**Notes and Themes
Themes for *Shamir***(mostly from the Old Testament; miracles-ancient lore)

**Genesis** Serafim
Sanverim
Sulfur (brimstone)
Interplanetary travel
Giants
“Smoke of furnace”
Deluge
Giant animals–also Ziz bird, (mammals)
Struggling with the angel?
Angels visit Abraham
Dream interpretation   **Exodus** Manna–hydroc. combin.   **Numbers** Radiation disease-Tzaarat–“leprosy”-Hair fell out   **Joshua** Wild ducks (meat of fowl)–radioactivity in exposed animals-case of radiated engineer.
The death after eating the wild ducks (irradiated).
Phosphorescence—hand white after being kept in dark
Karnaim-the horns or rays of Moses
(rays of Venus–like horns)
Finding water
Diamonds
Petroleum
Vermin plague
Jordan running back
Deluge of fire
Serpent and Baal worship
Leveling of mountains   **Judges & Kings** Magnet
Mouth-to-mouth breathing
Weather forecast
Telepathy and hypnosis. Since 1740?
Necromancy
Shamir-radium
“Oil-enzyme”?
“Leprosy” and sulfur baths
Ball of fire (left cloth);
Sennacherib (burnt but cloth)
Sword over Jerusalem
Glilim
“Terrible ones”
Music in psychiatry
Even shetia (Mars?) (also Mecca)
Daniel & his friends
Mene Tekel - writing on the wall
Sun’s shadow returned   **Elias & Elisha** Sanverim
Magnetism
Static electricity
Artificial breathing
Meteorology
Galvanism
Chariot of fire

**Interplanetary Travel**

The story told in Genesis 6, about the sons of God (B’nei Elim) coming to the daughters of men, is usually explained as referring to the aristocrats that mingled with common people.

In my understanding this is a literary relic dealing with the visit of intelligent beings from another planet. Actually in the rabbinical literature is preserved the stroy of 36(?) persons led by ...... that descended on Mount Hermon. The new arrivals, all males, were probably of gigantic stature; their progeny with women of the earth were giants (Genesis 6). I thought that trilithon of Baalbek, near Hermon, was the work of their hands.

The planet from which they came I would not know to determine. El would refer to Saturn. The great size of the visitors would suggest a smaller body. Because of the strangeness of the idea, I thought to never publishing it. But since I came to it in about 1940-1941, the space age started, UFO were claimed to be vehicles of visitors from other planets (which idea does not find any credence in me), and previous visits to the earth by guests from other systems (other star systems) were expressed without calling for ridicule.

It appears to me that the visitors in expectation of some great catastrophe, moved out from their planet. Actually, their story precedes the story of the Deluge in the Scriptures.

**Angels visit Abraham**

The time of the events connected with the story of the patriarch Abraham is, in my understanding, the end of the Early Bronze or Old Kingdom in Egypt. The catastrophe of Sodom and gomorra—the overturning of the plain, the origin of the Dead Sea, was a catastrophe that ended an era; the origin of the Great (African) Rift or its greater expansion, coincided with those events. The age of the Dead Sea when measured by the amount of salts in its waters and in the supplying sources—is of the order 5,000 years, but could be even less, all depending the various factors (submarine sources, change in concentration of salts in the Jordan, the contribution of the sources on the shores of the sea, besides the main tributaries.)

The visit of “angels”—or B’nei El—to the ten of Abraham would suggest that the interplanetary visitors were still around at the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, or Early Bronze. To me this appears a misplaced memory. I would think that the “visitors” would be suggestive of an earlier time.

But in recent years I chanced to find my old idea concerning Genesis 6, expressed by a Russian astronomer, though he seems to be unaware of the landing at Hermon, he associated a not removed stone in the quarry near Baalbek with “their” effort to leave the earth; he also sugested that the turning of the plain was the work of their hands (atomic explosion) which might be true, considering the element of the “punishment” told in the story of Sodom.

 **Horn Blowing on Yom Kippur**

The blowing of the horn on the New Year and on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is a recretion of the noise that like blowing of the horn was heard at the day of Lawgiving—all over the world. The twisted strata of the earth produced this noise, and as I remarked in *Worlds in Collision*, the noise could also have been produced by the approach of a charged body (Teremin effect).

 **Hamon**

I read these days (April 1967) that infra-acoustic waves can cause death. I thought of the expression that the Assyrians before their death were “permitted to hear the music of the sphere”; also the expression “Hamon” in the prophets relating to the phenomenon; also the Egyptian name of a divinity Hemon.
As I demonstrated in *Worlds in Collision*, Mars was the instrument of the debacle of the Assyrian host. Hamon must be another name for Mars, Maadim, or Aritz, from which is derived the Greek Ares.

# Giant Animals in Hebrew Lore

It is remarkable that travellers of the second and possibly the first millennium before the present era, brought home these stories:

The ruler over the sea animals is Leviathan. His fins radiate brilliant light, its smell is foul.[(1)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/gianim.htm#f_1) Leviathan spouts out water.[(2)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/gianim.htm#f_2) This description, one may guess, is of a whale.

Ziz is the ruler over the birds; it is monstrous in size; its wings are so huge that unfurled they darken the Sun. “Great bird Ziz slaps his wings and utters his cry, so that the birds of prey, the eagles and the vultures, blench.[(3)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/gianim.htm#f_3)The span of the wings of the pterosaurs ranged from 27 feet upwards to an incredible 69 feet, whereas the span of the wings of the large eagles is less than 10 feet.

Behemot (not to be confused with the animal that bears this name at present) is the most notable representative of the mammal kind. Behemot matches Leviathan in strength. It had to be prevented from multiplying and increasing, “else the world could not have continued to exist.” It is deprived of the desire to propagate its kind.

As the above-mentioned travellers could not have visited the American Museum of Natural History on their voyages, nor any other museum of paleontology, nor could they have read modern books on dinosaurs and all their classes, it is puzzling to read their description of the monstrous animals and of their behavior, and also of the weapon used by the largest land animal. In mortal combat between the gigantic beasts, Leviathan kills by a blow of its fins, and Behemot kills by a lash of its tail.[(4)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/gianim.htm#f_4) The modem paleontologists wondered at the largest land animal’s lack of weapons for attack or defense, which would have made it easy prey for every attacker, and supposed that the animal used its tail as its weapon.

Equally interesting is the description of the gigantic female Reem when heavy with young. “Leviathan, Ziz, and Behemot are not the only monsters; there are many others, and marvellous ones, like reem, a giant animal, of which only one couple, male and female, is in existence .... The act of copulation occurs but once in seventy years between them . . . The act of copulation results in the death of the male. He is bitten by the female and dies of the bite. The female becomes pregnant and remains in this state for no less than twelve years. At the end of this long period she gives birth to twins, a male and a female. The year preceding her delivery she is not able to move . . .. For a whole year the animal can but roll from side to side, until finally her belly bursts, and the twins issue forth. Their appearance is thus the signal for the death of the mother reem.”[(5)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/gianim.htm#f_5)

The problem of the statics of the dinosaurs, with their pillar-like legs, vexed modern scholars. The larger species are classified as amphibians, though no adaptation for life in water is found in their fossilized remains; they are classified so because, by wading in water, they would have a lesser load of body to carry. That this does not solve the question is shown above. The animals were apparently not adapted to the life conditions and did not survive.

To be more exact, the animals adapted themselves to conditions, but the Earth changed these conditions completely, and more than once. The variations of the force of gravitation became, more than anything else, fatal to the large dinosaurs.
 **References**

1. L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews,* I (Philadelphia, 1942), p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
4. Ginzberg, I, p. 28.
5. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

# The Burning Bush

It is told in the Book of Exodus that, in advance of the great catastrophes that preceded and accompanied the flight of the Israelites from Egypt, the first sign of the things to come was the experience of Moses in the wasteland of Midian? Sinai? when he saw a burning bush. The bush, to his amazement, was burning, yet the flame did not consume it (Exodus 3:2-4). Should we assume that it was some natural phenomenon, interpreted by Moses as a miracle, we would be put before the choice: either it was a phenomenon of phosphorescence, or some similar radiation, or it was a phenomenon of an electrical nature, such as that known to us as St. Elmo fire. In the first instance a desert bush could glow in the dusk of the day if covered by phosphorus dust; and the desert of Sinai, like southern Israel, abounds in deposits of phosphorus. Irradiated by light during the day, phosphorus continues to glow in the dusk. St. Elmo fire is the visible electrical glow on the tops and extremities of masts of ships, or at the summits and ends of branches of trees; this electrical phenomenon is especially apparent when the atmosphere is charged more than usual by electricity. Neither phosphorescence nor St. Elmo fire are consuming flames; and the miracle of the revelation was the miracle of one of these phenomena,because they are revelations of nature which human genius tries to understand and has succeeded in this until now only very incompletely.

The “miracle” with the bush was followed, according to the story, by more phenomena of a related nature. Moses observed that his hand temporarily turned white, as if afflicted by leprosy, upon keeping it in the dark recess of his clothing. This, too, sounds like luminosity of phosphorescent or radioactive nature.

Assuming that what is described in Exodus 3:2-4 and 4: were phenomena that really did occur, we would think that in these unusual signs the cosmic events that were soon to take place had already their first foreboding. Moses felt an inner call to return to Egypt to announce great happenings and to demand the right of worship for his people there, not yet the permit for them to emigrate. He himself was not yet aware of the great disturbances to come. In *Worlds in Collision* and *Ages in Chaos* I offered evidence that the Earth entered the fabric of a great comet at the time that these events took place. Most probably the celestial prodigy made itself known by irradiating the Earth with the electrical glow of its dispersed trail of thin dust or gases. A great train of meteorites was to follow; but already the precursor of the great and swiftly-moving masses, the thin dust of charged particles, could make the phenomena of phosphorescence and St. Elmo fire rather pronounced. And the future leader of the bondsmen escaping from Egypt, impressed by the glow that does not consume, felt an inner call to return to the land of his birth and to bring there the message of upheavals approaching in swift succession.

It is known that comets glow chiefly by their own light, rather than by the reflected light of the Sun: the spectral analysis of the glow coming from the tails of the comets shows that the light originates there; it shows the so-called lines of emission, whereas reflected glow would produce lines of absorption. Electrical light shining in vacuum, upon meeting some obstacles, may also produce X-rays.

The great discharges exchanged between the head and tail of the comet, retarded in its motion; the terrifying “crashes” *(kolot)* of the bolides *(barad)* on entering the Earth’s atmosphere; the magnetic disturbances; and the electrical phenomena caused by the irregularities of the terrestrial motions—all must have contributed to the increased tensions between the ground and the upper atmosphere, and the radiations, some of them of harmful nature, that filled the air of the entire world. Thus a passage of the Earth through the tail of a comet would result in phenomena the intensity of which would clearly depend on the size and mass of the comet and of its trailing tail, and the closeness of the approach.

It is narrated that when Moses came from hiding in the cloud on Mount Sinai, his face shone (Exodus 34:30,35). This was regarded as a sign of holiness, and actually in Christian times the saints are represented with a halo around their heads. Of Zarathustra it is also said that he was burned by fire, but not consumed by it, during his stay on a mountain.[(1)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/burbush.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22f_1) Mountains themselves often possess a “halo” ; and actually, Charles Beke went to Arabia in 1874 in search of Mount Sinai, and believed to have discovered it in Mount Seir, a mountain with an electrical halo. Michelangelo portrayed Moses on his famous statue, presently in Rome, with horns over his forehead. As many artists, he was misled by the translation of the word *keren* (plural *karnaim),* which in Hebrew can mean both “horn” and “ray.” What the scriptural writer had in mind when he described Moses descending from Mount Sinai was most certainly a halo of rays of light. In the *aggadic* or legendary material not included in the Scriptures, Moses and Aaron, appearing before the Pharaoh, had already faces that were illuminated, or glowed in the dark. The Biblical narrative renders the story of Moses’ descent from the mountain after the lawgiving as the time when he impressed the people in the plain by his head shining in the dark: it was surrounded by rays of light, understood by Michelangelo, and by many others, as “horns” protruding from his head.

As we can gather from the material collected in *Worlds in Collision,* the comet that shone at the end of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt—and caused its downfall—appeared to the peoples of the world at one time as a dragon with a flaming body, at another moment as the head of a bull with horns stretched out towards the earth; these were horns of light. This explains why the Hebrew word “horns” and the word “rays” is the same *(keren, plural karnaim)* can be understood in terms of the phenomena attending the Exodus.

It is also very probable that the great discharges that accompanied the terrestrial catastrophes caused radiation diseases. The great role that leprosy *(zaarath)* took in the medical concern of the priests during the wandering in the desert, and the very description of this so-called “leprosy” that was cured by time and no other medicine, lets surmise that this disease was of radioactive nature. I will discuss the subject of radiation disease separately.

References

1. Dio Chrysostom, *The Thirty-Sixth Discourse,* 40f.

# Matza

The most important item of the ceremonial of Passover is unleavened bread called matza; the feast itself is called the feast of the unleavened bread. Matza is not just one of several equally important other regulations of the festival of Passover: it is the main ceremonial (together with the reading of the Haggada), almost *the* symbol of the chief holiday of the Israelites. The observing of the command to eat only the unleavened cakes during the feast of Passover is ordained in the following terms: “For whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that same shall be cut off from Israel” (Exodus 12: 15). The Book of Exodus explains this bread by the command given on the eve of the departure of the Children of Israel from Egypt:

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations... Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread. (Exodus 12:14)

After they left Rameses and came to Succoth,

And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victuals. (Exodus 12:39)

The fact that the Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry that that night the dough did not leaven, could hardly be the only motif for a command to which the religion of Israel affords such importance. The speed of the Exodus from Egypt was not complemented with the speed of an entry into the Promised Land, but was followed by forty years of aimless wandering in the desert; the haste which saved a few hours needed for the dough to leaven was lost completely in the events of the slow-moving years that followed; the rashness of the Exodus did not even help the Israelites to run away from the pursuing Egyptian army and they would have been destroyed were it not for the sea that parted and let the Israelites pass, only to return then to its strength and engulf the Egyptian hosts. For its part, the haste of the Exodus could have been much more aptly remembered by some act symbolizing the haste of leaving one’s domicile or swiftness of retreat, or celebration of reaching a water barrier and the like; weary loins and the staff of a wanderer would express better the leaving of Egypt; and if the swift going away should be symbolized in food, uncooked victuals or eating while standing could better symbolize the speed than unleavened cakes eaten in a reclining position, as prescribed by the ritual. And the seven-day-long observance of eating unleavened bread hardly harmonizes with the explanation that makes a one-time hurried preparation of bread the motive of it.

The other explanation of the origin of the custom of eating of matza during Passover is found in the Haggada read during the Seder, the evening meal of the first (in diaspora the first two) evenings of the feast. There it is said: “This is the bread of misery that our forefathers ate in Egypt.” This explanation makes matza the replica of the poor bread eaten in the misery of serfdom. Though less popular, it sounds better rationalized. A nation that preserves the memory of the long years of affliction may institute the observance of eating—one week each year—the bread of affliction, *lakhmo anio.* It must, however, be noted that the replica of the bread of affliction is not made to taste unpleasantly and is enjoyed by adults and by children alike. There is another symbolic piece of edibles on the Seder plate, the bitter root, which is supposed to commemorate the bitterness of the days of bondage; it is eaten, however, dipped in honey.

The two explanations contradict each other: according to one of them the unleavened bread was eaten during the many decades of the sojourn in Egypt where the children of Israel were subjugated and carried the yoke of bondage; according to the other explanation this bread was eaten only on the very last night of the sojourn and possibly not even then, but was, for lack of time, made in preparation of the suddenly-undertaken migration.

Being contradictory, the two traditional explanations invite a re-examination of the motives underlying this ancient usage.

The major festivals of the Jewish calendar are connected with the memories of the Exodus, Lawgiving and living in huts during their migration in the desert.Was not some unusual phenomenon connected with the time of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt that could be regarded as more compelling for the origin of the custom than the above-stated motives? A usage of such persistence, predominance and antiquity, must have been instituted, so it seems, to honor some unusual and impressive occurrence. Such an occurrence was the fall of manna.

During the years when the Israelites wandered in the desert after having left Egypt manna fell from the sky. It served as their nourishment in the years when they roamed in the wasteland, in the shadow of death, when nothing budded. The customary explanation of manna as the seed of the tamarisk bush growing in the desert was refuted in *Worlds in Collision,* section *“Ambrosia.”* Manna is called “the bread of heaven,” the bread that fell from the clouds, (Exodus 16: 4) or even from the starry sky.[1](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm#1) It was found by the Israelites daily in enormous quantities, and the Midrashic sources state that “the quantity that fell every day would have sufficed to nourish the people for two thousand years.”[2](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%222) It was ground between stones and baked in pans (Exodus 16:14-34), Numbers 11:7-8). It had the shape of coriander seed, a yellowish color and oily taste.

And the people went round about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it. (Numbers II: 8 )

The fall of manna was also not confined to the desert of wandering. It is said that all the peoples of the East and the West could see it.[3](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%223) And actually we could trace the same memory to many nations of the world. The Scandinavian peoples were destroyed almost to the last in a catastrophe, and in the Fimbul winter that followed, the survivors subsisted on the morning dew.[4](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%224) The Scriptures also have it that “When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.” (Numbers 11:9) The Greeks preserved the memory of manna as that of ambrosia—and it is described in the very same terms as manna. Ambrosia had the taste of oil and barley, or honeycomb; and so did manna.

It is significant in this connection that according to old rabbinical sources, matza is described as having the taste of manna.[5](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%225) From this alone one could deduce that the custom of eating matza was first established in memory of the phenomenon of manna—yet, strangely, this has not yet been done. The fall of manna was a phenomenon of no mean significance. After the catastrophe of the days of the Exodus and in the years ofits aftermath, the Israelites roaming in the desert had no leaven and they lacked salt; and until this day the unleavened bread is produced without salt being added. In the Seder night, when the great miracles are told that accompanied the Exodus and the upheaval in the physical nature, the greatest—the fall of bread from the sky—must be especially honored, it being the food of the multitude that left Egypt, and it would be strange if it would have remained without a memorial in the main feast commemorating the deliverance from Egypt and the preservation of the people, almost brought to complete annihilation by man and by elements alike.

A similar feast was celebrated in Athens during the spring month of Anthesteria—honey and flower were poured into a fissure in the earth. And since the phenomenon of manna was ubiquitous all over the earth, it is of interest and significance to note that also in India, in the *Rig-Veda,* it is said that honey *(madhu)* comes from the clouds.[6](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%226)

In that book is described how edible substances precipitated for a long period of time after the passage of the Earth through the trailing part of the planet Venus, then a comet.[7](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%227)

The planet Venus was deified by all races of antiquity and in *Worlds in Collision* I brought together reports of its being described as a comet from ancient Mexico, where it was called *la estrella que humeava,* “the star that smoked,”[8](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%228) from Babylon, from China and from many other lands and peoples. Manna was a derivative of Venus. To eat it was like eating a portion of the god. Many ancient religions had this mystery of swallowing the god. The Christian religion, too, in the mystery of communion, had the participants eating of their god. Here it is shown how this strange idea originated; it was an element of ancient mysteries that were inherited and then incorporated in the Christian faith. The eating of the body of the god, the miracle of food falling from the sky, the food that sustained life in the wanderers in the desert—these are the wonders that impressed the ancient world and that survived in the ancient cult of matza, and also in the bread of communion, and in the custom of offering cakes to the Queen of Heaven in ancient pre-exilic Israel.

There must have been a special reason why the cakes of unleavened bread should not be implicitly connected with manna. It appears that these cakes became a part of an astral worship. It transpired to the instructed priests of the northern kindgorn of Israel that it was the planet Venus that was an instrument, or as they may also have thought, the cause of the disturbances and upheaval that enabled the Israelite slaves to leave Egypt. In the northern kingdom Jeroboam, by erecting an image of a calf in the temple of Dan and another in Beth-el, said “here are the gods that brought you out of Egypt” and he initiated the Passover service in Dan which in his plan should have served as the gathering place for the Passover week, not only for the population of the northern kingdom, but also for the people of Judah. Thus we see that Passover was a feast also in the worship of Baal; and in *Worlds in Collision* we have shown that the calf was the image of the planet Venus and that Baal was also her name.

At the end of the sixth century before the present era, shortly before the Babylonian Exile, Jeremiah accused the population of Jerusalem: “The women knead dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven, that they may provoke me to anger.” (7:18) The Queen of Heaven, we are informed by many authorities, was the planet Venus. Apparently the knowledge that Venus had something to do with the Exodus made the people of the Northern Kingdom, that of Israel, and then also of Judah, to bake cakes in honor of Venus, the planet, the role of which in the catastrophe of the days of the Exodus is described in detail in *Worlds in Collision.* And when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the Jews who escaped to Egypt spoke of the incense and offerings that were given to the queen of heaven by themselves, and also by their fathers, their kings, and their princes “in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.” “And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her without our men?(44:19)”

The heavenly bread coming from the clouds that were deposited by the comet Venus, the cakes made by the women of Jerusalem to her honor, were in memory and in thankfulness for the miracle she performed for their ancestors: Therefore the women of Jerusalem regarded the prohibition of this usage by the king Josiah and probably also by his son Zedekiah, under the influence of Jeremiah, as an offense for which their temple was destroyed; they went into refuge in Egypt, when the other remnants of the people were carried into Exile in Babylonia.

The custom of bringing bread (flour) and honey to the queen of heaven was practiced also by the Syrians in the second century before the present era, as Lucian tells in his book *De Dea Syria.* And in Greece, on the spring feast of libations of flour and honey were poured into a crevice in the ground, in memory of the flood of Deukalion, in which the population of Greece was destroyed almost to the last; this flood of Deukalion, according to tradition conserved by the fathers of the Church, occurred in the days of the Exodus (Eusebius)

Also in the Western Hemisphere the spring feast in honor of Quetzalcoatl or the planet Venus was observed once in eight years—every eight yers the planet Venus presently returns to the same position in relation to the sun and the earth—the synodic cycle of Venus consists of eight terrestrial years. Venus years were rigorously observed by the Mayas in Yucatan, Aztecs in Mexico, and Incas in Peru.

During the feast of in honor of Venus, bread was baked without salt, with water alone—and Sahagun, the Spanish author who studied the life of the Mayas in the sixteenth century, wrote:

Every eighth year these natives celebrated a feast which they called Atamalqualiztli, which means “feast of bread and water.” For eight days preceding the festival they ate nothing but tamales prepared without salt, nor did they drink anything else but clear water. ... They did not mix anything else with the dough of which they make them (tamali) not even salt...[9](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/matza.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%229)

Here we see the feast of unleavened bread in America dedicated to Venus and was observed on its every return on its synodical cycle. Among the Mayas the feast of the bread was dedicated to the planet Venus, as it was among the women of Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah and before him.

The word “matza” may mean “to find”; the corn of heaven was actually found on the ground.

The people of Israel in gratitude for their salvation in the desert, amidst the outraged elements, in a desert clouded by twilight, burning and waterless, observe the feast of salvation and eat the unleavened bread.

The connection by the people of Judea in the days of Jeremiah of manna and matza with Venus contributed to the separation between the custom and its cause, when religion became a monotheistic form of Judaism. Thus the root of the custom was lost and other explanations were devised and survived for many centuries, despite their obvious inadequacy.

 **References**

1. Psalms 78:23-24; Tractate Yorna 75a.
2. Midrash Tehillim to Psalm 23; Tosefta Sota 4.3.
3. Tractate Yorna 76a.
4. J. A. MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology* (1930), p. 168.
5. Kiddushin 38a.
6. W.H. Roscher, *Nektar und Ambrosia,* (Leipzig, 1883), p. 19.
7. [The synthesis of various edible carbohydrates and sugars from hydrocarbons by bacterial action, or from other, simpler compounds by chemical reaction aided by strong irradiation has been demonstrated experimentally. For instance, see A. J. Swallow, *Radiation Chemistry of Organic Compounds* (Oxford, 1960). V. A. Firsoff (Our *Neighboring Worlds* [1954], p. 208) described how formaldehyde could be produced from water vapor and carbon dioxide in the presence of strong ultraviolet radiation. From formaldehyde sugars, like fructose or glucose, and starches can be produced. See Wong Kee Kuong, “The Synthesis of Manna,” *Pensée* III (1973), pp. 45-46. Carbon dioxide is a major constituent of Venus’ atmosphere.]
8. Bernardino de Sahagun, *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva Espana,* Bk. VII, Chap. 4.
9. Ibid., Appendix to Bk. II.

# Shamir

In the Talmud and the Midrashim there are many references to *Shamir*—unusual qualities were ascribed to it. For instance it reportedly could disintegrate anything, even hard, durable stones. The rabbinical literature describes it as being employed in engraving the breast plate of the High Priest. Among Solomon’s possessions it was the most wondrous. King Solomon was eager to possess the Shamir because he had heard about it from earlier days; knowledge of the Shamir is in fact ascribed by rabbinical sources to Moses. After much search a grain of Shamir the size of a barley-corn was found in a distant country, in the depths of a well, and brought to Solomon. But strangely, it lost its abilities and became inactive several centuries later, about the time the Temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

What was *Shamir*?

In the opinion of medieval authors, Rashi, Maimonides and others *Shamir* was a living creature, a worm.[1](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#1) It was argued that *Shamir* could not have been a mineral because it was active. The Talmud transmits in the name of Rabbi Nehemiah the following description of the engraving on precious stones: The names of the twelve tribes were inscribed on the twelve semi-precious stones of the Urim and Tummim, the breastplate of the High Priest, not by carving, but by writing with a certain fluid and “showing” them to *Shamir,* or exposing them to its action. In the opinion of modern authors, the expression “was shown to *Shamir*”*—*“clearly shows it was the glance of a living being which effected the splitting of wood and stones.”[2](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#2) It is admitted, however, that “in the Talmudic-Midrashic sources it is never explicitely stated that the *Shamir* was a living creature.”[3](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#3) An old source. *The Testament of Solomon,* a work written in Greek, probably in the early third century of the present era,[4](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html%22%20%5Cl%20%224) refers to *Shamir* as a “green stone.” But how could a greenish stone cut the hardest of diamonds with its glance?

“The Shamir is as large as a barley-corn. It was created in the six days of Genesis. There is no substance hard enough to withstand its action”[5](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#5)

Over a hundred and twenty-five years ago a Jewish scholar in Germany published a paper to prove that *Shamir* is a mineral,[6](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#6) but more modern authorities agree with the medieval rabbis and say that they were “undoubtedly correct.”[7](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#7)

The manner in which *Shamir* was kept secure may give us some clue “The *Shamir* may not be put in an iron vessel for safe-keeping, nor ii any metal vessel: it would burst such a receptacle asunder.”[8](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#8) “It is kept wrapped in wool inside a box of lead filled with barley-bran.” This sentence is quoted from the Tractate Sotah 48b of the Babylonian Talmud. “*Oferet*”in the text is properly translated as “lead.” It contains an important clue: folkloristic fantasy would not make a leaden box of a greater resistance than an iron or a gold one: lead is a son metal. Therefore, this must be a description based on fact. And with the knowledge of our age we may easily guess who or what was Shamir: It was a radioactive substance; radium salts, for example, acting upon certain other chemical substances, can emit a luminescence with a yellow-green hue.

The breastplate of the High Priest was engraved in the following manner. The letters were written with ink, and the stones were exposed, one after another, to the “glance” or radiation of the *Shamir.* This ink must have contained powdered lead or lead oxides.[9](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html#9) The parts of the stones which were unprotected by lead were disintegrated without leaving any dust particles which, according to the Tractate Sotah 48b, appeared especially wondrous. Those parts protected by leaden ink stood up in relief on the surface of the gems.

The most precious possession of Solomon, his *Shamir,* did not survive With time it became inactive. The usual version of the story—the *Shamir* “disappeared,” does not correspond to the Hebrew text. The word *batel* used to describe the end, or demise, of *Shamir*[10](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html%22%20%5Cl%20%2210) has only one meaning: “To become inactive.” Therefore, when occasionally it is said that the *Shamir* “vanished” at about the Temple was destroyed, this is incorrect.[11](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html%22%20%5Cl%20%2211) The Hebrew term for a paralyzed member is *ever batel;* a loafer is *batlan;* inactivity is *batala;* all these words come from the root *batel.* In the four hundred years that passed from the building of the first Temple to its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in -587, a radioactive substance could become inactive.[12](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/shamir.html%22%20%5Cl%20%2212)

In 1896, one year after Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen of Wuerzburg discovered X-rays, Antoine Henri Becquerel, son and grandson of the great physicists, discovered radioactivity by accidentally placing a photographic plate near a uranium salt.

Uranium at ordinary temperatures emits an invisible radiation which resembles X-rays, and can affect a photographic plate protected by a thin layer of metal.

Marie and Pierre Curie, led by the conviction that in the midst of pitchblende, their source of uranium, there must be still another element of a much greater radioactivity, dedicated themselves to its isolation and in 1898 they succeeded in bringing forth the new element as its bromide salt-radium.

A new era in physics began with these discoveries. And because of the dramatic circumstances under which the Curies pursued their goal—and the story of the illuminating substance they found one evening when they came to their cold and poorly-equipped laboratory—the last of the three discoveries, radium, captured the imagination of people everywhere.

Radioactivity is used in the treatment of neoplasms, while the destructive work of the uranium bomb thrown on Hiroshima also goes back to the discoveries of Roentgen, Becquerel, and the Curies.

Uranium and radium are elements—the original substances of which the universe is built; they were discovered, not invented. Therefore they were present in nature since the beginning; and since radioactive elements have a limited life-time because of disintegration through radioactivity, there must have been more radioactive elements in the past; and actually, a “radium clock” is used to measure the age of rocks. Radium itself is continuously decaying, yet continuously being replenished from the decay of throium, of which it is a byproduct. The end result of the decay of radium is an isotope of lead. This lead differs from regular lead, and from the ratio of such lead to uranium in rocks, the age of these rocks can be determined. Lead is also the substance that protects best against the damaging effect of radium or other radionuclide irradiation; and thus laboratory radium is preserved in a lead receptacle when not in use for medical or technological purposes.

The information found in ancient sources—that *Shamir* was a greenish mineral, that it was as large as a barley-corn; that it could damage anything, even metals and other minerals, save lead, and the only protection could be found by placing *Shamir* in a leaden box; that it had a “glance” which disintegrated things without leaving filings or dust; that it became inactive after a period of four hundred years—all reveal the true nature of *Shamir.*

 **References**

1. Rashi, *Pesahim 54a;* Maimonides, *Commentary on Abot* 5.6.
2. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews,* (Philadelphia, 1925), vol. V p. 53, n. 165.
3. *Ibid.,* loc. cit.
4. C. McCown, *The Testament of Solomon* (Leipzig, 1922), pp. 105 ff. F C. Conybeare (“The Testament of Solomon,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* XI [1898], p. 12) dated it to ca. 100 C.E.
5. Tractate Sotah 48b of *The Baby Ionian Talmud.*
6. S. Cassel, “Ein archaeologischer Beitrag zu natur- und Sagenkunde,” *Denkschrift der Koeniglichen Akademie gemeinmitziger Wissenschaften in Erfurt,* (19 July, 1854), pp. 48-112.
7. Ginzberg, *Legends,* loc. cit.
8. *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 34
9. [Possibly the ink contained sugar of lead, which is the salt of acetic acid solution—a readily available reagent for the ancients, as acetic acid is the major constituent of vinegar.—F.B.J.]
10. Tractate Sotah (Seder Nashim) 9.2.
11. E.g., Ginzberg, *Legends* I*.* 34.
12. Radium loses about one percent of its radioactivity every 25 years.

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| MagnetismIt would appear that the action of the lodestone must have been discovered very early; a legend tells how a young herdsman in the hills of Magnesia felt the nails of his shoes kept glued to the rock, and thus discovered the phenomenon of magnetism. Since magnetic rock is found in many places, the discovery of its action must have been made in more than one place; yet apparently knowledge of the phenomenon was confined to the initiated, whether the medicine man, yogi, or shaman. Is it for certain that the phenomenon has no reference in the Hebrew Scriptures? One instance, it seems, points to its use by the seer Elisha. In the Book of Kings where the story of his deeds is given, apparently culled from some ancient source no longer extant, the following episode is described: So he [Elisha] went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put it in his hand, and took it.[(1)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/magnet.htm#f_1) Nothing is said as to whether a lodestone was attached to the twig. The onlookers could think that the twig was a wonder wand, and that a stone tied to its end was only for the purpose of approaching the twig to the sunken ax. But we know that a twig would not attract and lift iron, whereas a lodestone would—and much more easily in water than in air, because the weight of the ax would be that much lighter in water. Preoccupation with things electrical and magnetic was a trademark of Elijah and his apprentice and successor Elisha. There remains a margin of surmise in this our explanation of the phenomenon. But should today primitives of Africa or Australia ask a missionary to perform the miracle and lift iron drowned in a stream or a lake, he would impress them greatly if he should repeat the miracle as reconstructed here. Miracle it is, but not of the one who long ago knew its use: magnetism is a miracle with which the Universe is created, and its true nature is still not known, and therefore belongs in the fold of the miraculous. References 1. II Kings 6:4-7.
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Radiation Sickness

The upheaval of the days of the Exodus caused by interplanetary perturbations and discharges, was of an intensity of many thousands of hydrogen bombs. Some of the many consequences were transmutation of elements, nuclear fission, and radiation sickness. A permanent bombardment or the Earth by cosmic rays is going on, resulting in fission of atoms, especially those of nitrogen. But the comparative rarity of cosmic rays makes the results, though spectacular in every case or collision of a ray-particle with an atom or a gene, lacking, in an overall picture, the dramatic element of massive change or transformation. In the abnormal conditions of interplanetary stress and discharges, the elements could go through transformations on a grand scale, the living organisms through the process of somatic changes, and their reproductive cells through mutations that would impress themselves on the formation of the generations to follow.

In the travelogue of the fugitives from Egypt which was ruined in the catastrophe, we read the strange story of the people’s asking for meat, their request having been answered, yet the wrath of the Lord causing them to die as a consequence of eating the flesh of the quail, a large flock of which was flung towards their camp (Numbers 11:31-33). It could have been the consequence of eating meat contaminated by fallout; the flesh of the flock of wild geese could have been so contaminated, and the description of what happened to those who feasted on them in the desert supports such an interpretation.[1](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html#1)

Since antiquity a story was spread that the refugees were people sick with leprosy. Manetho, an author of the third pre-Christian century, equated them with the lepers that were expelled from Egypt with the high priest Osarsiph—yet this story does not refer to the time of the Exodus but, as I will show elsewhere, belongs into the period of Libyan domination over Egypt. It is based on the story of Osorkon,[2](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html%22%20%5Cl%20%222) whose expulsion in the late eighth century took place in the midst of another series of catastrophes, during which portions of the Earth’s ozone layer were stripped away, resulting in the penetration of dangerous amounts of radiation from space, and widespread radiation disease.

We must be impressed with the many regulations concerning the diagnosis, the isolation, the quarantine, and the symptoms of *zaraath* found in Leviticus, and related by the text of that book to the time of the wandering in the desert. It appears from the importance given to the regulations concerning those stricken with *zaraath* that it was a widespread disease in the days of the wandering in the desert. Actually, this disease occupied the minds of the priests to the extent that the code of hygiene for the purpose of preventing disease deals chiefly with *zaraath.*

A recently published report on the contamination of a group of physicists at a research laboratory tells that one of the physicists who was exposed to a larger dose of irradiation contaminated his apartment, his family, and the rugs and furniture; that the rugs and the furniture were burned, yet the neighbors continued to evade the members of the family; and though the physicist after several months was again able to work, the fear of his co-workers was so great that he was coerced to look for a place of work far away from his community, and at the time of the publication of the report was still without a job and could not find a buyer for his house.

Similarly in the Book of Leviticus (Ch. 13) we read of the fear of the community with respect to those affected with *zaraath* and of their banishment from the camp. The fear of the ancients of radiation sickness was not smaller.

*Zaraath* being understood in later times as leprosy, the fear of radiation disease of those times was transferred to those sick with leprosy. Today we read the reports of medical men who work with the leprous, and we find that this disease is one of the less contagious; yet through the ages the lepers were the outcasts, kept outside the camps or any other human settlements, urban or rural. It seems as if the ancient fear of radiation disease was manifesting itself in the later fear of leprosy.

Leprosy does not break out in sudden symptoms. Yet the description we have of *zaraath* in the Scriptures ascribes to this disease a sudden outbreak.[3](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html#3)

A famous case of *zaraath* is narrated in II Chronicles, ch. 26. It affected the king Uzziah.[4](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html#4) In *Worlds in Collision* I narrated in short the episode that preceded the outbreak of the affliction. It was during the planetary upheavals of the eighth century, namely in -747.

According to the Midrashim and Talmud, on the west side of Jerusalem a mountain was split and one of its halves was hurled to the east.[5](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html#5) Flaming seraphim leaped in the air.[6](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html#6) The population fled from Jerusalem in advance of the catastrophe; Uzziah burned incense in the Temple and addressed himself to the Lord in the name of the nation. This was interpreted by the priests as an appropriation of their priestly duties. The punishment that followed was ascribed to Uzziah’s having committed a sin by burning incense in the Temple. The Temple itself was badly damaged by a great breach that rent its wall. This shows that Uzziah was appearing before the Lord in the very moment of great danger. Flaming seraphim, or tongues of fire leaped in the air. The king was stricken with *zaraath.* According to the Book of Chronicles, the signs of *zaraath* “shone on the king’s forehead”[7](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html#7) in these very circumstances when the king was in the Temple usurping the duties of the official intermediary between men and God. It would appear more probable that the sickness which we would be inclined to recognize as radiation sickness, showed itself soon thereafter. The sudden outbreak of the symptoms of leprosy would be even less likely than a sudden outbreak of a sickness which we would think not entirely unexpected under the circumstances.

In Assyria, and in the entire ancient world, a new era was counted from the year -747; in Assyria it was the “era of Nabonassar,” still used many centuries later in astronomical computations. In the Scriptures, too, we find that the time was counted from the days when “the people escaped from before the *raash* (commotion) of the days of Uzziah.”[8](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/radiation.html#8)

The fact that the king who prayed for his people and realm was struck by a disease was regarded as a sign of the Lord’s displeasure. Uzziah was placed in seclusion; and still today on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, close to the bottom of the Valley of Jeshoshaphat, or of the Lord’s Judgment, in Jerusalem, tourists are shown the artificial grotto that looks like an enclosed balcony with supporting columns where, according to the tradition, king Uzziah spent the rest of his reign, within sight of Jerusalem and the Temple’s hill Moriah yet barred from entering.

*Zaraath* covered also the term for leprosy, at least in later times. And it took three thousand years to separate leprosy from the fear ofcontamination it carried among all peoples.

 **References**

1. Cf. the following item in *Newsweek,* November 26, 1956, p. 64: “Historians of the atomic age may one day make a prominent place in their chronicles for some oddly assorted pioneers of progress: the radioactive ducks . . . The ducks once severely upset the stomachs of some Canadian hunters who ate them. A few weeks before, the fowl, on their way north, had fed at an extremely radioactive pond at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.”
2. See R. Caminos, *The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon,* in *Analecta Orientalia* (1956).
3. [E.g., Miriam became “leprous” all of a sudden after she and Aaron approached the pillar of cloud (Numbers 12:5, 10), and recovered seven days later. This course of the disease is quite unlike leprosy.]
4. Cf. Julian Morgenstern, “The Sin of Uzziah,” *Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. XII (Cincinnati, 1937).*
5. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* IV, 262.
6. *Ibid.,* VI, 358.
7. II Chronicles 26: 19. The King James version renders this: “He was leprous in his forehead,” but the Hebrew text has: “*ha-zaraath zarkha”,* meaning “the zaraath shone.”
8. Amos 1:1; Zechariah 14:5.

# Diamonds

Diamond is a form of carbon, differing from common graphite only in its molecular structure. Using extremes of heat and pressure, artificial diamonds have been produced from graphite. By implication it is concluded that naturally found diamonds might have originated from coal, but under what conditions is not known.

Diamonds are regularly found as single crystals with no signs of previous attachment to any other mineral. They are found in several places in the world, in sands and gravels; in South Africa they are found in the “blue ground.” The nature and origin of the “blue ground” is not known; it contains splinters of minerals some of which are of the nature of the rocks in the neighborhood, and some of which cannot be traced to the surrounding formations. But in the neighboring rocks diamonds are not found. Similarly with the gravel and sands: they are only partly related to the rock formations in their vicinity; and diamonds are not found in these formations. Diamond is a form of carbon foreign to the surroundings in which it is found. Thus it is spoken of the “mystery which surrounds the natural origin of this remarkable mineral.[(1)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/diamonds.htm#f_1)

The clouds which encompassed the Earth at the time of the Exodus contained carbon in abundance. There were frequent discharges of potentials at that time between the clouds and the ground. Let us make a surmise: did not diamonds originate in these clouds?

In the Tractate Yoma it is said that precious stones fell every morning with manna from the clouds.[(2)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/diamonds.htm#f_2)

Did diamonds drop from the sky? In this connection significant is the fact that diamonds are occasionally found in meteorites.[(3)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/diamonds.htm#f_3)

The “blue ground” of South Africa was thrown together in a catastrophe: this is well recognized. But the catastrophe appeas to have been of cosmic nature.

If we are to believe the Talmud, diamonds were found in the Desert of Wandering.[(4)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/diamonds.htm#f_4) So far no diamonds are known to have been discovered in the desert of Arabia. If transformation of the carbon of the clouds into diamonds, through powerful electrical discharges, whether originating in the clouds themselves or from other planets, was facilitated by the atmospheric conditions over the desert. Possibly diamonds will yet be found in the desert of Arabia, and also possibly in the sands of the Sahara.[(5)](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/diamonds.htm#f_5)

References

1. Article “Diamond” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 14th edition.
2. Yoma 75a.
3. Diamonds were found in the meteorites which fell in 1886 at Novo\_urei near Penza in Russia; in the stone discovered at Carcote, Peru, and in the iron meteorite found at Canon Daiblo in Arizona. Also “graphitic carbons” found in meteorites are regarded as metamorphosed diamonds.
4. See “The Great and Terrible Desert.”
5. [Alexander Humbold concluded “that the formation of gold veins, and consequently of diamonds, is comparatively of recent date, and scarcely anterior to the destruction of the mammoths.” See J. Timbs, *Curiosities of Science* (London, 1859), pp. 122f. The same conlusion was reached by Sir Roderick I. Murchison in his *Siluria.*]

# The Chariot of Fire

Asking one day a friend of mine, Horace Kallen, the well-known humanist scholar, educator and philosopher who lived in New York, which of the wonders of the Old Testament seemed to him the least plausible, he answered me, who was expecting to hear about Joshua and the sun that stood still, “The carrying of Elijah by a flaming chariot into the sky.”

In the ninth century, as a result of cosmic events, the electrical charge of this planet was highly affected. The ionosphere above the earth was charged to such an extent that leaps of discharge occurred from a cloudless sky. As I proved in Ages in Chaos, the letters found in the Egyptian State Archive of el-Amarna originated in the ninth century, and a very considerable portion of them was written by Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat king of Jerusalem, and theirgenerals. The corresponding texts of the Scriptures prove a very high grade of trustworthiness, even in transmission of orations and dialogues, ascribed to historical personages. This fact encourages to approach with credence the stories of Elijah and Elisha, interwoven in the same parts of the Book of Kings. Incidentally I could show that the change of attitude of Captain Naaman towards the king of Samaria, from bad to good, is substantiated also by texts of the Letters. The Book of Kings ascribes this change to a rather natural cure of the captain by Elisha, who prescribed to the diseased seven baths in the Jordan river: the Jordan is rich with sulfur, magnesium, and brom salts, which enter the river at the Sea of Tiberias, and constitute, after evaporation of water in the Dead Sea, its deposits. Another instance which throws a side-light on the activity of Elisha is the fact that, as I could show, two letters of the collection were written to the Pharaoh by the Great Lady of Shunem (Kings ). She wrote from that city, and sighned “Baalat-Ness”, or “the Lady to whom a wonder had occurred”. Elisha revived her child employing artificial breathing and a “four-cells” contact of his own body with the body of the infant.

The wonders of Elijah were of a peculiar nature: it seems that most or all of them have to do with atmospheric electricity. When a prolonged drought endured for a number of years, he sat on top of Mount Carmel with his head between his knees and from time to time asked his servant whether there was a cloud already seen over the sea. After a while a cloud appeared, approached, and burst into abundant rain.

When a detachment of the king Ahaziah was sent to interrogate him, Elijah, again “on top of the hill” invoked a lightning bolt out of an apparently cloudless sky to strike this group of men. According to the story he repeated this with a second detachment. Characteristically Elijah made all his meteorological and electrical “wonders” from the top of a hill.

Elijah was an “electrical” man, occasionally a living barometer, looking for electrical and magnetic “wonders” to employ in his miracles; in modern times and in modern attire I think of Nikola Tesla, who introduced alternating current and measured the Earth’s electrical charge; he too was a recluse who hardly published anything (of Elijah no prophetic book is known to exist). Tesla was attracted to electricity, was as if sought out by electrical phenomena. Some of his exploits may well be compared to those of Elijah—his most famous were performed from the top of a hill.

Attention should be paid to the fact that summits of certain mountains have an electrical halo, and that there is a permanent flow of electricity as can be demonstrated by a wire that connects two points at different altitudes on the slope of a hill, and that a charged electroscope is quickly discharged by ions, supposedly drifting from above. The enigmatic coolness of mountin tops is caused by an electrical process as I show elsewhere.

The death of Elijah also takes place under circumstances that suggest an electrical phenomenon. The occurrence of the phenomenon known as ball lightning was denied until very recent time, actually measured in decades. Today, the phenomenon belongs into textbooks. A ball of fire is seen sometimes moving rather slowly and then exploding.

In the Second Book of Kings, in its second chapter, the story is told how Elijah had crossed the Jordan with Elisha, his apprentice, when “behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire . . . parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven . . . And Elisha saw him no more . . . he took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back . . .”

The disciples looked for several days “lest peradventure the spirit of the Lord hath taken him and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley,” but they found him not.

The detail about the mantle of Elijah that was left behind, instead of detracting from the verisimilitude of the Biblical episode, tends to support it. It is a well-known phenomenon that a wire may evaporate when an electrical discharge strikes it, yet its envelope of fabric (an insulator) remains intact. Here is what may have happened:

Traveling afoot on the east side of the Jordan, Elijah and Elisha were approached by a lightning ball that separated them; next it exploded, consuming Elijah, yet leaving his mantle unscathed, thus making it appear that it was a fiery chariot that approached them and then carried Elijah “by a whirlwind into heaven.”

It is not claimed here that this was the end of Elijah, only that such a phenomenon could be natural, though very unusual.

# Resuscitation by Mouth-to-Mouth Breathing

When I was a medical student at the University of Moscow (1915-1921), we were taught the art or reviving the drowned or suffocated, or people in shock, by artificial breathing. The patient who had stopped breathing was put in the proper position (in the case of drowning on his stomach, with his tongue pulled out and held by a cloth) and his arms were lifted and then pressed to his ribs, pressure thus being rhythmically applied to his chest.

Once, years later, on a crowded beach, the body of a drowned man was brought from the sea surf. I happened to be in the crowd, and together with another doctor we desperately toiled for almost an hour, until an ambulance arrived. The doctor in the ambulance pronounced him dead—he did not breathe, nor did his heart beat.

After that incident I thought of Elisha’s method of artificial breathing; but many years passed before I read in the American press of a new method—resuscitation by mouth-to-mouth breathing. Since then, the method of mouth-to-mouth breathing has become widely known, and in very many cases people were revived who otherwise would be dead. Only yesterday (of my writing this) I read of a boy of ten who was discovered by his father with his neck caught by the sling of a rope; the father cut the rope and the mother, who happened to be a nurse, applied mouth-to-mouth breathing, keeping him alive until the ambulance arrived. The boy was saved.

In the time of Elijah there lived in Shunem “a great woman.” After years of childlessness she bore a boy.

And when the child was grown, it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father. My head, my head. And he said to the lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.[1](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/mtm.html#1)

The mother put him on a bed and hurried on a donkey driven by a servant, and came to the man of God, Elisha, and begged him to hurry with her to her son. Elisha followed to Shunem, entered the house.

A staff brought in by the seer’s servant, Gehazi, who arrived first, and put it on the child, did not produce any effect. Gehazi “went again to meet him [his master], and told him, saying. The child is not awakened.” Then Elisha entered the house and “found the child was dead.”

And he went up, and lay upon the child and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child vexed warm. Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro; and went up and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.[2](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/mtm.html#2)

He called the Shunamite and said: “Take up thy son.”

The description of Elisha’s miracle makes clear that he did not resurrect the child by a gesture or a word, but by a prolonged procedure, with the seer’s mouth upon the child’s mouth; the exercise was interrupted, the seer, after straightening his body by walking in the house, repeated the procedure, and then the child repeatedly sneezed and the breathing reflex was re-established, and the child was alive again.

The description of the child’s sudden illness makes it appear that he suffered from sun-stroke when in the field with the reapers. A strong headache preceded the lapse into unconsciousness.

The mouth-to-mouth breathing accompanied by rhythmic movements of the body of the healer stretched out on the child’s body, who kept his hands on the child’s hands, and also warmed him by his own body warmth (and the flesh of the child vexed warm”), is an even better method than mouth-to-mouth breathing alone, and should be recommended in emergencies.

The story is apparently not fiction. In *Ages in Chaos* I have quoted from two letters of the great lady of Shunem. These two letters of the el-Amarna collection are the only ones written from Israel by a woman; she must have been a “great lady” if she corresponded directly with the pharaon. As I could show conclusively, these two letters were written from Shunem; and the woman signed them Baalat-Ness, or “she to whom a miracle happened.” From the appellation used in her letters to the pharaon it appears that the fame of the healing reached also the palace of Egypt.

**References**

 II Kings 4:18-20.

 II Kings 34-35

# Sanverim

The book from which I learned the history and practice of hypnosis treated it: as a rather recent discovery, crediting F.A. Mesmer with inventing hypnosis, or “animal magnetism” as he called it.[1](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/sanverim.html#1) But it is very improbable that this natural phenomenon could have evaded the ancients and remained unknown through all the centuries and millennia ofrecorded history: too simple is the application and in no proportion to the mystery of the phenomenon. Many of the practices of the Hindu yogis that go back to ancient times belong to the category of autohypnosis.

In a deep hypnosis it is possible to provoke by a mere verbal order a cataleptic state, hysteria-like paralysis, and illusions. An order can be given that the person in the experiment not be able to lift his arms; in the case of a person subjected to a deeper hypnosis—that he will not be able to see; or if led to some destination, that he should believe that he is in different surroundings.

In the Hebrew Scriptures I find two instances where supposed “miracles” can be recognized as inflicted hypnotical states, consisting of paralysis and somnambulistic illusions. In both of these examples the expression *hikku b’ sanverim—*he (or they) smote with sanverim”—is used to describe the phenomenon.

The first story is found in Genesis, in the narrative of the event shortly preceding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot had in his house as guests two of the Lord’s messengers, or *malakhim,* a word usually translated as “angels” ; but they are called also “men” in the body of the story. When the depraved people of the town demanded the delivery of the guests for their sexual debauchery and tried to force their way inside. Lot vainly negotiated with the people at the door. The messengers opened the door, stretched out their arms, brought Lot inside, and smote the assailants at the door with *sanverim.* Those smitten with *sanverim* groped for the door, unable to find it. The next morning Lot with his family hastily left the city and fled to Zoar. Then followed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The second case where the word *sanverim* is used in the Scriptures is in the Book of Kings. King Ben-Hadad of Damascus conspired to kill the king of Samaria in an ambush, hiding his assassins near a road where the king was to pass. But the king of Samaria was warned repeatedly by the seer Elisha, and would each time select a different route and thus escape the peril. The king of Damascus spoke to his captains and expressed the belief that somebody among them had disclosed their plans to the king of Samaria. They answered him by saying that the seer in Samaria knows what he. King Ben-Hadad, says in his bedroom; in other words, that the king of Samaria is warned by his seer, who is endowed with the gift of telepathy. On hearing this, the king of Damascus sent a detachment to fetch the seer. They found him in the village of Dothan. They were under orders to bring him to Damascus; but the seer smote them with *sanverim* and commanded them to follow him, saying that he would lead them to the man they were seeking. He led them to Samaria. There he opened their sight by ordering them to see again, and they saw; “and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria,” the king’s city. Then Elisha had bread and water set before them and sent them back to Damascus.

The usual translation of the word *sanverim* is “blindness.” Yet in these instances if blindness was meant, the regular word for blindness, *ivaron* should have been used. *Iver* signifies a blind person in many Biblical texts. The Old Testament also knows the ways a person may become blind—slowly as in the case of the patriarch Isaac, or suddenly, as in the case of King Zedekiah, blinded by Nebuchadnezzar. The translation of *sanverim* as blindness is given on the basis of the fact that In both instances the effect was a transient inability to see. But in the story of Lot we have a case of blindness obviously induced by hysteria, affecting simultaneously more than one person.[2](http://www.varchive.org/ce/shamir/sanverim.html#2) In the story of Elisha it is even more obvious that the term refers to hypnotical blindness or illusion. It was inflicted by verbal means, and it was also relieved by verbal means. The fact that the soldiers of Ben-Hadad were made to travel to Samaria believing that they were going to a different destination is also an act that a good hypnotist can perform with a select group of people. Their being sent to remove the seer, whose fame had reached foreign countries, made the men of the detachment well prepared (conditioned) for this feat.

 **References**

1. Its first use is often placed in 1840 when a surgeon working in India applied it for its anaesthetic effect before there was any other method of painless surgery. Ether was introduced for narcosis by C.W. Long in 1842 and chlorophorm by J.Y. Simpson in 1847. Even today there are physicians who apply hypnosis in childbirth.
2. The word *sanverim* is probably not of Hebrew origin; there is no word in Hebrew that is built on the same root. [A Syriac commentary on Genesis interprets the word *sanverim* as “phantasies.” Abraham Levene, *The Early Syrian Fathers on Genesis* (London, 1951) p. 92.—JNS]