed no sin?' R. Eleazar replied: 'Moses assuredly died, but not by the power of the evil serpent, and so he was not defiled by his hands. Besides, from another aspect, he did not die,

but was only drawn up by the Shekinah and departed to eternal life, as has already been explained in connection with the passage, "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a living man, etc." (II Sam. XXIII, 20). [Tr. note: v. p. 6b.] Thus whoever applies himself to the study of the Torah attains perfect freedom: freedom in this world from the bondage of the idolatrous nations, and freedom in the next world, as no accusation will be brought against him there. For the Torah contains sublime and recondite truths, as it says, "she is more precious than rubies" (Prov. III, 11). Treasures innumerable are indeed concealed therein, so that David, when he considered the Torah in the spirit of wisdom, and realised how many wondrous truths unfold themselves therefrom, was moved to exclaim, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law" (Ps. CXIX, 18). AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT BEFORE HE HAD DONE SPEAKING, BEHOLD, REBEKAH WENT OUT . Instead of "went out" (yozeth) we should have expected "came" (baah). The implication is that God brought her away from the people of the town, and made her an exception to them. AND SHE WENT DOWN TO THE FOUNTAIN . This fountain was none other than the well of Miriam; hence the word "to" here is expressed by the letter he (ha-'aynah). According to another explanation, the term "went out", like the similar term in the passage, "young maidens going out to draw water" (I Sam. IX, 11), implies modesty, that is, that they kept at home and only went out at a certain hour to draw water. This was the sign by which Abraham's servant recognised her. For when he reached Haran and met Rebekah "at the time of evening" it was the time of the afternoon prayer (minhah). Thus the moment when

Isaac began the afternoon prayer coincided with the moment when the servant encountered Rebekah. So, too, it was at the very moment of his afternoon prayer that Rebekah came to Isaac himself. Thus all was fitly disposed through the working of the Divine Wisdom. It was as part of the same scheme that the servant came to the well of water, the inner significance of which is to be found in the passage, "Thou art a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon" (S.S. IV, 15).

R. Simeon was once on his way to Tiberias in company with R. Abba. Said R. Simeon to him, 'Let us proceed, for I foresee that a man will come up to us who has something new to say, some new expositions of the Torah.' Said R. Abba: 'Verily I know that wherever you go the Holy One sends you winged angels to entertain you.' When they had gone a little further, R. Simeon raised his eyes and saw a man running along. R. Simeon and R. Abba then sat down. When the man came up to them R. Simeon asked him, 'Whence art thou?' He said, 'I am a Judean and am coming from Cappadocia, and I am on my way to the abode of the son of Yohai, to whom the companions sent me in order to communicate certain decisions to which they have come.' R. Simeon said to him, 'Speak, my son.' The man asked, 'Art thou the son of Yohai?' 'I am,' was the reply. The man then said: 'It is an established rule that a man whilst praying should not let anything interpose between himself and the wall, as it is written, "then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall" (Is. XXXVIII, 2); and it is further forbidden to pass within four cubits of the man who stands in prayer, and they have now laid down that this means on any side save directly in front of him. Further, that a man may not pray standing behind his teacher, etc. These are the decisions of the companions.' The man then discoursed on the verse: Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; keep not silence at my tears (Ps. XXXIX, 13). 'Why', he asked, 'is the word for "hear" in this place written *shim'ah* instead of the usual *sh'ma*'? The truth is that the form *sh'ma* is always addressed to the male aspect of the Deity, whereas the form *shim'ah* is addressed to the female aspect. Hence the term *shim'ah* is used because it is addressed to that grade which receives all the prayers of mankind, and, according to our tradition, weaves them into a crown which it puts on the head of the Zaddik, the life of the universe, referred to in the words, "Blessings upon the head of the Just One" (Prov. X, 6). Further, the words "Hear, O Lord, my prayer" allude to silent prayer, whereas the succeeding words "and give ear unto my cry" refer to prayer which a man cries aloud in his anguish, as we read, "and their cry came up to God" (Ex. II, 23). (The term *shav'atham* (their cry) indicates the raising of the voice and the raising of the eyes towards heaven; it is akin to the term *sho'a* (turning) in the passage "and turning (*v'sho'a*) to the mount" (Is. XXII, 5).) Such a prayer

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breaks through all gates and ascends to heaven. "Keep not silence at my tears": prayerful tears ascend before the King, no gate can withstand them, and they are never turned away empty. Further, there are in this passage three grades of supplication: prayer, cry, and

tears, corresponding to the three grades mentioned in the verse, "For I am a stranger with thee, a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Ps. XXXIX, 13). First "a stranger", then "a sojourner", and last "as all my fathers", who were the basis of the world. Observe that there are two categories of prayer, one to be said standing and the other sitting, although they form but one whole. There are also two phylacteries, one for the arm and one for the head, corresponding to day and night, the two again making one whole. The sitting prayer corresponds to the arm phylactery, which prepares and adorns it like a bride before entering under the bridal canopy. So the prayer is surrounded and escorted, mystically speaking, by the chariots and legions mentioned in the prayer, "Creator of ministering spirits.... And the Ophanim and holy Hayoth..." This prayer, therefore, is recited sitting, but when the prayer approaches the Supreme King and He is about to receive it, then we are to stand up before the most high King, for then the male is united with the female. Hence there must be no interruption between the redemption benediction at the end of the sitting prayer and the beginning of the standing prayer. Also, since one is standing before the Supreme King, he must on concluding step backwards four cubits, which has been explained to be a divine measure. Thus, whatever part of the prayer is symbolic of the male principle has to be recited standing. Similarly the supplicant bends his knee at the utterance of *barukh* (blessed be), and erects himself to his full height at the utterance of the Divine Name, to symbolise the superiority of the male over the female. Observe, further, that we have laid down that one should not while praying stand immediately behind his teacher. The reason is this. It is written: "Thou shalt fear the (eth) Lord thy God" (Deut. VI, 13). The particle *eth* here indicates that the teacher is associated with God as the object of fear. Hence during prayer a man should not be faced with that object of fear, so that he may be filled exclusively with the fear of the Holy One alone without any adjunct. Isaac instituted afternoon prayer in the same way as Abraham instituted morning prayer. Each of them instituted the prayer corresponding with the grade to which he was attached. Hence the time for the afternoon prayer begins with the sun's decline towards the west, inasmuch as the period preceding that time, from the dawn onward, is termed day, as in the passage, "the mercy of God endureth the whole day" (Ps. LII, 3). Nor can it be said that "the whole day" lasts until darkness sets in, since it is written, "Woe unto us, for the day hath departed, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out" (Jer. VI, 4). This shows that the term "day" is limited to the time for receiving the morning prayer, of which it is written, "the mercy of God endureth the whole day", for at that time the sun is still on the east side. As soon as the sun declines in its passage towards the west, the time of the afternoon prayer sets in, as the day has already departed, and has given place to the shadows of the evening, when the quality of rigour asserts itself. "The day has departed", that is, the period when the grade of mercy (*hesed*) prevails, and "the shadows of the evening are stretched out", at what time there rages the grade of rigour, that very hour when the Sanctuary was destroyed and the Temple burnt down. For this reason tradition teaches us that a man should be careful not to miss the afternoon prayer, as then is the time when the

world is under the aegis of rigour. Jacob instituted evening prayer ('arbit), thereby causing the letter Vau (symbolic of Jacob) to supplement the letter He (symbolic of Isaac), which is nourished by the Vau, having no light of its own. For that reason the evening prayer is optional, inasmuch as it is a continuation of the day prayer, having for its aim to illumine the obscurity of the night. That obscurity prevails until midnight, at which hour the Holy One disports Himself with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Hence it is an opportune time for a man to busy himself in the study of the Torah, as already explained elsewhere. Observe that David in his psalms made allusion to the three periods of prayer, in the words, "Evening, and morning, and at noonday, do I meditate, and moan" (Ps. LV, 18). Here we have allusion to three periods, although David himself observed only two prayers, one alluded to in "do I meditate" and the second in "and moan". The first is the prayer of the morning, the period of mercy; hence "meditating" suffices. The second is the prayer of the afternoon, the period of rigour; hence, "and I do moan". At midnight David arose to chant songs and hymns,

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as it is written, "and in the night his song is with me" (Ps. XLII, 9).'

R. Simeon then rose up and they proceeded on their way, the stranger accompanying them as far as Tiberias. On the way R. Simeon said: 'Observe that the members of the Great Synod [Tr. note: A body which, according to Rabbinic tradition, regulated the affairs of the Jewish community during the lifetime of Ezra and for some time afterwards.] instituted the prayers in correspondence to the fixed daily offerings, of which there were two, as it is written, "the one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer between the two evenings" (Num. XXVIII, 4), that is, at the two periods which coincide with the periods of prayer.' Said the stranger: 'Since originally it was the patriarchs who instituted the prayers, why should those instituted by Abraham and Isaac be of primary importance, while the one instituted by Jacob, who was the cream of the patriarchs, be only voluntary?' R. Simeon replied: 'The reason, as has been affirmed, is as follows: The two periods of the two earlier prayers have for their object only to unite Jacob to his heritage, but once this has been effected we need nothing further: as soon as the Woman is placed between the two arms and is joined to the Body, nothing more is needed. The two prayers are thus the two arms between which Jacob is united to the body, that is, to heaven, in accordance with the verse, "but thou, O Lord, art on high for evermore" (Ps. XCII, 9). All this contains deep mysteries known only to the initiated.' R. Abba and the Judean then approached R. Simeon and kissed his hand, after which R. Abba remarked: 'Until this day I always found here a difficulty, but now happy is my portion that I have been privileged to solve it! AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO THE TENT (OF) SARAH HIS MOTHER . R. Jose remarked: 'The letter he at the end of the word haohelah (into the tent) is a reference to the Shekinah, which now returned to the tent. For during the whole of Sarah's life the Shekinah did not depart from it, and a light used to burn there from one Sabbath eve to the other; once lit, it lasted all

the days of the week. After her death the light was extinguished, but when Rebekah came the Shekinah returned and the light was rekindled. Thus the verse reads literally: "And he brought her into the tent-Sarah his mother", the last phrase implying that Rebekah was in all her works a replica of Sarah his mother.' R. Judah said: 'Just as Isaac was the very image of Abraham, so that whoever looked at Isaac said, "there is Abraham", and knew at once that "Abraham begat Isaac", so was Rebekah the very image of Sarah. She was thus, so to say, in the phrase of our text, "Sarah his mother".' R. Eleazar said: 'All this is truly said. But observe a deeper mystery here. For, verily, although Sarah died, her image did not depart from the house. It was not, however, visible for a time, but as soon as Rebekah came it became visible again, as it is written, "and he brought her into the tent-Sarah his mother", as much as to say, "and forthwith Sarah his mother made her appearance". No one, however, saw her save Isaac, and thus we understand the words, "and Isaac was comforted after his mother", that is, after his mother became visible and was installed in the house again.'

R. Simeon said: 'Why does the Scripture tell us with so much detail that Isaac TOOK REBEKAH, AND SHE BECAME HIS WIFE, AND HE LOVED HER ? The last statement seems to be unnecessary, for naturally if she became his wife he loved her, as is the way of all men to love their wives. The explanation is that the attraction of the male to the female is derived from the left, as we read, "Let his left hand be under my head" (S. S. II, 6), the left being symbolic of night and darkness; hence although Abraham loved Sarah, the statement "and he loved her" is only mentioned in the case of Isaac (he being of the left). Of Jacob also it is written that he "loved Rachel" (Gen. XXIX, 18); but here the explanation is that this was due to the side of Isaac which was contained in him. Observe that Abraham, on seeing Sarah, only embraced her, and nothing more, whereas Isaac seized Rebekah and put his arm under her head, as it is written, "Let his left hand be under my head, and his right hand embrace me" (S. S. II, 6). Jacob afterwards had intercourse with his wives and begat twelve tribes. Observe, too, that all the patriarchs followed the same course,

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in that each one of them espoused four women. Abraham had four spouses, besides Sarah and Hagar, two concubines, as is seen from the passage, "but unto the sons of the concubines that Abraham had" (Gen. XXV, 6). Isaac had four spouses, in that Rebekah, mystically speaking, combined in herself the virtues of four women. This is indicated in Scripture in the following manner: "And he took Rebekah" alludes to one; "and she became his wife" indicates a second; "and he loved her" indicates a third; "and Isaac was comforted for his mother" makes four. Correspondingly, Jacob had four spouses; and one mystic purpose guided them all.' R. Hiya said: 'Abraham and Isaac had each one wife for a union of holiness, the one Sarah, the other Rebekah, and Jacob had as many as both together twice over, namely four.' R' Simeon said: 'It practically comes to the same thing, since all was arranged by a divine dispensation to one and the same mystical purpose.' AND ABRAHAM TOOK ANOTHER

WIFE, AND HER NAME WAS KETURAH . Keturah was none other than Hagar. For we know by tradition that though Hagar when she left Abraham went astray after the idols of her ancestors, yet in time she again attached herself to a life of virtue. Hence her name Keturah (lit. attached). Abraham then sent for her and took her to wife. From here we learn that a change of name acts as an atonement for sin, since that was the reason why her name was changed. The term vayoseph (lit. and he added) here indicates not that Abraham took another wife, but that he took again his former spouse whom he had driven out on account of Ishmael, and who had now abandoned her evil practices, and had made a change in her name symbolical of her change of life. Observe that R. Eleazar, in comment on the passage, "And Isaac brought her into the tent-Sarah his mother", said that the form of Sarah was there revealed, and Isaac was comforted by virtue of this, as he looked at her image every day. But Abraham, although he married again, never entered Sarah's tent nor allowed that woman to enter there, for a handmaid may not be heir to her mistress. No other woman, in fact, ever appeared in Sarah's tent save Rebekah. And although Abraham knew that Sarah's image revealed itself there, he left the tent entirely to Isaac to behold each day his mother's form. This is indicated in the verse, AND ABRAHAM GAVE ALL THAT HE HAD UNTO ISAAC , where the expression all that he had" indicates the form of Sarah that was installed in that dwelling. According to another explanation this verse indicates that Abraham transmitted to Isaac the exalted doctrine of the true faith, so that he should be attached to his rightful grade. BUT UNTO THE SONS OF THE CONCUBINES THAT ABRAHAM HAD ABRAHAM GAVE GIFTS What sort of gifts were they? They comprised the sides of the low grades, that is to say, the names of the powers of the unclean spirit, so as to complete the whole list of grades. (Isaac was raised above those grades by the power of the true faith.) "The sons of the concubines" are the sons of Keturah, who had formerly been a concubine and was now once more a concubine.' R. Hiya said that the term "concubines" here in the plural must be taken literally. AND HE SENT THEM AWAY FROM ISAAC HIS SON , so that they should not be on a par with Isaac. WHILE HE YET LIVED , that is, while Abraham was yet alive and vigorous, so that they should not complain against him after his death, and so that Isaac might strengthen himself in the side of rigour so as to prevail over them all and make them all submit to him. EASTWARD, UNTO THE EAST COUNTRY : for the reason that there are the haunts of the impure practitioners of magic and witchcraft. Observe this. It is written: "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East" (I Kings V, 10). Herein is an allusion to the descendants of the very children of Abraham's concubines, who, as already said, inhabit the mountains of the East, where they instruct the sons of men in the arts of magic and divination. It was this very land of the East from which came Laban and Beor and his son Balaam, who were all magicians.'

R. Hizkiah discoursed on the verse: Who gave Jacob

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for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned, and in whose ways they would not walk? (Is. XLII, 24). 'Observe,' he said, 'that since the destruction of the Temple, blessings have been withdrawn from the world, if one might say so, both on high and here below, so that all the lower grades are reinforced and exercise dominion over Israel on account of their sins. Now the verse just cited requires elucidation. For while it begins by speaking of Jacob and Israel in the third person, it goes off into the first, saying "he against whom we have sinned", and then reverts to the third person, saying "and they would not walk". The truth is that when the Sanctuary was destroyed and the Temple was burnt and the people driven into exile, the Shekinah left her home in order to accompany them into captivity. Before leaving, however, she took one last look at her House and the Holy of Holies, and the places where the priests and the Levites used to perform their worship. When she entered the land of exile she observed how the people were oppressed and trodden under foot by the nations, and she exclaimed, "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, etc.?" And the reply of the people was: "he against whom we have sinned". Then the Shekinah echoed back: "And in whose ways they would not walk." So in the days to come, when the Holy One, blessed be He, will remember His people, the community of Israel, the Shekinah will return from exile first and proceed to her House, as the holy Temple will be built first. The Holy One, blessed be He, will then say to the Community of Israel: "Shake thyself from the dust, arise and sit down, O Jerusalem" (Is. LII, 2). She will enquire, "Whereto shall I go, since my House is destroyed, my Temple is burnt with fire?" The Holy One, blessed be He, will then rebuild the Temple first, restore the Holy of Holies, build the city of Jerusalem and then raise her from the dust. So Scripture says: "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem" first, and then, "He gathereth together the dispersed of Israel", 134a<and afterwards, "Who healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Ps. CXLVII, 2, 3)-this being an allusion to the resurrection of the dead. Then will be fulfilled that which is written, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, etc." (Ezek. XXXVI, 27). 'Blessed be the Lord for evermore!'

### TOL'DOTH

R. Hiya once discoursed on the text: Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or make all his praise to be heard? (Ps. CVI, 2). 'When God', he said, 'resolved to create the world, He used the Torah as the plan both of the whole and the parts. Hence Scripture says: "Then I was by him as a nursling, and I was

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daily all delight" (Prov. VIII, 30), where the word 'amon (nursling) may also be read 'oman (architect, designer). When God was about to create man the Torah remonstrated, saying: "Should man be created and then sin and be brought to trial before Thee, the work of Thy hand will be in vain, for he will not be able to endure Thy judgement." Whereto God replied: "I had already fashioned repentance before creating the world." When God created the world, He said to it: "O



world, world! Thou and thy order are founded only upon the Torah, and therefore I have created man in thee that he may apply himself to its study; otherwise I will turn thee into chaos again." Hence Scripture says: "I have made the earth and created man upon it" (Is. XLV, 12). The Torah in truth continually calls to the sons of men to devote themselves to its study, but none gives ear. Yet whoever labours in the Torah upholds the world, and enables each part to perform its function. For there is not a member in the human body but has its counterpart in the world as a whole. For as man's body consists of members and parts of various ranks all acting and reacting upon each other so as to form one organism, so does the world at large consist of a hierarchy of created things, which when they properly act and react upon each other together form literally one organic body. Thus the whole is organised on the scheme of the Torah, which also consists of sections and divisions which fit into one another and, when properly arranged together, form one organic body. This reflection led David to exclaim: "How manifold are thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy creatures"(Ps. CIV, 24). The Torah contains all the deepest and most recondite mysteries; all sublime doctrines, both disclosed and undisclosed; all essences both of the higher and the lower grades, of this world and of the world to come are to be found there, but there is no one

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to fathom its teachings. Hence it is written: "Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or make the whole of his praise to be heard?" (Ps. CVI, 2). Solomon thought to penetrate to the innermost meanings of the Torah, but it baffled him and he exclaimed: "I said, I will get wisdom, but it was far from me" (Eccl. VII, 23). David said: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Ps. CXIX, 18). We read of Solomon that he "spoke three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five" (I Kings V, 12), and tradition explains this to mean that each of his proverbs admitted of a thousand and five interpretations. Now if this could be said of the words of mere flesh and blood like Solomon, must we not perforce believe that each of the words of the Torah spoken by the Holy One, blessed be He, contains proverbs, songs, and hymns innumerable, sublime mysteries, and truths of Divine Wisdom? Hence: "Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord?"

'We derive also another lesson from this verse. It is written "And these are the generations of Isaac" (Gen. XXV, 19), and a few verses before (Ibid. 12) the text says, "And these are the generations of Ishmael", and goes on to enumerate twelve princes. Seeing that Isaac had only two sons, we might think that in this respect Ishmael was superior to him. But in truth it is just in allusion to Isaac that Scripture exclaims: "Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord?" the term "mighty acts" being an allusion to Isaac. For Isaac begat Jacob, who in his own self excelled them all, and who further begat twelve tribes, through whom all both above and below were firmly established. Isaac was invested with the sanctity of the supernal world, whereas Ishmael was of the lower world. Hence it says: "Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or make

the whole of his praise to be heard?" the latter clause alluding to Jacob, as much as to say: "When the sun joins the moon innumerable stars are thereby illumined." ' AND THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF ISAAC, ABRAHAM'S SON . 'Why', asked R. Jose, 'should Isaac be referred to just here, and here only, as "Abraham's son"? The reason is that with the death of Abraham Isaac assumed the image of his father, so that anyone looking at him could say "This is surely Abraham", and thus would be convinced that "Abraham begat Isaac".'

R. Isaac rose from his bed one night

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to study the Torah. R. Judah, who happened then to be in Caesarea, said to himself at the same time: 'I will go and join R. Isaac in the study of the Torah.' He accordingly set out along with his youthful son Hizkiah. As he was nearing R. Isaac's threshold he overheard him expound the verse: "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son; and Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi" (Gen. XXV, 11). 'The connection between the two parts of this verse', he said, 'is obscure, but may be explained as follows. It was necessary that God should bless Isaac, because Abraham had not blessed him, and the reason why Abraham had not blessed him was to prevent that blessing being transmitted to Esau. Hence the task of blessing fell, so to speak, to the Almighty. The text thus continues: "And Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi" (lit. the well of the living and seeing one), that is, as the Aramaic paraphrase has it, "the well where appeared the Angel of the Covenant", to wit, the Shekinah, to which Isaac became attached, thereby drawing upon himself the blessing of the Almighty.' At that point R. Judah knocked at R. Isaac's door, entered the room and joined him. R. Isaac said: 'Now, the Shekinah herself is in our presence.' Said R. Judah: 'Your exposition of the term beer-lahai-roi is quite correct, but there is more in it than you have said.' He then began to discourse thus. 'It is written: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon (S. S. IV, 1). "A fountain of gardens" is a description of Abraham; "a well of living waters" is a description of Isaac, of whom it is written: "And Isaac dwelt by the well of the living and seeing one (beer-lahai-roi)." The "well" is none other but the Shekinah; "the living one" is an allusion to the Righteous One who lives in the two worlds, that is, who lives above, in the higher world, and who also lives in the lower world, which exists and is illumined through him, just as the moon is only illumined when she looks at the sun. Thus the well of existence literally emanates from "the living one" whom "it sees", and when it looks at him it is filled with living waters. (The word "living" is similarly used in the verse

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"And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a living man" (II Sam. XXIII, 20), i.e. a righteous man who illumines his generation as the living Deity above illumines the universe.) So the well constantly looks to the "living one" to be illumined. Further, the statement that Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi teaches the same lesson as the statement "And Isaac was forty years old

when he took Rebekah” (Gen. XXV, 20), and abode with her and was united with her, symbolising in this way the union of darkness with night, as it is written: “His left hand under my head” (S. S. II, 6). Observe now that after Abraham's death Isaac remained in Kiriath-arba; how, then, it may be asked, can it say that he dwelt in Beer-lahai-roi? The answer is, to indicate that Isaac attached himself and held fast to that well in order to awaken the attribute of mercy, as already explained.’

R. Isaac discoursed on the verse: The sun shineth forth and the sun cometh in and hasteth to his place where he ariseth (Eccl. I, 5). ‘ “The sun shineth forth” from the supernal place where he is established, in order to cast his lustre on the moon, which only reflects the light of the sun; “and cometh in” in order to join the moon. “He goeth toward the South” (Ibid. I, 6), which is on the right and in which, therefore, his strength reposes (for all the strength of the body is on the right side); “and then turneth about to the North” (Ibid.), in order to impart light both to the one side and to the other. Further, “The wind turneth about continually and in its circuit” (Ibid.). Although the text here speaks of the wind and not of the sun, yet it is all one, and has the same inner meaning; all this is that the moon may be illumined from the sun and the two may be associated. Observe that when Abraham appeared in the world he embraced the moon and drew her near; when Isaac came he took fast hold of her and clasped her affectionately, as it says: “His left hand under my head” (S. S. II, 6). But when Jacob came the sun joined the moon and she became illumined, so that Jacob was found perfect on all sides, and the moon was encircled in light and attained completion through the twelve tribes.’

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, etc. (Ps. CXXXIV, 1). ‘This verse tells us’, he said, ‘that only those are truly worthy to bless the Almighty who are the servants of the Lord. For although it is true that every

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Israelite is regarded as fitted to bless the Almighty, yet only the servants of the Lord are worthy to offer those benedictions from which is diffused blessing in the upper and lower worlds. And who, then, are those servants of the Lord? “They that stand in the house of the Lord in the night seasons” (Ibid.), to wit, those who rise at midnight and keep vigil in the study of the Torah: these do “stand in the house of the Lord in the night seasons”, as at that time the Holy One, blessed be He, comes to disport Himself with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Since, then, we are passing the night in expounding the Torah, let us say something about Isaac, whom we have just mentioned.’

R. Isaac then began his discourse on the verse: AND ISAAC WAS FORTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE TOOK REBEKAH ETC. ‘The number “forty” here’, he said, ‘has an esoteric significance, to wit, that Isaac when he took Rebekah comprised in himself the union of North and South and fire and water. Further, as the rainbow exhibits three colours, green, white, and red, so Rebekah was three years old when Isaac took her;

and he begat offspring when he was sixty years old, this being a ripe age for producing a child like Jacob who should be endowed with all good qualities, according to God's design. THE DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL THE ARAMEAN, OF PADAN-ARAM, THE SISTER OF LABAN THE ARAMEAN. Why all these details, seeing that it has already been stated: “And Bethuel begat Rebekah etc.”? (Gen. XXII, 23). It is to emphasise the fact that although she was brought up among sinful people, being the daughter of Bethuel, and a native of Padan-Aram, and the sister of Laban the Aramean, and thus came from a wicked environment, yet she did not follow their ways, but distinguished herself in good and righteous deeds. Here a difficulty arises. If we could say that Rebekah was then twenty years old or more, or even thirteen years old, then we could indeed commend her for not imitating the conduct of her surroundings; but since, as previously said, she was only a child of three years, how can we ascribe to her any merit on this account?’ R. Judah said in reply: ‘Though she was but three years old, she had shown her character by what she did for Abraham's servant.’ R. Isaac rejoined: ‘In spite of all that she had done for him, one could not yet say positively that her character was really good.’

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But we learn this from another source. It is written, “As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters” (S. S. II, 2). The lily may be taken as symbolic of the Community of Israel, which in the midst of its multitudes resembles a rose among thorns. But there is a more esoteric explanation of the verse, as follows. Isaac was derived from the side of Abraham, who was the embodiment of supernal grace (Hesed), and acted graciously towards all creatures, though he himself represented the attribute of severity. Rebekah, on the other hand, originated from the side of severity, but broke away from her kith and kin and joined Isaac; and in spite of her origin, she was of a mild disposition and gracious bearing, so that in the midst of the severity which characterised Isaac she was “as a lily among thorns”. And if not for her gentleness the world would not have been able to endure the severity inherent in Isaac. In this manner God constantly mates couples of opposing natures, one, for example, of a stern with one of a mild type, so that the world preserves its balance.’

R. Judah followed with a discourse on the text: AND ISAAC ENTREATED THE LORD FOR HIS WIFE. ‘The term “entreated” (vaye'tar)’, he said, ‘implies prayer accompanied by offerings, on an analogy with a kindred term in the passage, “So the Lord was entreated for the land” (II Sam. XXIV, 25), where also the prayer was accompanied by offerings. It is written here first, “And Isaac entreated”, and then “And the Lord let himself be entreated”, indicating that a celestial fire descended to meet the fire ascending from below. According to another explanation, the term vaye'tar (and he entreated) is akin to vayehtar (and he dug), signifying that Isaac in his prayer dug a tunnel, as it were, leading right up to the supernal department appointed over fecundity. He thus rose above the planetary influences (mazzal) in the same way as Hannah in her prayer, of whom it is written: “And she

prayed unto ('al', lit. upon) the Lord" (I Sam. I, 10) Similarly, the term vaye'ather (and he let himself be entreated) implies that the Lord Himself cleared a way for Isaac's prayer, with the result that "Rebekah his wife conceived". Observe that Isaac lived with his wife for twenty years without having children, the reason being that God delights in the prayer of the righteous, who thereby attain to higher sanctity and purification. He therefore withholds from them

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their needs until they offer their supplications. Now observe that Abraham did not supplicate God for children, notwithstanding that Sarah was barren (for when he said "Behold, to me thou hast given no seed" (Gen. XV, 3), he did not mean it as a prayer, but as a mere statement of fact); but Isaac did offer up prayer on behalf of his wife, as he felt confident that he himself was not sterile. This confidence was based on his inspired knowledge that Jacob was destined to issue from him and produce twelve tribes, but he could not tell whether it would be from his present wife or from another. Hence he entreated the Lord for his wife, not for Rebekah.' The youthful son of R. Judah here asked his father: 'If that is so, why did not Isaac love Jacob as much as Esau, knowing as he did that the former would rear twelve tribes?' 'That is a good question,' said his father, 'and the answer is as follows. All creatures of the same kind love one another and are drawn to one another. Now we are told that Esau "came forth ruddy", a colour emblematic of severity. There was thus an affinity between Isaac, the representative of severity on high, and Esau, the embodiment of severity here below; and through this affinity Isaac loved him above Jacob. Hence we read: "And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his hunting", where the term zayid (hunting) suggests the same idea as the similar term in the verse: "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter (gibbor zayid) before the Lord" (Gen. X, 9).'

R. Isaac said: 'It is written: AND THE CHILDREN STRUGGLED TOGETHER WITHIN HER; AND SHE SAID, IF IT BE SO, WHEREFORE DO I LIVE? AND SHE WENT TO ENQUIRE OF THE LORD . Whither did she go? To the Academy of Shem and Eber. "And the children struggled together within her", for there already Esau declared war against Jacob. The term vayithrozzu (and they struggled) is akin to a root meaning "to break", and thus it implies that they broke asunder and drifted away from each other. Observe that the one was of the side of him who rides the serpent, whilst the other was of the side of Him who rides on the sacred and perfect throne; of the side

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of the sun that illumines the moon. And observe further that because Esau was drawn after that serpent, Jacob dealt with him crookedly like the serpent, who is cunning and goes crookedly, as we read: "And the serpent was more cunning etc." (Gen. III, 1). Jacob then dealt with him after the manner of the serpent in order to draw him further serpentward, so that he should separate further from himself and thus not have any share with him either in this world or in the world to

come; and our teachers have said, "When a man comes to kill you, kill him first." It is written of Jacob: "In the womb he took his brother by the heel" (Hos. XII, 4), that is, he drew him downwards by [Tr. note: Al. "to the heel", i.e. to the lower grades.] the heel. So it says: AND HIS HAND HAD HOLD ON ESAU'S HEEL , i.e. he put his hand on Esau's heel in order thereby to force him down. According to another explanation, the words "and his hand had hold" imply that he could not escape him entirely, but his hand was still clinging to his brother's heel. Esoterically speaking, the moon was obscured through the heel of Esau; hence it was necessary to deal with him cunningly, so as to thrust him downwards and make him adhere to the region assigned to him.' AND HE CALLED HIS NAME JACOB . It was God who called him so. (So, too, it is written lower down, "Hath he not rightly called his name Jacob?" (Gen. XXVII, 36) and not "his name was called".) God saw that the primeval serpent was full of guile to do mischief, and so when Jacob appeared He said: "Behold, here is one who can stand up to him", and therefore He called him Ya'kob, akin to the term vaya'kebeni (and he acted toward me with guile) (Gen. XXVII, 35). It has already been pointed out that the simple term vayikra (and he called), as when it says, "and he called unto Moses", points to the lowest grade (of the Sephiroth). At no time did Jacob receive a name from a human being. So in another passage we find: "And the God of Israel called him El (God)" (Gen. XXXIII, 20), signifying that the God of Israel called Jacob by the name of "El" (God), as though to say, "I am the God of the supernal world and be thou the God of the world below". Observe that Jacob knew that Esau was destined to ally himself to that tortuous serpent, and hence in all his dealings with him he conducted himself like another tortuous serpent,

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using all cunning devices; and so it was meet. The same idea was expressed by R. Simeon when, in expounding the verse, "And God created the great fishes, and every living creature that creepeth" (Gen. I, 21), he said: 'The "great fishes" are symbolic of Jacob and Esau, and "every living creature that creepeth" symbolises all the intermediate grades.' Verily Jacob was endowed with cunning to enable him to hold his own with that other serpent; and so it was meet. For the same reason every New Moon a goat is to be offered up so as to draw the serpent to his own place and thus keep him away from the moon. The same applies to the Day of Atonement, when a goat is to be offered. All this is cunningly devised in order to gain dominion over him, and make him impotent to do mischief. So Scripture says: "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land which is cut off" (Lev. XVI, 22), where the goat (sa 'ir = Seir), as already explained, symbolises Esau. In all dealings with him cunning and craft are employed, in accordance with the words of the Scripture: "And with the crooked thou dost show thyself subtle" (Ps. XVIII, 27); and as the evil serpent is resourceful and crafty, trying to mislead the heavenly as well as the earthly beings, Israel anticipate him and counter him with similar ruses and devices so as to prevent him from working his evil will; just as Jacob, who was endowed with the true faith, in all his actions towards Esau had no aim but to prevent the

serpent from defiling the Sanctuary or even approaching it, and so achieving dominion over the world. There was however, no need either for Abraham or for Isaac to use such tortuous ways, seeing that Esau, who was of the side of the serpent, had not yet appeared in the world. But Jacob, being the master of the household, had to counter the serpent, and to give him no chance to tarnish the Sanctuary of Jacob. Hence Jacob had need of such shifts more than any other person. Israel, therefore, was chosen as the portion of the heritage of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written: "For the portion of the Lord is his people, Jacob the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. XXXII, 9). AND THE BOYS GREW . It was the side of Abraham which gave them their vitality, and his merit was their support. He trained them in observing the precepts, for so we read: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children etc." (Gen. XVIII, 19). R. Eleazar said: 'Each one of them took his own way,

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one to the side of true faith and the other to the side of idolatry; and they had already exhibited the same traits whilst in the womb of their mother, where each one of them inclined to his own side. Thus, whenever she was performing some good action or approaching a goodly spot in order to carry out some precept of the Torah, Jacob would gleefully thrust himself forward to come forth. But did she happen to pass near an idolatrous shrine, Esau would kick and struggle to come forth. Thus, when they were fully formed and emerged into the world, they separated, each one taking his own way and being drawn to the place befitting him.' AND ISAAC LOVED ESAU, FOR THE HUNTER'S CUNNING WAS I N HIS MOUTH . So we translate in accordance with what has been said above. A MAN OF THE FIELD : this means that he was a highwayman who robbed and murdered people, while all the time pretending to his father that he was abroad performing his prayers. Again, he was a fieldman in that his portion was not cast in inhabited land but in wild and desolate places. It may be asked, how came Isaac to be unaware of Esau's evil deeds, seeing that the Shekinah was with him, as is proved by the fact of his subsequently blessing Jacob. The truth is that the Shekinah, although continually with him, did not reveal to him Esau's evil career in order that Jacob should receive his blessing not by the will of Isaac, but solely by the will of the Holy One, blessed be He. So it was destined to be, and when Jacob entered into the presence of his father the Shekinah accompanied him, and Isaac thus felt that there was before him one who was worthy of being blessed; and blessed he was by the will of the Shekinah. AND JACOB SOD POTTAGE; AND ESAU CAME I N FROM THE FIELD, AND HE WAS FAINT . R. Eleazar said: According to the received explanation, the pottage of lentils was a sign of mourning for the death of Abraham. But if so, we should have expected Isaac to have prepared it. The deeper explanation, therefore, is that Jacob cooked

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that pottage in virtue of his clear discernment of the side to which Esau adhered. Lentils form a red pottage

which is cooling to hot blood. Hence Jacob purposely chose such a dish as a means of weakening the strength and power of Esau, and the effect was that Esau sold himself to Jacob as a slave and sold him his birthright. At that moment Jacob divined that for the sake of one he-goat that his descendants would bring as a sacrifice to Esau's grade, the latter would consent to be a slave to them and desist from attacking them.' R. Judah said: 'Of a like manner were Jacob's dealings with Laban, who was a magician, as it says: "I have observed the signs, and the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake" (Gen. XXX, 27); and notwithstanding that Jacob is designated a "simple man", this means only that he was so in his dealings with anyone who deserved to be treated gently; but where cunning and severity were necessary, he could use these also. For he was of a twofold character, and to him could be applied the words: "With the merciful thou dost show thyself merciful.... And with the crooked thou dost show thyself subtle" (Ps. XVIII, 26-27), just as required.' AND THERE WAS A FAMINE I N THE LAND, BESIDE THE FIRST FAMINE, ETC. R. Judah discoursed here on the verse: The Lord trieth the righteous; but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth (Ps. XI, 5). 'How goodly', he said, 'are the acts of the Holy One, blessed be He, all based upon justice and truth, as it says: "The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice; a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. XXXII, 4). For He did not punish Adam, the first man, until He had given him precepts to keep him in the right path and save him from defilement; and not until he was unmindful and transgressed the command of his Master was he punished.

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Even then God did not exact the full penalty from him, but was long-suffering with him and permitted him to survive for one day-to wit, a thousand years-save seventy years which Adam presented of his allotted time to King David, who had none of his own. In like manner, the Almighty does not mete out punishment to a man in strict accordance with the evil deeds to which he is addicted, or else the world could not endure. God is thus long-suffering with the righteous, and even more so with the wicked. He is forbearing with the wicked in order that they may change in their ways in complete repentance and so establish themselves in this world and in the world to come, as Scripture says: "Have I any pleasure, saith the Lord God, in the death of the wicked, and not rather that he should return from his way and live" (Ezek. XVIII, 23), i.e. that he may live in this world and in the world to come. The Almighty is also forbearing with the wicked for the sake of the goodly seed which may spring from them for the benefit of the world, as there issued from Terah that goodly scion, Abraham, who was a blessing for the world. But with the righteous God is strict, as He knows that they will turn aside neither to the right nor to the left, and therefore He puts them to the test; not for His own sake, since He knows the firmness of their faith, but so as to glorify them the more. It was for this purpose that God-as we read-"proved (nissah) Abraham" (Gen. XXII, 1), or, as we may also translate, "He raised his banner aloft throughout the world" [for the term nissah (he proved) implies the lifting of an ensign, as it is written:

“Lift up an ensign (nes) over the peoples” (Is. LXII, 10). The text continues: “The Lord trieth the righteous” (Ps. XI, 5). For what reason? Said R. Simeon: ‘Because when God finds delight in the righteous, He brings upon them sufferings, as it is written: “Yet it pleased the Lord to crush him by disease” (Is. LIII, 10), as explained elsewhere. God finds delight in the soul but not in the body, as the soul resembles the supernal soul, whereas the body is not worthy to be allied to the supernal essences, although the image of the body is part of the supernal symbolism.

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Observe that when God takes delight in the soul of a man, He afflicts the body in order that the soul may gain full freedom. For so long as the soul is together with the body it cannot exercise its full powers, but only when the body is broken and crushed. Again, “He trieth the righteous”, so as to make them firm like “a tried stone”, the “costly corner-stone” mentioned by the prophet (Is. XXVIII, 16). “But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.” So we would naturally translate; but this is hardly admissible, and it is more probable that the verse alludes to that grade whence all souls derive their existence, and tells us that “that grade hateth the soul of the wicked man”, not wanting it at all, neither in this world nor in the world to come. When God created Adam He gave him a precept for his well-being and endowed him with wisdom through which he rose to the higher grades of contemplation. But when Adam turned his thoughts to the lower world, he let himself be enticed by the evil tempter and clung to him, so that all that he had observed of the glory of his Master vanished from his mind. After him Noah at first was a man righteous and devout; but afterwards he also went downwards, and seeing the wine-wine a day old, not yet refined—he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent” (Gen. IX, 21). Then came Abraham, who contemplated the wisdom and glory of his Master. In his time “there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there” (Ibid. XII, 10), but subsequently he “went up out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South” (Ibid. XIII, 1). That is, he ascended again to his own former grade, so that he came out unscathed as he went in. Then came Isaac, of whom it is written: “And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine, etc.” He went into Gerar and afterwards ascended again from thence unscathed. Thus God proves the righteous in order to glorify them in this world and in the world to come. AND THE MEN OF THE PLACE ASKED HIM OF HIS WIFE; AND HE SAID: SHE IS MY SISTER . Like Abraham before him, he referred with these words to the Shekinah, which was with him as well as with Rebekah his wife; for like Abraham he carried out the injunction: “Say unto wisdom: Thou art my sister” (Prov. VII, 4). They were further entitled to call her sister in virtue of the verse, “My sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled” (S. S. V, 2), for it is for this that the righteous cleave to God. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN HE HAD BEEN THERE A LONG TIME... WITH REBEKAH HIS WIFE . The particle eth (with) indicates that it was the Shekinah that was with Rebekah. In any case it is not to be supposed that Abimelech saw Isaac having intercourse with his wife in the daytime, for this would

be contrary to the dictum: “Israel are holy and they abstain from cohabitation in the daytime.” But the truth is that Abimelech was an astrologer, and the window through which he looked was nothing but the planetary constellation. [The word “window” is similarly used in the passage: “Through the window she looked forth, and peered, the mother of Sisera” (Jud. V, 28).] Abimelech by this means discovered that, contrary to Isaac’s assertion, Rebekah was his wife. SO ABIMELECH CALLED ISAAC, AND SAID, ETC . R. Jose said: ‘Abimelech would have behaved toward Isaac as he behaved toward Abraham, were it not that God had reproved him in the previous case. Note that when Abraham said, “Surely the fear of God is not in this place” (Gen. XX, 11), his reason for thinking so was that the people lacked faith, and had they possessed faith, he would have had no need to act as he did.’

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R. Eleazar said: ‘The Shekinah does not abide outside the Holy Land, and that is what Abram meant by saying that “the fear of God is not in this place”, namely, that this was not the place where the Shekinah could find abode. Isaac, however, held fast to the true faith under the inspiration of the Shekinah, which he saw residing, as it were, within his wife.’ AND ABIMELECH CHARGED ALL THE PEOPLE, SAYING: HE THAT TOUCHETH THIS MAN OR HIS WIFE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH . Observe how long a respite God gave to this wicked people for the sake of the kindness that Abimelech showed to Israel’s first ancestors. It was on this account that Israel could not touch them till many generations had elapsed. Abimelech thus did well to show kindness to Abraham in saying to him: “Behold my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee” (Gen. XX, 1 ;). R. Judah said: ‘Woe to the wicked who when they do a kindness never do it perfectly. Ephron, for instance, first said to Abraham: “Nay, my lord, hear me: the field I give thee and the cave that is therein, I give it thee, etc.” (Gen. XXIII, 11). But later on he said: “A piece of land worth four hundred shekels, etc.” (Ibid. 15); and then we read: “And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver... current money with the merchant” (Ibid. 16). Similarly here, at first Abimelech said: “He that toucheth this man, etc”, but later on he said, “Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we” (Gen. XXVI, 16).’ R. Eleazar said to R. Judah: ‘Abimelech’s kindness to him consisted in his not taking anything from him, and sending him away with all his possessions intact, and then going after him to make a covenant with him.’ AND ISAAC DIGGED AGAIN THE WELLS, ETC . R. Eleazar said: ‘In digging these wells Isaac acted fittingly, for he discerned from his knowledge of the mysteries of Wisdom that in this way he could attach himself more firmly to his faith. Abraham likewise made a point of digging a well of water. Jacob found the well already prepared for him, and he sat down by it. Thus they all looked for a well and strove through it to preserve their faith pure and undiminished. And nowadays Israel hold fast to the well through the symbolism of the precepts of the Torah, as when each day every Israelite performs the precept of the fringes in which he envelops himself, and of the phylacteries which he puts on his head and on his arm. All these

have a deep symbolism, since God is found in the man who crowns himself with the phylacteries and envelops himself in the fringes. Hence, whoever does not envelop himself in the latter, nor crown himself with the former each day to invigorate himself in faith, makes it appear as though faith does not dwell within him, and fear of his Master has departed from him, and so his prayer is not as it should be. Hence our ancestors strengthened themselves in the true faith in digging the well, symbolic of the supernal well, which is the abode of the mystery of perfect faith.' AND HE REMOVED FROM THENCE, AND DIGGED ANOTHER WELL . R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: And the Lord will guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in brightness, and make strong thy bones (Is. LVIII, 11). 'The true believers', he said, 'have derived strength from this verse, where promise is made to them of the world to come, for the word "continually" includes both this world and the world to come. Again, the term "continually", which seems superfluous, is an allusion to the continual burnt-offering which is offered at dusk, and is held firm underneath the arm of Isaac and is symbolic of the world to come. The term "guiding" is similarly used by David in the verse: "He guideth me in straight paths for his name's sake" (Ps. XXIII, 3). "And satisfy thy soul in brightness"; this is the "clear mirror" from the contemplation of which all souls obtain delight and benefit. "And make strong thy bones": these words do not seem to harmonise with what has gone before, which we have interpreted of the souls of the righteous ascending on high. We interpret them, therefore, to allude to the resurrection of the dead, when the Holy One, blessed be He, will reconstitute the bones and restore the body to its former state. The soul will then derive stronger illumination from the "clear mirror", so as to illumine the body to the full extent of which it is capable. Hence: "And thou shalt be like a watered garden" (Is. LVIII, 11), that is, like the celestial garden whose supernal waters never fail, but flow on for ever and ever;

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"and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Ibid.), alluding to the river that issues from Eden and flows on for all eternity. Observe that the "well of living waters" is a symbol within a symbol for guiding faith. There is the well which is the very source of the waters, and there is the well which is fed by that source of water. There are thus two grades, which are, however, really one with two aspects, male and female, in fitting union. The well and the issue of waters are one, designated by the name of "well", it being at once the supernal never-ceasing fountain and the well that is filled by it. And whoever gazes at that well gazes at the true object of faith. This is the symbol which the patriarchs transmitted in digging the well, in such a way as to indicate that the source and the well are indissoluble. AND HE CALLED ITS NAME REHOBOTH (lit. streets, broad places). By this he intimated that his descendants would one day tend that well in the fitting manner through the mystical potency of offerings and burnt-offerings (like Adam, when God "put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it" (Gen. II, 15), to wit, by offerings and burnt-offerings), so that its springs should flow forth on every side, as Scripture says: "Let thy springs be dispersed abroad,

and courses of water in the streets (rehoboth)" (Prov. V, 16). Hence here the name of Rehoboth (streets, broad places).'

R. Simeon here discoursed on the verse: WISDOM CRIETH ALOUD IN THE STREET, SHE UTTERETH HER VOICE IN THE BROAD PLACES (Prov. I, 20). 'This verse', he said, 'contains a deep mystical teaching. The term hokhmoth (lit. wisdoms) implies the superior Wisdom and the lesser Wisdom which is included in the superior Wisdom and abides therein. The superior Wisdom is an essence most recondite and concealed, unknown and unrevealed, as Scripture says: "Man knoweth not the price thereof, etc." (Job XXVIII, 13); and when it expands into a source of light, its illumination is that of the world to come, and that world is created by it: for so we have learned, that the world to come was created by the Yod, and there Wisdom remained hidden, the two being one. When God was crowned, it was through the mystery of the future world, as already said. There was joy at this illumination, but all was in silence without a sound being heard abroad. Wisdom then willed it to expand further, so that from that space there issued fire and water and air, as already said, from which there sprang up a voice which issued forth abroad and was heard, as already said. From that point onwards all is exterior (huz), whereas in the interior the voice is silent and not heard abroad. Once, however, the secret force has become audible, it is called "without" (huz). Hence it is incumbent on man to be zealous in searching after wisdom "in the wide places" (ba-rehoboth). This refers to the firmament, which contains all the luminous stars, and which constitutes the fountain of perennial waters, referred to in the verse: "And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden" (Gen. II, 10). And there "she uttereth her voice", both the superior and the lower Wisdom, which in truth are one. Solomon alluded to this in saying: "Prepare thy work without" (ba-huz), and make it ready for thee in the field" (Prov. XXIV, 27), where the word "without" is used as in the verse "Wisdom crieth out without", indicating the point from which man can commence to inquire and investigate, as it is written: "For ask now of the days past... and from one end of heaven unto another" (Deut. IV, 32). The "field" again is the "field which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. XXVII, 27). When a man has penetrated into the mystery of Wisdom and perfected himself therein, then Solomon tells him to "build his house" (Prov. XXIV, 27), i.e. to cultivate his soul in his body, so as to attain perfection. Hence, when Isaac digged and prepared the well in peace he called it Rehoboth (wide places), and all was done in the right manner. Happy the righteous by whose works the Holy One sustains the world, as it says: "For the upright shall inhabit the land" (Prov. II, 21), where the term yishkenu (they will inhabit) may be read yashkinu (they shall cause to be inhabited).'

AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT WHEN ISAAC WAS OLD, AND HIS EYES WERE DIM . R. Simeon said: It is written: And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night (Gen. I, 5). This verse has already been expounded, but there is yet more to be learnt from it. For all the works of the Almighty are manifestations of truth and contain deep lessons; and all the words of the Torah assist faith and are deeply symbolical. Observe now that Isaac was not so fortunate as Abraham, whose eyes were not blinded

nor dimmed. Herein is a profound lesson touching faith, as has already been explained elsewhere. By "the light" here is meant Abraham, who is the light of the day and whose light keeps on expanding

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and growing stronger like that of the day. Hence it is written: "And Abraham was old, advancing in days" (Gen. XXIV, 1), that is, in illumination, and as he grew older his light continued to expand, so that he was "shining more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. IV, 18). On the other hand, "the darkness" is a description of Isaac, who represents darkness and night, and hence when he was old his eyes were dim, so that he could not see. He had to become enveloped in darkness in order to become attached to his own proper grade.' R. Eleazar his son came and kissed his hand. He said: 'So far I understand. Abraham was bathed in light from the side of his grade; whereas Isaac became wrapt in darkness from the side of his grade. But why is it written of Jacob: "And the eyes of Israel were heavy for age" (Gen. XLVIII, 10)?' R. Simeon in answer said: 'It is written here "they were heavy", but not "they were dim"; and further, it is not written "for his old age", but "for old age", referring to the old age of Isaac, and implying that his eyes were heavy as a result of the side of Isaac, but still they were only so heavy as to prevent him seeing properly, but not entirely dim. Whereas Isaac's eyes were altogether dimmed, so that darkness settled upon him and night took hold of him, until to him could be applied the words, "And the darkness he called night." ' AND HE CALLED ESAU, HIS ELDER SON , who was derived from his own side of severe judgement, AND HE SAID: BEHOLD NOW, I AM OLD, I KNOW NOT THE DAY OF MY DEATH. R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: Happy is the man whose strength is in thee, etc. (Ps. LXXXIV, 6). 'Happy is the man', he said, 'who holds fast to the Holy One and places his strength in Him. Like whom, for instance? Shall we say, like Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, when they boldly said to the King of Babylon: "Behold, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand" (Dan. III, 17)? Not so; for if God had not stood by them to deliver them, His name would not have been acclaimed holy as they declared it to be. But they themselves realized their mistake, and so they corrected themselves and said: "But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, etc." (Ibid. 18), that is, whether our God deliver us or not, be it known unto thee that we will not serve thy gods, etc. Tradition tells us that Ezekiel said something to them which opened their eyes, namely, that God would not stand by them if they expected reward. It was then that they began all over again, saying: "But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, etc." A man, therefore, should not confidently affirm: "God will deliver me or will do for me this or that"; but he should endeavour to fulfil the precepts of the Law and to walk in the path of truth, and then put his full trust in Him that He will help him thereto. For assuredly whenever a man sets out to purify himself he is helped thereto from on high. A man should thus put his trust in God and not anywhere else. Hence the expression "whose strength is in thee". The next words, "in whose heart are paths", indicate that a man should purge his heart of all strange thoughts, so as to make it

like a path that leads straight to the desired destination. According to another interpretation, the word "strength" alludes to the Torah, of which we read: "The Lord gives strength unto his people" (Ps. XXIX, 11). It is thus here indicated that a man should study the Torah in single-hearted devotion to the Almighty, and whoever labours in the Torah from worldly motives had better not have been born. The word mesilloth also may be translated not "highways" but "extollings" (cf. the verse "Extol (solu) him that rideth upon the skies" (Ps. LXVIII, 5)). It thus alludes to the man who labours in the Torah with the object of extolling God and making Him the only object of devotion in the world. Observe that Jacob performed all his actions for the sake of God, and therefore God was always with him and did not ever remove His Presence from him. We know this from the fact that although Jacob was not present when Isaac called Esau his son, the Shekinah told Rebekah, who in her turn told Jacob.' R. Jose said: 'Observe that had Esau, God forbid, been blessed there and then, Jacob would never have been able to assert himself; but all was directed by Providence, and everything fell into its right place.' AND REBEKAH LOVED JACOB , and so she sent for him and said to him: BEHOLD, I HEARD THY FATHER SPEAK UNTO ESAU THY BROTHER, SAYING... NOW THEREFORE, MY SON, HEARKEN TO MY VOICE, ETC . It was then the eve of Passover, a time when the evil tempter had to be removed, so as to restore to power the moon, to symbolise the true object

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of faith. Rebekah therefore prepared two dishes. R. Judah said: 'Herein were foreshadowed the two he-goats which the children of Jacob were in the future to offer, one for the Lord and the other for Azazel on the Day of Atonement. We see thus Rebekah offering "two kids of the goats", one for the supernal grade and the other with the object of subduing the grade of Esau, so as to deprive him of any power over Jacob. Hence "two kids of the goats", both of which Isaac tasted and ate of. Similarly, when it says "And he brought him wine, and he drank", the word "brought" intimates that the wine was fetched from a distant region, namely, from the region of Esau. R. Eleazar said: 'There is an allusion here to that wine in which is all kind of exhilaration, since Isaac and his side required to be exhilarated.' AND REBEKAH TOOK THE CHOICEST GARMENTS OF ESAU, ETC . These were the garments of which Esau had despoiled Nimrod. They were precious garments which, originally belonging to Adam, in time came into the hands of Nimrod, who used them as his hunting dress, for so Scripture says: "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord" (Gen. X, 9). Then Esau went out into the field and made war against Nimrod, and slew him and possessed himself of those garments, as is hinted in the passage: "And Esau came in from the field, and he was faint" (Ibid. XXV, 29), that is, from killing, as in the passage, "for my soul fainteth before the murderers" (Jer. IV, 31). Now, Esau kept those garments in Rebekah's apartment, from whence he would fetch them whenever he went a-hunting. On that day, however, he went out into the field without them, and thus he stayed there longer than usual. Now when Esau put on those garments no aroma whatever was emitted from them, but when

Jacob put them on they were restored to their rightful place, and a sweet odour was diffused from them. For Jacob inherited the beauty of Adam; hence those garments found in him their rightful owner and thus gave off their proper aroma. Said R. Jose: 'Can it really be so, that Jacob's beauty equalled that of Adam, seeing that, according to tradition, the fleshy part of Adam's heel outshone the orb of the sun? Would you, then, say the same of Jacob?' Said R. Eleazar in reply: 'Assuredly Adam's beauty was as tradition says, but only at first before he sinned, when no creature could endure to gaze at his beauty; after he sinned, however, his beauty was diminished and his height was reduced to a hundred cubits. Observe further that Adam's beauty is a symbol with which the true faith is closely bound up. This is hinted at in the passage: "And let the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us" (Ps. XC, 17), as well as in the expression, "to behold the graciousness of the Lord" (Ibid. XXVII, 4). And Jacob assuredly participated of that beauty. The whole, then, is deeply symbolical.' AND HE SMELLED THE SMELL OF HIS RAIMENT, AND BLESSED HIM . Observe that it is not written "the raiment", but "his raiment". This is explained by the text "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Ps. CIV, 2). The word "his" may also be understood to indicate that it was only when Jacob put them on that the garments emitted their sweet odour; and it was only the sweet odour diffused by them that made Isaac bless him, for only then did he feel that there was before him one deserving of the blessings, since otherwise all these divine aromas would not have accompanied him. Hence the sequence of the verse: AND HE SMELLED THE SMELL OF HIS RAIMENT, AND BLESSED HIM, AND SAID: SEE THE SMELL OF MY SON IS AS THE SMELL OF THE FIELD WHICH THE LORD HATH BLESSED . The subject of the word "said" is, according to some, the Shekinah, according to others, Isaac himself. "The field which the Lord hath blessed" alludes to the "field of apple trees", the field which the patriarchs cherish and cultivate. SO GOD GIVE THEE OF THE DEW OF HEAVEN, AND OF THE FAT PLACES OF THE EARTH, AND PLENTY OF CORN AND WINE . R. Abba said: 'We may bring into connection with this passage the verse: "A song of Ascents. In my distress I called unto the Lord and he answered me" (Ps. CXX, 1). Many songs and hymns did David utter before the Almighty for the purpose of perfecting his grade and making himself a name, as Scripture says: "And David got him a name" (II Sam. VIII, 13). But this song David recited when he contemplated this incident of Jacob.' R. Eleazar said: 'It was Jacob who uttered this psalm at the moment when his father said to him: "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not." That was

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a moment of great distress for Jacob, as he feared that his father would recognize him. We read, however: "And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him." It was then that Jacob said: "In my distress I called unto the Lord, and he answered me. O Lord, deliver my soul from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue" (Ps. CXX, 1-2). The "lying lips" is a reference to the grade of Esau,

which is so called because when the serpent brought curses into the world it was by means of cunning and crookedness. Observe that when Isaac said to Esau: "and go out into the field, and take me venison", he added, "I will bless thee before the Lord" (Gen. XXVII, 7). Now, had Isaac said simply, "that I may bless thee", there would have been no harm. But when he uttered the words "before the Lord", the Throne of Glory of the Almighty shook and trembled, saying: "Will the serpent now be released from his curses and Jacob become subject to them?'. At that moment the angel Michael, accompanied by the Shekinah, appeared before Jacob. Isaac felt all this, and he also saw the Garden of Eden beside Jacob, and so he blessed him in the presence of the angel. But when Esau entered there entered with him the Gehinnom, and thus we read: "And Isaac trembled very exceedingly", as until that time he had not thought that Esau was of that side. "And I have blessed him"-he then said-"yea, he shall be blessed". Jacob thus equipped himself with wisdom and cunning, so that the blessings reverted to himself who was the image of Adam, and were snatched from that serpent of "the lying lips" who acted and spoke deceitfully in order to lead astray the world and bring curses on it. Hence Jacob came with craft and misled his father with the object of bringing blessings upon the world, and to recover from the serpent what hitherto he had withheld from the world. It was measure for measure, as expressed in the verse: "Yea, he loved cursing, and it came unto him; and he delighted not in blessing, and it is far from him" (Ps. CIX, 17). Concerning him it is written: "Cursed art thou from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field" (Gen. III, 14). He remains in that curse for evermore, and Jacob came and took away from him the blessings; from the very days of Adam Jacob was destined to snatch from the serpent all those blessings, leaving him still immersed in the curses without the possibility of emerging from them. David also said concerning him: "What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done more unto thee, thou deceitful tongue?" (Ps. CXX, 3). That is to say, of what benefit was it to the serpent that he brought curses upon the world? As the adage says: "The serpent bites and kills, and feels no satisfaction". "A deceitful tongue": in that he deceived Adam and his wife and brought evil upon them and upon the world, until Jacob came and took away from him all the blessings. "Sharp arrows of the mighty" (Ibid. 4) is an allusion to Esau, who nursed his hatred toward Jacob on account of these blessings, as we read: "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing, etc. SO GOD GIVE THEE OF THE DEW OF HEAVEN, AND OF THE FAT PLACES OF THE EARTH , that is to say, blessings from above and from below in conjunction. AND PLENTY OF CORN AND WINE , in consonance with the text: "yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. XXXVII, 25). This, as we have laid down, was uttered by the Prince of the world; hence "plenty of corn and wine". LET PEOPLES SERVE THEE : alluding to the time when King Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, as it is written: "And all the kings of the earth etc.... And they brought every man his present" (II Chr. IX, 23-24). AND NATIONS BOW DOWN TO THEE , alludes to the time when the Messiah will appear, concerning whom it is written: "Yea, all kings shall prostrate themselves before him" (Ps. LXXII, 11). R. Judah said: 'The whole



applies to the advent of the Messiah, of whom it is also written: "all nations shall serve him (Ibid.). BE (heveh) LORD OVER THY BRETHREN . The irregular form heveh (be), instead of heyeh or tiyeh, has a deep mystical signification, being composed, as it is, of the three letters which are the basis of faith: He at the first, Vau in the centre, then He following. Hence: "Be (heveh) lord over thy brethren", namely, to rule over them and subdue them at the time of King David. R. Jose said: 'These blessings apply to the time of the advent of the Messiah, since on account of Israel transgressing the precepts of the Torah Esau was able to take advantage of the blessing given to him, "thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck" (Gen. XXVII, 40).' R. Jose said: 'All these

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blessings were from the side of Jacob's portion, so that Jacob only received what was his own. Isaac desired to transfer them to Esau, but God brought it to pass that Jacob came into his own. Observe the parallelism. When the serpent brought curses upon the world God said to Adam: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife... cursed is the ground for thy sake, etc." (Gen. III, 17), meaning that it should not bring forth fruit or any vegetation in proper measure. Corresponding to this curse we have here the blessing, "of the fat of the earth". Again, there it is written: "In toil thou shalt eat it" (Ibid.): here comes the corrective, "of the dew of heaven". There it says: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee" (Ibid. 18)-here, "and plenty of corn and wine". There we have "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread" (Ibid. 19)-here, "Let peoples serve, and nations bow down to thee", tilling the earth and cultivating the field, as it is written: "And aliens shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers" (Is. LXI, 5). Jacob thus turned each curse into a blessing, and what he took was his own. God brought all this about so that Jacob should remain attached to his own place and portion, and that Esau should remain attached to his place and portion.'

R. Hizkiah questioned this exposition, saying: 'Do we not find that later on Esau received a similar blessing as regards the fat places of the earth and the dew of heaven, as we read: "Behold, of the fat places of the earth shall be thy dwelling, and of the dew of heaven from above"?' Said R. Simeon in reply: 'The two blessings are not alike, being from entirely different grades. As regards Jacob it is written: "So God give thee", whereas as regards Esau it is written merely: "Of the fat places of the earth shall be, etc."; as regards Jacob it is written: "of the dew of heaven and of the fat places of the earth", but as regards Esau, "of the fat places" and then "of the dew of heaven". The difference between the two goes very deep. For the "dew of heaven" promised to Jacob is the supernal dew that flows from the Ancient of Days, and is therefore called "dew of heaven", namely, of the upper heaven, dew that flows through the grade of heaven, to fall on the "field of consecrated apples". Also, the earth mentioned in Jacob's blessing alludes to the supernal "earth of the living". Jacob thus inherited the fruit of the supernal earth and the supernal heaven. Esau, on the other hand, was given his blessings on earth here below and in heaven here below. Jacob obtained a portion in the

highest realm, but Esau only in the lowest. Further, Jacob was given a portion both above and below, but Esau only here below. And although he was promised, "And it shall come to pass when thou shalt break loose, that thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck" (Gen. XXVII, 40), this was only to be here below, but regarding the upper world it is written: "For the portion of the Lord is his people, Jacob the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. XXXII, 9).'

Observe that as soon as Jacob and Esau commenced to avail themselves of their blessings, the former possessed himself of his portion on high, and the latter of his portion here below. R. Jose the son of R. Simeon, the son of Laqunia, once said to R. Eleazar: 'Have you ever heard from your father how it comes about that the blessings given by Isaac to Jacob have not been fulfilled, while those given to Esau have all been fulfilled in their entirety?' R. Eleazar replied: 'All the blessings are to be fulfilled, including other blessings with which God blessed Jacob. For the time being, however, Jacob took his portion above and Esau here below. But in aftertime, when the Messiah will arise, Jacob will take both above and below and Esau will lose all, being left with no portion of inheritance or remembrance whatever. So Scripture says: "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, etc." (Obad. I, 18), so that Esau will perish entirely, whilst Jacob will inherit both worlds, this world and the world to come. Of that time it is further written: "And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Ibid. I, 21), that is to say, the kingdom which Esau has taken in this world shall revert to God. For although God rules both above and below, yet for the time being He has given to all the peoples each a portion and an inheritance in this world; but at that time He will take away dominion from all of them, so that all will be His, as it is written, "And the kingdom shall be the Lord's". It will be the Lord's alone, as it is further written, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be One, and his name One" (Zech. XIV, 9).'

AND IT CAME TO PASS AS JACOB WAS SCARCELY GONE OUT, ETC . R. Simeon said: 'The double form yazo yaza (lit. going out, went out) indicates that

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the Shekinah went out with him. For it had entered along with Jacob, and had been with him when he received his blessings and had confirmed them. And when Jacob went out the Shekinah went out with him, and hence the twofold expression yazo yaza, implying a simultaneous going out of two.' AND ESAU HIS BROTHER CAME IN FROM HIS HUNTING . It was literally "his", devoid of any blessing, and the Holy Spirit cried out to Isaac: "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye" (Prov. XXIII, 6). AND HE ALSO MADE SAVOURY FOOD.... LET MY FATHER ARISE . He spoke in a rough and overbearing manner, with no sign of politeness. Observe the difference between Jacob and Esau. Jacob spoke to his father gently and modestly, as it says: "He came to his father and said: My father." He was careful not to startle him, and said in a tone of entreaty: "Arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison." But Esau said: "Let my father arise", as

though he were not addressing him personally. Also, when Esau entered the Gehinnom accompanied him, so that Isaac shook with fear, as it says: "And Isaac trembled, greatly, exceedingly." The word "exceedingly" is added to show that no such fear and terror had ever assailed Isaac since the day he was born; and not even when he lay bound on the altar with the knife flashing before his eyes was he so affrighted as when he saw Esau enter and the Gehinnom enter with him. He then said: BEFORE THOU CAMEST, AND I HAVE BLESSED HIM. YEA, AND HE SHALL BE BLESSED, because he saw that the Shekinah had confirmed his blessings. According to another explanation, Isaac said: "And I have blessed him", and a heavenly voice answered: "Yea, and he shall be blessed." Isaac, indeed, wanted to curse Jacob, but the Holy One said to him: "O Isaac, thou wilt thereby be cursing thyself, since thou hast already pronounced over him the words, 'Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee'." Observe that all, both above and below, confirmed these blessings, and even he who was the portion that fell to the lot of Esau consented to those blessings, and, moreover, actually himself blessed Jacob, as it is written: "And he said: Let me go for the day breaketh. And he said: I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. XXXII, 27). The angel said "Let me go" because Jacob seized hold of him. You may wonder how could a man of flesh and blood take hold of an angel, who is pure spirit, as it is written: "Who makest spirits thy messengers, the flaming fire thy ministers" (Ps. CIV, 4). But the truth is that when the angels, the messengers of the Holy One, descend to earth, they make themselves corporeal, and put on a bodily vesture like to the denizens of this world. For it is fitting not to deviate from the custom of the place where one happens to be, as has already been explained. We find it thus written of Moses when he ascended on high: "And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water" (Ex. XXXIV, 28), in order not to deviate from the custom of the place to which he went. Similarly we read, as an example of the behaviour of angels on descending here below: "And he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat" (Gen. XVIII, 8). So here, Jacob could only have wrestled with the angel after the latter had assumed a bodily vesture after the manner of a being of this world. The reason, too, why Jacob had to wrestle with him the whole of that night was because those beings possess dominion only in the night, and so, correspondingly, Esau dominates only during the exile, which is none other than night. During the night, therefore, the angel held fast to Jacob and wrestled with him; but as soon as day broke his strength waned, and he could no more prevail, so that Jacob got the upper hand, since Jacob's domination is in the daytime. (Hence it is written: "The burden of Dumah. One calleth unto me out of Seir: Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" (Is. XXI, 11). For the domination of Esau, who is identical with Seir, is only in the night.) The angel, therefore, feeling his strength ebb as the day broke, said: "Let me go, for the day breaketh." Jacob's answer, "I will not let thee go, except thou hast blessed me",

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is peculiar, since we should have expected "except

thou wilt bless me". By using the past tense, however, Jacob as much as said: "except thou acknowledge those blessings with which my father blessed me, and wilt not contend against me on account of them". The angel, we are told, thereupon said: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. XXXII, 29). By the name Israel he meant to imply: "We must needs be subservient to thee, since thou art crowned with thy might above in a supernal grade." "Israel shall be thy name"; assuredly so, for "thou hast striven with Elohim". By this name he apparently referred to himself, but he really had a deeper meaning, viz. "Thou hast striven to associate thyself with God in a close union, as symbolised by the junction of the sun and the moon." Hence he did not say "thou hast prevailed over God", but "with God", i.e. to unite closely with God. R. Simeon here discoursed on the verse: When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. XVI, 7). 'How greatly', he said, 'is it incumbent on man to direct his path toward the Holy One, blessed be He, so as to observe the precepts of the Torah. For, according to our doctrine, two heavenly messengers are sent to accompany man in his path through life, one on the right and one on the left; and they are also witnesses to all his acts. They are called, the one, "good prompter", and the other, "evil prompter". Should a man be minded to purify himself and to observe diligently the precepts of the Torah, the good prompter who is associated with him will overpower the evil prompter, who will then make his peace with him and become his servant. Contrariwise, should a man set out to defile himself, the evil prompter will overpower the good prompter; and so we are agreed. Thus when a man sets out to purify himself, and his good prompter prevails, then God makes even his enemies to be at peace with him, that is to say, the evil prompter submits himself to the good prompter. Of this Solomon said: "Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant" (Prov. XII, 9), the servant being the evil prompter. Hence inasmuch as Jacob put his trust in the Almighty, and all his actions were for His sake, God "made even his enemies to be at peace with him", to wit, Samael, who is the power and strength of Esau; and, he having made peace with Jacob and consented to the blessings, Esau also consented to them. For until Jacob was at peace with the chieftain of Esau, Esau was not at peace with Jacob. For in all cases power below depends on the corresponding power above.' AND ISAAC TREMBLED VERY EXCEEDINGLY, AND SAID: W HO THEN (epho) IS HE ...? The term epho (lit. here) is an allusion to the Shekinah that was present when Isaac blessed Jacob. Isaac thus as much as said: "Who is he that stood here and confirmed the blessings I conferred upon him? YEA, AND HE SHALL BE BLESSED, seeing that God approved of these blessings." R. Judah said: 'For having caused his father thus to tremble, Jacob was punished by being thrown into a similar tremor when his sons showed him Joseph's coat and said, "This have we found" (Gen. XXXVII, 32).' (Note that the word epho used by Isaac here is also used to herald the punishment of Jacob through the loss of Joseph, who, when sent to seek his brethren, said: "Where (epho) are they feeding the flock?" (Ibid. I6); and this although God approved of the blessings.) AND ISAAC TREMBLED A GREAT

TREMBLING. The term great is echoed by the phrase “and this great fire” (Deut. XVIII, 6), thus intimating that the Gehinnom entered along with Esau. VERY EXCEEDINGLY (‘ad me’od): the term me’od, on an analogy with the same term in the clause, “and behold, it was very (me’od) good” (Gen. I, 31), alludes to the angel of death; hence the exclamation: “Who then is he...?”

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WHEN ESAU HEARD THE WORDS OF HIS FATHER, ETC . R. Hiya exclaimed: ‘How much has Israel suffered on account of those tears which Esau shed before his father, in his desire to be blessed by him, out of the great regard he had for his father’s words!’ HAS ONE NOT RIGHTLY CALLED HIM JACOB ? The form of the expression, instead of the more natural “has not his name been called”, indicates the contempt with which Esau uttered the words. FOR HE HATH SUPPLANTED ME THESE TWO TIMES . The word “these” (ze) implies that the supplanting was of the same character on both occasions, since the word bekhorathi (my birthright) consists of the same letters as birkhathi (my blessing). The word ze has a similar force in the sentence: “Surely we had now (ze, lit. this) returned a second time” (Gen. XLIII, 10), where the letters of the word shavnu (we had returned) can be transposed to form boshnu (we are put to shame), as much as to say: “if we delay longer, we shall both return and be ashamed”. Job made use of a similar wordplay when he said: “And thou holdest me for thine enemy” (oyeb) (Job XIII, 24), as much as to say: “Thou hast turned about Iyob (Job) into oyeb (enemy).” Similarly here, Esau said: “He first took my birthright (bekhorathi), and now he turned the same about into my blessing (birkhathi), which he has also taken from me.” BEHOLD, I HAVE MADE HIM THY LORD... AND WHAT THEN SHALL I DO FOR THEE, MY SON? By the word epho (then, lit. here) he implied that there was no one there to approve of a blessing for him. Isaac thus blessed him with worldly goods; he surveyed his grade and said, “And by thy sword shalt thou live”, as much as to say: “This is just what suits you, to shed blood and to make war.” It was for this reason, as R. Eleazar explains, that he first said to him: “And what then shall I do for thee?”, seeing that I behold in thee harshness, the sword and blood, but in thy brother the way of peace. Then he added “my son”, as if to say, “my son thou surely art, and I transmit to thee all this”. Hence, BY THY SWORD SHALT THOU LIVE AND THOU SHALT SERVE THY BROTHER . This has not yet been fulfilled, seeing that Esau has till now not yet served Jacob, since Jacob did not desire it at the time, and, indeed, himself many times called him “my master”. The reason is that Jacob gazed into the distant future and therefore deferred the fulfilment of the blessings to the end of days, as already said.

As R. Hiya and R. Jose were once walking together, they noticed R. Jesse the Elder coming up behind them. So they sat down and waited for him until he came up to them. As soon as he joined them they said, ‘Now we shall journey with godspeed.’ As they proceeded, R. Hiya said: “It is time to do for the Lord” (Ps. CXIX, 126).’ R. Jose thereupon began to discourse on the verse: She openeth her mouth with

wisdom, and the law of kindness is on her tongue (Prov. XXXI, 26). ‘The word “wisdom”’; he said, ‘signifies the Beth of the word bereshith (in the beginning), as already explained elsewhere. The Beth is closed in on one side and open on the other. It is closed in on one side as symbolic of that which is written: “And thou shalt see my back” (Ex. XXXIII, 23), and open on the other side so as to illumine the higher worlds. (It is also open on one side in order to receive from the higher worlds, like a hall in which guests gather.) For that reason it is placed at the beginning of the Torah, and was later on filled in. Again, “She openeth her mouth with wisdom”, for so the word bereshith is rendered in the Chaldaic version, behokhmetha (with wisdom). “And the law of kindness (hesed) is on her tongue”, i.e. in her subsequent utterances, as it is written: “And God said: Let there be light, and there was light.” The “mouth” again is an allusion to the He, of the Divine Name, which contains the Whole, which is both unrevealed and revealed, and comprises both the higher and the lower emanations, being emblematic of both. “She openeth her mouth with wisdom”, inasmuch as, though herself hidden and absolutely unknowable, as it says, “And it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air” (Job XXVIII, 21), yet when she begins to expand by means of the Wisdom to which she is attached and in which she resides, she puts forth a Voice which is the “law of kindness” (hesed). Or again, the “mouth” can be taken as alluding to the final He of the Divine Name, which is the Word that emanates from Wisdom, while the “law of kindness on her tongue” signifies the Voice which is above the Word, controlling it and guiding it,

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since speech cannot be formed without voice, as has been agreed.’

R. Hiya then followed with a discourse on the verse: I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of devices (Prov. VIII, 12). ‘ “Wisdom” here’, he said, ‘alludes to the Community of Israel; “prudence” signifies Jacob, the prudent man; and “knowledge of devices” alludes to Isaac, who used devices for the purpose of blessing Esau. But since wisdom allied itself with Jacob, who was possessed of prudence, it was he who was blessed by his father, so that all those blessings rested on him and are fulfilled in him and in his descendants to all eternity. Some have been fulfilled in this world, and the rest will be fulfilled on the advent of the Messiah, when Israel will be one nation on earth and one people of the Holy One, blessed be He. So Scripture says: “And I will make them one nation on earth” (Ez. XXXVII, 22). And they will exercise dominion both on high and here below, as it is written: “And, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man” (Dan. VII, 13), alluding to the Messiah, concerning whom it is also written: “And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, etc.” (Ibid. II, 44). Hence Jacob desired that the blessings should be reserved for that future time, and did not take them up immediately.’

R. Jesse then followed with a discourse on the verse: But fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, neither

be dismayed, O Israel, etc. (Jer. XLVI, 27). 'When Jacob', he said, 'rose to leave his father, he became aware that he would not be able to avail himself of the blessings till a long time had elapsed, and he was greatly dismayed. A voice then went forth and said: "But fear not thou, O Jacob... for I am with thee" (Ibid. 27-28), i.e. I will not forsake thee in this world. "For, lo, I will save thee from afar" (Ibid.), i.e. at the time for which thou hast reserved those blessings, "and thy seed from the land of their captivity" (Ibid.), that is to say: "Although Esau has already taken possession of his blessing and so will enslave thy children, I will free them from his hands, and then thy children will be masters over them." "And Jacob will return" (Ibid.), i.e. he will return to his blessings, "and he will be quiet and at ease" (Ibid.) from the kingdoms of Babylonia, Media, Greece, and Edom, which have enslaved Israel, "and none shall make him afraid" (Ibid.), for ever and ever.'

The three then proceeded on their way, when R. Jose remarked: 'Truly all that God does in the world is an emblem of the divine Wisdom and is done with the object of manifesting Wisdom to the sons of men, so that they should learn from those works the mysteries of Wisdom, and all is accomplished according to plan. Further, all the works of God are the ways of the Torah, for the ways of the Torah are the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, and no single word is contained in it but is an indication of ever so many ways and paths and mysteries of divine Wisdom. Did not Rabban Johanan evolve three hundred legal decisions, through esoteric allusions, from the verse: "And his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab" (Gen. XXXVI, 39)-decisions which he revealed only to R. Eleazar? This shows that each incident recorded in the Torah contains a multitude of deep significations, and each word is itself an expression of wisdom and the doctrine of truth. The words of the Torah, then, are all sacred, revealing wondrous things, as we read: "Open thou mine eyes, that may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Ps. CXIX, 18). Here is a proof. When the serpent had subverted Adam and his wife, and infected her with impurity, the world fell thereby in a state of defilement, and was laid under a curse, and death was brought into it. So the world had to be punished through him until the tree of life came and made atonement for man and prevented the serpent from ever again having dominion over the seed of Jacob. For each time the Israelites offered up a he-goat the serpent was subdued and led captive, as already said. Hence Jacob brought his father two he-goats (se'irim), one to subdue Esau, who was hairy (sa'ir), and the other to subdue the grade to which Esau was beholden and to which he adhered, as has been said already. And it is through this that the world will be preserved until a woman will appear after the pattern of Eve and a man after the pattern of Adam, who will circumvent and out-manoeuvre

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the evil serpent and him who rides on him, as explained elsewhere.'

R. Jose further discoursed as follows: And Esau was a cunning hunter... and Jacob was a perfect man,

dwelling in tents (Gen. XXV, 27). 'In which way was he "perfect"? In that he was "dwelling in tents", i.e. that he held fast to the two sides, to that of Abraham and that of Isaac. In dealing with Esau he advanced from the side of Isaac, as already said, and in the spirit of the passage: "With the merciful thou dost show thyself merciful... and with the crooked thou dost show thyself subtle" (Ps. XVIII, 26-27). But when he came to receive the blessings, he came with help from on high, and with support from both Abraham and Isaac, and thus all was prescribed by wisdom, as already said above. For Jacob conquered the serpent with prudence and craft, but chiefly by means of the he-goat; and although the serpent and Samael are the same, yet he also conquered Samael by another method, as described in the passage, saying: "and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him" (Gen. XXXII, 25-26). Observe how great Jacob's merit must have been. For as his adversary was intent on destroying him completely, and that night was the night when the moon was created, it was doubly unpropitious for Jacob, who remained behind all alone. For we have been taught that a man should not go out alone in the night time; how much less then in the night when the lights were created, [Tr. note: i.e. the fourth night of the week.] since the moon is defective, and on such a night the evil serpent is specially powerful. Samael thus came and attacked him, in order to destroy him utterly. Jacob, however, had strong support on all sides, on the side of Isaac and on the side of Abraham, both of whom constituted the strength of Jacob. When Samael attacked Jacob's right he saw there Abraham equipped with the strength of day, being of the side of the Right, the same being Mercy (Hesed). When he attacked his left, he saw there Isaac with the strength of stern judgement. When he attacked in front, he found Jacob strong on either side by reason of those surrounding him, and thus we read: "And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh" (Gen. XXXII, 26), that is, a part that is outside of the trunk and one of its supports. Hence, "the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained" (Ibid.). When day appeared and night departed, Jacob's strength increased and Samael's waned, so that the latter said: "Let me go, for the moment of the recital of the morning hymn had arrived", and it was therefore necessary for him to depart. He thus confirmed Jacob's blessings and added to them one blessing more, as it says: "And he blessed him there" (Ibid. 30).

'Many were the blessings which Jacob received at different times. First he obtained blessings from his father, through the exercise of craft; then a blessing from the Shekinah, at the time when he returned from Laban, as we read, "And God (Elohim) blessed Jacob"; another blessing he received from that angel, the chieftain of Esau; and then his father blessed him when he set out for Padan-Aram, saying, "And God Almighty bless thee...." (Gen. XXVIII, 3). When Jacob saw himself equipped with all these blessings, he deliberated within himself, saying, "Of which of these blessings shall I avail myself now?" He decided to make use for the time being of the least of them, which was the last; for although in itself it was powerful, yet Jacob thought that it was not so strong in promises of dominion in this world as the others. Jacob hence said:

“Let me take this blessing to use for the time being, and the others I will reserve against the time when I and my descendants after me will be in need of them—the time, that is, when all the nations will assemble to exterminate my offspring from the world.” To Jacob may be applied the words of the Scripture: “All nations compass me about, verily, in the name of the Lord I will cut them off. They compass me about, yea, they compass me about.... They compass me about like bees, etc.” (Ps. CXVIII, 10-12). Here we have three times the words “compass me about”, corresponding to the three remaining benedictions: his father’s first blessing, then God’s blessing, and thirdly the blessing of the angel. Jacob said: “Those blessings will be needed at that time for use against all those kings and nations: I shall therefore reserve them for that time, but now to cope with Esau this blessing will suffice me.” He was like a king who had at his disposal a numerous and powerful army with skilled leaders, able and ready to engage in warfare with the most powerful

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adversary. Being once informed that a highway robber was infesting the country, he merely said, “Let my gate-keepers set out to deal with him.” “Of all thy legions,” he was asked, “hast thou no others to send but these gate-keepers?” “To cope with the robber these will suffice,” he answered, “whereas all my legions and military leaders I have to keep in reserve for the time when I will need them to meet my powerful adversaries.” Similarly Jacob said: “For dealing with Esau these blessings will suffice me, but the others I will keep in reserve against the time when my children will need them to withstand all those monarchs and rulers of the earth.” When that time will come all those blessings will become operative, and the world will be established on a firm foundation. From that day onward that kingdom will gain the ascendancy over all other kingdoms, and it will endure for ever, as it is written: “It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but it shall stand for ever” (Dan. II, 44). This is “the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands, etc.” (Ibid. 45). The same stone is alluded to in the words: “From thence, from the Shepherd, the stone of Israel” (Gen. XLIX, 24). This stone is the Community of Israel, alluded to in the verse: “And this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, etc.” (Gen. XXVIII, 22).’ R. Hiya cited the following verses in regard to Jacob’s blessings: ‘ “A remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob” (Is. X, 21). ‘This is a reference’, he said, ‘to the remainder of the blessings. It is further written: “And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples (i.e. all the peoples, and not Esau alone), as dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass” (Micah V, 6).’ R. Yesa said: ‘It is written: “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master” (Mal. I, 6). Such a son was Esau, for there was not a man in the world who showed so much honour to his father as he did, and this it was that procured him dominion in this world. The “servant honouring his master” is typified by Eliezer the servant of Abraham, as already explained elsewhere. So, too, the tears which Esau shed made Israel subject to him, until the time when they will return unto the Holy One with weeping and with tears, as it says, “They shall come with weeping, etc.” (Jer. XXXI, 9). And then will be fulfilled the prophecy: “And saviours

shall come up on Mount Zion, to judge the Mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s” (Ob. I, 21). Blessed be the Lord for evermore.’

## VAYEZE

AND JACOB WENT OUT FROM BEER-SHEBA AND WENT TOWARD HARAN . R. Hiya drew a parallel between this statement and the verse: The sun ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he ariseth (Eccles. I, 5). ‘The sun arising’, he said, ‘is parallel to Jacob when in Beersheba; and “the sun going down” to Jacob on his way to Haran, when, as we read, “he tarried there all night, because the sun was set”; and as the “sun hasteth to his place

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where he ariseth”, so Jacob “lay down in that place to sleep”. Observe that although the sun illumines all quarters of the world, yet he travels only in two directions, as we read: “He goeth toward the South, and turneth about unto the North” (Eccles. I, 6), one being the right and the other the left. Every day, too, he emerges from the East, turns to the South, then to the North, then toward the Western side, and finally is gathered unto the West. As the sun emerges from the East, so Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and as the sun turns toward the West, so Jacob went toward Haran.’ R. Simeon said that Jacob “went forth” from the ambit of the Land of Israel, and he “went into” another sphere, as is implied in the sentence, “and he went toward Haran” (lit. strange, alien). R. Hiya said: ‘When the sun goes down to the West, the West is called the place of the sun and his throne, the place in which he abides, and to which he gathers in all his radiance. This accords with the Rabbinic dictum that God puts on phylacteries, that is, He takes up all the supernal crowns, to wit the emblem of the supernal Father and the emblem of the supernal Mother (these being the phylactery worn on the head), and then He takes up the Right and the Left, thereby carrying the whole.’ R. Eleazar said: ‘The “Beauty of Israel” takes up the whole, and when the Community of Israel is drawn toward the world on high, it also carries the whole, the male world of the Holy One as well as the female world

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of the Holy One; for just as all the lights radiate from the one, so the other carries the whole, one world being a representation of the other. Hence Beer-sheba (lit. well of seven) signifies the Jubilee year, be’er (well) symbolising a Sabbatical year; and the sun shines only from the Jubilee year. Hence “Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went unto Haran”, that is toward the West, which is identical with the Sabbatical year.’ R. Simeon said: ‘Beer-sheba symbolises the Sabbatical year, and Haran the year of ’orlah, inasmuch as he issued from the sphere of holiness into an alien sphere, since he was fleeing from his brother, as already explained.’ But when he arrived at Bethel, which is still within the holy sphere, it is written: AND HE LIGHTED UPON THE PLACE . R. Hiya said: ‘This is the place mentioned in the verse, “and he hasteth to his place” (Eccl. I, 5). AND TARRIED THERE ALL NIGHT, BECAUSE THE SUN CAME , i.e. came to illumine it,

as it says: "he hasteth to his place where he shines". AND HE TOOK OF THE STONES OF THE PLACE. This is an allusion to the twelve precious and wondrous stones of the upper layer, of which it is written, "Take you... twelve stones" (Josh. IV, 3), and underneath which there are thousands and myriads of hewn stones. Hence it says "of the stones", and not simply "the stones. AND PUT THEM UNDER HIS HEAD (lit. heads). The plural form shows that we should refer the "his" not to Jacob but to the place, and understand the "heads" to be the four cardinal points of the world: he arranged the stones three to the

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North, three to the West, three to the South, and three to the East, and that place or spot was above them so that it should be established on them. Thereafter he LAY DOWN IN THAT PLACE TO SLEEP, for now that the couch was properly arranged, he, namely the sun, lay down on it. Thus the words "and he lay down in that place to sleep" are parallel to the text: "the sun ariseth and the sun comes in".

Whilst R. Isaac was one day sitting at the entrance of the cave of Apikutha, a man passed by with his two sons. Said one of them to the other: 'The sun is most powerful when it is in the South, and were it not for the wind which tempers the heat, the world could not exist.' Said the younger brother: 'If not for Jacob, the world could not subsist. For when the unity of God is proclaimed by his sons with the verse, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. VI, 4), which is an expression of perfect and absolute oneness, then Jacob their father joins them, and takes possession of his house, where he abides in close association with his fathers, so that male and female become united.' Said R. Isaac to himself: 'I will join them and listen to what they have to say.' He accordingly went along with them. The man then commenced to discourse on the verse: Arise, O Lord, unto thy resting place, thoa and the ark of thy strength (Ps. CXXXII, 8). 'David,' he said, 'when he uttered these words, was like a man saying to a king, "Let your Highness arise and proceed to his abode of rest." Moses also addressed God similarly when he said: "Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered" (Num. X, 35). The difference between the two is this. Moses spoke like a man giving orders in his own household, and so, as it were, bade the Lord to make war against His enemies; whereas David solicited Him to retire to His place of rest, and in accordance with the rules of etiquette included in his invitation both the King and His Consort. Hence he said: "Arise, O Lord, unto thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength", so as not to separate them. From David's conduct on this occasion we learn that anyone who invites a king should strive to entertain him in some novel

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fashion, so as to afford him special pleasure. If, for instance, it is the king's wont to be entertained by ordinary clowns and jester, he should provide for him specially refined and courtly entertainers. Thus, when David invited the King and His Consort, he replaced the customary entertainers of the King with a higher order.

So he said: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints sing songs" (Ps. CXXXII, 9). Now the Levites were the regular musicians of the King, but David, having extended an invitation to Him, deviated from the normal practice and provided priests and saints to entertain Him. God said to him: "David, I do not wish to burden thee overmuch." Said David in reply: "O my Master, when Thou art in Thy palace, Thou doest according to Thy will, but now that I have invited Thee, it is for me to arrange matters, and it is my will to bring before Thee these, although it is not their usual task." From here we learn again that in his own house a man may arrange things as he pleases, but when invited out he must be at the command of his host, and conform to his desires. For when David substituted the priests for the Levites, God assented to his wish. David further said: "For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed" (Ibid. 10), as much as to say: "Let not the arrangements I have made be annulled." God said to him: "David, even my vessels I will not make use of, but will use thine instead." Nor did God stir from there until He had bestowed upon him a multitude of gifts, as it is written: "The Lord swore unto David in truth; he will not turn back from it: of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne" (Ibid. 11).' R. Isaac went up to the man and kissed him, saying: 'It was worth my while to come hither if only to hear this.'

The elder son of the man then discoursed thus: And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went unto Haran. 'Jacob', he said, 'acted in conformity with the verse: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife" (Gen. II, 24). Or again, his action may be regarded as symbolical of a later time when Israel left the Sanctuary and were driven into exile among the nations, as described in the text: "And gone is from the daughter of Zion all her splendour" (Lam. I, 6), as well as ill the passage, "Judah is gone into exile because of affliction" (Ibid. 3).' The younger son then began to discourse thus: And he lighted upon the place, and tarried there all night, etc. 'Even a king,' he said, 'when he desires to visit his consort, should coax her and use words of endearment, and not treat her as a mere chattel; and though he should have a golden couch with embroidered coverings in a grand palace, and she prepares for him a bed on a floor of stones with a straw mattress, it is incumbent on him to leave his own couch and lie down on hers, so as to give her satisfaction, and so that their hearts may be united, without any constraint. We learn this lesson from this text, which tells us that when Jacob went unto her, he "took from the stones of the place... and lay down in that place to sleep", showing that he loved even the stones of that place.' R. Isaac wept for joy, and said: 'Seeing that such pearls are in your possession, how can I help following you?' The man said to him: 'You must leave us, as we have to go to the town to celebrate the wedding of this my son.' R. Isaac then said: 'I must then needs go my own way.'

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[Note: The English passage from the beginning of the page until "Said R. Isaac" is not found in our Hebrew text] He then went and repeated the expositions he had

heard to R. Simeon, who remarked: 'They indeed spoke well, and all they said about God has been affirmed by us. Moreover, these expositions come from the mouths of the descendants of R. Zadok the invalid. He was called invalid because he fasted forty years, praying that Jerusalem should not be destroyed in his life-time. He used to discover within each word of the Torah profound lessons, from which he deduced the proper rules for the conduct of life.' Said R. Isaac: 'Not many days elapsed before I again met that man, accompanied by his younger son. I said to him: "Where is your other son?" He said: "I had him married, and he is with his wife." Then, recognising me, he said: "I swear to you that I refrained from inviting you to the marriage of my son for three reasons: first, because I did not know you, and, since the style of an invitation must accord with the rank of the recipient, I was afraid lest you might happen to be a great man and I should unwittingly offend your dignity; secondly, I thought you might be in a hurry, and so I did not wish to inconvenience you; and thirdly, I did not wish to put you to shame in the presence of the company of guests, as it is a custom with us that whoever sits at table with the bride and bridegroom gives them presents and gifts." I said to him: "God give you credit for your good intentions." I further asked him his name, and he said: "Zadok the Little." On that occasion I learnt from him thirteen profound lessons in the Torah, and from his son I learnt three, one concerning prophecy, one concerning dreams, and one concerning the difference between prophecy and dreams. He said that prophecy is of the male world, whereas dreams are of the female world, and from the one to the other is a descent of six grades. Prophecy is from both the right side and the left side, but dreams are only from the left side. Dream branches out into many grades in reaching here below; hence dreams are universally diffused throughout the world, each man seeing the kind of dream that answers to his own grade. Prophecy, on the other hand, is confined to its own region.' [Note: The last 14 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

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AND HE DREAMED . It may be asked, how came Jacob, the holy man, the perfection of the Patriarchs, to have a vision only in a dream, and that in such a holy spot? The reason is that Jacob at that time was not yet married, and that Isaac was still alive. It is true that we find him subsequently saying: "and I saw in a dream" (Gen. XXXI, 10), at a time when he was already married. But that was due to the inferiority of the place, as well as to the fact that Isaac was still alive. So when he came into the Holy Land with all the tribes, with "the foundation of the house, the mother of the children rejoicing", we read, "and God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night" (Gen. XLVI, 2)-not "dream", but "visions", which are of another and higher grade. Dreams are transmitted through the medium of Gabriel, who is the sixth in rank of inspiration; but a vision comes through the grade of the Hayyah that rules in the night. True, it says in one place, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision" (Dan. VIII, 16). The reason there is that a dream is more precise than a vision, and may explain what is obscure in a vision, and therefore Gabriel was sent to explain to Daniel what was obscure in his vision. A "vision" (mar'eh=vision, or

mirror) is so called because it is like a mirror, in which all images are reflected. (Thus we read: "And I appeared... as El Shaddai" (Ex. VI, 2), this grade being like a mirror which showed another form, since all supernal forms are reflected in it.) AND BEHOLD A LADDER SET UP ON THE EARTH. This ladder signifies the grade on which the other grades rest, to wit, the "Foundation of the world". AND THE TOP OF IT REACHED TO HEAVEN , so as to be attached to it. For this grade is the conclusion of the Body standing between the upper and the lower world in the same way as the sign of the covenant is situated at the end of the trunk of the body, between the thighs. AND BEHOLD, THE ANGELS OF GOD ASCENDING AND DESCENDING ON IT ; this alludes to the Chieftains who have charge of all the nations, and who ascend and descend on that ladder. When Israel are sinful, the ladder is lowered and the Chieftains ascend by it; but when Israel are righteous, the ladder is removed and all the Chieftains are left below and are deprived of their dominion. Jacob thus saw in this dream the domination of Esau and the domination of the other nations. According to another explanation, the angels ascended and descended on the top of the ladder; for when the top was detached, the ladder was lowered and the Chieftains ascended, but when it was attached again, the ladder was lifted and they remained below. But it comes to the same thing.

It says of Solomon that" In Gibeon the Lord appeared to him in a dream by night" (I Kings III, 5).

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Here we have "appearing" and "dream" combined, to show that there was there a mingling of two grades, a higher and a lower, the reason being that Solomon had not then yet attained his full development. But when he had perfected himself it is written of him, "And God gave Solomon wisdom" (Ibid. V, 9), also" And Solomon's wisdom excelled, etc." (Ibid. 10); for the moon then reached its fullness and the Temple was built, and thus Solomon saw wisdom eye to eye and had no need of dreams. After he sinned, however, he was beholden again to dreams as before. Hence it says that "God appeared unto him twice" (Ibid. XI, 9)-twice, that is, in dreams, for communications through wisdom he had every day. Moreover, the dream-medium of Solomon excelled that of all other men inasmuch as it was a mingling of grade with grade, of vision with vision. In his later days, however, darkness fell upon him on account of his sins, and the moon waned because he observed not the holy covenant and gave himself up to strange women. This was the condition God made with David, saying: "If thy children keep my covenant... their children also for ever shall sit upon the throne" (Ps. CXXXII, 12), where the expression "for ever" it of the same import as the phrase "as the days of the heaven above the earth" (Deut. XI, 21). And since Solomon did not keep the covenant properly, the moon began to wane, and so in the end he was beholden again to dreams; and likewise Jacob was beholden to dreams, as explained before. AND BEHOLD, THE LORD STOOD (nitsab) UPON IT, ETC. Here Jacob discerned the essential unity of the object of faith. This is implied in the term nitsab (firmly knit), which implies that Jacob saw all

grades stationed as one on that ladder so as to be knit into one whole. And inasmuch as that ladder is situated between two sides, God said to him: I AM THE LORD, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM THY FATHER, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC , these two being respectively of the two sides, one of the right and the other of the left. According to another explanation, the Lord was standing over him, to wit, over Jacob, so as to form the Divine Chariot, with the Community of Israel, embodied in Jacob, as the uniting link in the midst, between the right and the left. That Jacob was in the midst is proved by the fact that the text here calls Abraham “thy father”, but not Isaac, thus showing that Jacob was next to Abraham; and hence the text naturally continues: THE LAND WHEREON THOU LIEST , showing that the whole formed one sacred Chariot. Here Jacob saw that he was to be the crown of the patriarchs. The words “the God of thy father Abraham and the God of Isaac” show that Jacob was attached to either side and holding fast to both of them. But as long as he was not married this fact is not disclosed in the text, save to those who can read between the lines. After he married and begat children, however, it was openly stated, as it is written: “And he erected there an altar, and the God of Israel called him El (godlike)”. From here we learn that whoever is incomplete below remains incomplete on high. Jacob was an exception, yet he too before marriage was not perfected openly; or rather, he only foresaw that he eventually would be perfected. It is true, God had already said to him, “And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest.” This, however, only implies that God’s care and protection were always with him in the hour of need, in this world; but as regards the higher world, he was not sure of it till he had perfected himself. AND JACOB AWARENED OUT OF HIS SLEEP, AND HE SAID: SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE, AND I KNEW IT NOT . How, we may ask, could he have known? The truth is, however, that he meant much the same as Saul when he said: “and I have not entreated the Presence of the Lord” (I Sam. XIII, 12). What Jacob really said was: “And I have not known Anokhi (I, i.e. the Shekinah)”; as much as to say: “Behold all this revelation has been vouchsafed to me whilst yet I have not reached the stage of a knowledge of Anokhi (I) and of entering under the wings of the Shekinah, so as to attain perfection”. Similarly, Rebekah said: “If it be so, what boots me Anokhi (I)?” (Gen. XXV, 22), because she saw every day the splendour of the Shekinah,

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but when she felt the pains of approaching childbirth, “she went to enquire of the Lord” (Ibid.), that is, she proceeded from the Shekinah grade to another grade, identical with the Lord (TETRAGRAMMATON). Hence Jacob said: “Have I seen all this without knowing Anokhi?”, because he was single, and had not yet come under the wings of the Shekinah. Straightway: AND HE WAS AFRAID, AND SAID: HOW FULL OF AWE IS THIS PLACE . The word “place” here has a twofold significance. It refers in the first instance to the place mentioned by Jacob in the preceding verse; but it also refers to the mark of the holy covenant, which should not be left inoperative. (These two significations, however, are only two aspects of one and the same idea.) Jacob then said: THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN

THE HOUSE OF GOD , implying: This is not to remain idle; its covenant is not meant to exist in isolation. It is in sooth a godly abode, to be used for the promotion of fecundity and for receiving blessing from all the bodily organs. For indeed this is THE GATE OF HEAVEN , or, in other words, the gate of the Body, the gate assuredly through which pass the blessings downwards, so that it is attached both on high and below: on high, as being the gate of heaven, and below, as being none other than the house of God.” Hence “he was afraid, and said: How full of awe is this place!” But mankind (it may be added) pay no regard to its preciousness, so as thereby to become perfect on high and here below.’

The father of the youth went up to him and kissed him. R. Isaac said: ‘When I heard him speak thus, I wept and said: Blessed be the Merciful One who has not allowed divine Wisdom to perish from the world. I followed them until we entered the next town, a distance of three parasangs. Hardly had they arrived in the town when the man had his son affianced. I said to him: “You act upon your own words.” I also repeated the remark of R. Simeon, that all these verses are allegorical and have a profound significance. When I repeated all this in the presence of R. Simeon, he remarked to me that I should not think that all this exposition was merely the youth’s own idea: it contains recondite thoughts which bear the seal of divine Wisdom.’

AND JACOB VOWED A VOW, SAYING: IF GOD WILL BE WITH ME, ETC. Said R. Judah: After receiving all these promises, how could Jacob still say, If God will be with me, etc.?”? What Jacob meant, however, was this: “Some dreams are true and some not, so if this dream should come true, and God will really be with me as I have dreamt, then “the Lord shall be to me for God”, that is, I shall draw blessings from the well-spring of the universal stream towards the region called Elohim.’ For Israel being in the centre take first of the original well-spring, and after the bounty reaches them they pass it on toward that region. Hence we may render: “and the Lord shall be toward me, first, and afterwards the whole will be drawn toward Elohim”: i.e. in the same way as Elohim will fulfil for me all these good promises, so will I draw toward Him from my region all those blessings and will make Him the all-comprehensive uniting force. When will that be? “When I come back to my father’s house in peace”, when I shall be settled in my own grade, in the grade of peace so as to make perfect my father’s house, then “will the Lord be toward me, toward Elohim (God)”.’ According to another explanation, Jacob meant: “I desire to come back to my father’s house in peace, because there is the Holy Land, and there I will become perfected, and the Lord shall be my God. In that place will I duly rise from this grade to another grade, and there I will engage myself in His worship.” R. Hiya adduced here the verse: The tale of iniquities is too heavy for me; our transgressions, thou wilt pardon them (Ps. LXV, 4). ‘The two halves of the verse’, he said, ‘do not seem to fit one another. The truth is, however, that David first prayed for himself and then for mankind in general, as though to say, “I know my own sins, but there are a great number of sinners in the world whose sins are much more grievous than mine; this being so, both mine



and theirs, all our transgressions, thou wilt pardon them.” For when sinners become numerous in the world, they go up to the place where the records are kept, as it is written, “there is a sitting in judgement and the books are open” (Dan. VII, 10). That book stood, as it were, over the head of David, and hence he said, “The tale of iniquities is too heavy for me, and therefore”, he went on, “our transgressions thou wilt pardon them”. Jacob, being in a similar condition, felt distrustful, not of God, but of himself, and he feared lest his sins should prevent him from returning in peace and deprive him of God's providential care. THEN SHALL THE LORD BE MY GOD : i.e. should I return in peace, I shall not care even if the attribute of divine mercy becomes justice towards me, inasmuch as I will worship Him continually.’ R. Aha said that Jacob's words amounted to saying: ‘Now I have no need of severity, but when I will return to my father's house, I will link myself with that attribute also.’ Said R. Jose: ‘That is not so, but what Jacob practically said was: Now I require the attribute of divine justice to guard me (against my enemies) until I return in peace to my father's house, but then I will combine mercy with justice, and bind all attributes in a firm unity.’

AND THIS STONE, WHICH I HAVE SET UP FOR A PILLAR, SHALL BE GOD'S HOUSE : seeing that all will be then united into one, and this stone will be blessed from the right and from the left, from on high and from below, for the reason that I will give the tenth of everything. We should have expected here, instead of Elohim, the name TETRAGRAMMATON, as in the text: “to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord (TETRAGRAMMATON)” (II Chr. XXXI, 20), also: “Let us go unto the house of the Lord (TETRAGRAMMATON)” (Ps. CXXII, 1). But in truth, the name Elohim here points to the tribunal which represents the attribute of justice on its two supernal sides, on the side of the Jubilee year, known as Living God (Elohim Hayyim), and on the side of Isaac, expressed simply by the term “God” (Elohim). R. Eleazar said: ‘The Jubilee Year, although it dispenses judgement, is yet altogether pervaded with mercy and is the source of universal joy and gladness. But “the house of God (Elohim)” represents rigorous judgement only, on the side of the left, either for good, in consonance with the text, “His left hand be under my head” (S. S. II, 6), or for evil, as it says, “Out of the North the evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land” (Jer. I, 14). Well then may it be called “the house of God (Elohim)”.’ R. Simeon said: ‘ “The house of God (Elohim)” signifies the same as “the city of the great king” (Ps. XLVIII, 3). Verily the supernal world is not only “King”, but a “Great King”, and that is what is meant here.’

R. Hiya and R. Hizkiah were once sitting underneath a tree in the field of Ono. R. Hiya fell into a slumber and beheld Elijah. He said to him: ‘The whole field is illumined with your presence.’ Elijah answered: ‘I am come to tell you that Jerusalem is about to be laid waste together with all the towns of the sages, for the reason that Jerusalem is the embodiment of judgement, and is preserved by judgement, and now

judgement demands its destruction; and Samael has already been given power over it and over its mighty ones. I have therefore come to advise the sages thereof so that they may try to obtain for Jerusalem some years of grace. For so long as knowledge of the Torah is found therein it will be spared, the Torah being the tree of life by which all live. But when the study of the Torah ceases below, the tree of life disappears from the world. Hence so long as the sages cling to the Torah, Samael has no power over them, as Scripture says: “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau” (Gen. XXVII, 22). The voice is the Torah, which is termed the voice of Jacob, and so long as that voice pours forth, the utterance also dominates and prevails (over the hands of Esau). Hence the study of the Torah should never cease.’ R. Hiya

then awoke, and they went and told the sages. Said R. Jesse: ‘We all know this, and so it is written: “Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain” (Ps. CXXVII, 1), as much as to say: “It is those who labour in the Torah who preserve the Holy City, and not the warriors and men of might”.’ AND HE LOOKED, AND BEHOLD A WELL IN THE FIELD, ETC . R. Judah discoursed on the verse: A psalm (mizmor= song, hymn) of David when he fled from Absalom his son (Ps. III, 1). ‘The companions’, he said, ‘have been perplexed by the title “song” given to this psalm. When his own son rose up against him, David should rather have uttered a lamentation, since a little hurt from one's kin is worse than a great hurt from a stranger. The truth, however, is that David was apprehensive lest the punishment for his sons might be remitted to the next world, and so when he found that it was being exacted from him in this world he rejoiced. Further, he was comforted by the fact that many, superior to himself, had had to flee alone, like Jacob, who “fled into the field of Aram” (Hos. XII, 13), all alone, and Moses, who fled from the face of Pharaoh (Ex. II, 15), also alone; whereas he was accompanied by all the nobility and the valiant men of the land and the chiefs of Israel, who stood on his right hand and on his left to guard him on all sides. Seeing himself thus favoured, David broke out into song.’ R. Judah further remarked: ‘The fugitives mentioned above in the course of their wanderings all came across that well. Why not David also? The reason is that it was at that time at enmity with him, whereas it welcomed Jacob and Moses and was eager to approach them, and as soon as it saw them its waters rose to meet them, like a woman rejoicing to greet her husband. Why, it may be asked, was not Elijah when he fled also met by the well? The reason is that Elijah is beneath the well and not above it, as Moses and Jacob were, and hence he is an angel who executes messages. So when it says that “Jacob looked, and behold, a well in the field”, there is here an inner meaning, to wit, that he discerned the supernal well which corresponds to the well below. This is borne out by the next words: THREE FLOCKS OF SHEEP LYING THERE BY IT . Since they were only

three, why is it written, “And thither were all the flocks

gathered"? But in truth the three allude to the South, the East, and the North, the South on one side, the North on the other, and the East between them, all three standing by that well, holding fast to it and filling it. Why all this? FOR OUT OF THAT WELL THEY WATERED THE FLOCKS, the allusion being the same as in the text: "They give drink to all the Hayyoth of the field" (Ps. CIV, 11). Further, the words AND THITHER WERE ALL THE FLOCKS GATHERED, can be illustrated from the passage: "All the rivers run into the sea" (Eccl. I, 7). AND THEY ROLLED THE STONE FROM THE WELL'S MOUTH : i.e. they dispelled from it the rigidity of hard judgement, which congeals it as it were into stone, from which water cannot flow. For when those rivers arise, the South, which is on the right, gathers strength and prevents the North from solidifying the water. For a large river, with a great volume of water, does not become frozen and congealed so soon as a small river with a small volume of water. Hence when those rivers arrive, the South, which is the right, puts forth its strength and the waters thaw and are loosened, so as to flow onward and give drink to the flocks, as it says, "they water the Hayyoth of the field" (Ps. CIV, 11). Then "they put the stone back upon the well's mouth in its place", because the world has need of its judgement so as thereby to punish the guilty.

Observe that Jacob, when he sat by the well and saw the water rising up toward him, knew that there he would meet his destined wife; and so it was, as Scripture says: WHILE HE WAS YET SPEAKING WITH THEM, RACHEL CAME WITH HER FATHER'S SHEEP. AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN JACOB SAW RACHEL, ETC. It was the same with Moses, who, when he sat down by the well, as soon as he saw the water rising toward him knew that there he would meet his destined wife; and so indeed it turned out, as we read: "And the shepherds came and drove them away, etc." (Ex. II, 17), with the result that there he met with Zipporah.

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It was the well that served as medium to both of them. Observe that in this section the term "well" (be'er) is mentioned seven times, which indicates the identification of this well with "Beer-Sheba" (the well of seven). In the narrative of Moses, on the other hand, the well is mentioned only once, when it says, "and he sat down by the well" (Ibid. 15). The reason is that Moses completely separated himself from his house here below, whereas Jacob did not separate himself at all. Moses adhered to one, the one of which we read: "My dove, my undefiled, is but one, she is the only one of her mother" (S. S. VI, 9). Moses thus was master of the house and ascended on high; hence of him it is written: "and he sat upon ('al) the well", whereas of Jacob it is merely written, "and he saw, and behold a well in the field".

[The following is an alternative exposition of this section. AND JACOB WENT OUT FROM BEER SHEBA, AND WENT TOWARD HARAN . R. Abba discoursed on the verse: Happy are they that keep justice, that perform acts of charity (zedakah) at all times (Ps. CVI, 3). 'Happy are Israel', he said, 'to whom

the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Law of truth so that they should exert themselves in its study day and night, as whoever exerts himself in the study of the Torah achieves complete freedom, even from death, which can no more prevail over him, as already explained elsewhere. For whoever exerts himself in the study of the Torah and lays hold of it, lays hold of the tree of life; and whoever relaxes his hold of the tree of life, behold the tree of death overshadows him and takes hold of him. So Scripture says: "If thou relaxest in the day of adversity, thy strength is narrow indeed" (Prov. XXIV, 10), signifying that whoever relaxes in the study of the Torah, in the day of adversity his strength (Koah-KoH=the strength of KoH) is narrow indeed, to wit, the strength of KoH that continually follows on the right of the man that walks in the ways of the Torah, and forms his constant guard, so that the evil power is prevented from approaching him and is powerless to accuse him. But of him who turns aside from the ways of the Torah and relaxes his hold of it, it is said: "narrow indeed is the strength of KoH", as the evil power, represented by the left, obtains dominion over that man and thrusts aside that KoH, so that he has no room to move. According to another interpretation, the term "zar" (narrow) signifies here "adversary"; for when a man holds fast to the ways of the Torah he is beloved both on high and below, and is the favourite of the Holy One, blessed be He, as we read: "And the Lord loved him" (11 Sam. XII, 24); but when a man turns aside from the ways of the Torah, then zar kohekoh, that is, the strength of KoH becomes his enemy, and makes the evil one obtain dominion over him so as to accuse him in this world and the world to come. For the evil one, who is the same as the evil tempter, dominates the world from many sides, and exercises great power therein; he is indeed the very same mighty serpent through whom Adam fell into sin, and who entices mankind to draw him unto themselves until he draws out their souls. Now his power is over the body, and when he obtains that power over the body, the soul departs because the body has become defiled. To obtain that dominion over the body, however, the evil one must receive authorisation. Further, many evil powers come forth from his side to dominate the world. According to our teachers, all the affairs of the world come under their rule, as he has subordinates and ministers who interfere in all the activities of the world. Hence he is called the "left end". For, as already explained, there is a right end and a left end; and this left end is identical with the "end of all flesh". It is called "the end of all flesh", but not "the end of all spirit". Each is an "end" in the mystical sense, but one presides over flesh, the other over spirit, the latter being the inner one, the former the outer one; one being right, the other left, one being holy, the other defiled, as already explained elsewhere. Now observe a deep and holy mystery of faith, the symbolism of the male principle and the female principle of the universe. In the former are comprised all holinesses and objects of faith, and all life, all freedom, all goodness, all illuminations

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emerge from thence; all blessings, all benevolent dews, all graces and kindnesses-all these are generated from that side, which is called the South. Contrariwise, from the side of the North there issue a variety of grades,

extending downwards, to the world below. This is the region of the dross of gold, which comes from the side of impurity and loathsomeness and which forms a link between the upper and nether regions; and there is the line where the male and female principles join, forming together the rider on the serpent, and symbolised by Azazel. Now from thence there spread many grades which dominate the world, all of them presenting sides of defilement and acting as chieftains and prefects in the world. Observe that Esau, when he emerged into the world, was red all over like a rose, and was hairy after the pattern of a goat (sa'ir), and from such a being came forth chieftains and prefects, fully armed, who dominate the world. This has already been explained elsewhere. Observe now the verse previously cited: "Happy are they that keep justice", to wit, they who keep the faith of the Holy One, blessed be He, since God is justice, so that a man should be on his guard not to turn aside but to keep to the way of justice, as God is justice and all His ways are justice. The verse proceeds: "that exercise charity (zedakah) at all times". The words "at all times" cannot be taken quite literally, but refer to those who endeavour to follow the ways of the Torah and dispense charity to those who are in need of it. For when charity is given to the poor, its effect is felt both on high and here below. For that charity ascends on high and reaches to the region of Jacob, who is the supernal chariot, and causes blessings to flow toward that region from the very fountain of fountains; and from that charity he causes blessings to flow in abundance to all the lower beings and to all chariots and hosts. All these are blessed and increase in illumination, as is befitting, for they all are comprehended within the term "time" ('eth). This, then, is the meaning of the words "that do charity in the whole of time". Observe that as long as Israel were in the Holy Land they drew the blessings from on high to below, but after they went forth from the Holy Land they came under a strange power and blessings were withheld from the world. Jacob was at first under sacred jurisdiction, but when he departed from the land he entered into a strange jurisdiction. And before he came under a strange jurisdiction the Holy One, blessed be He, appeared unto him in a dream, and he saw wonderful things, and holy angels accompanied him until he sat down by the well; and when he sat by the well the waters thereof rose toward him, as a portent that he would there meet his wife, and the same thing happened to Moses. The inward significance of the matter is that the well only rose when it saw its affinity, to form with him a union.] AND JACOB WENT ON HIS JOURNEY, AND CAME TO THE LAND OF THE CHILDREN OF THE EAST (Gen. XXIX, 1). R. Abba said: 'Since Laban dwelt in Haran, why did Jacob go further on? That Laban dwelt in Haran we know from the verses: "And Jacob said unto them: My brethren, whence are ye? And they said: Of Haran are we. And he said: Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said: We know him" (Ibid. 4-5). The truth, however, is that Jacob said to himself: "I wish to enter into communion with the Shekinah, or in other words, I desire to marry. Now, when the servant was sent to take a wife for my father, he found a well of water through which he met my father's destined wife. But, behold, in this place I have found neither spring, nor well, nor any water at all." Straightway he proceeded further, and came to "the land of the

children of the East", where he found a well, as already said, and where he encountered his wife.' Said R. Eleazar: 'That place was assuredly Haran, but the well was in an outlying field, and that is why it says that "Rachel ran and told her father" (Ibid. 12).' R. Eleazar further remarked: 'Since Jacob had to find his wife by the well, why did he not meet there Leah, who was to be the mother of so many tribes? The answer is that it was not the will of God that Leah should be espoused to Jacob openly, and in fact he married her without his knowledge, as it is written: "And it came to pass in the morning that, behold, it was Leah" (Ibid. 25). It was also in order to rivet his eye and heart on the beauty of Rachel, so that he should establish his principal abode with her.

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How did Jacob know that she was Rachel? We must suppose that the shepherds told him, as it is written, "and, behold, Rachel his daughter came with the sheep" (Ibid. 6).' AND HE SAID: I WILL SERVE THEE SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL THY YOUNGER DAUGHTER. Why should Jacob have mentioned seven years rather than ten months or one year? For one thing, Jacob did not want people to say that he lusted after Rachel's beauty. Also he knew that the wisdom of the moon requires a septennate; and all the seven supernal years hovered over Jacob before he married Rachel, so that his association with her should accomplish its true purpose. For Jacob, before his marriage, first made his own all those years, so that when at last he came to her he should be as it were the heaven to her earth. Hence it says: AND THEY SEEMED UNTO HIM BUT A FEW DAYS. The inner meaning of the word ahadim (few, lit. united) is that all those seven years resembled in his eyes those superior years that are bound together so as to form a complete whole and an inseparable unity. The verse continues: FOR THE LOVE HE HAD FOR HER, that is, his desire to reproduce the supernal pattern. R. Abba said: 'Jacob assuredly served seven years in order to join himself to the Sabbatical Year.' R. Eleazar said: 'Observe that the Jubilee Year, wherever mentioned, symbolises that which is undisclosed (to the human mind), whereas the Sabbatical Year symbolises the disclosed. So when Jacob had served the first seven years, a voice went forth and said: O Jacob, it is written: "from one world to the other world" (Ps. CVI, 48). The one world is the upper world, which is veiled, the category of the Jubilee Year. From thence is the starting point; for those which are veiled and undisclosed are from the category of the Jubilee Year.' Hence they were hidden from Jacob, who thus mistakenly thought that his own seven years were from the Sabbatical septennate. Their inwardness was hidden from him in order that he should make a beginning from the highest world, from the Jubilee cycle which is undisclosed. And after the years symbolic of the Jubilee cycle, which is undisclosed, had passed, he served the years of the Sabbatical septennate which are disclosed. He was thus crowned with the two worlds and laid hold of both of them.

Observe that Leah bore six sons and one daughter. That was in the order of things, since six world-directions were stationed above her, and so the six

sons and one daughter formed a symbol of the grades. Rachel bore two righteous ones, and this was also in order, since the Sabbatical septennate is placed perpetually between two Righteous Ones, as it is written: "The righteous ones shall inherit the land" (Ps. XXXVII, 29), one Righteous One on high and one below. From the one on high there is a flowing out of upper waters, and from the one below there is a reciprocal welling up of water from the female principle toward the male principle in a perfect ecstasy. There are thus a Righteous One on this side and a Righteous One on that side; and as the male principle above is situated between two female principles, so the female principle below is situated between two Righteous Ones. Hence Joseph and Benjamin represent the two Righteous Ones. Joseph merited to be the (symbol of the) Righteous One on high in virtue of his having kept under guard the sign of the holy covenant. Benjamin was the Righteous One below, so that the Sabbatical septennate was crowned between Righteous Ones, to wit, Joseph the righteous and Benjamin the righteous.

It may be asked, was Benjamin indeed a righteous man? Yes, he was, in that he never in his life transgressed in regard to the sign of the holy covenant. It is true, however, that he was never exposed to a temptation like that of Joseph. If so, why was he called righteous? The reason is that during the whole time of Jacob's mourning for the loss of Joseph he abstained from conjugal intercourse. But, it may be said, when Joseph was carried off, was not Benjamin a mere child? What, then, is the point of saying that he abstained from conjugal intercourse? The answer is that he abstained from conjugal intercourse even after he was married. But again we may ask, how is this to be squared with the tradition that Joseph, when he came down to Egypt, asked him whether he had a wife and children, and he answered, "Yes, and they are all named in memory of my brother, to wit, Bela and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, etc." (Gen. XLVI, 21). How, then, can it be said that he abstained from conjugal relations? The truth, however, is that Benjamin had no children at that time, but he had begotten them already when the brethren went (finally) to Egypt. Benjamin, then, assuredly observed conjugal abstinence all the time his father mourned for Joseph, saying: "Behold, my brother Joseph constituted the sign-of-the-holy-covenant of my father, that sign being the end of the bodily trunk. Now that he is lost I have to guard

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the place of my brother". One may still object that at the time when Joseph was lost Benjamin had not yet proved himself righteous, and he did not, in fact, do so until the time when he withstood temptation. But the truth is that Jacob knew that Joseph would guard that place, and the others obtained that knowledge from Jacob. It was for that reason that he prolonged his stay with Laban until his body, as it were, was made complete, the completion being constituted by the sign of the holy covenant. Hence it is written: "And it came to pass when Rachel had borne Joseph, etc." (Ibid. XXX, 25), Jacob having said to Laban in so many words, "Now that my body has been made complete I am desirous of going." In this way Benjamin knew that

his brother was righteous, and he trod in his footsteps. And after Joseph had been found he returned home, had conjugal intercourse, and begat children. God thus declared him righteous here below and Joseph righteous above.

It was thus in the order of things that Rachel bore two sons and Leah six sons and a daughter; and the first seven years were thus veiled from Jacob as they represented the Jubilee cycle; and whilst in intention serving the Sabbatical seven years, which are of the disclosed realm, Jacob in reality served the Jubilee cycle which belongs to the undisclosed realm. So Scripture says: "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel", the term seven years being unqualified, implying that he served for Rachel seven years of the supernal order, and he thus laid hold of both worlds. From here we learn that only through the disclosed can a man reach the undisclosed. If it is asked, how can the first seven years correspond to the Jubilee cycle, seeing that in regard to the latter it is written, "seven times seven years" (Lev. XXV, 8), and here there are no seven times, the answer is that the seven times are represented in the seven days of festivity with which Jacob celebrated his marriage with Leah. The number was thus made complete, since each day may be regarded as sevenfold, in harmony with the verse, "Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous ordinances" (Ps. CXIX, 164), and the seven years were thus to be multiplied by the seven days. But, it may be said, Jacob should have first served the Sabbatical septennate and attached himself to the grade of the Sabbatical year. The answer is that since in intention he did serve them, the effect was the same as if he had served them in reality.' R. Abba then came up to R. Eleazar and kissed him, saying: 'Blessed be the Merciful One for the exposition of this verse. Concerning such a privilege, it is written: "The Lord was pleased for his righteousness' sake, to make the Torah great and glorious" (Is. XLII, 21).' R. Eleazar said further: 'What has been said about Leah having borne six sons and one daughter and Rachel having borne two sons is assuredly correct; but how do the sons of the concubines fit into the scheme? They constitute, as it were, the four joints, the so-called hinder parts, alluded to in the statement: "and all their hinder parts were inward" (I Kings VII, 25). For the right arm contains three joints, the middle one of which is the largest and projects backwards, being as it were outside the body. There is a similar joint in the left arm, as well as in the right thigh and in the left thigh; and when the whole is properly arranged, all of them look inward, in fulfilment of the statement, "all their hinder parts were inward". Now all the other joints are in the line of the body, but these protrude outside the arms and the thighs. Correspondingly, the sons of the handmaids, although they are within the number, yet are not of the same rank as the sons of Rachel and Leah, and thus remain outside. According to another explanation, these four are the joints by which all the others are moved.' R. Abba remarked: 'So assuredly it is, and thus the whole is properly constructed.' AND THE LORD SAW THAT LEAH WAS HATED . R. Eleazar said: 'It is written: "Who sets aright the foundation ('aqereth, lit. barren woman) of the house, a joyful mother of children. Hallelukah" (Ps. CXIII, 9). "The foundation of the house" is an allusion to Rachel,

whereas by “a joyful mother of children” is meant Leah. According to another explanation, the “foundation of the house” is an allusion to the Sabbatical year, which constitutes the basis of this world; and “a joyful mother of children” signifies the Jubilee year, on which depend the joy and gladness of all the worlds; and this verse comprehends them all in a sacred symbolism, and hence the concluding word, “Hallelukah”. We can now understand why it says here that “Leah was hated”. This seems strange, in view of the fact that children of a hated woman are of a low type, whereas all Leah's children were of a high type. But the truth is that the Jubilee is a veiled world nothing of which

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is disclosed to human intelligence; hence Jacob was wholly unaware of it. Now the lower world is intelligible, and is the starting point for the ascending grades. Just as the Supernal Wisdom is a starting point of the whole, so is the lower world also a manifestation of Wisdom, and a starting point of the whole. This world, therefore, is named “Thou” (attah), being symbolic of the Sabbatical year, and is intelligible, whereas the upper world, symbolic of the Jubilee, is named He (hu’=he, or it), as it is wholly veiled from human understanding. Hence there is an inner significance in the words “and he lay with her that (hu’) night”. Hence, too, it is written: “And the Levite shall serve hu (him)” (Num. XVIII, 23), so as to draw blessings for every one from it, namely from the upper world, which remains for ever veiled. Jacob, however, had no mind to attach himself to the undisclosed, but only to the disclosed, in harmony with the recondite meaning of the verse, “and he shall cleave to his wife” (Gen. II, 25). Also, from the words: “And the Lord saw that Leah was hated” we may learn that a man is not naturally tempted by his mother, and that hence he may remain alone with his mother in any place whatever without any scruple. Observe that it was for the sake of Jacob that the world became firmly established. (For though we have said elsewhere that it was for the sake of Abraham, the truth is that it was for the sake of Jacob that Abraham was firmly established, as it is written: “Thus saith the Lord, concerning the house of Jacob who redeemed Abraham” (Is. XXIX, 22).) For at first God built up worlds and destroyed them, and only when Jacob came did the worlds take their final form, and were not again demolished as heretofore. So Scripture says: “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel” (Is. XLIII, 1). Israel is also called “son” to God, as it is written: “Israel is my son, my firstborn”, also, “Let my son go that he may serve me” (Ex. IV, 22-23). There is also the same allusion in the verse: “What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest” (Prov. XXX, 4). AND SHE CALLED HIS NAME REUBEN (lit. see, a son). She did not give him a more specific name, because he was to form a group with the other two, Simeon and Levi. The name Levi, being akin to the term loyoth (joining) (I Kings VII, 30), signifies the perfect combination of them into one scheme. R. Judah said that the same idea is implied in the phrase: “The excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power” (Gen. XLIX, 3), which is rendered in the Chaldaic paraphrase: “Birthright, priesthood, and kingdom”, kingdom belonging to the side of power (Geburah). Hence the name Reuben,

implying “son” (ben), simply. R. Abba said that the birth of that triad, as implied in the name Reuben, was the goal towards which Leah strove, as indicated in her utterance: “Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons” (Gen. XXIX, 34), that is, three joined together as one. Observe now that the Heavenly Throne consists of our three patriarchs, to whom King David was subsequently joined, making together a tetrad, symbolic of the Divine Tetragrammaton. Correspondingly we have Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, to whom later on there was joined Judah, who inherited the kingship. Hence the significance of the passage: “This time will I praise the Lord. Therefore she called his name Judah. And she left off bearing”, the reason being that now all the four supports of the Heavenly Throne were completed. (Why did she say: “this time will I praise the Lord” in regard to this son and not in regard to any of the others? The truth is that we learn from here that as long

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as the Community of Israel is in exile the Divine Name remains incomplete.) Observe that with the birth of three sons the Heavenly Throne was not yet made complete until Judah was born; hence only then Leah said, “This time will I praise the Lord”, and not in regard to any of the other sons; and hence again the term vatha’amod (and she left off, lit. stood), implying that the Heavenly Throne stood then firm on its supports. (This term also indicates that up to that point there is unity, but below that is the world of separation.) As for the two other sons born subsequently with the same characteristics, these were united with the others, constituting together a unity symbolic of the six directions of the world.

Observe further that all the twelve tribes are the integral parts of the Community of Israel in this world, to give full strength to the supernal light, enveloped in blackness, and restore the root principle of the Whole to its place. All the worlds are built on the same pattern; and through this relation the lower world was completed on the pattern of the upper world. By the birth of Issachar and Zebulun there was made complete the number six, symbolic of the six directions of the world. Then again the four sons of the handmaids were associated with them, they being, as it were, the four joints that were linked with them, as already explained. So Scripture says of them: “and their hinder parts were inward” (I Kings VII, 25), to wit, although they were the sons of the handmaids, yet they belonged inward. R. Hizkiah said: ‘We have affirmed that what the lower world produces belongs to the category of separation, as it is written “and from thence it was parted” (Gen. II, 11). If so, what about Joseph and Benjamin? How can you say that they belonged to the same world as the others, since they did not issue from the upper world, and what the lower world brings forth is for the lower world and not for the upper world; and, if so, they are separated from the others, since it has been laid down that whatever the lower world produces belongs to the category of separation.’ R. Abba came up and kissed him and said: ‘This is a real difficulty, since it is true that the upper world becomes perfected by the twelve which properly belong to it. But

it can be solved esoterically as follows. At every moment the Righteous One both leaves and enters the lower world. Hence he is built up in this place, while his root is above. Thus he is always present in the lower world.

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It is written: "And it came to pass as her soul (nafshah) was in departing, for she died" (Gen. XXXV, 18). Now the Righteous One is both in and out of this lower world. When he enters it he does so as symbolised by Joseph the righteous; and when he leaves it he does so as symbolised by Benjamin. Hence it says in connection with the birth of Benjamin: "And it came to pass as her soul (nafshah) was in departing-for she died", where "her soul" alludes to the Righteous One that was departing, to wit, Benjamin. She called him Ben-oni (son of my sorrow), thinking that what she bore belonged to the lower world, the world of separation, thus leaving only eleven as belonging to the upper world. His father, however, called him Benjamin (son of the right hand) (Ibid.), implying that he ascended on high to the upper world; for when Joseph disappeared Benjamin took his place. Thus did the Righteous One both enter the lower world and leave it. Hence Joseph and Benjamin and all the others completed the number of twelve, who formed a unity after the supernal pattern.' THIS TIME WILL I PRAISE THE LORD . R. Simeon adduced here the verse: "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart (lebab), with the council of the upright, and with the congregation" (Ps. CXI, 1). 'The intensified form lebab (heart) is used here', he said, 'to show that David desired to praise the Lord with his whole being, including both his good prompter (yetser-tob) and his evil prompter (yetser-ra'), or, in other terms, the right side and the left side, the heart (lebab), being symbolic of South and North. By the phrase "with the council of the upright" David implied the other directions, making up the six directions of the world, after the supernal pattern; "the congregation" is a reference to the realm of Judah, the term 'edah (congregation) being akin to the term 'eduth (testimony) in the passage, "and my testimony (ve-'edothi) that I shall teach them" (Ps. CXXXII, 13), as well as to the vocable 'od (yet) in the passage, "but Judah yet ('od) ruleth with God, etc." (Hos. XII, 1). On the other hand, in the verse: "I will praise thee with my whole heart (libi) toward Elohim will I sing praise unto thee" (Ibid. CXXXVIII, 1), David addressed himself to one single realm, designated Elohim [Tr. note: The grade Malkuth, or Kingdom.], singing praises to the grade associated with the right side. Observe that Judah embraced all sides, having taken hold of the South as well as of the East; himself issuing from the left side, with his beginning in the North, he took hold of the South, since his turnings were to the right, and attached himself to the body. Hence Leah's words: "This time I will praise the Lord." The words, "And she stood still not to bear any more" imply that there was now a firm standing, that all was now in order, since the Heavenly Throne was now (with the birth of Judah) made complete.'

R. Simeon was once walking in the country when he met R. Abba and R. Hiya and R. Jose. When he saw them he said: 'We ought to have here some new expositions of the Torah. So the three of them sat down

for a time. When he was about to go, each one of them in turn discoursed on a Scriptural text. R. Abba took the verse: And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot had separated from him: Lift up now thine eyes, etc. (Gen. XIII, 14). 'Did Abraham then', he asked, 'inherit only so much of land as was within his range of vision and no more - a mere three, four, or, at most, five parasangs? This would contradict the next verse saying: "for all the land which thou seest to thee I will give it" (Ibid. 15). But the truth is that in surveying the four directions of the world he saw the whole land, since the four directions embrace the whole world. Furthermore, God raised him high above the Land of Israel

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and made him see how it is bound up with the four cardinal points. Abram thus looked over the whole of the land. In a similar way, whoever sees R. Simeon sees the whole world, sees the delight of the upper world and the lower world.' R. Hiya followed with the text: "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed" (Gen. XXVIII, 13). 'Did God, then', he asked, 'promise him no more than that spot, a mere four or five cubits? The truth, however, is that God at that moment folded up the whole of the land of Israel within those four cubits, so that that spot comprised the whole land. Now, if the whole land can be so concentrated, how much more truly may it be said that R. Simeon, who is the light of the world, is of equal worth with the whole world!' R. Jose then took the passage: "This time will I praise the Lord." 'Was it not', he asked, 'equally incumbent on her to praise God for the birth of her other sons? But the truth is that Judah, in virtue of being the fourth son, was the completion of the Heavenly Throne. Judah alone is thus the mainstay of the Heavenly Throne and is its truest support. For this very reason, moreover, was he called Judah (YHVDH), a word which contains the Divine Name with the addition of the letter Daleth (four), pointing to the four supports of the Heavenly Throne. With how much greater force can this be said of R. Simeon, who illumines the whole world with the light of the Torah, and who kindles the light of many lamps!' AND REUBEN WENT IN THE DAYS OF WHEAT HARVEST, AND FOUND MANDRAKES IN THE FIELD . R. Isaac discoursed on the verse: How manifold are thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy creatures (Ps. CIV, 24). 'Who', he said, 'can count the works of the Almighty, inasmuch as there are hosts upon hosts, and legions upon legions of beings, each differing from the other, all existing simultaneously? For just as the one hammer-blow causes sparks to fly off in all directions, so God brought into being simultaneously manifold species and hosts, each differing from the other, without number. The world was brought into being by a word and a breath together, as it is written: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. XXXIII, 6). One is inoperative without the other, but from their combined action there came into being hosts upon hosts and legions upon legions, and all simultaneously. Now when God was about to create the world, He produced a secret spark from which there issued and radiated all the lights which are disclosed. First there spread from it those lights which constitute the upper world. Then it

continued its radiation, and the Artificer made it into a light without brightness, and thus He made the lower world. And by reason of its being a light, but without illumination, it feels itself attracted towards

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the upper world. Now it is that light without illumination which through its attachment to the upper world brought into being all those legions and hosts of existences, all the multitudinous species, of which it is written, "How manifold are thy works, etc." And whatever is on earth has its counterpart on high, there being no object, however small, in this world but what is subordinate to its counterpart above which has charge over it; and so whenever the thing below bestirs itself, there is a simultaneous stimulation of its counterpart above, as the two realms form one interconnected whole. This may be illustrated from the verse: GIVE ME, I PRAY THEE, OF THY SON'S MANDRAKES . It was not the mandrakes that made Rachel bear children, but God used them as an instrument for procuring the birth of a child, Issachar, who should hold fast to the Torah more than all the other tribes. For Rachel at first held fast to Jacob and did not let him go to Leah, as it is written: "Is it a small matter that thou hast taken away my husband?" But afterwards Rachel said: "Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes." Thus the mandrakes were responsible for the birth of Issachar, through whom the fragrance of the Torah ascended to the presence of the Almighty, in harmony with the words: "The mandrakes give forth fragrance" (S. S. VII, 14); and thus it is further written: AND HE LAY WITH HER THAT (HU) NIGHT , where the term hu (he) points assuredly to Him of the supernal world, which, as already explained, is hidden absolutely. For the Torah came forth from the upper world, which is everywhere pointed to by the vocable hu (He), indicating a realm undisclosed. Now Issachar took hold of the Torah, which is called the tree of life, meaning life of the upper world, which is called hu (he) and not attah (thou). It is clear that it was not the mandrakes that opened Rachel's womb, seeing that it is written "and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb"-God, and no other. For although the mandrakes are endowed with a certain power above, yet that power cannot influence the birth of children, inasmuch as children depend on fate (mazzal) and nothing else. However, the mandrakes also are a help to

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women who are slow in child-bearing but not barren, the latter being under the influence of mazzal.' AND LEAH WENT OUT TO MEET HIM, AND SAID: THOU MUST COME IN UNTO ME, ETC . This language appears on the surface to be immodest, but really it is a proof of Leah's modesty that she said nothing in the presence of her sister, but went out to meet Jacob, and there told him in a low tone that, though he properly belonged to Rachel, yet I HAVE SURELY HIRED THEE , and have obtained permission from Rachel; and in order that he might not become confused in the sight of Rachel, she spoke to him outside and not in the house. Moreover, one door of Leah's tent faced on the road, and she brought him in by that door before he

could enter into the tent of Rachel, so that she should not say anything in the presence of Rachel, which would have been immodest. She further reflected that should Jacob once enter Rachel's tent, it would not be right for her to make him leave it; she therefore intercepted him outside. Leah went to all this trouble because the Holy Spirit stirred within her, and she knew that all those holy tribes would issue from her; and she thus hastened the hour of union in her loving devotion to God, and under the same inspiration she called them by names with deep symbolical meanings.

As R. Hiya and R. Jose were once walking on the road, the latter said: 'Every time we walk together and discuss matters pertaining to the Torah, God performs for us miracles, and now that we have a long road before us let us occupy ourselves in the Torah and so God will join us.' R. Hiya then opened with the verse: In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread (Ex. XII, 18). 'This unleavened bread', he said, 'is called in another place "bread of affliction" (Deut. XVI, 3), an expression on which the companions have commented as follows. When Israel were in Egypt they were under an alien power; and when God desired to bring them near unto Himself, He assigned them the region of the bread of 'oni (affliction), the term 'oni admitting also of the reading 'ani (poor), and thus pointing to King David, who said of himself: "for I am poor ('ani) and needy" (Ps. LXXXVI, 1). Now this bread of affliction is called mazzah (unleavened bread), symbolic of the female principle, which without the male principle is, so to speak, in poverty. Thus Israel were first brought near the grade symbolised by mazzah. But afterwards God caused them to enter other grades, until the male principle joined the female principle, and so mazzah received the addition of the letter vau, symbolic of the male principle, and became converted into mizvah (command, precept). So Scripture says: "For this commandment" (Deut. XXX, 7): first mazzah (unleavened bread), then mizvah (commandment).'

Whilst they were going along they heard a voice saying: 'Ye tent-dwellers who take a crooked path, turn to the high ground and do not descend by the path leading downwards.' R. Jose said: 'This proves that God is guarding our way.' They then took the mountain path and ascended a hill that was situated between huge rocks, saying to themselves: 'Since God desires us to take this road, we are sure to see something of note, or experience some miracle.' They went on and sat down by a cleft in the rock, and were amazed to see a man suddenly emerge from it. 'Who art thou?' said R. Jose. 'I belong to the denizens of Arfa,' he answered. 'Are there human beings there?' they asked. 'Yes,' he answered, 'and they sow and reap. Some of them are of a strange appearance, different from my own; and the reason I ascended to you is to learn from you the name of the earth wherein ye dwell.' 'This earth', R. Jose replied, 'is called erez, namely, the erez (land) of life, of which it is written: "As for the earth (erez), out of it cometh bread" (Job XXVIII, 5), implying that only out of this earth cometh bread, but not out of any other, or if it does come, it is not bread of any of the seven kinds.' The man thereupon returned to his place, leaving them astonished. They said: 'Assuredly, God wishes to recall something to our minds through

this incident.' R. Hiya then said: 'Assuredly so. Now in regard to the verse you have just cited, I remember that my grandfather pointed out to me an excellent idea in connection with the unleavened bread, namely, that God first gave Israel that bread from the land of life and afterwards He gave them bread from heaven; and so we have affirmed. He further said that a

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man born into this world knows nothing until he tastes bread, and only then is there an awakening in him of intelligence and power of discernment. In the same way, when Israel left Egypt they were devoid of all knowledge until God made them taste bread of that earth called erez, of which it says: "As for the earth (erez), bread cometh of it" Then Israel began to know and to recognise God. God, however, desired that they should know also of that place which is the fitting counterpart of this earth, but they were not able to do so until they tasted bread from that place, to wit, heaven, as it says: "I will cause to rain bread from heaven for you" (Ex. XVI, 4). It was only then that they attained to a knowledge and a vision of that realm. ' R. Jose came up to R. Hiya and kissed him, saying: 'Assuredly this was the reflection of which God desired to remind us. We learn, then, that the preliminary to Israel's knowledge was bread.' They then arose and proceeded on their way. Whilst walking they noticed two Damascene plums, a male and a female, which led R. Jose to remark: 'There is no species which is not divided into male and female. Further, whatever being exists on dry land has its counterpart in the sea.'

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: AND JACOB CAME FROM THE FIELD IN THE EVENING, AND LEAH WENT OUT TO MEET HIM . 'According to tradition,' he said, 'she knew of his coming through the braying of an ass, and hence Scripture says: "Issachar is an ass large-boned" (Gen. XLIX, 14), where the word garem (large-boned) can also be read garam (he caused), signifying that the ass was a cause of his birth. Leah said to herself: I assuredly know that should Jacob once enter Rachel's tent I shall not be able to get him out again. I will therefore await him here so that he may enter my tent. FOR I HAVE SURELY HIRED THEE WITH MY SON'S MANDRAKES . She mentioned the mandrakes to Jacob, because she thought this would predispose him in her favour, on account of their efficacy for childbirth. Jacob, however, knew that it did not depend on the mandrakes but on heaven. By the words "for I have surely hired thee", Leah may have referred to the Torah, which Jacob embodied. Or she may have meant literally his own self, as much as to say:

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"I have hired thee so that I may bear thy very image." From here we learn that whoever studies diligently the Torah inherits the world to come and the inheritance of Jacob. For the name Issachar may be divided into the two words yesh sakher (there is a reward), found in the verse: "there is a reward to thy work" (Jer. XXXI, 16), and again: "There is (yesh) an inheritance for those that love me, and I will fill their treasures" (Prov. VIII, 21).' BECAUSE I HAVE BORNE HIM SIX SONS . R.

Hizkiah said: 'The six sons prefigured the upward and downward and the four directions of space, and the purpose of prolonging the word ehad (in reciting the Shema) is to acclaim God as King on high and below and in the four directions of the world, and so truly one.' R. Hizkiah further said: 'A distinction is to be drawn between "mountains of separation" (S. S. II, 17) and "mountains of spices" (Ibid. VIII, 14). The latter are typified by the six sons of Leah, who included within themselves the other six sons, thus constituting all the twelve, with Leah presiding, as it were, over them, in fulfilment of the passage: "the mother of the children is joyful. Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. CXIII, 9). It is therefore written "thou shalt not take the dam with the young" (Deut. XXII, 6), for the reason that she represents the undisclosed world, and hence: "thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself" (Ibid. 7), inasmuch as she symbolises the world that is absolutely concealed, while "the young thou mayest take unto thyself" in harmony with the verse: "For ask now of the days past, etc., and from the one end of heaven unto the other" (Ibid. IV, 22). Now, all these are called "mountains of spices", whereas all which is underneath is called "the mountains of separation", in allusion to the passage: "and from thence it was parted and became four heads" (Gen. II. 10).' R. Jesse said: 'The sons of the handmaids represented the four joints which were necessary for the perfecting of the whole.' R. Eleazar remarked: 'It was for that reason that these joints project outwards, despite the fact that they are all organic parts of the body, which otherwise is perfectly straight; and thus all the tribes ascend as a testimony on high, as Scripture says: "Whither the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, as a testimony unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord" (Ps. CXXII, 4).' R. Eleazar further cited the verse: AND IT CAME TO PASS WHEN RACHEL HAD BORNE JOSEPH, ETC . 'With the birth of Joseph, Jacob saw that the adversary of Esau had appeared, and he therefore made ready to depart. Observe further that Joseph gave, as it were, fixity to Jacob, corresponding to the Zaddik in whom the Body ends, and so he merited in particular to be called righteous. So when Jacob saw that the Body was made complete, his body conceived the desire to depart, the completion of the body being the sign of the covenant. But for all that it was Benjamin who completed the number of the twelve tribes. Why, then, it may be asked, did Jacob, knowing that the number of the tribes was not yet full, not wait for the birth of Benjamin to complete the number? The reason is that Jacob was guided by a further consideration. "It is clear", he said, "that if the number of the tribes will be completed here, then divine perfection will rest upon them in the appropriate manner; but in this land it is not desirable that they should attain perfection, but only in the Holy Land." The proof that all the twelve tribes together effect the full realisation of the lower world is to be seen in the fact that immediately Benjamin was born Rachel died, and this lower world fell into its proper place, and attained through them perfect realisation. Hence Benjamin had to be born in the Holy Land and not elsewhere. So Scripture says: "And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died unto me in the land of Canaan" (Gen. XLVIII, 7). Rachel thus died there, and her place was filled by this lower world, which assumed its rightful place in a completed House. But as long as



Rachel was alive the lower world could not be made perfected through them. If it is asked why Leah did not die at the same time, the answer is that the House was in the lower world, and from it all were to be brought to full self-realisation, but it was not in the upper world. This was the reason that Leah did not die at that time. Moreover, all that concerned Leah is kept under a veil, as she typified the upper world, which is veiled and undisclosed; and this is another reason why Leah's death is not divulged like that of Rachel. It is in accordance, too, with this difference between the upper and the lower worlds that Leah was buried away from sight in the cave of Machpelah; whereas Rachel was buried by the open road. Hence it is that all blessings are from two worlds, the disclosed and the undisclosed, though the whole originates from the upper world; [Note: The last 3 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

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and when we offer blessings to God we invariably associate Him with the two worlds in such words as: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from one world even unto the other world" (Ps. CVI, 48). It is for this reason that the upper world is named Hu (He), whereas the lower world is named Attah (Thou), because it is blessed from the upper world through the Righteous One. Thus Scripture says: "Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, who dwelleth in Jerusalem, etc." (Ps. CXXXV, 21): assuredly it is out of Zion that He is blessed. Observe that we similarly find the divine Name repeated twice in: "The Lord, the Lord... merciful and gracious" (Ex. XXIV, 6), alluding to the two worlds, the hidden and the revealed; and this explains the tonal pause between the two. But for all that, the one world and the other form together an absolute unity.' AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN RACHEL HAD BORNE JOSEPH, ETC. R. Judah said: 'Jacob, as a straightforward man, did not wish to leave save by the permission of Laban. In the end, it is true, he did depart without asking Laban's permission, but this was because he feared that Laban would not let him go, and in consequence the last of the twelve tribes would be born in an alien land. Hence, when he saw that the time had come for Benjamin to be born, he fled, as it is written: SO HE FLED WITH ALL THAT HE HAD. For as soon as Benjamin was born, the Shekinah attached herself to the company of the tribes and made her home with them. And Jacob, through his knowledge of the mystic symbolism, was aware that as soon as the twelve tribes should be complete the Shekinah would make them her adornment and attach herself to them, and that Rachel would die and the Shekinah would take possession of the House. Our tradition tells us that the lower world was assigned to Jacob in the same way as it was later to Moses, but this could not be accomplished until there were the full twelve tribes in the House to whom the Shekinah could attach herself. It was then that Rachel was removed, and the Shekinah took up her abode in the House with all the tribes, and became the foundation of the House. Assuredly, "He sets in her place the foundation of the House" (Ps. CXIII, 9). Jacob thus said: "The time has now arrived for the number of the twelve tribes to be completed, so that the upper world will be due to descend into the House to become attached to them,

and this poor woman (Rachel) will be thrust out to make room for it. Should she die here, I shall never be able to get away. Moreover, this is not the land where it is fitting that the House should be made complete." Hence AND IT CAME TO PASS, ETC. R. Simeon, on hearing all this exposition, said: 'Assuredly all R. Judah's expositions are excellent, but this excels them all. Jacob might indeed have departed at once, but he delayed until Rachel was pregnant with Benjamin. Then he fled without asking permission, so as not to linger there any more and so that his union with all the tribes might be effected in the fitting place.'

R. Abba said: 'We read of Moses that "he went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, etc." (Ex. IV, 18). Now Moses, who was the shepherd of Jethro's flock and lived with him as Jacob with Laban, when he wished to go away first obtained his permission; why, then, did not Jacob, being so upright a man, obtain permission from Laban before leaving him? The truth is, as tradition teaches us, that Jacob feared lest Laban might employ all sorts of devices to make him remain with him longer, as he had done at first. Moses, however, had nothing of the kind to fear from Jethro. Laban was a magician, and in all his dealings with Jacob used magical arts. But Jacob did not wish to remain there any longer, since God had said to him: "Return unto the land of thy fathers, etc." (Gen. XXXI, 3). Jacob thus did not wish to stay and transgress the command of his Master.'

R. Abba further discoursed on the verse: For the Leader; of the sons of Korah, upon Alamothe. A song (Ps. XLVI, 1). 'This verse,' he said, 'if properly considered, will be found to contain a deep mystical allusion. And, indeed, all the songs and hymns sung by the sons of Korah were ancient songs and hymns sung anew; and all the songs and hymns sung by David and his associates contain deep allusions of wisdom. Now God has made the lower world after the pattern of the upper world, and all the arrangements laid down by David and Solomon and by all the true prophets were

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after the supernal pattern. Observe that in the same manner as there are watches of the night on earth, so are there in heaven relays of angels who sing praises to their Master and intone hymns continually; they all stand ranged in rows, facing each other, and producing one harmony of song and praise. Thus the companions have interpreted the phrase "upon Alamothe. A song". The term "Alamothe", according to them, has a meaning similar to its homonym in the verse: "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and maidens ('alamoth) without number" (S. S. VI, 8), whilst the phrase "without number" finds its echo in the passage: "Is there any number in his armies?" (Job XXV, 3). Hence "maidens without number" all standing in rows upon rows, facing each other, to sing hymns and praises to their Master. These are called "the maidens of song" because there are other maidens who do not chant hymns like these. There are three orders (of singers) arrayed on each one of the four sides of the world, and each order again is subdivided into three sub-orders. The first order on the East contains thus three orders each with three sub-orders,

amounting altogether to nine, each of which comprises thousands and tens of thousands of angels. All these nine orders are guided by a signal of engraved letters to which they constantly look up. The same procedure is followed by the rest of the orders, all of whom are similarly guided by engraved letters. Furthermore, they are arrayed in a series of ranks one above the other, all of them chanting praises in unison; and when those letters soar high in the air the chief of them gives the command and a melodious chanting is raised. Then one letter flies up from the lower world, rising and descending, until two letters fly down to meet it; they then join together into a group of three, corresponding to the letters YHV, which are the three letters within the "illuminating mirror". The two supernal letters which rise aloft are intertwined the one within the other, expressing the union of mercy and severity. Hence they are two, and are of the upper world, symbolising the male principle. On the other hand, the one that ascended from below and joined them symbolises the female principle, and thus is embraced by the two, in the same way as the female is embraced by two arms, the right and the left, so that a unity is formed which is both male and female. For when the world was created it was the supernal letters that brought into being all the works of the lower world, literally after their own pattern. Hence, whoever has a knowledge of them and is observant of them is beloved both on high and below.' R. Simeon said: 'All these letters consist of male and female merging together into one union, symbolical of the upper waters and the lower waters, which also form one union. This is the type of perfect unity. Hence, whoever has a knowledge of them and is observant of them, happy is his portion in this world and in the world to come; as therein is contained the root principle of true and perfect unity. Now, the three orders on each side act in perfect unison, being truly symbolical of the supernal order. The second order on the South consists also of three orders each with three sub-orders, forming a total of nine, as said above. As for the letters, they are distributed on all the sides, so as to become united later, inasmuch as there are letters of the female principle and letters of the male principle, the two classes of which come together to form a unity symbolical of the mystery of the complete divine Name. The third order on the North also comprises three orders each with three sub-orders, amounting to nine. The total number of orders on all three sides thus amounts to twenty-seven,

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corresponding to the twenty-seven letters, inclusive of the five final letters. These twenty-seven letters distributed over the three sides consist of nine letters of the female principle which join and become united with the other eighteen letters, as has been explained, all being carried out in proper order. Observe that after the pattern of the supernal letters there are other letters here below, the upper letters being large ones and the lower letters small ones, but both of the same pattern. And they both contain the mystery of the male principle and the female principle, which together form a perfect unity.' AND GOD (Elohim) REMEMBERED RACHEL . The name Elohim is used here because Rachel was still dependent upon a "lucky star", and therefore also the term remembering (zakhar) is used here. Of Sarah,

however, it is written that "the Lord visited (paqad) her" (Gen. XXI, 1), because she did not depend on a lucky star, and so in her case all forces were combined. The reason why in her case the term "visiting" (paqad) is used, is that "remembering" had already preceded, and the key to child-birth had already been handed over, as it were, to the lower-world force, God having declared: "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this time, etc." (Ibid. XVII, 21). Since, then, Isaac had been "remembered" in the higher sphere, he now was noticed within the sphere of the female principle under the process of "visiting", so as to effect a unity of both forces. R. Hiya here discoursed on the verse: And moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant (Ex. VI, 5). 'The expression "remembering" is used here', he said, 'because it was a process taking place on high, above the starry course (mazal), and in virtue of the male principle, coming on top of the process of "visiting", which operates in exile, here below, in virtue of the female principle. In a similar sense it is written: "And God remembered Rachel", which has a meaning similar to that of the passage "and I remembered my covenant". Now, if we say that the term "visiting" is used only of the female principle (the Shekinah), we are met with a difficulty in the text: "I have surely visited you". For how could the Shekinah speak thus, seeing that she was herself in exile, and, in fact, how could she appear to Moses at all? But in truth there is a deep significance in this passage. For as the sun, although his centre is in heaven, yet spreads his power and might throughout the earth, so that the whole earth is full of his glory, so, as long as the Temple was in existence, the whole earth, to wit, the Holy Land, was full of God's glory; but now that Israel is in exile, the Shekinah is on high, but still her might surrounds Israel so as to shield them, even when they are in a strange land. For the Shekinah is both here below and on high. The Shekinah on high abides in the twelve holy chariots and the twelve supernal Hayyoth; the lower Shekinah is among the twelve holy tribes, and thus the upper Shekinah and the lower Shekinah are intertwined, and both operate together and simultaneously. Now, when Israel is in exile, the upper Shekinah is not complete because the lower Shekinah is not complete, and that is what is meant by the Shekinah being in exile when Israel is in exile. It is like a king who has lost a son, and who as a sign of his mourning turns over his couch and spreads thistles and thorns on its underside and then lays himself down on it. Similarly when Israel went into exile and the Temple was destroyed, God took thorns and thistles and put them underneath Him, as it were, as it is written: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn-bush" (Ex. III, 2), the reason being that Israel was in exile. It was now "visiting", as the "remembering" had taken place already, as it says: "And I remembered my covenant." First, then, there was a "remembering", which was now followed by a "visiting",

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the "visiting" completing the previous "remembering". Similarly with Sarah it says: "And the Lord visited Sarah." But here in the case of Rachel, since she had

not yet been “remembered” before, it does not say “visited” but “remembered”, a term concerned with luck or fate (mazzal).’

R. Judah and R. Hizkiah were once going from Cappadocia to Lydia, the former riding whilst the latter was on foot. R. Judah dismounted and said: ‘From now onward let us occupy ourselves with expositions of the Torah, in harmony with the injunction: “Ascribe ye greatness unto our God” (Deut. XXXII, 3).’ Said R. Hizkiah: ‘It is a pity we are not three, as then one could have expounded while the other two chimed in.’ R. Judah rejoined: ‘This only applies to the recital of benedictions, one mentioning the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the other two responding, in harmony with the verse: “When I proclaim the name of the Lord, ascribe ye greatness unto our God” (Ibid.); but in regard to the Torah, even two may sit together and praise the Almighty for the great boon of the Torah.’ R. Hizkiah then asked: ‘Why are three required for the recital of benedictions?’ His companion replied: ‘I have just explained, but in truth there is a mystic virtue in the number three for pronouncing the praises of the Almighty, as in this way the blessings are established through a supernal symbolism.’ Whilst they were proceeding on their way, R. Judah said: ‘We have learned that there is a remembering for good and a remembering for evil; a visiting for good and a visiting for evil. Examples of remembering for good are: “But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors” (Lev. XXVI, 45); “And God remembered Noah” (Gen. VIII, 1); “And God remembered his covenant” (Ex. II, 24). An example of remembering for evil is: “So he remembered that they were but flesh” (Ps. LXXVIII, 39). Visiting for good we find in: “I have surely visited you” (Ex. III, 16); visiting for evil we find in, “Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with strokes” (Ps. LXXXIX, 33). In all these verses there are mystic references. All those remembrances and visitations for good refer to grades of the true object of faith embracing male and female, the one under remembrance, the other under visiting, both being for good. Contrariwise, the remembrance and visitation for evil refer to the other side (sitra ahra), with allusions to strange gods, and similarly embracing male and female in one union: the one (male) under remembrance, the other (female) under visitation, both unceasingly intent on evil. There are thus two parallel and opposing influences. From the one there flows all the inspiration of true Faith and all supernal sanctifications; from the other flows whatever is evil, all kinds of death and all sorts and conditions of mischief in the world.’ R. Hizkiah said: ‘Assuredly it is so. Happy is he whose portion is firmly established on the good side, and who does not incline himself to the other side, but is delivered from them.’ Said R. Judah: ‘Assuredly it is so, and happy is he who is able to escape that side, and happy are those righteous who are able to wage war against that side.’ R. Hizkiah asked: ‘How?’ R. Judah, in reply, began to discourse on the verse: For by wise guidance thou shalt make thy war, etc. (Prov. XXIV, 6). ‘This war’, he said, ‘alludes to the war against the evil side, which man must combat and overcome, so as to be delivered from it. It was in this way that Jacob dealt with Esau, who was on the other side, so as to outwit him by craft, as was necessary in order to keep the upper hand of him from

the beginning to the end, as befitted. Moreover, the beginning and the end fitted into one another, the beginning being “my birthright” (bekhorathi), while the end concerned “my blessing” (birkhothi), so that the two victories were embodied in two vocables of similar sound. Happy thus is he who escapes them and obtains mastery over them. Observe, again, that remembrance and visitation for good go together in the true faith, and happy is he who strives after true faith in accordance with that which is written: “They shall walk after the Lord, who shall roar like a lion, etc.” (Hos. XI, 10).’ Said R. Hizkiah: ‘Assuredly it is so. Observe that when a man prays, he should not say: “O remember me and visit me”, since remembrance and visitation can be for evil as well as for

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good, and the evil forces are ready to take the word out of the mouth of the suppliant, and thus to make remembrance of the sins of that man and bring punishment on him. Unless, indeed, he be a perfectly righteous man, so that when search is made for his sins he will be unaffected. It was so with Nehemiah when he said: “Remember me, O my God, for good” (Nehem. XIII, 25). Again, when a man prays, it is best that he should merge himself in the general mass of the community. We may take example from the Shunammite and her answer to Elisha. It happened to be the day of the New-Year on which the heavenly Court sits in judgement over the world, and God is called King of Judgement, when Elisha spoke to her, and hence he asked her: “Wouldst thou be spoken for to the King?” (II Kings IV, 13). But she answered: “I dwell among mine own people” (Ibid.), as much as to say: “I have no desire to be marked out on high, but only to be counted among the multitude, and not to stand out apart from them.” It is thus requisite for a man to mingle himself among the mass and not to isolate himself, so that no special notice may be taken of his sins, as already explained.’

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Have the gates of death been revealed to thee? Or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of death? (Job. XXXVIII, 17). ‘God’, he said, ‘addressed these words to Job when He saw him perplexed by the problem of divine justice. Job had said: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him (lo) (Ibid. XIII, 15). The word lo is written with an aleph, meaning “not”, and is read as with a vau, meaning “in Him”. God said in reply to him: “Am I the one that kills the sons of men? Have the gates of death been revealed to thee? And seest thou the gates of the shadows of death? There are ever so many gates open on that side, over which death ruleth, hidden away from the sons of men, who know them not.” There are here mentioned both “death” and “the shadow of death”. These are a pair, the one being the angel of death, the other his rider, [Tr. note: The grade Geburah.] who also is his protecting shadow and strength, the two being linked together and forming but one being. All the grades that issue from them and are attached to them form their “gates”. Corresponding to the gates on high, of which it is written: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, etc.” (Ps. XXIV, 7), and which are called rivers and brooks flowing through the six directions of the world, there are these gates of death and the shadow of

death emanating from the other side, forming certain grades that rule over the world. The “gates of death” and the “gates of the shadow of death” are female and male combined into one. Hence, in answer to Job's complaints: “As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more” (Job VII, 8), and so forth, God said to him: “Are those gates revealed unto thee as being all in my power, and destined one day to be destroyed from off the world, as it is written: ‘He shall swallow up death for ever’? (Is. XXV, 8.)” ‘ AND GOD (Elohim) REMEMBERED RACHEL, AND GOD (Elohim) HEARKENED UNTO HER AND OPENED HER WOMB . The name Elohim (God) is mentioned here twice, once to represent the male world and the other the female world, the two having been necessary, since the birth of children depends on fate (mazzal). Now when Rachel was moved to name her son Joseph, saying, “The Lord add to me another son”, Jacob knew that it was she that was destined to complete the number of the tribes, whilst she herself would not survive; hence he desired immediately to leave, but he could not carry out his wish. When, however, Benjamin was about to be born, Jacob fled and departed thence, so that the House should not be made complete and the world of holiness become bound up with it in a strange land. So Scripture says: “And the Lord said unto Jacob: Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee” (Gen. XXXI, 3). God, in effect, said to him: “Until now Rachel was with thee, being the basis of the House; henceforward I will be with thee and will carry on the House with thee in its complement of the twelve tribes”. The same idea is implied in the verse: “And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died unto me (‘alai, lit. upon me”) (Gen. XLVIII, 7). By the word ‘alai (on me) Jacob meant to say, “it was on account of me and through me that she was thrust out and another one came and took over the house so as to inhabit it with me”. AND HE SAID: APPOINT (naqebah) ME THE WAGES, AND I WILL GIVE IT . R. Isaac said: The term naqebah (appoint, akin to neqebah=female) signifies that the wicked Laban said to himself, “I see that Jacob has an eye only for females,

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for the sake of whom he will serve me.” He therefore said in effect: “Behold, a female shall be thy wage as before; tell me on what female thou hast cast thine eyes, and I will give her to thee in return for thy service.” AND JACOB SAID: THOU SHALT NOT GIVE ME AUGHT . Jacob practically said: “Far be it from me! For in all my acts I am zealous for the glory of the Holy King, and hence thou shalt not give me aught, as my mind is not set on that, but if thou wilt do this thing for me, etc.” ‘ AND HE REMOVED THAT DAY THE HE-GOATS . R. Eleazar quoted here the verse: Lord, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle.... He that walketh in perfection, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart (Ps. XV, 1-2). ‘ “He that walketh in perfection”,’ he said, ‘refers to Abraham, who, after he had circumcised himself, was called “perfect”; “and worketh righteousness” refers to Isaac; “and speaketh the truth” refers to Jacob, who indeed attached himself to the truth. If that is so, why then did he act towards Laban in this way? The reason is that Jacob wanted to

see if the hour was propitious for him, for it is permissible for a man to test his luck before returning to his land. If he finds fortune favourable, well and good; but if not, let him not stir before his luck is in again. It is written: SO SHALL MY RIGHTEOUSNESS WITNESS AGAINST ME HEREAFTER, ETC ., for he did not attempt to obtain from Laban anything for nothing, but he acted throughout honestly and uprightly, and, moreover, he asked Laban for permission to depart. Hence Laban himself said: I HAVE OBSERVED THE SIGNS, AND THE LORD HATH BLESSED ME FOR THY SAKE . For Laban tested Jacob by all manner of divinations, and found that he brought him luck; through Jacob he obtained each month a hundred sheep and a hundred lambs and a hundred he-goats more than his flock was wont to produce.’ R. Abba said: ‘Jacob brought him in a thousand sheep and a thousand lambs and a thousand he-goats extra every month. This is proved by the verse: FOR IT WAS LITTLE WHICH THOU HADST BEFORE I CAME, AND IT HATH INCREASED ABUNDANTLY: AND THE LORD HATH BLESSED THEE FOR MY SAKE . For a blessing from on high never results in less than a thousand of each kind. So that there was a surplus of a thousand in Laban's ewes, and the same in his lambs, and in his goats, until he acquired great wealth, and all through Jacob. But when Jacob came for his recompense, he only obtained ten of each kind, and even this he considered great riches. What a small part then did he take for himself of all that he contributed for the benefit of Laban, and even that he had to force from him, as it were, by means of the rods which he placed against the flock. Observe how Jacob in his simplicity did everything possible to satisfy Laban, and while bringing him all this wealth, he only asked for the spotted and speckled. But for all that Laban consented to this, he would not in the end let him have them, but he took ten of each kind and sent them to him through his sons, saying: “Take these, and whatever they will bear of the sort you said shall be yours.” It is thus written: “And your father hath deceived me” (Gen. XXX, 7), and also, “and thou hast changed my wages ten times” (Ibid. 41), the term monim (times, akin to minim--kinds) indicating ten of each kind. So whatever agreement Laban made with Jacob, he went back on his word and took from him everything, until God had compassion on him, so that he wrested what was his own from him by force, as it were.’ R. Eleazar remarked that all these verses contain deep lessons, based on what we have learned from tradition, to wit, that some blessings from above are obtained by action, some by speech, and others by devotion. So that whoever wishes to draw down to himself blessings must exercise prayer, which consists of speech and devotion; yet there are blessings that cannot be obtained by prayer, but only by action.

Observe that Jacob, the simple man, acted throughout with wisdom. AND HE SET THE RODS — we read— WHICH HE HAD PEELED OVER AGAINST THE FLOCKS IN THE GUTTERS IN THE WATERING TROUGHS . This was all done with esoteric wisdom so as to draw benedictions from the chief well-spring that waters all the supernal grades which were his lot and portion. The rods were symbolic of the grades embodying judgement, which he had “peeled”, that is, the severity of which he had mollified. “In the gutters”

(rehatim) finds its echo in the passage: "The king is bound to the gutters (rehatim)" (S. S. VII, 5),

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indicating that the supernal King is tied and bound to those supernal aqueducts whence flow benedictions for all, "Flowing in the watering troughs"; to wit, in the rivers and brooks that flow on until they reach their final reservoir. Again, "where the flocks came to drink" is parallel with the verse: "They give drink to every animal of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst" (Ps. CIV, 11), both alluding to the reservoir, the gathering place of all the waters whereto all resort to drink. "And they were heated" (vayehannah). When the north wind blows, the waters become frozen, they stop flowing, so that no one comes to drink of them. This is the time when judgement impends over the world, and the cold of the North freezes the waters. But when the south wind arises, the waters become warmer, and, the ice being melted, flow on their way, and all come to drink of them; for the southern warmth having caused the waters to thaw, all come to drink with relish the waters after they have been freed from the icy grip of the North. Thus all that Jacob did contained a deep symbolic purpose. Further it is written: AND JACOB TOOK RODS OF FRESH POPLAR, ETC. R. Eleazar discoursed here on the verse: For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself and Israel for his own treasure (Ps. CXXXV, 4). 'From the actual words of the original', he said, 'we could not tell whether it was the Lord who chose Jacob or vice-versa. That the former is meant we know from the parallel verse which says: "For the portion of the Lord is his people, Jacob the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. XXXII, 9). Nevertheless, it is also true that Jacob on his part, too, has chosen his heritage and his portion, and, rising above all intermediate grades, has taken for his lot "rods of fresh poplar" (libneh= white), symbolic of the white grade of the Right side, and "of the almond and of the plane-tree", symbolic of the red grade of the Left side; "and peeled with streaks in them", signifying that he removed severity from the Left, and linked the Left with the Right, while he entered between and laid hold of both of them together, so that there resulted one united blend of two colours, but at the same time "making the white appear", i.e. predominate over the red. Why all this? So as to draw to the grade which was his own portion blessings from the universal well-spring, and to place that grade, which is the third, "in the gutters in the watering-troughs", as has been already explained. Now from these operations of Wisdom blessings flow to the lower world, and all worlds are watered and beatified, as it says: "In the morning he devoureth the prey" (Gen. XLIX, 27), and after that: "and at even he divideth the spoil" (Ibid.), so that the blessings pass

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to all the lower worlds. Jacob, too, took his portion of those blessings that rested upon him in this world, inasmuch as he is the portion and lot of the Holy One, blessed be He.'

R. Jesse the Younger was a frequent visitor at the school of R. Simeon. Referring one day to the verse: "Blessings are upon the head of the righteous" (Prov.

X, 6), he asked: 'Why does it say "upon the head of the righteous", and not simply "upon the righteous"?' R. Simeon in answer said: 'This is an allusion to the Holy Crown, as has been explained elsewhere. Or again, the "head of the righteous" can be an allusion to Jacob, who received the blessings and transmitted them to the Righteous One, from whom they were diffused to all sides, so that all worlds were blessed. We have, however, affirmed that "Righteous" is the name given to the place of the covenant whence there issue fountains abroad, and just as the aperture of a wine cask through which the wine is drawn is called the top or head of the cask, so is this spot called "the head of righteous", when it wells forth into the female. Furthermore, whoever succeeds in keeping unsullied the sign of the holy covenant, and observes the precepts of the Torah, is called righteous, and is so called from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; and when blessings flow into the world they rest upon his head, from whence they are diffused throughout the world, through the medium of the holy and worthy sons whom he brings up.' R. Jesse further cited the verse, I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken (Ps. XXXVII, 25). 'These words,' he said, 'according to our teaching, were uttered by the Chieftain of the world, who concentrated in them more wisdom than most people would think.' R. Simeon said to him: 'My son, that is quite true, as it deals with the subject of holy union. It is a laudation of this unity, in which day is never found without night, for night is ever found in day. Now the Righteous One holds fast to the upper world and also to the lower world. As for the words "nor his seed begging bread", the meaning is that when the seed flows forward, he does not court the Female, since she abides with him and never parts from him, and hence is ever in a state of readiness for him. For the seed does not flow save when the Female is present,

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and their mutual desires are blended into one indissoluble ecstasy. Hence he has no need to ask for consent.' R. Jesse remarked: 'This surely is not the case during the time of exile.' R. Simeon rejoined: 'As regards the seed it is, since it is written "his seed" but not he himself; that is, the outpouring of the blessings only occurs when there is close union of the female with the male. It may be asked then, does the assertion, "and I have not seen a righteous forsaken" apply to the time of exile? The truth is that the Righteous One is always closely bound to the upper world and so far is never abandoned. Thus at one time, that is, at the time of exile, the Righteous One is not forsaken from the side of the upper world, to which he holds fast, whilst at another time he is not forsaken from the two sides, holding fast to both, the upper and the lower worlds, so that in fact he is never forsaken.'

This Zaddik is also called "the firmament of the heaven" (Gen. I, 17). For there are two similar firmaments, one at the beginning and one at the end of the series of eight. The top one is the eighth firmament, the one in which there are set all the lesser and the greater stars. It is the undisclosed upper firmament which upholds the totality of things and from which all existence flows. This is the eighth firmament counting

from below, and is thus the top one and the starting-point from which all things receive their existence. Correspondingly there is an eighth firmament counting from above, in which also are set all stars and lights and lamps. This firmament supports the whole and forms the end of the whole. Thus the top firmament and the end firmament are of the same pattern, forming together the river that flows on perennially so that the end is already enclosed in the beginning. Hence it says: "And God set them in the firmament of heaven." For what purpose? "To give light upon the earth." There is, however, a difference between the two firmaments, for while the upper one sustains and nourishes the upper world in which it is set and all those upper sides, the lower firmament sustains and nurtures the lower world and all those lower sides. It may be asked, what is meant here by the "upper world", seeing that the upper eighth firmament, which is hidden and undiscoverable, is itself the upper world and is so called? But the truth is that while it itself forms the upper world proper, all those that emanate from it are also designated by that name. It is the same with those that emanate from the lower world, they also being designated by its name. Yet all of them form one unity. Blessed be He for ever and ever! It is written: The trees of the Lord have their fill, the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted; Wherein the birds make their nests; as for the stork (hasidah), the fir trees are her house (Ps. CIV, 16-17). The allusion of Lebanon has been explained already elsewhere. The birds also are the two referred to in many places

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as those from which there emerge hosts of other birds. They themselves, however, are superior, as emanating from Lebanon, which is in the supernal realm. They are hinted at in the words "Laban had two daughters". The "fir-trees" are the six supernal sons, symbolic of the six directions of the world, as already explained elsewhere. In them "the stork has made her house". Why is it called here by the feminine form hasidah (stork, lit. filled with mercy)? The truth is that this upper world is really of the female principle, but we usually give it a masculine name (hesed), inasmuch as in its unfolding it is the source whence all beneficence and all light come forth. And thus, as it is hasidah, there springs from it hesed (mercy), which is the primordial light referred to in the statement: "And God said, Let there be light" (Gen. I, 3). It is thus that region of which it says: "fir-trees are her house", where the word beroshim (fir-trees) may be read berashim (at the heads, or head), signifying that there is another world (Geburah) which has its habitation below and constitutes the Court of Justice of this world. It is to this that we can refer such expressions as: "And it repented the Lord... and it grieved him at his heart" (Ibid. v, 6), or "the fierce anger of the Lord", for in the realms above there resides only light spreading life all around. Hence the dictum: "there is no grief in the presence of God". Hence, too, it is written: "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing" (Ps. C, 2), the word "Lord" alluding to the upper world, and the word "presence" to the lower world. Happy are Israel in this world and in the world to come. So Scripture says: "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee? A people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and that is the sword of thy

excellency! etc." (Deut. XXXIII, 29). AND HE SET THE RODS WHICH HE PEELED IN THE GUTTERS, ETC . Said R. Eleazar: "There are sinners who either neglect altogether the words of the Torah, or if they do cast an eye on them, think them mere foolishness. But in truth the foolishness is in their own minds, since all the words of the Torah are sublime and precious, and of every word it is written: "She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared with her" (Prov. III, 15). Woe to all these foolish and senseless people, when the Holy One, blessed be He, will demand an account from them for the insult done to the Torah and they will be punished for having rebelled against their Master. So Scripture says: "For it is no empty thing for you" (Deut. XXXII, 47), implying that if it is an empty thing, its emptiness is from you yourselves, seeing that all the things one can desire are not to be compared with her. How can they say that the Torah is an empty thing seeing that Solomon said: ' ' If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself" (Prov. IX, 12), implying that whoever becomes wise in the Torah benefits himself thereby? Thus the Torah is filled with all riches and no one can add thereto even one letter. "But if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it" (Ibid.), since the worth of the Torah will be in no wise diminished thereby, and the scorning will only recoil on the head of the scorner so as to cause him to perish in this world and in the world to come. Observe now. When the supernal letters are joined together and attach themselves to that grade which is the last of all the supernal holy grades, and it becomes filled from them and enriched with blessings from the upper world, this same grade is in readiness to "water all the flocks" according to their requirements, each one being watered both with judgement and mercy. Now Jacob desired to institute evening prayer and so restore the light of the moon and water her and enrich her with blessings on all sides. Hence it is written, "And he set the rods, etc." These rods signify severity and force, which issue from the supernal Geburah. So Jacob, in his desire to put himself right with that grade, "set the rods", that is, he removed all the influences of severity and force symbolised by the rods, and "placed them in the gutters", to wit, those four gutters [Tr. note: i.e. the four Hayyoth, v. Ezek. 1, 5.] that stand underneath "the well, which the princes digged" (Num. XXI, 18), the well which was filled from those supernal rivers and fountains; for when water comes forth out of that sacred well, these four receive the whole of it, they being called gutters (rehatim=swift runners) for that reason, and to that source

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they all come to drink, taking of those implements of severity and force what is fitting for each. So it says: "over against the flocks". Further it is written, "and they conceived" (lit. grew hot); that is to say, when they are invested with power to punish, they become heated thereby, and then they set out to roam to and fro in the world and closely inspect the ways of men, whether for good or for evil. Further we read: "And the flocks became heated at the sight of the rods", inasmuch as these rods become hot and take charge of the judgements to be meted out to the world, and the sons of men receive their punishments through them, as we read: "The sentence is by the decree of the angels, and

the decision by the word of the holy ones" (Dan. IV, 14).'

R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: My soul cleaveth unto thee; thy right hand holdeth me fast (Ps. LXIII, 9). 'King David', he said, 'could speak thus because his soul ever clave to God, and he had no care for worldly matters, and therefore God supported him and never let him go; and so it is with every man who cleaves to God. Or again, David may have meant these words as a prayer that his grade should be crowned in the supernal realm, for when that grade clings to the supernal grades to ascend after them, then the right hand of God lays hold of it, raises it, and unites it to itself, as we read: "And thy right hand would hold me" (Ps. CXXXIX, 10), also: "And his right hand should embrace me" (S. S. VIII, 3). Hence David's words: "Thy right hand holdeth me fast." Of him who does hold fast to the Holy One, blessed be He, it is written: "His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me" (Ibid.), an expression indicative of perfect attachment and union.'

When the water pours into those gutters, they are filled on all four sides, so that all the flocks can be watered each from its proper side. Now when Jacob essayed to perfect his grade, he chose for himself the right side which befitted him, and allowed the left side which did not befit him to part from him, as it is written: "and he put his own droves apart, and put them not unto Laban's flocks". "Apart", that is, by himself, so that he should not avail himself of alien idols of the other sides. Happy the portion of Israel of whom it is written: "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee, etc." (Deut. XIV, 2). Now Jacob was the crown of the patriarchs and their epitome, summing them all up within himself, and he therefore set about to restore the light of the moon, as well as to institute the evening prayer; and all this work was well becoming him, as thereby he perfected all those sides of holiness which belonged to his side, and separated his portion from the portion of the other nations. The former are the supernal sides, sanctified with the supernal sanctities, whilst the latter are utterly defiled and unclean. So that Jacob, as already explained, "put his own droves apart"; that is, he prepared himself for the adoption of a faith which should keep him apart, as it is written: "and the Lord hath chosen thee to be his own treasure out of all peoples" (Deut. XIV, 2); "and put them not unto Laban's flock", that is, he did not place his portion and lot with them. Jacob thus, being the perfection of the patriarchs, established the true faith, and separated his own portion and lot from that of other peoples. To such an action could be applied the words: "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day" (Ibid. IV, 4). Said R. Abba: 'Happy is the portion of Israel, who are exalted above the idolatrous nations, in virtue of their grade being above on high, whereas the grade of the idolatrous people is down below. The former are of the side of holiness, the latter of the side of uncleanness; they are on the right, the others on the left. But when the Temple was destroyed, then it could be said, "He hath drawn back his right hand" (Lam. II, 3), wherefore also it is written: "Save me with thy right hand and answer me" (Ps. LX, 7); and the left side has since been gathering force and

uncleanness, and will continue to do so until God shall rebuild the Temple and establish the world on its right foundation, and the right order shall be restored, and the side of uncleanness shall pass out of the world, as it says: "and I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" (Zech. XIII, 2),

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also: "He will swallow up death for ever" (Is. XXV, 8). God will then remain alone, as it is written: "And the idols shall utterly pass away" (Ibid. II, 18), also: "and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Ibid. 17). He alone, then, will be left, as it is written: "And there was no strange God with him" (Deut. XXXII, 12), the unclean host being then extirpated from the world, so that both in the upper world and in the lower world there will be no other left save God alone, with Israel, the holy people, worshipping Him. For Israel will then be designated holy, as it is written: "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written unto life in Jerusalem" (Is. IV, 3). There will thus be one and only one King on high and below, and one and only one people to worship Him, as it is written: "And who is like thy people Israel, a nation one in the earth...?" (I Chron. XVII, 21).'

R. Isaac and R. Jesse were once walking together on the road. Said R. Jesse: 'Behold, the Shekinah is near us. Let us therefore engage in an exposition of the Torah, since whoso occupies himself with the Torah draws Her nearer to himself.' R. Isaac then began a discourse on the verse: The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation (Ps. XVIII, 47). 'This verse', he said, 'has a recondite meaning We know that God is called "the living one". But this verse indicates that the perfectly righteous man also is called "living one", so that there is a righteous living one on high, and correspondingly a righteous living one here on earth. On high it is God who is called "living one", and here below it is the righteous man who is called "living one", as it is written: "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a living man"[Tr. note: According to the K'tib.] (II Sam. XXIII, 20). He was so called because he was a righteous man, and the righteous man is called "living one". The words "blessed by my Rock" have the same reference, since the Living One and the Blessed One are never parted, and when united are called "well of living waters"; the one flows in, and the other is filled therewith. "And exalted be the God of my salvation"; this indicates the supernal world, which is high and exalted over all, inasmuch as from it everything springs, even all the outpouring by which the well is filled, receiving therefrom blessings to spread light among all the dwellers of the lower world. And when the whole is filled properly, then "exalted will be the Rock of salvation".' R. Jesse then discoursed on the verse: He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous; but with kings upon the throne he setteth them for ever, and they are exalted (Job XXXVI, 7). 'When', he said, 'the domination of the wicked ceases and they perish from the world, then the righteous obtain dominion, as it says: "He preserveth not the life of the wicked, but giveth to the poor their right" (Ibid. 6). The words, "He withdraweth not from the righteous his eye" are parallel

to the text, "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous" (Ps. XXXIV, 16). "But with kings upon the throne"; these are the kings who are, as it were, united to their thrones, and whom He setteth for ever so that they remain immovably established. "And they are exalted", to wit, to rule over the world so that the throne remains firmly established on its supports. Or, again, it may mean that they raise the throne and set it up on high so that it should become united to its proper place and there should thus be a complete unity.'

Whilst they were proceeding on their way they caught sight of a man coming towards them, with a child riding on his shoulders. Said R. Isaac: 'This man is without doubt a Judean, and he wants to give people a chance to do a good action.' Said R. Jesse: 'Let us be the first to take advantage of the opportunity.' When he came up to them, R. Jesse asked him: 'Whereto is the saffron pot set on the path?' The man replied: 'So as to afford people an opportunity of doing a pious action; for I have two sons who were taken captive by a brigand who passed through my native town, and now I am on the road in order to afford people the opportunity of doing a good action.' The two thereupon availed themselves of the occasion and gave him food to eat. The Judean then began a discourse on the verse: My food which is presented unto me for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in due season (Num. XXVIII, 2). 'The offering brought unto the Holy One, blessed be He, every day,' he said, 'was for the purpose of feeding the world and providing sustenance both for the upper world and the lower world, inasmuch as the upper world moves in response to the lower world, with the result that every one is supplied according to his due. The words, "My food which is presented to me as an offering", are paralleled by the verse, "I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk" (S. S. V, 1); and "made by fire" by the words: "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved" (Ibid.). Now, if God assigns food above in order that therefrom food may be dispensed below, with how much more reason must he who offers food for the preservation of a soul be rewarded, in that God will bless him and direct to him sustenance from on high, so that the world will receive blessings for his sake!' R. Isaac remarked: 'Assuredly this is the inner meaning of the verse.' R. Jesse said: 'This incident assuredly bears out the admonition of the Sages that no man should ever treat slightly another man, for this man has occasioned us a double privilege.'

The stranger then continued his discourse on the above verse, but in the name of

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R. Eleazar. 'The accusative particle "eth" here,' he said, 'alludes to the Community of Israel; the "offering" is a connecting link (between high and low); "my food" is an allusion to the food that descends from on high in response to the stirring here below; "as a fire offering" includes all the other hosts which receive their necessary sustenance each one in proper measure; "of a sweet savour unto me" signifies the uniting of the whole in one bond of unity and good will so as to form an emblem of the upper world; "shall ye observe to

offer unto me in due season" alludes to the time when Abraham bestirred himself to do the will of God, regarding which it is written: "And Abraham rose early in the morning" (Gen. XXII, 3), and also to the time when Isaac was bound on the altar, which was at eventide.' Said R. Jesse: 'In that case, we should rather have expected the plural "seasons".' The Judean in reply said: 'At the time of the sacrifice, fire and water are intermingled and become one, and hence it says "season" and not "seasons". The expression "ye shall observe to offer unto me" is used in connection with this offering only, the reason being that this offering ascends to the highest grade in an intermingling of the Right and the Left, symbolised by Abraham and Isaac.' Said R. Jesse: 'If only to hear this, it was worth our while coming here. Happy are Israel in this world and in the world to come! In regard to this it is written: "Thy people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, wherein I glory" (Is. LX, 21).' NOW LABAN WAS GONE TO SHEAR HIS SHEEP, ETC . R. Jose said: 'The teraphim were idols, so called out of contempt, the name being akin to the word toreph (obscenity). The proof that they were idols is found in Laban's question: "Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" as well as in Jacob's words: "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, etc." For Laban was a great sorcerer who practised all kinds of magical arts, and it was by such means that he learnt all that he wished to know.' R. Hiya said that the powers of the idol were derived from wizardry; R. Jose, from divination. R. Judah said: 'They were derived from a close observance of the times and moments for striking and for holding off. At one moment the craftsman would use his hand to beat it into shape, and another he would relax. Hence the term teraphim, akin to hereph (relax) (II Sam. XXIV, 16). For when the craftsman was making it, the man who knew the proper seconds and hours stood over him, saying now "strike", and now "stay". There is no other work which requires to be timed in this way. Now, this magic idol was continually uttering evil counsel, and prompting to mischief. Rachel thus feared lest it should counsel her father to do mischief to Jacob, and by reason of her contempt for the idol she placed it underneath her, so that it was not able to speak; for whenever it was consulted they used to sweep and clean up before it. The teraphim were a male and a female image, and a number of ceremonies had to be performed before them before they would speak. Hence Laban delayed three days before pursuing, as he was unaware of Jacob's flight, as it says: AND IT WAS TOLD LABAN ON THE THIRD DAY THAT JACOB WAS FLED .' R. Judah further said: 'Laban prepared himself in two ways: he equipped himself with all his magical arts and also with ordinary weapons in order to destroy Jacob, as it is written: "An Aramean was going to destroy my father" (Deut. XXVI, 5). So when God saw that he intended to destroy Jacob, He warned him, saying: TAKE HEED TO THYSELF THAT THOU SPEAK NOT TO JACOB EITHER GOOD OR BAD . This is borne out by Laban's words: IT IS IN THE POWER OF MY HAND TO DO YOU HURT, to wit, through his magical arts. Observe that Laban covered in one day a distance that took Jacob seven days, and all in order to destroy him utterly; first because he had fled, and secondly for the loss of the teraphim. Now, as regards Rachel, although her purpose was to wean her father



from idolatry, yet she was punished by not surviving to bring up Benjamin or even to live with him a single hour; and all on account of the pain she caused her father, notwithstanding her good intention.' R. Isaac said: 'All this reproof which Jacob administered to Laban served to make him acknowledge the Holy One, blessed be He, as is proved from Laban's words: SEE, GOD IS WITNESS BETWIXT ME AND THEE. But observe that it is further written: THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF NAHOR... JUDGE BETWIXT US . This indicates that, sinner as he was, he reverted to his former idolatrous worship, for after invoking the God of Abraham, he immediately added "the God of Nahor".'

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AND JACOB SWORE BY THE FEAR OF HIS FATHER ISAAC . Why by "the fear of Isaac" and not by the God of Abraham? Because he did not wish to trouble, as it were, the right-hand grade for the sake of Laban; furthermore, it is not right for a man to swear, even a true oath, by the most high realm. R. Jose said: 'Truly, Jacob's oath was most appropriate to the occasion. For he said to himself: "Behold, he has invoked the God of Abraham, but left out the name of my father; let me therefore make up the deficiency." Hence he swore by the "fear of his father Isaac". Another explanation is that Jacob desired to bring the grade of severity on to his side to assist him against Laban.' AND JACOB WENT ON HIS WAY, AND THE ANGELS OF GOD MET HIM . R. Abba discoursed on the verse: Male and female created he them, etc. (Gen. V, 2). 'How incumbent it is upon us', he said, 'to study intently the words of the Torah! Woe to those whose heart is obdurate and whose eyes are blinded! Behold, the Torah is calling unto them, saying: "Whoso is thoughtless, let him turn in hither; as for him that lacketh understanding, she saith to him: Come, eat, of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled" (Prov. IX, 4-5). But there is no one to pay attention to her. Observe that this verse contains sublime mysteries, it has an inner and an outer meaning. Thus, one meaning is that the sun and moon are closely united, as is implied in the passage: "The sun and the moon stand still in her habitation" (Hab. III, 11); and another is that Adam and Eve were created as a united pair; and since they were coupled together, God blessed them. For blessing does not reside save in a spot where there are male and female. Observe that when Jacob set out on his journey to Haran he was all by himself, not yet having married. What does Scripture say of that occasion? "And he lighted upon (vayifga'=entreated) the place, etc." (Gen. XXVIII, 11), and he was only promised deliverance in a dream. But now that he was married and was coming with all the tribes, heavenly legions entreated and supplicated him, as it were, for we read: "And the angels of God met (vayifge'u=entreated) him." Whereas before it was he who entreated the "place", now it was they who entreated him, for the reason that it was for the sake of Jacob and the tribes that they were watered from the great sea. Moreover, whereas before he saw them only in a dream of the night, now he saw with open eyes and in full daylight, as it is written: AND JACOB SAID WHEN HE SAW THEM: THIS IS GOD'S CAMP, ETC.

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How, it may be asked, did he recognise them? The answer is that they were the same angels whom he had seen in his dream. Hence he called them Mahaneum (two camps), indicating the camp which had appeared to him on high and the camp which appeared now below. Why did they appear unto him to entreat him? Because the Shekinah accompanied him in order to bear along his household, and she was also awaiting the birth of Benjamin so as to make her home with Jacob as pre-ordained. It is in allusion to this that Scripture says: "And Jacob shall again be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid" (Jer. XXX, 10). Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen!

### VAYISHLAH

AND JACOB SENT MESSENGERS (lit. angels), ETC . R. Judah discoursed on the text: For he will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways (Ps. XCI, 11). 'According to the companions,' he said, 'the moment a child is born into the world, the evil prompter straightway attaches himself to him, and thenceforth brings accusations against him, as it says, "sin coucheth at the door" (Gen. IV, 7), the term "sin" being a designation of the evil prompter, who was also called sin by King David in the verse: "and my sin is ever before me" (Ps. LI, 5). He is so called because he makes man every day to sin before his Master, never leaving him from the day of his birth till the end of his life. But the good prompter first comes to man only on the day that he begins to purify himself, to wit, when he reaches the age of thirteen years. From that time the youth finds himself attended by two companions, one on his right and the other on his left, the former being the good prompter, the latter the evil prompter. These are two veritable angels appointed to keep man company continually. Now when a man tries to be virtuous, the evil prompter bows to him, the right gains dominion over the left, and the two together join hands to guard the man in all his ways; hence it is written: "For he will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."'

R. Eleazar applied this verse to Jacob when God assigned to him companies of angels as an escort because he came with the full number of tribes, forming with them a godly company. Hence it says: "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him" (Gen. XXXII, 2), as already explained. Here, therefore, when he was delivered from the hands of Laban and dissociated himself from him, the Shekinah joined him, and sacred camps came to encircle him, so that

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"Jacob said when he saw them, etc." (Ibid. 3). It was from these angels that he sent a mission to Esau, as it says: "And Jacob sent angels" (mal'akhim).' R. Isaac said: 'Why, in one place in the Psalms does it say "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them" (Ps. XXXIV, 8), in the singular, and in another place, "For he will give his angels charge over thee" (Ibid. XCI, 11), in the plural? The reason is that the term "angels" is a reference to angels proper, whereas in the verse: "The angel of the

Lord encampeth”, the reference is to the Shekinah, as in the verse: “And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush” (Ex. III, 2). Thus “the angel of the Lord encampeth round about those who fear him” to deliver them; and when the Shekinah abides within a man, ever so many holy legions rally round him. David uttered this verse when he escaped from Achish the king of Gath, because the Shekinah encompassed him and delivered him from Achish and his people, and all those who assailed him. It is written in the same connection: “And he feigned himself mad (vayitholel) in their hands” (I Sam. XXI, 14). The term vayitholel here, in place of the more usual vayishtagea’, contains an allusion to the kindred term used formerly by David when he said: “For I was envious of the madmen (holelim)” (Ps. LXXIII, 3). God thus said in effect to David: “As thou livest, since thou enviest madmen, thou thyself wilt yet be driven to play the madman”; and so it came to pass when he was brought before Achish and his life was in danger; he then “feigned himself mad (vayitholel) in their hand”, that is, he behaved like one of those madmen (holelim) whom he had once envied; and only then did the Shekinah come to his rescue. How, it may be asked, could this be, seeing that the Shekinah abides only in her own heritage, the Holy Land? The answer is that from there only she bestows blessings, but for purposes of protection she is to be found elsewhere also. So here, when Jacob departed from Laban, all the holy legions surrounded him, so that he was not left by himself.’

R. Hizkiah asked: ‘If that was so, how came Jacob, as stated later, to be “left alone” (Gen. XXXII, 25)?’ Said R. Judah in reply: ‘Because he exposed himself deliberately to danger, and therefore the angels deserted him. It was to this that he alluded when he said: “I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant” (Ibid. 11).’ R. Isaac said that the reason why they departed was to leave him alone with the chieftain of Esau, who came down to him with divine permission; and they meanwhile went off to chant the hymns for which the hour was then due and to sing the praises of the Holy One, blessed be He, and afterwards they returned to Jacob. “Now I am become two camps”: to wit, the camp of the Shekinah and his own household, so that he was complete on all sides, having his portion both with the white and with the red. R. Eleazar said: ‘The sages have stated that on that night and at that hour the power of Esau was in the ascendant, and therefore Jacob was left alone, or, from another aspect, the sun was left alone, the light of the moon having been obscured. Nevertheless, the guardianship of Providence did not leave him entirely, so that his antagonist prevailed not against him, as it says: “And when he saw that he prevailed not against him...”. He looked to Jacob’s right, and there his gaze met Abraham; he turned to his left, and there he saw Isaac; he looked at Jacob’s body, and he saw that it was a fusion of the two sides, and so he touched the hollow of his thigh, which is a pillar adjoining the body but is outside the body. In this way, then, the angel encompassed Jacob on all sides to deliver him; and when the Shekinah came down to abide with him, there joined him multitudinous hosts and legions; and it was of those angels that he sent a party to Esau.’ AND

JACOB SENT ANGELS . Said R. Abba: What induced Jacob to make advances towards Esau? Would he not have done better to leave him alone? The truth is that Jacob said to himself: “I am well aware that Esau has great respect for his father and would never cause him any vexation, and so I know that I have no ground to fear him so long as my father is alive. Let me, therefore, effect a reconciliation with him whilst my father is alive.” Straightway, then, Jacob “sent angels before him”.’ R. Simeon opened a discourse on the verse: Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant, than he that playeth the man of rank, and lacketh bread (Prov. XII, 9). ‘This verse’, he said, ‘speaks of the

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evil prompter, who lays plots and unceasingly brings up accusations against a man. He puffs up a man’s heart, encouraging him to arrogance and conceit, and induces him to twirl his hair and carry his head high, until he obtains an ascendancy over him and drags him down to Gehinnom. Better, therefore, is one who is “lightly esteemed” and who does not follow the evil prompter, but remains humble in heart and spirit and submits himself to the will of the Holy One, blessed be He. The evil prompter is bowed down before such a one, and so far is he from obtaining the mastery over the man that it is the man who obtains the mastery over him, as it says, “but thou mayest rule over him” (Gen. IV, 7). Such a man is better than he who “playeth the man of rank”, who has a high opinion of himself, twirls his hair and is full of conceit, as already mentioned above, but “lacketh bread”, to wit, the true faith, which is referred to as “the bread of his God” (Lev. XXI, 22) (Ibid. 6). Again, “he who is lightly esteemed” is exemplified in Jacob, who humbled himself before Esau so that the latter should in time become his servant, in fulfilment of the blessing: “Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee, etc.” (Gen. XXVII, 29). For Jacob’s time had not yet arrived, as he deferred it to the future, and in the immediate present he “esteemed himself lightly”. But in the proper time “he that playeth the man of rank” will become the servant to him “that lacketh bread”, to the man who was allotted “plenty of corn and wine” (Ibid. 28). Jacob knew that it was for the time being necessary for him to humble himself before Esau, and so made himself as one who “esteemed himself lightly”. And, moreover, he displayed therein more craft and subtlety than in all his other dealings with Esau; and had Esau realised this, he would rather have taken his own life than come to such a pass. Jacob thus acted throughout with wisdom, and to him can be applied the words of Hannah: “They that strive with the Lord shall be broken in pieces... and he will give strength unto his king, etc.” (I Sam. II, 10).’ AND HE COMMANDED THEM, SAYING: THUS SHALL YE SAY UNTO MY LORD ESAU: THUS SAITH THY SERVANT JACOB: I HAVE SOJOURNED WITH LABAN, AND STAYED UNTIL NOW . He began by representing himself as Esau’s servant, in order that the latter’s thoughts might be diverted from the blessings which he had received from his father, and the enjoyment of which he was postponing for a future time, as already said. R. Judah said: ‘What was Jacob’s object in saying to Esau, “I have sojourned with Laban”? What had this to do with his message to

Esau? The reason was that Laban the Aramean was famous throughout the world as a master magician and sorcerer whose spell no man could escape. He was, in fact, the father of Beor, who was the father of Balaam, mentioned in Scripture as “Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer” (Josh. XIII, 22). But for all Laban's skill and pre-eminence in sorcery and magic, he could not prevail over Jacob, though he employed all his arts to destroy him, as it says: “An Aramean designed to destroy my father” (Deut. XXVI, 5).’ R. Abba said: ‘All the world knew that Laban was the greatest of wizards and sorcerers and magicians, and that no one whom he wished to destroy could escape from him, and that it was from him that Balaam learnt all his skill-Balaam, of whom it is written: “for I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed” (Num. XXII, 6). Thus Laban and his magic were universally feared. Hence Jacob's first intimation to Esau was, “I have sojourned with Laban”; and lest Esau should think that it was merely a month, or, at most, a year, he added: “and I stayed until now”—a space of twenty years. And lest Esau should think that he had achieved nothing of consequence, he added: “And I have oxen and asses”, these being the symbols of two grades of severity that are never combined together save to bring suffering on the world. (This is the underlying reason of the precept: “Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together” (Deut. XXII, 10)). Further, “and flocks, and men-servants, and maid-servants”, these being symbolic of the lower crowns whom God slew in Egypt, in the form of “the first-born of cattle, the first born of the captive” (Ex. XII, 29), and “the first-born of the maidservant” (Ibid. XI, 5). Straightway Esau was seized with fear and went forth to meet him. Indeed, he was as much afraid of Jacob as Jacob was afraid of him. Jacob was like a traveller who hears that robbers are lying in wait for him on the road. Meeting another man, he asks him to whom he belongs, and he replies: “I am a member of such and such a band of robbers”. “Get thee hence,” exclaims the wayfarer, “for I have about me a snake who kills anyone that approaches me.” The man then returns to the chief of the brigands and warns him, saying: “A man is coming along this way who has about him a snake which bites anyone who approaches him

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and kills him.” Hearing this, the chief of the brigands says: “I had better go out to meet that man and make peace with him.” When the wayfarer sees him coming he exclaims: “Woe is me, he is going to kill me.” So he commences to bow and prostrate himself before him, whereupon the brigand regains his self-assurance, thinking: “If he had with him such a dangerous snake as he said, he would not have bowed so much to me. But since he does bow so much before me, I will not kill him.” In the same way Jacob sent word to Esau, saying: “I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now”, as much as to say: “I have stayed with him twenty years, and I have brought with me a deadly snake who slays people with his bite.” Esau, on hearing this said: “Woe is me, who can stand up before him?” for he was afraid that Jacob would kill him with his mouth. He therefore went forth to meet him and to make peace with him. But Jacob, we read, as soon as he saw him, “was greatly afraid and distressed”, and

when he approached him he commenced bowing and kneeling before him, as it says: “and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother”. Esau then said to himself: “Had he really been so well equipped as he said, he would not have bowed before me”, and he again began to carry himself haughtily.

It is written in regard to Balaam: “And God came unto Balaam at night” (Num. XXII, 20). Similarly in regard to Laban it is written: “And God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night, and said unto him: Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad” (Gen. XXXI, 24). Instead of the words “that thou speak not”, we should have expected here “that thou do no evil to Jacob” But the truth is that Laban in his pursuit after Jacob did not intend to contend against him with armed force, as he was well aware that Jacob and his sons were more than a match for him, but he designed to kill him with the power of his mouth. Hence: “that thou speak not”, and not “that thou do not”. It is also written: “It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt” (Gen. XXXI, 29). Laban knew this from the warning given him, as he himself continued: “But the God of your father spoke to me, etc.” (Ibid.). And this is the very testimony which God commanded the Israelites to pronounce, as it is written: “And thou shalt testify and say before the Lord thy God: An Aramean intended to destroy my father, etc.” (Deut. XXVI, 5). Of Balaam it is further written: “and he went not as at other times, to meet enchantments” (Num. XXIV, 1), this being his wont, since he was an adept in divinations. Laban also said: “I have observed the signs” (Gen. XXX, 27), that is to say, he tested Jacob's fortune by means of his divinations, and when he set out to destroy him he also intended to accomplish his end by the same power of magic and sorcery, but God did not permit him. And it was in allusion to this that Balaam his grandson said: “For there is no enchantment with Jacob, neither is there any divination with Israel” (Num. XXIII, 23), as much as to say: “Who can prevail against them, seeing that when my grandfather sought to destroy their ancestor by means of enchantments and sorceries, he did not succeed, as he was not permitted to curse him?” Laban, indeed, employed against Jacob all the ten kinds of magic and divination of the flashing of the underworld crowns, but could do him no hurt, as it is written: “and he changed my wages ten times, but God suffered him not to hurt me” (Gen. XXXI, 7), where the term monim (times) is akin to the term minim, signifying “kinds”. These ten kinds of witchcraft are alluded to in the verse saying: “There shall not be found among you... one that useth divination, a soothsayer, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or one that consulteth a ghost or a familiar spirit, or a necromancer” (Deut. XVIII, 10-11). R. Jose said: ‘Divination and enchantment are two different arts of the same potency. Balaam made use of divination against Israel, as it says: “with divinations in their hand” (Num. XXII, 7). Laban, on the other hand, used enchantments against Jacob, but neither of them succeeded. Hence Balaam said: “For there is no enchantment with Jacob, neither is there any divination with Israel” (Ibid. XXIII, 23), the first half of the verse alluding to the days of Laban, the other half to the time of Balaam himself. Balaam said in effect to Balak: “How can anyone prevail against them, seeing that all the

divinations and sorceries residing in our crowns derive their potency from the flashing of the supernal sovereignty, which is attached to them, as it is written: 'The Lord his God is with them, and the shouting for the King is among them' (Ibid. 21).' R. Judah said: 'Far be it from us to imagine that Balaam knew aught of the supernal sanctity,

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seeing that God did not choose any people or tongue to make use of His glory save His holy children, to whom he said: "sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy" (Lev. XI, 44). Only those who are themselves holy are permitted to make use of holy things; and it is only Israel who are holy, as it is written: "For thou art a holy people" (Deut. XIV, 2), that is, thou alone art holy, but no other people. Contrariwise, those who are impure are brought into contact with impurity and become more impure, and of such it is written: "he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be" (Lev. XIII, 46); for impurity calls unto impurity, as it says: "and he shall cry unclean, unclean" (Ibid. 45), where the text admits of the rendering, "and unclean calls to unclean", that is, seeks out its own kind.'

R. Isaac said: 'Was it becoming for a holy man like Jacob to admit that he had contaminated himself with Laban and his enchantments? Was this anything to his credit?' R. Jose said to him: 'Although R. Judah has given an explanation, I agree with you that we should seek another. For we find a somewhat similar difficulty in Jacob's words: "I am Esau thy first-born" (Gen. XXVII, 19), where also we may ask: "Was it becoming for a righteous man like Jacob to assume the name of the impure Esau?" I will answer both these difficulties. There is a tonal pause after the word "I-am" (anokhi) in this passage, so that what Jacob really said was: "I am (who I am, but) Esau (is) thy first-born", as already explained elsewhere. Similarly here Jacob meant to say: "Do not pay any regard to the blessing which my father gave, nor imagine that it has been fulfilled in me. For he blessed me saying, 'be lord over thy brethren', whereas of a truth 'I am thy servant Jacob, to my lord Esau'. Again, he blessed me with 'plenty of corn and wine', but I have no stock of these, but 'oxen, and asses and flocks', and am only a shepherd in the field. Of the blessing 'of the dew of heaven, and of the fat places of the earth', nothing has been fulfilled in me, seeing that 'I have sojourned with Laban', being merely a sojourner, without so much as a house that I can call my own, let alone the fatness of the earth." The whole of Jacob's message was thus calculated to divert Esau's regard from those blessings, so that he should not quarrel with him over them.' R. Abba said: 'It is written of Jacob that he was "a perfect man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. XXV, 27). The designation "perfect man" was given him because he resided in the two supernal Tabernacles and embodied in himself both this side and that side, and thus was made complete. His language must not be construed into an admission that he had contaminated himself with the enchantments of Laban, and, with all due respect to R. Judah, his heart was pure and full of thankfulness for the kindness and the truth that God had shown him. Thus Jacob's message to Esau amounted to saying: "Everyone

knows what kind of a man Laban is, and that no one can escape him. Yet I stayed with him twenty years, and though he contended with me and sought to destroy me, yet God delivered me from his hand." Jacob's purpose in all his words was to prevent Esau from thinking that the blessings had been fulfilled, and so from nursing a grudge against himself. Regarding such conduct Scripture says: "For the ways of the Lord are right, etc." (Hos. XIV, 10), also: "Thou shalt be whole-hearted with the Lord thy God" (Deut. XVIII, 13).'

AND THE ANGELS RETURNED TO JACOB, SAYING: WE CAME TO THY BROTHER ESAU, AND MOREOVER HE COMETH TO MEET THEE, AND FOUR HUNDRED MEN WITH HIM . The word "Esau" after "thy brother" seems to be superfluous, since Jacob had no other brothers. It was, however, a hint to Jacob not to think that Esau had retraced his steps and entered on the path of rectitude, but that he was still the same wicked Esau as of old. And moreover "he cometh to meet thee", and that not by himself, but having "four hundred men with him". Why all these details? Because God always delights in the prayer of the righteous, and He crowns Himself, as it were, with their supplications. So we affirm that the angel in charge of the prayers of Israel, Sandalphon by name, takes up all those prayers and weaves out of them a crown for the Living One of the worlds. All the more, then, must we believe that the prayers of the righteous, in which God takes delight, are made into a crown for Him. Seeing that Jacob had with him legions of holy angels, it may be asked why he was afraid. The truth is that the righteous rely not on their merits but on their prayers and supplications to their Master. R. Simeon said: 'The prayer of a congregation ascends to the Almighty, and He is crowned therewith, because it comprises many hues and directions, wherefore it is made into a crown to be placed on the head of the Righteous One, the Living One of the worlds; whereas the prayer of an individual is not many-sided and presents only one hue, and hence is not so complete and acceptable as the prayer of a congregation. Jacob was many-sided, and therefore God craved for his prayer, and hence it is written: "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and was distressed".' R. Judah cited here the verse: "Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into evil" (Prov. XXVIII, 14).

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'Happy is the people of Israel', he said, 'in whom the Holy One, blessed be He, finds delight, and to whom He has given the Torah of truth that thereby they may merit life eternal. For whoso labours in the Torah is vouchsafed from heaven the best life, and is taken up into the life of the world to come, as it is written: "for that is thy life, and the length of thy days" (Deut. XXX, 20); also, "and through this thing ye shall prolong your days" (Ibid. XXXII, 47), implying life in this world and in the world to come.' R. Eleazar said: 'Whoever labours in the Torah for its own sake will not die through the agency of the evil prompter (the same being the serpent and the angel of death), inasmuch as he holds fast to the tree of life and relaxeth not. For this reason the bodies of the righteous who have laboured in the Torah remain undefiled after death, since the spirit of defilement does not hover over them. How came it,

then, that Jacob, who was the tree of life itself, as it were, was afraid of Esau, who surely could not prevail against him? Had he not, too, the promise: "And, behold, I am with thee" (Gen. XXVIII, 15)? And had he not further protection in the escort of the host of holy angels, of whom it says, "and the angels of God met him" (Ibid. XXXII, 2)? The reason, however, of his fear was that he did not wish to rely on a miracle, as he did not consider himself deserving that a miracle should be wrought on his behalf. The cause of his self-mistrust was that he had not rendered filial service to his father and mother as he should have done, and that he had not devoted himself to the Torah, and, further, that he had married two sisters. But, in truth, a man should always go in fear and offer up prayer to the Almighty, as it says: "Happy is the man that feareth alway".

'It was the prayers offered up by the patriarchs that sustained the world, and by them are upheld all who dwell therein; and the merits of the patriarchs will never be forgotten, inasmuch as they form the support of the upper and the lower realms; and Jacob's support is firmer than that of all the others. Hence it is that when the children of Jacob are oppressed, God looks at the image of Jacob and is filled with pity for the world. This is hinted in the passage: "Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob" (Lev. XXVI, 42), where the name Jacob is spelt plene, with a vau, which is itself the image of Jacob. To look at Jacob was like looking at the "clear mirror". According to tradition, the beauty of Jacob was equal to that of Adam, the first man.' R. Jose said: 'I have heard it said that he who sees in his dream Jacob robed in his mantle enjoys length of life.' R. Simeon said: 'We have learnt that no life-portion was originally assigned to David, but Adam gave him seventy years of his own; and so David lived seventy years, whilst Adam lived a thousand years less seventy; thus the first thousand years included the lives of both Adam the first man and King David. The Scripture', he said, 'alludes to this in the verse, "He asked life of thee, thou gavest it him; even length of days for ever and ever" (Ps. XXI, 5). For when God created the Garden of Eden and placed in it the soul of King David, He saw that it possessed no life-portion of its own, and cast about for a remedy. So when He created Adam the first man, He said, "Here, indeed, is the remedy"; and so it was that from Adam were derived the seventy years that David lived. Further, each of the patriarchs conceded him some years of his own life, that is to say, Abraham and Jacob and Joseph, but not Isaac, because King David belonged to the same side as himself. Abraham allowed him five years of the hundred and eighty years which he was properly entitled to live, so that he lived only a hundred and seventy-five years, five years less than his due. Jacob was also due to live in this world as many years as Abraham, but he lived

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only a hundred and forty-seven years. Thus, Abraham and Jacob between them conceded to David thirty three years. Then Joseph should have lived a hundred and forty-seven years like Jacob, his father, but he fell short of that number by thirty-seven years. These, with the other thirty-three, completed the seventy years allotted to David, which were thus transferred to him

out of the lives of the patriarchs. The reason why Isaac did not transfer to him any years like the others was that he was himself wrapt in darkness, and David came from the side of darkness, and he who is in darkness possesses no light whatever, nor any life: it is for that reason that David possessed no life at all of his own. But those others, being possessed of light, could afford light to King David, who was beholden to them for light and for life, since of the dark side he had no life at all. Hence Isaac did not come into the reckoning. Why, it may be asked, was Joseph's contribution greater than those of the other two together? It was because Joseph was reckoned the equivalent of the other two, since he was called "the righteous", and he was better able than the others to illumine the moon, and hence he conceded to King David a greater share of life than all the others.

'To protect himself against Esau, Jacob resorted to prayer and did not rely upon his merit, since he desired to keep this in reserve for the benefit of his descendants in the future, and not to use it up now against Esau. Hence he now offered up his prayer to the Almighty, and did not rely upon his merits, nor ask for deliverance for their sake. Hence we read: AND HE SAID: IF ESAU COME TO THE ONE CAMP, AND SMITE IT, THEN THE CAMP WHICH IS LEFT SHALL ESCAPE . It was for this reason that he "divided the people that was with him... into two camps". Now the Shekinah never departed from the tent of Leah nor from the tent of Rachel. Jacob knew, therefore, that they were under the protection of the Almighty, and so he put the handmaids and their children foremost, saying to himself: "If Esau slays them, well, he will slay them, but as regards the others I have no fear, since the Shekinah is with them." Hence it says: THEN THE CAMP WHICH IS LEFT SHALL ESCAPE . Having taken this step, he next resorted to prayer, as it is written: And Jacob said, O GOD OF MY FATHER ABRAHAM, AND GOD OF MY FATHER ISAAC, O LORD, WHO SAIDST UNTO ME: RETURN UNTO THY COUNTRY, AND TO THY KINDRED, AND I WILL DO THEE GOOD . R. Jose discoursed on the verse: A prayer of the poor, when he fainteth (ya'atof) and poureth out his complaint before the Lord (Ps. CII, 1). He said: 'As has been laid down in many places, this psalm was composed by King David when he contemplated the plight of the poor man, and that was when he fled from his father-in-law. It was then that he composed a "prayer of the poor", as much as to say: "Behold, this is the prayer a poor man offers up to the Almighty, and one which should ascend in advance of all other prayers." The phrase, "a prayer of the poor", finds its parallel in the expression: "A prayer of Moses, the man of God" (Ibid. XC, 1), the one alluding to the phylactery of the head, the other to that of the arm, the two being inseparable and of equal importance. The reason why the prayer of the poor is admitted first into the presence of the Almighty is indicated in the verse: "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the lowliness of the poor, etc." (Ibid. XXII, 25). According to another exposition, the term "a prayer" is an allusion to Moses; "of the poor" to David; "when he fainteth" (ya'atof = is covered) to the moon when it is hidden and the sun is concealed from it. Observe that the prayer of other people is just a prayer, but the prayer of a poor man breaks through all barriers and storms its way to the

presence of the Almighty. So Scripture says: "And it shall come to pass, when he cries unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious" (Ex. XXII, 26); also: "I will surely hear their cry" (Ibid. 22). David continues: "and poureth out his complaint before the Lord", like one who protests against the judgements of the Almighty.'

R. Eleazar said: 'The prayer of the righteous is an object of joy for the Community of Israel,

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who weave out of it a crown by which to adorn themselves before the Holy One, blessed be He. Hence God holds it in special affection: He longs, as it were, for the prayer of the righteous, when they are in straits, because they know how to appease their Master.'

Note the words of Jacob's prayer: O GOD OF MY FATHER ABRAHAM, AND GOD OF MY FATHER ISAAC, O LORD, WHO SAIDST UNTO ME: RETURN . Various strands are here fitly interwoven. "O God of my father Abraham" symbolises the Right; "God of my father Isaac" symbolises the Left; while by the words "Who saidst unto me" Jacob interwove himself between the two. I AM NOT WORTHY OF ALL THE MERCIES . The connection of those words with what precedes is as follows. Jacob said in effect: "Thou hast promised me to deal well with me, but I know that all thy promises are conditional. Now, behold, I possess no merits, so that I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shown unto Thy servant; and all that Thou hast done for me until this day Thou hast done not for sake of my merits but for Thine own sake. For behold, when first I crossed the Jordan, fleeing from Esau, I was all alone, but Thou hast shown unto me mercy and truth, in that I have now crossed with two companies." Up to this point Jacob was reciting the praises of the Almighty; he then proceeded to pray for his requirements. From Jacob all men can take example, when offering prayer, first to recite the praises of their Master, and only then to present their petition. So Jacob, after praising the Lord, continued: "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children." Here, too, is a lesson that in praying a man should state in precise terms what he requires. Thus Jacob commenced: "Deliver me, I pray thee," and since it might be said that he had already been delivered from the hand of Laban, he added "from the hand of my brother"; and since, again, the term "brother" covers all relatives, he added "from the hand of Esau"; and yet again, lest it should be urged that he had no need of such a delivery, he continued: "for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children"; all this in order that there should be no possibility of misunderstanding. AND THOU SAIDST: I WILL SURELY DO THEE GOOD, ETC . We find King David closing a prayer with the words: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before thee" (Ps. XIX, 15), the former of these clauses referring to what he had actually said explicitly, and the latter to his inner thoughts which he had only half expressed. This division of prayer into clearly expressed and half-expressed desires corresponds to a distinction in the

divine grades, the clearly expressed prayer being addressed to the lower grade, the meditation of the heart to the higher and inner grade. Jacob divided his prayer similarly; first he stated what he desired distinctly, then he left his thought only half expressed, in the words alluding to the promise made to him, "and I will make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude". There was here an underlying thought which was best left unexpressed. This division was necessary, as explained, so as to make the unification complete. Happy are the righteous who know how to express fittingly the praises of their Master, as a preliminary to their prayer. Of them it is written: "And he said unto me: Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Is. XLIX, 3). AND JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE, ETC . R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent. (Ps. XCI, 10). 'When God', he said, 'created the world, He made on each day

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the work appropriate for that day. This has already been explained. Now on the fourth day the lights were created; but the moon was created without light, since she diminished herself. This is implied in the phrase "Let there be lights", wherein the term meoroth (lights) is written defectively (less the letter vau), as it were me'eroth (curses); for as a result of the moon's diminution, occasion was granted to all spirits and demons and hurricanes and devils to exercise sway, so that all unclean spirits rise up and traverse the world seeking whom to seduce; they haunt ruined places, thick forests and deserts. These are all from the side of the unclean spirit, which, as has been said, issues from the crooked serpent, who is, indeed, the veritable unclean spirit, and whose mission is to seduce man after him. Hence it is that the evil prompter has sway in the world, following men about and employing all manner of ruses and seductions to turn them aside from the paths of the Holy One, blessed be He. And in the same way as he seduced Adam and thereby brought death into the world, so does he ever seduce men and cause them to defile themselves; and whoever allows himself to be defiled draws upon himself the unclean spirit and clings unto him, and numerous unclean influences are at hand to defile him, so that he remains polluted in this world and in the world to come. Contrariwise, should a man strive to purify himself, the unclean spirit is foiled and can no longer dominate him. Thus it is written: "No evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent". R. Jose said: ' "Evil" here alludes to Lilith (night-demon), and "the plague" to the other demons, as has been explained elsewhere.' R. Eleazar said: 'It has been taught that a man should not go out alone at night, and especially when the time of the creation of the moon recurs and it is without light. For at that time the unclean spirit, which is the same as the evil spirit, is at large. Now, the term "evil" here is an allusion to the evil serpent, while "the plague" alludes to him who rides on the serpent, so that evil and plague work together. It is true, we have also been taught that the term "plague" signifies "the plagues of the sons of man", which issued from Adam. For during all those years that Adam kept away from his wife, unclean spirits came and

conceived from him, and bore offspring, which are called "plagues of the offspring of Adam"; and it has been affirmed that when a man is sleeping and is not in control of himself, he is assailed by an unclean spirit and sometimes by a number of unclean female spirits who draw him unto themselves, conceive from him and give birth to spirits and demons. These sometimes appear in the form of human beings, save that they have no hair on their heads. It is therefore incumbent on a man to be on his guard against them and not to let himself be contaminated by them, but to follow the paths of the Torah. For there is no man falls asleep on his bed in the night-time but he has a foretaste of death, in that his soul (neshamah) departs from him; and since his body is left without the holy soul, an unclean spirit comes and hovers upon it and it becomes defiled. It has already been said elsewhere that a man should not pass his hands over his eyes when he wakes in the morning on account of the unclean spirit hovering over his hands. Now, although Jacob was beloved by the Almighty, yet when he was left alone a strange spirit immediately came and joined battle with him.' R. Simeon said: 'It is written of Balaam, "and he went shefi (to a bare height)" (Num. XXIII, 3). The word shefi signifies "alone", and it is also akin to the term sheffon, in the phrase "sheffon (a horned snake) in the path". So Balaam went alone, like a snake that goes alone and lurks in by-paths and lanes, with the object of attracting to himself the unclean spirit. For he who walks alone at certain periods, and in certain places, even in a town, attracts to himself the unclean spirit. Hence no one should ever go on a lonely road, even in a city, but only where people are about, nor should a man go out in the night-time, when people are no longer about. It is for a similar reason that it is written: "his body shall not remain all night upon the tree" (Deut. XXI, 23),

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so as not to leave the dead body, which is alone, without the spirit, above ground in the night. The wicked Balaam, however, for that very reason went alone like the serpent, as already explained.' AND THERE WRESTLED (vaye'oveq) A MAN WITH HIM . R. Joshua the son of Levi said: 'From the word behe'ovqo (in his wrestling) we learn that they raised a dust with their feet which reached the Throne of Glory, as this word finds a parallel in the phrase "the dust ('abaq) of his feet" (Nahum I, 3). The angel here mentioned was Samael, the chieftain of Esau, and it was right that his dust should rise to the Throne of Glory which is the seat of judgement.' R. Simeon said: 'This dust ('abaq) was not ordinary dust, but ashes, the residue of fire. It differs from dust proper in that it is sterile and unproductive, whereas dust ('afar) is that from which all fruit and vegetation spring and is common to the lower and higher existences.' R. Judah remarked: 'If so, how can we explain the passage: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust" (I Sam. II, 8)?' R. Simeon replied: 'The dust possesses nothing of its own, hence it is from the dust that the poor man has to be raised who possesses nothing of his own either. At the same time the dust is the source of all fruitfulness and of all the produce of the world, and from it have been formed all things in the world, as it is written: "all are of the dust and all return to dust" (Eccl. III, 20),

including, according to tradition, even the solar sphere. But the dust called abaq is forever barren, and hence, as the term vaye'obeq ("and he wrestled", or "raised the dust") implies, the man came up, riding, as it were, upon that dust, in order to contest Jacob's right.' UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE DAY; this being the moment when his dominion passed away and vanished. The same will happen in the time to come. For the present exile is like the night, and in that night the barren dust rules over Israel, who are prostrate to the dust; and so it will be until the light will appear and the day will break; then Israel will obtain power, and to them will be given the kingdom, as they are the saints of the Most High. So Scripture says: "And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them" (Dan. VII, 27). AND HE SAID: LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY BREAKETH, AND HE SAID: I WILL NOT LET THEE GO, EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME . R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Who is she that looketh forth as the dawn, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners ? (S. S. VI, 10). 'This verse', he said, 'refers to Israel, at the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise them up and bring them out of captivity. At that time he will first open for them a tiny aperture of light, then another somewhat larger, and so on until He will throw open for them the supernal gates which face on all the four quarters of the world. And, indeed, this process is followed by God in all that He does for Israel and the righteous among them. For we know that when a man has been long shut up in darkness it is necessary, on bringing him into the light, first to make for him an opening as small as the eye of a needle, and then one a little larger, and so on gradually until he can endure the full light. It is the same with Israel, as we read: "By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, etc." (Ex. XXIII, 30). So, too, a sick man who is recovering cannot be given a full diet all at once, but only gradually. But with Esau it was not so. His light came at a bound, but it will gradually be withdrawn from him until Israel will come into their own and destroy him completely from this world and from the world to come. Because he plunged into the light all at once, therefore he will be utterly and completely exterminated. Israel's light, on the other hand, will come little by little, until they will become strong. God will illumine them forever. All then will ask: "Who is she that looketh forth like the dawn", this being a reference to the first tiny streak of the dawn, then "fair as the moon", the light of the moon being stronger than that of the dawn, and then "clear as the sun", that is, a still stronger light, and finally "terrible as an army with banners", expressive of the light in its full strength. For, just as when the dawn emerges from the darkness its light at first is faint, but gradually brightens till full daylight is reached, so when God will bestir Himself to shine upon the Community of Israel, He will first shed on them a streak of light like that of the daybreak which is still black, then increase it to make it "fair as the moon", then "clear as the sun", until it will be "tremendous as an army with banners", as already explained.'

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[Note: The first 28 lines of the Hebrew text (until "Said R. Hiya) do not appear in our translation.] Now in connection with Jacob it is not written: "for daybreak has come (ba')", but "for daybreak has gone up ('alah)". For at the moment when daybreak arrived, the Chieftain summoned all his strength and struck out at Jacob in order thereby to impart power to Esau; but as soon as the blackness of the dawn passed the light came on and Jacob's power increased; for his time had then arrived to come into the light, as it is written: "And the sun rose upon him as he passed over Peniel. In the next words, AND HE LIMPED UPON HIS THIGH, there is a hint that after Israel in exile have endured many sufferings and pains, when daylight rises upon them and they attain to rest and ease they will in their memory go through again their past sufferings and afflictions and will wonder how they could have endured them. So Jacob, after "the sun had risen upon him", was "limping upon his thigh", vexing himself for what had befallen. But when the blackness of the early dawn passed he made a great effort and grasped his opponent, whose strength at the same time gave out, his dominion being only during the night, whereas Jacob has ascendancy in the daytime. Hence he said: LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY BREAKETH, so that, as he might have added, "I am now in thy power".

R. Hiya said: 'Had Jacob's strength not failed him at that spot (the sinew that shrank) he would have prevailed against the angel so completely that Esau's power would then have been broken both on high and below.' R. Simeon remarked: 'Ezekiel the prophet said: "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it I fell upon my face, etc.'" (Ez. I, 28). This verse illustrates the difference between the other prophets and Moses, of whom it is written, "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deut. XXXIV, 10). For Moses gazed into the clear mirror of prophecy, whereas all the other prophets looked into a hazy mirror.

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Moses received the divine message standing and with all his senses unimpaired, and he comprehended it fully, as it is written: "even manifestly, and not in dark speeches" (Num. XII, 8); whereas other prophets fell on their faces in a state of exhaustion and did not obtain a perfectly clear message. All those prophets thus failed to realise fully what God had in store for Esau in the future, with the exception of the prophet Obadiah, who, being himself a proselyte, originating from the side of Esau, was able to receive a full message with regard to Esau. The reason why all the prophets except Moses were thus weak was that "he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh through the sinew of the thigh-vein"-the sinew that draws to the thigh all its energy; the energy of the thigh was thus broken, and Jacob remained "limping upon his thigh", and hence the rest of the prophets, with the exception of Moses, could not retain their faculties during a vision and grasp it fully. Now just as the prophets were thus weakened, so when scholars are not encouraged and no one gives them

pecuniary support the Torah is forgotten from one generation to another and its strength is weakened, those who toil in it having no support, and the sinful kingdom increases in power with each day. Much evil therefore results; since, as the upholders of the Torah become weaker, strength is thereby gained by him who has no legs to stand upon. For when God said to the serpent, "upon thy belly shalt thou go" (Gen. III, 14), the serpent had his supports and legs cut off so that he was left with nothing to stand on. But when Israel neglect to support the Torah, they thereby provide him with supports and legs on which to stand firm and upright.

Many were the stratagems and cunning devices to which the serpent-rider resorted on that night against Jacob. For he well knew that "the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. XXVII, 22), so that whenever the voice of Jacob is interrupted, the hands of Esau are reinforced. He therefore cast about on all sides for means of interrupting his voice, but he found him strong on all sides, his arms strong on both sides and firmly upheld between them, and the Torah firmly entrenched therein. Seeing, therefore, that he could not prevail against him, he "touched the hollow of his thigh". For he knew that when the supports of the Torah are broken, the Torah itself is shaken; hence he thought that in this way he should reap the benefit of what their father had said, namely: "And it shall come to pass when thou shalt break loose, that thou shalt shake his yoke from thy neck" (Ibid. 40). His whole purpose in contending with Jacob was to break the force of the Torah, and when he saw that he could not strike at the Torah itself, he weakened the power of its upholders; for without upholders of the Torah there will be no "voice of Jacob", and the hands of Esau will operate. Jacob, on seeing this, as soon as day broke, seized hold of him and did not let him go, so that he blessed him and confirmed to him those blessings, and said to him: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob (Ya'aqob=supplanter), but Israel (Yisrael=princehood and strength), so that no one can prevail against thee." Now, from that serpent issue numerous hosts which disperse themselves on every side to prowl about the world. It is incumbent, therefore, upon us to preserve in a complete state the sinew of the thigh-vein, for although the serpent-rider touched it, it retained its vitality, and we require its strength to establish ourselves in the world and to make good the words: "For thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed." When the adversary sees that that part is not broken or consumed, his own strength and courage is broken

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and he can no more do any harm to the sons of Jacob. It is for that reason that we are forbidden to give that part (of an animal) to anyone to eat and may not benefit of it in any way. R' Jesse the elder connected the word "touched" in this clause with the same word in the verse: "He that toucheth the dead, even any man's dead body, etc." (Num. XIX, 11). 'Just as in the latter case', he said, 'there is defilement, so here defilement is implied, that part of the body being an object of defilement, so that we may not put it to any use whatever.' Blessed be the Merciful One who gave the



Torah to Israel, whereby to merit this world and the world to come, as it is written: "Length of days is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour" (Prov. III, 16). AND HE HIMSELF PASSED OVER BEFORE THEM, AND BOWED HIMSELF TO THE GROUND SEVEN TIMES, UNTIL HE CAME NEAR TO HIS BROTHER. Said R. Eleazar: It is written, "For thou shalt bow down to no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. XXXIV, 14). Now, Jacob was the consummation of the patriarchs, who was selected as the choicest portion of the Almighty, and was brought specially near to Him and was perfected above and below. How came it, then, that such a man should bow down to the wicked Esau, who was of the side of another god, so that bowing down to him was the same as bowing down to another god? The proverb, it is true, says, "When a fox is in honour, bow down to him." This, however, could not apply to Esau, who was like another god, belonging to that side and that portion to whom Jacob would in no way bow down. A similar difficulty arises with the verse: "And thus ye shall say: All hail! (lehay, lit. to the living one) and peace be both unto thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace be unto all that thou hast" (I Sam. XXV, 6). Now, inasmuch as, according to our teaching, it is forbidden to give the first greeting to a wicked man, how could David have sent such a message to Nabal? There, however, the explanation is that David in reality addressed his words to God, as is implied in the expression lehay (to the Living One), although Nabal misunderstood them as addressed to himself. Similarly, when we read: "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head" (Gen. XLVII, 31), we are not to suppose that he bowed down in worship to his son, but that his obeisance was directed towards the spot where the Shekinah rested. So in this passage, the words: "and he himself passed over before them" refer to the celestial Shekinah who went before Jacob in order to afford him the promised protection from on high. When Jacob became aware of this he thought it incumbent on him to make obeisance towards the Holy One, blessed be He, who was going, as it were, in front of him, and so "he bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother". Mark that it is not written, "and he bowed down to Esau", but simply "he bowed down", implying that he did so because he saw the Holy One, blessed be He, going before him, not that he made obeisance by way of worship to anyone else. Everything was thus in order. Happy are the righteous all of whose actions are for the glory of their Master, and with the object that they themselves should turn neither to the right nor to the left.' AND ESAU RAN TO MEET HIM, AND EMBRACED HIM, AND FELL ON HIS NECK AND KISSED HIM; AND THEY WEPT . The word zavaro (his neck) is used here instead of the more usual zavorav; while dots are placed over the letters of the word vayishoqehu (and he kissed him). Said R. Isaac: 'Many are the methods by which the Scripture conveys recondite allusions, yet with a common purpose. It is written: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt" (Is. LVII, 20). This verse may be applied to Esau, all of whose actions were wicked and sinful. His approaches to Jacob on this occasion were insincere, as is shown by the signs mentioned above. The "neck" here is an allusion to Jerusalem, which is indeed the neck of the universe, and the singular form

zavaro is used instead of the regular dual form zavorav as a hint that the seed of Esau would one day fall upon and destroy one of the two Temples. Again, the dots above the word vayishoqehu (and he kissed him) indicate that he kissed him reluctantly. The verse: "but the kisses of an enemy are importunate" (Prov. XXVII, 6) has been applied by our teachers to Balaam, who, although he blessed Israel, did it against his will; but Esau provides another illustration.' R. Jose said: 'It is written: "For thou hast smitten all my enemies upon the cheek, thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked" (Ps. III, 8), and there is a tradition which reads here shirbabtha (thou hast lengthened) instead of shibbartha (thou hast broken), to indicate that Esau's teeth were suddenly lengthened to prevent him from biting.' We read further: AND THEY WEPT ; both the one and the other with good cause,

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as the companions have expounded. For Esau was so evilly disposed to Jacob that even at that very time he was planning how to afflict him and bring accusations against him in the distant future. Hence they wept: Jacob for fear lest he might not escape from his brother's onslaught, and Esau to think that his father was still alive, so that he was unable to do any harm to Jacob.' R. Abba said: 'Assuredly Esau's wrath was allayed at the moment he beheld Jacob, since his chieftain had confirmed Jacob's claims, and therefore it would have been vain for Esau to vent his wrath. For all the affairs of this world depend on what is done above, and whatever is agreed upon above is accepted below, and no power can be exercised below until power is granted above. Thus one world depends always on the other.' LET MY LORD, I PRAY THEE, PASS OVER BEFORE HIS SERVANT; AND I WILL JOURNEY ON GENTLY, ETC. R. Eleazar said: 'This bears out what we said before, namely, that Jacob did not wish as yet to avail himself of the first blessings that he received from his father, not one of which had so far been fulfilled, since he reserved them for the end of days when his descendants should need them in their struggle against the nations of the world. Hence, when Esau said: "Let us take our journey, and let us go", that is, "let us share together this world and rule it in partnership", Jacob replied: "Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant", as much as to say: "Have thou first thy dominion of this world, and I will journey on gently, and reserve myself for the world to come and for the latter days that flow on gently... 'until I come unto my lord unto Seir', i.e. I will endure subjection to thee until my time will come to rule over the mount of Esau, as it is written: 'And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's' " (Oba. I, 21). AND JACOB JOURNEYED TO SUCCOTH, AND BUILT HIM A HOUSE, AND MADE BOOTHS FOR HIS CATTLE. THEREFORE THE NAME OF THE PLACE IS CALLED SUCCOTH . R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: Except the Lord build the house, etc., except the Lord keep the city, etc. (Ps. CXXVII, 1). He said: 'When God resolved to create the world, He produced out of the primordial lamp of scintillation a nucleus that flashed forth from the midst of darkness and remained on high while the darkness went below. It flashed along through a hundred paths and ways, some narrow and

some broad, until the House of the world[Tr. note: By 'house of the world, here seems to be meant the 'world of emanation', which is 'central', as being least penetrable to the intelligence.] was made. This House forms the centre of the universe, and it has many doors and vestibules on all its sides, sacred and exalted abodes where the celestial birds build their nests, each according to its kind. From the midst of it rises a large tree, with mighty branches and abundance of fruit providing food for all, which rears itself to the clouds of heaven and is lost to view between three rocks, from which it again emerges, so that it is both above and below them. From this tree the house is watered. In this house are stored many precious and undiscovered treasures. Thus was the house built and completed. That tree is visible in the day-time but is hidden at night, whereas the house becomes manifest in the night and is hidden by day. As soon as darkness sets in and all the doors on all sides are closed, innumerable spirits fly about, desiring to know what is in it. They pass between the birds, bringing their credentials, they flit about and see many things, until the darkness by which the house is enveloped is aroused and sends forth a flame and strikes with mighty hammers, causing the doors to be opened, and splitting the rocks; then the flame goes up and down and strikes the world with blows that resound above and below. Then a

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herald ascends, attaches himself to the ether, and makes proclamation. That ether emerges from the pillar of cloud of the inner altar, and spreads itself out into the four quarters of the world. A thousand thousand stand at the left side and a myriad of myriads stand at the right side. And the herald stands in his place and makes loud proclamation. Then innumerable are those who chant hymns and make obeisance; and two doors open, one on the South and one on the North. The house then is lifted up and is fastened between the two sides, whilst hymns are chanted and songs of praise ascend. Then some enter silently whilst the house is lit up on every side with six lights, brilliant and resplendent, and from thence flow out six rivers of balsam from which all the "animals of the field" are watered, as it says: "They give drink to every animal of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst, etc." (Ps. CIV, 11). They thus continue singing praises until daybreak. At daybreak, the stars, the constellations and their hosts all commence to chant songs of praise and hymns, as we read: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job XXXVIII, 7). Now observe the words: "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it." This is a reference to the Most High King who constantly builds the house and perfects it, but only when acceptable worship ascends from below in due form. Then again the words "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" refer to the time when the darkness of the night sets in and armed companies roam to and fro in the world, and the doors are shut, and the city is guarded on all sides so that the uncircumcised and the unclean may not come near it. So it says: "For henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Is. LII, 1), since God will one day remove them from the world. Who, then, is the uncircumcised and who is the

unclean? They are both one, the same that seduced Adam and his wife to follow him and so bring death into the world. He, too, will continue to defile this house until such time as the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause him to vanish from the world. Hence: "Except the Lord keep the city, etc."

Observe that Jacob "journeyed to Succoth", whereas Esau "returned that day on his way unto Seir", each one taking the road toward his own side. Esau betook himself toward the side of Seir, that is, toward the "strange woman", the strange god, which are both designated by the name Seir; whereas Jacob journeyed to Succoth (lit. tabernacles), a name indicative of the true faith. "And built him a house", to wit, the House of Jacob.' Said R. Eleazar: 'Here is an indication that Jacob instituted evening prayer. We read further: "and he made booths (succoth) for his cattle"; these were other tabernacles which he made for guarding them, but the former succoth were his own portion.' AND JACOB CAME PERFECT (shalem): perfect in every respect; the same allusion is contained in the words: "In Shalem (lit. in perfection) also he set his tabernacle" (Ps. LXXVI, 3). For faith became his constant companion when he attained perfection, when he was crowned in the spot appropriate to him; and then also that Tabernacle was crowned along with him who was the perfection of the patriarchs, being completed by his sons. He was thus perfect on all sides: perfect on high, perfect below, perfect in heaven and perfect on earth. Perfect on high in that he was the consummation of the patriarchs, the glory of Israel; perfect below, through his holy sons; perfect in heaven and perfect on earth, so that "in perfection also he set his tabernacle". AND DINAH THE DAUGHTER OF LEAH WENT OUT . The companions have remarked that there exist a variety of grades and sides on high, each one different from the other, serpents of all sorts, one kind endeavouring to gain dominion over the other and to devour prey, each according to its kind. From the side of the unclean spirit ever so many grades branch out, and all of them lie in wait to bring accusations against each other. Hence it is written: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" (Deut. XXII, 10), inasmuch as when these are joined together they bring accusations against mankind. Observe further that the great desire of the unclean grades is to find matter of charge against the holy sides. Thus, since Jacob was a holy man, they all lay in wait for him and contended with him. First the serpent bit him when he touched the hollow of his thigh, and now the ass bit him. Then it was Jacob himself who opposed the serpent, now it was Simeon and Levi, who belonged to the side

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of stern judgement, who stood up against the ass and prevailed over him and completely subdued him, as we read: "And they slew Hamor (lit. ass) and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword." Now Simeon, who was under the zodiacal sign of ox (Taurus), set upon the ass so as to prevent the two from joining, as then the latter would have set upon him. All came to contend with Jacob, who, however, was delivered from them and afterwards obtained dominion over them. Then came the one who is designated ox, and made himself

perfect among the asses, that is, among those who were of the side of the ass. For Joseph was designated ox, and of the Egyptian the Scripture says: "whose flesh is as the flesh of asses" (Ez. XXIII, 20). It was for this reason that the sons of Jacob later on fell among those asses, inasmuch as the ox was joined with them; and they bit them to the bone until Levi arose as on the former occasion, and scattered and subdued them, and utterly broke their force. He also removed the ox from them, as it is written: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Ex. XIII, 19). Observe that when Simeon assailed the ass (Hamor) on the first occasion he first made them see blood -the blood of circumcision-and after that "they slew all the males". God dealt in the same way through the hand of the Levite, Moses, with those other asses, the Egyptians. He first showed them blood and afterwards "the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt" (Ibid. XII, 29). In connection with Hamor it is written: "They took their flocks and their herds and their asses, etc."; in connection with those other asses it is written: "jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment" (Ibid. 35), also: "And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds, even very much cattle" (Ibid. 38). In the same way, too, as Simeon withstood this one ass, Levi withstood that company of asses. They all conspired against Jacob the holy man and essayed to bite him, but he together with his sons stood up against them and subdued them. But now that Esau is biting him and his children, who will stand up against him? Jacob and Joseph, one on one side and the other on the other side. So Scripture says: "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, etc." (Oba. I, 18). AND THEY JOURNEYED; AND A TERROR OF GOD WAS UPON THE CITIES THAT WERE ROUND ABOUT THEM, AND THEY DID NOT PURSUE AFTER THE SONS OF JACOB . R. Jose said: 'They all came together, but when they commenced to gird on their arms a terror seized them and they left them alone. Hence "they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob".' PUT AWAY THE STRANGE GODS, ETC . These were the silver and gold vessels that they had taken from Shechem, and on which were engraved images of their gods. R. Judah said: 'Their idols themselves were made of silver and gold, and Jacob hid them there in order that his children should not make use of the side of idolatry, as a man is forbidden to have any benefit whatsoever from it;'

As R. Judah and R. Hizkiah were once walking together on the road, the latter said: 'It is written: "And he took the crown of Malcam from off his head; and the weight thereof was a talent of gold, and in it were precious stones; and it was set on David's head" (II Sam. XII, 30). Now, we have been taught that "Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites" (I Kings XI, 5) is the same as Malcam in this verse. How, then, was this crown permitted to be set on David's head? And further, why is it called "abomination", whereas other idols are referred to as "gods of the peoples", "strange gods", and the like?' R. Judah replied: 'Indeed, other idols are also called abominations, as we read: "And ye have seen their abominable things and their idols" (Deut. XXIX, 16). As regards the identification of Malcam with Milcom, this is certainly correct; nevertheless David was able to use the crown of

Malcam because Ittai the Gittite, before he became a proselyte, broke it, that is to say, he disfigured the image which was on it, and so made its use permissible, [Tr. note: According to the Rabbinical rule: "An idolater can render his idol null and void."] and it was set on David's head. The idol of the Ammonites was a serpent graven deep on that crown, and for that reason it was called abomination.' R. Isaac said that the order "put away the strange gods" referred to the other women who brought with them on their persons all their ornaments. Hence it is written: AND THEY GAVE UNTO JACOB ALL THE FOREIGN GODS , to wit, of those women. AND JACOB HID THEM

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so that his people should not derive any benefit whatever from the side of idolatry.

Observe the complete devotion of Jacob to the Almighty, as shown by his words: AND LET US ARISE, AND GO UP TO BETH-EL, AND I WILL MAKE THERE AN ALTAR UNTO GOD, WHO ANSWERED ME IN THE DAY OF MY DISTRESS, AND WAS WITH ME IN THE WAY WHICH I WENT . From these last words we learn that it is incumbent on a man to praise God and to give Him thanks for any miracle or any kindness that He has shown him. Observe that first Jacob said: "let us arise and go up to Beth-El", thus associating his children with him; but then: "and I will make there an altar", and not "we will make". The reason was that this task devolved upon him alone, since it was he who had passed through all those tribulations from the time when he fled from his brother, whereas his sons were not born until after. Hence he did not associate them with him. R. Eleazar said: 'From here we learn that he to whom a miracle is vouchsafed must himself offer thanks; just as he who has eaten a meal should say grace, and not one who has eaten nothing.' AND HE BUILT THERE AN ALTAR, ETC . There is no mention here of libation or offering. The reason is that Jacob's intention was only to complete the grade which required completion, to wit, to join the lower grade, referred to by the word "altar", to the upper, referred to by the word "Lord". Hence he only built an altar and did not offer drink-offerings or burnt-offerings. AND CALLED THE PLACE EL-BETH-EL : a name analogous to the Most High Name, inasmuch as when there is a plenitude of light, then "like mother, like daughter, the two becoming one. BECAUSE THERE GOD WAS (lit. were) REVEALED UNTO HIM : the word Elohim (God) here is an allusion to the seventy who are always attendant on the Shekinah, there being seventy thrones round the Shekinah. Hence: "there God was revealed unto him", indicating the same place of which it is written: "And behold, the Lord stood beside him" (Gen. XXVIII, 13). AND GOD WENT UP FROM HIM IN THE PLACE WHERE HE SPOKE WITH HIM . R. Simeon said: From here we learn that Jacob formed the Holy Chariot together with the other patriarchs; further, that Jacob constitutes the supernal Holy Chariot which will restore the full light of the moon, and that he forms a Chariot by himself, as implied in the statement: "And God went up from him". It is written: "For what great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon him?" (Deut. IV, 7). How dear', he

exclaimed, 'must Israel be to the Almighty, seeing that there is no nation or language among all the idol-worshippers that has a god to hearken unto them, whereas the Holy One, blessed be He, is ready to receive the prayers and supplications of Israel in their hour of need, to hearken to their prayers for the sake of their grade.' AND GOD SAID: THY NAME SHALL BE CALLED No MORE JACOB, BUT ISRAEL SHALL BE THY NAME; AND (he) CALLED HIS NAME ISRAEL . The subject of "and called" is the Shekinah, as in the expression: "And (he) called unto Moses": whereas the name "God" earlier in the sentence refers to the higher grade. The name Israel was given him in virtue of his having achieved perfection, and so by this name he was raised to a higher grade and was made perfect in that name. As R. Eleazar and R. Jose were once walking on the road, the latter said to R. Eleazar: 'Assuredly it is as you said, that Jacob was the consummation of the patriarchs and that he was attached to all the sides and so his name was called Israel. But how comes it that God afterwards again called him many times by the name of Jacob, and that he is commonly called Jacob just as before?' R. Eleazar replied: 'That is a good question. To find an answer, consider the verse: "The Lord will go forth as a mighty one, he will stir up jealousy like a warrior" (Is. XLII, 12). Why say as a mighty one, seeing that He is a mighty one; and why say like a warrior, seeing that He is a warrior? But the truth is that, as we have learned, the name TETRAGRAMMATON (Lord) is everywhere expressive of the attribute of mercy. Now, assuredly,

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God is named TETRAGRAMMATON (Lord), as it is written: "I am the Lord TETRAGRAMMATON" (Ibid. 8). Yet we see that at times His name is called Elohim (God), which is everywhere expressive of judgement. The explanation is that when the righteous are numerous among mankind, He is called by the name of TETRAGRAMMATON (Lord), the name which implies mercy, but when sinners abound, He is called by the name of Elohim (God). Similarly with Jacob. When he is not among enemies, or in a strange land, his name is Israel, but when he is among enemies or in a strange land he is called Jacob.' R. Jose rejoined: 'This does not quite solve the difficulty, seeing that it is written: "thy name shall no more be called Jacob", and yet all the time we do call him Jacob; as for your remark that he is only called Jacob when among enemies or in a strange land, do we not find it written: "And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings in the land of Canaan" (Gen. XXXVII, 1), which was not a strange land?' R. Eleazar replied: 'Just as the names "Lord" and "God" indicate different degrees, so the names Jacob and Israel indicate different degrees; and as for the words "thy name shall no more be called Jacob", that signifies merely that Jacob should not be his fixed name.' Said R. Jose: 'If that is so, how is it that the name of Abraham became fixed after God had said: "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham" (Ibid. XVII, 5).' R. Eleazar replied: 'It is because there it is written: "but thy name shall be (vehayah), that is, always, whereas here it is written: "but Israel shall be (yihyeh) thy name", that is, at least on one occasion, if not oftener. When, however, his posterity were crowned with priests and

Levites, and were raised to high degrees, he was invested with the name of Israel in perpetuity.'

Whilst they were walking, R. Jose said to R. Eleazar: 'It has been said that with Rachel's death the house was transferred to Her who required to be adorned with twelve tribes. Nevertheless, why should Rachel have died immediately after the birth of Benjamin?' R. Eleazar in reply said: 'It was in order that the Shekinah should be duly crowned and take her place in the house as "a joyful mother of children". With Benjamin, the Shekinah was equipped with the full twelve tribes, and with him the kingdom of heaven began to be made manifest on earth. Now the beginning of any manifestation is brought about with strain, and involves a doom of death before it can become established. Here, when the Shekinah was about to assume her rightful place and to take over the house, the doom fell upon Rachel. Similarly, when the kingdom was about to be made manifest on earth, it commenced with a judgement, and the kingdom was not established in its place until a doom had fallen upon Saul, in accordance with his deserts; and only then was it established. It is a general rule that beginnings are rough, whereas the subsequent course is smooth. Thus, on New Year's day (Rosh-hashana) the year opens with severity, as the whole world passes under judgement, each individual according to his deeds, but soon after comes relief and forgiveness and atonement. The reason is that the beginning is from the left side, and so it brings harsh judgements, until the right side is aroused and ease follows. In time to come God will first treat the idolatrous nations gently and indulgently, but afterwards with severity and stern judgement. So Scripture says: "The Lord will go forth as a mighty one, he will stir up jealousy as a warrior; he will cry, yea, he will shout aloud, he will prove himself mighty against his enemies" (Is. XLII, 13); which interpreted means that first He will manifest Himself as TETRAGRAMMATON (the Lord), in His attribute of mercy, then as a mighty one, but not in His full might, then as a warrior, but not in His full war panoply, and finally, His whole might will become manifest against them in order to exterminate them, so that "he will cry, yea, he will shout aloud, he will prove himself mighty against his enemies." Again, it is written: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fighteth in the day of battle" (Zech. XIV, 3). Also: "Who is this that cometh from Edom with crimson garments from Bozrah? etc." (Is. LXIII, 1).' AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HER SOUL WAS IN DEPARTING FOR SHE DIED-THAT SHE CALLED HIS NAME BEN-ONI; BUT HIS FATHER CALLED HIM BENJAMIN. R. Judah discoursed on the verse: The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him (Nahum I, 7). 'Happy', he said, 'is the man who finds his strength in the Holy One, blessed be He, since His strength is invincible. The Lord is indeed "good to all" (Ps. CXLV, 9), "a stronghold", wherein is salvation, as we read: "He is a stronghold of

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salvation" (Ibid. XXVIII, 8); "in the day of trouble", to wit, in the day of Israel's oppression at the hand of other nations. Now of him who relaxes his hold of the Holy

One, blessed be He, it is written: "If thou art faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is straitened" (Prov. XXIV, 10), and the only way of holding firmly to God is to hold firmly to the Torah; for whosoever holds firmly to the Torah holds firmly to the tree of life, and, as it were, adds strength to the community of Israel. But if he relaxes his hold of the Torah, then, as it were, he presses hard the Shekinah, which is the strength of the world. Again, when a man relaxes his hold of the Torah and walks in the wrong path, ever so many enemies are ready at hand to act as his accusers in the day of trouble, nay, even his own soul, which is his power and strength, turns against him, and becomes his enemy, so that it may be said of him "thy strength becomes an enemy" (zar=enemy, or straitened). Said R. Abba: "When a man follows the guidance of the Torah and walks in the straight path, many are the advocates that rise up to say a good word for him. Thus we read: "If there be for him an angel, an intercessor, one among a thousand, to vouch for man's uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith: Deliver him from the pit, I have found a ransom" (Job XXXIII, 23, 24). These verses', continued R. Abba, 'present a difficulty. Is not everything revealed before God, that He should require an angel to point out to Him the good or bad that is found in a man, so that only when a man has defenders on his side to recall his merits before Him, and no accusers, then He is gracious unto him, and saith: "Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom"? But the language of the text, if properly considered, contains the answer. For it would have sufficed to say: "If there be for him an angel"; who, then, is the "intercessor, one among a thousand"? It is one of the angels appointed to follow man on his left side. There are a thousand such, as it says, "A thousand may fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand" (Ps. XCI, 7). Now "one among a thousand" is a designation of the evil prompter, who is the outstanding figure of the thousand on the left, since he is the one who ascends on high and obtains authorisation. Hence, if a man walks in the way of truth and the evil prompter becomes his servant, according to the words, "Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant" (Prov. XII, 9), then he ascends on high and becomes the man's advocate, pleading his merits before God, whereupon God says: "Deliver him from going down into the pit." Nevertheless, the evil prompter does not return empty-handed, since another man is delivered into his power, one whose sins he has already set forth, and this one is a ransom for the other man. This is what is meant by the words: "I (God) have found a compensation" (for thee, the accuser). According to another interpretation, the ransom consists in the merits of the man, through which he is freed from the pit and from death. It is therefore incumbent on a man to walk in the path of truth so that the accuser should be turned into his defender. A similar procedure is employed by Israel on the Day of Atonement, when they tender a he-goat to the evil prompter and so engage his attention until he ascends and gives testimony before the Almighty, in their favour. Thus Solomon says: "If thine adversary be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" (Ibid. XXV, 21), referring to the evil prompter. The words: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble" apply to Jacob when Esau came forward to accuse him, and the words: "and he knoweth them that

put their trust in him" were exemplified when the trouble of Dinah befell him. Observe that the accuser attacks a man only in time of danger; and so it was on account of Jacob having delayed to fulfil his vows which he had made to God that the accuser came forward against him,

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selecting the moment when Rachel's life was in danger. "Behold," he said, "Jacob has made vows and has not paid them; he has wealth and children and is short of nothing, yet he has not paid his vow that he made before Thee; and Thou hast not punished him." Then straightway "Rachel travailed and she had hard labour", the term "hard" indicating that a severe doom was issued on high at the instigation of the angel of death.' AND RACHEL DIED . We have seen that Jacob, at the time Esau came up to him, put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. Why did he put Rachel hindermost? Because he feared that the wicked Esau might observe her beauty and assail him on account of her. It is written further: "Then the handmaids came near, they and their children, and they bowed down. And Leah also and her children came near, and bowed down", the females before the males. But in regard to Rachel it is written: "and after came Joseph near and Rachel", that is, Joseph in front of his mother, so as to protect her. And here Rachel was punished at the hand of the evil prompter, who availed himself of the moment of danger and brought accusations against her; and Jacob was punished for not having paid his vow. Jacob felt this blow more acutely than all the other sufferings that befell him. That her death was due to him we learn from his words: "Rachel died upon me" (Gen. XLVIII, 7), or, as we may translate, "on account of me", i.e. through my not having paid my vows. R. Jose said: 'It is written: "the curse that is causeless shall come home" (Prov. XXVI, 2). This signifies that the curse of a righteous man, even if pronounced under a misapprehension, once uttered is caught up by the evil prompter to be used at a moment of danger. Now Jacob said to Laban: "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, he shall not live" (Gen. XXXI, 32); and although he was unaware that it was Rachel who had stolen them, the Satan (adversary) who perpetually dogs the footsteps of the sons of men, seized on that utterance. Hence we are taught that a man should "never open his mouth for the Satan", inasmuch as the latter is sure to take hold of his utterance and use it to bring accusations on high and below; all the more so if it is the utterance of a righteous man or a sage. These, then, were the true causes of Rachel's death.' AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HER SOUL DEPARTED-FOR SHE DIED . R. Abba said: 'What need is there to state that she died, after it says that her soul departed? The object is to make it clear that her soul did not return again to her body, as sometimes happens with some people. Thus we read: "And his spirit returned unto him"; also: "And their heart departed" (Gen. XLII, 28); or: "My soul departed" (S. S. V, 6); again: "until there was no soul left in him" (I Kings XVII, 17). But when Rachel's soul passed out, it did not return, and so she died.' AND SHE CALLED HIS NAME BEN-ONI (the son of my sorrow), in reference to the doom that was pronounced against her; but Jacob turned him round

and attached him to the right (Benjamin=the son of the right hand), as the West (of which Benjamin was symbolic) needed to be bound up with the right. Thus, although he was Ben-oni (the son of sorrow), derived from the side of chastisement, yet was he also Benjamin (the son of the right), as the mother was bound up with the right and was buried by the road, as explained elsewhere. Rachel's death and burial-place are recorded, but neither the death nor the burial-place of Leah is recorded; and this although the matriarchs have a joint symbolism, which has been explained elsewhere. AND JACOB SET UP A PILLAR UPON HER GRAVE . R. Jose said: 'He did this in order that her burial-place should never be forgotten until the day when God shall raise the dead to life. This is borne out by the phrase: "unto this day", which means until that great day.' R. Judah said: 'It means, until the day when the Shekinah will return with the exiles of Israel to that spot, as it is written: "And there is hope for thy future, saith the Lord; and thy children shall return to their own border" (Jer. XXXI, 17). This is the oath which God swore unto her; and Israel are destined, when they return from exile, to stop at Rachel's grave and weep there as she wept over Israel's exile. It is thus written: "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them" (Ibid. 9); also: "for thy work shall be rewarded" (Ibid. 16). And at that

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time Rachel who lies on the way will rejoice with Israel and with the Shekinah. The Companions have thus expounded all this.' AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHILE ISRAEL DWELT IN THAT LAND, THAT REUBEN WENT AND LAY WITH BILHAH HIS FATHER'S CONCUBINE; AND ISRAEL HEARD OF IT. NOW THE SONS OF JACOB WERE TWELVE . R. Eleazar said: 'The term dwelt (sh'kon) indicates that Leah and Rachel had died by that time, and the house had been taken over by the new mistress (the Shekinah). In spite of the words of the text, we are not to suppose that Reuben really lay with Bilhah. The truth is that during the lives of Leah and Rachel the Shekinah hovered over them; and now that they had died the Shekinah never departed from the house, but took up there her abode, namely, in the tent of Bilhah; nor would it have been found there had not Jacob formed a new union of male and female. But Reuben, in his displeasure at seeing Bilhah filling his mother's place, came and disarranged the couch; and because the Shekinah rested on it, it is written, "And he lay with Bilhah".' R. Jesse said that Reuben laid himself down to sleep on that couch, thus showing disrespect to the Shekinah. Hence Reuben was not excluded from the list of the tribes; and so Scripture relates that "the sons of Jacob were twelve", commencing with Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, thus putting him at the head of the tribes.

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just do walk in them; but transgressors stumble therein (Hos. XIV, 10). 'All the ways of God', he said, 'are right and true, but mankind know not and regard not what it is that keeps them alive. Hence "the just do walk in them", because they know the ways of God, and they devote themselves to the Torah; for whoever devotes himself to the Torah knows those ways and follows them without turning

either to the right or the left. "But transgressors do stumble therein", to wit, the sinners, since they labour not in the Torah nor regard the ways of the Almighty, and know not in which way they are walking. And since they are thoughtless and do not study the Torah, they stumble in their ways in this world and in the world to come. Now the soul of one who has laboured in the study of the Torah, when it leaves this world, ascends by the ways and paths of the Torah-ways and paths familiar to them. They who know the ways and paths of the Torah in this world follow them in the other world when they leave this world. But those who do not study the Torah in this world and know not its ways and paths, when they leave this world know not how to follow those ways and paths, and hence stumble therein. They thus follow other ways which are not the ways of the Torah, and are visited with many chastisements. Of him who devotes himself to the Torah, on the other hand, it is written: "When thou liest down, it shall watch over thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Prov. VI, 22). "When thou liest down", to wit, in the grave, the Torah shall watch over thee against the judgement of the other world; "and when thou awakest", that is, when the Holy One, blessed be He, will awake the spirits and souls so as to bring the dead to life again, it shall talk with thee, the Torah will speak in defence of the body, so that those bodies which laboured to keep the Torah as required will rise up. These it is who will be the first to rise up, and of whom it is written: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, etc." (Dan. XII, 2), for the reason that they occupied themselves with everlasting life, which is the Torah. Further, all the bodies of those who have devoted themselves to the Torah will be preserved, and the Torah will protect them, inasmuch as at that time the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise up a wind from all four quarters of the world, a wind specially prepared to bring to life all those who have laboured in the Torah so that they should live for ever. It may be asked here, what of the dead who were revived by the prophet's invocation, "Come from the four winds, O breath" (Ez. XXXVII, 9), and who yet did not survive, but died a second time? The answer is that at that time, although the wind was compounded of all four winds, it did not come down to give them permanent life, but only to demonstrate the mode in which God will one day bring the dead to life, namely, by a wind

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formed in this fashion. So that although those who were then resurrected turned again into bones, since their resurrection was only meant as a proof to the world that God will one day raise the dead to life, we may still believe that at the proper time the righteous will be resurrected for an everlasting life. For the Torah itself will stand by each one of those who have occupied themselves in the study of the Torah, recounting his merits before the Almighty.' R. Simeon said: 'All the words of the Torah, and all the doctrine of the Torah to which a man devotes his mind in this world, are ever before the Almighty, and at that time the Torah will recount how the man devoted himself to the Torah in this world, and thereat such men will all rise for everlasting life, as we said already.' Thus, "the ways of the Lord are right, and the just do walk in them; but

transgressors do stumble therein.”

R. Hiya cited in this connection: “Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting” (I Sam. II, 22). ‘Are we to believe’, he said, ‘that the priests of the Lord actually did such a thing? And what, in fact, were their sins as recorded by the Scripture? Merely that they “dealt contemptuously with the offering of the Lord” (Ibid. 17), and that “the custom of the priests with the people was that, when any man offered sacrifice.... Yea, before the fat was made to smoke, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed: Give flesh to roast for the priest.... Nay, but thou shalt give it to me now, and if not, I will take it by force” (Ibid. 16). In fact, they only took those portions that belonged to the priests, and it was only because they treated lightly the offerings that they were punished. Yet here Scripture states that “they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting”. Assuredly they could not have committed so grave a sin, and that in so sacred a place, without the whole of Israel arising and slaying them. The truth is that what they did was to prevent the women from entering and offering their prayers until the other sacrifices had been offered, because their offerings were of a kind in which the priests had no portion. It is this action of preventing them from entering the sanctuary which is described by the words: “they lay with the women, etc.” Similarly, in the case of Reuben, we should not dream of taking literally the words “and he lay with Bilhah”. What he did was to prevent her from performing her conjugal duty to his father, and this was the object of his disarranging his father's couch; and, moreover, he did it in the presence of the Shekinah; for the Shekinah is always present whenever marital intercourse is performed as a religious duty; and whoever obstructs such a performance causes the Shekinah to depart from the world. So Scripture says: “Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then profanedst thou that one that went up to my couch” (Gen. XLIX, 4). Hence it is written: “that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine; and Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve”; that is to say, they were all included in the number, and their merit was in no wise abated.’

R. Eleazar asked: ‘Why do we find in this verse first the name Israel and then the name Jacob? The reason may be given as follows. Reuben said to himself: “My father was intended to raise twelve tribes and no more, yet now he is about to beget more children. Does he then wish to disqualify us and replace us with others?” So straightway he disarranged the couch and prevented the intended intercourse, thereby slighting, as it were, the honour of the Shekinah that hovered over that couch. Hence it is written first “and Israel heard”, since it was by that name that he was exalted among the twelve hidden ones which are the twelve pure rivers of balsam, and then “and the sons of Jacob were twelve”, alluding to the twelve tribes by whom the Shekinah was adorned and whom the Torah again enumerated

as before, implying that they were all of them holy, all of them considered by the Shekinah worthy to behold the sanctity of their Master; for had Reuben really committed the act mentioned, he would not have been included in the number. For all that, he was punished by being deprived of the birthright and by its transference to Joseph, as we read: “And the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel—for he was the first-born; but forasmuch as he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph” (I Chron. VI). We see from this how all that God does is planned with profound wisdom, and every act of a man leaves its imprint and is preserved before the Almighty. For on the night when Jacob went in to Leah, all his thoughts were centred upon Rachel, and from that intercourse, and from the first germ, and under that intention Leah conceived; and we have affirmed that had not Jacob been unaware of the deception, Reuben would not have entered into the number. It is for that reason that he did not receive a name of special significance, but was simply called Reuben (reuben=behold, a son). But for all that, the intended effect was produced, and the birthright reverted to the eldest son of Rachel, as originally purposed. Thus everything came right in the end, for all the works of the Almighty are based on truth and right.’

R. Hizkiah one day found R. Jose cooking a dish from which grease was dripping on to the fire, sending up a cloud of smoke. He said then to him: ‘If the pillars of smoke which used once to ascend from the top of the altar had continued to go up like this smoke, wrath would not have descended on the world and Israel would not have been exiled from their land.’ R. Jose then opened a discourse on the verse: Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant (S. S. III, 6). ‘When Israel’, he said, ‘were journeying in the wilderness, the Shekinah went in front of them, as it is written: “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light” (Ex. XIII, 22). They on their side followed its guidance; wherefore it is written: “Thus saith the Lord: I remember thee the affection of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the wilderness, etc.” (Jer. II, 2). The Shekinah was accompanied by all the clouds of glory, and when it journeyed the Israelites took up their march, as it says: “And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tent, then after that the children of Israel journeyed, etc.” (Num. IX, 17). And when the Shekinah ascended, the cloud also ascended on high, so that all men looked up and asked: “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?” For the cloud of the Shekinah looked like smoke because the fire which Abraham and his son Isaac kindled clung to it and never left it, and by reason of that fire it ascended both as cloud and smoke; but for all that it was “perfumed”, or, as we may also translate, “bound up with myrrh and frankincense”, that is, with the cloud of Abraham on the right and with the cloud of Isaac on the left. The words “with all powders of the merchant” allude to Jacob, or, according to another explanation, to Joseph, whose bier accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness, and the designation rokhel (merchant or tale-bearer) is given to him because he brought evil reports of his

brethren to their father; or, again, because just as the seller of spices keeps his herbs and spices in bundles, so Joseph through one action kept the whole of the Torah, since all the precepts of the Torah are bound up with the preservation of the holy covenant in its integrity. The Shekinah was thus leagued with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob together with Joseph, inasmuch as the two latter are one in essence, each one being the image of the other, as indicated in the words: "These are the offspring of Jacob: Joseph" (Gen. XXXVII, 2). Now, when the Israelites dwelt in their land and brought offerings, they all drew themselves nearer to God in manner due; and when the work of sacrifice was performed and the smoke of the altar ascended in a straight column, they knew that it had kindled

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the lamp which they desired to kindle, and so all faces shone and all lamps were lit. But since the destruction of the Temple not a day passes but is visited with wrath and rage, as it says: "and God hath indignation every day" (Ps. VII, 12), and joy has departed from on high and from below, and Israel have gone into exile and are subject to other gods, and the words of Scripture have been fulfilled, saying: "and there thou shalt serve other gods" (Deut. XXVIII, 64). Why all this? "Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemy, etc., in want of all things" (Ibid. XXVIII, 47-48). And so it will be until God will arise and redeem them from among the nations, as we read: "then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine that are dispersed be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, etc." (Ibid. XXX, 3-4). NOW THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU-THE SAME IS EDOM. The Scripture does not enumerate the sons of Esau until after it has recorded the death of Isaac, whereas Jacob's sons were enumerated long before. The reason for the distinction is this. Esau had neither portion nor inheritance nor lot in Isaac, but only Jacob and his sons. Jacob and his sons are therefore the portion of the Holy One, blessed be He, and they enter into the reckoning; but Esau, who was not of the portion of the side of true faith, made up his account, as it were, after the death of Isaac, and his portion parted and took its course to another region. Observe that after Isaac died and Esau retired to his own side, it is written: "And Esau took his wives... and went into a land away from his brother Jacob", that is, he relinquished to Jacob both the capital and the profit, or, in other words, the bondage of Egypt and the land, and he sold his own portion in the cave of Machpelah, and went away from the land and from the true faith, abandoning all completely. Observe, then, how much Jacob's portion was thus enhanced in every respect, in that Esau did not remain with him, but parted from him and went away to his own portion and lot, so that Jacob was left in possession of the heritage of his father and of his ancestors. Hence: "and he went into a land away from his brother Jacob", the last phrase indicating that he had no desire for Jacob's portion or

inheritance or his meed of faith. Happy the portion of Jacob, of whom the Scripture says: "For the portion of the Lord is his people, Jacob the lot of his inheritance" (Ibid. XXXII, 9). AND THESE ARE THE KINGS THAT REIGNED IN THE LAND OF EDOM, BEFORE THERE REIGNED ANY KING OVER THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. R. Jesse discoursed on the verse: Behold, I make thee small among the nations, thou art greatly despised (Ob. I, 2). 'When God', he said, 'made the world, He divided it into seven regions corresponding to the seventy Chieftains whom He placed in charge over the seventy nations, assigning to each the nation appropriate to him, as we read: "He set the borders of the peoples, according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. XXXII, 8); and of all those Chieftains who were given charge over the other nations no one is so much despised before Him as the Chieftain of Esau. The reason of this is that the side of Esau is the side of defilement; and the side of defilement is despicable before the Holy One, blessed be He, as it springs from those base grades that are behind the empty millstones of the red custodians. Hence, God said to it: "Behold, I make thee small among the nations; thou art greatly despised", as it is written: "upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. III, 14), and also: "cursed be thou from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field" (Ibid.) Observe that the lower grades form a hierarchy, one above the other, and each different from the other, yet all linked and interlocked with each other. So is kingdom separate from kingdom, yet is each linked to the other. All the grades are held, as it were, by one chain of a certain measurement, which in its turn is divided into three smaller chains which reach down and are tied to the stars and planets, so that each grade is assigned one

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star or planet. Those stars in their turn operate under the grades above. Every grade has thus charge of its own proper region, and, when they diverge, a chain is formed by which each grade is bound to its proper side. The sides of the unclean grades, which are on the left side, diverge all of them into numerous ways and paths and distribute their power to thousands and myriads in the lower world; and in reference to this it was said to Edom: "Behold, I make thee small among the nations; thou art greatly despised." Now, in the text, "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom", the words "in the land" indicate the side of his grade, that is, the grade of Esau, since it is written: "Esau- the same is Edom." All these things were thus from the side of the unclean spirit; and they were "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel", inasmuch as they embody the grades that stand first at the lower gates. It was this that Jacob had in mind when he said "Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant" (Gen. XXXIII, 14), since Esau's grades were the first to gain an entrance. They thus reigned before there was any king over Israel, for as yet the time had not arrived for the kingdom of heaven to enter into power and to league itself with the children of Israel. When it did, it began with the least of the tribes, which was Benjamin, as it says: "There is Benjamin, the youngest, ruling them, etc." (Ps. LXVIII, 28), and with him the kingdom began to advance. After that the kingdom came into its



own place and was established, never to be removed.'

R. Hiya discoursed on the verses: Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant, and Israel, whom I have chosen; thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb, who will help thee: Fear not, O Jacob my servant, and thou Jeshurun, whom I have chosen (Is. XLIV, 1-2). 'Observe', he said, 'how God has promised Israel in many places to make them worthy of the world to come, as He has not chosen for his portion any other people or language, but only Israel. It was for this purpose that He gave them the Torah of truth, by whose means they may live virtuously and learn the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, so that they may inherit the Holy Land; for whoever is thought worthy of the Holy Land has a portion in the world to come. So Scripture says: "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever" (Ibid. LX, 21). Now, in the verses above quoted three grades are mentioned: first Jacob, then Israel, and finally Jeshurun. Jacob and Israel have been explained. Jeshurun suggests the word shur (row, side) and indicates that he has his rank on this side and on the other. The three names, though representing different grades, are really the same. Jacob is called "my servant" because sometimes he is like a servant who has orders from his master and is eager to execute his will. We read elsewhere: "the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel" (Ibid. XLIII, 1), and in the above verse we read: "Thus saith the Lord that made thee." We have thus herein the terms "crested", "formed", and "made", which represent different grades, one above the other, but which all are essentially one. Happy the portion of Israel in whom the Holy One, blessed be He, finds delight above all the nations who worship idols, of which it is written: "They are vanity, a work of delusion; in the time of their visitation they shall perish" (Jer. X, 15). That will come to pass on the day when God will destroy them from the world, so that He alone will remain, as it says: "And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Is. II, 11).'

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel (Ibid. XLI, 14). 'Observe', he said, 'that all the Gentiles have been placed by the Almighty under the charge of certain tutelary Chieftains, as already stated, and that they all follow their own gods, as it is written: "For all the peoples walk each one in the name of its god" (Micah IV, 5); and they are addicted to bloodshed and warfare, to robbery, violence, and fornication,

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and other kinds of wickedness, and use all their power to injure and do harm. Israel, on their part, have no force or power to overcome them save in their mouth, like to the worm which has no strength or power except in its mouth, by which, however, it wears through everything. Hence Israel are called "worm". Or again, as the silkworm, that precious creature which produces from itself a fine thread out of which is woven the costliest kingly raiment, leaves behind before it dies a seed out of which it comes to life as before; so Israel, although they seemingly die, always re-emerge and persist in the world as before. So Scripture says:

"Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel" (Jer. XVIII, 6). The term homer (clay) signifies in reality the material of glass which, when broken, can be refounded and made whole as before. "Fear not... men of Israel", they being the tree of life, for since the children have engrafted themselves on the tree of life, they will arise from the dust and will be established in the world as one united people to worship the Holy One, blessed be He, in harmony with the words: "That they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. III, 9).'

R. Eleazar and R. Isaac were one day travelling on the road together when the time for the reading of the Shema arrived. R. Eleazar paused and recited the Shema and said his prayer. After he had finished, R. Isaac said to him: 'Have we not learnt that before a man starts on a journey he must first ask leave from his Master and offer up his prayer?' R. Eleazar said in reply: 'When I left it was not yet time either for the reading of the Shema or for saying prayers. Now that the sun has risen I have said my prayer. But all the same, before commencing my journey I did offer a prayer to Him and consulted Him, as it were. I, however, did not say this prayer because I have been occupied in studying the Torah since midnight, and from the early dawn up to now it was not yet the time for prayer, for while the morning is still dark the Wife is conversing with her Husband, being about to retire to her tent, where her maidens keep her company. Hence no man should then interrupt them and break in with other words. Now, however, that the sun has risen it is the time for prayer, as it is written: "They shall fear thee with the sunrise" (Ps. LXXII, 5), which indicates the close connection between fear of God, or devotion, and the light of the sun, which makes it incumbent on man not to part them, but to associate them together.' The two then proceeded on their way, until they arrived at a field, where they sat down. Raising their eyes, they saw a mountain, on the top of which they discerned strange creatures moving about. R. Isaac began to tremble. Said R. Eleazar to him: 'Why are you afraid?' He answered: 'Because this mountain looks so formidable and on it are strange creatures, which I fear will attack us.' R. Eleazar then said to him: 'Whoever is afraid of his sins has cause to fear. Those creatures are not of the dangerous kind that haunt the mountains.' He then began to discourse on the verse: AND THESE ARE THE CHILDREN OF ZIBEON: AIAH AND ANAH-THIS IS ANAH WHO FOUND THE YEMIM IN THE WILDERNESS. In regard to this verse,' he said, 'it is agreed that these yemim are not the same as the Emim mentioned in the verse: "The Emim dwelt therein aforesaid... but the children of Esau succeeded them" (Deut. II, 10-11). They were an unnatural kind of being which was first created from the side of evil spirits and goblins at the moment when the Sabbath was about to be sanctified, and they remained unsubstantial and bodiless, since neither the sixth day nor the seventh day would own them.

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When, however, Cain was driven from the face of the earth and dwelt in the land of Nod, they spread from his side and became corporeal, but not for any length of

time. They are therefore called yamim (days), spelt in the same way as yemim here, without a yod, in allusion to the fact that they appear occasionally to men as they haunt the mountains, and for one moment in the day assume bodily shape, but forthwith lose it again. Anah found them and they taught him to bring bastards into the world. For Anah himself was a bastard, the offspring of an incestuous intercourse between Zibeon and his own mother; and this came about through the side of the unclean spirit that attached itself to him. Those and numerous other monstrous beings of many varieties are derived from that side and roam about in the wilderness and can be seen there, as the wilderness is a desolate place and therefore is a suitable haunt for them. For all that, whoever walks in the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, and fears Him, has no cause to fear them.' The two then went on and ascended the mountain. Said R. Isaac: 'Are they found in all desert mountains like these?' Said R. Eleazar: 'That is so, but of all those who labour in the Torah it is written: "The Lord shall keep thee from all evil; he shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and for ever" (Ps. CXXI, 74).

R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: Hallelukah (praise ye the Lord). I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, in the council of the upright, and in the congregation. (Ps. CXI, 1). 'King David', he said, 'daily devoted himself to the worship of the Almighty, and he would rise at midnight and sing hymns and songs of praise and thanksgiving, so as to establish his place in the kingdom above. For as soon as the north wind began to blow at midnight he knew that the moment had come when God rose, as it were, to disport Himself with the righteous in the Garden of Eden; so he arose at that moment and busied himself with songs and thanksgivings until the morning. For, as we have affirmed, when the Holy One, blessed be He, appears in the Garden of Eden, He and all the righteous in the Garden of Eden listen to the voice of the suppliant, as we read: "The companions hearken for thy voice, cause me to hear it" (S. S. VIII, 13); and, moreover, a thread of grace is woven round him during the day, as it is written: "By day the Lord will command his lovingkindness, and in the night his song shall be with me" (Ps. XLII, 9). And furthermore, all the words of the Torah which one utters in the night ascend and are woven into a garland before the Almighty. King David therefore devoted himself during the night to the service of his Master. Observe the heading Hallelukah (praise ye the Lord), for we have learned that of all the titles that David affixed to his songs and hymns, the most excellent was Hallelukah, embracing as it does in one single word the name of God and the call to praise, the name being Kah, and the praise coming from the Community of Israel, who continually compose thanksgivings to the Holy One, blessed be He, as we read: "O God, there is no silence for thee; hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God" (Ps. LXXXIII, 2), because the Community of Israel continually arranges and offers up its thanksgivings to Him. Now we read further: "I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart (lebab)", that is, as already explained, with the good and the evil prompter, who are always with a man: "in the council of the upright, and in the congregation" is an allusion to Israel, who are adorned

with all grades-priests and Levites, the just and the pious. It is the same congregation of which we read: "God standeth in the congregation of God" (Ps. LXXXII, 1). Hence a man should continually offer praise to God, since He takes delight in songs and hymns, and when a man knows how to offer praise to God in the proper manner, He accepts his prayer and delivers him, as we read: "I will set him on high, because he hath known my name... With long life will I satisfy him, etc." (Ibid. XCI, 14-16).'

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: Thou art my hiding-place; thou wilt preserve me from the adversary; with songs of deliverance thou wilt compass me about. Selah (Ibid. XXXII, 7). 'It is God', he said, 'who is a hiding-place and a shield to the man that walks in the ways of the Torah; such a man is covered by the shadow of His wings so that no one can do him mischief. "Thou wilt preserve me from the adversary"; that is, from the adversary on high and from the adversary here below, both of whom are one and the same evil prompter,

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who is the opponent above and the opponent below; and if not for the evil prompter, man would have no adversary in the world. "With songs of deliverance thou wilt compass me about" is an allusion to those songs that possess grades of potency to save; with which, therefore, "Thou wilt compass me about" to afford me deliverance when on a journey. (This verse is efficacious whether read forwards or backwards.) Observe that all the songs and hymns that David sang contain deep allusions of wisdom, because he composed them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which alone it was that prompted him.'

R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall; but the Lord helped me (Ibid. CXVIII, 13). 'We should have expected', he said, ' "they did thrust sore at me" instead of "thou didst, etc." But, in truth, this alludes to the "other side" that continually thrusts at a man, and tries to seduce him and lead him astray from God; the same is, indeed, the evil prompter who follows man about. It is to him that David addressed the words, "thou didst thrust sore at me", seeing that he endeavoured by means of all sorts of afflictions to turn him aside from God. David thus said: "Thou didst thrust sore at me-to cause me to fall into Gehinnom-but the Lord helped me-so that I was not delivered into thy hand." It is, hence, incumbent on a man to be on his guard against the evil prompter, so that he shall not obtain the mastery over him; such a man God guards in all his ways, as it is written: "Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely, and thou shalt not dash thy foot" (Prov. III, 23), also: "When thou goest thy step shall not be straitened; and if thou runnest thou shalt not stumble" (Ibid. IV, 12); and also: "But the path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Ibid. v, 18).'

Said R. Judah: 'Happy are Israel whom the Holy One, blessed be He, preserves in this world and in the world to come, as it is written: "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever" (Is. LX,

21). Blessed be the Lord, for evermore. Amen and Amen!

### VAYESHEB

AND JACOB DWELT IN THE LAND OF HIS FATHER'S SOJOURNINGS, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN . R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: Many are the ills of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all (Ps. XXXIV, 20). 'Many, indeed', he said, 'are the adversaries with whom a human being has to contend from the day that God breathes into him a soul in this world. For as soon as he emerges into the light of day, the evil prompter is at hand in readiness to join him, according to our interpretation of the verse: "Sin coucheth at the door" (Gen. IV, 7). In proof whereof note that the beasts from the day they are born are able to take care of themselves, and avoid fire and similar dangers, whereas man, on the other hand, seems to feel at first a natural propensity to throw himself into the fire, the reason being that the evil prompter dwells within him and from the beginning lures him into evil ways. So Scripture says: "Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who knoweth not how to receive admonition any more" (Eccl. IV, 13). The "child" here signifies the good prompter, who is so called because he is, as it were, a youngster by the side of man, whom he does not join till he is at the age of thirteen years, as elsewhere affirmed. He is better, then, than "an old and foolish king", to wit, the evil prompter, who is called king and ruler over the sons of men, and who is assuredly old, since, as already said, so soon as a man is born and sees the light of day he

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attaches himself to him; and he is foolish, not knowing how to receive admonition, since, as Solomon says of him also, "the fool walketh in darkness" (Ibid. II, 14). Indeed, he comes from the very quarry of darkness, and light is for ever a stranger to him.' R. Simeon said: 'It has been laid down that the "poor child" here is the good prompter, the same as he who said of himself: "I have been young, and now am old" (Ps. XXXVII, 25). He is called "poor child", as he has no possession whatever of his own, and is called "youth" for the reason that he is constantly renewed in the same way as the moon; also he is wise, since wisdom dwells within him. He is better than the "old king", who is the evil prompter, as already said, since from his first emergence he has never rid himself of his impurity, and he is foolish in that all his steps are toward the evil ways, and he turns the sons of men from the right path, employing all kinds of pretexts to divert them from the good way to the evil. And he hastens to join man on the very day he is born, in order that man may come to believe in him, and that when the good prompter arrives later he may be loth to believe him and think him a burden. Similarly our teachers have defined a "cunning wicked man" to be one who comes first to the judge and pleads his cause before his opponent arrives; as Scripture says: "He that pleadeth his cause first seemeth just, etc." (Prov. XVIII, 17). In the same way the evil prompter is cunningly wicked, as we read: "And the serpent was more cunning, etc." (Gen. III, 1), and so he arrives first to take up his abode with man,

and make his case plausible to him,. so that when his fellow, that is, the good prompter, arrives, he finds himself obnoxious to man, and is not able to raise his head, as though he were bowed down with a heavy burden, because of that cunningly wicked one who has got the start of him. Hence the words of Solomon: "the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard" (Eccl. IX, 16), because the other has anticipated him. Hence for a judge to receive the pleadings of one litigant in the absence of the other is like acknowledging strange gods. But the way of the righteous judge is to wait till "his neighbour cometh and searcheth him out" (Prov. XVIII, 17). Similarly the righteous man is he who does not put credence in the evil prompter, but first waits for the arrival of the good prompter. For neglecting to do this the sons of man will stumble in the world to come. The righteous man, on the other hand, endures in this world many trials for not believing in and not associating himself with the evil prompter, but the Holy One, blessed be He, delivers him from all ills, as it says: "Many are the ills of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Ps. XXXIV, 20). For God finds delight in such a man and delivers him from all ills in this world and in the world to come. Happy is his portion! See how many ills befell Jacob in his effort not to be drawn to the evil prompter, and to keep himself far from his portion; and for this he endured many afflictions and ills without respite.' R. Hiya applied to Jacob the verse: I was not at ease, neither was I quiet, neither had I rest; but trouble came (Job. III, 26). 'How many ills and sufferings,' he said, 'one after another come upon the righteous in this world that they may merit the world to come. Jacob was one of them, and could say of himself, "I was not at ease" in the house of Laban, from whom I could not escape; "neither was I quiet" on account of Esau, through the pain inflicted on me by his Chieftain, and later on through fear of himself; "neither had I rest" in the affair of Dinah and Shechem; "but trouble came", to wit, the trouble and confusion of the loss of Joseph, which was the worst of all, on account of his love for Joseph.' AND JACOB DWELT IN THE LAND OF HIS FATHER'S SOJOURNINGS, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN .

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R. Jose discoursed here on the verse: The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and godly men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come (Is. LVII, 1). 'When God', he said, 'surveys the world and finds it misbehaving and meet for chastisement, He first removes from it any righteous man that is present in it, so that chastisement should be visited on all the others and there should be none to shield them. For as long as there is a righteous man in the world chastisement cannot befall it, as we learn from Moses, of whom it is written: "Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, etc." (Ps. CVI, 23). God thus first removes the righteous from the world, and only then collects His account, as it were. We thus translate the conclusion of the verse: "the righteous is taken away before (mitne') the evil to come", that is, before the evil is due to befall. (According to another interpretation, "from the evil to come" is an allusion to the evil prompter.) Observe now

that although the galuth was already due in the life-time of Jacob, yet because he was a righteous man-the perfection of the patriarchs-the sentence was postponed; for whilst he was alive punishment could not befall the world, and even the famine of Egypt ceased on his arrival. Neither did the exile really commence during the life-time of Joseph, since he was the image of his father, but as soon as he died the captivity began in earnest, as it says: "And Joseph died... come, let us deal wisely with them... and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, etc." (Ex. I, 6-14). Similarly, wherever a righteous man exists, God for his sake shields the world, and during his life-time no chastisement falls on the world; and so we affirm.' AND JACOB DWELT IN THE LAND OF HIS FATHER'S SOJOURNINGS . The term m'gure (sojournings) can be rendered "apprehensions", being akin to the term magor in the phrase magor misabib, "a terror on every side" (Jer. VI, 25), and so indicates that Jacob passed all his life in fear and anxiety. THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB: JOSEPH, ETC. When Jacob was brought to rest in Joseph, and so the sun was united with the moon, then there commenced a production of offspring, the progenitor being Joseph. For it is that perennially flowing stream which fructifies the earth and from which generations are propagated in the world. For the sun, even when he approaches the moon, cannot cause vegetation without the help of that grade which goes under the name of Righteous (Zaddik). It was, then, Joseph who was the grade of Jacob to bear fruit and bring forth offspring in the world. Hence: "These are the generations (tol'doth, lit. offspring) of Jacob: Joseph." Or, again, we may take the words to signify that whoever looked at Joseph thought he was looking at Jacob. Hence this form of expression is used only in connection with Joseph and not with any other of Jacob's sons-it is not written, for instance, "These are the offspring of Jacob: Reuben", the reason being that Joseph was the exact image of his father. BEING SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD . R. Abba said: This number of seventeen is significant, corresponding as it does to the seventeen years of joy and honour which Jacob lived in Egypt, with all his sons round him and Joseph as king, and which God vouchsafed him in return for the years during which he mourned for Joseph, and did not see him.'

R. Hiya discoursed on the text: Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: Far be it from God that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity. For the work

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of man will he requite unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways (Job XXXIV, 10-11). 'God,' he said, 'in creating the world, meant it to be based on justice, and all that is done in the world would be weighed in the scales of justice, were it not that, to save the world from perishing, God screened it with mercy, which tempers pure justice and prevents it from destroying the world. The world is thus governed in mercy and thereby is able to endure. But, you may ask, is not a man often punished by God undeservedly? The answer is, as has been affirmed, that when suffering befalls a righteous man, it is on account of the love

which God bears to him. He crushes his body in order to give more power to his soul, so that He may draw him nearer in love. For it is needful that the body should be weak and the soul strong, that so a man may be beloved of God, as the Companions have affirmed, that the Holy One inflicts suffering on the righteous in this world in order that they may merit the world to come. But he who is weak of soul and strong of body is hated of God. It is because God has no pleasure in him that He inflicts no pain upon him in this world, but permits his life to flow smoothly along with ease and comfort, in that for any virtuous act he may perform he receives his reward in this world, so that no portion should be left him in the next world. This is in accordance with Onkelos's paraphrase of the text: "And he repayeth them that hate him to their face" (Deut. VII, 10), which reads: "And he repayeth them that hate him in this world." The righteous man, then, who is continually broken in body is the beloved of the Holy One, blessed be He.

Now various difficulties are raised by this statement. In the first place we know that the Shekinah does not dwell amid sad surroundings, but only where there is cheerfulness. For this reason Elisha said: "But now bring me a minstrel, and so it came to pass that when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came upon him" (II Kings III, 15), and we learn the same lesson from Jacob, from whom the Shekinah departed during the years that he was grieving for Joseph, but to whom it returned as soon as the glad tidings about Joseph reached him, when, as it says, "the spirit of Jacob their father revived" (Gen. XLV, 27). That being so, where, we may ask, is the cheerful spirit in the righteous man who is broken in body, seeing that he is tormented by his sufferings? And further, do we not know of many righteous men, beloved by the Almighty, who were never a prey to acute suffering or physical weakness? Why this discrimination? Why should these be physical wrecks and the others hale and hearty? One explanation given is that the latter were born of righteous parents, whereas the former, although themselves righteous, were not children of righteous parents. But the facts are against this, since we see many righteous men who are the sons of righteous parents, and who nevertheless are afflicted with bodily ills and are lifelong sufferers. But there is a deep mystery involved here, inasmuch as all the ways of God are based on truth and righteousness. In connection with this verse I have found in the books of the ancients a mystical doctrine, and next to it another mystical doctrine, both being in essence one and the same. It amounts to the following. There is a period when the moon is defective, judgement being visited upon her, and the sun being concealed from her. Now it is the moon that at all times and seasons releases souls to enter the sons of men-she having previously gathered them for the purpose. Of those souls, then, which she releases during the period that she is under sentence, every one will always be the victim of degradation and poverty and suffer other chastisements, irrespective of whether he be sinful or righteous. (Prayer, however, can avert any sentence of punishment.) But those souls which the moon sends forth when she is in the grade of completeness, and the perennially flowing stream plays about her, are destined to enjoy abundance of all good things-of

riches, children, and bodily health-and all on account

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of the allotment (mazzal) that flowed forth and joined itself to that grade in order to be perfected and blessed by it. We see thus that all things are dependent on allotment (mazzal), according to the dictum: "Children, life, and livelihood do not depend on a man's merits, but on mazzal." Hence all those who are sorely afflicted in this world in spite of being truly righteous suffer through the mischance of their soul; but in compensation the Holy One, blessed be He, has compassion on them in the world to come.' R. Eleazar said: 'All the acts of the Almighty are in accordance with justice, and His purpose is to purify that soul from the scum that adheres to it in this world, so as to bring it into the world to come. When the body is crushed the soul is purified, and so God brings pains and sufferings on the righteous man in this world in order that he may gain k life everlasting. In this regard it is written: "The Lord trieth the righteous, etc." (Ps. XI, 5).'

R. Simeon said: 'It is written: "Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my holy places, because I am the Lord who sanctify them" (Lev. XXI, 23). When the perennial stream releases human souls, and the Female becomes pregnant, they all range themselves within the edifice. Now all those that go forth at the period when the moon is defective by reason of the evil serpent, although pure and holy, become bruised and defective in whatever place they reach, and have to undergo pain and suffering. And these are the souls in whom the Holy One finds delight in spite of their being sad instead of joyful. Esoterically speaking they are a counterpart of something above, the body being impaired and the soul being within after the supernal pattern, each corresponding to each, and these are the souls that require to be renewed with the renewal of the moon, and hence it is written concerning them: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me" (Is. LXVI, 23), the word "all" signifying that these souls will be renewed wholly with the renewal of the moon. For they are partners, as it were, with the defective moon, for which reason she dwells in them always, without leaving them, in allusion to which the Scripture says: "I dwell... with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit... to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Is. LVII, 15), also: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart" (Ps. XXXIV, 19). These verses refer to those who are fellow-sufferers with the moon in her defect, and regarding whom it is fitly said, "to revive the heart of the contrite ones", that is, to make those who participated in the sufferings of the moon also participate in the new life to be bestowed on her in the future. Such sufferings undergone by them are called "sufferings in token of love". Happy is their portion in this world and in the world to come when they will be privileged to be partners with her, in allusion to which it is written: "For my brethren and companions' sakes, etc." (Ibid. CXXII, 8).'

R. Simeon further discoursed on the text: Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted

up, and shall be very high (Is. LII, 13). 'Happy is the portion of the righteous', he said, 'to whom the Holy One reveals the ways of the Torah that they may walk in them. This verse contains an esoteric meaning. When God created the world, He made the moon, and made her small, for she possesses no light of her own, but because she accepted her diminution she receives reflected light from the sun and from the other superior luminaries. Now, as long as the Temple existed, Israel were assiduous in bringing offerings, which together with all the other services performed by the priests, Levites, and Israelites had for their object to weave bonds of union and to cause luminaries to radiate. But after the Temple was destroyed there was a darkening of the lights, the moon ceased to receive light from the sun, the latter

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having withdrawn himself from her, so that not a day passes but is full of grievous distress and afflictions. The time, however, will come for the moon to resume her primordial light, and in allusion to this it is written: "Behold, my servant will prosper." That is to say, there will be a stirring in the upper realms as of one who catches a sweet odour and stands alert. "He shall be exalted", from the side of the most exalted luminaries; "and lifted up", from the side of Abraham; "and shall be high", from the side of Isaac; "very", from the side of Jacob. At that time, then, the Holy One will cause a stirring on high with the object of enabling the moon to shine with her full splendour, as we read: "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of the seven days" (Ibid. XXX, 26). There will thus be added to the moon an exalted spirit whereby all the dead that are in the dust will be awakened. This is the esoteric meaning of "my servant", viz. the one that has in his hand the key of his Master.

So, too, in the verse: "And Abraham said unto his servant, etc." (Gen. XXIV, 2), the servant is an allusion to the moon as already explained. Also, the servant is identical with Metatron, who is the servant and messenger of his Master, and who was, as we read further, the elder of his house, the same who is alluded to in the text: "I have been young, and now am old" (Ps. XXXVII, 25). "That ruled over all that he had"; this applies to the same Metatron by reason of his displaying the three colours, green, white, and red. "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh"; this is symbolic of the foundation of the world, for this servant was destined to bring to life again the dwellers in the dust, and to be made the messenger by the spirit from on high to restore the spirits and souls to their places, to the bodies that were decomposed underneath the dust. We read further: "and I will make thee swear (veashbe'akha) by the Lord, the God of heaven", the term veashbe'akha implying that the servant will be invested with the mystery of the seven (sheba') celestial lights which constitute the mystery of sublime perfection. Further: "that thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites." The "wife" is an allusion to the body lying underground, and "to my son" is an allusion to the soul, inasmuch as all the souls that issue from the celestial everflowing river are the children of the Holy One, blessed be He. The

servant is thus bidden “not to take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites”, or, in other words, not to take for a soul any of the bodies of the idolatrous nations whom the Holy One will in the future shake out of the Holy Land, as we read: “and the wicked be shaken out of it” (Job XXXVIII, 13), as one shakes dust from his garment. The servant is further bidden: “But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred.” “To my country” has already been explained; “to my kindred” is an allusion to Israel. Observe now what is written further: “And the servant took ten camels.” The “servant” we have already identified; “ten camels” represent the ten grades over which the servant exercises dominion, and which are after the supernal pattern; “of the camels of his master”, to wit, an exact pattern of the superior degrees, as already said; “having all goodly things of his master’s in his hand”, to wit, all the supernal spirits that emerge from the supernal luminaries; “and he arose and went to Aram-Naharaim”, to wit, the spot in the Holy Land where Rachel wept at the time the Temple was destroyed. “And he made the camels to kneel down without the city by the well of water”, that is, he fortified the energy of the souls before their entering into the bodies for their revival; “at the time of evening”, to wit, the eve of Sabbath,

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which is the sixth millennium, the same period as that alluded to in the text: “and to his labour until the evening” (Ps. CIV, 23), also in the words: “for the shadows of the evening are stretched out” (Jer. VI, 4). We read further: “at the time that women go out to draw water”, to wit, the time when those who drew the waters of the Torah will rise from the dead before the rest of mankind, in virtue of their having taken hold of the tree of life. Further: “and the daughters of the men of the city came out to draw water”, to wit, the bodies will come forth, as we read: “and the earth will throw up the shades” (Is. XXVI, 19), implying that the earth will in future give up all the bodies lying therein, “to draw water”, that is, to receive the soul in a perfected state. Further: “So let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, that I may drink.” It is one of our affirmations that every soul that occupied itself in this world in the study of the deep mysteries of Divine Wisdom, when it goes to heaven is raised to a high grade, high above those who remained in ignorance; and it is they who will rise from the dead first. The words, then, “Let down thy pitcher, etc.” signify the inquiry which the servant will make of each soul regarding her occupation in this world. We read, then, “and she will say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also”, that is, do thou drink first, and afterwards I will give drink to the other grades, for although those grades drink from the same source, they ultimately derive their sustenance from the religious activity of the righteous who knew how to serve their Master properly, for it is the righteous who know how to supply proper sustenance to each grade. “The same be the woman”, it says further, “that thou hast appointed for the son of my master”; that assuredly is the body destined for that superior soul. Observe that it has been said before that the desire of the male towards the female forms a soul, and the desire of the female towards the male rises upwards to unite with the soul and form one being. The

woman is thus the body which is destined for the association of the soul that is derived from the male. These bodies, then, are destined to rise first, as we said already, and then all the others in the other lands will be raised in a complete state and will be renewed with the renewal of the moon, and the world will be restored to its primeval state, in allusion to which it is written: “Let the Lord rejoice in his works” (Ps. CIV, 31). Hence we read: “Behold, my servant will understand”, that is, he will know how to restore the souls, each one to its place. “He shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high”, from the side of all the superior grades as said above. The next verse says: “According as many were appalled at thee-so marred was his visage unlike that of a man” (Is. LII, 14). According to our exposition, when the Temple was destroyed and the Shekinah went into exile into strange lands, then “behold, their Erelim [Tr. note: A kind of angel.] cry without, the angels of peace weep bitterly” (Ibid. XXXIII, 7), for all wept and mourned for the Shekinah that was exiled from her place, and in the degree that she became altered from what she was, to the same degree her Master withdrew his light and became altered from what he was, as it is written: “The sun was darkened in his going forth” (Ibid. XIII, 10). Hence: “so marred was his visage.” According to another interpretation, the words, “so marred was his visage unlike that of a man” are illustrated by the verse: “I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering” (Ibid. L, 3). For after the Temple was destroyed the heavens did not retain their former illumination. Esoterically speaking, benediction does not abide save where male and female are together, and since at that time

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the male was not with her, all the souls that issued then were not the same as they had been when the sun was in union with the moon, as already said. This union is symbolized by the relation of Joseph to Jacob, as expressed in the verse, “These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph.” This form of expression implies that Jacob’s image was completely reproduced in Joseph, and that whatever happened to the one happened to the other also, the two being parallel and having the same esoteric symbolism.’ AND JOSEPH BROUGHT EVIL REPORT OF THEM UNTO THEIR FATHER . This has been interpreted to mean that he accused them to his father of eating flesh cut from a living animal; he also accused the sons of Leah of having treated with contempt the sons of the handmaids. How, it may be asked, could they have done this, seeing that the sons of the handmaids were reckoned in the twelve tribes? Or how could they have eaten flesh from a living animal, seeing that this was distinctly forbidden to the sons of Noah in the words: “Only flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat” (Gen. IX, 4)? The truth is, however, that it was only Joseph’s talk, and he was punished for it. R. Judah said: ‘The evil report of them that Joseph brought was that they cast their eyes on the daughters of the land, which was equivalent to providing sustenance to the unholy degrees that proceed from the unclean side.’ NOW ISRAEL LOVED JOSEPH MORE THAN ALL HIS CHILDREN, BECAUSE HE WAS THE SON OF HIS OLD AGE; AND HE MADE HIM A COAT OF MANY

COLOURS . Said R. Eleazar: 'It is written: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Is. XXVI, 20). God holds Israel in affection above the idolatrous nations, and on that account He warns them and puts them on their guard in all their deeds. There are three periods in a day during which the world is liable to chastisement, and at each of these periods it behoves a man to be specially on his guard. These are well known and are specified elsewhere. Furthermore, at a time when judgement is at work upon the world and death rages in a city, a man should not walk by himself in the open street, as already mentioned above, but he should shut himself in after the example of Noah, who shut himself within the ark so that he should not be met by the destroying angel. Hence: "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee", so as not to be exposed to the destroying angel; "hide thyself for a little moment", until the indignation be overpast, as after the moment of judgement is passed the destroying angel has no more power to harm. And it is because God holds Israel in affection and draws them near to Himself that all the idolatrous nations hate Israel; for they see themselves kept at a distance whilst Israel are brought near. Similarly it was by reason of the love that Jacob showed towards Joseph above all his other sons that they conspired to slay him, though he was their own brother. How much greater, then, must be the enmity of the idolatrous nations towards Israel!' Observe the consequences that followed the excessive love shown to Joseph by his father: he was exiled from his father, and his father joined him in exile, and along with them

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the Shekinah also went into exile. It is true that the exile was really the consequence of a divine decree; yet the proximate cause was the coat of many colours which he made for him specially. AND JOSEPH DREAMED A DREAM, ETC . On the subject of dreams, R. Hiya discoursed on the text: And he said: Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord do make myself known unto him in a vision, I do speak with him in a dream (Num. XII, 6). 'God', he said, 'has brought into existence a series of grades, one higher than the other, one drawing sustenance from the other, some on the right, others on the left, all arranged in a perfect hierarchy. Now all the prophets drew their inspiration from one side, from the midst of two certain grades which they beheld in a "dull mirror", as it says: "I do make myself known unto him in a vision", the word "vision" denoting, as has been explained, a medium reflecting a variety of colours; and this is the "dull mirror". The dream, on the other hand, is a sixtieth part of prophecy, and so forms the sixth grade removed from prophecy, which is the grade of Gabriel, the supervisor of dreams. Now a normal dream proceeds from that grade, and hence there is not a dream that has not intermingled with it some spurious matter, so that it is a mixture of truth and falsehood. Hence it is that all dreams follow their interpretation, as it is written: "And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was" (Gen. XLI, 13); for since the dream contains both falsehood and truth, the word has power over it, and therefore it is advisable that every dream should

be interpreted in a good sense.'

R. Hiya further discoursed on the text: In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and by their chastisement sealeth the decree (Job XXXIII, 15-16). 'When a man retires to rest,' he said, 'it behoves him first to acknowledge the Kingdom of Heaven [Tr. note: i.e. to recite the Shema.] and then to say a short prayer. For when a man goes to bed and sleeps, his soul leaves him and soars aloft. God then reveals to the soul through that grade which presides over the soul future events, or things which correspond to a man's own thoughts, so as to serve as an admonition to him. For no revelation comes to man when his body is in full vigour, but an angel communicates things to the soul, and the soul transmits them to the man; dreams, then, originate on high when souls leave the bodies, each one taking its own route. There is a graduated series of the intimations by which deeper knowledge is conveyed to men, dreams forming one grade, vision another grade, and prophecy a third grade, in a rising series. AND JOSEPH DREAMED A DREAM, AND HE TOLD IT TO HIS BRETHREN. AND THEY HATED HIM THE MORE FOR HIS DREAMS . From this we learn that a man should not tell his dream save to a friend, otherwise the listener may pervert the significance of the dream and cause delay in its fulfilment. Joseph communicated his dream to his brethren, and they caused its fulfilment to be delayed for twenty-two years. Thus we find it written: AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, HEAR, I PRAY YOU, THIS DREAM

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WHICH I HAVE DREAMED . We see here how he begged his brethren to listen to him, and insisted on telling them his dream, which, had they given it another meaning, would have been fulfilled accordingly. But they said to him: "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou have dominion over us?" and with these words they sealed their own doom.

R. Hiya and R. Jose used to study with R. Simeon. R. Hiya once put to him the following question: 'We have learnt that a dream uninterpreted is like a letter undeciphered. Does this mean that the dream comes true without the dreamer being conscious of it, or that it remains unfulfilled?' R. Simeon answered: 'The dream comes true, but without the dreamer being aware of it. For nothing happens in the world but what is made known in advance either by means of a dream or by means of a proclamation; as it has been affirmed, that before any event comes to pass in the world it is announced in heaven, whence it is broadcast into the world. So Scripture says: "For the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his counsels unto his servants the prophets", (Amos. III, 7). This refers to the time when there were prophets in the world; when prophets were no more, their place was taken by the Sages, who, in a sense, even excelled the prophets; and in the absence of Sages things to come are revealed in dreams, and if not in dreams, through the medium of the birds of heaven; and so we have laid down.' AND HIS BRETHREN WENT TO FEED THEIR FATHER'S FLOCK IN SHECHEM . R. Simeon said:

The dots on the top of the particle eth in this sentence indicate that the Shekinah accompanied them by reason of their being a band of ten. (They were only ten because Joseph was not with them and Benjamin remained at home on account of his tender age.) Hence, when they sold Joseph they were in the company of the Shekinah, and, furthermore, they associated the Shekinah with them in their oath (not to reveal the affair of Joseph); and until the fate of Joseph became known, the Shekinah did not rest on Jacob. The proof that the Shekinah accompanied the brethren is the verse of the Psalms which speaks of "the tribes of the Lord, a testimony unto Israel" (Ps. CXXII, 4), a title which shows that they were all of them righteous and devout, constituting the support of the whole world, both on high and below.' R. Simeon further discoursed on the text: I rejoiced when they said unto me: Let us go unto the house of the Lord (Ibid. CXXII, 1). 'This verse has been explained', he said, 'as follows. David was minded to build the House of God, but he was commanded to leave the task to his son, as we read: "Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord... nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name" (I Kings VIII, 18-19). The whole of Israel knew of this and they used to say: "When is David going to die so that Solomon his son may arise and build the House, and we shall be able to say, 'Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem' (Ps. CXXII, 2), for we will then go up and offer sacrifices?" But although David knew that they were impatient for his death, yet he rejoiced to hear them speak thus on account of his son, who would take his place in carrying out the command to build the House. David thus commenced to sing its praises and said: "Jerusalem that art builded as a city that is compact together" (Ibid. CXXII, 3). According to our teachers, God fashioned the lower Jerusalem on the model of the heavenly Jerusalem, the one exactly facing the other, as it is written: "the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established" (Ex. xv, 17). The expression "that art builded" indicates that God will in time to come cause the upper Jerusalem to descend below; this is further proved by the phrase "as a city that is compact (she-hubrah) together", where the term hubrah (lit. she is joined), written in the singular, indicates that the Mother has joined the Daughter and the two are become as one. We read further: "Whither the tribes went up", they being the support of the world and the upholding of the lower world, and even of the upper world, as it says: "even the tribes of the Lord, as a testimony unto Israel", the term "Israel" having its esoteric significance; for they, being the support of the lower world, act as a testimony to the upper world, and all in order "to give thanks unto the name of the Lord" (Ps. CXXII, 4), i.e. to acknowledge the name of God in all directions.'

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AND ISRAEL SAID UNTO JOSEPH: DO NOT THY BRETHREN FEED THE FLOCK OF SHECHEM? COME, AND I WILL SEND THEE UNTO THEM . How came it that Jacob the perfect man, who loved Joseph above all his sons and knew that all his brethren hated

him, sent him to them? The truth is that he harboured no suspicion of them, knowing them to be all righteous; but God brought all this about in order to fulfil the decree pronounced "between the pieces" (Gen. xv, 17). We have found it stated in ancient books that the sons of Jacob were anxious to obtain dominion over Joseph before he went down into Egypt, because they knew that if he should go down there first before they obtained dominion over him the Egyptians would obtain dominion over Israel in perpetuity; but by selling Joseph as a slave they made themselves his masters, and since he later on rose to power and the Egyptians became his slaves, Israel became masters of all. Joseph was the symbol of the heavenly covenant, and so long as he was alive the covenant of the Shekinah remained with Israel in perfect harmony, but as soon as Joseph departed the covenant of the Shekinah together with Israel was plunged into captivity, as it says: "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph" (Ex. I, 8). It was all fittingly ordained by Providence. AND A CERTAIN MAN FOUND HIM : this was Gabriel, of whom we read: "the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning ' (Dan. IX, 2 1). AND, BEHOLD, HE WAS WANDERING : indeed he was wandering both literally and metaphorically; he trusted his brethren and sought their affection but could not gain it, and he was looking for them but could not find them. Hence: AND THE MAN ASKED HIM, SAYING: WHAT SEEKEST THOU? AND HE SAID: I SEEK MY BRETHREN.... AND THE MAN SAID: THEY ARE DEPARTED HENCE, ETC . R. Judah discoursed on the text: O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breast of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, and none would despise me (S. S. VIII, 1). 'The Companions', he said, 'interpret this verse as being addressed by the Community of Israel to the King to whom peace belongs. She said to Him: "O that thou wert as my brother", to wit, as Joseph towards his brethren, to whom he said: "Now, therefore, fear ye not; I will sustain you and your little ones" (Gen. L, 21), and whom he provided with food and fed in time of famine. According to another explanation, the phrase "as my brother" refers to Joseph, who was in the relation of a brother towards the Shekinah, with whom he was intimately associated-"that sucked the breast of my mother", this expresses the perfect affection between them; "when I should find thee without", to wit, in exile, in a strange land, "I would kiss thee", so that spirit should join spirit; "yea, and none would despise me", despite my dwelling in a strange land. Observe that although when Joseph fell into their hands they did not act towards him as brothers, yet when they fell into his hands he did act towards them as a brother, as it is written: "And he comforted them, and he spoke kindly unto them" (Gen. I, 21). AND THEY SAID ONE TO ANOTHER (lit. one man to his brother). These are Simeon and Levi, who were truly brothers in all respects, both being descended from the side of rigorous judgement; and hence it was that their anger was the anger that causes death in the world, as it says: "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel" (Ibid. XLIX, 7). For there are two species of anger. There is anger which is blessed on high and below, and is called "blessed" (barukh), as explained in connection with the sentence: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth"



(Ibid. XIV, 19); and there is anger which is accursed on high and is called "cursed" (arur), and regarding this it is written: "Cursed be thou from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field" (Ibid. III, 14), as well as "Cursed be their anger for it was fierce." This is the recondite significance of the two mounts Gerizim and Ebal set aside for the blessing and the curse (Deut. XI, 29), the two mounts corresponding to these two grades; and hence one is called cursed and the other blessed. Simeon and Levi both belonged to the side of severity, from which side, in its extreme manifestation, issues the anger which is under a curse. All anger issues from the side of rigorous judgement, but in two directions,

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one referred to as blessed, the other as cursed. Similarly, from the side of Isaac there issued two sons, one of whom was blessed and the other cursed on high and below; the two separated, each going off towards his own side, the one making his abode in the Holy Land, the other on Mount Seir, being as he was "a cunning hunter, a man of the field" (Gen. xxv, 27). The latter had his home in the desert, in regions of waste and desolation, while the former "dwelt in tents" (Ibid.), all being fitly ordained. Hence it is that there are two grades, "blessed" and "cursed", each ranged on its own side. From the one issue all blessings in the upper and the lower worlds, all beneficence, all light, all deliverance, all redemption; whilst the other is the source of all curses, all wars and bloodshed, all desolation and evil, and all defilement.

R. Simeon said: 'It is written: I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord (Ps. XXVI, 6). The inner implication of this verse has been explained as follows. Every man has a foretaste of death during the night, because the holy soul then leaves him, and the unclean spirit rests on the body and makes it unclean. When, however, the soul returns to the body, the pollution disappears, save from the man's hands, which retain it and thus remain unclean. Hence a man should not pass his hands over his eyes before washing them. When he has washed them, however, he becomes sanctified and is called holy. For this sanctification two vessels are required, one held above and the other placed beneath, so that he may be sanctified by the water poured on his hands from the vessel above. The lower vessel, then, is the vessel of uncleanness, receiving as it does the water of contamination, whilst the upper vessel is a medium of sanctification. The upper one is to be referred to as "blessed", the lower as "cursed". Further, the water of contamination should not be emptied in the house, in order that no one may come near it; for it forms a gathering-place for the elements of the unclean side, and so one may receive injury from the unclean water. Neither may a man pronounce a benediction before the pollution is removed from his hands. Thus, before he sanctifies his hands of a morning, a man is called unclean, and after that he is called clean. For this reason one should not allow water to be poured over his hands save by a man who has already washed his own hands, in harmony with the precept: "And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean" (Num. XIX, 19). We see that the one with his hands washed is

the clean person, the other the unclean. Similarly with the two vessels, the upper and the lower, the one being the holy vessel, the other the unholy. Nor is it permitted to put the polluted water to any use, or even to let it stay overnight in the house, but it must be emptied in a spot where people do not pass, as it is liable to cause harm through the unclean spirit that clings to it. It is quite permissible, however, to let it flow down a slope into the earth. It must not be given to witches, as by means of it they can do harm to people. One should, then, avoid this water, since it is water of curse, and the Holy One desires to purify Israel so that they may be holy, as it is written: "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ez. XXXVI, 25).' AND THEY TOOK HIM AND CAST HIM INTO THE PIT . R. Judah here discoursed on the text: The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul (Ps. XIX, 8). 'The study of the Torah', he said, 'procures for a man life in this world and in the world to come, so that he gains the two worlds; and even he that studies the Torah for worldly motives and not purely for its own sake as he ought to, gains a good reward in this world, and escapes punishment in the other. The Scripture says: "Length of days is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour" (Prov. III, 6). There is, indeed, length of days for him who devotes himself to the Torah for its own sake. For such a one there is length of days in the other world, where days are indeed days.

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And further: "in her left hand are riches and honour", which means good reward in this world. Moreover, if a man has devoted himself to the Torah for its own sake, when he departs this world the Torah goes before him and proclaims his merit, and shields him against the emissaries of punishment. When a man's body is laid in the grave, the Torah keeps guard over it; it goes in front of his soul when it soars upwards, breaking through all barriers until the soul reaches its proper place; and it will stand by the man at the time when he is awakened at the resurrection of the dead, in order to defend him against any accusations. Thus Scripture further says: "When thou liest down, it shall watch over thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Ibid. VI, 22). The "lying down" is an allusion to the time when man's body is lying in the grave and is being judged there; the Torah will then protect him; whilst "when thou awakest", that is, when the dead will rise from the dust, "it shall talk with thee", that is, plead thy cause.' R. Eleazar interpreted the clause "it shall talk with thee" to mean that when they rise from the grave the Torah will not be forgotten of them, but they will know it much as they did when they left this world. For their Torah will be preserved from that time, will penetrate within them, and will talk, as it were, within their very inwards; and moreover, they will be more adept than they were previously, so that points which formerly baffled them in spite of all their labour will now be fully comprehended by them, the Torah itself speaking within them. Hence: "when thou awakest, it will talk with thee".' R. Judah said: 'In a similar way, whoever devotes himself to the study of the Torah in this world will be privileged to study in the world to come; and so we affirm. On the other hand, the man

who fails to study the Torah in this world, and so walks in darkness, when he leaves this world is taken and cast into Gehinnom, a nethermost place, where there will be none to pity him, a place called "tumultuous pit, miry clay" (Ps. XL, 3). Hence, of him who has not devoted himself to the study of the Torah in this world, but has besmirched himself with the offscourings of this world, it is written: "And they took him and cast him into the pit", that is, into Gehinnom, a place where those who have not laboured in the Torah are brought to judgement. "And the pit was empty", in the same way as he was empty: why so? "Because there was no water" (i.e. Torah) in him. Observe, too, how great is the punishment for neglect of the study of the Torah, seeing that Israel were not exiled from the Holy Land save for having abandoned the Torah, as it is written: "Who is the wise man that may understand this?... Wherefore is the land perished?... And the Lord saith: Because they have forsaken my law, etc." (Jer. IX, 11). R. Judah derived the same lesson from the verse: "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, for want of knowledge" (Is. v, 13), that is, because they have not applied themselves to the study of the Torah, which is the foundation of the upper and the lower worlds, as it says: "Were it not for my covenant enduring day and night, I would not have appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jer. XXXIII, 25). AND THEY CAST HIM INTO THE PIT. There is a hint here that they cast him ultimately among the Egyptians, a place where there was no sign of true faith. R. Isaac said: 'Seeing that the pit contained serpents and scorpions, how could Reuben have advised that Joseph should be cast into it in order that "he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father"? Had he no fear of the serpents and scorpions attacking Joseph? And if they did, how could he deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father? But the truth is that Reuben perceived the intense enmity of the brethren towards Joseph and how intent they were on killing him, and he therefore thought that it was better for him to fall into the pit of serpents and scorpions than to be delivered into the hands of enemies who would have no mercy on him. Hence the saying: "Rather should a man throw himself into a fire or a pit full of serpents and scorpions, than be delivered into the hands of his enemies."

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The reason is that in a place infested with serpents and scorpions, if the man be righteous, God may possibly perform a miracle for him, or it may happen that the merits of his ancestors may stand him in good stead and he will be delivered. But of those who are delivered into the hands of their enemies, few indeed are able to escape. Hence the expression "that he might deliver him out of their hand", as much as to say "Let him be delivered, at any rate, out of their hand, and if he is to die in the pit, then it cannot be helped." Observe the great piety of Reuben. He knew well the ruthlessness of Simeon and Levi when acting and planning in conjunction, as witnessed by their treatment of Shechem, where they not only slew all the males, but took all their little ones and their wives, all their silver and gold, all their cattle and precious vessels, and everything else they found in the city, and even everything which was in the field, as we read: "and that which was in the city and that which was in the field

they took" (Gen. XXXIV, 28). Reuben thus said to himself: "If such a great city as that could not escape them, should this youth fall into their hands they will not leave of him a single shred." Hence he said: "He must at all costs be rescued from them, since they will leave no sign of him for his father to see again; whereas here, if he is killed, his body, at any rate, will remain for me to bring back to my father." Hence the words: "to bring him back to his father", that is, even if he die there. Hence, too, Reuben's words: "The child is not", that is to say, not even a dead child did I find. Observe his tactfulness in saying "Let us not take his life," and not "Do not ye take his life." Now Reuben was absent when Joseph was sold, as the brethren had each in turn to attend one day on their father, and that day happened to be Reuben's turn. He was anxious lest on that day Joseph should disappear, and therefore at once HE RETURNED UNTO THE PIT. BUT BEHOLD JOSEPH WAS NOT IN THE PIT ;-not even dead- AND HE RENT HIS CLOTHES. AND HE RETURNED UNTO HIS BRETHREN AND SAID: THE CHILD IS NOT, ETC. For even Reuben did not know that Joseph had been sold. As already said, the brothers associated the Shekinah with them in the oath of secrecy, and so Reuben did not learn of it until Joseph made himself known to his brethren. Reuben's attempt to save Joseph's life was all the more disinterested, because he knew that the birthright had been taken away from him and given to Joseph, for we thus find that Moses interceded on his behalf, praying: "Let Reuben live, and not die" (Deut. XXXIII, 6), i.e., let him live in this world and not die in the world to come; and this prayer was prompted by this action of Reuben and also by his repentance for that other action. [Tr. note: i.e. the affair of Bilhah.] For whoever repents of his sin, God preserves in this world and in the world to come. AND THEY TOOK JOSEPH'S COAT, AND THEY KILLED A HE-GOAT, ETC., the reason being, as has been laid down, that the blood of a he-goat resembles that of a human being. We learn from this passage how particular God is with the righteous, even when they act correctly. For although Jacob acted fittingly in bringing a he-goat to his father, who was of the side of severity, yet because he thereby deceived his father, he was punished through that other he-goat, the blood of which his sons brought for the purpose of deceiving him. Of Jacob it is written: "And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck" (Gen. XXVII, 16); correspondingly, we read of his sons: "and they dipped the coat in the blood", with the object of deceiving him. It was measure for measure. Likewise, there we read: "And Isaac trembled very exceedingly" (Ibid. 33), and as a punishment Jacob trembled when his sons uttered the words: "know now whether it is thy son's coat or not".

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R. Hiya added: 'There it is written: "whether thou be my very son Esau or not?"' (Ibid. 21): correspondingly, here it is written, "whether it is thy son's or not". We thus find that the Almighty is particular with the righteous to a hairbreadth.' R. Abba said: 'When the brethren perceived the pain they had caused their father, they were stricken with remorse and cast about to ransom Joseph at all costs, if so by they could discover his whereabouts. But when they found that they were

unable to do so, they turned on Judah, who hitherto had been king over them, and deposed him from his high estate. Hence it is written: "And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren." ' (

R. Judah discoursed here on the text: The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High gave forth his voice; hailstones and coals of fire (Ps. XVIII, 14). 'When God', he said, 'created the world, He constructed for it seven pillars by which it was to be upheld. So Scripture says: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov. IX, 1). These in turn are upheld by one grade from among them called "the Righteous One, the everlasting foundation" (Ibid. x, 25). Further, when the world was created, it was started from that spot which is the culmination and perfection of the world, the central point of the universe, which is identical with Zion, as it is written: "A psalm of Asaph. God, God the Lord hath spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth" (Ps. L, 2). That is to say, God started the earth from Zion, from the spot where faith culminates in its full perfection. Zion is thus the citadel and central point of the universe, from which it began to be fashioned and from which the whole world is nourished. This lesson is esoterically indicated in our text. For Zion and Jerusalem, while one, represent two degrees, the one being the channel of judgement, the other of mercy; first there issues from one the sound of mercy, and afterwards there comes forth from the other the voice of judgement, the two forming the source from which the paths of judgement and mercy issue and diverge. Hence the expression "And the Lord also thundered in the heavens" indicates judgement, while "the Most High gave forth his voice" refers to mercy, and "hailstones and coals of fire" signify water and fire, that is, mercy and judgement commingled.'

'Observe that when Judah was born, it is written: "and she left off bearing" (Gen. XXIX, 35), the reason being that Judah constituted the fourth of the four supports of the Heavenly Throne. But here it is written: AND JUDAH WENT DOWN FROM HIS BRETHREN , that is, from his position as their king, because Joseph had been taken down into Egypt, as explained. AND JUDAH SAW THERE A DAUGHTER OF A CERTAIN CANAANITE . The term Canaanite has been explained by the Companions. AND SHE CONCEIVED, AND BORE A SON; AND HE CALLED HIS NAME ER . Judah had three sons, and the only one who survived was Shelah. R. Eleazar and R. Jose and R. Hiya were once walking together. Said R. Jose to R. Eleazar: 'Why is it that of the first son of Judah it is written: "and he called his name Er", whereas of the other two it is written: "and she called his name Onan", "and she called his name Shelah"?' R. Eleazar replied: 'There is a deep mystic allusion in these sentences, which explains all. Thus Judah going down from his brethren symbolizes the moon becoming obscured and descending from the perfected grade to another grade to which the serpent becomes associated, as is indicated in the statement: "and he turned into a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah". Then we read: "And she conceived, and bore a son; and he called his name Er." The name 'Er is a reversal of the letters ra'

(evil), for he was evil, having issued from the side of the evil prompter. The accusative particle eth (the) inserted before his name likewise

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hints at the emergence of another grade, that of impurity and defilement, from which grade Er was born. Nor was the defect made good until afterwards, when Shelah appeared. It says further: "And Er, Judah's first-born, was evil in the sight of the Lord", where the term "evil" finds its echo in the sentence: "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. VIII, 21). Er was evil in that he shed blood, by spilling the seed on the ground, and therefore the Lord slew him. After that it is written: AND JUDAH SAID UNTO ONAN: Go IN UNTO THY BROTHER'S WIFE, ETC . R. Simeon opened here a discourse with the text: I have roused up one from the north, and he is come, from the rising of the sun one that calleth upon my name; and he shall come upon rulers as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay (Is. XLI, 25). 'How foolish', he said, 'are the sons of men who neither know nor care about the ways of the Almighty, their eyes being closed as in sleep. God made man after the supernal pattern, each limb corresponding to something in the scheme of Wisdom. For when the whole body of man had been duly shaped with all its members, God associated Himself with him and put a holy soul into him, so as to teach man to walk in the ways of the Torah and to observe His commandments in order that he might attain to his full perfection. Hence, while the holy soul is still within man's body, it is incumbent on him to multiply the image of the King in the world. There is herein an esoteric thought involved, namely, that just as the celestial stream flows on for ever without ceasing, so must man see that his own river and spring shall not cease in this world. And so long as a man is unsuccessful in his purpose in this world, the Holy One, blessed be He, uproots him and replants him over and over again. Observe, then, the meaning of the words: "I have roused up one from the north, and he is come", where the rousing alludes to the rousing and stirring up of the desire of a man for mating in this world, which originates from the North, whilst the words "and he is come" allude to the holy soul which descends from on high, whence God sends it, and comes into this world to enter into a man, as said above. "From the rising of the sun" alludes to the place of that celestial ever-flowing river, whence the soul issues and is illumined: "and there come rulers as mortar" signifies the heavenly forces which cause a rousing in the souls above corresponding to the stirring of the man in his body. For it is for this purpose that God creates souls in couples and sends them down to the world, so that there may be companionship both on high and below, and the well-spring of all may be blessed. God made man that he should steadfastly walk in His ways, and never cut off his fount and well-spring; for if a man cuts off his well-spring on earth and causes it to dry up, it is as though he causes the waters of the celestial river to fail, as described in the words: "The waters fail from the sea, and the river is drained dry" (Job XIV, 11). For inasmuch as man has been established in this world after the pattern of the upper world, he whose well-spring ceases to produce through his not taking a wife is beyond remedy, and of him it is said: "That which is

crooked cannot be made straight" (Eccl. I, 15). On the other hand, he who has taken a wife but has not been blessed with offspring can be redeemed by his near relative, that is, by his brother. He who dies without leaving children will not enter within the curtain of heaven and will have no share in the other world, and his soul will not be admitted to the place where all souls are gathered and his image will be cut off from there. Of such a one it is written: "And this soul will be cut off from before me." Such being the case, God has provided for such a man a redeemer

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to redeem him out of the hands of the destructive angels, to wit, his brother who is near to him. So Scripture says: "If brethren dwell together, etc." (Deut. xxv, 5-10); also: "Go in unto thy brother's wife, and perform the duty of husband's brother unto her, etc." For the soul of such a man does not enter before the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, but remains without, since he has not succeeded in radiating light in this world by means of the body. He who has not succeeded in this place must go to another place where he may have better fortune. When wood smoulders without any flame, if it is struck it flares up and throws out light. Man is compared to wood, as it says: "for the tree of the field is man" (Ibid. xx, 19). Now a man who eats and drinks and marries, but is not blessed with children, is like the wood that burns without giving off any light, that is, his soul has not been illumined in its present body but has remained in darkness. It is written: "He created it not a waste, he formed it to be inhabited" (Is. XLV, 18), that is, God made man for this purpose, and so dealt kindly with the world. Observe the Scriptural text: "And Abraham took another wife, and her name was Keturah" (Gen. xxv, 1). Herein is an allusion to the soul which after death comes to earth to be built up as before. Observe that of the body it is written: "And it pleased the Lord to crush him by disease; to see if his soul would offer itself in restitution, that he might see his seed, and prolong his days, and that the purpose of the Lord might prosper by his hand." (Is. LIII, 10). That is to say, if the soul desires to be rehabilitated then he must see seed, for the soul hovers round about and is ready to enter the seed of procreation, and thus "he will prolong his days, and the purpose of the Lord", namely the Torah, "will prosper in his hand". For although a man labours in the Torah day and night, yet if his source remains fruitless, he will find no place by which to enter within the heavenly curtain. As has been pointed out, a well of water, if not fed by its source and spring, is no well, since the well and the source are one and they have a joint symbolism. It is written: "It is vain for you that ye rise early, and sit up late, ye that eat the bread of sadness; so he giveth unto his beloved sleep" (Ps. CXXVII, 2). Precious, indeed, are the words of the Torah, each one containing sublime and holy mysteries, as has been affirmed, that when God gave the Torah to Israel, He gave it to them with all its sublime and holy treasures. The words: "It is vain for you that ye rise early" are addressed to those who are single, not exhibiting the proper union of male with female. In vain they rise early, as we read: "There is one that is alone, and he hath not a second... yet, there is no end of all his labour" (Eccl. IV, 8). In vain, too,

they "sit up late", or, as we may translate, they "postpone rest", as woman is assuredly man's repose. They are addressed as "ye that eat the bread of sadness", for the man who has children eats his bread in good cheer and gladness of heart; but to him that has no children, the bread he eats is bread of sadness: "so he giveth unto his beloved sleep", the beloved being he whose wellspring is blessed, and to whom the Holy One vouchsafeth sleep in the other world, as we read: "and thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet" (Prov. III, 24), for he has a share in the world to come; the man will thus lie down and be blessed with the world to come. "There is one that is alone" (Eccl. IV, 8) is an allusion to the man who is improperly alone, without a wife; "and he hath not a second", no one to uphold him, no son to establish his name in Israel, or to bring him to his due meed; "yet there is no end of all his labour", as he is always labouring, day and night; "neither is his eye satisfied with riches" (Ibid.) and he has not the sense to reflect: "for whom, then, do I labour and bereave my soul

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of pleasure?" (Ibid.) You may say that he has pleasure in that he eats and drinks and feasts every day; but it is not so, inasmuch as his soul (nefesh) does not share in his pleasure, so that assuredly he bereaves his soul of pleasure, of the blissful illumination of the world to come; for it is left stunted without attaining its full and proper growth. For God cares for His works, and so desires that a man should be set right and not perish from the world to come, as already said.'

R. Hiya put the following question: 'What is the position of a man who is just and upright and occupies himself with the study of the Torah day and night, and devotes himself wholly to the service of the Almighty, and yet is not blessed with children in this world despite all his effort, or who has children and they die-what is his position in the world to come?' R. Jose replied: 'His good deeds and the Torah will shield him in the world to come.' R. Isaac said: 'Of such it is written: "For thus saith the Lord concerning the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast my covenant: even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a monument and a memorial, better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting memorial that shall not be cut off" (Is. LVI, 4-5), so that these have a share in the world to come.' Said R. Jose: 'All this is perfectly correct. But what of the following problem? Suppose there is a perfectly righteous man who has all these qualities and duly perfects himself, yet dies without issue. Now, seeing that he will inherit his place in the world to come, will his wife require to marry his brother or not? If she has to do so, then the marriage will be purposeless, seeing that the other brother inherits his own place in the other world. The truth, however, is that she must still marry the brother, because we cannot say definitely whether the departed was really perfect or not. And in any case her second marriage is not purposeless, since it can serve to redeem some other righteous man who has died without children and has had no ransom. The passage quoted above continues: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour" (Eccl. IV, 9),

alluding to those who have performed the duty of leaving children in this world, for whose sake they inherit a portion in the world to come. So God has planted trees in this world; if they prosper, well and good, and if not, He uproots them and replants them time after time. All the ways of the Holy One are thus for the purpose of achieving the good and the perfection of the world.' Go IN UNTO THY BROTHER'S WIFE, AND PERFORM THE DUTY OF A HUSBAND'S BROTHER UNTO HER . Judah and all the other tribes were already cognisant of this duty, the main purpose of which is expressed in the sentence: "and raise up seed to thy brother", as that seed is needed for the purpose of putting things right by growing into human shape and form and thus preventing the stock from being severed from its root. And when all has been put right, then those concerned receive praise in the other world, as the Holy One is pleased with them. Hence it says: "Wherefore I praised the dead that are already dead more than the living that are yet alive; but better than they both is he that hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun" (Ibid. IV, 2-3). That is to say: I praised the dead that are already dead more than the living that have returned (from the other world) to the days of their youth; but better than they both is he that has not yet returned to the days of his youth, as he has no need to rectify and to suffer for his former sins; for the Holy One

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has already given him a fitting place in the other world. Happy the portion of the just who walk in the way of truth. Of them it is written: "The righteous shall inherit the land" (Ps. XXXVII, 29). AND THE THING WHICH HE DID WAS EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD; AND HE SLEW HIM ALSO . R. Hiya discoursed here on the text: In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, etc. (Eccl. XI, 6). 'It behoves a man', he said, 'to be well on his guard against sin, and to be heedful in his actions before the Holy One, blessed be He; for numerous messengers and chieftains roam about the world, spying out the works of the sons of man, to which they bear witness, and all of which are recorded in a book. Now of all the sins which defile a man, that which defiles him the most, both in this world and in the world to come, is the sin of spilling one's seed (semen). A man guilty of this sin will not enter within the Heavenly Curtain, and will not behold the presence of the Ancient of Days. So we learn from the recurrence of the word "evil" here and in the verse: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; evil shall not sojourn with thee" (Ps. v, 5). It was on account of this sin, too, that the prophet said to the people, "your hands are full of blood" (Is. I, 15). Happy the portion of him who fears his Master, and is on his guard against the evil habit, keeping himself pure so as to persevere in the fear of his Master. Observe, then, the admonition saying: "In the morning sow thy seed." This alludes to the period when a man is in his prime and in the flower of youth, when he sets out to bring forth offspring from the woman destined for him. Then is the proper time for rearing children, as it says: "As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of one's youth" (Ps. CXXVII, 4), as the

father can then teach them the ways of the Holy One and so gain reward in the world to come, as it is written: "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be put to shame, when they speak with their enemies in the gate" (Ibid. 5), i.e. in the next world when the accusers bring their indictment against him, since there is no greater reward in the next world than that of the man who has trained his children in the fear of their Master and in the ways of the Torah. So it is written of Abraham: "For I have known him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice" (Gen. XVIII, 19); and it was that merit which bestowed him against all the accusers in the other world. Further: "and in the evening withhold not thy hand", that is to say, from begetting children even in old age, "for thou knowest not which shall prosper", that is which shall stand up in thy defence in the other world; and in regard to this it is written: "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord" (Ps. CXXVII, 3), where the phrase "heritage of the Lord" is an allusion to the "bundle of souls" in the world to come, and the passage indicates that it is children that make a man worthy of entering that heritage of the Lord. Hence happy is the man who is blessed with them and who trains them in the ways of the Torah. AND SHE PUT OFF FROM HER THE GARMENTS OF HER WIDOWHOOD . Tamar was the daughter of a priest, and it can hardly be imagined that she set out with the intention of committing incest with her father-in-law, since she was by nature chaste and modest. She was indeed virtuous and did not prostitute herself, and it was out of her deeper knowledge and wisdom that she approached Judah, and a desire to act kindly and faithfully (towards the dead). And it was because her act was based on a deeper knowledge that God aided her and she straightway conceived. So that it was all ordained

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from on high. If it is asked, why did not God cause those sons to be born from some other woman, the answer is that Tamar was necessary for this purpose, and not any other woman. There were two women from whom the seed of Judah was to be built up, from whom were to descend King David, King Solomon, and the Messiah, viz. Tamar and Ruth. These two women had much in common. Both lost their first husbands, and both took similar steps to replace them. Tamar enticed Judah because he was the next-of-kin to her sons who had died, and "she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him for wife". Ruth similarly enticed Boaz, as it says, "and she uncovered his feet and laid her down" (Ruth III, 7), and afterwards she bore him Obed. Now we do not ask why Obed was not born from another woman, for assuredly Ruth was necessary for that purpose to the exclusion of any other woman. From these two women, then, the seed of Judah was built up and brought to completion, and both of them acted piously, and had for their aim to do kindness toward the dead, for the proper establishment of the world subsequently. And this bears out our exposition of the verse "Wherefore I praise the dead that are already dead" (Eccl. IV, 2), for whilst their first husbands were alive there was no merit in them, but afterwards they were good for something, and so these

two women exerted themselves to do kindness and truth with the dead; and God aided them in that work, and all was done fittingly. Happy is he who exerts himself in the study of the Torah day and night, as it says: "but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, etc." (Jos. I, 8). AND JOSEPH WAS BROUGHT DOWN TO EGYPT, AND POTIPHAR BOUGHT HIM, ETC . The expression ' was brought down' indicates that God approved of the act, so as to bring to fulfilment the announcement made to Abram between the pieces: "thy seed shall be a stranger, etc." (Gen. xv, 13). AND POTIPHAR BOUGHT HIM , for a sinful purpose.

R. Hizkiah discoursed on the text: Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealet up the stars (Job IX, 7). 'God', he said, 'has set seven stars in the firmament, and each firmament contains numerous angels appointed to minister to the Holy One, blessed be He, each angel having his own service to perform before his Master. All attend to the service to which they have been appointed and each one knows his task. Some of them serve as messengers, having charge in this world of the works of men; others are appointed to chant to Him songs and hymns. But although this is their own particular charge, there is no host in heaven or in the stars or in the constellations but chants praises to the Holy One, blessed be He; for as soon as night falls three hosts of angels range themselves in three quarters of the universe; and in each quarter there are myriads upon myriads, all of whom have for their task

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to chant praises to the Holy One. Over these three hosts there stands a sacred Hayah as chieftain. The chanting continues until daybreak. As soon as day breaks all those on the side of the South as well as the shining stars break out into song and praise to the Holy One, as we read: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job XXXVIII, 7), the morning stars being the stars of the South, the direction implied in the sentence: "And Abraham got up early in the morning" (Gen. XIX, 27), whilst the "sons of God" are those on the left side who merge themselves in the right. When daylight arrives Israel take up the song and offer praises to the Holy One three times a day, corresponding to the three watches of the night. Thus through the angels and Israel together the glory of God is proclaimed day and night with six litanies. The sacred Hayah that is in charge of the chantings of the night on high similarly presides over the chantings of Israel here below; and all is performed in proper order. In regard to this one it is also written: "She riseth also while it is yet night and giveth food to her household, and a portion to her maidens" (Prov. XXXI, 15), where the "household" alludes to the heavenly hosts, whilst the word "maidens" signifies Israel here below. The Holy One is thus extolled both on high and here below.' R. Simeon said: 'The clause "Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not" applies to Joseph, whilst the sequel, "and sealet up the stars", applies to his brethren, regarding whom he said, "And eleven stars bowed down to me."

Alternatively, "Who commandeth the sun" is an allusion to Jacob at the time his sons said to him: "Know now whether it is thy son's coat or not"; "that it shineth not" is a reference to the time when the Shekinah departed from him; whilst "sealet up the stars" implies that through his sons Jacob's light was sealed and closed up, the sun for him was darkened and the stars did not shine-all because Joseph was separated from his father. And note that from the day on which Joseph disappeared Jacob abstained from marital intercourse and observed all the other rites of mourning until the day the good tidings of Joseph reached him.' F AND THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH, AND HE WAS A PROSPEROUS MAN; AND HE WAS IN THE HOUSE OF HIS MASTER THE EGYPTIAN . R. Jose quoted here the verse: "For the Lord loveth justice, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever" (Ps. XXXVII, 28). 'Observe', he said 'that wherever the righteous walk, God protects them and never abandons them, as David said: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and staff they comfort me" (Ibid. XXIII, 4); wherever the righteous walk the Shekinah accompanies them and does not abandon them. Joseph walked through the valley of the shadow of death, having been brought down to Egypt, but the Shekinah was with him, as we read: "And the Lord was with Joseph", and by reason of the presence of the Shekinah all that he did prospered in his hand; so much so that if he had something in his hand and his master wanted something of a different kind, it changed in his hand to the kind his master wanted. Hence, it says "made to prosper in his hand", the reason being that the Lord was with him. Observe, too, that it is not written here, "And his master knew", but "And his master saw", signifying that he saw every day with his eyes the miracles God performed by the hand of Joseph; hence: "the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake". God guards the righteous, and for their sakes He guards also the wicked, so that the wicked receive blessings through the righteous. So we find it written: "The Lord blessed the house of Obededom... because of the ark of God" (II Sam. VI, 12). Others are sustained for the sake of those righteous, but they are not able to sustain or save themselves by their own merits. So Joseph, although his master was blessed for his sake, could not himself escape from him through his own merits and gain his freedom. He was even thrown afterwards into the dungeon, as we read: "His feet they hurt with fetters, his person was laid in iron" (Ps. cv, 18), until God liberated him and made him ruler over all the land of Egypt, and thus it is written: "and he forsaketh not his saints;

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they are preserved for ever." God shields the righteous in this world and in the world to come, as it is written: "So shall all those that take refuge in thee rejoice, they shall ever shout for joy, and thou shalt shelter them; let them also that love thy name exult in thee" (Ibid. v, 12).' AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS THAT HIS MASTER'S WIFE, ETC . R. Hiya discussed the text: Bless the Lord, ye angels of his, ye mighty in strength, that fulfil his word, hearkening unto the voice of his word (Ibid. CIII, 20). 'How greatly', he said, 'it

behoves a man to guard against sin and to pursue the straight path, so that the evil prompter, his daily assailant, should not lead him astray. And since he assails man perpetually, it behoves man to muster all his force against him and to entrench himself in the place of strength; for as the evil prompter is mighty, it behoves man to be mightier still; and those sons of men who do excel him in might are called "mighty in strength", dealing with him in his own coin, and they are "the angels of the Lord" who come from the side of Geburah (Might) to deal mightily with him. Such a one was Joseph, who was called "righteous" and guarded in purity the sign of the holy covenant which was imprinted upon him.' R. Eleazar said: 'The word "after" here alludes to the evil prompter, being the name of a grade, as we have laid down. Joseph exposed himself to his accusations because he used to pay great attention to his personal appearance. That gave the evil prompter an opening to say: "Behold, his father observes mourning for him, and he decks himself out and curls his hair!" Thus the bear was let loose, as it were, and set upon him.' AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS . When God surveys the world with intent to judge it, and finds there wicked people, then, in the words of the Scripture, "He shuts up the heaven, so that there shall be no rain, and the ground shall not yield her fruit" (Deut. XI, 17); through the sins of the sons of men heaven and earth are shut up and do not perform their functions. Now those who do not guard in purity the holy covenant cause a division between Israel and their Father in heaven. So Scripture says: "and ye turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them.... He shut up the heaven, so that there shall be no rain" (Ibid. XI, 16-17); for to be false to the holy covenant is equivalent to bowing to another god. But when the holy covenant is properly guarded by mankind, God showers blessings from above on to this world, as we read: "A bounteous rain didst thou pour down, O God; thine inheritance and the weary one, thou confirmest it" (Ps. LXVIII, 10). "A bounteous (n'daboth, lit. favour) rain" is a rain of favour, at a time when the Community of Israel find favour in the eyes of the Almighty and He desires to shower upon them blessings; then "Thine inheritance", namely Israel, who are the inheritance of the Holy One, as it says: "Jacob the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. XXXII, 9), and "the weary one", to wit, the Community of Israel, which is weary in a strange land, which is parched, panting for drink, "with that rain of favour thou confirmest it". Hence heaven and earth with all their hosts are upheld by that covenant, as Scripture says: "If not for my covenant, day and night, the ordinances of heaven and earth were as though I had not made them" (Jer. XXXIII, 25). Hence it is first written: "And Joseph was of beautiful form, and fair to look upon", and immediately afterwards, "that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph". AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS SHE SPOKE TO JOSEPH DAY BY DAY . R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: To keep thee from the evil woman, etc. (Prov. VI, 24). 'Happy', he said, 'are the righteous who know the ways of the Almighty and follow them, since they devote themselves to the Torah day and night; for whoso devotes himself to the Torah day and night inherits two worlds, the upper world and the world

below. He inherits this world, even if he does not study the Torah for its own sake; and he inherits the other world, if he does study the Torah for its own sake. So it is written: "Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand are riches and honour" (Ibid. III, 16); that is, whoever walks to the right of the Torah, for him she is length of life in the world to come, where he will be invested with the glory of the Torah, which is the truest glory and the crown of crowns; for the crown of the Torah is in the other world; but "in her left hand are riches and honour", to wit, in this world; even for him who does not study it for its own sake. When R. Hiya came from Babylonia to the Land of Israel he studied the Torah until his face shone like the sun, and when the students of the Torah stood up before him he would say: "This one studies the Torah for its own sake, this one does not study the Torah for its own sake." For the former he would pray that they should always retain that frame of mind and so merit the world to come; for the latter he prayed that their heart should be changed so that they should study the Torah for its own sake and merit life everlasting. One day he saw a certain disciple whose face was unnaturally pale. He said to himself: "This young man is undoubtedly assailed by sinful imaginations." So he took him in hand and interested him in the words of the Torah until he returned to a better frame of mind. From that day the disciple resolved not to give way any more to evil thoughts, but to study the Torah for its own sake.' R. Jose said: 'When a man perceives that evil thoughts are assailing him, he should study the Torah, and that will drive them away.' R. Eleazar said: 'When the evil side comes to seduce a man, he should draw it towards the Torah, and then it will quit him. For so we have learnt, that when the evil side stands up before the Almighty to accuse the world for its evil deeds, God in pity furnishes the sons of men with a device whereby to escape the accuser, so that he may not have power over them or their actions. This device consists in the study of the Torah, which will save them from the evil power, as it is written: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching (Torah) is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." The passage continues: "To keep thee from the evil woman, from the smoothness of the alien tongue" (Ibid. VI, 23-24), that is, from the side of uncleanness, or the other side, that is perpetually accusing the sons of men before the Almighty; and whilst it seduces men here below from the right path, it is busy on high pointing out the sins of men and indicting them, so that they may be given over into its power, in the same way as it acted towards Job. Especially at those periods when God sits in judgement on the world does it rise up to indict men and enumerate their sins. God, however, had compassion on Israel and provided them with a device for escaping from it, to wit, the trumpet (shofar) which is to be blown on New Year's Day, and the scapegoat which they give it on the Day of Atonement in order that it may leave them alone and occupy itself with its own portion. Of this it is written: "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on the nether world" (Ibid. v, 5); but of the true faith it says: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Ibid. III, 17). This refers to the ways and paths of the Torah. We have here the two opposing ways, the one of well-being, the other of death. Happy is the portion of Israel who cleave

faithfully to the Holy One, who has afforded them a means of escape from all the other sides, because they are a holy people, His inheritance and portion. Happy are they in this world and in the world to come. When this evil side comes down and roams through the world and sees the works of mankind and how they all act perversely in the world, it ascends and accuses them, and were it not that the Almighty has compassion on the works of His hands, none would be left in the world on account of the accuser. Thus we read: "And it came to pass, as she spoke to Joseph day by day",

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that is to say, the accuser ascends every day and brings ever so many evil reports and calumnies in order to destroy mankind; "but he hearkened not unto her", because He has compassion on the world; "to be by her", that is, to permit the accuser to exercise dominion over the world, which he cannot do without obtaining authorization. The virtuous man so guards his ways as to keep afar from him the evil prompter, as it is written: "And it came to pass, as she spake to him day by day, that he hearkened not unto her"; for the unclean spirit, which is the same as the evil prompter, tries day by day to seduce man to lie by her, that is, to draw him into Gehinnom, to be with her there; for observe that once a man yields to that side he is more and more drawn towards it and defiles himself with it in this world and in the other world. This unclean side is ugly and filthy, and by it is punished he who goes astray from the Torah, and all those sinners that have no faith in the Holy One, blessed be He. It is further written: "And it came to pass on a certain day", to wit, the day in which the evil prompter is at large in the world, and comes to lead men astray; the day when the sons of men "come into the house to do their work", that is, to repent of their sins or study the Torah and carry out the commandments of the Torah, since man's proper work in this world is nothing else than the service of the Holy One. Hence it behoves him to be strong as a lion on every side, so that the other side should not get the mastery over him and should be powerless to seduce him. But when the evil prompter sees that there is no man to stand up against him and wage war with him, then "She caught him by the garment, saying: Lie with me", for when the evil prompter gains an ascendancy over a man, he decks him out with fine raiment and curls his hair and says "Lie with me", that is, attach yourself unto me. He that is righteous stands up to him and offers him battle; so Scripture says: "And he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got him out"-the righteous thus by an effort shakes him off and flees from him so that he should not have command over him any more.' R. Isaac said: 'The righteous will one day see the evil prompter in the form of a huge mountain and they will marvel at themselves, saying, How were we ever able to overthrow that mighty mountain? Contrariwise, to the wicked the evil prompter will appear like a thread as thin as a hair, and they will say in astonishment, How was it that we could not master so frail a thread as this? The righteous will weep for joy and the wicked will weep from anguish. And the Holy One will sweep the evil one off the earth, He will slaughter him before their eyes, so that his power will for ever be gone from the world. The righteous will behold and rejoice, as it says: "Surely the

righteous shall give thanks unto thy name, the upright shall dwell in thy presence" (Ps. CXL, 14).'

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AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT THE BUTLER OF THE KING OF EGYPT AND HIS BAKER OFFENDED, ETC . R. Judah opened his discourse with the text: Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey? win a young lion give forth his voice out of his den, if he has taken nothing? (Amos III, 4). 'It well boots a man', he said, 'to be assiduous in the worship of the Holy One, blessed be He, for then his fear and dread is upon every creature. For when God created the world, He made each creature in its proper likeness; and finally He created man in the supernal image and gave him dominion over all through this image. For as long as a man is alive the other creatures look up to him and, perceiving the supernal image, shake and tremble before him, as we read: "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, etc." (Gen. IX, 2). But this is only when they are aware of that image and soul in him (though R. Eleazar said that the image of the righteous does not change even when their soul (neshamah) is no longer in them). But when a man does not walk in the ways of the Torah, that divine image is altered, and the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky obtain power over him; because the divine image in him, the very form which makes him a man, is changed. Observe how God altered the order of nature in order to execute His purpose. For the form of Daniel was not altered even when he was thrown into the lions' den, and thus he was saved.' Said R. Hizkiah: 'If so, why is it said, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me" (Dan. VI, 23)?' R. Judah said in reply: 'The divine image of the righteous man is itself the very angel that shuts the mouths of the beasts and puts them in shackles so that they do not hurt him; hence Daniel's words: "My God hath sent his angel", to wit, the one who bears the imprint of all the images of the world, and he firmly fixed my image on me, thereby shutting the lions' mouths, and making them powerless over me. Hence man has to look well to his ways and paths, so as not to sin before his Master, and to preserve the image of Adam. Ezekiel guarded his mouth against forbidden food, as it is written: "Neither came there abhorred flesh into my mouth" (Ez. IV, 14), and for this he was dignified with the title "son of Adam". Of Daniel also it is written: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's food, nor with the wine which he drank" (Dan. I, 8), in virtue of which he conserved the image of Adam; for all beings of the world fear the image of Adam, which is ruler and king over all.' Said R. Jose: 'For this reason it behoves man to be on his guard against sin and to turn neither to the right nor to the left; and however careful he may be, he should still search himself daily for any sin. When a man rises in the morning two witnesses join him and follow him the whole day. When he opens his eyes, they say to him: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee" (Prov. IV, 25); when he gets up and makes ready to walk, they say to him: "Make plain the paths of thy feet, etc." (Ibid. 26). A man, therefore, should be on his guard against his sins the whole day



and every day, and when night comes it behoves him to look back and examine all the actions he has done that day, so that he may repent himself. So David said: "And my sin is ever before me" (Ps. LI, 5), as an exhortation to repentance. Now, when Israel were in the Holy Land sin never clung to them, because the offerings which they offered up

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made atonement for them. But now that they are exiled from the Land and the offerings have ceased, it is the Torah and good deeds that make atonement for them.' R. Isaac remarked: 'So whosoever devotes himself to the study of the Torah and to the performance of good deeds enables the Community of Israel to raise its head in the midst of exile. Happy is the portion of those who study diligently the Torah day and night.'

Observe now how God regulates events in such a way as to raise aloft the head of the righteous; for in order that Joseph, who was found righteous before Him, might be exalted, He stirred his master to anger against his servants, as we read: "The butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt"-all that Joseph the righteous might be exalted. And notice that it was through a dream that Joseph was brought low by his brethren, and it was through a dream that he was raised over his brethren and over the whole world. AND THEY DREAMED A DREAM, BOTH OF THEM, EACH MAN HIS DREAM, IN ONE NIGHT, EACH MAN ACCORDING TO THE INTERPRETATION OF HIS DREAM, ETC. Seeing that we have laid down that dreams follow their interpretation, it may be asked what made Joseph interpret the dream of one in a good sense and of the other in a bad sense. The explanation is that these dreams concerned Joseph himself, and, because he penetrated to the root of the matter, he gave to each dream the fitting interpretation so that everything should fall in its place. AND JOSEPH SAID UNTO THEM: Do NOT INTERPRETATIONS BELONG TO GOD? TELL IT ME, I PRAY YOU. Joseph used this formula because it is necessary before interpreting a dream to entrust the interpretation to the Holy One, since there, on high, is the shaping of all events, and His is the interpretation. Observe that the grade of dream is a low grade, the sixth from that of prophecy, and that its interpretation determines its effect, being itself embodied in speech and utterance. This is what is meant by Joseph's question: "Do not interpretations belong to God (Elohim)?" Assuredly to Elohim. Now observe the verse: "And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, etc." R. Eleazar opened a discourse on the text: And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha: Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said: I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 'The language used by Elijah here', he said, 'is not a little surprising, for surely it is only God who can grant whatever is asked of Him. And further, how could Elisha, knowing this, demand "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me"?' But, indeed, this was surely not beyond the power of one who had a grip of heaven and earth and of the whole world, for assuredly God would perform the will of Elijah, as of all righteous men, as we read: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him" (Ps.

CXLV, 19), and all the more when it was a question of Elijah bequeathing the holy spirit he possessed to Elisha, who was his own servant, and concerning whom God had said to him: "and Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abel-mehulah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room" (I Kings XIX, 16); hence Elisha was his heir by right. We may ask, however, how he could beg for a double portion of his spirit, which was more than Elijah possessed. What Elisha really asked, however, was not a double portion of the spirit, but the power to perform a double achievement with that same spirit. Elijah thereupon said: "Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so" (II Kings II, 10). By the words, "if thou see me" he meant: If thou canst penetrate to the true inwardness of the spirit that I bequeath thee at the moment I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee. For such essence of the spirit as he should discern while looking at Elijah he would fully grasp.

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And so, whoever contemplates that which he learns from his master whilst at the same time seeing that wisdom reflected in his face, can thereby obtain an additional meed of spirit. So Joseph, in whatever he was about to do, used to contemplate in the spirit of wisdom the image of his father, and so he prospered and an augmentation of spirit came upon him with a higher illumination. When that sinner said to him: "behold, a vine was before me", Joseph was alarmed, not knowing what import it might have; but when he continued, "and in the vine were three branches", straightway Joseph's spirit was astir and received an influx of energy and illumination, because at the same time he gazed at the image of his father, and knew the meaning of the words he heard. We read, then, AND IN THE VINE WERE THREE BRANCHES. Said Joseph: 'This is assuredly tidings of unalloyed joy', since that vine was symbolic of the Community of Israel, and the three branches were the three higher grades ramifying from that vine, to wit, Priests, Levites, and Israelites: and AS IT WAS BUDDING ITS BLOSSOMS SHOT FORTH, that is, by virtue of those three orders the whole Community of Israel ascended and received the blessing from the Most High King: AND THE CLUSTERS THEREOF BROUGHT FORTH RIPE GRAPES, an allusion to the wine that is kept in store in its grapes since the six days of creation. [Tr. note: For the banqueting of the righteous in the world to come.] So far the dream was of good tidings for Joseph; the rest of the dream concerned solely the dreamer himself; for, indeed, some dreams there are which in part concern the dreamer himself and in part other people. In this connection we have been taught: To see white grapes in a dream is of good omen to the dreamer, but not black, the reason being that these two are emblems of two certain grades, one of the side of good, the other of the contrary side. Grapes in general are an allusion to faith, and hence they diverge within that category, one kind to the side of good and the other to the side of evil, the one requiring to be exorcised by prayer, the other betokening providential care. Observe that the wife of Adam pressed for him grapes and thereby brought death to him, and to the whole world. Noah, again, came upon those grapes

and he was not duly circumspect, so it is written of him: "And he drank of the wine, and he was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent" (Gen. IX, 21). Of those same grapes the sons of Aaron drank, and they offered up sacrifices whilst under the influence of wine, as a result of which they died. Hence it is written: "their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter" (Deut. XXXII, 32), referring to those grapes that caused all those ills; but the chief of the butlers saw in his dream the good grapes in that vineyard whence there ascends a pleasant and agreeable odour among the perfect grapes in manner due. Thus Joseph, who penetrated to the root of the whole matter, interpreted the dream aright; for inasmuch as the dream contained good tidings for himself he interpreted the whole of it in a favourable sense, and so it was fulfilled. The text continues: WHEN THE CHIEF BAKER SAW THAT THE INTERPRETATION WAS GOOD, HE SAID UNTO JOSEPH: ALSO I SAW IN MY DREAM, AND BEHOLD, THREE BASKETS OF WHITE BREAD WERE ON MY HEAD . Cursed be the wicked whose actions are all fraught with evil intent, their utterances with malice. As soon as the chief baker opened his mouth with the word af (=anger) Joseph was affrighted, perceiving, as he did, that his words would be of evil import; and, indeed, in the words "and behold, three baskets of white bread upon my head" Joseph at once read the evil tidings of the destruction of the Temple and of the exile of Israel. For notice the rest of the dream, namely, "and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head": this was a reference to the other nations who would assemble against Israel, slay them, devastate their dwellings, and scatter them into the four corners of the world. Joseph noted all this and knew that that dream concerned Israel at the time when they should sin before the King; he thus straightway interpreted it in an evil sense, which interpretation was fulfilled in the dreamer. Observe, then, that the two dreams belonged to two different grades: the one saw

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the upper grade ascending and the moon in its fullness of light; the other saw the moon in darkness and under the domination of the evil serpent. Joseph therefore looked closely at that dream and interpreted it as of evil presage.

R. Judah opened a discourse on the verse: Create me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me (Ps. LI, 12). 'The term "a clean heart",' he said, 'finds its parallel in the passage: "Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart" (I Kings III, 9), and also in: "But he that is of merry heart hath a continual feast" (Prov. xv, 15). This is assuredly the clean heart which David asked for. "And renew a steadfast spirit within me" indicates the spirit spoken of in the passage: "and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters", this being, as has been pointed out, the spirit of the Messiah; the same is alluded to in the promise: "And a new spirit will I put within you" (Ez. XXXVI, 26). David thus prayed for that steadfast spirit, since on the sinister side there is the unclean spirit called the spirit of perverseness that leads people astray, that unclean spirit referred to in the statement: "The Lord hath mingled within her a spirit of perverseness" (Is. XIX, 14). David thus prayed: "and renew within me a spirit of

steadfastness". The term "renew" also alludes to the renewal of the moon, a period which contains the assurance that David, King of Israel, is alive and in being.'

R. Eleazar and R. Jose were once walking on the road. Said R. Jose to R. Eleazar: 'We read: "And there came forth the spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said: I will entice him: And the Lord said unto him: Wherewith? And he said: I will go forth and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets. And He said: Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also; go forth and do so" (I Kings XXII, 21-22). According to tradition that was the spirit of Naboth the Jezreelite. Can, then, a soul which has once ascended to the upper world return to this world? Further, the words "I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in his mouth" are very astonishing. And again, why was Ahab punished on account of Naboth, seeing that Samuel had so laid down the law to Israel, when he said to them: "And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them" (I Sam. VIII, 14)? According to this, if Ahab took Naboth's vineyard, he was within his rights, and all the more so, seeing that he offered him in exchange another vineyard or its equivalent in gold, which he refused.' R. Eleazar said in reply: 'It is a proper question you ask. Observe that the traditional identification of that spirit with the spirit of Naboth does indeed raise a difficulty. For how could the spirit of Naboth stand up before the Almighty to ask permission to lie? If Naboth's was a righteous man, how could he ask permission to lie in the other world, the world of truth, seeing that even in this world it is the part of a righteous man to keep afar from falsehood? How much more so, then, in the upper world! On the other hand, if Naboth was not a righteous man, how could he have stood in the presence of the Almighty? But the truth is that Naboth was not righteous enough to stand in the presence of the Almighty, and that spirit was another one which has power in the world and continually ascends and stands before God, the same that leads people astray by means of falsehood. Now he who is accustomed to lying will always resort to lying, and hence he said: "I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit, etc.", to which the Holy One replied: "... go forth, and do so", as much as to say: "go hence and be off from here". This is in harmony with the Scriptural text: "He that speaketh falsehood shall not be established before mine eyes" (Ps. CI, 7). And in regard to the other difficulty-if Ahab took Naboth's vineyard, why did he kill him? It was just because he killed Naboth without cause, before expropriating his vineyard, that Ahab was punished. So it is written: "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" (I Kings XXI, 19). Great, indeed, is the number of those whom that lying spirit leads astray by means of falsehood, dominating the world from many sides and through many activities. Hence King David supplicated that he might be guarded against him and removed from defilement, saying: "Create me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me", a steadfast spirit being the opposite of that other spirit. In sum, there are two grades, one sacred and the other defiled.'

R. Eleazar then opened a discourse on the text: And the Lord uttereth, his voice before his army; for his

camp is very great, for he is mighty that executeth his word (Joel II, 11). He said: 'The expression "and the Lord" (V-Tetragrammaton), as we have laid down, everywhere indicates the Lord in conjunction with His Court of Justice; the "voice" here is the same as "the voice of words" (Deut. IV, 12) heard by the Israelites, where the term "words" again is identical with the same term in the verse "I am not a man of words" (Exod. IV, 10), the man of words being the man of God (Deut. XXXIII, 1); "before his army", to wit, Israel; "for his camp is very great", as it says: "Is there any number of his armies?" (Job xxv, 3),

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inasmuch as the Holy One has ever so many chieftains and emissaries who are at hand to bring accusations against Israel, and therefore God goes before Israel in order to guard them, and so that their accusers should not prevail against them: "for he is mighty that executeth his word", to wit, the righteous man, who devotes himself to the study of the holy Torah day and night. Alternatively, the term "mighty" here is an epithet of the accuser, who appears frequently before the Almighty, and who is indeed mighty, strong as iron, hard as flint; and it is he that "executeth his word", as he first obtains authorization from above and then takes away man's soul here below. We read further: "For great is the day of the Lord and very terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel II, 11), inasmuch as He is ruler over all, most high and most mighty, all being subject to His dominion. Happy are the righteous in whom the Holy One constantly finds delight, so as to vouchsafe to them the world to come and to make them participators in the joy with which the righteous will one day exult in the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written: "So shall all those who take refuge in thee rejoice, they shall ever shout for joy, and thou shalt shelter them, and that those that love thy name will exult in thee" (Ps. v, 12). Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen I'

## MIQEZ

AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END . R. Hiya expounded the word "end" from the text: He setteth an end for darkness, and he searcheth out to the furthest bound; a stone of thick darkness and the shadow of death (Job XXVIII, 3). 'The end here mentioned is', he said, 'an allusion to the "end of the left", which, after roaming to and fro in the world, finally ascends and presents itself before the Holy One, blessed be He, to bring accusations against mankind. He "searcheth out to the furthest bound" (takhliith-- destruction), inasmuch as all his works are never for good, but always for destruction and for the utter annihilation of the world. He is "a stone of stumbling" on which the wicked come to grief and which is found in "a land of thick darkness, as darkness itself" (Ibid. x, 22). For there is a "land of the living" on high, which is the Land of Israel, and a land below called "land of darkness'. The darkness and the shadow of death here mentioned are identical with the end that emerges from the side of darkness, which is also the "dross of gold". As we have laid down, it behoves the sons of men to take due thought of divine worship and to labour in the Torah day and night, so as to know how to serve the Holy One, blessed be He. The Torah herself summons man daily, saying:

"Whoso is thoughtless, let him turn in hither, etc." (Prov. IX, 4-6). And whoever labours in the Torah and cleaves unto her is privileged to take hold of the tree of life, as it is written: "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" (Ibid. III, 18). And whoso takes hold upon the tree of life in this world will also keep hold on it in the world to come, since the grades assigned to souls in the next world correspond to their state on departing from this world. Now the tree of life ramifies into various degrees, all differing from one another, although forming a unity, in the shape of branches, leaves, bark, stock, and roots. All the faithful ones of Israel lay hold upon the tree of life, some grasping the stock, some the branches, some the leaves, and others, again, the roots. But those who exert themselves in the study of the Torah

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grasp the very trunk of the tree, and so lay hold upon all; and so we affirm.' AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END . What does the term "end" signify? Said R' Simeon: 'It signifies the region wherein there is no remembering, which is identical with the end of the left. Why did it emerge at that moment? Because Joseph said: "But have me in thy remembrance when it shall be well with thee" (Gen. XL, 14). It was hardly becoming for Joseph the righteous to beg to be remembered by the chief butler; but he was led to do so by his dream, which he thought betokened remembrance. In this, however, he was mistaken, since all depended on God, and therefore the region of forgetfulness placed itself before him. Hence the Scripture, after saying, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph" (Ibid. 23), adds the words "but forgot him", alluding to the region of forgetfulness, which is identical with the end of the side of darkness.' AT THE END OF TWO FULL YEARS . The two years were symbolic of the two grades, the grade of forgetfulness and the grade of remembrance to which it gave place, THAT PHARAOH DREAMED. AND, BEHOLD, HE STOOD BY THE RIVER . This dream was one that concerned Joseph himself, since the idea of river is closely connected with Joseph the righteous; and according to the lore of dreams a river seen in a dream is a presage of peace, for so it is written: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river" (Is. LXVI, 12).

R. Hiya opened a discourse on the text: The king by justic establisheth the land; but he that exacteth gifts overthroweth it (Prov. XXIX, 4). 'When God', he said, 'created the upper world, He so constituted it as to send forth celestial radiations in all directions, and He created the upper heaven and the upper earth in such a way that they should provide for the sustenance of the lower denizens. The "king" here is an allusion to the Holy One, blessed be He, while "justice" signifies Jacob, who forms the basis of the world, since the basis of the world is justice, which establishes the earth with all requirements and provides for its sustenance. Alternatively, the "king" is the Holy One, blessed be He, while "justice" refers to Joseph, who established the land, as it is written: "And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn"; and because God chose for Himself Jacob, He caused Joseph to be ruler over the land.' R. Jose said: 'The "king" signifies Joseph, while

the words "by justice establisheth the land" allude to Jacob, seeing that before Jacob arrived in Egypt the existence of the people was jeopardized by the famine; but as soon as Jacob set foot in Egypt the famine ceased through his merits and the world was made secure. Alternatively, the king who by justice establisheth the land is exemplified in King David, of whom it is written: "and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people" (II Sam. VIII, 15); for David thereby upheld the world, which was preserved after him for the sake of his merits. "But he that exacteth gifts overthroweth it": this is exemplified in Rehoboam. For God for the sake of the righteous withholds punishment even when it has been decreed against the world; hence, during David's lifetime the land was upheld and after his death it was preserved for his sake, as we read: "and I will defend the city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake" (II Kings xx, 6). Similarly, during the lifetime of Jacob, as well as that of Joseph, no punishment was enforced against the world. Again, "he that exacteth gifts overthroweth it" is exemplified in Pharaoh, inasmuch as by hardening his heart before God he brought ruin on the land of Egypt, whereas before the land was preserved through Joseph in conjunction with Pharaoh's dreams.

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AND, BEHOLD, THERE CAME UP OUT OF THE RIVER SEVEN KINE, WELL FAVOURED AND FATFLESHED; AND THEY FED IN THE REED GRASS . The river is mentioned because from it all the lower grades receive their blessings. For the (supernal) stream which flows perpetually waters and feeds the whole, and Joseph was himself the river by means of which the whole of Egypt was blessed. By that (upper) river seven grades are irrigated and blessed, they being "well favoured and fattleshed", AND THEY FED IN THE REED GRASS (ahu). The word aku (meadow, or brotherhood) signifies that there is no separation between them. The number seven has everywhere a similar symbolism, e.g. the seven maidens and the seven chamberlains mentioned in the Book of Esther (Esther II, 9; I, 10). R. Isaac said that the seven good kine symbolize the superior grades, and the seven lean and ill-favoured kine other and lower grades; the former of the side of holiness, and the latter of the side of defilement. SEVEN EARS OF CORN . R. Judah said: 'The first seven ears were good, as they came from the right side, of which it is written "that it was good" (Gen. I, 4), and the second seven were ill, as being lower than the others; the first ones proceeded from the side of purity, and the others from the side of impurity. They all symbolized two series of grades corresponding with each other; and Pharaoh saw them all in his dream. R. Jesse remarked: 'Can it indeed be that the wicked Pharaoh was shown all these?' R. Judah in reply said: 'He only saw their counterparts rising in a corresponding series: he saw this through the medium of the lower grades. For, as we have learnt, what a man is shown in a dream corresponds to his own character, and his soul ascends just so far as to obtain for him the information suitable for his grade. Pharaoh thus saw as far as he was permitted to, see and no more.' AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END . R. Hizkiah quoted here the verse: To every thing there is a

season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven (Eccl. III, 1). 'For every thing that the Almighty has made in the lower world,' he said, 'He has appointed a fixed term and limit. He has appointed a time for light and for darkness. He has fixed a term for the light of the other nations who are now the rulers of the world; and a term for the darkness of the exile of Israel who are now subjected to their rule. And so there is a term for every purpose in the lower world.' According to another explanation, the word 'eth (time) is the name of an angelic power charged to see that everything takes place at its appointed time. AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE MORNING THAT HIS SPIRIT WAS TROUBLED; AND HE SENT AND CALLED FOR ALL THE MAGICIANS OF EGYPT, AND ALL THE WISE MEN THEREOF . The word vatipo'em (and was troubled, akin to the word pa'am, time) indicates that the spirit kept on appearing to Pharaoh and leaving him, not staying with him long enough at any one time to enlighten him. The same was the case at first with Samson, of whom it is written: "And the spirit of the Lord began to move him in time beats (I'pha'amo)" (Jud. XIII, 25). In connection with Nebuchadnezzar it is written vatithpa'em (and was troubled) (Dan. II, 1), to indicate that the coming and going of the spirit was twice as rapid.

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AND HE SENT AND CALLED FOR ALL THE MAGICIANS OF EGYPT AND ALL THE WISE MEN THEREOF , to wit, the bird-diviners. They all tried to make out the dream, but it baffled them. R. Isaac said: 'Although it has been affirmed that no man is shown anything in a dream save what falls within his own grade, it is different with kings, who are permitted to see more deeply than other men; for inasmuch as a king's grade is higher than that of other men, he is permitted to see that which falls within a higher grade than that of other men. So Scripture says: WHAT GOD IS ABOUT TO DO HE HATH SHOWN UNTO PHARAOH . whereas to other men God does not reveal what He is about to do, except to the prophets, saints, or sages of the generation. Now observe the words: ME HE RESTORED UNTO MINE OFFICE, AND HIM HE HANGED . From this we learn that a dream is determined by its interpretation, since the pronoun "he" can refer only to Joseph, indicating that it was Joseph who restored the one to his office, and hanged the other, through the medium of his interpretation. THEN PHARAOH SENT AND CALLED JOSEPH, AND THEY BROUGHT HIM QUICKLY (vayerizuhu) OUT OF THE DUNGEON . R. Abba discoursed on the verse: The Lord taketh pleasure (roze) in them that fear him, in those that wait for his mercy (Ps. CXLVII, 11). 'God indeed takes pleasure in the righteous', he said, 'because they promote peace in the upper world and in the lower world, and cause the bride to join her husband; and therefore God takes pleasure in those that fear Him and do His will. Those that wait for His mercy are they who study the Torah in the night time and thereby become associates of the Shekinah, and thus when the morning comes they wait for His mercy; for, as has been affirmed, whoso studies the Torah in the night time is looked upon graciously in the day time. So Scripture says: "By day the Lord will command His lovingkindness (or grace)"-for what

reason? Because “in the night his song is with me” (Ps. XLII, 9). Hence: “The Lord takes pleasure in those that fear him”, or, as we might translate more accurately, “appeases those that fear Him”, like one friend with another. Similarly, of Joseph here it is written, vayerizuhu (and they brought him hastily), which admits of the rendering, “and they appeased him”, when he was sad and woebegone, giving him words of good cheer that gladdened his heart and dissipated the gloom of the dungeon. Observe that just as his troubles commenced through his having been thrown into the pit, so it was through the pit that he finally was exalted.’ R. Simeon said: ‘Before that incident (of Potiphar’s wife), Joseph was not called righteous (zadiq); it was only after he stood the test of guarding the purity of the covenant that he was called righteous, and that the grade of the holy covenant was crowned through him, and having been with him in the first pit rose with him now; and thus it is written: “and they brought him quickly out of the pit”-he was raised from the pit and crowned by the well of living waters.’ AND PHARAOH SENT AND (he) CALLED JOSEPH . Instead of “and called” we should have expected “to call for”. The implied subject is, therefore, God, as in the verse “And he called to Moses” (Lev. I, 1), and this harmonizes with the words of the Psalmist: “Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him” (Ps. cv, 19). AND HE CHANGED HIS RAIMENT , out of respect for royalty, as explained elsewhere. R. Eleazar quoted here the text: Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham (Ibid. 23). ‘God,’ he said, ‘while accomplishing his decrees, yet directs events in such a manner as to soften their severity. For we have learned that but for the love which God bore to our ancestors, Jacob would have been brought down into Egypt in iron chains; but out of His love for the patriarchs He caused his son Joseph to be made ruler of the world; and so all the tribes went down into Egypt like people of distinction, and Jacob entered it like a king. In the verse: “Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham”, we may take Israel to be an allusion to the Holy One, blessed be He, for it was for the sake of Jacob, who sojourned in the land of Ham, and his sons that the Shekinah came into Egypt. God thus arranged that

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Joseph should first be brought into Egypt, as through his merit the covenant was confirmed with him, and made him ruler over all the land. In this connection it is written: “The King sent and loosed him; the ruler of peoples, and set him free” (Ibid. 20). According to R. Simeon, the word “ruler” in this sentence is the object of the verb “sent”, and refers to the ruler of peoples, to wit, the angel-redeemer, who is the ruler of the earthly beings, and whom God sent to set Joseph free. GOD WILL GIVE PHARAOH AN ANSWER OF PEACE . This was a first greeting and an overture of peace. R. Abba said: ‘The wicked Pharaoh said, “I know not the Lord” (Ex. v, 2), notwithstanding that he was the wisest of all the magicians; he knew, however, the name “God” (Elohim), seeing that he himself said: “Can we find such a man as this, a man in whom the spirit of God (Elohim) is?” But Moses came to him, not in the name of God (Elohim), but in the name of the Lord (TETRAGRAMMATON), a name altogether beyond his

apprehension.’ R. Abba quoted in this connection: Who is like the Lord our God, that is enthroned on high, that looketh down low upon heaven and upon the earth (Ps. CXIII, 5-6). ‘God’, he said, ‘is “enthroned on high”, that is, He raises Himself high above His Throne of Glory and does not reveal Himself to the lower world at those times when no righteous men are to be found in the world. Contrariwise, He “looketh down low” when righteous men are found in the world, as then He descends in His grade so as to meet the lower beings and to take the world under His providential care. But when there are no righteous men in the world, He ascends aloft and hides His face from men, and deserts them, inasmuch as the righteous are the foundation and the mainstay of the world. Hence God did not reveal His Divine Name save to Israel alone, who are His portion and lot and heritage; and the rest of the world He apportioned to celestial chieftains, as we read: “When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance.... For the portion of the Lord is his people, Jacob the lot of his inheritance” (Deut. XXXII, 8-9).’

As R. Hiya and R. Jose were one day walking together, the latter said: ‘I often puzzle over the language of Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes, which I find exceedingly obscure; for instance, the words All things would wear a man out to tell; man cannot utter it, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing (Eccl. I, 8). Why mention all these three organs? Having said that all things are more than mouth can utter, why add that “eye cannot see nor ear hear sufficiently”? The reason is, I presume, because eyes and ears function involuntarily; whereas the mouth is under a man’s control, and so Koheleth teaches us that all three together cannot exhaust the universe.’ Said R. Hiya: ‘That is so. Man’s mouth cannot utter, nor his eyes see, nor his ear hear the entirety of things; and yet “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ibid. I, 9). And observe that not even the disembodied spirits which the Holy One created under the sun are able to give utterance to all the things that are in the world, nor can their eye

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see nor their ear hear all. Hence Solomon, who knew everything, spoke thus. Now, observe that all the doings of the world are controlled by vast numbers of spirits, but the people of the world know not and regard not what it is that upholds them. Even Solomon, the wisest of men, could not apprehend them.’ He further discoursed on the verse: He hath made everything beautiful in its time; also he hath set the world in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done, etc. (Ibid. III, 11). ‘How happy’, he said, ‘are those who labour in the Torah and thus learn to see with the eye of wisdom! Whatever God has formed in the world has its own controlling grade which directs it either for good or for evil. There are grades of the right and grades of the left. If a man goes to the right, whatever act he performs then becomes a directing grade on that side which helps him onward and procures him other helpers. But if he goes to the left, then whatever act he commits becomes a directing force on that side, and brings indictments against him, whilst leading him further into that side. Hence, whenever a man performs a good and proper act the

chieftain of the right hand affords him help, and this is indicated in the expression "good in its time", that is, the act and its time become intimately bound up together; also "He hath set the world in their heart", that is, the whole world and all its works depend only on the will of man. Happy are those righteous who by their good deeds draw benefits upon themselves and upon the world, and who know how to attach themselves to the grade called "time of peace", and who in virtue of their righteousness in the lower world influence the grade called Kol (everything) to shine in its time ('eth). Woe to the sinners who know not the time- grade of any act and are not circumspect to perform their deeds in such a way as to benefit the world, and so that each deed of theirs should fall under the proper grade. Everything is thus dependent on man's free will, as it is written: "so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end"; and inasmuch as it depends on a man's will whether his deeds are attached to the proper grade or to the improper one, the text continues: "I know that there is no good in them but to rejoice, and to perform good actions so long as they live" (Ibid. III, 12). That is to say, if a man's actions are not good, he has to rejoice at all their consequences and to give thanks for them to the Holy One and to do good actions as long as he lives; for since his own act brought evil upon him through the grade presiding over it, he has to rejoice at the punishment and to give thanks for it, seeing that he brought it on himself, like a bird blindly falling into the snare. So Scripture says: "For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them" (Ibid. IX, 12). The expression "his time" ('eth) refers to the ministering angel called "time", who presides over each act a man performs, and is referred to in the statement "he hath made everything beautiful in its time". Hence they are "as the birds that are caught in the snare". Happy, then, are those who exert themselves in the study of the Torah and are intimate with the ways and paths of the Torah of the Most High King so as to follow the true way.'

Observe that a man ought never to begin his speech with an ill-omened utterance, as he does not know who will take it up, and he may come to grief over it. The righteous thus always begin their discourse with words of peace. So Joseph prefaced his address to Pharaoh with the words: "God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." R. Judah said: 'It has been taught that the Holy One, blessed be He, is solicitous for the welfare of a king, as we read: "and he gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh, King of Egypt" (Ex. VI, 13).'

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R. Hiya said: 'Pharaoh wished to put Joseph to the test, and so changed the tenour of his dreams. But Joseph, knowing, as he did, the grades, saw clearly each object of the dream, and said, "thus and thus didst thou see", point by point. Hence it is written: AND PHARAOH SAID UNTO JOSEPH: FORASMUCH AS GOD HATH SHOWN THEE ALL THIS, THERE IS NONE SO DISCREET AND WISE AS THOU . As if to say: You seem to have been there at the time I dreamt my

dream and to have seen the dream together with its interpretation." Said R. Isaac: 'If that be so, it would signify that Joseph told Pharaoh both his dream and its interpretation, as did Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar.' Said R. Hiya: 'Not so. Joseph gathered from Pharaoh's statement that he was speaking of certain grades, and was able to put him right on certain points, knowing the correct order of the grades. Whereas Daniel gathered nothing from Nebuchadnezzar's statement and told him outright both his dream and its interpretation. It is thus written: "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel by a vision of the night" (Dan. II, 19), to wit, by Gabriel. There are six visions (corresponding to the six mentions of the word "vision" in Ezek. XLIII, 3). The vision of a dream is a reflection of a higher vision, and this again of a still higher, the whole forming a series called "visions of the night", through which all dreams are interpreted. Hence "he revealed the secret to Daniel in a vision of the night", that is to say, one of those grades revealed to him the dream and its interpretation. But Joseph divined the higher grades out of the words of Pharaoh. Hence Pharaoh gave him command over the whole land of Egypt, and in this way God restored to him what was his due. Joseph's mouth kept back from sinful kissing; correspondingly we read, "and according to the word of thy mouth shall my people be ruled"; Joseph's hand kept itself away from sinful touch, hence "Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand"; Joseph's neck kept itself far from sinful embrace, so we read, "and he put a gold chain about his neck"; his body kept away from sin, hence "and he arrayed him in vestures of linen"; the foot did not ride in sin, so we read, "and he made him ride in the second chariot which he had"; and in virtue of the thought which Joseph kept pure he was called "discreet and wise of heart". So that all he received was his own due. It is then written: AND JOSEPH WENT OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH, AND WENT THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT . R. Hizkiah said that he went through the land of Egypt to have his rule proclaimed, and also to collect the corn of the various districts. R. Eleazar said that he collected the corn to prevent it from rotting. R. Simeon said: 'God is ever moulding events so as to fulfil His promise. When God created the world He first provided all necessities and then brought man into the world, so that he found his food ready for him. So, too, with the promise made by God to Abraham in the words: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs... and afterwards shall they come out with great substance" (Gen. xv, 13-14). When Joseph came into Egypt he did not find there great substance, so God arranged to bring a famine on the world, with the result that all people brought their silver and gold into Egypt, so that the whole land of Egypt was filled with silver and gold; then, when great substance was amassed there, He brought Jacob into Egypt. For this is the way of the Almighty, to provide the cure before inflicting the wound. Thus here He first prepared great substance and then

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brought Israel into exile. Observe that it was in virtue of being a righteous man that Joseph became the cause of Israel acquiring riches of silver and gold (Ps. cv, 37).

All this came to Israel by the hand of the righteous, and all was for the purpose of making them worthy of the world to come. ' R. Simeon then took for his text the verse: Enjoy life with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, etc. (Eccl. IX, 9). 'This verse', he said, 'has been thus esoterically explained. "Enjoy life" is an allusion to the life of the world to come, for happy is the man who is privileged to gain that life in its fulness; "with the wife whom thou lovest" is a reference to the Community of Israel, of whom it is written: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. XXXI, 3). When so? At the time when the Right side takes hold of her, as is implied in the concluding words: "Therefore with affection (hesed) have I drawn thee" (Ibid.); "all the days of thy vanity", inasmuch as she is bound up with life, with the world of the living, as opposed to this world, which is not the world of the living, since its denizens are "under the sun", where the lights of that (upper) sun do not reach—those lights which have departed from the world since the day when the Temple was destroyed, as is hinted in the verse: "The sun shall be darkened in his going forth" (Is. XIII, 10). "For that is thy portion in life": this alludes to the association of the sun with the moon, as it behoves us to bring the moon, as it were, into the sun and the sun into the moon so that there should be no separation between them, this being the portion of man by which he may enter the world to come. Then the passage continues: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy strength; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." This verse strikes one at first sight as surprising: is man indeed free to do "whatsoever his hand findeth to do"? But we must note the qualification in the phrase "do by thy strength", i.e. through the instrumentality of the higher soul of man (neshamah), which forms his strength, so as to gain through her this world and the world to come. Alternatively, "by thy strength" alludes to the wife mentioned above, she being a source of strength both for this world and the world to come. It thus behoves man to possess himself of that power in this world so as to be fortified by it in the next world; inasmuch as once a man departs this world he can do no more, and it is useless for him to say, "Henceforward I am going to perform good acts", for assuredly, "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest". If a man has not acquired merit in this world he will not acquire it any more in the other world, according to the dictum, "He who has not laid up provision for the journey from this world will have nothing to eat in the other world." There are, moreover, certain good deeds the fruits of which a man enjoys in this world whilst the principal remains for his enjoyment in the world to come. Observe that Joseph gained this world and the world to come in virtue of his determination to join himself to a God-fearing wife, as expressed in his words: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. XXXIX, 9). For this he rose to be a ruler in this world and gathered money for Israel, as we read, "Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt" (Ibid. XLVII, 14), and this was in the order of things, since the ever-flowing celestial river gathers within itself all things and is the repository of all riches. Everything thus happened according to plan: assuredly Joseph was predestined to rule over the kingdom. AND HE MADE HIM RIDE IN

THE SECOND CHARIOT . God has made a second chariot for the Righteous One, by whom the world is nourished. For God has an upper chariot and a nether chariot. The nether chariot is the second chariot, and Joseph, having attained to the name of "righteous", was qualified to ride on the second chariot, like his prototype in the supernal world. AND THEY CRIED BEFORE HIM: ABRECH . The term "abrech" signifies the spot where the sun is joined to the moon, towards which all bow down. We read further: AND HE SET HIM OVER ALL , namely, over all the world, so that all the peoples acknowledged his rule.

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Observe that God has made the earthly kingdom after the pattern of the heavenly kingdom, and whatever is done on earth has been preceded by its prototype in heaven. Now the dominion of the celestial kingdom was not perfect until it united itself to the patriarchs, since the Holy One intended that the supernal kingdom should be illumined from the grades symbolized by the patriarchs. And so when Joseph first went down into Egypt he drew after him the Shekinah, as the Shekinah only follows the Righteous One. Joseph was thus first drawn into Egypt, where he gathered up all the wealth of the world, and then came the Shekinah in company with all the tribes. And it was in virtue of having kept the purity of the covenant that Joseph was privileged to be crowned in his right place and merited the upper kingdom and the lower kingdom. Hence, to preserve the purity of the covenant is like observing the whole of the holy Torah, since the covenant is on a par with the whole Torah. NOW JACOB SAW THAT THERE WAS CORN IN EGYPT . R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus saith the Lord who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him (Zech. XII, 1). 'Certain points', he said, 'are to be noted in this verse. First, as to the import of the term "burden", here and in other passages. This term, wherever it introduces a judgement pronounced against other nations, has a favourable import, inasmuch as the prosperity of the idolatrous nations is, if one may say so, a burden for the Holy One. Hence a judgement pronounced against the idolaters removes, as it were, from Him the burden. Contrariwise, wherever the term "burden" introduces a decree of judgement against Israel, it has an unfavourable import, as it implies a burden put on the Holy One, blessed be He. Now, having said "who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth", what need is there for the text to add "and formeth the spirit of man", a fact which we know already? But in truth this points to a certain grade which forms the reservoir of all spirits and souls.' R. Simeon said: 'The words "within him" seem superfluous. But in truth this expression has a twofold recondite meaning. It bears allusion to that ever-flowing celestial river whence all the souls emerge and fly forth. For this purpose it gathers them in one central place or grade, and that grade "formeth the spirit of man within itself", like a woman who has conceived and forms the child within her womb from the moment of conception until it is fully developed; so the spirit remains within this grade until a man is created in the world to whom He assigns it. Alternatively, God "formeth the spirit of

man" within him, to wit, in his body, literally. For when a man is created and God assigns him his soul, and he emerges into the light of day, the spirit within him finds no body in which to expand, and remains cramped in one corner, as it were; but with the growth and expansion of the body the spirit also grows and expands; and in response to its growing need it continues to receive from on high, in ever greater abundance, vigour and energy, which in its turn it infuses into the body. Further, the statement that the Holy One "formeth the spirit of man within him" indicates that the spirit needs sustenance in the same way as the body, and that as the body goes on developing, so is the spirit granted increased strength and energy.' Observe, that when Joseph was lost, Jacob was deprived of that increase of spirit through the departure of the Shekinah from him. But afterwards "the spirit of Jacob their father revived" (Gen. XLV, 27),

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that is, it regained its former increase and growth. [Note: The first eight lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in the English version]

R. Jose and R. Hizkiah were once travelling from Cappadocia to Lydda, and with them was a certain Judean driving an ass laden with clothes. Said R. Jose to R. Hizkiah: 'Repeat one of those excellent expositions of Scripture which you are wont to deliver daily before the Sacred Lamp.' R. Hizkiah then began to hold forth on the verse: Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace (Prov. III, 17). 'These ways', he said, 'are the ways and paths of the Torah, as whoever walks in them is invested by the Holy One, blessed be He, with the grace of the Divine Presence as his constant accompaniment, and whoever follows her paths enjoys peace on high and below, peace in this world and in the world to come.' Said the Judean: 'A deeper meaning lies in this verse, like a coin in the corner of a box.' 'How do you know this?' they asked him. He said: 'I have heard the recondite explanation of this verse from my father.' He then continued to discourse thus. 'This verse contains a twofold idea, one suggested by the terms "ways" and "pleasantness", and the other by the terms "paths" and "peace"'. The "ways" are those mentioned in the passage, "who maketh a way in the sea" (Is. XLIII, 16). For the term "way" everywhere in Scripture denotes an open road, accessible to all. So the words "her ways are ways of pleasantness" allude to those ways which our patriarchs opened up and traversed on the great ocean, and which ramify in all directions to all quarters of the world; and by "pleasantness" is meant that pleasantness which issues from the other world, the source whence radiate all lamps in all directions. That felicity, that light which our patriarchs absorbed and inherited, is thus called "pleasantness". Or we can say that the world to come itself is called "pleasantness", because when it is awakened there is a stirring of all joy, all felicity, all illumination, and all freedom. Hence tradition tells us that when the Sabbath comes in, the sinners in Gehinnom have a respite and are granted ease and rest; and that at the termination of the Sabbath we have to call down the supernal joy upon us so that we may be delivered from the punishment that the sinners undergo from that moment onward; and this

we do by reciting the verse: "And let the pleasantness of the Lord our God be upon us, etc." (Ps. xc, 17), an allusion to the supernal pleasantness which brings universal freedom. Now, as for the "paths", they denote the paths that proceed from on high and are all gathered into the single covenant which is named "peace", meaning the peace of the household, and which carries those paths into the great ocean when it is agitated, and so gives it peace.' Observe that Joseph embodied the covenant of peace, and in consequence became ruler over the land of Egypt. Jacob, being deserted by the Shekinah, knew nothing of this, but nevertheless he had hopes [Tr. Note: This is a play on the term sheber=corn, which by a change of the diacritical point becomes seber=hope.] from the purchase of corn in Egypt, and he also foresaw calamity upon calamity [Tr. Note: Another play upon the term sheber, which, besides "corn", also signifies "calamity"] in his sons going down into Egypt. AND JACOB SAID TO HIS SONS: WHY SHOULD YE MAKE YOURSELVES CONSPICUOUS ? meaning, in effect, "you should not pretend to be other than hungry and short of food". R. Hizkiah said: 'Assuredly there is here contained a recondite lesson, to wit, that when trouble is abroad in the world, and the world is in distress, a man should not show himself in the open road, in order that he may not be seized on account of his sins; and so it is affirmed. Alternatively we may explain that

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for that very purpose God sent a famine into the world, namely that Jacob and his sons should go down into Egypt; and so Jacob saw the people bringing corn from Egypt, and thus knew that there was corn there. Or we may explain thus. When Isaac died, Jacob and Esau came to divide his inheritance. Esau renounced the inheritance of the (holy) land and all that it involved, and Jacob took up the whole, including the galuth. Hence he saw the calamity that awaited him in Egypt, where he and his sons would endure exile, and hence he said to his sons: "Why do you show yourselves off in presence of the supernal judgement? That is the way to bring the accuser down upon you." 'AND HE SAID: BEHOLD, I HAVE HEARD THAT THERE IS CORN IN EGYPT. GET YOU DOWN (redu) THITHER . It has already been pointed out that the numerical value of the term redu (RDV=210) amounts to the number of years Israel was in Egypt. AND JOSEPH WAS THE GOVERNOR OVER THE LAND, ETC . R. Jesse discoursed on the text: And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; and I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices with trumpet-sound (Ps. XXVII, 6). 'When God', he said, 'takes pleasure in a man, he raises him high above all his fellow-men and makes him chief over them all, so that all his enemies are subdued before him. King David was hated by his brothers and rejected by them, but God raised him high above all men. He had to flee from his father-in-law, but God made him ruler over the latter's whole kingdom and all knelt and prostrated themselves to him. Joseph, again, was rejected by his brothers, but afterwards they all knelt down and prostrated themselves before him, as we read: "And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down to him with their faces to the earth." Alternatively we may suppose this verse to be spoken by the



Community of Israel, whose head will one day be raised above Esau and all his lieutenants. Then Israel will “offer in his tabernacle sacrifices with trumpet-sound”, or, rather, “sacrifices of breaking” (teru’ah) to wit, the broken spirit which is mentioned in the passage: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit” (Ibid. LI, 19), so as to cause severity to be removed from the world; “then I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord”, without ceasing, for evermore. According to another interpretation, it is the good prompter who says, “and now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me”, to wit, above the evil prompter that surrounds man on every side and is his enemy throughout: “and I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices with trumpet-sound”, alluding to the study of the Torah, which has been given from the side of fire, as we read: “At his right hand was a fiery law unto them” (Deut. XXXIII, 2); for it is through the Torah that his head is lifted up and his enemies are broken before him, as it says: “Thou hast subdued unto me those that rose up against me” (Ps. XVIII, 40). According to another explanation it is King David who says, “And now shall my head be lifted up”, namely, to be ranked among the patriarchs, as he had first to join the patriarchs before he became exalted and elevated. “Above mine enemies round about me”: to wit, those on the left side, the accusers who sought to injure him; by his overcoming them the sun formed a junction with the moon, and a unity was effected. Observe now the passage: AND JOSEPH WAS THE GOVERNOR OVER THE LAND , which, in its deeper meaning, implies that the sun rules over the moon, gives her light and sustains her. We read further: HE IT WAS THAT SOLD TO ALL PEOPLE OF THE LAND . This alludes to the ever-flowing river whence all derive their nourishment and whence the souls of all men emerge. Hence all bow down toward that region, as nothing happens in the world that does not depend on mazzal, as explained elsewhere.

R. Eleazar here discoursed on the text: Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil the iniquity of my heels that compasseth me about? (Ps. XLIX, 6). ‘There are’, he said, ‘three classes who fear, and know not what they fear, as we have laid down elsewhere. One kind is the man who has committed sins without realizing that they were sins, and he is therefore afraid of “days of evil”, to wit, days that are under the jurisdiction of the

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evil one, that is, the evil prompter, who on certain days is given authorization to lead astray all those who pollute their ways. For whoever enters the path of defilement is carried further along it. Those days, then, are called “days of evil”, being assigned for the punishment of little sins which a man treads under his heels, [Tr. Note: i e. little peccadilloes which people are apt to overlook. An allusion to the term ‘aqebai=’, ‘footsteps’, or lit. “heels”.] as it were. Whoever, then, is habituated to those sins which men tread underfoot, as it were, is unaware of them and is constantly in fear. King David, however, was ever on his guard against these sins, and whenever he set out for battle he would closely examine himself to see that he was free from such sins, and he therefore was not afraid to go to war. Observe now the difference in the

behaviour of four kings in going to war. David said: “Let me pursue mine enemies, and overtake them; neither let me turn back till they are consumed” (Ps. XVIII, 38). He dared to make this request because he guarded himself against those sins, and thus allowed no opening to his enemies to prevail against him. He therefore prayed only that he might pursue them continually, and had no fear that they might pursue him, or that his sins might cause him to fall into their hands. Asa was in greater fear, for though he also minutely examined himself for any sins, yet it was not with such care as David. His request, therefore, was that he might merely pursue his enemies, not overtake them himself, and that God should slay them for him. And so it came about, as we read: “So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people that were with him, etc.” (II Chr. XIV, 11-12). Whereas in regard to David it is written: “And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day” (I Sam. xxx, 17). Jehoshaphat, again, in praying for help, said: “I am not able to pursue nor to slay them; but let me chant thy praises and do thou slay them.” This was because he did not examine himself even to the same degree as Asa. And God did what he requested, as it is written: “And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set liers-in-wait against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, that were come against Judah; and they were smitten” (II Chr. xx, 22). Finally, Hezekiah felt himself able neither to sing praises, nor to pursue, nor to engage in war, the reason being that he feared the above-mentioned sins. It is thus written: “And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses” (II Kings XIX, 35). That is, Hezekiah sat in his house, and lay in his bed, whilst God slew them. Now, if those righteous men were in so much fear on account of these sins, how much greater should be the fear of other men? Hence it behoves a man to be on his guard against those sins and to examine himself closely regarding them so as not to allow those “days of evil” which are without mercy to obtain dominion over him.’ AND JOSEPH KNEW HIS BRETHREN . When they fell into his hands he had compassion on them, since he was completely virtuous. BUT THEY KNEW HIM NOT : these were Simeon and Levi, who came from the side of severity, and hence had no pity on him, inasmuch as all those imbued with severity take no pity on men when they fall into their hands.

Hence David said, “Wherefore should I fear?” indicating that naturally he ought to fear [Tr. Note: Al. that he had no reason to fear.]

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those “days of evil”, as previously stated. David continues: “The iniquity of my heels that compasseth me about.” The word “heels” here, as in the passage, “and his hand had hold on Esau’s heel” (Gen. xxv, 26) indicates those evil powers (forming as it were the heel of the Body) that are forever on the look out for the sins which a man constantly treads under his heels. These little sins are like “cords of vanity” (Is. v, 18), scarcely

discernible, but which in time become as strong as “cart ropes”, and thus cause a man to lose this world and the world to come. Happy are the righteous who know how to guard themselves against their sins and continually examine their deeds so that no accuser may rise up against them either in this world or in the world to come, the Torah being their guide and preparing the way before them. Of these it is written: “Her ways are ways of graciousness, and all her paths are peace.” AND JOSEPH REMEMBERED THE DREAMS WHICH HE DREAMED OF THEM, ETC . R. Hiya quoted here the verse: Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth (Prov. XXIV, 17). ‘God’, he said, ‘created man in order that he should make himself worthy of His glory and always serve Him and be occupied in the Torah day and night. For God takes pleasure in the Torah and gave it to Adam and taught it to him, so that he should know its ways. So it is written: “Then did he see it, and declare it; he established it, yea, and searched it out. And unto Adam he said: Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job XXVIII, 27-28). Adam, however, though he inquired into it, did not keep it, and transgressed the command of his Master and was punished for his sin. Similarly, all those who transgress one precept of the Torah are held to account for it. King Solomon, the wisest of men, transgressed one precept of the Torah, and for that he was dethroned and his son’s inheritance was divided. What, then, must be the consequences of the transgression of the whole Torah! Now, since Joseph knew the Torah, having learnt it from his father, why when his brethren fell into his hands did he put them through all those ordeals? Far be it from us to think that it was out of a spirit of revenge that he heaped on them accusations: his only purpose was to make them bring with them his brother Benjamin, for whom his heart was longing; and, moreover, he did not let them come to grief, as we read later: “Then Joseph commanded them to fill their vessels with corn, etc.” ‘ R. Judah said: ‘After God created the moon He had her constantly before His eyes (Deut. XI, 12). In regard to this it is also written: “Then did he see it, and declare it (vayesaprah); he established it, yea, and searched it out” (Job XXVIII, 27). “He saw it” means that through His providence the sun is reflected in it. The term vayesaprah we may translate, “he made it like sapphire”. “He established it” so that it should fall properly into twelve divisions, [Tr. Note: i.e. the division of the Holy Land according to the twelve tribes.] and be further distributed among seventy kingdoms, [Tr. Note: Corresponding to the seventy nations or languages among which the world was divided according to the enumeration given in Genesis, chap. x supported by seventy[Tr. Note: The editions read “seven”.] celestial pillars, [Tr. Note: i.e. the seventy chieftains presiding over the seventy kingdoms of the world.] that it might be perfectly illumined. “And searched it out”: to guard it with an eternal and neverceasing vigilance. And then He gave a warning to man, as we read further: “And unto man he said: Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Ibid. XXVIII, 28), since wisdom is the means to attain to the fear of the Holy One, and understanding is the power by which to separate and keep away the refuse, and thus attain to a knowledge of and an insight into the glory of the Most

High King.’

R. Jose once rose in the night to study the Torah, when there happened to be a certain Judean with him in the house. R. Jose began to expound the verse: Treasures of wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death (Prov. X, 2). ‘There is no profit’, he said, ‘to those men who do not occupy themselves with the study of the Torah and follow only worldly affairs in order to amass treasures of wickedness, of which it is written: “And those riches perish by evil adventure” (Eccl. v, 2). But “righteousness delivereth from death” those who occupy themselves with the study of the Torah and know its ways; for the Torah is called the tree of life and is also called righteousness, as we read: “And it shall be righteousness unto us” (Deut. VI, 25). The word zedaqah (righteousness) here may also have its literal meaning of “charity”.

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The two meanings, Torah and charity, are however, in essence identical.’ The Judean remarked: ‘It bears also the meaning of peace.’ R. Jose replied: ‘Assuredly it is so.’ The Judean then joined him and began to discourse on the text: He that tilleth the ground shall have plenty of bread; but he that followeth after vain things shall have poverty enough (Prov. XXXIII, 19). ‘This verse’, he said, ‘presents a difficulty. For can it be supposed that King Solomon, the wisest man in the world, would have said that it behoves a man to devote himself to the tilling of the ground and to neglect the life everlasting? But there is an inward meaning therein.’ The Judean then cited the verse: “And he put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it” (Gen. II, 15). ‘This sentence, as has been explained,’ he said, ‘contains an allusion to the sacrifices, the object of the verb “to dress” being the higher King, and of “to keep” the lower King, the one embracing the upper world, the other the lower world, the one esoterically referred to in “remember”, the other in “observe”[Tr. Note: An allusion to the two variants, “remember,” and “observe”, in the text of the fourth Commandment, in Exodus and Deuteronomy.] Hence the “ground” here is an allusion to the Garden of Eden, which it behoves man to dress and to till so as to cause to flow upon it blessings from on high, whereby he himself will receive blessings along with it. Observe that the priest who blesses the people is blessed himself, as it says: “and I will bless them”[Tr. Note: i.e. the priests.] (Num. VI, 27). Hence, “He that tilleth the ground shall have plenty of bread”, to wit, heavenly food, but “he that followeth after vain things”, namely, he that cleaves to the other side, shall have poverty enough, assuredly.’ R. Jose remarked: ‘Happy art thou to be able to give such an exposition.’ The Judean then followed with a discourse on the verse: A faithful man shall abound with blessings (Prov. XXVIII, 20). ‘This speaks of the man’, he said, ‘who puts his trust in God, like R. Jesse the elder, who, although he had food for the day, would not prepare his meal before he had prayed for his daily bread to the Holy King; and he used to say, “We shall not eat before we obtain permission from the King.” “But he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be unpunished” (Ibid.), because he refuses to devote himself to the Torah, which constitutes the life of this world and the

life of the world to come. It being now the time to occupy ourselves with the study of the Torah, let us do so,' he said. He then began to discourse on the subject of dreams. 'We read, he said: AND JOSEPH REMEMBERED THE DREAMS WHICH HE DREAMED OF THEM . That is, when he saw them bowing to him, he called to mind his dream about their sheaves bowing to his sheaf. Further, one ought to remember a good dream, because, although there is no forgetfulness before the Holy One, yet if the man forgets the dream he also will be forgotten. A dream that is not remembered might as well not have been dreamt, and therefore a dream forgotten and gone from mind is never fulfilled. Joseph therefore kept his dream fresh in his memory, never forgetting it, so that it should come true, and he was constantly waiting for its fulfilment. AND HE SAID TO THEM: YE ARE SPIES . Although he remembered his dream, he did not mention it to them, but only said, "Ye are spies." ' R. Jose discoursed on the verse: For a dream cometh through a multitude of business; and a fool's voice through a multitude of words (Eccl. v, 2). 'It has already been explained', he said, 'that dreams are under the charge of a hierarchy of custodians, so that some dreams are altogether true and others are a mixture of true and false. But to the truly righteous no false messages are ever communicated, but all they are told is true. Observe that of Daniel it is written: "Then to Daniel, in a vision of the night,

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the secret was revealed" (Dan. II, 19), also: "Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream" (Ibid. VII, 1). Had the dream contained falsehood, it could not have been written down in the Scriptures. When the souls of the truly righteous ascend, nothing comes in contact with them save holy beings that communicate to them words of truth, words that can be relied upon never to prove false. There is, it is true, a tradition that King David never saw a happy dream, from which we should conclude that he was shown false things in his dreams. The truth is, however, that David was all his life engaged in making war, in shedding blood, and hence all his dreams were of misfortune, of destruction and ruin, of blood and shedding of blood, and not of peace. You may possibly also wonder how it is that a good man is often shown a bad dream. The explanation is that what he sees in such dreams is the evil that is to cleave to those who transgress the commands of the Torah and the punishments which will be meted out to them in the other world; and the good man sees all these in his dreams in order that the fear of his Master may constantly be upon him. So it says: "and God hath made it, that man should fear before him" (Eccl. III, 14), which has been explained to refer to bad dreams. This, then, is the reason why the righteous man is made to see a bad dream. We have learned that when a man has had a dream, he should unburden himself of it before men who are his friends so that they should express to him their good wishes and give utterance to words of good omen. Desire, which is Thought, is the beginning of all things, and Utterance is the completion; and so a deep symbolism will in this way have been effected, and all will have been made good. Thus a man's friends should affirm the good

interpretation, and so all will be well. We see, then, that God communicates to each man by means of dreams of the degree and shade of colour conformable to the degree and shade of colour of the man himself.' The Judean remarked: 'Assuredly, it is only the good man that is made to see true dreams. When a man is in bed asleep, his soul leaves him and roams to and fro towards the upper world and enters as far as she can, and numerous bands of pure spirits who are traversing the world meet her. If she be worthy, she ascends on high and sees notable things, but if not, she falls into the hands of the other side, who communicate to her lying things, or things which are about to happen shortly. And when the man awakes, the soul communicates to him what she saw. The unjust man is thus shown a happy dream, but an untruthful one, so as to make him go further astray from the path of truth. For since he turned aside from the right path they defile him the more, as whoever sets out to purify himself is purified from above, and whoever sets out to defile himself is similarly defiled from above. This has already been expounded elsewhere.'

Thus R. Jose and the Judean discoursed until the morning dawned. R. Jose then remarked: 'Assuredly the reason that Joseph's name is not mentioned in connection with the standards of the tribes (v. Num. III) is that he exalted himself over his brethren.' Said the Judean: 'I have heard it said that Joseph derived from the world of the Male, whereas his brethren derived from the world of the Female; and it is for this reason that he was not included with them. It is thus written: WE ARE ALL ONE MAN'S SONS , where the word for "we" (anahnu) is written defectively nahnu, without the letter aleph. The aleph is the image of the male principle as against the beth, which is the image of the female principle; and since the brothers did not exhibit the symbolism of the covenant, the aleph was removed from them and they were left, as it were, of the female aspect in the company of the Shekinah. Afterwards, however, they said: "We are upright men" (Gen. XLII, 31), using the full form anahnu (we), containing the aleph, and without knowing it they were right, since Joseph was present with them. This view is further supported by the passage: "And they said: We thy servants are twelve brethren" (Ibid. 13): here clearly Joseph was included within the number twelve, and hence they similarly made use of the full form for "we are", namely anahnu, not the defective form nahnu.' R. Jose remarked: 'All these expositions we have just now given must be pleasing to God, since the Shekinah did not depart

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from here in accordance with the verse: "Then they that fear the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi, III, 16). ' AND HE PUT THEM ALTOGETHER INTO WARD THREE DAYS . Said R. Eleazar: 'Those three days correspond to the three days during which the men of Shechem were sick (Gen. XXXIV, 25). Observe that it is written here: AND JOSEPH SAID UNTO THEM THE THIRD DAY: THIS (zoth) DO AND LIVE , by which he showed them that he was not going to act towards

them in the way they acted towards Shechem; for whereas they had first made the people of Shechem take upon them the sacred rite of the covenant, which is symbolized by the word zoth (this), and then had slain them to the last man, Joseph, on his part, said: "This (zoth) do and live"; why? "For I fear God", and am guarding the sacredness of the covenant. All this procedure was only for the sake of Benjamin. AND THEY SAID ONE TO ANOTHER: WE ARE VERILY GUILTY CONCERNING OUR BROTHER, ETC. "One to another" (lit. a man to his brother) refers to Simeon and Levi, the same reference being contained in the words: "And they said one to another (lit. a man to his brother): Behold, this dreamer cometh" (Ibid. XXXVII, 19). Which is "man" and which is "brother"? "Man" must refer to Simeon, as in the passage: "And, behold, a man of the children of Israel came" (Num. xxv, 6). Simeon repented of his action and wept and felt remorse and said: "We are verily guilty"; and it was through his repentance that his emblem became the ox, the same as that of Joseph, of whom it is written: "His firstling bullock, majesty is his" (Deut. XXXIII, 17). And it was for that reason that we read AND HE TOOK SIMEON FROM AMONG THEM, for Joseph wished to separate him from the influence of Levi, as when the two were together they might find matter of charge against him. AND BOUND HIM BEFORE THEIR EYES. It has already been explained that only before their eyes did he have him bound, but after they departed he regaled him with food and drink. It must not be supposed that Joseph acted in the spirit of the verse, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink, for thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head" (Prov. xxv, 21). Joseph was too righteous a man for this. Far be it, then, from Joseph to have acted in that spirit. Indeed, he acted as a man to his brother, in true brotherly love without any other motive. And not only towards Simeon, but towards all his brethren he acted so, as it is written: THEN JOSEPH COMMANDED TO FILL THEIR VESSELS WITH CORN, AND TO GIVE THEM PROVISION FOR THE WAY; AND THUS IT WAS DONE UNTO THEM. All this he did in a spirit of brotherhood.'

R. Jose commenced a discourse on the verse: If they be peaceful and likewise many, and they will likewise be shorn, then he shall pass away; and though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more (Nahum I, 12). 'This verse', he said, 'has been expounded in the following manner. When a people live in peace, and harbour no quarrelsome persons in their midst, God has compassion on them, and rigorous justice is not invoked against them, even though they worship idols. This is in harmony with the verse, "Ephraim is joined in serving idols, let him alone" (Hos. IV, 17) [Tr. Note: i.e. albeit Ephraim are worshipping idols, since they are all joined together in peace and harmony, they will escape the rigour of justice.] In the expression "and they will likewise be shorn", the word "likewise" continues the thought of the word "peace" above, by adding to it charity, which is peace; for whoever promotes charity promotes peace, both in the upper world and in the lower world. "Those who are shorn" means those who allow themselves to be shorn of their substance, devoting it to charity: Concerning such the verse says: "and he (or it) shall pass away", not, as we should have

expected "they shall pass away", but "it shall pass away", namely, the wrathful judgement of heaven. The word "pass" is used in a similar connection in the verse "until indignation be overpast" (Is. XXVI, 20). The following is an alternative interpretation. "Thus saith the Lord: If they be perfect (shelemim)": this is an allusion to Israel, whom God favoured with the covenant which they were to guard constantly so as to be perfect on all sides, both on high and here below; for otherwise a man is defective in every respect. So it is written: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. XVII, 1), implying that Abram, before the sign of the covenant was confirmed in him, was defective. Hence: "if they be perfect they shall likewise be many", that is, if Israel observe this precept whereby they become perfect and do not remain in a state of incompleteness, they will in consequence increase

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and multiply, inasmuch as souls do not descend into the world save through the covenant. The verse continues: "and so if they be circumcised it shall pass away", the last part referring to the taint of the uncircumcised state that attached to them before. The following is, again, another interpretation of the verse. "Thus saith the Lord: if they be perfect and likewise many": this is an allusion to the sons of Jacob, inasmuch as so long as they were in the presence of Joseph they were perfect in that they stood by him who kept the purity of the covenant. But when "they became separated", having gone and left Joseph and Simeon behind, then "He was wrathful", as then judgement was invoked on their account. The term 'abar (lit. pass) similarly indicates anger in the verse: "For the Lord will be full of wrath (ve'abar, lit. will pass through) in smiting the Egyptians" (Ex. XII, 23). Observe that there is severe judgement and mild judgement, and when mild judgement sucks, as it were, from severe judgement, it becomes itself harsh and formidable. When judgement is invoked against Israel, it is mild judgement that is exercised, such as has not been hardened by severe judgement. But when judgement is invoked against the idolatrous nations, mild judgement becomes hardened by the severity of judgement on high and is rendered terrible. It is thus written: "And the Lord will be full of wrath in smiting the Egyptians" (Ibid.), where the term ve'abar (lit. and He shall pass) indicates that He becomes full of wrath and indignation and takes hold of chastisement. (Note that when ten assemble together in Synagogue and one of them slips out, God is wrathful with him.) According to another interpretation, the second part of the verse says: "and likewise they", that is, the evil deeds of man, "will be removed, and it shall pass over". What shall pass over? R. Simeon said: 'When the soul leaves this world it has to pass through many trials before it reaches its place. And, finally, there is the ever-flowing river of fire which all souls have to pass and to bathe in, and who is he that can face it and pass through it without fear? But the soul of the righteous passes without fear and stands in His holy place; and the man who has performed charity in this world, having given of his substance to charitable objects, of such a one it is written, "and he shall pass over", that is, he shall pass through that region without fear; and a herald will proclaim before that soul, "and though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict

thee no more" (Nahum I, 12). For, whoever is worthy to pass through that region is exempt from any further ordeal whatever.'

It may be asked, what need was there to record all these incidents concerning Joseph and his brethren? The Torah, however, is the embodiment of truth and all its ways are ways of holiness, there being no word in the Torah that does not contain sublime and holy recondite truths and examples for man to lay to heart and follow. R. Jose began in this connection a discourse on the verse: Say not thou: I will requite evil; wait for the Lord, and he will save thee (Prov. xx, 22). 'Observe', he said, 'that the Holy One made man for the purpose that he should lay fast hold of the Torah and walk in the way of truth, towards the right side, and not towards the side of the left. And since they ought to go to the right, it behoves the sons of men to abound in love for each other, and banish enmity from their midst, so as not to weaken the right side, which is the spot to which Israel cleave. It is for this reason that there exist a good prompter and an evil prompter; and it behoves Israel to make the good prompter master over the evil prompter by means of good deeds. But when a man strays to the left, the evil prompter thereby gets the mastery over the good prompter, and after having been disabled is restored to strength through the man's sins, for this burden becomes strong only through man's sins. Hence it behoves man to see that the evil prompter does not become reinforced through his sins, inasmuch as it is the good prompter to whom more power should be given and not the evil prompter. Hence Scripture teaches us: "Say not thou: I will make complete the evil one (ashalmah ra'); wait for the Lord, and he will save thee." According to another interpretation, the verse teaches us first not to repay evil for good, inasmuch as "whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house" (Prov. XVII, 13); and, moreover, man must abstain even from repaying evil for evil, but must "wait for the Lord and he will save thee". This teaching was exemplified in Joseph the righteous, who abstained from repaying evil to his brethren when they fell into his hands. He addressed to himself the words, "wait for the Lord, and he will save thee", for he

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feared the Holy One, blessed be He. He thus said to his brethren: THIS DO, AND LIVE .

R. Abba began a discourse on the verse: Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out (Ibid. xx, 5). 'The first clause of this verse', he said, 'may be applied to the Holy One, who with deep counsel moulded events by the hand of Joseph so as to execute his decree; "but a man of understanding will draw it out" is exemplified in Joseph, who revealed those deep things which the Holy One decreed on the world. Again, "Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water" is exemplified in Judah at the time when he approached Joseph on behalf of Benjamin, as explained elsewhere, whereas "a man of understanding will draw it out" was exemplified in Joseph.' R. Abba was one day sitting at the gate of Lydda when he saw a man come and seat himself on a ledge overhanging the ground. Being

weary from travelling, he fell asleep. R. Abba saw a serpent glide up towards the man, but, before it reached him, a branch fell from a tree and killed it. The man then woke up, and catching sight of the serpent in front of him stood up; and no sooner had he done so than the ledge gave way, and crashed into the hollow beneath it. R. Abba then approached him and said: 'Tell me, what have you done that God should perform two miracles for you?' The man replied: 'Never did anyone do an injury to me but that I made peace with him and forgave him. Moreover, if I could not make peace with him, I did not retire to rest before I forgave him together with all those who vexed me; nor was I at any time concerned about the evil the man did me; nay more, from that day onward I exerted myself to show kindness to such a man.' R. Abba then wept and said: 'This man's deeds excel even those of Joseph; for Joseph showed forbearance towards his own brethren, upon whom it was natural for him to have compassion; but this man did more, and it was thus befitting that the Holy One should work for him one miracle upon another.' R. Abba then began a discourse on the verse: He that walketh uprightly walketh securely; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known (yivade'a) (Ibid. x, 9). ' "He that walketh uprightly", ' he said, 'signifies the man that follows the ways of the Torah, and such a one "walketh securely", the malignant forces of the world being able to do him no harm; but "he that perverteth his ways" and turns aside from the way of truth "shall be known", to wit, he will become a marked man to all the executors of judgement, by whom his image will never be forgotten until the time when they will take him to the appointed place of retribution. But "him who walks in the way of truth" God takes under His cover so that he should not become known to nor recognized by the executioners of judgement. Happy are those who walk in the way of truth, and thus go about securely in the world without fear either in this world or in the world to come.' AND THE MEN WERE AFRAID, BECAUSE THEY WERE BROUGHT INTO JOSEPH'S HOUSE . R. Jose said: Woe to the men who know not nor reflect on the ways of the Torah. Woe to them when God will call them to account for their actions and will raise the body and the soul to pay the penalty for all their deeds committed before the soul was separated from the body. That will be the Day of Judgement, on which the books are open and the prosecutors standing by. At that time the serpent will be on the alert to bite the man, quivering in all his limbs to leap upon him. The soul will then become separated from the body and will depart and be carried off to it knows not where. Alas for that day, a day of wrath and indignation! Hence it behoves man to contend daily with his evil prompter and to picture to himself the day when he will stand before the King to be judged, when they will lower him into the ground to rot there, whilst the soul will become separated

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from him. We have been taught that it behoves man always to rouse the good prompter against the evil prompter; if the latter departs, well and good, but if not, the man should study the Torah, as there is nothing so well calculated to crush the evil prompter as the Torah; if he departs, well and good, but if not, let the man remind him of the day of death so as thereby to subdue

him. This statement requires consideration. We know that the evil prompter and the angel of death are one and the same. How is it possible, then, that the angel of death should be cowed by the thought of the day of death, seeing that he himself is the slayer of the sons of men, and this is his joy, and in fact his whole purpose in leading men astray is to bring them to this? The truth, however, is that the purpose of bringing to mind the day of death is primarily to humble a man's heart, for the evil prompter dwells only in a place where pride and intoxication are rampant, but where he finds a broken spirit he leaves the man alone. Observe that the good prompter requires the joy of the Torah and the evil prompter the joy of wine and lewdness and arrogance. Hence a man should constantly be in fear of that great day, the Day of Judgement, the day of reckoning, when there will be none to defend him save his own good deeds which he performed in this world. If Joseph's brothers, who were all valiant men, were afraid when led by one youth into Joseph's house, how much greater will be man's fear when the Holy One, blessed be He, will cite him to judgement? Hence it behoves a man to strive his utmost in this world to fortify himself in the Almighty, and put his trust in Him; for then, although he may have sinned, if he repents with all sincerity, since his stronghold is in the Holy One, it will be as though he had not sinned. The brothers were afraid on account of their sin in having stolen Joseph, for had they not sinned they would not have had any cause to fear; for it is only a man's sins that break his courage and deprive him of strength, the reason being that the good prompter is at the same time unnerved, and left powerless to contend with the evil prompter. This is implied in the words: "What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted?" (Deut. xx, 8), on account, that is, of sins which he may have committed, these being the ruin of a stout heart.

For many generations God exacted payment for the sins of the tribes, since nothing is forgotten of Him, but He exacts requital from generation to generation, and the sentence remains in force till it is fully paid. This is exemplified in the case of Hezekiah. Hezekiah sinned in exposing the mysteries of the Holy One, blessed be He, to the view of idolatrous nations. [Tr. Note: Is. XXXIX, 2: "and (he) showed them his treasure-house", which, according to the Cabbalists, is a reference to the Ark and the tables of the Ten Commandments.] God therefore sent him, through Isaiah, a message, saying: "Behold, the days come that all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers laid up in store until this day shall be carried to Babylon, etc." (Is. XXXIX, 6). Through his sin in disclosing that which should have remained hidden, opportunity was given to the other side [Tr. Note: i.e. the K'liphoth, or shells, the sinister forces that avail themselves of every opening to contaminate and draw sustenance from any sacred region.] to obtain dominion over it. For, as explained already, blessing rests on that which remains undisclosed, but as soon as it is disclosed the other region obtains scope to exercise dominion over it. It is written: "All that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness" (Lament. I, 8). This is explained as follows. When Merodach Baladan, King of Babylon, sent a present to Jerusalem (Is. XXXIX, 1) he sent a letter in which he first wrote, "Peace be unto Hezekiah King of Judah, and peace be unto the great

God, and peace be unto Jerusalem." But no sooner did the epistle leave his hands than he bethought himself that he had not done right in putting the greeting of the servant before that of his Master. So he rose from his throne, advanced three paces, took back his epistle and wrote another one in its place, headed thus: "Peace be unto the great God, peace be unto Jerusalem, and peace be unto Hezekiah." Thus was Jerusalem honoured;

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but later, "all those that honoured her despised her", the reason being that "they have seen her nakedness", through the action of Hezekiah. Since, however, Hezekiah was very righteous, the punishment was postponed during his lifetime, but it was visited upon his descendants after him. Similarly, the guilt of the tribes did not bring its punishment until a later time, because the judgement from on high could not obtain power over them until an opportune time arrived. Hence, whoever is burdened by sins is constantly in fear, as it says: "and thou shalt fear night and day" (Deut. XXVIII, 66). AND HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES, AND SAW BENJAMIN HIS BROTHER, HIS MOTHER'S SON, ETC . R. Hiya began a discourse on the verse: Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but desire fulfilled is a tree of life (Prov. XIII, 12). 'This', he said, 'bears out the traditional teaching to the effect that a man in praying to the Almighty should not observe too closely whether his prayer is answered or no, lest the numerous accusers who are about will come to scrutinize his deeds. The underlying meaning of the first part of the verse is that if a man thinks too much about whether his prayer will be answered, he provokes "sickness of heart", to wit, that spirit who is constantly shadowing him in his eagerness to indict him on high and below; but "desire fulfilled is a tree of life", that is, as tradition teaches us, whoever desires that the Holy One, blessed be He, should accept his prayer, should be diligent in the study of the Torah, which is the tree of life, and thus desire is "fulfilled", or, more literally, "cometh" (baah). By "desire" is meant the grade that presides over all prayers and takes them up into the presence of the Most High King. The word "cometh" (baah) is used here as in the phrase, "In the evening she cometh" (Esther II, 14), and means that the desire comes up before the Most High King so as to fulfil the man's wish. Alternatively, "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" is an allusion to that other and wrong place in which man's prayer may be delayed whilst it passes from hand to hand and so fails to reach its destination, because it is passed from chieftain to chieftain and is brought down again into this world. "But desire fulfilled is a tree of life": this alludes to the hope that is not bandied about among those chieftains, but is granted to the man by God immediately; for if it is delayed among those chieftains it is exposed to the scrutiny and criticism of numerous accusers, who may prevent it from being granted. Not so is it with the hope that issues directly from the King's Court: this is granted to man at once, irrespective of his merits. Again, "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" is exemplified in Jacob, whose hope in regard to Joseph was deferred for a long time, while "desire fulfilled is a tree of life" is exemplified in the case of Benjamin, inasmuch as only a short time elapsed between

Joseph's demand that he should be brought to him and his actual arrival, of which it is written, "And he lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin his brother, his mother's son." The words "his mother's son" in this passage indicate that Benjamin was the very image of his mother.' Said R. Jose: 'since it has already been written, "And Joseph saw Benjamin with them", why does the Scripture repeat "And he lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin his brother"? The truth is that the second time he saw something new: he foresaw through the holy spirit that Benjamin would have a portion along with his brethren in the Holy Land, and, moreover, that it would be in the portions of Benjamin and Judah that the Shekinah would rest, in that the Temple would be in their portion. [Tr. Note: Cf. T.B. Tractate Yoma, 12a: "A strip of land went forth from Judah's lot and entered into Benjamin's territory, and on this the Temple was built."] Hence he saw that Benjamin would be more closely connected with them than he himself.' AND JOSEPH MADE HASTE; FOR HIS HEART YEARNED TOWARD HIS BROTHER; AND HE SOUGHT WHERE TO WEEP; AND HE ENTERED INTO HIS CHAMBER AND WEPT THERE . In connection with this, R. Hizkiah quoted the verse: The burden concerning the valley of vision. What aileth thee now that thou art wholly gone up to the house tops? (Is. XXII, 1). 'This verse', he said, 'has been expounded as alluding to the day on which the Temple was destroyed with fire by the enemies, when all the ministering priests went up

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on the walls [Tr. Note: Al. the roofs.] of the Temple holding all its keys in their hands and exclaimed: "Until now we have been thy treasurers, now take back thine own." The Valley of Vision is an appellation of the Temple when the Shekinah dwelt in it, and when it was the source from which all drew their prophetic inspiration; for although the various prophets proclaimed their messages in various regions, they all drew their inspiration from the Temple. Hence the appellation "Valley of Vision". (The term hizayon (vision) has also been interpreted to signify "reflection of all the celestial hues".) The words "what aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house tops?" allude to the Shekinah, who at the destruction of the Temple revisited all the spots where she had dwelt formerly and wept for her habitation and for Israel who had gone into exile and all those righteous ones and saints that perished there. God thereupon said to her: "What aileth thee, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?", the word "wholly" including together with the Shekinah all the legions and hosts that wept with her over the destruction of the Temple. The Shekinah replied with tears: "Thou that wast full of uproar, a tumultuous city, a joyous town, thy slain are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle, etc. Therefore said I: Look away from me, I will weep bitterly" (Is. XXII, 4), as much as to say, "Seeing that my children have gone into exile and the Sanctuary is burnt, what is there left for me that I should linger here?" And the answer of the Holy One, blessed be He, as explained already elsewhere, was: "Refrain thy voice from weeping, etc." (Jer. XXXI, 16). Observe that from the time when the Temple was destroyed no day has passed without its curses. For as long as the Temple was in existence,

Israel performed divine service, offering up burnt-offerings and other offerings, while the Shekinah in the Temple hovered over them like a mother hovering over her children, and so all faces were lit up, and all found blessing both above and here below, and no day passed without its blessings and its joys. Then Israel dwelt securely in their land and all the world was provisioned through them. But now that the Temple is destroyed and the Shekinah is in exile with Israel there is not a day but brings its curses, and the world is under a curse, and joylessness reigns on high and below. Nevertheless the Holy One, blessed be He, will in due time raise Israel from the dust and suffuse the world with joy. So Scripture says: "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer, etc." (Is. LVI, 7). And just as they went into exile with tears, as it is written, "she weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks" (Lam. I, 2), so shall they return with tears, as it is written, "they shall come with weeping and with supplications will I lead them" (Jer. XXXI, 9). AS SOON AS THE MORNING WAS LIGHT, THE MEN WERE SENT AWAY, THEY AND THEIR ASSES . Said R. Eleazar: 'Having said that the men were sent away, why does Scripture add "they and their asses"? The reason is to show that previously there had been no ground for their apprehension when they said, "and take us for bondmen, and our asses" (Gen. XLIII, 18). There is also an allusion to the verse: "And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, etc." (Ibid. XXII, 3). It was that morning of Abraham that shone for the brethren to support them by its merits, so that, strong in the merit of Abraham, they went away in peace and were delivered from judgement. For at that moment the rigour of judgement was impending over them and would have exacted punishment from them but for the merit of that morning of Abraham.' R. Judah derived the same lesson from the verse, "And as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, the morning without clouds; when through clear shining after rain, the tender grass springeth of the earth" (II Sam. XXXIII, 4). 'The "light of the morning" ', he said, 'is an allusion to the light of that morning of Abraham; "when the sun riseth" is an allusion to the sun that rose upon Jacob (Gen. XXXII, 32); "the morning without clouds" means that that morning was not very cloudy, but was "clear shining after rain", to wit, the rain that comes from the side of Isaac, which is the rain that causes the tender grass to spring from the earth. Alternatively we may explain that the light that shone on that morning when Abraham rose up

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also shone when the sun rose upon Jacob, which was the morning without clouds, filled with light, and without any darkness; for as soon as morning dawns severity has no more any power, but is filled with light from the side of Abraham. The words "when through clear shining after rain" allude to Joseph the righteous one who brought rain upon the earth so as to cause grass and all other vegetation to spring forth.' Said R. Simeon: 'Observe this. As soon as night spreads its wings over the world, numerous angels of chastisement and accusers are let loose over the world and take command of it. But as soon as day breaks they all disappear, each one retiring to his own place.

Scripture thus says: "As soon as the morning was light", that is, in virtue of that morning on which Abraham rose early, "the men were sent away", to wit, the executioners of judgement, "and their asses", to wit, the legions that emanate from the side of impurity, who no longer show themselves or no more have any power as soon as dawn appears. For the supernal grades are divided into right and left, into grades of mercy and severity, constituting a hierarchy, some on the side of holiness and others on the side of impurity; but wherever the morning of Abraham awakens in the world, all the unclean grades disappear, exercising no more power, because they can have no existence on the right side but are confined to the left side. The Holy One, blessed be He, thus made night and day to dispose of every one to its own proper side.' R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: But even unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings (Malachi III, 20). 'God', he said, 'will at the proper time cause to shine on Israel that sun which he stored away at the time of the Creation, out of sight of sinners, as alluded to in the words: "But from the wicked their light is withholden" (Job XXXVIII, 15). This light, when it first emerged, radiated from one end of the world to the other; but when God contemplated the generation of Enoch and the generation of the Flood and the generation of the division of languages and all the sinners of the world, He stored it away. When Jacob appeared and wrestled with the chieftain of Esau, who struck against the hollow of his thigh so that he became lame, "the sun rose upon him" (Gen. XXXII, 32), to wit, that same sun that was stored away, in order, with its inherent healing powers, to heal him of his lameness. It is thus written: "And Jacob came perfect (shalem)" (Ibid. XXXIII, 18), to wit, perfect in body, inasmuch as he was made whole again. Likewise the Holy One, blessed be He, will in the future unsheathe that sun and cause it to shine upon Israel, as it says: "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise", by which is meant the same sun that rose upon Jacob, who was made whole by it, "with healing in its wings", inasmuch as that sun will bring healing to all. For at the time when Israel will rise up from the dust, many lame and many blind will be among them, and so the Holy One will cause to shine upon them that sun with healing in its wings, by which they will be healed. The sun, then, will again radiate from one end of the world to the other, bringing healing to Israel, but the idolatrous nations will be consumed by it. Regarding Israel it is further written: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward" (Is. LVIII, 8). Let us return to our subject. AND UNTO JOSEPH WERE BORN TWO SONS BEFORE THE YEAR OF THE FAMINE CAME, ETC . R. Isaac opened a discourse on the verse: And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that are not looked for from men, nor awaited at the hands of the sons of men (Micah v, 6). 'Observe', he said, 'that every day as soon as day breaks a certain bird wakes up on a tree in the Garden of Eden and calls three times in succession, whereupon the twig on which it sits stands upright, and then a herald cries aloud, saying: "To you the warning is given, O rulers of the world. There are those among you that

see without seeing, that stand without knowing what supports them, and that regard not the glory of their Master."

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The Torah is standing in their presence, but they occupy not themselves with it. It were better for them not to have been born. How can they exist without understanding? Woe to them when the days of evil will bestir themselves against them and extirpate them from the world! What are the "days of evil"? They are not the days of old age, inasmuch as for him who has children and grandchildren those are good days. These days of evil are those indicated in the verse, "Remember then thy creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come" (Eccl. XII, 1). The esoteric reference is as follows. When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He created it by means of the letters of the Torah, all the letters of the Alphabet having presented themselves before Him until finally the letter Beth was chosen for the starting point. Moreover, the various Alphabets [Tr. Note: i.e. the various combinations of the Alphabet, based on a series of permutations, each one constituting, as it were, an Alphabet by itself.] in their variety of permutation presented themselves to participate in the Creation. But when it came to the turn of the Teth and the Resh to present themselves together, [Tr. Note: i.e. within the Alphabet called, from its initial letters, Albam. In this scheme the order is: Aleph, Lamed, Beth, Mim... Teth, Resh, etc.] the Teth refused to take its place; so God chid it, saying: "O Teth, Teth, why, having come up, art thou loth to take thy place?" It replied: "Seeing that Thou hast placed me at the head of tob (good), how can I associate with the Resh, the initial of ra' (evil)?" God thereupon said to it: "Go to thy place, as thou hast need of the Resh. For man, whom I am about to create, will be composed of you both, but thou wilt be on his right whilst the other will be on his left." The two then took their places side by side. God, however, separated them by creating for each one special days and years, one set for the right and one for the left. Those of the right are called "days of good", and those of the left "days of evil". Hence Solomon's words: "before the evil days come", to wit, those days which encompass a man on account of the sins he commits. These days are also alluded to by the terms "days of famine" and "years of famine", and "days of plenty" and "years of plenty". The lesson to be derived from this is that the spring of the holy covenant should not be allowed to flow during the days of famine and the years of famine. Hence Joseph, the exemplar of the sacredness of the covenant, checked his fountain-head in the years of famine, and did not allow it to bring offspring into the world. This is incumbent on every man during years of famine.'

R. Simeon said: 'There is a deep idea contained here, namely, that if a man does not close his fountain when the year of famine has sway, then he causes a spirit from the other side to enter the child then born, and so enables the side of impurity to increase at the expense of the side of holiness. Hence, of those who do not observe such abstinence at such a time it is written: "They have dealt treacherously against the Lord, for they have begotten strange children, etc."



(Hos. V. 7); for inasmuch as such children are called "strange children", assuredly the parents have dealt treacherously against the Lord. Thus happy is the portion of holy Israel who do not allow impurity to take the place of sacredness. And Scripture thus tells that "unto Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came", inasmuch as from the time the famine overspread the land he closed his source so as not to give children to the unclean spirit and not to put impurity in the place of holiness. It behoves a man to wait for the Master of holiness to come and establish his sway, as it is written: "And I will wait for the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him" (Is. VIII, 17). Happy are those righteous that know the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, and keep the precepts of the Torah and follow them. Of them it is written: "For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just do walk in them, but transgressors do stumble therein" (Hos. XIV, 10), also: "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day" (Deut. IV, 4).

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{Note: The first four lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in the English translation} God thus admonished Israel to sanctify themselves, in the words: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. XIX, 2). The term Ani (I) here signifies the kingdom of heaven. Confronting this is the kingdom of idolatry, which is termed "another" (aher), regarding which it is written: "For thou shalt bow down to no other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. XXXIV, 14). Ani (I) is sovereign over this world and of the world to come, all being dependent on it, whereas the other one (aher), the side of impurity, the other side, has rule only in this world and none at all in the other world; and hence, whoever cleaves to that Ani (I) has a portion in this world and in the world to come; but he who cleaves to that aher (the other one) perishes from this world and has no portion in the world to come. He has, however, a portion in the world of impurity, as that other kingdom, the kingdom of idolatry, possesses innumerable emissaries through whom it exercises dominion over this world. Hence Elisha, known by the name of Aher (the other one), [Tr. Note: i.e. Elisha the son of Abuya, who through speculations in Greek philosophy was led into heresy, and for this was called by his colleagues Aher (the other one). T. B. Hagigah, 15a and 15b.] who went down and clung to that grade, was thrust out of the future world, and was not permitted to repent; hence his name Aher. It therefore behooves a man to keep himself afar from the side of impurity so as to gain this world and the world to come. Thus there are two sides, the one of beatitude, the other of curse, the one of plenty, the other of famine, each the opposite of the other. Hence at the time of famine a man should not bring any children into the world, as that would be giving children to another god, as already explained. Happy is the man who is heedful to walk in the way of truth and to cleave constantly to his Master, in harmony with that which is written: "and to him shalt thou cleave, and by his name shalt thou swear" (Deut. x, 20), where "swear" (tishabe'a) has a reference to the mystery of faith in the seven (shib'a) supernal grades with their corresponding grades below.'

R. Hiya and R. Jose were once walking together when they caught sight of a man wearing a talith; beneath it, however, they saw that he was armed. Said R. Hiya: 'This man is either exceedingly pious, or he is a dangerous hypocrite.' R. Jose answered: 'Our sainted teachers have said: Judge every man in a favourable sense. Furthermore, we have been taught that when a man sets out on a journey, he should prepare himself for three courses: for making presents, for fighting, and for prayer. Now that man is wearing a talith, which shows that he is ready for prayer, and he is carrying arms, so that he is prepared to fight; about the third thing we need not inquire.' When the man came up to them, they greeted him, but he did not respond. R. Hiya remarked: 'We see now that he lacks one of the things with which he

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should have been provided: he has not prepared himself for making presents, under which head is included the greeting of peace.' R. Jose replied: 'It may be that he is absorbed in prayer or is repeating his studies so as not to forget them.' They then all walked together for a time without the man speaking a word to them. R. Hiya and R. Jose at length turned aside from him and began discussing points of the Torah. As soon as the man noticed this he approached them and offered them greeting. He also said to them: 'What did you think of me when you gave me greeting and I did not respond?' Said R. Jose: 'I thought that you were engaged in prayer, or perhaps meditating over your studies.' He replied: 'May the Almighty judge you favourably as you have judged me. I will explain why I acted as I did. One day I was walking on the road when I met a man to whom I gave greeting. He happened to be a highwayman, and he fell upon me and molested me, and had I not stoutly resisted I would have come to no small harm. From that day onward I made a vow not to salute first any man save a righteous man, unless one whom I knew already, for fear lest he might set on me and overcome me. That it is forbidden to salute a sinner we know from the verse: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, concerning the wicked" (Is. XLVIII, 22). Now, when I saw you, and you saluted me, I suspected you because I did not notice about you any sign of religion, and besides, I was myself repeating my studies. But now that I see that you are righteous men, I have a plain road before me.' He then began a discourse on the verse: A Psalm of Asaph. Surely God is good to Israel, even to such as are pure in heart (Ps. LXXIII, 1). 'Observe', he said, 'that the Holy One, blessed be He, made a Right and a Left for the ruling of the world. The one is called "good", the other "evil", and He made man to be a combination of the two. The evil, then, which is identical with the left, embraces the idolatrous nations, and has been placed on their side, seeing that they are uncircumcised of heart and uncircumcised of flesh, so that they become defiled by it. But of Israel it is written: "Surely, God is good to Israel." Not, indeed, to all Israelites, but only to those who have not defiled themselves with that "evil", only to such as are "pure of heart". Surely "God is good to Israel", so that they may cleave to Him, and thereby Israel cleaves to the sublime mystery, to the mystery of Faith, so as to be perfectly united with God.' R. Jose

then said: 'Happy are we that we did not suspect you falsely, seeing that it was the Holy One, blessed be He, that sent you to us.' R. Jose further said: 'Because He is good to Israel, Israel has a portion in this world and in the world to come, and is destined to see eye to eye the glorious vision, as it is written: "For they shall see, eye to eye, the Lord returning to Zion." ' Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen!

## VAYIGASH

THEN JUDAH CAME NEAR UNTO HIM, ETC . R. Eleazar discoursed on the verse: For thou art our Father; for Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name (Is. LXIII, 16).... [Tr. Note: The passage omitted is a repetition, in a shortened form, of pp. 2b, 3a.] He said:

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[Note: The first twenty lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in the English translation as per the translator's note on page 205a] 'The word "thou" here refers to the grade by which the world was planned and created, and by which man was brought into the world. "For Abraham knoweth us not", inasmuch as, though life and death were in his hands, he did not show so much care for us as for Ishmael, on whose behalf he pleaded, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. XVII, 18). Further: "Israel doth not acknowledge us", seeing that he left it to the divine grade to confer on his sons the blessings which he himself ought to have pronounced. Again, "Thou, O Lord, art our Father", as Thou art always standing by us to bless us and to watch over us like a father over his sons, to provide all their needs. "Our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name", God having been so called by Jacob when he said, "the angel who hath redeemed me" (Ibid. XLVIII, 16).'

One night when R. Isaac and R. Judah were sitting up studying the Torah, the former said: 'Tradition teaches us that when God created the world He created the lower world after the pattern of the upper world, and made the two the counterparts of each other, so that His glory is both on high and below.' Said R. Judah: 'Assuredly this is so, and He created man to be superior to all. Scripture thus says: "I, even I, have made the earth, and created man upon it" (Is. XLV, 12), that is to say, "I have made the earth for the sole purpose of creating man upon it"; since it depends upon man to complete the organic unity of the whole. It is written: "Thus saith God the Lord, he that creates the heavens, and stretcheth them forth, he that spreads forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein" (Ibid. XL, 5). The first part of the verse refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, in His operations on high, as He "createth the heavens" and continually and at all times renews them. The "earth" here is an allusion to the holy land which constitutes the "bundle of life"; and it is this earth which "gives soul (neshamah, lit. breath) unto the people upon it." ' Said R. Isaac: 'The whole verse speaks of the upper world, as it is from thence that the soul of life emerges into that land; and that land, in its turn, is the reservoir from

which issue souls for all. Observe that when the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, He gathered his earthly matter from the four corners of the world and fashioned him therefrom on the site of the Temple here below and drew to him a soul of life out of the Temple on high. Now the soul is a compound of three grades, and hence

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it has three names, to wit, nefesh (vital principle), ruah (spirit), and neshamah (soul proper). Nefesh is the lowest of the three, ruah is a grade higher, whilst neshamah is the highest of all and dominates the others. These three grades are harmoniously combined in those men who have the good fortune to render service to their Master. For at first man possesses nefesh, which is a holy preparative for a higher stage. After he has achieved purity in the grade of nefesh he becomes fit to be crowned by the holy grade that rests upon it, namely ruah. When he has thus attained to the indwelling of nefesh and ruah, and qualified himself for the worship of his Master in the requisite manner, the neshamah, the holy superior grade that dominates all the others, takes up its abode with him and crowns him, so that he becomes complete and perfected on all sides; he becomes worthy of the world to come and is beloved of the Holy One, blessed be He; of him Scripture says: "To cause my beloved ones to inherit substance" (Prov. VIII, 21), the "beloved ones" being those who have attained to the holy neshamah.' R. Judah remarked: 'If that be so, how can we understand the verse in the account of the Flood: "All in whose nostrils was the soul of the spirit (nishmath-ruah) of life... died" (Gen. VII, 22)?' R. Isaac replied: 'This bears out what I said. Among the generation of the Flood no one was left that possessed the holy neshamah, as, for instance, Enoch or Jered or any of the other righteous who by their merits could have saved the earth from destruction, and its inhabitants from being exterminated. Scripture thus tells us that "all in whose nostrils was the soul of the spirit of life, of all those on dry land, died", that is to say, they had died already and departed this world, so that none was left to shield the world at that time. Observe that nefesh, ruah, and neshamah are an ascending series of grades. The lowest of them, nefesh, has its source in the perennial celestial stream, but it cannot exist permanently save with the help of ruah, which abides between fire and water. Ruah, in its turn, is sustained by neshamah, that higher grade above it, which is thus the source of both nefesh and ruah. When ruah receives its sustenance from neshamah, then nefesh receives it in turn through ruah, so that the three form a unity.' THEN JUDAH CAME NEAR UNTO HIM . This was an approach of one world to another so as to join together. For Judah was king and Joseph was king, and they came nearer and nearer to each other until they united. R. Judah opened a discourse on the text: For, lo, the kings assembled themselves, etc. (Ps. XLVIII, 5). 'This is an allusion', he said, 'to Judah and Joseph, who were both kings and joined together in an altercation. For Judah had gone surety for Benjamin and pledged himself to his father in respect of this world and the world to come, saying to his father: "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the

blame all the days" (Gen. XLIII, 9), to wit, in this world and in the world to come. Hence he approached Joseph to reason with him regarding Benjamin, for fear lest he should be banned in this world and in the world to come. When Judah and Joseph hotly disputed, then all those that were present "saw, straightway they were amazed, they were affrighted, they hasted away. Trembling took hold of them there" (Ps. XLVIII, 6-7), as they feared lest they might kill or be killed, and all on account of Benjamin.'

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[Note: The first three lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in the translation.] R. Judah said: 'There is in this verse a recondite doctrine of faith, to wit, that when God is pleased with Israel and their union is crowned, then two worlds meet together in union, the one opening its store-house, and the other gathering in the contents. Thus, "lo, the kings assembled themselves", to wit, the two holy worlds, the upper world and the lower world.' R. Hiya said: 'The same effect is produced by the sacrifices, for when a sacrifice is offered up and each section receives its due, then there is a bond of union effected between all, and all faces are illumined. As for the words "they saw, straightway they were amazed", these cannot refer to the kings: they must refer to the accusers, whose whole joy lies in executing the sentence which has been committed to them. Hence, when the kings met together in amity and union, they, the accusers, "were amazed, they were affrighted, they hasted away"; they were subdued and passed out of the world; they had no dominion, and were left without any source of sustenance.' R. Eleazar said: 'The reason why Judah and no other came near to Joseph was because he went surety, as it says: "For thy servant became surety for the lad." Esoterically speaking, it was in the order of things that Judah and Joseph should thus meet, as Joseph was a Zaddik and Judah was a king, and so their union produced many benefits for the world: it was the cause of peace to all the tribes and between all the tribes, it was the cause of Jacob's spirit being fortified, as it says: "the spirit of Jacob their father revived" (Gen. XLV, 27). Hence, all both above and below conspired to bring them together.' R. Abba cited here the verse: "Fair in situation, the joy of the whole earth; even Mount Zion, the uttermost parts of the earth, the city of the great King" (Ps. XLVIII, 3), expounding it esoterically. ' "Fair in situation" ', he said, 'is an allusion to Joseph the Righteous, of whom it is said: "And Joseph was of beautiful form, and fair to look upon" (Gen. XXXIX, 6). He is called "the joy of the whole earth", as he is the joy and the gladness both of the upper and the lower world. He is also "Mount Zion, the uttermost part of the north", seeing that in his territory it was that the Tabernacle of Shiloh stood. "The city of the great King" is the place prepared to meet the Most High King, it being altogether the Holy of Holies, from whence there issue all light, all blessings, and all joy, to cause all faces to shine-the centre from which the Temple receives blessings, which in turn sends out blessings to all the world.'

R. Judah and R. Jose once met together in K'far-hannan, and whilst they were sitting in the inn there entered a certain man who had come with a laden ass.

R. Judah was then saying to R. Jose: 'Tradition tells us that King David used to sleep fitfully, like a horse. If so, how did David sleep till midnight, and not wake when a third of the night was passed?' R. Jose replied: 'When night-time arrived, David used to be sitting with the princes of his household dispensing justice and discussing the Torah, and afterwards he slept until midnight, when he would rise, and remain awake, absorbed in the service of his Master, singing songs of praise and hymns.'

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The stranger here interposed, saying: 'Is your exposition correct? Hardly. The real truth of the matter is this. King David lives for ever and ever. All his days he was on his guard so as not to have a foretaste of death, and therefore David, whose place is "living", only slept sixty breaths at a time. For up to the fifty-ninth breath the sleeper is still completely alive, but from that point he has a foretaste of death, and the spirit of impurity obtains power over him. King David therefore guarded himself so that the side of the unclean spirit should not obtain dominion over him. For the first sixty breathings less one are symbolic of heavenly life, of sublime breathings on high, on which life proper depends; they represent the mystery of life. But beyond that number they are associated with death. Hence King David measured out the night so as to remain in life and to prevent any foretaste of death coming over him. At midnight he was in his place, as he was anxious that at the arrival of midnight, when the holy Crown is awakened, he should not be found attached to another place, the place of death. For at midnight, when the supernal holiness is awakened, the man who remains asleep in his bed without regarding the glory of his Master falls under the spell of death and is attached to the other place. David thus rose up to contemplate continually the glory of his Master, who was a Living One like himself, and so never slept long enough to have a foretaste of death. He only slept like a horse, sixty breaths at a time.' R. Judah and R. Jose came up to him and kissed him. They asked him his name. He said: 'Hezekiah (lit. strengthened by God).' They said: 'May you be strong and may your knowledge of the Torah augment.'

When they sat down again, R. Judah said to the man: 'Having made a start, tell us more of the sublime mystical doctrines you alluded to.' The stranger then began to discourse on the verse: The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens (Prov. III, 19). 'When God', he said, 'created the world, He saw that it could not exist without the Torah, as this is the only source of all laws above and below, and on it alone are the upper and lower beings established. Hence, "the Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens", inasmuch as it is through Wisdom that all things are enabled to exist in the universe, and from it all things proceed. An alternative exposition is as follows. "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth", that is, the upper world has been created through the higher Wisdom and the lower world through the lower Wisdom, so that all things came into being out of the higher Wisdom and the lower Wisdom. "By understanding he established the heavens"; literally, He establisheth

(konen), to wit, day by day, without ceasing; they were not made complete at once, but He continues perfecting them each day. This is alluded to in the verse: "Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight" (Job xv, 15). Think not that this verse implies any disparagement of the heavens. On the contrary, its purpose is to indicate their importance and the great love and affection in which God holds them, in that, notwithstanding that He is perfecting them every day, they are not yet deemed in His eyes to have reached the utmost perfection of which they are capable. In His great affection for them it is His delight to irradiate them continually and without ceasing, the world to come radiating day by day bright streams of light in order to make the heavens resplendent. Hence the heavens, pure as they are, in God's sight are not yet pure. Again, the heavens here symbolize the patriarchs, and the patriarchs find their centre in Jacob, who embraces them all, he being the choice of the patriarchs, and the one who causes light to radiate into the world. And after he was raised to the next world there issued from him a branch beautiful in appearance, from which radiate all illumination and all plenteousness. That branch is Joseph the Righteous, who gave the world abundance and by whom it was sustained. Thus whatever God does in the world has a deep symbolic significance and is all as it should be.' At this point R. Eleazar entered. As soon as he saw them he said: 'Assuredly, the Shekinah is here present. What have you been discussing?' They told him

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all that had passed between them. He said: 'Assuredly, what he said was right. The first sixty respirations are those of life both above and below, but beyond these there are sixty other respirations that are of the side of death and over which hovers the grade of death. They are called "dormit", and contain a foretaste of death; King David, however, attached himself to the sixty respirations that are of life, after which he did not sleep any more. Thus he said: "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to my lids" (Ps. CXXXII, 4). Hence what the stranger said was correct, as David is living, belonging to the side of life and not to the side of death.'

So they sat together studying the Torah. R. Eleazar then discoursed on the verse: O Lord, God of my salvation, what time I cry in the night before thee (Ibid. LXXXVIII, 2). 'King David', he said, 'used to rise from his bed at midnight and study the Torah, and sang praises and hymns so as to cause joy to the King and the Matron. And this promoted the joy of faith throughout the earth. For at that time numberless celestial angels break joyously forth into song on high, and correspondingly praises should be sung here below; and whenever anyone offers up in the night praises on earth, the Holy One, blessed be He, finds pleasure in him, and all those holy angels that sing praises to the Holy One hearken to the one that sings praises to Him in the night on earth. When David wrote: "O Lord, God of my salvation, etc.", he said, in effect: "When is He my salvation? On that day when I rise up early in the night to offer thanksgiving to Thee; it is then that He is my salvation in the daytime." And observe further that whoever offers praises to his Master in the

night is fortified in the daytime by the Right side, as a cord issues from the Right side which is drawn round him and by which he becomes strengthened. Hence again David said: "The dead praise not the Lord" (Ibid. cxv, 17), inasmuch as it is the due of the living to praise the Living One, but not of the dead. Hence "The dead praise not the Lord.... But we will bless the Lord" (Ibid. 17), we who are alive and have no lot or part in the side of death. Hezekiah also said: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day" (Is. XXXVIII, 19), as the living has kinship with the living; King David is living, and hence he has kinship with the life principle of the universe. And he that has brought himself near to Him is alive, as it is written: "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day" (Deut. IV, 4). It is also written: "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a living man [Tr. Note: According to the K'tib.] of Kabzeel" (II Sam. XXIII, 20).'

The Judean then followed with a discourse on the text: And thou shalt eat and be satisfied, and bless the Lord thy God (Deut. VIII, 10). 'Have we not to bless God', he asked, 'before we eat? Indeed, we have to get up early in the morning and recite His praises in proper order, and bless His name before we are allowed to salute any living person. Scripture also says: "Ye shall not eat with the blood" (Lev. XIX, 26), implying that it is forbidden to eat before pronouncing a benediction to one's Master. But the truth is that other benedictions are mainly concerned with the declaration of the unity of God, whereas the grace after meals is meant to show that along with him who says it the grade of faith is also satisfied, and hence it has to be recited in order that this grade may be satisfied and beatified and filled of joy from the celestial life, so that it may provide us with sustenance. For the providing of man's daily food is for the Holy One, blessed be He, as heavy a task as the cleaving of the Red Sea, because it depends upon mazzal and is not, as it were, under His jurisdiction until a benediction is pronounced to Him. Similarly, the arranging of marriages is a heavy task to Him. For when the holy mating takes place, all

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the souls issue from that mazzal above which is identical with the everflowing river; and when there is desire in the lower for the higher, the souls fly down in pairs of male and female, after which their ruling grade separates them and sends each to its appointed place. But later on that presiding grade finds it hard to join them together in their original pairs, since they are now paired in accordance with men's conduct, and all depends now on a higher region. The providing of sustenance is compared to the cleaving of the Red Sea because this also depends on operations on high, ways and paths being opened and cleft in the sea in correspondence with the ways and paths on high. It is therefore necessary to offer blessings to the Power on high and to impart to Him reinforcement from below so that He may receive the heavenly blessings and the heavenly reinforcements in due measure. Hence it is written: "and thou shalt bless the Lord", the vocable eth (accusative particle) having a special significance (as pointing to that region). And toward that region it is necessary to show oneself satisfied and cheerful.

Contrariwise, toward the other side, when it exercises sway over the world, one must show oneself hungry and famished, inasmuch as plenteousness does not then rule in the world. This, then, is the explanation of the verse: "And thou shalt eat and be satisfied, and bless the Lord thy God." ' Said R. Eleazar: 'This is truly so, and that is how men ought to act.' R. Judah said: 'Happy are those righteous whose coming together brings peace to the world, since they know how to effect unity. Before Joseph and Judah drew near each other there was no peace, but as soon as they did so they brought much peace into the world, and great joy both above and below, since as soon as Judah came near to Joseph all the tribes joined him.' THEN JOSEPH COULD NOT REFRAIN HIMSELF BEFORE ALL THEM THAT STOOD BY HIM . R. Hiya discoursed on the text: He hath scattered abroad; he hath given to the needy; his charity endureth for ever (Ps. CXII, 9). 'Observe', he said, 'that God created the world and set man to be king over all. Now from the first man there have branched out different classes of men, righteous and wicked, foolish and wise, rich and poor; and among these each class can win credit for itself through the medium of the other, that is, the righteous through the wicked, the wise through the stupid, the rich through the poor. For it is by these means that a man becomes worthy of being joined to the tree of life; and what is more, the charity that he dispenses stands him for ever in good stead, as it says: "his charity endureth for ever".' Said R. Eleazar: 'When God created the world, He established it on one pillar the name of which is Righteous, as it is the Righteous One that upholds the world and that waters and sustains all that exists. So Scripture says: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads" (Gen. II, 10). The term "it was parted" signifies that the food and drink carried by that river is received in its entirety by the garden, and thence is scattered into the four quarters of the world; and many are they that wait to receive the drink and food from thence! So it is written: "The eyes of all wait for thee, and thou givest them their food in due season" (Ps. CXLV, 15). "But the wicked shall see, and be vexed" (Ibid. CXII, 10), namely, the idolatrous Kingdom. Observe that the Kingdom of Heaven is the Sanctuary designed to shelter all the needy under the shadow of the Shekinah; and the Righteous One is the charity-collector who dispenses to all, as it says: "He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the needy." Hence, those who collect for charity receive as great a reward as those who give the charity all together. Thus the words: "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him", refer to all those that stand and wait to receive food and drink from the Righteous One. In the sentence: "And there stood no

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man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren", the term "with him" is an allusion to the Community of Israel, and "his brethren" refers to the other chariot-riders and legions referred to in the verse: "For my brethren and companions' sake" (Ibid. CXXII, 8). Or again: "And there stood no man with him" is a description of the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will be mated with the Community of Israel. "While Joseph made himself known to his brethren": this again

alludes to the time when the Holy One will join Himself to Israel, to the exclusion of the idolatrous nations.' R. Jesse expounded the verse as alluding to the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise up the Community of Israel from the dust and will take vengeance on the idolatrous nations. Of that occasion it is thus written: "And of the peoples there was no man with me" (Is. LXIII, 3), which is analogous in phrasing to the passage "and there stood no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brethren", and further: "and he bare them and carried them all the days of old" (Ibid. 9). R. Hizkiah said: 'It is written in one Psalm: "A song of ascents. Unto thee I lift up mine eyes, O thou that art enthroned in the heavens" (Ps. CXXIII, 1), and in another Psalm it is written: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains" (Ibid. CXXI, 1). The difference has been expounded as follows. The latter speaks of heaven, whereas the former speaks of earth. Thus, "I will lift mine eyes unto the mountains", to wit, to the heavens above in order to draw down blessing from on high to below, to draw down blessings from those exalted mountains toward the Community of Israel; but then: "Unto thee I lift up mine eyes", in hoping and waiting for those blessings that descend from thence to here below. "O thou that art enthroned in the heavens": inasmuch as all might and strength is centred in heaven. For when the Jubilee opens the springs, all the gates of heaven are ready, and when the heaven receives all the lights that issue from the Jubilee, there flows down drink and food for the Community of Israel through the intermediary of one Righteous One. When this one moves towards her, many are those who stand and wait to be refreshed and to participate in the blessings from above, as Scripture says: "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God" (Ps. CIV, 2). But the Community of Israel rises in a recondite manner and receives dainties from her spouse in manner due. As to all those that stand round, they remain apart, as it says: "Then there was no man with him", and as it also says before: "and he cried: Cause every man to go out from me". Afterwards, however, when she has received dainties from her spouse, all the others are given drink and food, as it says: "They give drink to every beast of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst" (Ibid. CIV, 11).'

R. Jose opened a discourse on the subject of Elijah. 'There were', he said, 'two men who dared to expostulate with God: Moses and Elijah. Moses said: "Wherefore hast thou dealt ill with these people?" (Ex. v, 22); and Elijah said: "Hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" (I Kings, XVII, 20). Both used the term "evil" with the same recondite meaning. Moses said in effect: "Wherefore hast thou given licence to the side of evil to take the soul of that people?" Similarly Elijah said in effect: "Whoever preserves one soul in the world merits life and is worthy to lay hold of the tree of life; yet now the tree of death, the side of evil, has obtained power over the widow whom Thou hast commanded to sustain me." It may be asked, how could Moses and Elijah speak thus, seeing that evil is never done to man by the Almighty? The truth is that when a man walks on the right side, the protection of the Holy One, blessed be He, is constantly with him, so that the other side has no power over him, and the forces of evil are bowed before him, and cannot prevail over him. But as soon

as the protection of the Holy One is withdrawn from him by reason

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of his having attached himself to evil, that evil gains the mastery and advances to destroy him, being given authorization to take his soul.'

Said R. Hiya: 'Elijah was able to pronounce a doom with the full certainty that God would confirm it, as, for instance, that the heaven should not let fall rain or dew. How came it, then, that he felt afraid of Jezebel? How came it that at her threat to take his life (I Kings XIX, 2) he was filled with fear and fled for his life?' R. Jose said in reply: 'It has been laid down that the righteous should not put their Master to trouble by exposing themselves to an obvious danger. We find an example in Samuel, when he said: "How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me" (I Sam. XVI, 2); and God therefore told him to take certain precautions (Ibid.). So it was with Elijah.' Said R. Jose, further: 'I have heard a special exposition of this matter as follows. When Jezebel threatened Elijah, it is not written that he "feared" (vayira), but he "saw" (vayar) (I Kings XIX, 3). What was it that he saw? He saw that the angel of death had followed him for a number of years, and he had not been delivered into his hand. Then the verse continues: vayelexh el nafsho (and he went for his life), which literally means, "and he went to (el) his soul", that is to say, he resorted to the foundation of his soul, or, in other words, he proceeded to attach himself to the tree of life. In connection with the phrase el nafsho (to his soul), I have heard,' he continued, 'the following recondite doctrine from R. Simeon. All the souls of mankind emerge from the everflowing celestial stream, from which they are received into the "bundle of life". Now, when a female becomes pregnant from a male, it is mostly the result of an equal and reciprocal desire, or less often of the predominating desire of the female. But when the desire of the male predominates, then the soul of the child that is born has unusual vitality, inasmuch as the whole of its being is the result of the desire and yearning for the tree of life. Hence Elijah, to whose birth that desire had contributed in a special degree, was gifted with special vitality, and did not die like other men. For his whole being was derived from the tree of life and not from the dust. He, therefore, without suffering death, as is the lot of other men, went up on high, as Scripture says: "and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Kings II, 11). Observe the words: "behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, etc." (Ibid.), which indicate that Elijah's spirit was stripped of its body, so that he departed not life in the manner of other men, but became a holy angel like other heavenly beings, carrying out divine messages in this world; for it is well established among us that the miracles which God performs in the world are carried out by his agency. Now observe that it is written further: "and he requested for himself (eth nafsho=his soul) to die" (I Kings XIX, 4). This implies that he turned to the tree wherein death lurks, and there God appeared unto him, as Scripture says: "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord... and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice"-referring to the very innermost point, which is the source of all

illumination." And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle.... And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said: What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said: I have been very jealous for the Lord" (Ibid. XIX, 11-13). God said to him: "How long wilt thou continue to be jealous for me? Thou hast already closed fast the gate so as

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to secure thyself from death, and the world will not be able to endure thee." Elijah replied: "for the children have forsaken thy covenant, etc." (Ibid. 14). The Holy One then said to him: "As thou livest, in whatever place the rite of the holy covenant (i.e. circumcision) will be performed, thou wilt be present." It is for this reason that at every performance of that rite a chair is set aside for Elijah, who is always there present. Observe what consequences followed Elijah's words, for it is written: "Yet will I leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (Ibid. XIX, 18). God said to him in effect: "Henceforth the world will not be able to tolerate thee along with my sons." So He commanded him, saying: "and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room" (Ibid. 16), as much as to say: "There shall be another prophet for my children, and thou shalt go up to thy place." Observe that if a man is jealous for the Holy One, blessed be He, the angel of death has no power over him as he has over other men, and to him is given the covenant of peace, as it is said regarding Phinehas: "Wherefore say: Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace" (Num. XXV, 12). AND HE FELL UPON HIS BROTHER BENJAMIN'S NECK, AND WEPT; AND BENJAMIN WEPT UPON HIS NECK. R. Isaac said: 'We expound this to indicate that Joseph wept on account of the destruction of the first Temple and of the second Temple.' R. Isaac proceeded to discourse on the verse: Thy neck is like the tower of David builded with turrets, whereon there hang a thousand shields, all the armour of the mighty man (S. S. IV, 4). 'The tower of David', he said, 'signifies the heavenly Jerusalem, of which it is written: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is set up on high" (Prov. XVIII, 10), the phrase "on high" pointing to the tower above. "Thy neck" signifies the Temple below, which for its beauty is compared to the neck in the human body: as the neck gives symmetry and beauty to the body, so does the Temple to the whole world. "Builded with turrets" (talpiyoth, lit. mound of mouths), that is, a mound toward which all men turn their gaze when they open their mouths to offer prayer and praise. "Whereon there hang a thousand shields", alluding to the thousand cosmic reconstructions that are performed there. "All the armour of the mighty men", alluding to the angels of punishment that proceed from the side of severity. As a woman's ornaments are hung about her neck, so all the ornaments of the world are hung about the Temple. Similarly, in the passage, "To our very neck we are pursued" (Lam. v, 5), there is an allusion to the Temple. "We labour and have no rest" (Ibid.), that is, we have exerted ourselves to build the Temple twice, but the enemies have not permitted us to retain it, and it has not been rebuilt. Again, as the whole body perishes when the neck is destroyed, so as soon as the Temple

was destroyed and its light extinguished, the whole world was plunged into darkness, and there was no light of sun or stars, either in heaven or on earth. Hence, Joseph wept on account of this. After he had wept for the Temple, he wept for the tribes that were to go into exile. For as soon as the Temple was destroyed, all the tribes were exiled and scattered among the nations. Scripture thus tells us: "And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them", that is to say, for them. He wept for all of them, for the twofold destruction of the Temple and for his brethren the ten tribes that went into exile and were scattered among the nations. AND AFTER THAT HIS BRETHREN TALKED WITH HIM . They, however, did not weep, because the Holy Spirit did not flash upon them as upon Joseph.' AND THE REPORT THEREOF WAS HEARD IN PHARAOH'S HOUSE . R. Abba opened a discourse on the verse: My soul yearneth, yea, even pineth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy unto the living God (Ps. LXXXIV, 3). 'Observe', he said, 'that before offering his prayer to his Master, a man should first recite some thanksgiving. He should also pray before his Master in the proper time: in the morning to unite himself to the right side of the Holy One, blessed be He, and in the afternoon to the left side. It is incumbent on man to offer up prayer and supplication each day so as to unite himself with God. It has been laid down that in praying before his Master a man should not make his voice heard, as if he does so his prayer will not be accepted, for the reason that

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prayer does not consist in audible voice nor is the voice prayer. Prayer consists in another voice attached to the voice which is heard. It thus behoves man to pray silently, to pray with that voice that is inaudible. It is thus written: "and the voice (veha-qol=and the report, lit. the voice) was heard", where the term qol is written defectively, without a vau, pointing to the inaudible voice, like that of Hannah's prayer, of which it is written: "but her voice could not be heard" (I Sam. I, 13). The prayer which the Holy One, blessed be He, accepts is that which is performed with earnestness and devotion and proper concentration of the mind on the unity of God.' R. Eleazar said: 'The silent voice is the supernal voice from which all other voices proceed. The statement "and the voice was heard", where the term qol (voice) is written without a vau, is an allusion to the voice which wept on account of the first Temple and the second Temple. The word "was heard" suggests the verse: "A voice was heard in Ramah" (Jer. XXXI, 15), where the word b'ramah (in Ramah, lit. on high) alludes to the upper world, to the world to come; for of that event it is indeed written: "And in that day did the Lord, the God of hosts, call to weeping, and to lamentation, etc." (Is. XXII, 12), so that the voice was heard in the height of heights. Therefore, too, Rachel wept for her children; she "refused to be comforted for her children, because he is not". It is not written "they are not" (einam), but "he is not" (einennu), which is an allusion to her Spouse; for if her Spouse were present with her, she would let herself be comforted for them, as they would not remain then in exile; but her Spouse not being with her she cannot be comforted. The "house of Par'oh" (Pharaoh) here is, again, an allusion to the Temple on high, that is, to the house that was stripped

(par'oh= uncovering) and bared of all its light and radiance and its hidden treasures. When the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise that still voice from the dust and join the vau with it, then all that was lost to them in the time of exile will be restored, and they will feast on the supernal radiance that will stream with added brightness from the supernal world, as Scripture says: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great horn shall be blown; and they shall come that were lost in Assyria, and they that were dispersed in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem" (Ibid. XXVII, 13). NOW THOU ART COMMANDED, THIS DO YE: TAKE YE WAGONS OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, ETC . R. Hiya opened a discourse with the text: Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her rejoice for joy with her, etc. (Ibid. LXVI, 10). 'When', he said, 'the Temple was destroyed and Israel on account of their sins were driven from their land, God removed Himself, as it were, to the height of heights and regarded not the destruction of the Temple nor the exile of His people, and so the Shekinah was exiled with them. When God again descended, He observed His House that was burnt down. He looked at His people and behold, they were in exile. He inquired concerning the Matron (Shekinah) and found that she had been driven out. Then, "in that day did the Lord, the God of hosts, call to weeping, and lamentation, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth" (Ibid. XXII, 12); and the Matron was called upon to "lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth" (Joel I, 8), because He had removed Himself from her and they were separated. The very heaven and the very earth lamented, as it is written: "I clothe the heaven with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering" (Is. L, 3). The celestial angels all raised their voices in lamentation, as it says: "Behold, the angels cry without; the angels of peace weep bitterly" (Is. XXXIII, 7). The sun and the moon mourned and their light was darkened, as we read: "The sun shall be darkened in his going forth, etc." (Ibid. XIII, 10).

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For what reason? Because the other side had obtained sway over the Holy Land.' R. Hiya further discoursed on the verse: And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord God concerning the land of Israel: An end! the end is come upon the four corners of the land (Ezek. VII, 1). 'This verse', he said, 'contains a recondite idea. As has been stated, there is an end on the right and an end on the left. It is the end on the right which is alluded to in the expression "the land of Israel: an end!", while the expression, "the end is come" refers to the end on the left. The right end is the end of the good prompter; the left end is the end of the evil prompter; and when Israel's sins multiplied and increased, it was through this left end that the wicked kingdom obtained power and destroyed the House and Sanctuary of the Lord. Scripture thus says: "Thus saith the Lord God: An evil, a singular evil, behold, it cometh" (Ibid. 5). Heaven and earth thus lamented because dominion had been given to the left end. Now, seeing that the holy kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, has been overthrown and the wicked kingdom has prevailed, it behoves man to mourn with it and to abase himself with it, so that when it will be raised again and joy will be restored to the

world, he may rejoice with it. Scripture thus says: "Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her" (Is. LXVI, 10). AND HE SAW THE WAGON'S, ETC . Egypt is called "a fair heifer" (Jer. XLVI, 20), and hence the word 'egloth (lit. wagons, or heifers) here may be an allusion to Egypt, indicating that a time will come when the Israelites, the bondsmen of Egypt, the fair heifer, will obtain dominion over it. R. Eleazar said: 'By means of the heifers Joseph intended to remind Jacob that when he was separated from him he had been studying with him the section of the heifer whose neck was to be broken (Deut. XXI, 4). Now this rite of the heifer whose neck was to be broken was carried out for a man found slain without its being known who had slain him. The heifer was thrown, as it were, to the evil spirits in order to ward them off and prevent them from obtaining dominion over the earth. Now all men depart life through the hands of the angel of death, except the one whose life has been taken by another man, before the angel of death had received permission to exercise his function upon him. The angel of death has thus cause to complain against the place of the murder, and therefore it was commanded that "the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer, etc." (Ibid. XXI, 4), so as to remove any indictment against that locality and to safeguard it against the power of the accuser. When Joseph left his father, he went without escort and without eating first; and when Jacob afterwards said "Joseph is surely torn", he added: "Nay, but I will go down to the grave to my son mourning" (Gen. XXXVII, 35), as much as to say: "It was I who was the cause of his death, and, moreover, I sent him off although I knew that his brethren hated him." All this Joseph hinted to him by sending the heifers.' Said R. Judah to R. Eleazar: 'But did not Joseph send the heifers by the command of Pharaoh, as it says: "And Joseph gave them heifers, according to the commandment of Pharaoh" (Ibid. XLV, 21)?' R. Eleazar replied: 'Pharaoh only gave the command at Joseph's request. Indeed, Jacob was not fully convinced of the tidings brought to him until he saw them, as Scripture says: "And when he saw the heifers that Joseph had sent him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived" (Ibid. 27).' R. Simeon remarked: 'First Scripture says: "and the spirit of Jacob revived", and immediately after: "And Israel said" (Ibid. 28). The Torah first calls him Jacob because the Shekinah departed from him when the brethren made her a party to the oath of secrecy with regard to the sale of Joseph; but now that the Shekinah returned he rose to the higher degree symbolized by Israel.'

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AND HE SAID: I AM GOD, THE GOD OF THY FATHER... I WILL GO DOWN WITH THEE INTO EGYPT . This is an indication that the Shekinah accompanied him into exile; and wherever Israel were exiled the Shekinah followed them also into exile. Observe that Joseph sent his father six wagons, [tr.note: Here the Zohar reverts to the accepted rendering of 'agaloth, namely, wagons.] an allusion to which is found in the "six covered wagons" presented by the princes to Moses (Num. VII, 3). According to another view, the number was sixty; but the two views are not contradictory. For, indeed, it is first written: "in the wagons which Joseph sent" (Gen. XLV, 27), and afterwards, "which Pharaoh sent" (Ibid. XLVI, 5), SO

that the truth is that those which Joseph sent were of the proper number, which had a recondite significance, but the larger number which Pharaoh sent had no such numerical symbolism. AND JOSEPH MADE READY HIS CHARIOT . R. Isaac began a discourse on the verse: And over the heads of the living creatures (hayoth) there was the likeness of a firmament, like the colour of the terrible ice, stretched forth over their heads above (Ezek. I, 22). 'This verse', he said, 'has been explained as follows. There is a series of hayoth, one group higher than the other, and there is one above all which sets all the others in motion and causes them to transmit their light to one another. This supreme Hayah has various faces which radiate to all the cardinal points, three on each side. There is besides a series of firmaments, one above the other, the highest one dominating all the others, which all turn their gaze towards it. So Scripture says: "And under the firmament were their wings conformable the one to the other, etc." (Ibid. 23), as they all rule over what has been committed to their charge. There being nine hayoth on each of the four sides of the universe, the total number is thirty-six. When they are all joined together, they form one impression symbolizing the one Name in an absolute unity. And when they are all ranged round the heavenly throne, then is realized the description given by the prophet: "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man above it" (Ibid. 26). Now the figures on that chariot culminate in that of man; and when the other figures are subordinated to this one so as to form a homogeneous chariot, then it may be said: "And Joseph made ready his chariot", Joseph representing the Zaddik; further, "and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen", Israel typifying the supernal Adam, and Goshen (lit. approaching) the coalescence of the two. The text continues: "and he presented himself unto him", symbolizing the reflection of the light of the sun on to the moon, whereby the moon is lit up and floods with its light all the dwellers of the lower world. Correspondingly, as long as the supernal sanctity rested on the lower Temple, that Temple was filled with an effulgence of light, and thus remained in its completeness, but subsequently the supernal sanctity was withdrawn and the Temple was destroyed, regarding which it is written: "and he wept on his neck a long while"; "he wept", on account of the Temple that was to be destroyed, and "a long while", on account of the last exile. When Jacob thus saw that all below was complete after the supernal pattern, he said: "Now let me die... that thou art yet alive", that is to say: since thou hast retained the holy covenant of Him

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who is called the Living One of all eternity. The same is implied in Jacob's previous utterance: "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive." ' AND JACOB BLESSED PHARAOH . R. Jose cited in connection with this the verse: I have compared thee, O my love, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariot (S. S. I, 9). 'Observe', he said, 'that there are chariots of the left that belong to the other side, and there are chariots of the right that are under the aegis of supernal holiness; the latter are of grace, the former of severity. When the Holy One, blessed be



He, executed justice on the Egyptians, every form of punishment which He inflicted on them was after the very pattern of those chariots, and after the very pattern of that other side: as that side slays and takes men's souls, so did the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says: "and the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt" (Ex. XIII, 15), and so with all the other punishments executed on the Egyptians. This is the implication of the words, "I compared thee, O my beloved, etc.", to wit, "I made thee equal to the other side in the power to slay." And what does Scripture say in regard to the future? "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with crimson garments from Bozrah? etc. (Is. LXIII, 1). AND ISRAEL DWELT IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN; AND THEY GOT THEM POSSESSION THEREIN, AND WERE FRUITFUL, AND MULTIPLIED EXCEEDINGLY, and they got them possession, to wit, as a permanent possession, inasmuch as it belonged to them; and they were fruitful, and multiplied, assuredly so, seeing that they were relieved of all vexation and they enjoyed all the luxuries of the world. Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen! [Tr.note: The first four and a half pages of this section (211b-216a) are declared by all the commentators to be an interpolation, containing much erroneous doctrine.]

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[Note: The Hebrew text of this page does not appear in our translation as explained in the translator's note on page 211b]

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[Note: The Hebrew text of this page does not appear in our translation as explained in the translator's note on page 211b]

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## VAYEHI

R. Hiya discoursed on the text: And thy people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, etc. (Is. LX, 21). 'Israel', he said, 'have been favoured above all the Gentiles in being entitled by God righteous, that they may obtain an everlasting inheritance in the world to come, as it is written: "Then thou shalt delight in the Lord" (Is. LVIII, 14). Wherefore so? Because they attach themselves to the Body of the King, as it says: "Ye that cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day" (Deut. IV, 4).' R. Isaac said: 'This text of R. Hiya contains a deep allusion for "the reapers in the field".[Tr.note: i.e. students of the esoteric doctrine.] For R. Simeon has laid down in the esoteric Agadah that the exalted inheritance of that other land is acquired by none save him who is called "righteous." For the Matron cleaves to the Righteous One and finds delight in him, and the Righteous One assuredly inherits the Matron. So God in His love for Israel called them righteous and they are therefore meet to inherit the Matron. The reason is that they are circumcised, according to the dictum: "Whoever is circumcised and enters into the covenant and observes it becomes attached to the Body of the King, and enters into the Righteous One", and they are therefore called righteous, and so "they shall for ever inherit the land", to wit, the "land of the living". They are further called in the text "the branch of my planting", to wit, one of those shoots which God planted when He created the world, referred to in the verse,, "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden" (Gen. II, 8). According to another explanation, the words "And thy people are all righteous" refer to Jacob and his sons, who went down to Egypt among a stiff-necked people and all remained righteous, wherefore "they shall for ever

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inherit the land", since from there they went up to inherit the holy land.' AND JACOB LIVED IN THE LAND OF EGYPT. It is to be noted that this section is "closed", i.e. no space is left in the scroll of the Law between the beginning of this section (vayehi) and the end of the previous section (vayigash). Why is this? R. Jacob said: 'It is to indicate that when Jacob died the eyes of Israel became, as it were, closed, because then they really entered on the galuth and the Egyptians enslaved them.' R. Simeon said: 'It is to show that the words "and Jacob lived" are to be taken in close conjunction with the preceding sentence: "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt in the land of Goshen and they gat them possessions therein, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly." That is to say, just as they lived in luxury and were short of nothing, so Jacob similarly had every comfort and was short of nothing. Hence it is said of him now that "he lived". For

up to this time he had known nothing but trouble, but now he saw one of his sons in royal estate and the others virtuous and righteous, all living in the lap of luxury while he himself abode among them like good wine resting on its lees; so that now in reality he lived. SEVENTEEN YEARS . Why seventeen? R. Simeon said: 'Jacob's life was always one of hardship, but whenever he looked at Joseph he thought he saw his mother again, because Joseph closely resembled Rachel, and at such a time he forgot all his sorrows. When, however, Joseph was parted from him, this was a worse blow than all the previous ones, and he wept every day for the seventeen years that Joseph had been with him. Hence Providence compensated him with another seventeen years of Joseph's company, during which he lived in ease and luxury. Tradition tells us that all those seventeen years the Divine Presence rested upon him, and therefore they were called "life". So it says that when his sons told him that Joseph was alive, "the spirit of Jacob their father revived" (Gen. XLV, 27), for up to then the spirit had been dead within him and he had not been in a state to receive another in its place, since the spirit from above does not rest on an empty spot.' R. Jose said: 'The Shekinah does not rest on a place which is defective or disturbed, but only in a place properly prepared, a place of joyfulness. Hence all the years that Joseph was away and Jacob was in sadness, the Shekinah did not rest on him.' So we have learnt that R. Eleazar said in the name of R. Abba: 'It is written, "Serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing", to show that the service of God should be performed with joy.' This accords with what R. Eleazar has elsewhere said, that when Elisha desired the spirit to rest upon him, he said "and now bring me a minstrel" (II Kings III, 15).

R. Abba said: 'It has been laid down in a certain passage that the whole is derived from four sides, and that all the roots of the higher and lower beings are attached to them; and it has been further said that as one goes in another goes out, and as one is revealed another is concealed, and each one is linked to the next, and they are the origins of all.' R. Simeon said: 'There are three origins like the three patriarchs, and from them all the rest spread and extol the name to be crowned.'

R. Jose said: 'From the day that R. Simeon left the cave, nothing was concealed from the Companions, and things became clear to them as if they had been revealed that day on Mount Sinai. But after he died, then "the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven

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were closed", and the Companions could no longer get to the bottom of things, as shown by the following instance. One day R. Judah was sitting at the gate of Tiberias, and he saw two camels laden with bundles of clothes. One of the bundles fell down and a flock of birds flew to the spot. Before they could reach it, however, they dispersed. Then a number of other birds came up, and perched on the rock. The men threw stones and shouted at them but they would not go away. He heard a voice saying: "The crown of crowns is plunged in darkness and does not rest on the head

of the Master." While he was still sitting, a man passed by and said: "You are not following the example of Abram, who, when the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses drove them away (Gen. xv, 11)." "I am doing so," said R. Judah, "but they will not go". The man turned his head away and said: "This man has not yet plucked the hairs from the head of his Master, nor shorn the Matron." R. Judah followed him three miles asking him to explain, but he would not, so that R. Judah was greatly perturbed. One day he fell asleep under a tree and dreamt that he saw four wings outstretched and R. Simeon ascending on them with a scroll of the Law, and also with all manner of books containing hidden expositions and Agadahs. They all ascended to heaven and were lost to his view. When he woke he said: 'Verily, since the death of R. Simeon wisdom has departed from the earth. Alas for the generation that has lost this precious jewel which used to illumine it and on which higher and lower beings were supported.' He came and told R. Abba, who clapped his hands on his head, saying: 'R. Simeon was the mill in which every day the goodly manna was ground. Now the mill and the manna have departed, and nothing is left of it in the world save as it were "one omerful put in a pot to be kept" (Ex. XVI, 33), that is, kept in a private place and not exposed. Who now can reveal mysteries or even know them?' R. Abba whispered to him: 'The man that you saw was assuredly Elijah, and he was not willing to reveal secrets in order that you may appreciate the worth of R. Simeon, and that his generation may weep for him.' He said to him: 'He indeed deserves to be wept. Woe is me that I did not depart this life with those three who died in the sacred chamber of R. Simeon, so as not to behold this generation that has been laid low.' He then said to him: 'Master, tell me. It is written: "And they shall take the gold and the blue and the purple and the scarlet and the fine linen" (Ex. XXVIII, 5). Why is there no mention here of silver, seeing that silver was also brought for an offering (v. Ex. xxv, 3)?' He replied: 'You might ask the same question with regard to copper, which also is mentioned in one place and not in the other. As the Sacred Lamp has revealed the answer, I also may reveal it.' He then discoursed as follows. 'It is written: "Mine is the silver and mine is the gold, saith the Lord" (Haggai II, 8). On many occasions we have pondered over the question, what holiness is there in these priestly garments? We have, however, been taught that there is holiness in every place, and that these garments are after the supernal pattern, as we have learnt: "There is a High Priest above and a high priest below, raiment of honour above and raiment of honour below." As for the omission of silver and copper, these were assigned to another place, as it is written, "All the pillars of the court round about shall be filleted with silver", and again, "and their sockets of brass" (Ex. XXVII, 17). These were the instruments for the service of the Tabernacle; but this raiment of honour was only to be used by the High Priest and by no other.' AND THE TIME DREW NEAR THAT ISRAEL MUST DIE . R. Judah said: 'Alas, for the ignorance of mankind! They see not, neither do they hear,

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nor know that every day the voice of a herald goes forth and resounds through two hundred and fifty

worlds. We have learnt that when the herald goes forth one of these worlds shakes and trembles, and there issue from it two birds whose abode is beneath the tree wherein is the appearance of life and death, one towards the South and the other towards the North, one when the day dawns and one when it departs. Both proclaim what they hear from the herald. They then desire to return to their own place aloft, but their feet slip in the hollow of the great abyss and they are fastened there till midnight. Then the herald proclaims, and the sons of men are also "snared like birds caught in the trap." R. Judah said: 'The day when a man's feet are caught and his time approaches to die is called "the day of the Lord", because then his spirit returns to Him. We have learnt that at that time a holy Crown, to wit, the seventh, is entrusted with his spirit, or, if he comes from the side of Might (Geburah) the eighth Crown; beyond that his days cannot be prolonged, as it says, "yet is their pride and labour but sorrow" (Ps. xc, 10); where there is no foundation the building cannot be firm.' R. Judah said: 'Happy are the righteous when God is pleased to take back their spirit to Himself. But if a man is not adjudged worthy, woe to his spirit, which has to be purified and to be prepared before it can be drawn to the Body of the King; and if it is not prepared, woe to it that it must roll about "like a stone in a sling" (cf. I Sam.). Further, we have learnt: "If the soul is worthy, great is the bliss reserved for it in the other world, as it is written, "No eye hath seen save thine, O Lord, what thou wilt do for him that trusts in thee" (Is. LXIV, 3).' R. Jose said: 'When a man's appointed time draws near, proclamation is made concerning him for thirty days, and even the birds of the heaven announce his doom; and if he is virtuous, his coming is announced for thirty days among the righteous in the Garden of Eden. We have learnt that during those thirty days his soul departs from him every night and ascends to the other world and sees its place there, and during those thirty days the man has not the same consciousness or control of his soul as previously.' R. Judah said: 'From the first arrival of those thirty days a man's shadow becomes faint and his form is not outlined clearly on the ground.'

R. Isaac one day sat himself at R. Judah's door in great sadness. The latter coming out and finding him in this condition said to him: 'What is the matter to-day?' He replied: 'I have come to ask you three things. One is that whenever you repeat any of my expositions of the Torah you should give them in my name. The second is that you should train my son Joseph in the Torah; and the third is that you should go every seven days and pray over my grave.' Said R. Judah: 'What makes you think you are going to die?' He answered: 'My soul has lately been leaving me in the night and not enlightening me with dreams as it used to do. Furthermore, when I bow down in the course of my prayers, I notice that my shadow does not appear on the wall, and I imagine the reason to be that the herald has gone forth and made proclamation regarding me.' R. Judah replied: 'I will carry out your requests. But I will ask you also

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to reserve a place for me by your side in the other world, as we were together in this.' R. Isaac wept and said: 'I beg of you not to leave me for the rest of my

days.' They then went to R. Simeon, whom they found studying the Torah. Raising his eyes, R. Simeon saw R. Isaac and the Angel of Death running and dancing before him, so going to the door, he took R. Isaac by the hand and said: 'I ordain that he who is wont to enter shall enter and he who is not wont shall not enter.' Thereupon R. Isaac and R. Judah entered and the Angel of Death was kept outside. R. Simeon looked at R. Isaac and saw that his time had not yet come, and that he had respite till the eighth hour of the day, so he made him sit down before him and study the Torah. R. Simeon then said to his son R. Eleazar: 'Sit by the door and speak with no one, and if anyone wants to come in, swear to him that he may not.' He then said to R. Isaac: 'Have you seen to-day the image of your father? For so we have learnt, that at the hour of a man's departure from the world, his father and his relatives gather round him, and he sees them and recognizes them, and likewise all with whom he associated in this world, and they accompany his soul to the place where it is to abide.' R. Isaac replied: 'So far I have not seen.' R. Simeon then arose and said: 'Sovereign of the Universe! R. Isaac is well known among us, and he is one of the seven eyes of the world here. Now that I hold him, give him to me.' A voice then went forth and said: 'The throne of his Master is near the wings of R. Simeon. Lo, he is thine, and he shall accompany thee when thou goest in to abide on thy throne.' R. Eleazar now saw the Angel of Death coming up, and said to him: 'The doom of death cannot fall in the place where R. Simeon is.' R. Simeon then said to his son: 'Come in here and take hold of R. Isaac, since I see that he is afraid.' R. Eleazar did so, and R. Simeon turned round and began to study. R. Isaac then fell asleep and saw his father in a dream. He said to him: 'My son, happy is thy portion both in this world and in the world to come. For among the leaves of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden there is placed a great tree, mighty in both worlds, which is R. Simeon, son of Yohai, and he shelters thee with his boughs.' Said R. Isaac to him: 'Father, what is my portion there?' He replied: 'Three days ago they roofed in thy chamber and prepared for thee, placing windows on all four sides to let light in upon thee, so that when I saw thy place I rejoiced, and said: Happy is thy portion; save that thy son has not yet learnt sufficient Torah. And behold now, twelve righteous Companions were eager to visit thee, and when we were on the point of departing a voice went forth through all worlds saying "Ye companions that stand here, be proud of R. Simeon, for he has made a request and it has been granted to him." Nor is this [Tr.note: viz. that R. Isaac should live.]all, for there are here seventy crowned places belonging to him, and every place has doors opening to seventy worlds, and every world is open to seventy channels, and every channel is open to seventy supernal crowns, and from there paths are opened out to the Ancient and Inscrutable One, to give a view of that supernal delight which illumines and beatifies all, as it says, "to see the pleasantness of the Lord and to visit his temple".' Said R. Isaac: 'Father, how long am I granted to be in this world?' He answered: 'I am not permitted to tell, nor is this made known to a man. But in the great feast of R. Simeon, thou shalt prepare his table.' R. Isaac then awoke, his face full of smiles. R. Simeon, observing him, said: 'You have heard something, have you not?' 'Assuredly,' he

replied; and he then told him his dream, and prostrated himself before him. It is related that from that day

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R. Isaac diligently taught his son the Torah and always had him with him. When he went in to R. Simeon, he used to leave his son outside, and when he sat before R. Simeon he applied to himself the verse: "O Lord, I am oppressed, be thou my surety" (Is. XXXVIII, 14).

We have learnt that on the dread day when a man's time comes to depart from the world, four quarters of the world indict him, and punishments rise up from all four quarters, and four elements fall to quarrelling and seek to depart each to its own side. Then a herald goes forth and makes proclamation, which is heard in two hundred and seventy worlds. If the man is worthy, all the worlds welcome him with joy, but if not, alas for that man and his portion! We have learnt that when the herald makes proclamation, a flame goes forth from the North and passes through the "stream of fire", and divides itself to the four quarters of the world to burn the souls of sinners. It then goes forth and flies up and down till it alights between the wings of a black cock. The cock then flaps its wings and cries out at the threshold of the gate. The first time it cries: "Behold, the day cometh burning like a furnace, etc." (Mal. III, 19). The second time it cries: "For lo, he that formeth the mountains and createth the wind and declareth unto man what is his thought" (Amos IV, 13); that is the time when a man's deeds testify against him and he acknowledges them. The third time is when they come to remove his soul from him and the cock cries: "Who would not fear thee, King of the nations? For to thee doth it appertain, etc." (Jer. x, 7). Said R. Jose: 'Why must it be a black cock?' R. Judah replied: 'Whatever the Almighty does has a mystic significance. We have learnt that chastisement does not fall save upon a place which is akin to it. Now black is the symbol of the side of Judgement, and therefore when the flame goes forth, it strikes the wings of a black cock, as being the most appropriate. So when man's judgement hour is near, it commences to call to him, and no one knows save the patient himself, as we have learnt, that when a man is ill and his time is approaching to depart from the world a new spirit enters into him from above, in virtue of which he sees things which he could not see before, and then he departs from the world. So it is written: "For man shall not see me and live"; in their lifetime they may not see, but at the hour of death they may. We have further learnt that at the time of a man's death he is allowed to see his relatives and companions from the other world. If he is virtuous, they all rejoice before him and give him greeting, but if not, then he is recognized only by the sinners who every day are thrust down to Gehinnom. They are all in great gloom and begin and end their converse with "woe!". Raising his eyes, he beholds them like a flame shooting up from the fire, and he also exclaims "woe!". We have learnt that when a man's soul departs from him, all his relatives and companions in the other world join it and show it the place of delight and the place of torture. If he is virtuous he beholds his place and ascends and sits there and enjoys the delights of the other world. But if he is not virtuous, his soul remains in this world until his body is buried in the dust, and then

the executioners take hold of him and drag him down to Dumah and to his appointed storey in Gehinhom.' R. Judah said: 'For seven days the soul goes to and fro from his house to his grave, and from his grave to his house, mourning for the body,

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as it is written: "His flesh shall suffer pain for him, and his soul shall mourn for it" (Job XIV, 22), and it grieves to behold the sadness in the house. We have learnt that after seven days the body begins to decay, and the soul goes in to its place. It enters the cave of Machpelah, where it is allowed in up to a certain point according to its deserts. It then reaches the place of the Garden of Eden and meets the Cherubim and the flashing sword which is in the lower Garden of Eden, and if it is worthy to enter, it enters. We have learnt that four pillars [Tr.note: i.e. angels.] are waiting there with the form of a body in their hands, and with this it gleefully clothes itself and then remains in its appointed circle in the Garden of Eden for its allotted time. Then a herald makes proclamation and a pillar of three colours is brought forward, which is called "the habitation of Mount Zion" (Is. IV, 5). By means of this pillar it ascends to the gate of righteousness, in which are Zion and Jerusalem. If it is worthy to ascend further, then happy is its portion and lot that it becomes attached to the Body of the King. If it is not worthy to ascend further, then "he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy" (Ibid. 3). But if it is privileged to ascend further, then it beholds the glory of the King, and enjoys the supernal delight from the place which is called Heaven. Happy he that is vouchsafed this grace.' R. Jose said: 'There is a superior grace and an inferior grace. The superior grace is above the heavens, as it is written: "For great above the heaven is thy kindness" (Ps. CVIII, 5). Of the inferior grace it is written: "For great unto the heaven is thy kindness" (Ibid. LVII, 11), and to this class belong the "faithful kindnesses of David" (Is. LV, 3).'

R. Isaac once questioned R. Simeon with regard to the verse, "a joyful mother of children", saying: 'I know what is meant by the mother, but who are the children?' R. Simeon answered: 'There are two children to God, one male and one female. The male he gave to Jacob, as it is written: "Israel is my son, my firstborn" (Ex. IV, 22). The female he gave to Abraham. The mother sits on the young and gives them suck; whence the precept, "Thou shalt not take the mother with the young." Our teachers have said: "A man should beware of sinfulness below lest thereby the mother should be parted from the children." But when men repent and act virtuously then the mother returns and shelters the young, and this is called "repentance" (t'shubah, lit. returning). Then, too, it can be said, "the mother of the children is joyful". Hence a man should not cease from propagating his kind till he has a son and a daughter.' R. Isaac was not yet satisfied. 'The righteous', he said, 'desire no more than to "behold the pleasantness of the Lord" (Ps. XXVII, 4).'

R. Simeon answered: 'It is all one, since this pleasantness comes from the Holy Ancient One to this heaven, and the desire of the righteous is fixed on that.' R. Simeon further said: 'It is written: "He hath cast down the earth from the heavens" (Lam. II, 1). For when the Almighty resolved to destroy the

Temple and to banish Israel among the nations, He removed from before Him the upper earth, and when that earth was put away from Him, then the lower earth was laid waste and Israel were banished among the nations; whereupon the Community of Israel said: "My mother's sons were incensed against me" (S. S. I, 6), and that was the cause of my downfall.'

R. Jose was once walking with R. Hiya the son of Rab, and as they were going along he said to him: 'Do you see something over there?' 'I see a man in the river', he answered, 'and a bird on

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his head with a piece of flesh which it is eating and tearing with its claws. The man is crying out something, but I cannot catch what he says.' Said the other: 'Let us go nearer and listen.' He said: 'I am afraid.' 'Why,' he said, 'do you think that this is a man here? This is some hint of Wisdom which God is sending us.' So they went nearer and they heard him saying: 'Crown, crown, two sons are kept outside, and there will be no peace or rest until the bird is thrown down in Carsarea.' R. Jose wept and said: 'Verily the Galuth is drawn out, and therefore the birds of heaven will not depart until the dominion of the idolatrous nations is removed from the earth, which will not be till the day when God will bring the world to judgement.' As they went on they heard a voice say: 'Let the flame of fire advance to chastise', whereupon a flame came forth and burnt the bird. Said R. Jose, 'God only banished Israel when there was no longer faith among them, for then, if one may say so, He was entirely forgotten.' R. Hiya said: 'What is the meaning of the verse: "He hath swallowed up death for ever" (Is. xxv, 8)?' He said: 'When God shall arouse His right hand, then death shall be banished from the world. But He will not arouse His right hand till Israel give the impetus, to wit, by the Torah. At that time "the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly" (Ps. CXVIII, 16), and "I shall not die but live" (Ibid. 17). We have learnt that when God is pleased with a righteous man and the herald makes proclamation concerning him thirty days among the righteous in the Garden of Eden, then all the righteous rejoice and go and crown his place in preparation for his coming to take up his abode among them. But if he is sinful, then the herald proclaims concerning him thirty days in Gehinnom, and all the sinners are sad and exclaim: "Woe, that a new punishment is to be executed on so-and-so", and the demons are ready to meet him. Woe to the wicked and woe to his neighbour!' Then they all exclaim: "Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given to him" (Is. III, 11).' R. Isaac said: 'The word ra' (ill) in this passage refers especially to him who wilfully spills his seed, like Er the son of Judah. Such a one is thrust down lower than all the others in that world. All others have a chance to ascend, but not he. Is he even worse, it may be asked, than a murderer? Even so, because a murderer kills another man's children, but he kills his own, and he spills very much blood. Hence it is written of such a one particularly: "And that which he did was evil in the sight of the Lord" (Gen. XXXVIII, 10).' R. Judah said: 'Every sin admits of repentance barring this, and every sinner may hope to see the face of the Shekinah barring this one.' R. Isaac said: 'Happy are the righteous in this

world and in the world to come; of them it is written: "And thy people are all righteous, they shall for ever inherit the land (Is. LX, 21). [Tr.note: The translation of the three-and-a-half pages here omitted (219b-221b) will be found in the Zohar on Leviticus, 104b, to which they properly belong.]

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[Note: This page does not appear in our translation as explained in the translator's note on page 219b.]

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[Note: This page does not appear in our translation as explained in the translator's note on page 219b.]

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AND THE DAYS DREW NEAR FOR ISRAEL TO DIE. R. Hiya said: 'Why is the name Israel used here in connection with his death, whereas above it says, "And Jacob lived, etc.?"' R. Jose said in reply: 'Note here the word "days", which is somewhat peculiar, since a man only dies on one day, in fact, in one instant. The reason, however, is, as we have learnt, that when God desires to take back a man's spirit, all the days that he has lived in this world pass in review before Him. Happy, then, is the man whose days draw near before the King without reproach, not one of them being rejected because a sin was committed thereon. Hence the term "drawing near" is used of the righteous, because their days draw near before the King without reproach. But woe to the wicked whose days cannot so draw near, because they all passed in sin, wherefore they are not recorded above, so that of them it is written: "The way of the wicked is like thick darkness, they know not on what they stumble" (Prov. IV, 19).

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So here it says that the days of Israel "drew near", that is, without reproach and with unalloyed joy; and hence the name "Israel" is used, because it points to a greater perfection than the name Jacob.' R. Jose said: 'There are some righteous whose days when enumerated are put afar from the King, and others whose days are brought near to the King. It is they whose portion is blessed, and Israel was one of them.' AND HE CALLED HIS SON JOSEPH . R. Abba said: Joseph is called Jacob's son par excellence, because, as we have learnt, when Potiphar's wife tempted him, he lifted up his eyes and saw the image of his father (as it says, "and there was none of the men of the house there within" (Gen. XXXIX, 11), as much as to say, "but there was someone else"), and he thereupon resisted and withdrew. Hence it was that when Jacob came to bless his sons he said: "I know, my son, I know" (Gen. XLVIII, 19), repeating the word, as much as to say, "I know of the time when you proved in your own body that you were my son, and I also know that, as you say, this is the elder." Another explanation why he called him specially "my son" is that they closely resembled one

another, so that whoever saw Joseph could testify that he was the son of Jacob.' R. Jose said that another reason was that he supported him and his family in his old age.

The reason why Jacob asked Joseph to bury him, and not any other of his sons, was that only Joseph had the power to take him out of Egypt. R. Jose said: 'Since Jacob knew that his descendants would be in bondage in Egypt, why did he not have himself buried there in order that his merit might shield them, which would have shown true parental solicitude? The truth is that, as tradition tells us, when Jacob was about to go down to Egypt he was afraid lest his descendants might be lost among the peoples and lest God might remove His Presence from him. Hence God said to him: "Fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation" (Gen. XLVI, 3), and then, "I will go down with thee into Egypt" (Ibid. 4). Jacob was still afraid lest he should be buried there and not with his fathers, so God said to him: "I will also surely bring thee up again" (Ibid.), to wit, to be buried in the grave of thy ancestors. Hence he had various reasons for desiring to be taken out of Egypt. One was that the Egyptians should not make a god of him, since he foresaw that God would punish their gods. Another was because he knew that God would still keep his Presence among his descendants in the galuth. A third reason was that his body might rest in company with those of his ancestors, to be numbered with them and not with the sinners of Egypt, since, as we have learnt, Jacob reproduced the beauty of Adam, and his form was sublime and holy like that of the holy throne. Esoterically speaking, there is no separation among the patriarchs, and hence he said: "when I sleep with my fathers".'

Another reason why Jacob called Joseph "my son" was because he was from the first more intent on begetting him than any other of his sons, his whole thought having been devoted to Rachel.

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Said R. Simeon: 'Man should take good heed not to sin or to transgress the will of his Master, because all his actions are recorded in a book and are reviewed by the holy King and revealed before Him; even his thoughts are present before God and do not escape Him. Now on the night when Jacob went in to Leah and she gave him the tokens which he had given to Rachel, he really thought she was Rachel, and God, to whom all secrets are revealed, allowed that thought to have effect, and so the birthright of Reuben was transferred to Joseph, that having been Jacob's first seed, and so Rachel came into her own inheritance. This, too, is why Leah called his name simply Reuben (=see a son) and not Reubeni (=see my son). We have learnt: "God knew that Jacob had no intent to sin before Him, and that he did not allow his thoughts to dwell on any other woman at that instant like the sinful, and therefore it is written: "And the sons of Jacob were twelve" (Gen. xxxv, 22).' For the sons of the sinners who act in this way are called by another name, which is known among the Companions. Hence "Jacob called to his son Joseph"-his real son, his son at the beginning and at the end.' PUT, I PRAY THEE, THY HAND UNDER MY THIGH . R. Jose said: 'Jacob made him swear by the sign of the

covenant which was stamped on his flesh, since the patriarchs assigned more importance to this than to anything else, and this covenant, too, is symbolized by Joseph.' R. Simeon said: 'We find the formula, "put thy hand under my thigh", in connection with both Abraham and Jacob, but not with Isaac, the reason being that Esau issued from him. Again, we may suppose Jacob's idea to have been: "Swear to me by that holy impress which has brought holy and faithful seed into the world and which has ever been preserved from defilement that you will not bury me among those unclean who have never guarded it, and of whom it is written, "whose flesh is the flesh of asses and their neighing the neighing of horses" (Ezek. XXIII, 20).' Why, it may be asked, was Joseph, who also guarded the covenant, buried among them? The answer is that it was to meet a special emergency, like the appearance of God to Ezekiel outside the Holy Land. God saw that if Joseph were removed from there, the Israelites would sink under the bondage; therefore He said: "Let his burial place be here in a spot which will not be defiled (for Joseph's coffin was thrown into the river), and so the Israelites will be able to endure the captivity.' R. Jose said: 'Jacob saw that he was fitted in every way to form part of the holy chariot like his fathers, but he thought it impossible that his body should be attached to his fathers if he was buried in Egypt.'

Seeing that the patriarchs were privileged to be buried in the cave of Machpelah with their wives,

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why was Jacob buried with Leah and not with Rachel, who was the "foundation of the house"? The reason is that Leah bore more children from the holy stock. R. Judah said: 'Leah used to go out every day to the highway and weep for Jacob when she learnt that he was righteous, and prayed on his behalf, but Rachel never did so. Hence Leah was privileged to be buried with him, while Rachel's grave was set by the highway. The esoteric reason, as we have affirmed, is that the one typifies the disclosed and the other the undisclosed. Tradition tells us that the virtuous Leah prayed with many tears that she might be the portion of Jacob and not of the wicked Esau. Hence we have learnt that whoever prays with tears before the Almighty can procure the cancellation of any chastisement that has been decreed against him; for so Leah, though she had been assigned by divine decree to Esau, yet by her prayer succeeded in procuring the preference for Jacob and saved herself from being given to Esau.'

R. Isaac said: 'It is written: "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East" (I Kings v, 9). What is the wisdom of the children of the East? Tradition tells us that it was the wisdom which they inherited from Abraham. For we read that Abraham "gave all that he had unto Isaac" (Gen. xxv, 5): this refers to the higher wisdom, which he possessed through the knowledge of the holy name of God. "But to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had Abraham gave gifts"; to wit, certain information about the lower crowns, and he settled them in "the east country" (Ibid.); and from that source the children of the East inherited wisdom.'

R. Simeon was once travelling from Cappadocia to Lydda accompanied by R. Abba and R. Judah. He was mounted and they were on foot. Tired with keeping pace with him, R. Abba exclaimed: 'Verily, "they that go after the Lord shall roar like a lion" (Hos. XI, 10).' R. Simeon then dismounted, saying: 'Truly, wisdom is not acquired by a man save when he sits and rests, as it says of Moses that he "sat on the mountain forty days" (Deut. IX, 9).' So they all sat down. R. Abba then asked him: 'What is the difference between the wisdom of Solomon and the wisdom of the children of the east and the wisdom of Egypt, mentioned in the same verse?' He replied: 'The secret of Solomon's wisdom was in the name of the moon when blessed from every side. In his days the moon was magnified and reached her fullness. A thousand mountains rose before her, and she blew them away with a puff. A thousand mighty rivers flowed before her, and she swallowed them at a draught. Her nails reached out in a thousand and seventy directions,

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and her hands in twenty-four thousand, so that nothing could escape her. Thousands of bucklers clung to her hair. From between her feet went forth a youth[tr.note: Metatron.] who stretched from one end of the world to the other with sixty clubs of fire, and who is also called "Enoch son of Jered." He was called "son of Jered" (lit. descent) in reference to the ten stages by which the Shekinah descended to the earth. Under him are stationed many Hayyoth, under which again is fastened the hair of the moon, which is called "the knobs of the sceptre". Her hands and feet take hold of it like a strong lion holding his prey. Her nails are those who call to mind the sins of men and inscribe them with all rigour and exactness. The offscourings of her nails are all those who do not cleave to the Body of the King and suck from the side of uncleanness, when the moon begins to diminish. Now, after Solomon had inherited the moon in its fullness, he also desired to inherit it in its defective state, and therefore he sought to acquire the knowledge of spirits and demons, so as to inherit the moon on every side. As for the wisdom of Egypt, this is the lower wisdom which is called "the handmaid behind the millstones", and which was also included in the wisdom of Solomon.' Said R. Abba: 'How thankful am I that I asked you this question, since I have received so illuminating an answer.' R. Simeon said further: 'With regard to Solomon's words, "What profit hath man in all his labour?" (Eccl. I, 3), these do not apply to labour in the study of the Torah, since the statement is qualified by the words, "wherein he laboureth under the sun", and the study of the Torah is above the sun.' Said R. Hiya: 'Study of the Torah which is prosecuted for worldly ends is also accounted "under the sun", as it does not ascend aloft '.

R. Eleazar said: 'Though a man should live a thousand years, yet at the time of his departure from the world it seems to him as if he had only lived a single day.' WHEN I SLEEP WITH MY FATHERS . Happy is the lot of the patriarchs that the Almighty has made them a holy chariot above and has taken delight in them to be crowned with them; hence it is written, "Only in thy fathers the Lord took delight" (Deut. x, 15).

R. Eleazar said:

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'Jacob knew that he was to be crowned in his fathers and his fathers with him. Hence we have learnt regarding the graven letters that in the letter shin there are three strokes, one on one side and one on the other side and one combining them, and this is the allusion in the verse: "And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end" (Ex. XXVI, 28). Hence Jacob said: "I shall lie with my fathers".' R. Judah said: 'How deaf are men to the warnings of the Torah, and how blind are they to their own condition that they are not aware that on the day when a human being comes forth into the world, all the days that are assigned to him come forward and fly about the world and descend and warn the man, each day in its turn. And when a man has been so warned and yet sins against his Master, then the day on which he sinned ascends in shame and bears witness and stands by itself outside, and so it remains until the man repents. If he becomes virtuous it returns to its place, but if not, then it goes down and joins the outside spirit and returns to its house, and assumes the exact shape of that man in order to plague him and dwells with him continually in his house. If he is virtuous it proves a good companion, and if not, an evil companion. In either case, such days are missing from the full number and are not counted with the others. Woe to the man who has diminished the number of his days before the Almighty, and has not left days for himself with which to crown himself in the other world, and to approach the Holy King. For if he is worthy he ascends by means of those days, and they become a glorious vesture for his soul, those days in which he acted virtuously and did not sin. Woe to him that has diminished his days above, since when he comes to be clad in his days, those days that he spoilt by his sins are lacking, and his vesture is therefore defective; all the more so if there are many of them and he has nothing at all with which to clothe himself in the other world. Then woe to him and woe to his soul, since he is punished in Gehinnom for those days, many days for each, because when he departed from this world he had no days with which to clothe himself and no garment wherewith to cover himself. Happy are the righteous whose days are all stored up with the Holy King, and form glorious vestures with which they may robe themselves in the other world. This is the esoteric explanation of the verse, "and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. III, 7), that is to say, that the glorious raiment made of those days had been impaired and none of them was left to clothe themselves with. And so it was until Adam repented and God pardoned him and made him other garments, but not of his days, as it is written: "And God made Adam and his wife coats of skins and clothed them" (Gen. III, 21). Observe that of Abraham it says that "he came into days" (Gen. XXIV, 1), because when he departed this world he literally came into possession of his former days and was invested with them, his robe of glory being full and complete. Job, on the other hand, said of himself: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither" (Job. I, 21), because no material was left wherewith to clothe himself. Our teachers have said: "Happy the righteous whose days are without

reproach and remain for the world to come, so that after death they are all joined together and formed into

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robes of glory through which they are privileged to enjoy the delights of the future world, and in which they are destined to come to life again. But woe for the sinners whose days are defective, so that there is not left from them wherewith to cover themselves when they depart from the world." We have further learnt that all the virtuous who have acquired a robe of glory through their days are crowned in the future world with crowns like those of the patriarchs, from the stream that flows continually into the Garden of Eden, and of them it is written, "the Lord shall lead thee continually and satisfy thy soul in dry places" (Is. LVIII, 11), but the wicked who have not acquired such a garment will be "like the heath in the desert that shall not see when good cometh, but inhabits the parched places in the wilderness" (Jer. XVII, 6).' R. Isaac said: 'Of all men Jacob had the fairest prospect, because he was entitled to a robe on account both of his own days and of those of his fathers; hence he said: "I shall lie with my fathers." ' R. Judah said: 'When Jacob went in to his father to obtain a blessing, he was wearing the garments of Esau; nevertheless the text says that Isaac smelt his garments (Gen. XXVII, 27), to indicate that he caught the odour of his raiment in the future world, and it was therefore that he blessed him. Hence, too, he said: "See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed", the reference being to the field of holy apples, in which every day drops dew from the place called heaven; hence he continued: "God give thee of the dew of the heaven." It has been taught that fifteen odours ascend every day from the Garden of Eden to perfume those precious garments in the other world.'

R. Judah asked how many garments there are. R. Eleazar said: 'The authorities differ on this point, but in truth there are three. One is for clothing the spirit (ruah) in the terrestrial Garden of Eden. A second, the most precious of all, is for investing the inner soul (neshamah) when among the bundle of the living in the circle of the King. The third is an outer garment which appears and disappears, and with which the vital soul (nefesh) is clothed. It flits about the world and on Sabbaths and New Moons it attaches itself to the spirit in the terrestrial paradise and learns from it certain things which it goes and makes known in this world. It has been taught that on Sabbaths and New Moons the soul (nefesh) makes two visits. First it joins the spirit among the perfumes of the terrestrial paradise, and then in company with the spirit it joins the higher soul in the "bundle of the living", and feasts itself on the glorious radiance coming from both sides. This is hinted in the expression "The Lord shall satisfy thy soul in bright places" (Is. LVIII, 11), the plural including both the outer radiance of the place of the spirit and the radiance within radiance which they enjoy by associating with the higher soul in the "bundle of the living".'

Said R. Simeon: 'When I visit the Companions in Babylon they come together to hear me, and I discourse to them openly, but they go and seal up my

teaching under an iron padlock which makes it inaccessible to all. How often have I taught them the ways of the Garden of the King and the doctrine of the King! How often have I taught them all the degrees of the righteous in the future world! But they are all frightened to repeat

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these things and only mumble them, on which account they are called "mumblers". However, I account this fear in them creditable, because they are denied the air and the spirit of the Holy Land and inhale the air and the spirit of an alien region. Further, too, the rainbow has appeared in their time, [tr.note: The appearance of the rainbow, reminding God of His promise not to destroy the world, is a proof that there are no righteous who could protect the world by their merits alone. Vide T. B. Kethuboth, 77b.] and hence they are not worthy to behold the presence of Elijah, not to mention others. Their good fortune is that I am still alive to be the ensign and support of the world, for in my days the world will not be afflicted and the punishment of heaven will not fall upon it. After me there will not arise a generation like this one, and the world will be left without a protector, and insolence will be rampant both above and below—above on account of the insolence of those below, and their shamelessness. Mankind will cry and none will take heed; they will turn to every side and find no remedy. But one remedy there will be in the world and no more, to wit, in the place where there will be men devoting themselves to the study of the Torah, and where there will be a Scroll of the Law free from all error. When this will be taken out, the upper and lower denizens will bestir themselves, especially if the Holy Name is written in it in the fitting manner. As I have already taught, woe to the generation the members of which, high and low, do not rise when the Scroll of the Law is displayed Who shall come to its aid when the world is in distress and requires protection? Then it is necessary more than ever to display the Scroll of the Law. For when the world is in distress, and men go to the cemeteries to offer supplication, all the dead take note of the Scroll, since the soul goes and informs the spirit that the Scroll of the Law is in captivity through the distress of the world, and the living have come to supplicate. Then the spirit informs the higher soul (neshamah) and the higher soul informs the Almighty, who then takes note and has pity on the world, all because the Scroll of the Law has been banished from its place, and the living have come to supplicate by the graves of the dead. Alas for the generation that has need to remove the Scroll of the Law from one place to another, even from one synagogue to another, because they have nothing else to which to turn. Not all men know that the Shekinah at its last exile did not withdraw to heaven, but to "the wilderness, to an inn of travellers" (Jer. IX, 1), and that since then it is always to be found in the place where Israel is particularly in distress, and also wherever the Scroll is removed and high and low rise up before it.'

We have learnt that the soul is linked with the body twelve months in the grave, and they are judged together (this, however, does not apply to the souls of the righteous, as we have laid down), and it is present in the grave and is aware of the sufferings of the body.



It also knows the sufferings of the living, but does not intervene on their behalf. After twelve months it is clad in a certain vesture, and goes to and fro in the world, learning certain things from the spirit and interesting itself on behalf of the living who are in distress. But this is only when there is among them a virtuous man whose merit is properly recognized by them. For so we have learnt, that when a virtuous man is left in the world, he is known both among the living and the dead, and when the world is in great distress and he cannot deliver it, he makes the trouble known to the dead. And if there is not

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such a one, then they take out the Scroll of the Law, and high and low accompany it, and it is incumbent on all at that time to do penance, for otherwise heaven will punish them. Even the spirits of the Garden of Eden intercede for them for the sake of the Scroll, as has been affirmed. Said R. Judah: 'Little do men know how God extends His mercy to them at all times and seasons. Three times a day a spirit enters the cave of Machpelah and breathes on the graves of the patriarchs, bringing them healing and strength. That spirit distils dew from on high, from the head of the King, the place of the supernal fathers, and when it reaches the lower patriarchs they awake. That dew, as we have learnt, comes down by degrees till it reaches the lower Garden of Eden, and becomes impregnated with its perfumes. Then a spirit containing two other spirits arises and traverses the spice-beds, and enters the door of the cave. Then the patriarchs awake, they and their spouses, and supplicate on behalf of their descendants. If the world is in distress on account of its sins, and the patriarchs sleep, the dew not descending from on high, then the remedy is to take out the Scroll of the Law. Then the soul tells the spirit, and the spirit tells the higher soul, and the higher soul tells God. God then takes His seat on the throne of mercy, and there issues from the Ancient Holy One a stream of dew of bdellium, which flows to the head of the King, so that the fathers are blessed. Then the dew flows to those sleepers, and all are blessed together, and God has mercy on the world. We have learnt that God does not show mercy to the world till He has informed the patriarchs, and for their sakes the world is blessed.' Said R. Jose: 'Assuredly this is so. And I have further found in the Book of King Solomon, that one which was called the "counsellor of all wisdom" (and Rab Hamnuna also said that the same thing had been revealed to him), that Rachel achieves more than all of them by standing at the parting of the ways at all times when the world is in need. This is symbolized by the fact that the ark and the mercy-seat and the Cherubim were in the territory of Benjamin, who was born by the wayside, the Shekinah being over all.' AND ISRAEL BOWED HIMSELF DOWN UPON THE BED'S HEAD. The "bed's head" is the Shekinah. Said R. Simeon: 'Not at all. The bed stands for the Shekinah, as in the verse, "Behold, it is the litter of Solomon" (S. S. III, 7). The "head of the bed" is the Foundation of the World who is the head of the sacred couch; and "that which is upon the head" is (the supernal) Israel who is established at the head of the bed. Hence, Israel bowed down to his appropriate grade. At this time he was not yet ill, as we see from the next verse, but because he knew that at

the time he would rise to a supernal holy grade to become a perfect throne, therefore he bowed down to that supernal throne, the completion of the great and mighty tree, which was called by his name, to "Him who is over the Head of the bed".' R. Judah said: 'We have a dictum that if a man dies in foreign soil and

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his body is buried in the Holy Land, to him may be applied the verse, "And ye came and defiled my land and my inheritance ye made an abomination" (Jer. II, 7). How, then, could Jacob ask to be buried in the grave of his fathers, seeing that he was dying on alien soil?' R. Judah said: 'Jacob was different, because the Shekinah was closely attached to him. Hence it is written, "I will go down with thee to Egypt" (Gen. XLVI, 4), to wit, to abide with thee in captivity; "and I will also surely bring thee up again" (Ibid.), to attach thy soul to Me, and to obtain burial for thy body in the graves of thy fathers-and this even though he departed life on an alien soil. He was further promised that Joseph should put his hand on his eyes, the reason being that God knew that he was the firstborn in intent, and that he was most attached to Joseph.'

What was the idea of this promise of putting his hands on his eyes? R. Jose said that it was as a sign of honour to Jacob, and to inform him that Joseph was alive and would be with him at his death. Said R. Hizkiah: 'I have learnt something about this which I hardly like to disclose, showing how wisdom is embodied in a common practice.' R. Abba clapped him on the shoulder, saying: 'Speak out and do not be afraid; in the days of R. Simeon there is no need for secrecy.' He then said: 'I have seen in the chapter of R. Jesse the Elder regarding customs, that if a man has a son, when he dies the son ought to put dust on his eyes at the time of his burial, and this is a mark of respect to him, being a sign that the world is now concealed from him, but his son inherits the world in his place. For the human eye represents the world with its various colours. The outer ring of white corresponds to the sea of Oceanus which surrounds the whole world. The next colour represents the land which is surrounded by the sea. A third colour in the middle of the eye corresponds to Jerusalem, which is in the centre of the world. Finally there is the pupil of the eye, which reflects the beholder and is the most precious part of all. This corresponds to Zion, which is the central point of the universe, in which the reflection of the whole world can be seen, and where is the abode of the Shekinah, which is the beauty and the cynosure of the world. Thus the eye is the heritage of the world, and so as the father leaves it the son inherits it.' Said R. Abba: 'You are quite right. But there is still a deeper significance in the practice, although men do not know it. For when a man departs from the world, his soul is still enclosed in him, and before his eyes are closed they see certain recondite things, as we have explained in connection with the verse, "For a man shall not see me and live", indicating that they see things in their death which they do not see in their life-time. Then it behoves those who are present to place their hands on his eyes and close them, and, as we have learnt in connection with customs and manners, if he has a son, it behoves the son in the first place to do

so, as it is written, "And Joseph shall put his hand on thy eyes." The reason for the closing of the eyes is because some sight the reverse of holy might present itself, and it is not meet that the eyes which have just beheld a holy vision should now dwell on a sight of a different character. A further reason is that the soul is still attached to him in the house, and if the eye is left open, with that unholy vision still resting upon it, everything it looks upon is cursed; and this is not respectful to the eye, to allow it to gaze upon anything improper. The best sign of respect, therefore, is that a man's eyes should be closed by the hand of the son whom he has left behind him.'

For seven days the soul goes to and fro between the house and the grave, mourning for the body, and three times a day the soul and the body are chastised together, though no one perceives it. After that the body is thrust out and the soul is purified

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in Gehinnom, whence it goes forth roaming about the world and visiting its grave until it acquires a vestment. After twelve months the whole is at rest; the body reposes in the dust and the soul is clad in its luminous vestment. The spirit regales itself in the Garden of Eden, and the higher soul (neshamah) ascends to the place where all delights are concentrated; and all three come together again at certain times. Alas for men that they look not to their foundation, and neglect the precepts of the Torah. For some of these precepts fashion a glorious garment above, and some a glorious garment below, and some a glorious garment in this world; and man requires them all. And they are made literally out of his days, as we have explained. R. Judah the Elder one day saw in a dream his own image illumined and radiating brightly in all directions. 'What is that?' he said; and the answer came: 'It is thy garment for thy habitation here'; whereupon he was in great joy. R. Judah said: 'Every day the spirits of the righteous sit in rows in the Garden of Eden arrayed in their robes and praise God gloriously, as it is written: "Verily the righteous shall praise thy name the upright shall sit before thee."'

R. Abba said: 'When Jacob "bowed down to Him that is over the bed", as we have explained, and knew that he had reached the highest grade, and that his grade was on high with that of his fathers, and that he was the consummation of the whole, his heart was strengthened and he rejoiced in God's favour towards him. Hence it says, "And Jacob strengthened himself."'

R. Judah said: 'We learn in the Mishnah that judgement is pronounced on the world at four seasons: at Passover, in respect of produce; at Pentecost, in respect of fruit-trees; on New Year, when "all the denizens of the world pass before Him like a flock of sheep"; and on Tabernacles, when the rainfall is determined. This we have esoterically explained as follows. Passover is the time for the decision with regard to cereals, because on Passover Israel began to enter into the holy portion of the Almighty and to remove from themselves the leaven which symbolizes the powers who are appointed over the idol-worshipping nations and who are called "strange gods".

On Pentecost judgement is passed in respect of the fruit of the tree: this is the great and mighty tree which rears itself aloft. On New Year all pass before Him like a flock of sheep, because New Year (lit. head of the year) is the head of the King. On Tabernacles judgement is pronounced in respect of water, because this festival is the beginning of the right hand of the King, and therefore the rejoicing of water is universally diffused.'

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R. Jose said: 'If we look closely, we find that in these periods both the three patriarchs and David can be found, and in these the world is judged. But in truth every day books are open and acts are recorded, though no one notices or inclines his ear, and the Torah testifies against man every day and a voice cries aloud: "Who is simple, let him turn in here", but no one listens. We have learnt that when a man rises in the morning witnesses stand by him and adjure him, but he pays no heed. His higher soul adjures him at all times and seasons. If he heeds her, it is well, but if not, then the books are open and the deeds recorded.' R. Hiya said: 'Happy are the righteous who have no fear of judgement, neither in this world nor in the future world, as it is written: "But the righteous is confident like a lion" (Prov. XXVIII, 1), and again, "the righteous shall inherit the earth" (Ps. XXXVII, 29).' R. Hizkiah, citing the verse, "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram, etc." (Gen. XV, 12), said: 'This verse has been applied to the day of judgement, when man is removed from this world. For we have learnt that the day when man departs this world is the great day of judgement when the sun's light is withheld from the moon, as it is written, "or ever the sun be darkened" (Eccl. XII, 2). This is the holy neshamah which is withheld from man thirty days before he departs from the world. During that time he observes that he throws no shadow, the reason being that his neshamah is withheld from him. For it does not wait until he is on the point of dying, but even while he is still in his full vigour it passes out of him, and does not illumine the spirit, which in turn does not illumine the vital soul, so that his shadow no longer shows. From that day all proclaim his coming fate, even the birds of the heaven. When the spirit ceases to illumine the vital soul, the latter becomes weak and rejects food and all bodily enjoyments.' R. Judah said further: 'Also whenever a man is on a sick bed and is not able to say his prayers his neshamah leaves him, and the spirit does not illumine the soul until he is judged. If the judgement is favourable, then the neshamah returns to its place and illumines the whole. But when no trial is held, then the neshamah leaves him thirty days before his death and his shadow is withheld. We have learnt that when a man is judged above, his neshamah is brought to trial and she confesses all and testifies to all the thoughts of a man, but not to his deeds, since they are all recorded in a book. While the trial is going on, the body is in greater pain than at other times. If he is judged favourably, he obtains ease and a sweat breaks out over his body, and his neshamah returns to its place and illumines the whole; but a man never rises from his bed of sickness until he is judged above. How is it, then, it may be asked, that so many sinners and transgressors are alive and active? The reason is that

God looks ahead, and if he sees that a man, though sinful now, may become virtuous subsequently, He judges him favourably, or it may be because he is destined to bear a son who will be virtuous. All God's judgements incline to beneficence, as it is written: "Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, saith the Lord God, and not rather that he should return from his way and live?" (Ezek. XVIII, 23). Sometimes, again, it is because the malady has run its course,

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for illnesses have a fixed period, after which they depart, whether from the righteous or the wicked; and all is done in justice, as we have said.' AND ISRAEL SAW THE SONS OF JOSEPH, AND HE SAID: WHO ARE THESE ? This verse seems to contradict the statement a little lower down that "the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see". What this verse really means, however, is that he saw through the Holy Spirit those later descendants of Joseph, Jeroboam and his fraternity. Jeroboam made two golden calves and said: "These are thy gods, O Israel" (I Kings XII, 28). Hence Israel now said "Who are these", that is, who is he that will one day say "these" to idols. From this passage we learn that the righteous see into the distant future and God crowns them with His own crown. That God sees the future we learn from the verse: "And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. I, 31), which means that He foresaw all that was to happen before it was commenced. In the same way all the generations of the world from one end to the other stand before Him before they come into the world, as it says, "He calleth the generations from the beginning" (Is. XLI, 4), i.e. from the Creation; all the souls that are to descend into the world stand before God before they descend in the form which they are to assume in this world, and are called by name. In the same way God shows the righteous all generations before they come into the world, as He showed them to Adam, as it is written: "This is the book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. v, 1), and also to Moses, as it says: "And he showed him all the land" (Deut. XXXIV,1), which we interpret to mean that God showed him all coming generations and leaders and prophets. So here with Israel. The words "who are these" have thus a double meaning (literal and metaphorical), and hence Joseph answered: "They are my sons whom God hath given me here." That Israel saw here through the Holy Spirit is proved by the words, "God hath let me see thy seed also", where the augmentative word "also" brings in his descendants, as we have explained. AND HE BLESSED JOSEPH AND SAID . This statement seems inaccurate, since on reading further we find that he did not bless Joseph at all, but only his sons. R. Jose solved the difficulty by stating that in blessing the sons Jacob blessed Joseph also, since the blessing of a man's sons is his own blessing. R. Eleazar said that the object of the verb "blessed" is the particle eth, which alludes to the sign of the covenant. When Joseph said "they are my sons", Jacob blessed that place which symbolizes the Covenant that Joseph kept. In the next words, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk", the word God alludes to the holy Covenant, and the elder patriarchs Abraham and Isaac were literally "before" this, because that place derives nourishment

and sustenance from them. Jacob continued: THE GOD (Elohim) WHICH HATH FED ME . In repeating the word Elohim, he blessed that place with a reference to Elohim Hayyim (Living God), the source of life and of blessing. On that account he mentioned himself at this point, saying, "the God who blessed me", because all blessings that flow from the source of life are first received by Jacob, and thereupon this place is blessed, and all is made dependent on the male. From here we learn that wherever blessings are to be bestowed, God should be blessed first; otherwise the blessings will not be

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fulfilled. The blessing which Isaac bestowed on Jacob is no exception to this rule, because he said first, "behold the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed", where the field is an allusion to that field which is the source of blessings. Note that in the morning a man should first bless God and only then give his greeting to his fellow-men.

When Jacob was about to bless Joseph's sons, he saw by the Holy Spirit that Jeroboam the son of Nebat would issue from Ephraim, and he exclaimed, "Who are these?", the word "these" (eleh) being an allusion to idols. The reason is that besides the evil serpent there is one that rides on it, and when they are joined together they are called "these", and they visit the world with all their hosts. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is called "this", and is symbolized by the covenant of the holy imprint which is ever on a man's body. Hence we find written, "These also shall forget" (Is. XLIX, 15), and again, "For these I am weeping" (Ibid. 16), that sin being the cause to us of endless weeping; or alternatively, because this place was allowed to gain dominion over Israel and to destroy the Temple, the word "I" (ani) in this case referring to the Holy Spirit. It may be asked, on this hypothesis, what are we to make of the words "These are the words of the covenant"? The answer is that the word "these" is here also appropriate, because the words of the covenant are established by "these", since they are the abode of all curses, which await all who transgress the covenant. Similarly it is written, "These are the precepts which the Lord commanded", because the object of all the precepts is to purify man so that he should not stray from the right path and should keep far away from there. Hence, too, it is written, "These are the generations of Noah", because they included Ham the father of Canaan, who was accursed. The spirit of eleh is the "dross of gold". Aaron in the wilderness offered gold, which was his own affinity, since he was endowed with the strength of fire, and fire and gold are all one, but the unclean spirit which haunts the wilderness found at that time a place on which to fasten, and so Israel, after being freed at Mount Sinai from the primeval defilement which brought death into the world, afterwards incurred it again and brought death upon themselves and all their descendants. Hence, when Jacob saw in his mind's eye Jeroboam son of Nebat, who made an idol and said, "These are thy gods, O Israel", he trembled and said, "Who are these?". Hence when he came afterwards to bless them, he first blessed Elohim and then blessed them from that source.

R. Judah discoursed here on the text: Then Hezekiah turned his face unto the wall and prayed unto the Lord (Is. XXXVIII, 2). He said: 'We have derived from this verse the lesson that a man in praying should stand near the wall, with nothing intervening between himself and the wall. Now the question may be asked, why does it say of Hezekiah in particular that he turned his face to the wall, and of no one else who offered prayer, though with no less devotion, as, for instance, Moses, of whom it is written that he "prayed to the Lord" (Ibid. XVII, 4), and he "cried to the Lord" (Ex. xv, 25)?

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The reason is as follows. Hezekiah, as tradition tells us, was at that time not married and had no children. Isaiah therefore came to him and said: "Thou shalt die and not live", i.e. as tradition explains, "thou shalt die in this world and not live in the next world". For whoever has not laboured to beget children in this world is not established in the future world, and his soul is banished thence and can nowhere find rest; and this is the punishment referred to in the Law by the words, "They shall die childless" (Lev. xx, 20). Further, the Shekinah does not rest upon him at all. Hence Hezekiah "set his face to the wall", that is to say, he made a resolution to take a wife in order that the Shekinah, which is symbolized by a wall, might rest upon him, and hence the text continues, "and he prayed unto the Lord". From here we learn that anyone who is conscious of a sin for which he means to ask forgiveness should first form a resolution to cure himself of that sin and then offer his prayer, as it is written: "Let us search and try our ways" first, and then, "turn again unto the Lord" (Lam. III, 40). So Hezekiah, recognizing his fault, set his mind to put himself right with the Shekinah, the place against which he sinned. For all females are in the shelter of the Shekinah, and it abides with one who has a wife, but not with one who has none, and therefore Hezekiah first resolved to marry, and then offered his prayer. In regard to the actual language of his prayer, the words "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee" allude to the fact of his having kept the holy covenant without defiling it; the words "in truth and with a perfect heart" denote that he clung to all the principles of faith which are comprised under the word "truth", and the words "and have done that which is good in thy sight" indicate that in praying he always concentrated his mind upon declaring the unity of God with full conviction. Finally, Hezekiah "wept sore", because there is no door which remains closed to tears.' THE ANGEL WHO REDEEMED ME FROM ALL EVIL . This is the angel who takes part in every deliverance. R. Eleazar said: 'After Jacob had mentally carried the blessings from the lower to the upper sphere, he then drew them from the upper to the lower. Thus he first said: "The God which hath fed me", and then, having set the blessings in that place, he said "the angel who redeemed me".' R. Eleazar further said: 'It is written: "For the Cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark" (I Kings VIII, 7). The Cherubim were kept in their place miraculously, and three times a day they used to spread out their wings and cover the ark. They were a representation of the upper Cherubim and had the form of children, and they

stood beneath that place on the right and the left. They were the first recipients of the blessings which flowed from above, and transmitted them further, and this is the meaning of the words, "the angel who blessed me", that is, the angel first received blessings from the beings above, and with them "blessed the lads", to wit, the Cherubim, and from them blessings were transmitted from the upper to the lower creatures.

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R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: House and wealth are an inheritance from parents, but from the Lord is a prudent wife. (Prov. XIX, 14). 'When God gives a house and money to a man,' he said, 'sometimes he bequeaths the whole to his son, and therefore these things, although they are ultimately from God, may be called "inheritance of parents". But the possession of a good wife comes to man only from God. For God mates couples before they are born, and when a man is worthy he obtains a wife according to his deserts. Sometimes it happens that after the lot has been cast, that man perverts his ways, and then his mate is transferred to another until he rectifies his ways, or else until his time comes, and then the other is removed to make way for him and he comes into his own; and this is grievous in the sight of God, to remove one man to make way for another. Nor is it only a prudent wife who is from God. For if God has purposed to bestow benefits on a man, but he goes astray to the "other side", then from that other side to which he cleaves there shall come to him one who shall bring upon him all accusations and all ills. Hence of the wife who is not prudent Solomon said: "And I find that woman more bitter than death" (Eccl. VII, 26), because it is the man's sins which have drawn her on him. Hence, when God is pleased with a man, he provides for him a wife who is prudent, and redeems him from the other side. Hence Jacob said, "the angel who hath redeemed me from all wrong", meaning that a wife had not been assigned to him from the "other side", and that there was no defect in his seed, all of them being righteous and perfect.' SHALL BLESS THE CHILDREN . They were deserving of blessing because Joseph had kept the sign of the holy covenant. When Joseph said, "they are my sons whom God has given me here", he showed his father the sign of the covenant which he had kept, and therefore they were meet for blessing, and he also was deserving of blessing in abundance. Hence Jacob gave to the others only one blessing, but to Joseph many blessings, as it says, "the blessings of thy father... shall be upon the head of Joseph" (Gen. XLIX, 26).

R. Judah discoursed on the verse: Unto thee do I lift up mine eyes, O thou that sittest in the heavens (Ps. CXXIII, 1). He said: 'Prayer offered with true devotion is directed on high to the supernal recess, from whence issue all blessings and all freedom, to support the universe. It is attached above to the mystery of the supreme Wisdom, and it is attached below to him who sits on the throne of the patriarchs which is called heaven. Hence it is written here: "Who sits in the heavens." When the blessings issue from the supernal recess, they are all received by this place called heaven, and from thence they flow down till they come to the place called the "Righteous One the foundation

of the world”, from whence are blessed all the (heavenly) hosts and camps after their kind. All these heavenly legions are crowned by seventy-two lights, of which seventy[tr.note: The seventy Chieftains] form a circle about the world, while in the midst of the circle is a certain point[tr.note: The Shekinah.] from which the whole of the circumference is fed. The house of the holy of holies is the place

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for that spirit of all spirits, where lies hid the mystery of all mysteries, and when this removes, all move after it.’

As R. Hizkiah and R. Jose and R. Judah were once journeying together, R. Jose said: ‘Let each one of us give some exposition of the Torah.’ R. Judah thereupon began with the verse, “Remember not against us the iniquities of our forefathers, let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us” (Ps. LXXIX, 8). He said: ‘God in His great love for Israel allows no one to sit in judgement on them save Himself, and when He tries them, He is filled with compassion for them like a father for his children, and when He finds they have done wrong, He removes their offences one by one until there are none left to place them in the power of the other side. Hence it says, “let thy mercies prevent us”, because otherwise Israel would not be able to exist, in face of all the accusers and all the adversaries who are lying in wait for them above. Hence it continues “for we are very poor”, that is, poor in good deeds in the sight of God. For were Israel rich in good deeds before God, idolatrous nations would not be able to exist in the world. It is Israel who enable other nations to hold their head high, because but for their sins the nations would be subdued before them. And, as we have already said, had not Israel by their sins brought the other side into the Holy Land, the idolatrous nations would not have gained possession of it, and Israel would not have been exiled from their land. Hence, because “we are brought very low”, therefore “let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us”.’

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: “Serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing” (Ps. c, 2). He said: ‘The service of prayer offered by man to the Holy One, blessed be He, should be carried out with gladness and with singing, so that he may associate with him the Community of Israel; and then he should proclaim the unity in the fitting manner, as it says: “Know ye that the Lord he is God” (Ibid. 3). These two activities of gladness and song correspond to the two prayers of morning and afternoon, and to the two daily sacrifices—gladness in the morning and singing in the afternoon. The evening prayer, on the other hand, is optional, because at that time she (the Shekinah) is distributing sustenance to all her hosts, and it is not the time for blessing. In the daytime she is to be blessed from these two sides, morning and afternoon, out of gladness and singing, and at night time she divides the blessings among all in the fitting manner.’

R. Hizkiah took for his text the verse: “Let my prayer be established like incense before thee, the lifting of my hands like the evening oblation” (Ps. CXLI, 2). He said: ‘It may be asked, why did David mention here the oblation of the evening rather than

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of the morning? The answer may be given as follows. The offering of incense betokens joy, as it is written, “oil and incense rejoice the heart” (Prov. XXVII, 9). Hence the high priest, when he lit the candlestick, used to offer incense morning and evening (Ex. xxx, 7, 8); in the morning, because that is the natural season of joy, and in the evening to rejoice the left side, as befits. We see, then, that incense always betokened joy. Further, the incense links and unites upper and lower, and so removes death and wrath and accusation from the world and prevents them from prevailing over it; it was through the incense that Aaron stayed the plague. Hence the incense symbolizes universal joy and universal union. Now David offered the prayer we have quoted at the time of the afternoon oblation, when the world is under the aegis of justice, and he meant it to ascend and remove the wrath that was prevalent at that hour like the incense which removes wrath and accusation; hence he mentioned the “oblation of eventide”, the time when punishment descends on the world. Observe that the Temple was burnt at the time of the evening oblation, as it is written: “Woe to us because the day hath declined and the shadows of evening stretch out” (Jer. VI, 3). The “shadows of evening” are the accusers and the punishments which are abroad at that hour. Hence we have learnt that a man should say the afternoon prayer with special devotion, even more than other prayers. Hence, too, it was that Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer, as we have already explained.’

As they proceeded they came to a mountain. Said R. Jose: ‘This mountain is very formidable, let us keep clear of it.’ Said R. Judah: ‘If I were alone I should think the same, since we have learnt that he who travels alone makes his life forfeit. But this does not apply to three, all the more seeing that each one of us is worthy to be accompanied by the Shekinah.’ Said R. Jose: ‘But we have learnt that a man should not rely on a miracle, since even Samuel said: “How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me” (I Sam. XVI, 2), and he was more worthy than we are.’ He replied: ‘Even so, he was by himself and the danger was obvious, whereas we are three and there is no danger actually in sight. For if it is evil spirits you are afraid of, we have learnt that they do not show themselves to three or harm them, and if it is robbers, there are none here, because this mountain is far from any inhabited spot, and people never pass here. The only thing we have to be afraid of is wild beasts. Scripture speaks of “the angel who redeemed me from all evil”. This angel is the Shekinah, who continually accompanies a man and leaves him not so long as he keeps the precepts of the Law. Hence a man should be careful not to go on the road alone, that is to say, he should diligently keep the precepts of the Law in order that he may not be deserted by the Shekinah, and so be forced to go alone without the accompaniment of the Shekinah. Hence, before starting on a journey a man should first address his prayer to God in order that he may draw the Shekinah to himself, to be protected by it on the road and delivered from all harm. So Jacob, on setting out, said: “If God shall be with me”, i.e. if the Shekinah will accompany me, “and keep me in this way” (Gen.

XXVIII, 20), to deliver me from all harm. Now Jacob was alone

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at that time, but the Shekinah went with him; all the more so then will it accompany the Companions who discourse on the Torah.' Said R. Jose: 'What are we to do? If we remain here we shall be overtaken by night; if we commence to ascend, the mountain is very high, and there is danger from wild beasts.' Said R. Judah: 'I am surprised at you, R. Jose.' He replied: 'We have learnt that a man should not rely on a miracle, for God does not perform miracles at all times.' He answered: 'That applies only when a man is by himself. But we are three, and words of Torah pass between us and the Shekinah is with us; therefore we have no need to fear.'

As they went on, they perceived on the mountain a rock in which was a cave. Said R. Judah: 'Let us go up to yonder rock, as I see there a cave.' So they went up there. Said R. Jose: 'Perhaps there are wild beasts in this cave which will attack us.' Said R. Judah to R. Hizkiah: 'Why is R. Jose so afraid? He is not a sinner that he should fear, and we read that "the righteous is bold like a lion" (Prov. XXVIII, 1).' R. Jose said: 'It is because we are wilfully exposing ourselves to danger.' He replied: 'If that were so, you would be right, but there is no danger apparent here, and once we enter the cave no danger will follow us.' So they went into the cave. R. Judah then said: 'Let us divide the night into three watches, and let each one of us stand to his post in one of them, and let us all keep awake.'

R. Judah then commenced with the text: "Maskil to Ethan the Ezrahite" (Ps. LXXXIX, 1). He said: 'This psalm was uttered by our father Abraham when he devoted himself to the service of his Master and conferred on mankind the boon of teaching them to acknowledge God as ruler of the world; and he was called Ethan (lit. strong) because he clung strongly to God. "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever." Song comes from the side of the Left, not of Hesed (Mercy); so by this exordium the side of the Left was embraced in the Right. It was for this purpose (to combine Left with Right) that God tried Abraham, in order that he might be found to unite justice with mercy, and so be perfect. Hence he could say: "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever." He continued: "With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations." This refers to the faithfulness of God in making Abraham known in the world and causing his name to be in the mouth of all creatures. God made known to Abraham the true principle of faith, and he thereupon realized that he was the foundation and support of the universe. For when God created the universe, He saw that it could not endure unless He stretched forth His right hand to it. For this world was created under the aegis of justice, and it was not established save by the right hand. Hence Abraham continued: "I said, the world is built up on mercy (hesed)", the first step in the building up of the world having been the light of the first day. Then on the second day the Left came into play and with it was established the heaven, as it says: "Thou establishest the heavens, thy faithfulness is in them." (This may

also be explained to mean that the heavens were established by those mercies of the first day, and that the mystery of faith was established in them, the heavens being the bulwark of faith.) The text continues: "I have made a covenant with my chosen.", This covenant is the secret of faith. Or we may interpret the "chosen one" of

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the Zaddik from whom issue blessings to all the lower creation, all the holy Hayyoth being blessed from the stream which flows forth to the lower world. "I have sworn unto David my servant", to wit, that he will always be established in this Zaddik, the foundation of the world, save in the time of galuth, when the flow of blessing is cut off, and faith is defective, and all joy is banished. During this period, at nightfall, joy no longer enters before the King. Yet, though rejoicings do not enter, angels stand outside and chant hymns, and at midnight when the impulse from below arrives on high, God arouses all the hosts of the heaven for lamentation and strikes the firmament, causing upper and lower worlds to quake; nor is there any respite save when those below commence to study the Torah. Then God and all those with Him listen with joy to that voice, and relief is felt. For on the day on which the Sanctuary below was destroyed, God swore that He would not enter the celestial Jerusalem until Israel should enter the earthly Jerusalem. Now all those singers stand outside and chant hymns in the three watches of the night and intone praises, and all the hosts of the heavens sing at night and Israel by day, nor is the sanctification recited above until it is recited by Israel below, and only then do all the hosts of heaven sanctify the holy name together. Hence, Israel are holy and are sanctified by upper and lower angels, since the sanctification of the holy name is complete only when uttered above and below together.'

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened? (Job XXXVIII, 6). He said: 'When God created the world, He established it on seven pillars, but upon what those pillars rest no one may know, since it is a recondite and inscrutable mystery. The world did not come into being until God took a certain stone, which is called the "foundation stone", and cast it into the abyss so that it held fast there, and from it the world was planted. This is the central point of the universe, and on this point stands the holy of holies. This is the stone referred to in the verses, "Who laid the corner-stone thereof" (Ibid. 6), "the stone of testing, the precious corner-stone" (Is. XXVIII, 16), and "the stone that the builders despise became the head of the corner" (Ps. CXVIII, 22). This stone is compounded of fire, water, and air, and rests on the abyss. Sometimes water flows from it and fills the deep. This stone is set as a sign in the centre of the world. It is referred to in the words, "And Jacob took a stone and set it as a pillar" (Gen. XXXI, 45). Not that he took this stone, which was created from the beginning, but he established it above and below, by making there a "house of God". This stone has on it seven eyes, as it is written, "On one stone seven eyes" (Zech. III, 9), and it is called "foundation stone", for one thing because the world was planted from it, and for another because God set it as a source of blessing to the world. Now at

sunset, the Cherubim which stood in that place used to strike their wings together and spread them out, and when the sound of the beating of their wings was heard above, those angels who chanted hymns in the night began to sing, in order that the glory of God might ascend from below on high. The striking of the Cherubim's wings itself intoned the psalm, "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord... lift up your hands to the sanctuary, etc." (Ps. CXXXIII). This was the signal for the heavenly angels to commence. At the second watch

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the Cherubim again beat their wings, giving the signal to the angels of that watch. The psalm of the Cherubim this time was "They that trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, etc." (Ps. cxxv). At the third watch the Cherubim beat their wings to the words "Hallelukah, praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord" (Ps. CXIII), and then the angels of the third watch commenced to sing, and also all the stars and constellations of the heaven, as it is written: "When the morning stars sung together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job XXXVIII, 7), and also, "Praise him, all ye stars of light" (Ps. CXLVIII, 3), these being the radiant stars which are appointed to sing at dawn. After them Israel take up the chant below, and so the glory of God ascends both from below and from above, from Israel below in the day, and from the celestial angels above in the night, and so the name of God is fully praised on all sides. As for this stone that we have mentioned, all the angels above and Israel below take hold on it, and it ascends to be crowned in the midst of the patriarchs by day. At night the Holy One, blessed be He, comes to disport Himself with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Blessed are those who stand at their posts and study the Torah at night, because God and all the righteous in the Garden of Eden listen to the voice of those sons of men who study the Torah.'

That stone we have mentioned is a goodly stone, and it is hinted at in the verse "And thou shalt set in it a setting of stone, four rows of stone" (Ex. XXVIII, 17), because there is another stone of which it is written "And I shall remove the heart of stone, etc." (Ezek. XXXVI, 26). The two tablets of stone were also hewn from this stone; and this was also called "the stone of Israel" (Gen. XLIX, 24), as has been explained. R. Hizkiah quoted the verse: "And the stone shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve" (Ex. XXVIII, 21). He said: 'These are the precious supernal stones which are called "the stones of the place" (Gen. XXVIII, 11). They were "according to the names of the children of Israel" because just as there are twelve tribes below, so there are twelve tribes above, which are twelve precious stones; and therefore it is written: "Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, for a testimony unto Israel" (Ps. CXXII, 4), the reference being to the supernal Israel. Further, just as there are twelve hours in the day, so there are twelve hours in the night, in the day above and in the night below, each corresponding to each. These twelve hours of the night are divided into three sets, to each of which belong hierarchies of angels, which take their portion first. Hence, at midnight two ranks stand on one side and two on the other, and a celestial spirit goes

forth between them and then all the trees in the garden break forth into song and God enters the garden, as it says: "Then do all the trees of the wood sing for joy before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth" (I Chron. XVI, 33), because judgement enters among them and the Garden of Eden is filled therewith. Then the north wind springs up, bringing joy in its train, and it blows through the spice trees and wafts their perfume, and the righteous put on their crowns and feast themselves on the brightness of the "pellucid mirror"-happy are they to be vouchsafed that celestial light! The light of this mirror shines on all sides, and each one of the righteous takes his appropriate portion, each according to his works in this world; and some of them are abashed because of the superior light obtained by their neighbours.

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When night commences, numbers of officers of judgement arise and roam about the world, and the doors are closed, as we have affirmed. Thus at midnight the side of the north comes down and takes possession of the night until two-thirds of it have passed. Then the side of the south awakes until morning, and then both south and north take hold of it (the Shekinah). Then come Israel here below, and with their prayers and supplications raise it up until it ascends and hides itself among them, and receives blessings from the fountain-head.'

While they were sitting midnight arrived, and R. Judah said to R. Jose: 'Now the north wind awakes and the night is divided, and now is the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, longs for the voice of the righteous in this world, the voice of those who study the Torah. Now God is listening to us in this place; therefore let us not cease from discoursing on the Torah.' He then commenced: THE ANGEL WHO DELIVERED ME FROM ALL EVIL. This is the same as the one mentioned in the verse: "Behold I send an angel before thee, etc." (Ex. XXIII, 20), who, as we have laid down, is the deliverer of the world, the protector of mankind, and the one who procures blessings for all the world, he himself receiving them first. This angel is sometimes male, sometimes female. When he procures blessings for the world, he is male, resembling the male who provides blessings for the female. But when he comes to bring chastisement on the world he is called female, being, as it were, pregnant with the judgement. Similarly, in the words, "the flame of the sword which turned every way" (Gen III, 24), there is a reference to the angels who are God's messengers, and who turn themselves into different shapes, being sometimes female and sometimes male, sometimes messengers of judgement and sometimes of mercy. In the same way, this angel can take all colours like the rainbow, and treats the world correspondingly.

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R. Jose discoursed on the verse: The king's strength also loveth judgement, thou dost establish equity, etc. (Ps. XCIX, 4) 'The king', he said, 'is God, who loves judgement and takes fast hold of it, because by judgement the earth is established. By judgement, too,

the Community of Israel is confirmed and established, because from there it is sustained, and receives all its blessings. Hence all its desire and all its longing is for judgement. The words "Thou dost establish equity (mesharim, lit. straightnesses)" refer to the two cherubim below who render the world safe and habitable.'

R. Hizkiah discoursed on the verse: Praise ye the Lord (Hallelukah), praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. 'The repetition of the word "praise" in this verse', he said, 'seems somewhat pointless, but there is a reason for it. We have been taught that a eulogy should not be extravagant, and that to ascribe to another merits which he does not possess is really to reproach him; and, therefore, in recounting the praises of a deceased person, we should say only what he deserves and no more, otherwise through trying to praise we shall really blame him. Now the word Hallelukah (lit. praise ye Kah) contains the highest of all the praises of the Lord, mentioning, as it does, the place to which no eye can penetrate, being most recondite and inscrutable. This is Kah, the name which is supreme above all. Hence this psalm commences with "Hallelukah", a word in which praise and name are combined. Further, the subject of the word "praise" is not specified, but just as the name Kah is undisclosed, so those who praise it are undisclosed, and so it is fitting that all should be undisclosed in the realm of the supreme mystery. But the psalmist then continues: "Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord", because this is a place which is not undisclosed, a place which is called "Name". The first is completely undisclosed, the second half undisclosed, half disclosed, and therefore the psalmist specified those who praised that place, and said that they are "the servants of the Lord", who are meet to praise this place. The text continues "Blessed be (Yehi) the name of the Lord." The word yehi consists of the name Kah and the letter yod, and indicates the continuity between that supernal and inscrutable place which is Kah and the grade of the covenant which is the lower yod. For this reason the word yehi (let there be) in the account of the Creation, is used only of the upper productions, e.g. "let there be light", 'let there be a firmament", "let there be lights", but it is not used in connection with the

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lower productions. So by this word the Holy Name is blessed in all. The text continues: "From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof." The "rising" is the supernal place from which the sun derives light to shine over all, the place of the supernal and hidden fountainhead. The "setting" is the place to which faith is attached, from which blessings issue to all, and from which the world is sustained, as has been affirmed. The whole depends upon the impulse from below which is given by the service of the Lord when they bless the Holy Name, as we have said.'

By this time the morning had dawned, and so they came out of the cave, not having slept the whole night. They went on their way, and when they got beyond the hills they sat down and said their prayers. They then came to a village, where they stayed the whole day. At

night they slept till midnight, when they rose to study the Torah. R. Judah began: AND HE BLESSED THEM ON THAT DAY, SAYING: IN THEE SHALL ISRAEL BLESS, SAYING . 'The expression that day" has an esoteric meaning, and signifies the grade which is in charge of blessings above, the "day" from the supernal place which is called "That" (Hu). Hence we translate "by the day of That", indicating that there is no separation between "day" and "That". The two signify an upper grade and a lower grade in conjunction. Thus Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph with the union of upper and lower in order that the blessings might be unalterable. He then completed the conjunction by saying, "in thee shall Israel bless". The name Israel here refers to the patriarch Israel. This Israel receives blessings from above and then blesses all through this lower grade. Hence he said "God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh", putting Ephraim first because Ephraim were called Israel, as it is written: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel" (Ezek. XXXVII, 11), where the reference according to tradition is to the members of the tribe of Ephraim who were killed when they tried to break out of the captivity of Egypt before the time. For that reason, too, the tribe of Ephraim in the wilderness journeyed on the west. [tr.note: Which was regarded as the side of the Shekinah.] Note that Israel blessed the sons of Joseph before he blessed his own sons, which shows that a man loves his grandchildren more than his children.' R. Jose said: 'It is written: "The Lord hath remembered us, he will bless, he will bless the house of Israel." The first "he will bless" refers to the men, and the "house of Israel" to the women, because the women derive blessings only from the blessings of the men. Alternatively, this lesson may be derived from the verse: "He shall make atonement for himself and for his house" (Lev. XVI, 6)-for himself first and for his house afterwards. In this case we may interpret the words "He shall bless the house of Israel" to mean that God gives extra blessings to a man who is married, in order that his wife may be blessed through him,

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and so he receives two portions, one for himself and one for his wife.'

R. Hizkiah discoursed on the verse: "Thine eyes did see mine imperfect substance, and in thy book they were all written, etc." (Ps. CXXXIX, 16). 'This verse', he said, 'has been frequently expounded. All the souls which came into existence when the world was created stand before God before coming down in that same form in which they afterwards appear in the world, since that bodily appearance of man which he had in this world is also found above. When this soul is about to descend into the world, it stands before God in the form which it is to assume in the world, and God adjures it to keep the precepts of the law and not to transgress them. Hence it says: "Thine eyes saw mine imperfect form" before it appeared in the world, "and in thy book they were all written", that is to say, all the souls in their forms are recorded in the book. The text proceeds: "The days are fashioned and there is not one among them", that is, there is not one day of them in this world which can stand before its Master as it should. For when a man is virtuous in this world his



days are blessed above, from that place which is the measure of his days, mentioned in the verse, "Show me, O Lord, mine end, and what is the measure of my days" (Ps. XXXIX, 5). The "end" here is the "end of the right", which was united with David, and the "measure of my days" was the power in charge of his days.' R. Judah said: 'I have heard from R. Simeon that this verse refers to the days which were assigned to him out of the life of Adam, namely seventy years, since it has been affirmed that David had no life of his own, but Adam gave him seventy years of his life. David therefore prayed to know why it was that he had no life of his own, and continued, "Let me know how fleeting I am", that is to say, why, like the moon, I am without light of my own, unlike all those celestial lights which all have their own life. This is what David sought to know, but permission was not given to him. Observe that all celestial blessings were delivered to this grade to transmit to all creatures, and although it has no light of its own, all blessings and all joy and all goodness are contained in it and issue from it, and therefore is it called "the cup of blessing", or even simply "blessing", as it is written, "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich" (Prov. x, 22). Therefore it has a residue from all and is filled from all; it receives

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of the supernal blessings to transmit them further.' Said R. Isaac: 'We know this from the fact that Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph from the place from which all blessings had been delivered into his hand to transmit.' AND JACOB CALLED TO HIS SONS AND SAID: GATHER YOURSELVES TOGETHER, ETC. R. Abba discoursed on the verse: He turned to the prayer of the lonely one and did not despise their prayer (Ps. CII, 18). He said: 'The use of the word "turned" here, instead of "hearkened" or "listened", is significant. The prayer of an individual man only enters before the Holy King with great difficulty, because before it can be crowned in its place God examines it closely and weighs the merits and defects of that individual. He does not so with the prayer of a congregation; for congregational prayers are offered by many who are not virtuous, and yet they all come before God and He does not regard their sins. Therefore it says, "God turns to the prayer of the solitary one" and weighs and considers it, and examines in what spirit it is offered and who is the man that offers it, and what is his conduct. Hence a man should pray with the congregation because "God does not despise their prayer", even though they do not all pray with devotion. According to another explanation, the word "solitary" here refers to an individual who is united with numbers, to wit, Jacob, who was united with two sides, and who called his sons and prayed for them that they might be acceptable above and not be destroyed in the captivity. When Jacob called his sons, Abraham and Isaac were there and the Shekinah with them, rejoicing in Jacob, and in the prospect of joining the patriarchs

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and forming with them a chariot. When Jacob said to his sons, "I will tell you what will befall you in the latter end of days", a kind of sadness came over him and the Shekinah departed. His sons, however, raised their

voices and said, "Hear, O Israel, etc.", and Jacob answered, "Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom for ever and ever", and on this proclamation of the unity the Shekinah returned to its place. AND JACOB CALLED. The word 'called' signifies that he established them in their place above and below. Similarly, Moses "called Hosea son of Nun, Joshua" (Num. XIII, 16) to establish him in his proper place. There is a similar significance in the expressions "And he called his name Jacob" (Gen. xxv, 26) and "the God of Israel called him El" (Gen. XXXIII, 20). So, too, "I called from my sorrow unto the Lord" (Jonah, III, 7), signifying that one who praises his Master and addresses supplications to Him establishes his Master more firmly, by showing that all depends upon Him and not upon any other power. AND HE SAID. It has been laid down that "saying" means "thinking", as in the expression "And thou shalt say in thy heart" (Deut. VII, 17). ASSEMBLE YOURSELVES; that is, in complete harmony. AND I SHALL TELL YOU. The word "tell" (agidah) contains an allusion to the esoteric wisdom. He sought to reveal to them their final destiny. It may be asked, seeing that he did not reveal what he sought to reveal, why are his words, which were afterwards belied, recorded in the Scripture? The truth is that all that was needful to be revealed is completely stated, and there is a hidden meaning within, and so nothing in the Scripture is belied. In fact, everything is included in the Scripture, and there is no word or letter short in it. Jacob said all that was needful for him to say, but not all openly, and not a letter was short of what was required. R. Judah and R. Jose were one day sitting at the gate of Lydda. Said the latter: 'We are told that Jacob blessed his sons, but what are the blessings?' R. Judah answered: 'He did indeed bless them, as, for instance, "Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise", "Dan shall judge his people", "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat", and so forth; but what he sought to reveal to them he did not reveal, namely, the end. We have laid down that there is an end to the right and an end to the left, and he sought to reveal to them the end (of the left) in order that they might keep themselves

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pure from uncleanness. What he revealed to them referred only to the time when they were in the Holy Land; later things were not stated openly, but are only hinted at in this section and in these blessings.' REUBEN, THOU ART MY FIRSTBORN, MY MIGHT AND THE BEGINNING OF MY STRENGTH. Why did Jacob begin with Reuben and not rather with Judah, who was the leader of the camps and also king? Further we see that he did not bless him, nay, that he removed blessings from him till Moses came and prayed for him, as it is written: "Let Reuben live and not die" (Deut. XXXIII, 6). The fact is, however, that he did bless him, but kept the blessing for its proper place. He was like a man who had a son, and when he was about to die was visited by the king, whereupon he said: "Let all my money remain in the king's hands on behalf of my son, and when the king sees that my son is worthy he will give it to him." So Jacob said: "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, the beloved of my soul; but thy blessings shall remain in the hand of the Holy King until He shall see that thou art worthy of them, because "thou didst go after the sight of thine eyes, etc." (according to

Chaldaic paraphrase of this passage).

R. Eleazar here discoursed on the verse: And he said to me: Prophecy unto the wind, etc. (Ezek. XXXVII, 9). 'There is a difficulty here,' he said, 'because the text continues: "Prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind", which seems a repetition. The truth is, however, that there is here an esoteric lesson. There are two adjurations here. One is to give the impulse from below, since if there is no impulse from below there is no stirring above. Hence the words "Prophecy unto the wind" indicate the impulse from below, and the words "Prophecy, son of man, and say" to the impulse from above; for even after the impulse is given from below, that which is above receives from that which is higher still, wherefore the verse continues "Thus saith the Lord." The text then goes on: "Come from the four winds, O breath." The four winds are south, east, north, and west, and the breath comes from the west through its conjunction with the others, and from this source issue spirits and souls to take shape in human form. The next word, "breathe", indicates taking from one side and giving to another, in the same way as the sea takes and gives, and therefore "is not full" (Eccl. I, 7).'

R. Eleazar put the following question to R. Simeon. 'Since it is known to God that men will die, why does He send souls down into the world?' He answered: 'This question has been discussed many times by the teachers, and they have answered it thus. God sends souls down to this world to declare His glory and takes them back afterwards. This mystery can be explained from the verse: "Drink water from thy cistern and flowing streams from the midst of thy well" (Prov. v, 15). As we have laid down, the term "cistern" designates the place from which the waters do not naturally flow. But they do flow when the soul is perfected in this world and ascends to the place to which it is attached, for then it is complete on all sides, above and below. When the soul ascends, the desire of the female is stirred towards the male, and then water flows from below upwards, and the cistern becomes a well of flowing waters, and then there is union-and foundation and desire and friendship and harmony, since through the soul of the righteous that place has been completed, and the supernal love and affection has been stirred to form a union.'

Observe that Reuben and all the rest of the twelve tribes were linked with the Shekinah, and when Jacob saw the Shekinah by him, he called to his twelve sons to join it. From the beginning of the world there was never so perfect a couch as that of Jacob when he was about

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to depart from the world. Abraham was on his right, Isaac on his left, and he was lying between them with the Shekinah in front of him. When Jacob saw this, he called his sons and placed them round the Shekinah and arranged them in perfect order, so that the gathering was complete and many supernal chariots encompassed them. They then exclaimed: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory, etc." (I Chron. XXIX, 11), whereupon the sun joined the

moon and the east drew near to the west, and the moon was illumined and attained fullness, and so, as tradition tells us, "Jacob our father did not die." When Jacob saw such perfection as had never been vouchsafed to any other man, he rejoiced and praised God and blessed each of his sons with the appropriate blessing.

R. Jose and R. Jesse were once walking together, when the latter said: 'We have learnt that all the sons of Jacob were arranged in proper order and were blessed each one with the appropriate blessing. What, then, are we to make of the verse: "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat"?' He answered: 'I do not know, because I have not learnt this from the Holy Lamp. But let us both go to the Holy Lamp.' So they went, and when they came to R. Simeon they put their question to him. He said to them: 'Assuredly there is an esoteric meaning here. It is written: "Asher sat still at the haven of the sea, and abode by his creeks" (Judg. v, 17). He who dwells by the seashore has access to all luxuries, and Asher here signifies the supernal gate of Zedek (righteousness) when it receives blessings to transmit them to the world. This gate is always commissioned to send blessings to the world, and is called Asher, and it is one of the pillars upon which the world stands, and it repairs that place which is called "bread of affliction". This, then, is the meaning of the words "Out of Asher his bread is fat", that is to say, that which was bread of poverty becomes food of luxury, and hence the verse continues, "and he shall yield royal dainties": the giver here is the Community of Israel, by whom the king is fed with all luxuries, all blessings, all joy, and all goodness.' They said: 'If we had been born only to hear this, it would have been worth while.'

R. Hiya said: 'Reuben was entitled to all the rights of a firstborn, but they were all taken from him and the kingship was given to Judah, the birthright to Joseph, and the priesthood to Levi. Hence it is written: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" (tothar, lit. be left over); that is, thou shalt not retain them. In calling him "my might and the beginning of my strength", Jacob blessed him and entrusted him to God. He was like a king's friend who desired that the king should treat his son well, so one day he went out with his son and said to the king: "This is my son, the beloved of my soul"; whereupon the king understood that he was asking him to treat his son well. So Jacob said of Reuben, "thou art my firstborn, etc.", thus commending him to the King. UNSTABLE AS WATER, THOU SHALT NOT HAVE THE EXCELLENCY. Here he indicated his subsequent fate, in not being left in the land, but cast outside. [tr.note: Because the territory of Reuben was across the Jordan.] In return, there was an angel appointed over his border from the side of the supernal Tabernacle, which is in charge of Michael (according to others, Gabriel), and Reuben was next to this, although the kingship belonged to Judah. R. Simeon said: 'The sons of Reuben are destined to wage two wars. It is written here "my strength", alluding to the captivity of Egypt, and "the beginning of my strength", alluding to their entry into the land of Canaan at the head of their brethren (Num. XXXII). The words "the excellency of dignity" (lit. removing) refer to the captivity of Assyria, which befell the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben first of all; and they have suffered many evils without

repenting up to now. The words “the excellency of power” refer to the time when the Messiah will appear, and they will go forth and make war and conquer all peoples, and mankind will tremble before them;

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and they will endeavour to seize the kingship, but will not retain it, not in any quarter of the world, the reason being, as the text says, “because thou wentest up to thy father's bed”, this being a reference to Jerusalem. The sons of Reuben have been scattered in captivity to all four quarters of the world, having been taken captive four times, one referred to in the words “my might”, the second in the words “the beginning of my strength”, the third in the words “excellency of dignity”, and the fourth in the words “excellency of strength”. Correspondingly, they are destined to make war in the four quarters of the world and to carry all before them, and to conquer many peoples and rule over them. Here was revealed his blessing, and what happened at that time and what was to happen when Israel entered the land, and what will happen at the time of the Messiah, as far as concerns Reuben. SIMEON AND LEVI ARE BRETHREN . R. Isaac said: He joined them to the left side of the Shekinah, since he saw deeds of vengeance which the world could not endure.’ R. Jose said: ‘Where is their blessing?’ R. Isaac answered: ‘Simeon was not meet for a blessing, since Jacob saw that he had wrought much evil; nor was Levi, because he came from the side of stern justice, and blessing did not attach to him. Even Moses did not bless him directly, but left it to the Almighty, as it is written: “Bless, Lord, his substance and accept the work of his hands” (Deut. XXXIII, 11). It is written: “Yonder is the sea, great and wide, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts” (Ps. CIV, 25). The “sea” refers to the Shekinah, which stood over Jacob when he was about to depart from the world. It is called “great and wide” because all the world was compressed into it. There were “creeping things innumerable”, because numbers of celestial holy angels are found there; while the “small and great beasts” refer to the twelve tribes, the sons of Jacob, of whom one was called a hind, one a wolf, one a lion, and one a lamb.’ R. Isaac said: ‘First a lion, then a lamb, then a wolf, then a kid, and so forth, so that there should be great and small beasts.’ R. Judah said: ‘Simeon was an ox and came before Judah, who was a lion, and the Companions have laid down that they faced one another, one on the right and one on the left. It was as if a man had a vicious ox and said: Let us put the figure of a lion in his stall so that he shall see it and be afraid of it. Simeon was not meet for blessing, but Moses joined him to Judah, saying: “Hear, O Lord, the voice of Judah”; the word “hear” alluding to Simeon, at whose birth his mother said “For the Lord hath heard that I am hated.” ‘ Said R. Judah: ‘The blessing of Simeon and Levi was left by their father to Moses. Let us also leave this question to the Holy Lamp.’ So they went and asked R. Simeon. He said: ‘How glad I am you have asked me.’ He then clapped his hands and wept, saying: ‘Who shall open thine eyes, thou holy mirror of faith! Thou hast excelled in thy lifetime all the sons of men, thou hast excelled them in thy death, when thy likeness is effaced. The keys of thy Master have ever been delivered into thy hands. Observe now.

Jacob had four wives and begat sons from all of them.

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When he was about to die the Shekinah stood over him. He sought to bless these two, but he was not able, being afraid of the Shekinah. He said: “What shall I do, seeing that both of them are from the side of stern judgement? And if I try to force the Shekinah, I shall not be able, for I have had four wives, which are a complete portion. I will leave them to the master of the house and he will do as he pleases.” He also said: “I have taken my share of wives and children in this world and have had my fill; how, then, shall I press the matron more? I will therefore leave the matter to the master of the matron and he will do what he pleases without fear.” Hence it is written: “Now this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed” (Deut. XXXIII, 1). The term “man” here designates Moses as the master of the house and the master of the matron. Hence Moses blessed whom he pleased without fear, as we have affirmed.’ O MY SOUL, COME NOT THOU INTO THEIR COUNCIL . R. Abba discoursed on the verse: The secret of the Lord is for them that fear him. ‘ “The secret of the Lord” ‘, he said, ‘is the recondite doctrine of the Torah which God only gives to those who fear sin, and it is the sign of the holy covenant. Simeon and Levi insisted that the men of Shechem should circumcise themselves and accept this secret, and the Scripture tells us that it was “with guile”. Later, Zimri, the son of Salu, who was of the tribe of Simeon, nullified this secret. Hence Jacob said: “Let not my soul enter into their secret” -that soul which entered into the supernal covenant above and was called ‘ the bundle of life’. UNTO THEIR ASSEMBLY , MY GLORY BE NOT THOU UNITED . This has been explained to refer to the assembly of Korah (Num. XVI, 1). “My honour” here refers to the honour of the people of Israel in general, and therefore their father did not bless them, but left them to Moses. I WILL DIVIDE THEM IN JACOB . R. Hiya said: ‘From this verse we learn that these two tribes were never again united, and so it was meet, and there is no generation in which their punishment does not descend upon the world, and great is the number of beggars among them.’ JUDAH, THEE SHALL THY BRETHEN PRAISE, THY HAND SHALL BE ON THE NECK OF THY ENEMIES R. Jose discoursed here on the verse: He made the moon for seasons (Ps. CIV, 19). ‘God’, he said, ‘made the moon for us to sanctify by it new moons and new years. Now the moon never shines except from the reflection of the sun, and when the sun is aloft the moon does not appear, but only when the sun is gathered in does the moon rule the heavens, and the moon is of no account save when the sun is gathered in. God made both of them to give light and also “for signs”, to wit, Sabbaths, “and for seasons”, to wit, festivals, “and for days”, to wit, new moons, “and for years”, to wit, New Year days, so that the Gentiles should reckon by the sun and Israel by the moon. This accords with R. Eleazar's exposition of the verse: “Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy” (Is. IX, 2), where he refers “nation” to Israel and “it” to the moon, which gained accession of light for the sake of Israel. Which are superior, Israel or the Gentiles? Assuredly, the moon

is highest, and the sun of the Gentiles is under this moon, and this sun derives light from this moon. See, then, the difference between Israel and the nations. Israel cling to the moon and are linked with the supernal sun, and are attached to the place which gives light to the supernal sun, as it is written: "But ye who cleave to the Lord, are alive every one of you this day" (Deut. IV, 4.) JUDAH, THEE SHALL THY BRETHREN PRAISE . R. Simeon said: 'The kingship was assigned to Judah; and hence Leah, as we have explained, said at the time of his birth: "This time I shall praise the Lord", because he was the fourth, the fourth leg of the throne. The letters yod, he', vau of his name are the impress of the supernal name, and they were completed by a dalet, which represents the second he, of the sacred name, so that this name is found completely in Judah's name. Hence "Thy brethren shall praise thee", because the kingship is meet to remain with thee. Verily, "Judah still walketh with God, and is faithful with the holy ones" (Hosea, XI, 12). These holy ones are the supernal angels, who all acknowledge him and call him faithful. Therefore he is first in everything, and king over all.' R. Simeon discoursed on the verse: "The all-honoured daughter of the king is within" (Ps. XLV, 14). 'The "all-honoured one" is the Community of Israel, who is called the daughter of the king, the supreme King, who is within, because there is another king who is not so far within. The "clothing" of this honoured daughter of the king is "inwrought with gold", because she is clothed and encompassed with supernal might (Geburah), which also is called "king". On this account the earth is established, namely, when she takes hold of judgement, and this we call "the kingdom of heaven". Judah took hold of this and inherited the kingdom of the earth.'

R. Judah and R. Isaac were once travelling together. Said R. Isaac: 'Let us discourse on the Torah as we go along.' He began with the text: And he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, etc. 'The word vayegaresh (and he drove out)', he said, 'may, the Companions have explained, be translated "and he divorced". The accusative particle eth here has an esoteric meaning. Adam was punished for his sin, and brought death upon himself and all the world, and caused that tree in regard to which he sinned to be driven out along with him and his descendants for ever. It says further that God "placed the cherubim on the east of the garden of Eden"; these were the lower cherubim, for as there are cherubim above, so there are cherubim below, and he spread this tree over them. The "flame of a sword" refers to the flames of fire which issue from that flashing sword. It is said to "turn every way" because it sucks from two sides, and turns from one side to another. Another explanation is that the flames turn about, being sometimes men and sometimes women.' Said R. Judah: 'This is certainly correct, that Adam caused that tree through which he sinned to be driven out; and so, also, do other men, as it is written: "Through your transgressions your mother is sent away" (Is. L, 1). Still you are right, that the word eth refers to the perfection of man, and from that day the moon was impaired until Noah came and entered the ark. Then came sinners, and it was impaired again until Abraham came, and it

was established perfectly through Jacob and his sons, and Judah came and took hold on it, and seized the kingship and took possession of it as an everlasting inheritance for himself and his sons after him.' JUDAH, THEE SHALL THY BRETHREN PRAISE . When Israel were at the Red Sea, they all praised him and entered after him into the sea. THY HAND SHALL BE ON THE NECK OF THY ENEMIES , as it says, "Judah shall go up first" (Judg. I, 2). THE SONS OF THY FATHER SHALL BOW DOWN TO THEE : this includes all the other tribes, even though from other mothers. And even when Israel was split into two kingdoms, when the people went up to Jerusalem they used to bow down to the king there, because the kingship in Jerusalem

was derived from the holy kingdom. SHALL BOW DOWN BEFORE THEE . They only, but not other peoples, who will only bow down at the time of the Messiah. But here the expression only indicates Israel, all of whom would bow down to the Exilarch in Babylon, but not other peoples. JUDAH IS A LION'S WHELP : first he will be a whelp, and then a lion, corresponding to the transition from "lad" [tr.note: i.e. Metatron.] to "man", as it is written: "The Lord is a man of war" (Ex. xv, 3). FROM THE PREY, MY SON, THOU ART GONE UP The word "prey" includes the angel of death, who preys upon mankind. From that prey the Shekinah shook itself free. It "stooped down" in the captivity of Babylon, it "couched" in the captivity of Edom, "as a lion" which is strong and as a "lioness" which is stronger. So Israel are strong, because though the Gentiles entice and oppress them, they adhere to their laws and their customs like a lion and a lioness. So, too, the Shekinah, which, although it is fallen, remains strong like a lion and a lioness. For just as these crouch only to spring upon their prey, which they smell from afar, so the Shekinah only crouches to take vengeance on idolaters and to spring upon them. WHO SHALL ROUSE HIM UP . He will not rise to take any petty vengeance. The word "who" (Mi) here indicates the supernal world, which has dominion over all; it is similarly used in the verse "From the womb of whom (Mi) came the ice" (Job XXXVIII, 29), as we have explained. THE SCEPTRE SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH, ETC . The word Shiloh, here, is spelt with both a yod and a he, to allude to the holy supernal name, Kah, by which the Shekinah shall rise; and this is also the allusion of Mi, as we have said.

R. Hiya discoursed on the verse: The Lord shall keep thee from all evil, he shall keep thy soul. 'The words "He shall keep thee",' he said, 'refer to this world, and "he shall keep thy soul" to the next world. By "keeping in this world" is meant that a man is protected from many evil accusers who seek to bring charges against him and to cling fast to him. By preservation in the next world is meant, as we have explained, that when a man departs from this world, if he is virtuous his soul ascends and is crowned in its place, and if not, numbers of demons are at hand to drag him to Gehinnom and to deliver him into the hands of Duma, who has been made chief of demons, and who has twelve thousand myriads of attendants all charged to punish the souls of sinners. There are in Gehinnom seven circuits and seven gates, each with several gate-

keepers under their own chief. The souls of sinners are delivered by Duma to those gate-keepers, who then close the gates of flaming fire. There are gates behind gates, the outer ones remaining open while the inner ones are closed. On Sabbath, however, they are all open, and the sinners go forth, as far as the outer gates, where they meet other souls which tarry there. When Sabbath goes out, a herald proclaims at each gate: "Let the wicked return to Sheol." Now God protects the souls of the righteous from being delivered into the hands of Duma, and that is the meaning of the words "he shall keep thy soul."

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**BINDING HIS FOAL UNTO THE VINE** . The vine is the Community of Israel, so called also in the verse: "Thou didst remove a vine from Egypt" (Ps. LXXX, 9). By "his foal" is meant the Messiah, who is destined to rule over all the hosts of the peoples, that is to say, the heavenly hosts who have charge of the Gentiles, and from whom they derive their strength. The Messiah will prevail over them, because this vine dominates all those lower crowns through which the Gentiles have dominion. This will be the victory above. Israel, who are "a choice vine", will conquer and destroy other hosts below; and the Messiah will prevail over all. Hence it is written of him that he will be "poor and riding on an ass and on a young ass's colt" (Zech. IX, 9). "Colt" and "ass" are two crowns by virtue of which the Gentiles have dominion, and they are from the left side, the side of uncleanness. It is strange that the Messiah should be called "poor". R. Simeon explained that it is because he has nothing of his own, and he is compared to the holy moon above, which has no light save from the sun. This Messiah will have dominion and will be established in his place. Below he is "poor", because he is of the side of the moon, and above he is poor, being a "mirror which does not radiate", "the bread of poverty". Yet withal he "rides upon an ass and upon a colt", to overthrow the strength of the Gentiles; and God will keep him firm. **HE HATH WASHED HIS GARMENT IN WINE** . With this may be compared the verse: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" (Is. LXIII, 1); and also: "I have trodden the winepress alone, etc." (Ibid. 3). "Wine" here alludes to the side of Geburah, of stern justice which will be visited on the idolatrous nations. **AND HIS VESTURE IN THE BLOOD OF GRAPE** . This is the lower-world tree, the judgement court which is called "grapes", in which the "wine" is kept. Thus the Messiah will be clothed in both to crush beneath him all the idolatrous peoples and kings.

R. Jose discoursed on the verse: "And on the vine were three branches, and it was as though it budded and its blossoms shot forth." 'How little', he said, 'do men care for the glory of their Master or pay heed to the words of the Torah! At first prophecy was vouchsafed to men, and through it they knew the glory of God. When prophecy ceased, they had a bath-kol, [tr.note: t Lit. "daughter of a voice". According to the Rabbis, on certain occasions during the period of the Second Temple, a voice issued from heaven to give the Jewish people guidance or warning; and this was called by them bath-kol.] but now they have nothing but dreams. Dream is a lower grade, being one-sixtieth of

prophecy, and it is vouchsafed to everyone, since it comes from the left side. It comes down in various grades, and is shown even to sinners and even to Gentiles. Sometimes the dream is carried by evil demons who make mock of men and show them false things; and sometimes it is sent to sinners and tells them things of importance. Now this sinner, Pharaoh's butler, saw a true dream. The vine represented the Community of Israel, which was called by the psalmist "this vine" (Ps. LXXX, 15). The three branches have the same reference as the three flocks of sheep which Jacob saw by the well. (Gen XXIX, 2). Its blossoming typifies the time of Solomon, when the moon was illumined. The buds represent the lower Jerusalem, or, according to another explanation, the grade which is over it and gives sustenance to it.

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The clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes, in which to keep the precious wine. All this was seen by that sinner. Further, he saw the cup of Pharaoh in his hands; this is the cup of confusion which sucks in from the court of judgement and which issued from the grapes that were given to Pharaoh; and he drank it as it was, on account of Israel. When Joseph heard this he rejoiced, remarking the truth which the dream contained, and therefore he gave it a good interpretation. Thus the words "binding his foal unto the vine" indicate that all the forces of the Gentiles are to be subdued beneath that vine, as we have said, their power being bound up and subdued.' R. Simeon said: 'There are two kinds of vine. There is the holy celestial vine, and there is the vine which is called "the vine of Sodom, the strange vine"; and therefore Israel is called "this vine". And when Israel sinned and abandoned "this vine", then it was said of them: "For from the vine of Sodom is their vine" (Deut. XXXIII, 32).'

As R. Judah and R. Isaac were once travelling together, the former said: 'Let us turn into this field, as it is more level.' They did so, and as they went along R. Judah said: 'It is written: "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet." This verse has been expounded by our colleague, R. Hizkiah, who said that sinners are punished in Gehinnom twelve months, half with fire and half with snow. When they go into the fire, they say: "This is really Gehinnom." When they go into the snow, they say: "This is the real winter of the Almighty." They begin by exclaiming "Alas", and then they exclaim "Woe". The supreme punishment is with snow. Not so Israel, however, of whom it is written: "She is not afraid of the snow for her household", because "all her household are clothed with scarlet". The word shanim (scarlet) here may be read shnaim (two), referring to pairs of precepts such as circumcision and uncovering, fringes and phylacteries, mezuzahs and Hanukah lights, etc. The word "scarlet" may also be taken to indicate the robe of judgement, which is assumed for the punishment of idolaters. For one day God will put on a red robe and take a red sword to take vengeance on the ruddy one. [tr.note: Esau.] This we learn from the verse: "Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments, etc." ' R. Isaac said: 'We may also take the word shanim to mean "years", and to refer to the whole of past time, since the Community of Israel is the

consummation of the ages and draws sustenance from all sides.'

As they were going along, they met a boy leading an ass on which an old man was riding. Said the old man to the boy: 'My son, repeat me a passage of Scripture.' He answered: 'I have more than one passage. But come down or let me ride in front of you, and I will repeat some to you.' He said: 'I am old and you are young, and I do not want to put myself on a level with you.' Said the boy: 'If so, why is it you ask me to recite my verses?' He said: 'To make the journey more agreeable.' Said the boy: 'This old man can go and hang himself. Ignoramus as he is, he must needs ride and will not descend to my level, forsooth!' So he left the old man and went his way. When R. Judah and R. Isaac came up, he joined them. They asked who he was, and he told them what had happened. Said R. Judah to him: 'You did quite rightly. Come with us and we will sit down over there and you will tell us something.' He said to them: 'I am very weary,

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because I have not eaten to-day.' So they took out some food and gave him, and a miracle happened and they found a small stream of water under a tree from which he drank, and they also drank and sat down. The boy then quoted the text: "To David. Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness" (Ps. XXXVII, 1). He said: 'This is neither a song nor a prayer, but the superscription "To David" shows that it was spoken by the Holy Spirit, which thus admonished David: "Do not challenge the wicked, because thou knowest not if thou hast strength to prevail against him; perhaps he is a tree which has never been uprooted[tr.note: i.e. perhaps his soul is the first time on earth and thine the second time.] and thou wilt be repulsed by him. Also, do not look at the works of those who do unrighteousness, so that thou shouldst not need to be indignant with them; for whoever sees their works and is not zealous for God transgresses three negative precepts, namely: "Thou shalt have no strange gods before me"; "Thou shalt not make to thee any graven image"; and "Thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them." Therefore a man should keep away from them. That is why I have left the old man and taken a different path. Now that I have found you I will expound the Scripture in your presence.'

He then discoursed on the text: And he called unto Moses, etc. (Lev. I, 1). He said: 'The aleph of the word vayikra (and he called) is written small in the scroll, to show that this calling was not a perfect one, because it was only in the Tabernacle and in a strange land, perfection being only found in the Holy Land. Further, in the Tabernacle there was only the Shekinah, but in the land there was the complete union of Male and Female. When a king sits on his throne wearing the royal crown, he is called Great King, but when he comes down from his throne and visits his servant, he is called Little King. So God, as long as He is on high over all, is called Supreme King, but when He brings His abode below, He is simply King, not Supreme as before. The word "called", as we have learnt, means that he summoned him to his sanctuary. The "tent of

meeting" (mo'ed=also appointed time) means the tent on which depends the reckoning of seasons, festivals, and sabbaths, this being none other than the moon. The word "saying" (lemor, lit. to say) indicates the disclosing of what hitherto was concealed; and so in all places where it occurs (e.g. "And God spoke unto Moses, saying"), it means that permission is given to disclose. It is written just before: "And they brought the tabernacle to Moses" (Ex. XXXIX, 33). The reason why the Israelites brought the Tabernacle to Moses when they had finished it was because God had shown him the whole plan of it on Mount Sinai; so now they brought it to him in order that he might see whether it corresponded to the plan which he had seen. It was as if a king had given orders for a palace to be built for his queen, and had charged the builders to make one room here and one there, here a bedchamber and there a sitting-room, and so when the builders finished they showed it all to the king. So the Israelites brought the Tabernacle to Moses, who was the "master of the house", the "man of God". When the sanctuary was finished, the queen invited the king to it, and invited also her husband, that is to say, Moses the master of the house. Hence Moses was able to "take the tent and pitch it outside" (Ex. XXXIII, 7),

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a thing which no one else could possibly have done. The text continues: "And the Lord spoke to him", "the Lord" being another still higher grade.'

He further discoursed as follows. 'The text continues: When any man of you shall offer (Lev. I, 2). The word "man" (Adam) here indicates the union of the sun and the moon. "When he shall offer from you": this is a hint that he who desires to make his service of sacrifice truly acceptable should not be unmarried. "An offering to the Lord": this means that he should offer the whole for the purpose of uniting upper and lower. "From the cattle": to show man and beast as one. "From the oxen and from the sheep": these are the chariots which are clean. "Ye shall offer your offering": the "offering to the Lord" mentioned above was man, but "your offering" is from the cattle, from the herds and the flocks, to display the union of upper with lower and of lower with upper. If a king is sitting on a throne on a very high dais, then one who brings a present to the king has to mount from step to step until he reaches the top, the place where the king is sitting above all, and then it is known that that present is meant for the king. But when the present comes down from the top, then all know that the king is sending it from above to his friend who is below. So at first a man rises step by step from below upwards; this is "the offering of the Lord". Then he comes down step by step: and this is "your offering".' R. Isaac and R. Judah went up to him and kissed his forehead. They said: 'Blessed be God who has favoured us with this, blessed is God that these words have not been wasted on that old man.'

They then rose and went on. As they proceeded, they saw a vine in a garden. The boy then quoted the verse: "Binding his foal to the vine and his ass's colt to the choice vine." He said: 'The word oseri (binding) is written here with a superfluous yod, and the word 'iro (his colt) with he' instead of vau. Thus the Holy Name

Kah is hinted here. Similarly with the words bni (colt) and sorekah (choice vine). All this is to show that just as there is a Holy Name to subdue the "foal", so there is a Holy Name to subdue another power, which is called "ass"; for if the Holy Name were not hinted here, they would devastate the world. The "vine", as we have said, is the Community of Israel. It is called vine because just as the vine will receive no graft from another tree, so the Community of Israel accepts no master but God, and therefore all other powers are subdued before her, and cannot obtain dominion over her. "He hath washed his garments in wine", even from the time of the Creation the reference being to the coming of the Messiah on earth. "Wine" indicates the left side, and "the blood of grapes" the left side below. The Messiah is destined

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to rule above over all the forces of the idolatrous nations and to break their power above and below. We may also explain that as wine brings joyfulness and yet typifies judgement, so the Messiah will bring gladness to Israel, but judgement to the Gentiles. The "spirit of God which hovered over the face of the waters" (Gen. I, 2) is the spirit of the Messiah, and from the time of the Creation he "washed his garments in celestial wine". "His eyes shall be red with wine": this is the intoxicating celestial wine from which the masters of the Torah drink. "And his teeth white with milk", because the Torah is both wine and milk, the Oral and the Written Law. It is written of wine that it "rejoiceth the heart of man" (Ps. CIV, 15). Wine at first brings gladness, being the place from which all gladness issues, but afterwards it brings punishment, because its end is the place where is gathered all punishment. Hence the verse continues: "And oil to make the face shine", to wit, from the place from which all gladness issues. It then says: "And bread that strengtheneth man's heart", bread being the support of mankind. It is not, however, the only support, because there is no night without day, and they must not be separated. If so, it may be asked, why did David say that "bread supports the heart of man"? The answer is that this is why he added the word "and" before "bread", to show that the others are included. Observe that grace after meals should not be said over an empty table, but there should be bread on it and a cup of wine, and the wine should be taken in the right hand, in order to join the Left hand to the Right, and in order that the bread should be blessed by them and linked with them, so that the whole should be linked together to bless the Holy Name fittingly. For the bread being joined with the wine, and the wine with the right hand, blessings rest on the world and the table is duly perfected.' Said R. Isaac: 'Had we come on this journey only to hear these words, it would have been worth our while.' R. Judah said: 'This lad has no right to know so much, and I am afraid he will not live long.' 'Why?' said R. Isaac. 'Because', he answered, 'he is able to see into a place which man has no right to look upon, and I am afraid that before he reaches maturity he will actually look and be punished for it.' The lad heard them and said: 'I have no fear of punishment, because when my father died he blessed me and prayed for me, and I know that the merit of my father will protect me.' They said to him: 'Who, then, is your father?' 'R. Judah, the son of Rab

Hamnuna the Elder,' he replied. They then took him up and carried him on their shoulders three miles, applying to him the verse: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judg. xv, 14). The boy said to them: 'Since you have quoted the verse, expound it.' Said they to him: 'Since God has led us into the path of life, do you tell us.' He then began: 'We find a certain mystical allusion in this verse. The eater is the Zaddik, as it is written: "The Zaddik eats his fill" (Prov. XII, 25). By "his fill" is meant that he gives sufficiency to the place which is called the Soul of David. "From the eater comes forth food", for but for that Zaddik food would never come forth and the world could not exist. "Out of the strong came forth sweetness": this is Isaac, who blessed Jacob with the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth. We may also explain that were it not for the rigour of justice there would come forth no honey, to wit, the Oral Law,

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which comes forth from the Written Law, which is called "strong", as it is written: "The Lord shall give strength to his people" (Ps. XXIX, 11).' They went on together for three days till they reached the court where his mother lived. When she saw them she made preparations for them and they stayed with her two days. They then said farewell to him, and departed, and came and related everything to R. Simeon. He said: 'Truly, he has inherited the Torah, and if not for the merit of his fathers he would be punished from above. But for those who follow the Torah God has made it an inheritance to them and their descendants forever, as it is written: "But as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit which is upon thee, etc." (Is. LIX, 21). ZEBULON SHALL DWELL AT THE HAVEN OF THE SEA, ETC . R. Abba discoursed on the verse: Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty One, thy glory and thy majesty. He said: 'Is this glory and majesty, to gird on weapons and to practise the use of them? To study the Torah and to fight battles in the Torah and to arm oneself with it-this is praiseworthy, this is glory and majesty. The truth of the matter, however, is this. God has given men the sign of a holy covenant, and imprinted it upon them for them to preserve and not impair in any way. He who impairs it is confronted with the sword which avenges the insult to the covenant. Now he who desires to preserve this place should brace himself up to meet the evil prompter, and when the latter assails him should set before his eyes this sword, which is girded on the thigh to punish those who impair this place. Hence it says: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty One." Such a one is called "mighty", and hence it is his "glory and majesty". Another explanation is that before setting out on a journey a man should prepare himself with prayer and arm himself with righteousness, which is the supernal sword, as it is written: "Righteousness shall go before him, and (then) he shall set his steps on the way" (Ps. LXXXV, 14). Now Zebulon used always to go out on the roads and highways and make war, and used first to arm himself with this celestial sword of prayer and supplication, and so he fought with peoples and overcame them. You may say that this was the function of Judah, so why is it assigned here to Zebulon?

Observe this. The twelve tribes are the adornment

of the Matron. When Jacob was about to depart from the world, and saw that he was perfected on every side, with Abraham at his right, Isaac at his left, himself in the centre, and the Shekinah in front of him, he called his sons round him in order that both the lower and the upper might be fitly adorned.... [Note: The last 12 lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

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[Note: The beginning and ending passages of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.] The twelve tribes correspond to the twelve oxen which were under the sea of bronze made by Solomon (I Kings VII, 23 sqq.), three for each of the cardinal points. Three of them represented the right Arm, three the left Arm, three the right Thigh, and three the left Thigh. There were three tribes for each, because in each of these limbs there are three joints. And although this "adornment" was only complete with the number of six hundred thousand, yet already at the time of Jacob's death there were the seventy souls who had come down with him to Egypt and the very numerous progeny whom they had already produced in the seventeen years they had been there. Happy the portion of Jacob who was perfected above and below.

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[Note: The first seven lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.] R. Judah said: 'Zebulon and Issachar made an agreement that one should sit and study the Torah while the other went out and made money and supported him. So Zebulon used to traverse the seas with merchandise, and his territory was suitable for this, being on the sea coast. Hence it is written: "Rejoice, Zebulon, in thy going out, and Issachar in thy tents" (Deut. XXXIII, 18). HE SHALL DWELL AT THE HAVEN OF THE SEAS : that is to say, among those who sail the sea with merchandise. "At the haven of the seas": the plural "seas" is used, because although only one coast belonged to him, yet he dwelt by two. R. Jose said it is because traders from all other seas used to visit his coast. AND HE SHALL BE FOR A HAVEN OF SHIPS : that is, the place where all ships come to do trade. AND HIS BORDER SHALL BE UPON ZIDON . R. Hizkiah said: ' His territory stretched to the boundary of Zidon, and all merchants came to that place to trade.' R. Aha said: 'It is written: "Neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meal-offering; with all thine oblations thou shalt offer salt." Salt was to be used because it softens bitterness, and so mankind cannot do without it. Salt is the covenant upon which the world is established: hence it is called "the covenant of thy God".' R. Hiya said: 'It is written: "For God is righteous, he loves righteousness" (Ps. XI, 7). This is the salt in the sea, and he who separates them brings death upon himself. Hence it is written: "Thou shalt not suffer salt to be lacking." ' R. Aha said: 'The sea is all one, but it is called "seas" because in some places the water is clear (and in some turbid), in some sweet, and in some bitter; hence we speak of "seas".'

R. Abba was sitting one night and studying the Torah, when R. Jose came and knocked at his door. He

said: 'When the prince sits with the chief, then true judgement is given.' So they sat down and studied the Torah. Meanwhile the son of their host got up and sat before them. He said to them: 'What is the meaning of the verse: "Ye will save alive my father and my mother, etc.", and just before, "And give me a true token" (Jos. II, 13-12)? What did Rahab ask of the spies?' R. Abba said: 'That is a good question; if you know an answer, tell me, my son.' He said: 'A further question arises from the fact that they gave her something which she did not ask for, since they said to her: "Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window, etc." The explanation I have learnt is this. She asked for a sign of life, as it is written, "And ye will save alive my father, etc." She said: "A sign of life is only contained in the sign of truth, which is the letter Vau." In fact, as I have learnt, she asked for the sign of Moses. They, however, gave her a line of scarlet thread, because they said: "Moses is dead, and the sun is gathered in and the time has come for the moon to rule. Therefore we had better give you the sign of the moon, which is this line of scarlet thread. Thus the sign of Joshua shall be with you, because the moon is now in the ascendant." ' R. Abba and R. Jose rose

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and kissed him, saying: 'Assuredly, you will one day be a head of a college or a great man in Israel'; and, in fact, he became R. Bun.

He then asked a further question, saying: 'Seeing that the twelve tribes were arranged below in the same order as above, why is Zebulon everywhere placed before Issachar in the blessings, although Issachar devoted himself to the Torah, which should always come first? The reason is that Zebulon took out of his own mouth and gave to Issachar. From this we learn that he who supports a student of the Torah is blessed from above and below, and not only so, but he is privileged to eat of two tables, a privilege granted to no other man. He is granted wealth in this world, and he is granted a portion in the next world. Hence it says of Zebulon, that "he shall dwell at the haven of the sea", that is to say, in this world, "and shall be for a haven of ships", in the future world.

He here quoted the verse: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the fields, if you find my beloved, what will you tell him?" (S. S. v, 8). Why, it may be asked, should the Community of Israel speak thus, seeing that she is near to the king, like no other? The "daughters of Jerusalem", however, are the souls of the righteous, which are constantly near the King, and inform him every day of the requirements of the Matron. For so we have learnt, that when the soul comes down into the world, the Community of Israel makes it swear that it will tell the King her love for him in order to appease him. This appeasement is brought about when man unifies the Holy Name with his mouth, his heart and his soul, to link all together like flame with fire. According to another explanation, the "daughters of Jerusalem" are the twelve tribes, as we have learnt that Jerusalem is established on twelve rocks, three on each side (wherefore it is called Hayah (living one)), and these are called "the daughters of Jerusalem", and they



testify to the King concerning the Community of Israel, as it is written: "The tribes of the Lord are a testimony unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord" (Ps. CXXII, 4.) Said R. Judah: 'Happy are Israel who know the ways of God and of whom it is written: "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and thee did the Lord choose, etc." (Deut. XIV, 2).' ISSACHAR IS A STRONG ASS COUCHING DOWN BETWEEN THE SHEEPFOLDS . R. Eleazar said: 'Why should Issachar, because he studied the Torah, be called an ass, rather than a horse, or a lion, or a leopard? The answer given is that the ass bears a burden patiently and does not kick like other animals, and is not fastidious and will lie down anywhere. So Issachar bears the burden of the Torah and does not kick against the Almighty, and is not fastidious and cares not for his own honour but for the honour of his Master. He therefore "couches between the sheepfolds", as we say of the student of the Torah that he is "willing to sleep on the ground"[tr.note: v. Ethics of the Fathers, VI, 4.]. He also, in explanation of this verse, quoted the text: "To David. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. XXVII, 1). 'Those who study the Torah', he said, 'are beloved before God, so that they have no fear of evil hap, being protected above and below Nay more,

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such a one subdues all evil haps and casts them down into the great abyss. At nightfall the doors are closed, and dogs and asses commence to roam about the world with permission to do damage. Men sleep on their beds and the souls of the righteous ascend to the bliss above. When the north wind awakes at midnight, then there is a holy stirring in the world, as has been explained in many places. Happy is he who rises at that hour and studies the Torah. For as soon as he begins, all those evil beings are cast by him into the great abyss and he binds the ass and throws him down into the dung-heap. Therefore Issachar, who was a student of the Torah, bound the ass and brought him down from the ladder which he had mounted to do injury to the world, and made him abide between the sheepfolds, that is, in the dung-heap.' AND HE SAW REST THAT IT WAS GOOD, AND THE LAND THAT IT WAS PLEASANT, AND HE BOWED HIS SHOULDER TO BEAR, AND BECAME A SERVANT UNDER TASK WORK . "Rest" here signifies the Written Law; "the land" signifies the Oral Law; "he bowed his shoulder to bear", namely the yoke of the Law, and to cleave to it day and night; and he "became a servant under task work", to be a worshipper of the Holy One, blessed be He, and to cleave to Him. R. Simeon and R. Jose and R. Hiya were once travelling from Upper Galilee to Tiberias. Said R. Simeon: 'Let us discuss the Torah as we go, for whoever is able to discuss the Torah and does not do so renders his life forfeit, and is further subjected to the burden of worldly cares and the domination of others. This we learn from the verse which says of Issachar that "he turned aside his shoulder from bearing," that is to say, from bearing the yoke of the Law, and straightway "he became a servant under task work". Happy are those that study the Law, for they obtain favour above and below and every day win the inheritance of the future world, as it is written:

"To cause them that love me to inherit substance (yesh)" (Prov. VIII, 21), which means the future world. For his waters never fail and he receives a good reward above such as is earned by no other man. This is hinted in the name of Issachar, which we may divide into yesh sachar (yesh is the reward), as much as to say, yesh (substance) is the reward of those who study the Torah.

It is written: "I beheld till thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days did sit, etc." (Dan. VII, 9). When the Temple was destroyed, two thrones fell, that is, two above and two below. Two above, because the lower was removed from the upper, the throne of Jacob from the throne of David, and the throne of David fell. The two thrones below are Jerusalem and the students of the Torah, the latter corresponding to the throne of Jacob and the former to the throne of David. Hence it says that "thrones" were cast down, and not merely one throne, and all on account of the neglect of the Torah. Observe that when the truly pious study the Torah, all the mighty ones of other peoples and other forces are humbled and their power broken, and they have no dominion in the world, and Israel are raised above all. But if not, the ass causes Israel to go into captivity and to fall into the hands of the peoples and to be ruled by them. Why is this? Because "he saw rest that it was good", and that he could obtain from it many comforts and enjoyments, and he perverted his path so as not to bear the yoke of the Torah, and therefore he "became a servant under task work".

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Only through him was the knowledge of the Torah kept alive in Israel, as it says: "And of the sons of Issachar were those who had knowledge of the times, etc." (I Chron. XII, 32), and it was they who "caused all delights to be at our doors", to wit, the doors of synagogues and houses of study, "both new and old", because many old and new lessons of the Torah were brought to light by them to bring Israel near to their Father in heaven. "My beloved, I have kept hidden for thee": from this we learn that when one studies the Torah fittingly and knows how to draw the proper lessons from it, his words ascend to the throne of the King and the Community of Israel opens the gates before them and treasures them, and when God enters the Garden of Eden to disport Himself with the righteous, She brings them out before Him and God contemplates them and rejoices; and then God is crowned with noble crowns and rejoices in the Matron, and from that time the words are written in the book. Up to this point extends the sway of Judah, the arm that contained the strength of all sides, the three joints of the arm which enable it to prevail over all. DAN SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE AS ONE OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL . R. Hiya said: 'We should have expected here, "Dan shall judge the tribes of Israel", or "Dan shall judge the tribes of Israel as one." What is the meaning of "Dan shall judge his people"? We may explain as follows. Dan was the "rearward of the camps" (Num. x, 25), because he was the left thigh and went last. For after Judah and Reuben had set forth, the Levites and the Ark made an interval, as it were, and only after them did the standard of Ephraim set forth on the west, being the right thigh. We might have

thought that Zebulon should have marched first, since it is written of him: "And his thigh is unto Zidon." But the truth is that Judah comprised all, being the lower kingdom, for just as the upper kingdom comprises all, so does the lower kingdom, both body and thigh, becoming thereby exceedingly strong. The first corps comprised Judah, the kingdom which derives from the side of Might (Geburah), combined with the right hand, the body and the thigh. The second corps was that of Reuben, who was on the south side, which is on the right, and all the power of the right was taken by Judah, because Reuben lost the kingship, and thus Judah was reinforced with the strength of Reuben. The third corps was that of Ephraim, who was the right thigh, which always goes before the left. Thus Dan, who was the left thigh, marched last. We read that "Solomon made a great throne of ivory" (I Kings x, 18). This throne was after the supernal pattern and contained all celestial figures, and therefore it is written: "And Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king" (I Chron. XXIX, 23), and so also "Solomon sat on the throne of David his father and his kingdom was established greatly" (I Kings II, 12), because the moon was at its full.' "Dan shall judge his people" at first, and then "the tribes of Israel as one", that is, as the one Being of the World.

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This was realized in Samson, who single-handed wrought judgement on the world, and both judged and put to death without requiring a helper. R. Isaac said: 'Dan is compared to a serpent lying in wait in the way. But there is also a reference to another serpent above, lying in wait in ways and paths, from whom issue those who lie in wait for the sons of men on account of the sins which they cast behind their backs.' R. Hiya said: 'The primeval serpent above, before he is appeased with gladdening wine, is "a serpent by the way". As there is a "way" above, so there is a "way" below, and the sea is divided into various paths on every side. There is one path which has abundance of water and breeds many kinds of evil fishes, just as the waters below breed good and bad fishes. When they escape from the path of the sea, they appear like riders on horseback, and were it not that this serpent who is the rearward of all the tents lies in wait at the end of the path and drives them back, they would destroy the world. It is from the side of these that sorcerers come forth. Dan is called "a serpent by the way", because he that goes after the serpent repudiates the celestial household which is the supernal path that issues from above. To go after the serpent is like going to repudiate that celestial way, because from it the higher worlds are sustained. If it is asked why Dan is in this grade, the answer is given in the words, "That bites at the horse's heels", i.e. to protect all the camps. R. Eleazar said that he was one of the supports of the Throne, because on the throne of Solomon there was a serpent attached to his sceptre above the lions. It says of Samson that the "spirit of God began to move him in the camp of Dan" (Judg. XIII, 25). Samson was a Nazirite, and a man of huge strength, and he was a serpent in this world in face of the idolatrous nations, because he inherited the blessing of his ancestor Dan.' R. Hiya said: 'We know what a serpent is, but what is an adder (shephiphon)?' He answered: 'This word alludes to the practices of sorcerers, since it is written of Balaam that he went

shephi (alone). If it is said that this was not properly the grade of Dan, that is true, but he was appointed over this grade to be the last side (of the Israelites' host), and this was his honour, since some officers of the king are appointed to one post and some to another, and all are honourable, and the king's throne is supported by all. Various paths and grades spread out beneath them, some for good and some for evil, and all help to support the throne. Therefore Dan was on the north side. In the hollow of the great abyss, which is on the north side, there are many demons endowed with power to do mischief in the world. Therefore Jacob prayed, saying, I HAVE WAITED FOR THY SALVATION, O LORD. He mentioned God's salvation here because he saw here the might of the serpent setting in motion chastisement.'

R. Jose and R. Hizkiah were once going to see R. Simeon in Cappadocia. Said R. Hizkiah: 'We have laid down that a man before praying should first pronounce God's praises. But what of the man who is in great distress and is in haste to pour out his prayer and is not able to pronounce the blessings of his Master fittingly?' He replied: 'That is no reason why the praise of his Master should be omitted. He should pronounce it, even

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without proper devotion, and then say his prayer. Thus it is written: "A prayer of David. Hear, O Lord, righteousness, listen to my song" (Ps. XVII, 1)-first praise and then prayer. Of him who is able to pronounce the praise of his Master and does not do so, it is written: "Yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear" (Is. I, 15).'

It is written: "The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the second lamb shalt thou offer at even" (Num. XXVIII, 4). Prayers have been ordained to correspond to the daily offerings. Through the impulse from below there is a stirring above, and through the impulse from above there is a stirring higher up still, until the impulse reaches the place where the lamp is to be lit and it is lit. Thus by the impulse of the smoke (of the sacrifice) from below, the lamp is kindled above, and when this is kindled all the other lamps are kindled and all the worlds are blessed from it. Thus the impulse of the sacrifice is the mainstay of the world and the blessing of all worlds. When the smoke commences to rise, the holy forms in charge of the world derive satisfaction, and are disposed thereby to stir the grades above them; and so the impulse rises until the King desires to associate with the Matron. Through the yearning of the lower world the lower waters flow forth to meet the upper waters, for the upper waters do not flow save from the impulse of the desire from below. Thus mutual desire is kindled and the lower waters flow to meet the upper waters, and worlds are blest, and all lamps are kindled, and upper and lower are endowed with blessings. Observe that the function of the priests and Levites is to unite the Left with the Right. Said R. Hizkiah: 'That is so, but I have been told that one rouses the Left and the other the Right, because the union of male and female is only brought about by Left and Right, as it says: "O that his left hand were under my head, and his right hand should embrace me" (S. S.

II, 6). Then male and female are united, and there is mutual desire and worlds are blessed and upper and lower rejoice. Hence we see that the sacrifice is the support and the mainstay of the world, and the joy of upper and lower.' Said R. Jose: 'You are certainly right, and I had heard this before but had forgotten it. This, too, I have learnt, that nowadays prayer takes the place of sacrifice, and a man should fittingly pronounce the praise of his Master, and if not, his prayer is no prayer. The most perfect form of praising God is to unify the Holy Name in the fitting manner, for through this upper and lower are set in motion, and blessings flow to all worlds.' R. Hizkiah said: 'God placed Israel in exile among the nations in order that they might be blessed for their sake, for they do bring blessings from heaven to earth every day.'

As they were going along, they saw a snake wriggling on the path, so they turned aside. Another man then came up and the snake killed him. They looked back, and saw him dead, and said: 'Assuredly, that snake has performed the mission of his master. Blessed be God who has delivered us.' R. Jose thereupon quoted the verse: "Dan shall be a serpent in the way." 'This', he said, 'was in the days of Jeroboam, who, we are told, placed one of his golden calves in Dan (I Kings XII, 29). He placed it "on the way" in order to prevent the people from going up to Jerusalem; and thus Dan was to them "a serpent by the way", and also "an adder in the path", preventing Israel from going up to Jerusalem to celebrate their festivals and to bring sacrifices and worship there.

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When Moses came to bless the tribes, he saw that Dan was linked to a serpent, and he changed it into a lion, as it says: "And to Dan he said: Dan is a lion's whelp that leapeth forth from Bashan" (Deut. XXXIII, 22), his object being to connect the beginning and end of the four standards with Judah, who was compared to a lion's whelp.' I WAIT FOR THY SALVATION, O LORD . R. Hiya said: 'This refers to the time of Samson, of whom it was said: "He shall commence to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines" (Judg. XIII, 5).' R. Aha said: 'How could Jacob say "I wait", seeing that by that time he had been dead many years? The truth is, however, that the word "Israel" in the above passage has its esoteric-meaning.' Said R. Hiya: 'Assuredly that is so. Happy are the righteous who know how to study the Torah in such a way as to earn by it celestial life.' GAD A TROOP SHALL PRESS UPON HIM, BUT HE SHALL PRESS UPON THEIR HEEL . R. Jesse said: 'The conjunction of the two letters gimel and daleth indicates the issuing forth of troops and hosts, gimel giving and daleth receiving. [tr.note: Gimel (g'mul)=beneficence, and Daleth (dalluth)=poverty. The connection with armies is not clear.] That river which perennially flows from Eden supplies the needy, and therefore many hosts and many camps are sustained from here; and this is the significance of the name Gad, one producing and giving, and the other collecting and taking. R. Isaac said: 'Had Gad not been one of the sons of the handmaids, he would have risen to greater heights than all the rest. For the hour of his birth was propitious, but the flowing river departed at that moment, and therefore he had no share in the Holy

Land and was removed from it.' R. Judah said: 'Reuben was in the same case, as it is written of him, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel", which indicates that at his birth the waters stopped and did not flow. Neither Reuben nor Gad obtained a share in the Holy Land, but they provided troops and forces to conquer the land for Israel. The deficiency of Gad was made good in Asher, as it is written: "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, etc."'

R. Eleazar and R. Abba once turned aside into a cave at Lydda to escape the heat of the sun. Said R. Abba: 'Let us now encompass this cave with words of the Torah.' R. Eleazar thereupon commenced with the verse: "Place me like a seal upon thy heart, like a seal upon thine arm... its coals are coals of fire, a very flame of the Lord" (S. S. VIII, 6). 'This verse', he said, 'has been much discussed. One night I was attending on my father, and I heard him say that the true devotion and yearning of the Community of Israel for God is only brought about by the souls of the righteous, who cause the flow of the lower waters towards the upper; and then there is perfect friendship and desire for mutual embrace to bring forth fruit. When they cleave to one another, in the fullness of her affection she says: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart." For, as the impress of a seal remains even after the seal is removed, so, says the Community of Israel, I shall cleave to thee, even though I am removed from thee and go

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into captivity. Hence, "Set me as a seal upon thy heart" in order that my likeness may remain upon thee like the impress of a seal. "For love is strong as death": it is strong like the parting of the spirit from the body, as we have learnt that when man is about to depart from the world and sees strange things, his spirit courses through all his limbs and goes up and down like a boatman without oars who is tossed up and down on the sea and makes no progress. It then asks leave of each limb; and its separation is only effected with great violence. Such is the violence of the Community of Israel's love for God. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave." Love without jealousy is no true love. Hence we learn that a man should be jealous of his wife in order that his love for her may be perfect, for then he will not look at any other woman. Jealousy is compared to Sheol (the underworld), because just as the wicked are frightened of going down to Sheol, so is jealousy frightful in the eyes of one who loves and cannot bear to be parted from his beloved. Or we may also explain that just as when sinners are taken down to Sheol they are told the sins for which they are punished, so he who is jealous in demanding restitution reckons up all his grievances, and so his love becomes more firmly knit. "The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord." This is the flame which is kindled and issues from the Shofar. It is the left hand, as it is written: "His left hand should be under my head" (S. S. VIII, 3). It is this which kindles the flame of love in the Community of Israel to the Holy One, blessed be He. Therefore "many waters cannot quench love", because when the right hand comes, although it is symbolized by water, it fans the fire of love and does not quench the flame of the left hand, as it is written: "And his right hand should embrace me."'

As they were sitting they heard R. Simeon coming up the road, with R. Judah and R. Isaac. When he approached the cave, R. Eleazar and R. Abba came out. R. Simeon said: 'I can see from the walls of the cave that the Shekinah is here.' So they all sat down. Said R. Simeon: 'What have you been discussing?' R. Abba replied: 'The love of the Community of Israel for God, and R. Eleazar applied to it the verse: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, etc." ' Said R. Simeon: 'Eleazar, you have been scrutinizing the supernal love and affection.' He then fell into silence for a while. At last he said: 'Silence is good everywhere except in connection with the Torah. I have a certain gem which I do not desire to withhold from you. It is a profound thought which I have found in the book of Rab Hamnuna the Elder. It is this. Everywhere the male runs after the female and seeks to incite her love, but here we find the female courting the male and running after him, which it is not usually reckoned proper for the female to do. But there is here a deep mystery, much prized among the treasures of the king. There are three souls belonging to the celestial grades. The three are really four, because one is the supernal soul, which is not clearly discerned, even by the treasurer of the upper treasury, much less the lower. This is the soul of all souls, inscrutable and unknowable. Everything is dependent upon it, and it is veiled in a covering of exceeding brightness. It drops pearls which are linked together like the joints of the body, and it enters into them and displays through them its energy. It and they are one, and there is no separation between them. There is another, a female soul which is concealed in the midst of her hosts, to which is attached

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the body, and through this body she shows her energy, like the soul in the human body. Those hosts are the counterpart of the hidden joints above. There is another soul, to wit, the souls of the righteous below. These come from those superior souls, the soul of the female and the soul of the male, and therefore the souls of the righteous are superior to all the heavenly hosts and camps. You may ask, if they are so transcendent from both sides, why do they come down to this world to be afterwards removed from it? Imagine a king who had a son whom he sent to a village to be brought up until he should learn the ways of the king's palace. When the king heard that his son was grown up, out of his love for him he sent the Matron his mother for him, and brought him into the palace, where he rejoiced with him every day. So the Holy One, blessed be He, had a son from the Matron, to wit, the celestial holy soul. He sent it to a village, to wit, to this world, to be brought up in it, and learn the ways of the king's palace. When the king found that his son had grown up, and that it was time to bring him to the palace, out of his love for him he sent the Matron for him and brought him into the palace. The soul does not depart from this world till the Matron has come for her and brought her into the king's palace, where she remains forever. And for all that, the inhabitants of the village weep for the parting of the king's son from them. There was one wise man among them who said: "Why are you weeping? Was he not the king's son, and is not his proper place in his father's palace and not among you?" So Moses, who was a

wise man, saw the villagers weeping, and said to them: "Ye are sons of the Lord your God, ye shall not cut yourselves" (Deut. XIV, 1). Now, if the righteous all knew this, they would rejoice when their time arrives to depart from this world. For is it not a great honour for them that the Matron comes for their sakes to bring them to the King's palace, so that the King may rejoice in them every day? For God hath no delight save in the souls of the righteous. Now the love of the Community of Israel for God is excited only by the souls of the righteous here on earth, because they come from the side of the king, the side of the male. This excitement reaches the female and stirs her love; and in this way the male awakens the love and affection of the female, and the female is united in love with the male. In the same way, the desire of the female to pour forth lower waters to meet the upper waters is only aroused through the souls of the righteous. Happy, therefore, are the righteous in this world and in the world to come, since on them are established upper and lower beings. Hence it is written: "The righteous man is the foundation of the world" (Prov. x, 25). Esoterically speaking, the Zaddik is the foundation of the upper world and the foundation of the lower world, and the Community of Israel contains the Zaddik from above and from below. The righteous one from this side and the righteous one from that side inherit her, as it is written: "The righteous shall inherit the earth" (Ps. XXXVII, 29).

The Righteous One inherits this earth, and pours upon it blessings every day, and furnishes it with luxuries and delicacies in his flow. All this is hinted in the words: OUT OF ASHER HIS BREAD SHALL BE FAT, AND HE SHALL YIELD ROYAL DAINTIES . It is from the future world that the stream reaches this Righteous One which enables him to provide luxuries and delicacies to this earth, thus transforming it from "the bread of poverty" into "the bread of luxury".

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The name "Asher" (lit. happy) signifies the place which all declare happy, to wit, the future world. In the expression "his bread" the reference of the word "his" is not specified; but we may divide the word lahmo (his bread) into lehem vau, that is, "the bread of vau" (which signifies the heavens); hence it is written: "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you" (Ex. XVI, 4). It is from thence that the tree of life is nourished and crowned, and when it receives this nourishment, then it "yields the dainties of the king". This king is the Community of Israel, who is fed therefrom by the hand of the Righteous One, the sacred grade of the sign of the covenant. In the book of Rab Hamnuna the Elder it says that the bread mentioned here is the Sabbath bread, which is double in quantity, as it is written in connection with the manna: "They gathered double bread" (Ex. XVI, 22); that is to say, bread from heaven and bread from earth, the one being "bread of luxury", the other "bread of poverty". For on Sabbath the lower bread was united with the upper bread, and one was blessed for the sake of the other. He further said that the Sabbath receives from the celestial Sabbath which flows forth and illumines all, and in this way bread is joined with bread and becomes double. NAPHTALI IS A HIND LET LOOSE, WHO GIVETH GOODLY

WORDS . It has been affirmed that the upper world is of the male principle, and therefore whatever the Community of Israel causes to ascend on high must be male. We know this from the name of the offering ('olah, lit. going up), so called because it rises above the female. Hence it has to be a "male without blemish" (Lev. I, 3). By the words "without blemish" is meant that it must not be castrated. It may be objected that we find the words "without blemish" applied also to the female. This is true; nevertheless it does not alter the fact that the burnt-offering rises from the female to the male, and from this point upwards all is male, while from the female

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downwards all is female. It may be said that there is a female principle above also. The truth is, however, that the whole body takes its description from the end of the body, which is male, although the beginning of the body is female. Here, however, both the beginning and end are female. Observe the recondite allusion in this matter. We see that Jacob blessed Joseph along with his brothers, but when God arranged the tribes under four standards He omitted Joseph and put Ephraim in his place. This cannot have been for any sin of Joseph's, but the reason is this. Joseph was the impress of the male, and since all the adornments of the Shekinah are female, Joseph was removed from the standards and Ephraim was appointed in his place. On this account he was stationed on the west, the side where the female abides, and the impress which is male was removed from her adornments. We thus see that all the twelve tribes are the adornment of the Shekinah after the supernal pattern, save for the grade of the Zaddik, who makes all the limbs male. WHO GIVETH GOODLY WORDS . The Voice speaks to the Utterance, there being no voice without utterance. This Voice is sent from a deep recess above in order to guide the Utterance, the two being related as general and particular. The Voice issues from the south and speaks to the west, inheriting two sides, and therefore Moses said to Naphtali: "Possess thou the west and the south" (Deut. XXXIII, 23). Observe that Thought is the beginning of all. This Thought is recondite and inscrutable, but when it expands it reaches the place where spirit abides and is then called Understanding (binah), which is not so recondite as the preceding. This spirit expands and produces a Voice composed of fire, water, and air, which corresponds to north, south, and east. This Voice embraces in itself all forces, and speaks to Utterance, and this shapes the word properly. When you examine the grades closely, you find that Thought, Understanding, Voice, Utterance are all one and the same, and there is no separation between them, and this is what is meant by the words: "The Lord is one and His Name is One." JOSEPH IS A FRUITFUL BOUGH, A FRUITFUL BOUGH BY A FOUNTAIN . The words fruitful bough are repeated to show that he is such both above and below. Observe that the holy kingdom does not attain its perfection as holy kingdom until it is joined with the patriarchs. Then its structure is completed from the upper world,

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which is the world of the male. The upper world is

called "seven years" because all the "seven years"[Tr. note: i.e. the seven Sefiroth.] are in it. The mnemonic of this is "and he built it seven years" (I Kings VI, 38). By means of this the lower world was built, which also is alluded to as "seven years". The mnemonic for this is "Seven days and seven days, fourteen days" (I Kings VIII, 66), the first seven being male and the second female. It is written: "Many daughters have done virtuously" (Prov. XXXI, 29). These are the twelve tribes who did valiantly. Hence it is written here: "The daughters advanced upon the wall"; that is to say, the daughters took part in the adornment of the Shekinah, but not the sons. BUT HIS BOW ABODE IN STRENGTH . This means that the bow which was his mate clothed him with strength and kept him firm, knowing that he would not go astray right or left in regard to his own proper grade of the sign of the covenant. AND THE ARMS OF HIS HANDS WERE MADE STRONG : the word vayaphozu (were made strong) is akin to the word paz (fine gold), and indicates that his arms were adorned with precious jewels. BY THE HANDS OF THE MIGHTY ONE OF JACOB : these are the two sides to which Jacob held fast. FROM THENCE HE FED THE STONE OF ISRAEL : by him was supported that precious stone, as we have said. Or again, it may mean that that precious stone was sustained by these two sides which are north and south, and between which it was placed by the hands of the Righteous One.

Observe that Joseph received an extra blessing, as it is written: EVEN FROM THE GOD OF THY FATHER, HE SHALL HELP THEE . Jacob gave Joseph an inheritance above and below. The inheritance above was given in these words: "from the God of the father", the place called "heaven". He added: "And he shall help thee", to show that this place would not be exchanged for any other place, and his support would be from this place and from no other. AND WITH THE ALMIGHTY : this signifies another and lower grade, indicated by the word eth (with), from which issue blessings to the world.

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[Note: The first seven lines of the Hebrew text do not appear in our translation.]

Up to this point the blessings were given in general; they were now particularized with the words: BLESSINGS OF HEAVEN ABOVE, ETC. THE BLESSINGS OF THY FATHER HAVE PREVAILED ABOVE THE BLESSINGS OF MY PROGENITORS . This was so because Jacob inherited the cream of all more than the other patriarchs, he being perfect in all, and he gave all to Joseph. This was fitting, because the Righteous One takes all and inherits all, and all blessings are deposited with him. He first dispenses blessings above, and all the limbs of the body are disposed so as to receive them, and thus is brought into being the "river which goes forth from Eden". Why Eden (lit. delight)? Because whenever all the limbs are knit together in harmony and in mutual delight, from top to bottom, then they pour blessings upon it, and it becomes a river which flows forth, literally, from "delight". Or again, the word "Eden" may refer to the supreme Wisdom, from which the whole flows forth like

a river until it reaches this grade, where all is turned to blessing. The two interpretations are practically the same. UNTO THE UTMOST BOUND OF THE EVERLASTING HILLS . Or better, “unto the desire (ta'avath) of, etc.” These everlasting hills are two females, one above and one below, each of whom is called 'olam (a world). The desire of all the limbs of the Body is for those two Mothers, from below to suck from the higher Mother, and from above to be linked with the lower Mother, both desires being in essence the same. Therefore, THEY SHALL ALL BE ON THE HEAD OF JOSEPH , so that the grade of the Righteous One should be blessed and receive all as befits. Happy are they who are called righteous, for only he is so called who observes this grade, this sign of the holy covenant. Happy are they in this world and in the world to come.

They now went out of the cave. Said R. Simeon: 'Let each one of us give some exposition as we go along.' R. Eleazar commenced with the next verse: BENJAMIN IS A WOLF THAT RAVINETH . Benjamin is called a wolf because he was imprinted in this form on the Throne, all animals great and small being delineated there. The throne which Solomon made contained similar designs. He is also called a wolf because the altar was in his territory, and the altar is called “wolf” because it consumed flesh every day. Again, we may translate: “Benjamin shall feed the wolf”, to wit, the adversaries who are posted above to accuse, and who are all appeased by the sacrifice. IN THE MORNING HE SHALL DEVOUR THE PREY . This means that in the morning, when Abraham stirs in the world and it is the time of grace, the sacrifice brings appeasement and rises to the place called 'Ad (perpetuity). We may also translate “In the morning 'Ad shall eat”, this being the supernal throne which is forever and ever ('ade 'ad). Thesmoke ascends and love is awakened above,

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and a lamp is kindled and shines forth through this impulse from below. The priest is busy and the Levites sing praises joyfully, and wine is poured forth to be united with water (wine being good below to cause gladness to another wine above), and all is at work to link the Left with the Right. The bread, which is the “fine flour” used for royalty, and which gave the impulse, is received by the Left and the Right and joined to the Body. Then the supernal oil flows forth and is taken up by the hand of the Zaddik (hence the impulse must be given by means of fine flour and oil commingled, so that all should be linked together). So a complete unity is formed, with its resulting delight and the gratification which is gathered up by all the crowns. These all join together, and the moon is illumined through being joined with the sun, and there is universal delight. This is indeed “an offering for the Lord”, and for no other. Hence, in the morning Ad shall eat and no other, until he has been sated and linked to his place. For first the Holy Name must be blessed and then others, and therefore it is forbidden to a man to bless his neighbour in the morning until he has blessed God.' AND AT EVEN HE SHALL DIVIDE THE SPOIL . The evening sacrifice was brought wholly to God, and the stirring ascended thither. And having received His blessing, He linked up all the other celestial powers and assigned to

each its fitting blessings, so that worlds were gratified and upper and lower were blessed. This is hinted in the verse: “I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey” first of all; and afterwards He shares out among all and says: “Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved” (S. S. v, 1). Think not that the offering is brought to them or to any other power, but all is to the Lord, and He dispenses blessings to all the worlds.' Said R. Simeon: 'My son, you have said well. The whole object of the sacrifice is to set blessings in motion. First it is “an offering to the Lord” and no other, and then “you shall bring your offering” (i.e. carry away your gift), in that all worlds will be linked together and upper and lower will be blessed.' R. Abba then commenced with the next verse: ALL THESE ARE THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL . 'The word “all” signifies that they were all attached irremovably to the place from which all blessings issue. The “twelve” refers to the twelve links of the adornments of the Matron, she being joined with them. AND THIS IT IS THAT THEIR FATHER SPAKE UNTO THEM AND BLESSED THEM . The word “spake” indicates that in this place speech has scope. Further, we have here the union of upper with lower and of lower with upper. Below there is a union through the twelve tribes to which Zoth (this) was joined. The words “that he spoke” indicate the union of male and female. Thus there is a union on two sides, below and above. Finally, he united them in the place above, male and female together, as it is written: “Every one according to his blessing, etc.” Similarly in the verse, “The Lord bless thee out of Zion, and see thou the good of Jerusalem, all the days of thy life” (Ps. CXXVII, 5), Zion is mentioned because from it issue blessings to water the garden, and then Jerusalem is mentioned to show that all blessings issue from male and female together. Similarly it is written: “The Lord bless thee and keep thee” (Num. VI, 24) -“bless” from the male, and “keep” from the female.'

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R. Judah opened with the verse: AND WHEN JACOB MADE AN END OF CHARGING HIS SONS, ETC . We should have expected here “blessing” instead of “charging”. What it means, however, is that he charged them to remain united with the Shekinah. He also charged them concerning the cave (of Machpelah), which is near the Garden of Eden, and where Adam was buried. That place was called Kiriath Arba (lit. city of four) because four couples were buried there -Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. A difficulty arises here. We have learnt that the patriarchs are the “holy chariot”, and a chariot consists of not less than four. We have further learnt that God joined King David with them so as to form a complete chariot. If so, then David ought to have been joined with them in the cave. The reason, however, why he was not buried with them was because a fitting place was prepared for him elsewhere, namely Zion. As for Adam, the patriarchs were buried with him because he was the first king, though the kingship was taken from him and given to David, who derived his seventy years from the years of Adam. As the patriarchs could not go on living till David appeared, he was assigned a fitting place elsewhere and was not buried with them.' HE GATHERED UP HIS FEET INTO THE BED . Since he was abiding in the

place of the living, when he was about to depart from the world he gathered his feet into the bed. This is illustrated by the verse: "My soul yearns and longs for the courts of the Lord" (Ps. LXXXIV, 2). The Companions have explained this as follows. There are lower abodes and higher abodes. In the higher there are no dwellers, they being the inner room, but the outer rooms are called "courts of the Lord", because they are filled with love and desire for the female. When the soul departs, it turns wholly to the female, being united with it in whole-hearted desire. It is not said that Jacob died, but only that he "yielded up the ghost and was gathered unto his people". The words "he gathered up his feet into the bed" indicate that the sun was gathered in unto the moon. The sun does not die, but is gathered in from the world and goes to join the moon. When Jacob was gathered in, the moon was illumined, and the desire of the supernal sun was awakened for her, because when the sun departs, another sun arises and attaches itself to the first, and the moon is illumined.' Said R. Simeon: 'You are quite right. It has, however, been affirmed that above, the world of the male is joined with a lower one, which is the world of the female, and that the lower world is joined with the upper, and so one is the counterpart of the other. It has also been affirmed that there are two worlds, and although there are two females, one is supported by the male and one by the female. It is written: "The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him" (Prov. XXXI, 1). The secret meaning of this verse is not known. We may, however, render "the words which were spoken for the sake of El (God)

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who is king". Observe that Jacob was gathered into the moon and through it produced fruit[Tr. note: i.e. souls.] in the world, and there is no generation without the fruit of Jacob, because he gave an impulse above. Happy is the portion of Jacob, since he was made perfect above and below, as it is written: "Fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee" (Jer. XLVI, 28); it does not say "for thou art with me", but "for I am with thee", as has been pointed out.'

R. Isaac opened with the verse: AND THEY CAME TO THE THRESHING FLOOR OF ATAD . He said: What does it concern us that they came to the threshing floor of Atad, and why should there have been a great mourning there to the Egyptians? It has, however, been stated that as long as Jacob was in Egypt the land was blessed for his sake, and the Nile used to rise and water it, and, in fact, the famine ceased at his coming. Hence the Egyptians mourned for him.' R. Isaac here quoted the verse: "Who can utter the severities (geburth) of the Lord or show forth all his praise?" (Ps. CXI, 2). 'We have here', he said, 'the unusual word yemallel (utter) instead of the more usual yedaber (speak). Such variations in the Scripture are never without significance. So here, the word yemallel is akin to the word meliloth (cuttings), and is applied to the severities of the Lord because they are so numerous. For every sentence of punishment issues from there, and who is there who can annul one decree of those forcible acts which God performs? Or, again, we may take "utter" as being synonymous with "speak",

and the meaning is that no man can recite the severities of the Lord, because they are innumerable, and there is no end to the officers of judgement. They can only be known by a recital which contains allusions of Wisdom, but not by straightforward speech. "Or show forth all his praise": for many are the grades which join in praise, hosts and camps without number, as it is written: "Can his hosts be counted?" See now, the Egyptians were all clever, and came from the side of Geburah. They knew countless hosts and camps and grades upon grades till they came to the lowest grades. Through their divinations they were aware that as long as Jacob was alive no people could gain dominion over his sons. They also knew that they would enslave Israel many times. When Jacob died they rejoiced, but looking farther afield, they foresaw the punishments which would issue from Atad, ([Tr. note:] An allusion to the "mighty hand, with which God smote the Egyptians, the word atad having the same numerical value as yad (hand).] so when they came to this place "they lamented there with a very great and sore lamentation". And they rightly called it the "mourning of the Egyptians", because it was truly a mourning for them and for no others.'

R. Simeon made as though to depart, when he said: 'I see that on this day a house will fall in the town and bury two informers in its ruins. If I am in the town the house will not fall.' So they returned to the cave and sat down. R. Simeon then discoursed on the verse: Raise thy voice, O daughter of Gallim, etc. (Is. x, 30).

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'This verse', he said, 'was addressed to the Community of Israel, which lauds God with the voice of praise. We learn from here that anyone who desires to praise God with singing should have an agreeable voice in order that those who listen may derive pleasure from hearing him; if not, he should not come forward to sing. The Levites were commanded to retire from service at the age of fifty (Num. VIII, 25), because at that age a man's voice begins to fail and is no longer so agreeable. The word Gallim (lit. heaps) indicates the future world, in which heaps of things are contained. The verse continues: "O listen, Laishah", this laishah (lit. lioness) signifies power to crush hostile forces, and when Israel sing praises then this listens. The verse continues: "Poor Anathoth." When the moon is full it is called "the field of apples", but when it is defective it is called "the field of Anathoth (poverty)". Hence, praise from below affords it wealth and completeness, and so David all his lifetime sought to provide this completeness by chanting hymns of praise below. When David died he left it complete, and Solomon received it at its full, since the moon had escaped from poverty and entered into riches. By means of this riches Solomon ruled over all the kings of the earth, and therefore "silver was not accounted for anything in the days of Solomon" (I Kings x, 21), but everything was of gold; and of that time it is written: "And he had dust of gold" (Job XXVIII, 6). For the sun shining on the dust of the mountain tops turned it into gold. From the rays of the sun beating on the mountains the dust

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of the earth among the mountains became gold. And but for the wild beasts that roamed there, men would not have been poor. When Solomon observed this he called aloud: "All was from the dust" (Eccl. III, 20). Hence Solomon had no need to sing like David, save one song which is beloved of wealth, and is the jewel and favourite of all chants of praises, since it contains the praises recited by the Matron when she sits on the throne opposite the King. Everything was gold, and dust was joined with the left hand, on the side of love, and the sun clung to it and did not part from it. Solomon was hereby led into error. He saw that the moon had approached the sun and the right hand was embracing and the left hand under the head. Seeing this he said: "What need is there of the right hand here, seeing that they have drawn near to one another?" God then said to him: "I swear to thee that as thou hast rejected the right hand, thou shalt one day require the kindness (hesed)[Tr.note: which comes from the Right.] of men and shalt not obtain it." Straightway the sun parted from the moon, and the moon began to darken, and Solomon went begging and said: "I am Koheleth", and no one would show him kindness.

'It is written: "The old lion perishes without prey, and the young of the lioness are scattered" (Job IV, 11). When the lioness gives food, all the (heavenly) hosts come together and draw sustenance. But when she is without prey on account of the Galuth, then they are scattered to different sides. Hence, when the sacrifices were offered they were all supported and drew near together, as we have said. But now that there are no sacrifices, then indeed "the young of the lioness are scattered" Hence, there is no day without punishment, because upper and lower do not receive the proper impulse, as we have said. Now it is prayer which gives the proper impulse above and below, and through the blessings with which we bless God upper and lower are blessed. Hence worlds are blessed through the prayer of Israel. He who blesses God is blessed, and he who does not bless God is not blessed. Rab Hamnuna the Elder would not allow anyone else to take the cup of blessing, but he himself took it in his two hands and said the blessing. We have affirmed that the cup should be taken in the right hand, and not in the left. It is called "cup of salvations" (Ps. CXVI, 13), because through it blessings are drawn from the supernal salvations, and in it is collected the supernal wine. Also, the table over which the blessing is said should not be devoid of both bread and wine. The Community of Israel is called "cup of blessing", and therefore the cup should be raised both by the right hand and the left hand, so as to be set between.

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It should be filled with wine, because of the wine of the Torah which issues from the future world. There is a mystic allusion in this cup of blessing to the holy chariot. The right and left hands correspond to the north and south, between which is "the couch of Solomon". He who says the blessing should fix his eye upon the cup to bless it with four blessings. Thus the cup contains the emblem of faith, north, south, east, and west, and so the holy chariot. There should be bread on the table in order that the lower bread may be blessed, and the "bread of poverty" may become the

"bread of luxury". In this way the Community of Israel will be blessed in all four directions, above and below—above by the bread of blessing and the cup of blessing through which King David is joined to the patriarchs, and below, that bread should never be lacking from the Israelite's table.'

They all rose and kissed his hands, saying: "God be blessed who has brought us into the world to hear all this." They then left the cave and went on their way. When they reached the town, they saw a funeral procession for some men who had died through a house falling on them, and in whom were included some informers, as R. Simeon had said. R. Simeon quoted the text: "And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad", saying: 'This is a hint of the passing of the dominion of the Egyptians to give place to the dominion of Israel; and hence it was that they "lamented with a very great and sore lamentation". So here also these people are not mourning for the Jews, although there are some Jews among the dead; and even these, had they been really Jews, would not have been killed, and since they have died God pardons their sins.

R. Simeon said: 'Although Jacob died in Egypt, yet his soul did not depart in a foreign land, since when he died his soul was straightway joined to its place. as we have stated. When Jacob entered the cave, all the perfumes of Eden filled it and a light went up from it and a lamp was kindled there. When the patriarchs went to Jacob in Egypt, to be with him, the light of the candle departed, but when Jacob entered the cave it returned. With his admission the cave obtained its full complement, and it never again received another occupant, nor will it ever receive one. The souls that are worthy pass before the patriarchs in the cave in order that they may awake and behold the seed which they have left in the world, and rejoice before the Almighty.'

R. Abba asked: 'What was the embalming of Jacob?' He said to him: 'Go and ask a physician. It says: "and Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father, and the physicians embalmed Israel". Apparently, this embalming was like that of any other person. It cannot have been on account of the journey to Canaan, because Joseph also was embalmed and yet he was not taken out of the country. The real reason was that it was the custom to embalm kings in order to preserve their bodies. They were embalmed with very special oil mixed with spices. This was rubbed on them day after day for forty days. After that, the body could last for a very long time. For the air of the land of Canaan and of the land of Egypt corrupts the body

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I more rapidly than that of any other country. Hence they do this to preserve the body, embalming it within and without. They place the oil on the navel, and it enters into the body and draws out the inside, and thus preserves it inside and outside. It was fitting that Jacob's body should be so preserved, since he was the body of the patriarchs. Similarly Joseph, who was an emblem of the body, was preserved both in body and soul-in body, as it says "and they embalmed him", in



soul, as it is written, “and he was put in a coffin in Egypt”. The word vayisem (and he was put) is spelt with two yods, one of them to indicate an ark above which is called “the ark of the covenant”, which Joseph inherited because he kept the covenant. There is also another hint in this expression, to wit, that although he died on a foreign soil, his soul was united with the Shekinah, the reason being that he was righteous, and every righteous one inherits the celestial holy land, as it is written: “And thy people are all righteous, they shall forever inherit the land, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified” (Is. LX, 21).’