
Mystical Concepts in Chassidism

*An Introduction to
Kabbalistic Concepts and Doctrines*

BY

JACOB IMMANUEL SCHOCHET



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Table of Contents

<i>On the Propagation of Chassidism:</i>	
Foreword to Third Edition	7
Foreword to First Edition	25
Foreword to Second (Revised) Edition	27
<i>MYSTICAL CONCEPTS IN CHASSIDISM</i>	
Introduction	31
CHAPTER I: ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND METAPHORS	35
1. Anthropomorphism 35 / 2. Man-Metaphor 39 /	
3. Light-Metaphor 41	
CHAPTER II: TZIMTZUM	47
CHAPTER III: SEFIROT	59
1. Meaning of <i>Sefirot</i> 59 / 2. Order of the <i>Sefirot</i> 66 /	
3. <i>Keter</i> 68 / 4. <i>Chochmah-Binah-Da'at</i> 71 /	
5. <i>Chessed-Gevurah-Tiferet</i> 80 / 6. <i>Netzach-Hod-Yessod</i> 87	
7. <i>Malchut</i> 92 / 8. <i>Iggulim</i> and <i>Yosher</i> 96 /	
9. The <i>Sefirot</i> as Compounds 101	
CHAPTER IV: WORLDS	105
1. The Concept of 'Worlds' 105 /	
2. The Division of the Worlds 108	
CHAPTER V: OROT AND KELIM	117
1. The Concepts of <i>Orot</i> and <i>Kelim</i> 117 /	
2. <i>Or Pnimi-Or Makif</i> 122	
CHAPTER VI: PNIMIYUT AND CHITZONIYUT	127
CHAPTER VII: SHEVIRAT HAKELIM	129
CHAPTER VIII: PARTZUFIM	139
CHAPTER IX: TOHU AND TIKUN	143
CHAPTER X: KELIPOT; CHITZONIM; SITRA ACHRA	147
CHAPTER XI: BIRUR AND TIKUN	151
Bibliography	161
Index	164

נ"ה

זאת נחמתי נעניי כי אמרתך חיתי

לכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

שלי ושלכם שלו הוא

Foreword to Third Edition

On the Propagation of Chassidut

I

On several occasions when discussing mystical concepts of the Kabbalah and Chassidism with my father and teacher ז"ל, he would recall an interesting incident. His first master, Rabbi Joseph Leib Bloch—rabbi and *rosh yeshivah* of my father's native Telz, often referred to Kabbalistic concepts in his ethical discourses. When the rabbi was challenged that these are ideas foreign to his listeners, and often difficult to understand, he would reply: "The *neshamah* (soul) understands!"

This reply was not a cavalier retort. It harbours a profound thought discussed in Chassidism and articulated a century earlier by R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch (the *Mitteler Rebbe*—5534-5588; 1773-1827), as seen in the following episode.

The famed Chassidic sage Rabbi Hillel of Poritz was delegated by R. Dov Ber to visit numerous towns and villages where he would collect funds to redeem coreligionists who had been incarcerated and for other charitable purposes. At the same time

Rabbi Hillel was to encourage and strengthen the religious life of the communities he visited, and he reviewed for them Chassidic discourses he had learned in Lubavitch. The people he met on his travels ranged from the scholarly and perceptive to the quite simple, and this fact raised some doubts in Rabbi Hillel's mind. He asked R. Dov Ber whether to continue reviewing Chassidic discourses for those unable to understand them. The *Rebbe* answered in the affirmative and said:

"The teachings of Chassidism are heard by the *neshamah* (soul). Scripture states 'And flowing streams from *Levanon* (Lebanon)':¹ *Levanon* stands for *Lamed-Bet* [and] *Nun*,² i.e., the *Chochmah* (wisdom) and *Binah* (understanding) in the *neshamah*.³ When the *neshamah* hears, there is a flow and stream in the illumination of the soul which vivifies the body, and this results in a strengthening of the *asey tov* (do good)⁴ relating to the 248 com-

1. Song IV:15. Cf. R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Likutei Torah* IV:71d and V:5d.

2. The word *Levanon* is divisible into two components, each forming a symbolic number: the first two letters (*Lamed-Bet*) form the number 32, alluding to the '32 Wondrous Paths of *Chochmah*' (*Sefer Yetzirah* I:1; cf. R. Moshe Cordovero, *Pardes Rimonim* XII:1ff.); the remaining three letters spell *Nun*, the letter equivalent to the number 50 and alluding to the '50 Gates of *Binah*' (*Rosh Hashanah* 21b; *Zohar* I:4a and 261b). See R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, *Or haTorah—Nev'im*, vol. I:p. 373.

3. Cf. R. Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, *Likutei Levi Yitzchak—Zohar*, vol. II:p. 183, on *Zohar* III:16a (also noting, incidentally, that the *gimatriya*—numerical equivalent—of the word *baLevanon* is the same as that of *Chochmah-Binah*).

4. Psalms XXXIV:15: *sur mera ve'asey tov* (turn away from evil and

mandments [which the Torah enjoins man] to do, and of the *sur mera* (turn away from evil)⁴ relating to the 365 prohibitions [of the Torah].”⁵

II

The difficult and complex concepts and doctrines of Jewish Mysticism are all-pervasive in Chassidism, but this fact must not deter either the teaching or the learning of it. There is a unique merit, an objectively purifying, edifying and invigorating effect, in the very perusal of these sacred texts, as with Torah in general,⁶ even if they are difficult to understand and sometimes not comprehended.⁷

do good). Note, though, that Chassidism emphasizes that after an initial cognizance to avoid wrong-doing (see *Tanya*, ch. 41, and also *ibid.*, ch. 31) man's essential and foremost concentration and involvement should be with the positive aspect of *asey tov*; this will then of itself effect the negative *sur mera*, just as the kindling of light dispels darkness. See *Likutei Torah* V:48b-c; and R. Menachem M. Schneerson, *Likutei Sichot*, vol. I:p. 124f.; vol. II:p. 473f.; vol. V:p. 460f. Cf. also the Baal Shem Tov's comment that the light of Torah (goodness) causes darkness (evil) to disappear, in *Degel Machane Ephrayim, Nitzavim* (see my *The Great Maggid*, ch. XII).

5. R. Menachem M. Schneerson of Lubavitch, *Hayom Yom*, p. 31. Cf. the comment by R. Shmuel of Lubavitch (*Maharash*) quoted in *Sefer Hasichot* 5700, p. 138.

6. Cf. *Kidushin* 30b; *Eliyahu Rabba*, end of ch. VI (on *Menachot* V:8); *ibid.*, ch. XVIII (on *Lamentations* II:19), and ch. XXI (on *Numbers* XXIV:5); *Eliyahu Zutta*, end of ch. IX; *Tikunei Zohar* XXI:49a; *Tzavaat Harivash*, sect. 29 and 51, and notes *ad loc.*; *et passim*.

7. See R. Moshe Cordovero, *Or Ne'erav* V:2; R. Chaim David

This objective and independent potency makes it possible for all to become involved with *Pnimiyut haTorah* (the “inner” aspects of the Torah). The significance thereof is far-reaching, in view of the fact that the precept of *Talmud Torah* (Torah-study) is all-comprehensive, demanding that each and everyone study Torah to the best of his abilities and the utmost of his capacities—on all four levels of the Torah:⁸ *Peshat* (simple meaning), *Remez* (allusion), *Derush* (hermeneutics), and *Sod* (esoterics; mysticism).⁹ The *possibility* of involvement with *Pnimiyut haTorah*, therefore, implies of itself *obligation* of involvement.¹⁰

Azulay (*Chida*), *Avodat Hakodesh*, s.v. *Moreh beEtzba* II:44; and *infra*, note 29. Cf. *Avodah Zara* 19a, and *Tosaphot*, *ibid.*, 22b; *Zohar* I:185a and III:85b; *Sefer Chassidim* sect. 1164, and *Mekor Chessed ad loc.*; Baal Shem Tov’s comment quoted in *Likutim Yekarim*, sect. 3; and R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* II:13.

8. See *Shulchan Aruch* of R. Isaac Luria, s.v. *Keriah beChochmat haKabbalah*. R. Chaim Vital, *Sha’ar haGilgulim* XVI-XVII; *idem*, *Sha’ar haMitzvot*, Introduction; *Hilchot Talmud Torah*, I:4 and II:10.

9. In the context of the Talmudic passage of the “Four who entered the *Pardes* (Garden; Orchard)” —*Chagigah* 14b—the *Zohar* reads the word *Pardes* as an acronym for *Peshat*, *Remez* (or *Re’iyah*), *Derush*, and *Sod*, which are the four levels of meaning and interpretation of the Torah; see *Zohar Chadash*, *Tikunim* 107c; also *ibid.*, 102b; and *Zohar* I:26b, III:110a and 202a. For an example of the application of these four levels of interpretation, and their relationship to Chassidism, see R. Menachem M. Schneerson of Lubavitch, *Kuntres Inyanah shel Torat haChassidut* [presently available in English translation: *On the Essence of Chassidus*] ch. 9-17.

10. See *Hilchot Talmud Torah*, *ad loc. cit.* (*supra*, notes 6 and 8), and also II:2. Cf. R. Chaim Vital, *Sha’ar Ruach Hakodesh*, ed. Tel Aviv 5723, p. 108b; *Tanya*, *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVI.

The advent of R. Israel *Baal Shem Tov*, who revealed and disseminated *Pnimitiyut haTorah* in the form and modes of *Darkey haChassidut* (the ways and practices of Chassidism) and *Torat haChassidut* (the teachings of Chassidism), lent special impetus to the aforementioned. In the famous epistle addressed to his brother-in-law, R. Abraham Gershon of Kotov,¹¹ the Baal Shem Tov recalls a wondrous experience:

“On *Rosh Hashanah* 5507 (1746) I performed the evocation of *aliyat haneshamah* (ascent of the soul to celestial spheres) . . . I saw wondrous things in a vision as I had not seen heretofore since the day I reached maturity. It is impossible to relate and tell, even face to face, what I saw and learned when I ascended there.

“. . . I ascended level after level until I reached the palace of the Messiah, where the Messiah studies Torah with all the *Tannaim* (teachers of the *Mishnah*) and the *Tzadikim* (righteous people), and also the Seven Shepherds¹² . . . I asked the Messiah: ‘When will the master come [to redeem Israel]?’ And he answered:

“By this you shall know it: when your teachings will be-

11. This letter was published first by R. Jacob Joseph of Polnoy (to whom it had been entrusted by the Baal Shem Tov for delivery to R. Abraham Gershon) as an appendix to his *Ben Porat Yosseph*. Subsequently it has been reprinted, in whole or in part, in *Keter Shem Tov* and other works. Cf. *The Great Maggid*, p. 115.

12. Adam, Seth, Methuselah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and David; see

come renowned and will be revealed throughout the world, and 'your springs will be dispersed *chutzah* (abroad; externally)' . . . then the *kelipot*¹³ will perish and it will be a time of propitiousness and deliverance.' . . ."¹⁴

R. Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudylkov, the Baal Shem Tov's grandson and disciple, refers to this letter in his writings and adds:

"This [reply of the Messiah] seems alluded in the verse 'And the children of Israel went out [of Egypt] *beyad ramah* (with uplifted hand; *Exodus XIV:8*). [*Targum Onkelos* renders the translation of *beyad ramah* as] *bereish galey* (openly). *Bereish* is an acronym for R. Israel Baal Shem, and the word *galey* alludes to the time when his teachings shall be revealed and his springs will be dispersed; that is when [Israel] shall come out of exile."¹⁵

III

The Baal Shem Tov's vision in essence reflects an ancient premise of the mystics, as stated in the *Zohar*:

Sukah 52b, and *Shir Hashirim Rabba* VIII: end of 9. Cf. the gloss by *Tzemach Tzedek* in *Likutei Torah* III:33b, and his *Or haTorah-Nevi'im*, vol. I: p. 476 ff.

13. *Kelipot* (shells) is the Kabbalistic term for the aspects of evil; see *Mystical Concepts in Chassidism*, ch. 10.

14. *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 1 (p. 2a-b). For a Chassidic interpretation of this encounter, see R. Joseph Isaac of Lubavitch, *Likutei Diburim*, vol. II, sect. XVI-XVIII (esp. pp. 572 and 618ff.).

15. *Degel Machane Ephrayim, Beshalach*. See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. III: p. 872f.

“‘And they that are wise shall shine as the splendor of the firmament’ (*Daniel* XII:3) with this work of [R. Shimon bar Yochai], i.e., the Book of the *Zohar* (Book of Splendor) . . . And because in the future Israel will taste from the Tree of Life,¹⁶ the *Sefer haZohar*, they will leave the exile with it, in mercy.”¹⁷

“. . . And so many people here below (on earth) shall be sustained (*yitparnessun*) by this work of [R. Shimon bar Yochai] when it will be revealed in the last generation, at the end of days, and in the merit thereof ‘You shall proclaim liberty throughout the land.’ (*Leviticus* XXV:10)”¹⁸

The teachings of the Kabbalah originally were restricted to *yechidei segulah*, a chosen few whose saintliness matched their scholarship and who had mastered the strict prerequisites¹⁹ to

16. In Kabbalistic terminology, the ‘Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’ (*Genesis* II:9) symbolizes the exoteric Talmud and Halachah (which deal with the clarification of what is permitted, fit and pure, and what is forbidden, unfit and impure; in other words, the clarification or ‘knowledge’ of ‘good’ and ‘evil’), and the ‘Tree of Life’ symbolizes the esoteric aspects of the Torah, the Kabbalah. See the sequel of our passage in the *Zohar* (and its exposition in *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVI), and *Zohar Chadash*, *Tikunim* 106c-d; cf. also *Zohar* III:153a; and R. Sholom Dov Ber of Lubavitch, *Kuntres Etz haChayim*, ch. 3, 5 and 11-13, and Appendix III.

17. *Zohar* III:124b, explained at length in *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVI.

18. *Tikunei Zohar* VI:23b-24a. See also *ibid.*, XXI:53b (and the commentary *Kisse Melech ad loc.*; cf. *Zohar* III:153b), and *Zohar Chadash*, *Tikunim* 96c.

19. See *Zohar Chadash*, Bereishit, 6d: ‘One must not reveal the mys-

entering the orchard of mysticism. "The whole science of the Kabbalah had been concealed from all the scholars except for a select few—and even that was in a mode of 'walking secretly' and not publicly, as mentioned in the *Gemara*.²⁰ . . . R. Shimon bar Yochai, too, stated in the sacred *Zohar*²¹ that permission to reveal was

teries of the Torah except to a person that is wise and studied Scripture and Talmud, whose studies endure and he is G-d-fearing and erudite in everything.' Cf. *Chagigah* 11b and 13a; Maimonides, *Hilchot Yessodei Hatorah* IV:13; and *Zohar* III:105b and 244a (with *Nitzutzei Orot* and *Nitzutzei Zohar*, *ad loc.*); and note 20, *infra*.

R. Moshe Cordovero notes that he who wishes to pursue the esoteric teachings of the Torah must first possess some basic knowledge of *nigleh* (the exoteric Torah), the laws relevant to the daily life of the Jew; otherwise he would be like one who 'gazes at the stars, only observing the things above him, and thus failing to see holes right under his feet: ultimately he will fall into a deep pit'; *Or Ne'erav*, part I: ch. 6. Cf. Maimonides, *Moreh Nevuchim*, I: ch. 33-34, and also *ibid.*, ch. 31-32.

To study the mysteries of the Torah before Scripture, Mishnah and Talmud is at best 'like a soul without a body, lacking efficacy and accountability . . . Man must study the wisdom of the Kabbalah, but first his body must be purified. This is effected by practising the *mitzvot* — which serve this purpose [cf. *Genesis Rabba* XLIV:I] and are essential. Only thereafter can the *neshamah* (soul) — The soul of man is a lamp of the Eternal (*Proverbs* XX:27) — radiate in this body like a lamp placed in a glass reflector: shining and invigorating him to understand the mysteries of the Torah and revealing its depths . . .'; R. Chaim Vital, Introduction to *Etz Chayim*.

See also R. Moses Nachmanides' Introduction to his Commentary on the Torah, and R. Dov Ber of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, Tehillim, sect. 258 (*ed.* Kehot, p. 77a). Cf. also *The Great Maggid*, pp. 114-116.

20. See *Pessachim* 119a; *Chagigah* 11b and 13a; *Kidushin* 71a.

21. See *Zohar* III:159a; also *ibid.* II:149a and III:79a; and *Tikunei Zohar*, beginning of Introduction.

given to him and his associates only.”²² This concealment and restriction, however, was to last only to ‘the end of days,’ *i.e.*, to the period immediately preceding the Messianic era.

“The decree against open involvement with *Chochmath ha-Emeth* (the Wisdom of the Truth, *i.e.*, the Kabbalah) was but for a set period of time, namely up until the end of the year 5250 (1490). From then onwards it is called the ‘last generation,’ and the decree was nullified and it is permissible to occupy oneself with the *Zohar*. Since the year 5300 it is a most meritorious precept to be occupied therewith in public, for both the great and the small. As it is by virtue of this merit, and not another, that the King Messiah will come in the future, it is improper to be slothful [with this study].”²³

Indeed, in this context R. Shimon bar Yochai foresaw an ever-increasing revelation of mysticism in the period preceding the Messianic redemption to the point that “when the days of the Messiah will be near at hand even young children will happen to find the secrets of wisdom.”²⁴

22. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVI.

23. R. Abraham Azulay, quoting earlier sages, in his Introduction to *Or haChamah*.

24. *Zohar* I:118a. Cf. Rashi’s commentary on *Song* I:2; and Maimonides’ reference to the restoration of prophecy prior to the Messianic redemption, in his *Igeret Teyman* (see also his *Moreh Nevuchim* II: end of ch. 36). Cf. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. II: p. 588f.

IV

The century following the year 5250—referred to above—witnessed a phenomenal flourishing and revolutionary expansion in the study of, and preoccupation with, the Kabbalah. It was the age of R. Moshe Cordovero, whose expository works—of remarkably lucid style—have become primary sources. Immediately after him followed R. Isaac Luria, the *Ari* ("Lion"), whose all-encompassing teachings soon were recognized universally as final and authoritative and had an impact on the totality of Jewish life.²⁵ It was an age that ushered in an altogether new era: R. Isaac Luria declared that as of then it is not only *permissible* but a *duty* to reveal *Pnimitut haTorah*, the esoteric part of Torah.²⁶

Ever since then there has been a continuous flow of mystic works appearing in print: the writings and teachings of the aforementioned R. Moshe Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria, and of their disciples; commentaries on the *Zohar*; mystical expositions of the Bible and Rabbinic texts; special tracts propagating the principles and premises of the Kabbalah and introducing the novice to them. All these works, mostly written by scholars whose authoritative

25. See R. Joseph Ergas, *Shomer Emunim* I:17.

For the basic difference between the systems of R. Moshe Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria see R. Chaim Vital, *Sefer haChizyoni* II:17; R. Moses Zacuto's glosses on *Etz Chayim* and *Mevo She'arim*, note 2 (*Mevo She'arim*, ed. Tel Aviv 5721, p. 335a); R. Menachem Azarya de Fano, end of Introduction to *Pelach haRimon*. [See also *Sefer Toldot haAri*, sect. VI (ed. Jerusalem 1967, p. 158f.; and cf. also *ibid.* p. 100 note 1, and p. 178f.)]

26. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVI. See R. Chaim Vital, *Sefer Hagil-*

expertise in the Talmudic-Halachic branches of the Torah equalled their mastery of the Kabbalah, stressed the significance of, and need for, an intensive study of *Pnimitiyut haTorah*²⁷ — the very

gulum, ch. 32: “In this our present era, which is the last era, it is necessary to reveal *Chochmat haEmet* (the mystical teachings of the Torah) in order that the Messiah will come, as stated in *Tikunei [Zohar]* that by merit of the *Zohar* the King Messiah will be revealed.”

Cf. also Introduction to *Sha’ar haHakdamot*; *Kuntres Etz haChayim*, ch. 13 and 21, and Appendix III; *Kuntres Inyanah shel Torat haChassidut*, Appendix (p. 19ff.; *On the Essence of Chassidus*, p. 91ff.); *Likutei Sichot*, vol. VII:p. 206ff.

On the obligatory aspect in the study of *Pnimitiyut haTorah* see also *Tanya*, *Kuntres Acharon*, sect. IV (p. 156b); comment by R. Shmuel of Lubavitch quoted in *Sefer Hatoldot-MaHarash*, p. 81; R. Joseph Isaac of Lubavitch, *Kuntres Limud haChassidut*, ch. 10, and his letter published in *Hatamim* I:p. 25ff. (also in *Or haChassidut*, p. 169ff.).

27. See especially R. Isaac de Lattes’ Approbation to the first printing of the *Zohar* (prefacing most editions since); R. Moshe Cordovero, *Or Ne’erav* (parts I-V); R. Chaim Vital’s Introduction to *Sha’ar haHakdamot*; R. Abraham Azulay’s Introduction to *Or haChamah*; R. Joseph Ergas, *Shomer Emunim*; etc. They and many others went to great lengths to refute in detail the various objections raised to an extensive study of mysticism. They state emphatically the admissibility and necessity thereof nowadays, in spite, and precisely *because of* the spiritual decline of our own times (see the incisive parable by R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, quoted in *The Great Maggid*, pp. 117-119, and the analogy offered in *Likutei Sichot*, vol. I, p. 150f.; cf. *Zohar* II:26).

Note also R. Chaim Vital’s resolution of the seeming contradiction between this claim and the restrictive prerequisites referred to above (notes 19-21), by stating: “If we were to apply the prerequisites as strictly as they appear to be, no one would be able to pursue this study unless he had an instructor as great as R. Shimon bar Yochai to resolve all prob-

soul²⁸ of the Torah which animates and illuminates the body of the exoteric tradition.²⁹

However, this open dissemination of the Kabbalah, which began gradually in mediaeval times and expanded drastically from

lems encountered. Thus it seems to me that the *mitzvah* to pursue this wisdom remains in effect, provided one has adopted the following approach: When seeing bewildering passages which may arouse doubts, one must think 'If this matter appears to be vain—it is on *my* account [see *Yerushalmi, Pe'ah* I:1 on Deuteronomy XXXII:47]; that is, I don't understand it because of the deficiency of *my* intellect, and not, Heaven forbid, because the subject-matter is questionable . . . The study [of mysticism] is prohibited only to him who is unable to stand in the Palace of the King and may come to heresy, Heaven forbid, because he thinks himself very wise and without deficiency on his part"; *Kol Ramah* on *Zohar* III:141a (quoted in *Nitzutzei Zohar, a.l.*), and also *Etz Chayim*, ed. Tel Aviv, Introductions, p. 23b f. Cf. Maimonides, *Moreh Nevuchim*, I: ch. 31-34, and III: ch. 26 and 50.

See further the sources cited in the preceding note; the frequent discussion of this theme in *Likutei Sichot* (see index, s.v. *Hafotzat haMayanot; Chassidut; Pnimitut haTorah*); and the anthology *Or ha-Chassidut*.

28. The exoteric and esoteric layers of the Torah are usually compared and referred to as the *body* and the *soul* of the Torah; see *Zohar* III:152a; *Sha'ar haHakdamot*, Introduction; *Kuntres Etz haChayim*, ch. 15. Cf. Maimonides' distinction between the *nigleh* (revealed; exoteric) and *nistar* (concealed; esoteric) parts of the Torah, comparing them to silver and gold respectively; *Moreh Nevuchim*, Introduction (in comment on *Proverbs* XXV:1).

29. On the illuminating aspect of *Pnimitut haTorah* in relation to the other parts of Torah see *Or Ne'erav*, parts IV-V; *Kuntres Etz haChayim*, ch. 21ff.; *Kuntres Torat haChassidut*, *passim*; *Kuntres Limud haChassidut*, *passim*; *Kuntres Inyanah shel Torat haChassidut* (*On the Essence of Chassidus*).

the sixteenth century onward, remained restricted basically to the scholarly world. Two centuries passed since R. Isaac Luria before there was a further development bringing the *Zohar's* vision of the 'end of days' a major step closer to realization.

V

A new era began with the rise of R. Israel Baal Shem Tov who revealed and propagated the teachings of Chassidism. In this new stage mysticism was popularized on a much wider scale. Chassidism made it possible that not only the discerning scholar but *every one* may 'taste from the Tree of Life' and be inspired by it.

The Baal Shem Tov propagated and disseminated ideas and ideals of *Pnimitiyut haTorah* in such ways and manners as could be absorbed by all, by each relative to his own level. During his numerous travels he would address differing audiences with short and seemingly simple comments or parables relating to Torah and the Divine service. His pithy words were easily understood by simple folks at whom they were often directed and set their souls on fire to worship the Omnipresent with renewed vigor and enthusiasm. His words, however, invariably were based on, and contained and alluded to, profound premises and insights of the mystical depths of Torah. His scholarly disciples thus, too, could and would probe these teachings and meditate on them to extricate their inexhaustible lessons relating to themselves at their own level of scholarship and understanding.³⁰

30. See *Degel Machane Ephrayim*, sect. Vayeshev, and beg. of section *Tetzaveh* (*Likutim*); *Likutei Sichot*, vol. III:pp. 874 and 875.

This new approach, of an extensive study of *Pnimityut haTorah*, continued in one form or another through the second generation of Chassidism, led by R. Dov Ber of Mezhirech,³¹ and those following thereafter. Every attempt was made to realize fully the 'dissemination of the fountains of Chassidism *chutzah*'—outside, *i.e.*, even in such places and to such people which at first glance might seem far removed from any relationship with the subject-matters of Chassidism.³² If at first this dissemination had been indirectly, or in a transcendent mode of 'the *neshamah* hears and understands,' this, too, was to change in the course of time.

VI

The *Zohar's* vision of the overall study of *Pnimityut haTorah* is not one of merely a formal acceptance in principle or of a transcendental acquaintance, but of an immanent and all-pervasive understanding and comprehension.

When R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi interprets the *Zohar's* precondition to the Messianic redemption, as quoted above, to mean *limud be'iyun gadol davka*—an *intensive study* of, and *comprehensive deliberation* on *Pnimityut haTorah*,³³ he follows clearly in the footsteps of the classic commentators preceding him:

“And because in the future Israel lemit'am (*will taste*)

31. See *The Great Maggid*, ch. VII.

32. See *Likutei Sichot*, *passim* (*s.v.* *Hafotzat haMayanot; Chassidut; Pnimityut haTorah*).

33. Quoted by R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch in his Introduction to *Biurei haZohar*.

from the Tree of Life—': Note the expression *lemit'am*. It implies that the meanings of the *Zohar's* teachings ultimately will become manifest in a mode of *tuv ta'am* (goodness of taste; good discernment; *Psalms* CXIX:66); to the point that every palate tasting it will desire it, as opposed to he who studies [the *Zohar*] superficially only. The latter will not sense its sweetness, while Scripture states 'Taste and see that the Eternal is good' (*Psalms* XXXIV:9).

"—they will leave the exile with [the *Zohar*]: This is meant to be when they will taste (*i.e.*, discern; comprehend) the meanings of its delightful teachings, as in these our own times which are the 'end of days' and the era of the redemption, as we wrote in section *Vayera* (*Zohar* I: folio) 117, see there."³⁴

R. Sholom Buzaglo writes in his commentary on *Tikunei Zohar*:

"Note the expression 'when it will become manifest below.' This clearly indicates that . . . here below it will not be manifest until the 'last generation,' *i.e.*, the 'end of days,' meaning quite specifically close to the era of the Messiah who will come on this account."³⁵

"Verily, it is now hundreds of years already since the [*Zohar*] was revealed below, yet the descendant of David still has not come. But pay close attention to the text: it

34. R. Sholom Buzaglo, *Hadrat Melech* on *Zohar* III:124b.

35. See also R. Sholom Buzaglo's introductions prefacing *Tikunei Zohar*.

states '*yitparnessun* (they will be sustained; provided for) *by this work*.' The implication is that the profound teachings [of the *Zohar*] will be explicated—according to the premises revealed by R. Isaac Luria.³⁶ . . .

This is what is meant by [the term] *parnassah* (sustenance; provision), *i.e.*, that they will understand and benefit from its light which is 'sweet to the soul and health to the bones' (*Proverbs XVI:24*).

He who studies [the *Zohar* and *Pnimiyyut haTorah*] superficially (*girsu be'alma*) will reap a good reward for his effort and sanctifies his soul in purity, but the special remedy by virtue of which 'you shall proclaim liberty' is when *yitparnessun* (they will be sustained by) and study the meanings of the teachings [of the *Zohar*]."³⁷

VII

The progressive evolution in the manifestation and exposition of *Pnimiyyut haTorah* reached a new milestone in our own age. For now, some two hundred years after the advent of the Baal Shem Tov and the Chassidic Movement, these teachings have been, and continue to be made available not only in systematized form and in intelligible terminology and simplified exposition, but also translated into modern languages. This new development was ini-

36. Cf. R. Chaim Vital, *Etz Chayim* I:5; *Sha'ar haHakdamot*, II; *Shomer Emunim* I:17.

37. *Kisse Melech* on the passage from *Tikunei Zohar* VI:23b quoted above.

tiated by R. Joseph Isaac Schneersohn of Lubavitch,³⁸ and intensified in every conceivable way by א"ח"ל"ל his successor, R. Menachem M. Schneerson of Lubavitch שליט"א.

This latest expansion has in effect removed the last barriers to the fullest and widest possible dissemination of *Pnimitiyut ha-Torah*—"the fountains of Chassidus which were unlocked by R. Israel Baal Shem Tov, who envisaged Chassidus as a stream of 'living waters,' growing deeper and wider, until it should reach every segment of the Jewish People and bring new inspiration and vitality into their daily lives."³⁹

In our own days, thus, the path has been cleared and paved for the realization of R. Shimon bar Yochai's vision that "when the days of the Messiah will be near at hand even young children will happen to find the secrets of wisdom,"—culminating in the era of "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea" (*Isaiah* XI:9) "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother saying 'Know the Eternal,' for they shall *all* know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them!" (*Jeremiah* XXXI:33)⁴⁰

* * *

This book was written in the context and for the purpose of the aforesaid. Its justification is measured by the extent of achieving that end.

38. See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. III:pp. 874-6, and vol. XIII:p. 180; *Kovetz Yud Shvat*, pp. 69-71.

39. Foreword by Lubavitcher *Rebbe* to the English translation of *Tanya*. See also *Likutei Sichot*, vol. XIII:p. 177ff. (in conjunction with the publication of the bi-lingual edition of *Tanya*, London 1975).

40. See *Zohar* III:23a and Maimonides, *Hilchot Melachim* XII:5.

If the need for a new printing indicates some success, there is hardly a more gratifying reward for the author.

The present edition differs from the previous one by minor revisions and additions in both the text and the notes, and supplementary references to works published since then.

J. IMMANUEL SCHOCHET

Toronto, 28 Menachem Av 5739

Foreword to First Edition

This volume is a companion to my translation of *Igeret Hakodesh*, the fourth part of R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi's celebrated *Likutei Amarim-Tanya*. It is an introduction serving two purposes: to acquaint the reader with the general nature and contents of *Igeret Hakodesh*, and to introduce the reader to, and acquaint him with, some basic concepts and doctrines which appear throughout that work.

The paragraphs dealing with the nature and contents of *Igeret Hakodesh* appear also alongside the translation, by way of a brief and general Introduction. The explanatory notes, forming the bulk of this volume, appear here on their own, though numerous references have been made to them in the footnotes of the translation. This separate publication was necessitated by technical difficulties but also serves to emphasize the following point.

The Explanatory Notes deal with profoundly intricate subjects, involving very delicate premises and principles of the teachings of the Kabbalah and Chassidism. An attempt has been made to offer simplified outlines and explanations to the English-reading novice in this field, but the subject-matter is not as simple as may appear here. In Jewish Mysticism, as in other branches of knowledge, there are different schools of learning and interpretation.

These schools differ not only one from another, but sometimes subdivide into further branches within themselves. For example, in the school of R. Isaac Luria which, since shortly after its inception (sixteenth century), dominates the world of Jewish Mysticism, we find, in the very first generation after the passing of its founder, differing interpretations of even so basic a doctrine of that great master as *tzimtzum*.

As the footnotes show, the basic sources of the Explanatory Notes are the writings of R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi, with abundant references to the original writings of the *Zohar* and of R. Isaac Luria. The obvious purpose is to present them in a way that will help clarify the contents of *Igeret Hakodesh*. But it should be noted that the explanations offered in this volume* represent their author's understanding of the subjects. Though he strove to grasp and offer the views and interpretations of R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the reader is reminded that ambition is not necessarily identical with achievement. The involved terminology and subtle phraseology in all the works mentioned often threaten to entrap anyone who cannot claim to belong to the exclusive circle of יודעי ח"ן (adepts in the esoteric science).

Nonetheless, it is hoped that this Introduction will prove successful in its aims, and there remains but to paraphrase the Psalmist with the apology and prayer: "Who can understand (and prevent) errors? Clear Thou me from hidden faults!" (*Psalms* 19:13)

Toronto, 11 Nissan 5728

J.I.S.

* The same applies to the explanations given in the footnotes of the translation.

Foreword to Second (Revised) Edition

The first edition of this introductory tract has been out of print for a long time. The need for a second edition is not only gratifying but also provides an auspicious opportunity to revise and to take into consideration comments and suggestions received since the first printing. This has led to some major changes:

(i) This volume was written and intended as an Introduction to my translation of *Igeret Hakodesh*. But as it has come to be used for general reference, I have followed the suggestion to give it a separate title whilst retaining the original one as a sub-title. For this reason I have omitted from the revised edition the technical parts dealing with the nature and contents of *Igeret Hakodesh* (pp. 11-17 in the first edition of this work) which, in any case, appear in the abbreviated Introduction prefacing the translation. On the other hand, the numerous references to *Igeret Hakodesh*, and to the footnotes of its translation, growing out of the original intent and purpose, are retained.*

(ii) The first three chapters have been entirely rewritten.

* Where the numbering of these footnotes differs between the original editions of the translation (New York 1968 and 1972) and the bi-lingual edition (London 1973), reference is made to both – with the numbers in the bi-lingual edition noted in parentheses.

The other chapters were expanded, and otherwise underwent only minor revisions.

Technical difficulties prevent me, at this time, from adding a few additional chapters on related concepts and doctrines. But this new edition does afford an opportunity to rectify an omission in the first one, namely, to give due acknowledgment to my wife שתליט"א for compiling the helpful indices of both this work and the translation of *Igeret Hakodesh*.

Toronto, 26 Nissan 5731

J.I.S.

*MYSTICAL CONCEPTS
IN CHASSIDISM*

Introduction

This book deals with fundamental concepts and doctrines which appear throughout the writings of Chassidism and are essential for a proper understanding of them. They are concepts and doctrines that have their origins in the basic works of the Kabbalah such as *Sefer Yetzirah* and the *Zohar*-writings. But in these works they appear mostly seminal and rudimentary. They assume their accepted authoritative forms only in the comprehensive expositions of R. Moses Cordovero¹ and R. Isaac Luria.² Thus any attempt to explain these concepts and doctrines as they appear in the writ-

1. Known by the acrostic *REMAK*; 1522-1570. Leader of a prominent Kabbalistic school in Safed; author of *Pardes Rimonim*, *Elima Rabbaty*, *Shi'ur Komah*, *Or Ne'erav*, and many other works. *REMAK* is regarded as one of the most important and lucid expositors and systematists of Jewish Mysticism.

2. Known by the acrostic *ARI*; 1534-1572. Founder and leader of a Kabbalistic school in Safed that soon became the dominant school in Jewish Mysticism, and exerted a profound influence on the whole Jewish world. The intricate system of the Lurianic Kabbalah, which forms the theoretical basis of Chassidic thought, is authoritatively recorded in the multi-voluminous writings of *ARI*'s principal disciple R. Chayim Vital (1543-1620), such as *Etz Chayim*, *Peri Etz Chayim*, *Mevoh She'arim*, *Sha'ar haHakdamot*, *Likutei Torah*, etc.

ings of R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi,³ can be done only in the context of the works of his predecessors. For this reason the reader will find many references to them throughout this book. Where other works prove helpful, and cross-references enlightening to the serious student seeking to delve further into the subject-matter, these, too, are cited in the footnotes.

It is to be remembered that the concepts and doctrines discussed deal with profoundly intricate subjects, often involving difficult and delicate premises and principles which touch upon many basic theological problems. They are discussed here because the marginal notes accompanying the translation of *Igeret Hakodesh* (where these concepts and doctrines appear) could not do justice to them. But even the chapters following should be regarded as merely explanatory notes; as an attempt at simplified outlines and explanations, and nothing more. These outlines and explanations neither are, nor claim to be, complete in, and by, themselves. There are many philosophical questions and problems that are related to, and can be raised about, these various concepts and doctrines which are beyond the scope of this book to deal with. Verily, such an objective would require a much larger volume if not several volumes. Those interested in pursuing the subjects further are referred to readily available works devoted to that

3. Known as the *Rav* (Rabbi), and amongst Chassidim as the *Alter Rebbe* (Elder Rabbi); 1745-1813. Founder and leader of *Chabad*-Chassidism; author of *Likutei Amarim* (*Tanya*), an authoritative revision of *Shulchan Aruch*, *Torah Or*, *Likutei Torah*, etc. (A detailed biography in English is presently available, published by Kehot: New York 1969.)

purpose, often cited in the footnotes, such as the writings of R. Meir ibn Gabbai⁴ and R. Joseph Ergas.⁵

4. One of the first and foremost systematists of the Kabbalah; originally from Spain and later in Egypt. Author of *Avodat Hakodesh*, *Derech Emunah*, and *Tola'at Ya'akov*. *Avodat Hakodesh* is an elaborate introduction to the Kabbalah, dealing with its most important problems and containing profound critical discussions of various philosophical expositions. It should be noted, though, that Ibn Gabbai's works are pre-Lurianic (*Avodat Hakodesh* was completed in 1531, and *Derech Emunah* in 1539).

5. Renowned Talmudist and Kabbalist of the Lurianic school, residing in Livorno and Pisa; 1685-1730. Author of *Minchat Yosef*, *Shomer Emunim*, *Teshuvot Divrei Yosef*, etc. *Shomer Emunim* is written in the form of a dialogue between a mystic (adherent and defender of the Kabbalah) and his rationalist critic, and is a relatively easy philosophical introduction to the main issues and principles of Jewish Mysticism.

Anthropomorphism and Metaphors

1. *Anthropomorphism*

The terminology of Kabbalah and Chassidism, and thus in the expositions following, is highly anthropomorphic. The terms are borrowed from human concepts and the empirical world. The reason is because these are the only type of words that man can use in any meaningful way. The forms of spatial-temporal concepts are imposed upon the mind of man who lives in a spatial-temporal world.

It is for this very reason that the Torah, the Prophets, and our Sages use anthropomorphic language, as it is stated "The Torah speaks in the language of man."¹ For

"Had they limited themselves to abstract terms and con-

1. *Berachot* 31b; *Mechilta*, and *Tanchuma*. on *Exodus* 15:7 and 19:18; *Sifra* on *Levit.* 20:2.

cepts appropriate to G-d, we would have understood neither the terms nor the concepts. The words and ideas used have accordingly to be such as are adapted to the hearer's mental capacity so that the subject would first sink into his mind in the corporeal sense in which the concrete terms are understood. Then we can proceed to an understanding that the presentation is only approximate and metaphorical, and that the reality is too subtle, too exalted and remote for us to comprehend its subtlety.

"The wise thinker will endeavor to strip the husk of the terms (*i.e.*, their materialistic meaning) from the kernel, and will raise his conception step by step until he will at last attain to as much knowledge of the truth as his intellect is capable of apprehending."²

Thus it is to be kept in mind at all times that the terms and concepts need to be stripped of all and any temporal, spatial and corporeal connotations. All and any anthropomorphic notions and concepts, strictly speaking, are non-ascribable to the Divinity, as Scripture states explicitly: "To whom then will you liken G-d? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? . . . To who will you liken Me that I should be equal, says the Holy One." (*Isaiah* 40:18, 25).

This cardinal premise was adopted by Maimonides as the

2. R. Bachya ibn Pakuda, *Chovot Halevovot*, *Sha'ar Hayichud*: ch. 10. Cf. *Otzar Hageonim*, *Berachot*, Responsa no. 357 (I:p. 131), and Comment, no. 271 (II:p. 92); R. Judah Halevi, *Kuzary* IV:5; Maimonides, *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* I:7-12, and *Moreh Nevuchim* I:26, 33, 35f. and 46; *Tanya* II:10.

third in his compilation of the "Thirteen Fundamental Principles of Faith".³

At the same time, however, it should also be noted that the anthropomorphic terminology used in Scripture, by the mystics and by others, is not arbitrary just because it is under the protection of the above qualification. Rather, these terms are carefully chosen and possess a profound meaning.

The Rabbinic-Midrashic and mystical writings abound with references to the idea that the world below in general, and man in particular, are created in the "image" of the "world above".⁴ All the categories to be found in the world below and in man are homonymous representations of, and allusions to, certain supernal concepts and notions *to which they correspond*.

To be sure, there is no likeness whatever between G-d and the creation, and on the supernal levels of the strictly spiritual realm there are no such things as eyes, ears, hands, and so on, nor such activities and affections as hearing, seeing, walking, talking and so on. However, all these spatial-temporal activities and concepts do

3. *Commentary on Mishnah, Sanhedrin*, Intr. to ch. 10. Cf. *Hilchot Teshuvah* III:7; *Moreh Nevuchim* I:36 (and the references to Maimonides, *supra*, note 2).

4. *Midrash Tanchuma*, Pekudei: 3; *Avot de R. Nathan*, ch. 31; *Eccles. Rabba* I:4; *Zohar* I:38a, 140a, 205b; *ibid.* II:20a, 48b, 75bf.; *ibid.* III:65b, 117a; *et passim*. See also *Chovot Halevot*, I:ch. 10, and II: ch. 2, 3 and 5. (Most of these sources are quoted in the discussion of the "correspondence-theory" in J.I. Schochet, "The Psychological System of R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi," parts I and II, *Di Yiddishe Heim*, vol. XI (New York 1970), nos. 3-4.)

symbolise, and, indeed, *for that reason come into being in correspondence* to the original supernal, strictly and purely spiritual, categories.

In a widely-quoted passage, R. Joseph Gikatilla aptly explains this correspondence-relationship by means of the following analogy. When writing the name of a person on a piece of paper, there is surely no likeness, link or relationship between the written letters or words on paper and the physio-mental entity of the person whose name has been recorded. Even so, that writing is a symbol or sign relating to, calling to mind and denoting the full concrete entity of that person.

Thus it is with the anthropomorphic and anthropopathic concepts and terms: There is no concrete or direct link or likeness between them and the meanings they seek to express, but nonetheless, they are corresponding signs and symbols relating to, and denoting, specific categories, notions and concepts that are of a strictly spiritual nature, non-spatial and non-temporal.⁵

5. *Sha'arei Orah*, Sha'ar I (ed. Warsaw 1883, p. 2b). Cf. R. Solomon ibn Aderet, *Chidushei Harashba al Agadot Hashass*, on *Bava Batra* 74b (Jerusalem 1966, p. 90). For a fuller discussion of the mystics' view of anthropomorphisms see R. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Avodat Hakodesh*, part III, esp. ch. 26ff. and ch. 65; R. Moses Cordovero, *Pardes Rimonim*, sect. XXII (*Sha'ar Hakinuyim*), esp. ch. 2; R. Isaiah Horowitz, *Shenei Luchot Habrit*, *Toldot Adam: Bayit Neeman*; (all of which quote R. Joseph Gikatilla). In addition, the whole of R. Moses Cordovero's *Shi'ur Komah* is devoted to this topic. See also R. Joseph Ergas, *Shomer Emunim* I:24f.

R. Isaiah Horowitz (*ad loc. cit.*, p. 10d) makes the interesting point that strictly speaking it is not that "the Torah speaks in the language of man," but — in accordance with the aforesaid — exactly the other

This, then, is the way the anthropomorphic terminology is to be understood.⁶

2. *The Man-Metaphor*

In discussing Divinity relative to the Universe, the favourite metaphor of the mystics (as of many philosophers) is the analogy to man. Theological concepts and the G-d-world relationship, are often explained in terms of the soul-body relationship, and in particular in terms of the various soul-powers, their faculties, functions and manifestations.

The "proof-texts" for this usage are the verse "From my flesh I envisage G-d" (Job 19:26) and the Rabbinic analogy "Just as the soul permeates the whole body . . . sees but is not seen . . . sustains the whole body . . . is pure . . . abides in the innermost precincts . . . is unique in the body . . . does not eat and does not drink . . . no man knows where its place is . . . so the Holy One, Blessed is

way around, because all terrestrial concepts are allusions to supernal ones! Cf. *Peri Etz Chayim*, Sha'ar Hakorbanot, ch. 6, s.v. Berayta de R. Yishmael; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. II, p. 363f.

6. This should be remembered with particular regard to the so-called "erotic" concepts and symbolisms, like the frequent occurrence of terms as "masculine" and "feminine", and "conjunctio" and so on.

In general these denote the aspects of the active, emanating (influencing) category and the passive, receiving qualities and categories, the mode or form of emanation-reception and so forth (see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV, note 9). "The whole universe functions according to the principium of masculine and feminine" (R. Chayim Vital, *Etz Chayim* 11:6). "There are four principles: masculine and feminine (י"ז); Judgment (*Din*) and compassion (*Rachamim*); upper and lower; influencer or

He. . . .”⁷ This, too, in a sense, follows on the above-mentioned principle of a “terrestrial-supernal correspondence.”⁸

But even while an understanding of the soul is helpful in understanding matters relating to the Divinity, this is but an anthropomorphic approximation which cannot be carried too far and needs to be qualified. It must be remembered, as R. Schneur Zalman points out, that in some respects the analogy breaks down, and is completely inadequate:

emanator (*Mashpia'*) and influenced (*Mushpa'*; also called *Mekabel* – recipient). As a rule, the masculine corresponds to compassion, upper and emanator; and the feminine corresponds to judgment, lower and recipient;” *idem.*, *Peri Etz Chayim*, Hakdamah II: end of Derush 2 (ed. Tel Aviv 1966, p. 13a), and *'Olat Tamid*, beg. of Sha'ar Hatefillah (ed. Tel Aviv 1963, p. 2a).

Actually, such terminology is not uniquely Kabbalistic. It may be found in the Talmudic writings –

– [*Bava Batra* 74b: “All that the Holy One, blessed is He, created in His world, He created male and female”; see the commentaries *ad loc.*, and esp. *Chidushei Harashba al Agadot Hashass*, *op. cit.*, pp. 91ff., quoted at length by R. Jacob ibn Chabib in his *Hakotev on Ayin Ya'akov*]

as well as in the philosophical literature [*e.g.*, *Moreh Nevuchim*, Introduction, and *ibid.*, I: ch. 6 and 17, and III: ch. 8 and 12].

R. Schneur Zalman explains at length why the mystics purposely chose such delicate and seemingly peculiar terminology; see *Likutei Torah* V:9a, and *Biurei Hazohar*, ed. R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch (New York 1955), Noach: pp. 6aff. The earlier mystics, too, elaborate on the usage of these particular concepts; see *Pardess Rimonim* XXII:1; *Shi'ur Komah*, ch. 18; *Shenei Luchot Habrit*, *ad loc. cit.* (p. 8df.); *Shomer Emunim* I:26f.

7. *Berachot* 10a; *Midrash Tehillim* (ed. Buber) 103:4, 5 (see notes *ad loc.*); *Tikunei Zohar* 13:28a. See *Shomer Emunim* II:9; *Igeret Hakodesh*, beg. of sect. XV, and sect. XXV and XXIX.

8. See references *supra*, note 4.

"This parallel is only to appease the ear. In truth, however, the analogy has no similarity whatever to the object of comparison. For the human soul . . . is affected by the accidents of the body and its pain . . . while the Holy One, blessed is He, is not, Heaven forbid, affected by the accidents of the world and its changes, nor by the word itself; they do not effect any change in Him. . . ."⁹

Also, "The soul and the body are actually distinct, one from the other, in their very sources, for the source of the body and its essence does not come into being from the soul . . ."¹⁰ Thus while the body may be fully subordinate to the soul, they are nevertheless two distinct entities. In contrast, "in relation to The Holy One, blessed is He, who brings everything into existence *ex nihilo*, everything is absolutely nullified, just as the light of the sun is nullified in the sun itself".¹¹

3. *The Light-Metaphor*

Just as the soul provides a favourite metaphor, so we find that the term "light" is favoured by the mystics to describe the various emanations and manifestations of the Divinity.¹² This term is carefully chosen for a number of reasons. R. Joseph Albo sees in it the following advantages that may analogously be related to G-d:

9. *Tanya*, I, ch. 42.

10. *Ibid.*, II:6.

11. *Ibid.* See at length R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, *Sefer Hachakirah* I:8 (New York 1955, pp. 7b-8b and 26a-b). Cf. *infra*, ch. 2, note 18, and ch. 3, end of section 4.

12. This metaphor, too, like the previous one, abounds in the Talmudic-Midrashic and mediaeval-philosophic writings; see, e.g., *Berachot*

- (i) The existence of light cannot be denied.
- (ii) Light is not a corporeal thing.
- (iii) Light causes the faculty of sight and the visible colours to pass from potentiality to actuality.
- (iv) Light delights the soul.
- (v) One who has never seen a luminous body in his life cannot conceive colours nor the agreeableness and delightfulness of light.
- (vi) And even he who has seen luminous objects cannot endure to gaze upon an intense light, and if he insists upon gazing beyond his power of endurance his eyes become dim so that he cannot see thereafter even that which is normally visible.

By possessing all these qualities, light bears a greater similarity to the things which are free from matter than anything else

17a, 64a and so forth (the concept of *Ziv Hashechinah*; the radiation of the *Shechinah*); *Sifre*, and *Midrashim*, on *Numbers* 6:25; *Pirkei de R. Eliezer*, ch. 3; *Levit. Rabba* ch. 31 (esp. par. 6); *Numbers Rabba* 15:5; etc. See further R. Sa'adiah Gaon, *Emunot Vede'ot* III:10; *Kuzary* II:7-8 and III:17, and especially IV:3; *Moreh Nevuchim* I; ends of ch. 5, 19 and 25, and *ibid.*, ch. 76; also, R. Moses Narboni, *Commentary on Moreh Nevuchim* I:35; and so on. In general, though, the philosophical works use mostly the term *shefa'* (effluence; emanation) rather than *or*; see more on that in R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, *Derech Mitzvotcha, Haamanat Elokut*: ch. 5 (New York 1956, p. 50b f.).

The mystics have a special affinity for the term *Or* because its numerical value (*gimatriya*) is equivalent to that of *raz* (mystery): "Let there be light" (*Gen.* 1:3)—i.e., let there be *Raz* (Mystery; Concealment);

to which such things may be compared, and hence they are compared to light so as to make the matter intelligible.¹³

Likewise, R. Joseph Ergas lists the following advantages:¹⁴

- (a) Light is the most subtle and tenuous of all sense-perceptions.¹⁵
- (b) Light has numerous qualities characteristic of the Divine emanations, as, for example:

- (i) Light is emitted from the luminary without ever becoming separated from it. Even when its source is concealed or removed, thus no longer emitting perceptible light, the previous rays do not remain entities separate from the luminary but are withdrawn with it. This is a unique quality of light which is not shared with any other substance.

- (ii) Light spreads itself instantaneously.

- (iii) Light irradiates all physical objects and is able to penetrate unhindered all transparent objects.

- (iv) Light does not mix and mingle with another substance.

- (v) Light *per se* never changes. The perception of more or less intense light, or of differently coloured lights, is not due to any change in the light *per se* but is due to external factors.

for *Raz* and *Or* are one thing"; *Zohar* I:140a and *Zohar Chadash*, Bereishit:8d; see *Tikunei Zohar* 21:53b, and cf. R. Moses Cordovero, *Or Ne'erav* (Fuerth, 1701), III: ch. 4.

13. *Ikkarim* II:29.

14. *Shomer Emunim* II:11.

15. Cf. *Kuzary* IV:3: "The noblest and finest of all material things..."

(vi) Light is essential to life in general.

(vii) Light is received and absorbed relative to the capacities of the recipient; and so on.¹⁶

But here again, this term is only an homonymous approximation, used by way of metaphor and analogy. It is not to be taken in its full, literal sense. R. Joseph Albo already cautions that "No error should be made to the effect that intellectual light is something emanating from a corporeal object like sensible light."¹⁷ R. Moses Cordovero is still more emphatic in warning that this metaphor must not be carried too far "For there is no image whatever that can be imagined that is not corporeal."¹⁸

Indeed, R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch shows how, in some respects, this analogy, too, evidently breaks down and is inadequate. For example, the emittance of perceptible light from its source is automatic and intrinsically necessary: the luminary cannot

16. Cf. *Tanya* I, ch. 52, and *ibid.*, II:10. See also R. Schneur Zalman, *Torah Or*, *Vayakhel*: 87a-b, and *Siddur 'im Perush Hamilot*, pp. 48a ff. and 164c ff.

Obviously this "descriptive analysis" of light is based on the general human perception—the sense-perception—of it, while an exact "scientific analysis" is not really relevant to our purposes. Apart from the fact that this metaphor is qualified in any case (as we shall see), they are the *empirical perceptions* that make the use of this analogy so attractive and helpful in our context.

17. *Ikkarim*, *ad loc. cit.*; see there at length.

18. R. Moses Cordovero, *Elima Rabbaty*, I:i:9 (p. 4b). See also *Emunot Vede'ot* I:3 and II:2 with regard to light being an accident (as opposed to substance) and having a limit and boundary.

withhold the light. Needless to say that this restrictive quality cannot be ascribed to the emanations of the Omnipotent.¹⁹

In conclusion, then, as the mystics never tire to say, it cannot be mentioned too often or stressed too much that all terms and concepts related to the Divinity must be stripped of all and any temporal, spatial and corporeal connotations and must be understood in a strictly spiritual sense.

19. *Derech Mitzvotecha*, *ad loc. cit.* (*supra*, note 12). See also *Shi'ur Komah*, ch. 3-4.

Tzimtzum

One of the basic theological problems is concerned with the seeming enigma of reconciling G-d with the universe: How can there be a transition from the Infinite to the finite, from pure Intelligence to matter, from absolute Unity or Oneness to multifariousness? Moreover, how do we reconcile the Divine creation or bringing about of the universe and its multifarious parts with the eternal and inviolable absolute perfection of G-d, of whom Scripture affirms “I the Eternal, I have not changed” (*Malachi* 3:6)? In essence, the concepts and doctrines discussed here, and in the chapters following, all relate to these issues.

Creation is often explained in terms of a theory of emanationism: by means of a chain of successive emanations from “higher” to “lower” the finite evolved from the Infinite, and matter evolved from spirit. But this suggestion as it stands is insufficient. To speak of a casual evolutionary process of successive emanations merely begs the question and does not answer it. For regardless of how long this chain of causal evolutions may be, there always remains some relationship, qualitative as well as quantitative, between the effect

and its cause. Just as in a material chain the links are interlocked, connected and interrelated — retaining a basic relationship between the first link and the last one — so, too, would it be in a gradual process of causal evolution. Thus, since the beginning of the chain of emanations is G-d, the Infinite, the aspect of infinity is never really cast off:

Had the world descended from the light of the Infinite according to a gradual descent from grade to grade by means of cause and effect, this world would not, in such a case, have ever been created in its present form — in a finite and limited order — nor, for that matter, even the (spiritual) *Olam Haba* (World-to-Come), the supernal Garden of Eden, or the souls themselves.¹

In a gradual evolution and causal process “The effect is encompassed by the cause, in relation to which it is essentially non-existent . . . Thus, even numerous contractions will not avail to there being matter as dense as earth by way of an evolution from the spirituality of the abstract intelligences, nor even (that most subtle and diaphanous type of “matter”) of the angels.”² Again: “The creation of the worlds is not by way of a development from cause to effect . . . for even myriads upon myriads of occultations and evolutions from grade to grade in a causal process will not avail the development and coming into being of physical matter — not even the matter of the firmaments — out of an evolution from spirit. Rather, it is the power of the blessed *En Sof* (Infinite),

1. *Tanya* I: ch. 48.

2. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX. (See there note 33 in my English translation on the concept of the “angelic matter”.)

the Omnipotent, to create . . . *ex nihilo*, and this is not by way of a developmental order but by way of a 'leap'."³

Hence, that something non-divine and finite should come about, necessitates there being in the process of emanation a "radical step", a "leap" or "jump" (*dilug; kefitzah*) which breaks the gradualism and establishes a radical distinction between cause and effect: a radical act of creation.⁴ Only after that has occurred can we speak of an evolutionary process culminating in finite and material entities. And this principle is at the root of the doctrines of *tzimtzum* and the *Sefirot* introduced by the Kabbalah (and elaborated upon in Chassidism) to solve the problem of creation.

The word *tzimtzum* has two meanings: (1) contraction; condensation; and (2) concealment; occultation.⁵ Though both these meanings apply in our context, the second one does so, perhaps, more than the first. For the doctrine of *tzimtzum* refers to a refraction and concealment of the radiating emanation from the G-dhead, in a number of stages and in a progressive development of degrees, until finite and physical substances become possible. This intricate theory is first treated in detail by R. Isaac Luria.⁶ The basic works of his system all begin with an exposition

3. *Likutei Torah* IV:46c; also *ibid.*, IV:20d.

4. See *Torah Or*, Esther:90a and 116c; *Likutei Torah* V:40b f., 41d and 42b f.

5. See R. Nathan ben Yechiel, *Aruch*, s.v. צמצם (and the additional references in *Aruch Hashalem*, *ad loc.*).

6. Its roots, though, are to be found in the *Zohar*, e.g., I:15a, and *Zohar Chadash*, Vaetchanan:57a.

of *tzimtzum*.⁷ R. Schneur Zalman partly deals with it in *Tanya*,⁸ more extensively in *Sha'ar Hayichud Vebaemunah*,⁹ and above all in *Torah Or and Likutei Torah*.¹⁰

Prior to creation there is but G-d alone. G-d as He is in Himself is called *En Sof*: the Infinite; He that Is Without Limit (End).¹¹ Of G-d as *En Sof* nothing can be postulated except that He is *En Sof*: "High above all heights and hidden beyond all concealments, no thought can grasp You at all . . . You have no known Name

7. E.g., *Etz Chayim*, *Mevoh She'arim*; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*; etc.

8. Especially ch. 21-22 and 48-49.

9. *Tanya*, part II, esp. ch. 3-4, 6-7 and 9-10.

10. Especially *Torah Or*, Vayera:13c ff.; *Likutei Torah* II:51b ff., and V:40b ff. [The discourse in *Likutei Torah* II:51b ff., a major exposition of *tzimtzum*, appears also—with variants and additions—in R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, *Or Hatorah-Vayikra*, vol. II, p. 698ff.]

11. In fact there is a dispute among the Kabbalists whether the term *En Sof* applies to (a) the very Essence and Being of G-d as He is in Himself; or (b) to the Divine Will, i.e., to G-d *qua* First Cause of all beings—while, in turn, there is no term applicable to the very Essence and Being of G-d as He is in Himself (according to the second opinion); see *Pardess Rimmonim* III:1 seq., and R. Menachem Azaryah de Fano, *Pelach Harimon*, *ad loc.*

R. Isaac Luria takes a mediating view, that the term *En Sof* does not apply to the very Essence and Being of G-d as He is in Himself, nor to the Divine Will, but to a level of Divinity which exceedingly excels this latter plane. See at length R. Sholom Dov-Ber Schneersohn, *Yom Tov shel Rosh Hashanah* 5666, sect. XX (New York 1970, pp. 166 ff.), and *infra*, chapter III, note 38.

See also *Likutei Torah* I:7b, where R. Schneur Zalman quotes the works of R. Menachem Azaryah de Fano for the choice in terminology of *En Sof* (That Is Without End) rather than the seemingly more compre-

for You fill all Names and You are the perfection of them all.”¹²

In a mystical way, rather difficult to explain, there is a manifestation or Self-revelation of G-d *qua En Sof* even before the act of creation.¹³ This manifestation is called *Or En Sof* (the Light of the *En Sof*), and we speak of this Light as equally omnipresent and infinite. This distinction between *En Sof* and *Or En Sof* is extremely important and must be kept in mind. For when speaking of *tzimtzum* and the *Sefirot* we relate these to the *Or En Sof*, the Light and Radiation, rather than to the Luminary and Radiator (*Ma-or*), the *En Sof*.

hensive term *En Lo Techilah* (That Is Without Beginning). Cf. *Yom Tov* . . . 5666, p. 165.

12. *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.:17a-b (cf. *Tanya* I, ch. 48 and 51; *Igeret Hakodesh* sect. XII and XX).

The term *En Sof* “indicates that there is no grasping Him, neither by apprehension nor by any thought whatever; He is abstracted and separate from all thoughts. He is prior to all those that were emanated, created, formed and fashioned, and no time of start and beginning applies to Him, for He is continually present and exists for everlasting without any beginning or end whatsoever”; *Etz Chayim* I:1; see also R. Chayim Vital, *Sha’ar Hahakdamot*, end of Hakdamah III. *En Sof* therefore, is an indication of absolute perfection: “*En Sof* means perfection without any deficiency”; *Likutei Torah* IV:16a (quoting *Avodat Hakodesh* I:8, who in turn is quoting R. Azriel of Geronah, *Perush Eser Sefirot*, Responsum 3).

13. The difficulty in this concept is that revelation or manifestation generally presupposes another existent *in*, or *to* whom, this manifestation is directed, while the *En Sof* is the sole omnipresent existent. R. Schneur Zalman offers what he calls a “possible answer” by drawing an analogy to a person speaking to himself: speech is a medium of communication—thus self-revelation—to another outside the self. For man to communicate with himself he need not speak but *thinks* to himself, uses his faculty

Now, "when it arose in the Divine Will"¹⁴ to bring about the world and the creatures, the first act in the creative process was to bring about space in which the Divine emanations and ultimately the evolving, finite world could have a place to exist. This "primordial space" was brought about by a contraction or "withdrawal" and concentration of Divinity into Itself: the omnipresent, infinite Light of the *En Sof* was "withdrawn" into Himself; that is, it was screened, dimmed, hidden and concealed, and where it was dimmed — where this occultation and concealment of the Light occurred — an "empty" place, a "void" (*makom panuy; chalal*) evolved into primordial space. This is the act of the first *tzimtzum*, the radical act of *dilug* and *kefitzah*, as it were: an act of Divine Self-limitation, so to speak, as opposed to revelation.

However, this does not mean that the *chalal* is literally empty and void of all Divine radiation, that the Divine Presence is literally

of thought; in fact, thought is more comprehensive than speech, for some thoughts are difficult to articulate altogether, or would involve a lengthy process before they can be uttered and so on. Speech is merely a form of self-expression and self-revelation, and the lowest form of it at that. Nevertheless, one may still, at times, vest one's thoughts and intellections in distinct and limited letters and words to express them *to oneself*. In some metaphorical sense, analogous thereto, there is a mode of self-revelation of the *En Sof* even prior to creation. See *Likutei Torah* II:52d f.; cf. *Torah Or*, Vayakhel: 87a-b, and *Siddur im Perush Hamilot*, pp. 48a ff. and 164a ff.

14. This phrase is not to be taken in a temporal sense implying a change in the G-dhead, a supposition incompatible with the very idea and concept of the G-dhead and the explicit statement of Scripture that "I, the Eternal, I have not changed" (*Malachi* 3:6). Change depends on time; it is a relative, temporal-spatial concept. But time and space are

and totally withdrawn therefrom. Such interpretation¹⁵ would suggest an illegitimate ascription of spatiality, and hence corporeality, to the Infinite, and violate the principle of omnipresence affirmed in the most literal sense by Scripture¹⁶ and tradition.¹⁷

The *chalal* is metaphorically spoken of as a void in relation to that which is "beyond" or "outside" the *chalal*: "outside" the *chalal* there is a full manifestation of the *Or En Sof* while inside the *chalal* the Light is concealed. The *En Sof*, the Luminary (*Ma-or*)

themselves creations. From our present, temporal-spatial perspective there is a "before" and "after", but not from the eternal, supra-temporal and supra-spatial perspective.

See more on this concept of time (and its relation to creation) in *Etz Chayim* I:1; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, Hakd. III; *Shenei Luchot Habrit*, Toldot Adam: Bet Hashem (Glossary Note, p. 4b); *Shomer Emunim* II:14 ff.; *Tanya* II:7; *Torah Or*, Miketz: 37a; etc. Cf. *Moreh Nevuchim* II:13 and 30 (and also *ibid.*, I:52), and Responsa of R. Menachem M. Schneerson, *Bitaon Chabad* (Kfar Chabad 1971), no. 33:p. 51 f.; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. X, p. 176 f. [For a detailed comprehensive discussion of the problem of time in historio-philosophical context, see *Sefer Hachakirah*, part III (p. 28a seq.) and Addenda (p. 108a seq.).] Cf. also *Keter Shem Tov*, ed. Kehot, beg. of sect. 348; and R. Dov Ber of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, ed. Kehot, Addenda, sect. 23a and 52.

15. There have been some interpretations of this kind. Their inherent difficulties are dealt with critically in *Shomer Emunim* II:34 ff., and *Tanya* II:7.

16. "The whole earth is full of His glory" (*Isaiah* 6:3); "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth, says the Eternal" (*Jeremiah* 23:24)—"I, indeed, i.e., His very Being and Essence, as it were, and not His glory only!" (*Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX and XXV). Cf. *Chovot Halevovot* I:10.

17. "There is no place on earth void of the Divine Indwelling Presence (*Shechinah*)"; *Mechilta de Rashby* (ed. D. Hoffman, p. 2) and

whence the Light issues, Itself is totally unaffected by *tzimtzum*. *Tzimtzum* relates only to the Light of the *En Sof*.

Moreover, even in the Light *per se* there is no real change whatever: it is neither reduced nor removed but merely concealed. Even this concealment and occultation is strictly relative: relative to the void and its subsequent contents, without — strictly speaking — affecting the Light itself in any way. Moreover, in relation to the void there is not an absolute and total withdrawal: some residue or vestige (*reshimu*) of the Light remains in the *chalal*.¹⁸

Despite all these qualifications and the metaphorical interpretation of the withdrawal of the Light, this first act of *tzimtzum* is a radical “leap” (*dilug*) that creates the possibility for a gradual process and evolution of emanations to take place and to culminate in the creation of finite and corporeal entities.

The principal purpose of *tzimtzum* is to create a *chalal* in which the Divine creatures would be able to exist and subsist as opposed to becoming dissolved in the Divine Omneity. The infinite radiation of the Divine Light having been dimmed and concealed, as it were, will now no longer consume and nullify the contents of

Midrash Hagadol-Shemot (ed. Jerusalem 1956, p. 45), on *Exodus* 3:2; see also the other Midrashim on this verse. “There is no place devoid of Him”; *Tikunei Zohar* 57:91b and 70:122b (cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. I and XX). See also the references cited in *Midrash Hagadol*, *op. cit.*, *ad loc. cit.*, and in *Torah Shelemah*, vol. VIII, p. 119, note 39, and *ibid.*, pp. 248-251; *Igarot Ba'al Hatanya*, no. 56 (Jerusalem 1952, pp. 95-8). Cf. *Shi'ur Komah*, ch. 33-34. See my *The Great Maggid*, Kehot: New York 1974, p. 70f. and the references cited there.

18. To be sure, this outline of *tzimtzum* follows the interpretation of R. Schneur Zalman, and is the most stringent in the preservation of the

the *chalal* in the way, for example, that a spark is totally consumed and nullified in the flame itself, or the way the light of a candle would be totally absorbed and nullified in the very intense light of the sun.

In the second phase of the creative process an overt ray or radiation of the Divine Light is made to beam into the primeval space of the *chalal*. This thin ray or "line" (*kav*) irradiates the *chalal* and is the source of the subsequent emanations: it is both the creative and the *vivifying* force of the creation; it is the imma-

unaffectedness of G-d. Its key-concepts are that *tzimtzum* relates to the *Or En Sof*, and not to the *En Sof*; and that even in the *Or En Sof* it is but relative to the creation rather than to the Divine Light *per se*. This follows on the general "acosmic" view of R. Schneur Zalman and his predecessors that *vis-à-vis* G-d there is no change whatever. He constantly quotes, throughout all his works, the liturgical phrase "You were prior to the creation of the world, You are after the creation of the world" in the sense that G-d was, is and remains the sole true reality, and creation does not affect Him in any way implying whatever change. (See *Tanya* I: 20; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VI; *et passim*; quoted *infra*, ch. III, end of section 1.) And thus he follows his ancestor R. Judah Loewe, the *Maharal* of Prague (*Derashot Maharal*, Derushim Naim: Shabbat Hagadol 5349; *ed.* Jerusalem 1968, II:p. 34 f.); and R. Isaiah Horowitz (*Shenei Luchot Habrit*, *Beassarah Maamarot*: ch. 1; p. 30a), in interpreting *Deuteronomy* 4:39 "the Eternal is G-d . . . *there is no other*" in the sense that strictly speaking there is *no other existent* outside G-d. (See *Tanya* II:6. Cf. *Targum Onkelos* on *Exodus* 15:11.)

But, as already mentioned, there have been other interpretations of *tzimtzum* that take a more, or altogether literal view of this doctrine (see *supra*, note 15). For the four types of interpretations that have been suggested at various times, see Responsa of R. Menachem M. Schneerson of Lubavitch, *Bitton Chabad* (Kfar Chabad 1970), no. 31, p. 43.

nence of G-d in creation while the concealed Light is the all-encompassing transcendence of G-d taking in all creation. However, the *kav* itself also undergoes a series of numerous, successive contractions and concealments. Each of these contractions and concealments makes it possible for a successively lower stage or creation to take place, ultimately culminating in the lowest stage and creation represented by this finite, material and pluralistic world. It is by way of this *kav* that the process of successive emanations and causal development takes place. Unlike the first *tzimtzum* — which was by way of *dilug* ("leap") — this development and evolution can be spoken of as gradual and causal.¹⁹

To summarize, *tzimtzum* is "Something in the nature of an occultation and concealment of the flow of the light and life-force so that only an extremely minute portion of the light and life-force should irradiate and flow forth to the lower beings in a manifest way, as it were, to be vested in them and influence and animate them so that they may receive existence *ex nihilo* and be in a state of finitude and limitation."²⁰

"There is, thus, no change whatever in His blessed Self but

19. That is, in a very general sense. More specifically, though, the particular aspects of *tzimtzum* are too numerous to count and are of many diverse kinds. In general, however, there are three levels of powerful and comprehensive contractions and condensations which give rise to the lower three Worlds in which there is the appearance of finite and limited creatures distinct from Divinity; see *Tanya* I:49, and *infra*, ch. IV. Specifically speaking we still make some radical distinctions in the process of *tzimtzum* even after the *dilug*.

20. *Tanya* I, ch. 48.

only for the created entities which receive their life-force . . . through a process of gradual descent from cause to effect and a downward gradation by means of numerous and various contractions (*tzimtzumim*) so that the created entities can receive their life and existence from it without losing their entity. *These tzimtzumim are all in the nature of a "veiling of the Countenance" (Hester Panim), to obscure and conceal the light and life-force . . . so that it shall not manifest itself in a greater radiance than the lower worlds are capable of receiving.* Hence it seems to them as if the light and life-force of the Omnipresent, blessed is He . . . were something apart from His blessed Self . . . Yet in regard to the Holy One, blessed is He, there is no *tzimtzum*, concealment and occultation that would conceal and hide before Him and "the darkness is even as the light" (*Psalms* 139:12) as it is written "Even the darkness does not obscure from You . . ." (*ibid.*). For the *tzimtzumim* and "garments" are not things distinct from His blessed Self, Heaven forbid, but "like the snail whose garment is part of its very self"²¹ (*Genesis Rabba* 21:5)."²²

21. In general, garments are entities separate and distinct from their bearer, but in our context they are not; see commentaries on this *Midrash* (which, incidentally, is much-quoted in mystical works).

22. *Tanya* I, ch. 21; see also *ibid.*, II:6.



Sefirot

1. *Meaning of Sefirot*

Tzimtzum on its various levels brings about a series of numerous intermediary stages between the infinite Light of the *En Sof* and the finite universe, making possible the creation of the finite and pluralistic world. These intermediary stages are generally divided into five classes or grades, referred to as the Five Worlds or Realms. The varying radiations of the Divine Light in these Worlds, becoming ever more intensely screened and obscured from one level to the next, are referred to as the *Sefirot*.

There are four principal aspects: (1) *En Sof*; (2) *Or En Sof*—the Self-manifestation of G-d; (3) the finite world; and (4) the intermediary levels in the successive development of the creative process brought about by means of *tzimtzumim*.

Of the *En Sof*, as mentioned before, nothing can be postulated, except that He is *En Sof*.¹ Names or attributes apply only to mani-

1. See *supra*, chapter II, notes 11-12.

festations, to those aspects of Divinity which are revealed in, and to His creation.² These Divine manifestations or attributes are dimmed radiations from the Light of the *En Sof* and they are called *Sefirot*.³ The *Sefirot* bridge, as it were, the *Or En Sof* with the ultimately evolving world. That is, in order for finite creations to

2. *Exodus Rabba* 3:6: "You wish to know My Name? I am called according to My workings. Sometimes I am called . . .". Cf. *Zohar* III: 257b f., and see also *Kuzary* II:2; *Moreh Nevuchim* I:61; *Pardess Rimoni* 4:10; *Shomer Emunim* II:54 ff.; *Torah Shelemah*, vol. VIII, p. 151, note 179.

"All the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He, His Will and His Wisdom, are designated and called by (their) terms relative only to the upper and lower beings alone"; *Tanya* II:10. In a sense, with respect to the *En Sof*, R. Schneur Zalman goes even beyond Maimonides' definition of the attributes as negations (*Moreh Nevuchim* I:58-60): It is even inappropriate to say that "it is impossible to apprehend G-d", because that would be like saying "of a lofty and profound wisdom that it cannot be touched with the hands because of the profundity of the concept. Surely, whoever would hear such a statement will laugh, because the sense of touch relates and applies only to a physical object that can be grasped with the hand. Truly so, the aspect of intellect and apprehension in relation to the Holy One, blessed be He, is considered as an actual physical action . . ."; *Tanya* II:9. See also the discussion of attributes in *Torah Or*, Bo:60a, and *Likutei Torah* I:6c, and *ibid.*, V:7d. Cf. *Shi'ur Komah*, ch. 57-58.

3. *Sefirot*—plural form; *Sefirah*—singular form. The doctrine of the *Sefirot* is first mentioned in *Sefer Yetzirah*, and is briefly referred to in the Midrash, *Numbers Rabba* 14:12. The word *Sefirah* is variably interpreted as derived from, or related to, *mispar* (number) or *sapar* (to number); *sefer* (book); *siper* (to tell: relate); *sapir* (sapphire; brilliance or luminary; see *Exodus* 24:10, and cf. *Ezekiel* 1:26); *separ* (boundary); and *safr* (scribe). See *Zohar* II:136b f.; *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 12b; *Zohar Chadash*, Yitro, 33b; commentaries of R. Moses Hagoleh and R.

come about, the Light of the *En Sof* vested Itself in the *Sefirot*.⁴ Only by Its prior investment in the *Sefirot* in all the intermediary stages brought about by *tzimtzum* could It be vested in a finite and physical world.⁵

Moses Botaril on *Sefer Yetzirah* I:2; *Pardess Rimonim* 8:2; *Elima Rabbaty* VI:2 (p. 50d f.); *Shi'ur Komah*, ch. 2; *Etz Chayim* 5:5. These interpretations do not conflict with one another, but relate to the various aspects of the *Sefirot* on different levels. As varying manifestations and principles the *Sefirot* are also referred to (in *Zohar* and other works) by other terms suited to the context (e.g., lights, pillars, levels, colours, garments, firmaments, crowns, wreaths, kings, faces, and so on); see *Elima Rabbaty*, *ibid.* ch. 3-12, and *Shi'ur Komah*, ch. 3-12.

The ten sacred Divine Names that one is prohibited to destroy or erase — [see *Shevuot* 35a; Maimonides, *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* VI:1 f. Though there are basically only seven such Names, they are “seven that are ten” as some may appear in different forms; see *Zohar* III:11a f.; cf. *Avot de R. Natan*, ch. 34.] — are usually identified with the ten *Sefirot*: “the *Sefirot* are the Names, and the Names are the *Sefirot*”; see *Zohar* II:42b, and III:288a; *Shenei Luchot Habrit*, Toldot Adam: *Bet Hashem* (p. 3d); *Shomer Emunim* II:67; cf. *Pardess Rimonim*, Sha'ar XX. However, this identification must be qualified. The *Sefirot* and the Names are not fully identical in the plain sense. For the *Sefirot* (as will be explained *infra*, ch. V) are “divisible” into two aspects: *Orot* (Lights) and *Kelim* (Vessels). The Divine Names are to be identified only with the *Orot*, the aspect of the Light of the *En Sof* vested in the *Kelim* of the *Sefirot*, thus not with the *Kelim* or with the *Sefirot* as compounds of *Orot* and *Kelim*; see in detail *Likutei Torah* II:51c, and cf. *Shomer Emunim* II:64 ff.; *Shenei Luchot Habrit*, *ad loc. cit.* See also R. Israel Baal Shem Tov's caveat quoted in *Keter Shem Tov*, Addenda sect. 26, and the notes *ad loc.*

4. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX. (As mentioned in the preceding note, there are two aspects to the *Sefirot*: *Orot* and *Kelim*. Thus the *Sefirot* are to be conceived as “vessels” in which the Divine Light is vested and effects Its workings through them.)

5. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. III.—The doctrine of the *Sefirot* is

The *Sefirot* are thus Divine emanations, various phases in the manifestation of Divinity. As we speak of them in terms of numerous gradations, extreme care must be taken to avoid any fatal misconception of dualism or a plurality in the G-dhead. There is no suggestion whatever that the *Sefirot* are to be taken as entities distinct and separate from the *En Sof*. On the contrary, there is a basic and intrinsic unity between the *En Sof* and the *Sefirot*. This absolute and intrinsic unity has already been stressed in the ancient *Sefer Yetzirah*: "The ten *Sefirot* are without anything (*beli-mah*).⁶ Their end is wedged in their beginning, their beginning is wedged in their end — like a flame bound up in the coal. For the Eternal is One, and there is no second to Him, and prior to One what can you count!"⁷

This simile is re-stated in the *Zohar* with even greater emphasis: "The Holy One, blessed is He, emits ten crowns, supernal

thus essential to an understanding of the principle of creation. *Tzimtzum* and the *Sefirot* explain how it is possible for finite and multifarious creations to come about from an Infinite, Simple (as opposed to compound) One. In numerous, and at times lengthy, arguments the mystics prove from both traditional and philosophical points of view that the doctrine of *Sefirot* is essential to explain the possibility of the creation of the universe as well as the possibility of a subsequent Divine Providence, or that the transcendent G-dhead also be a "personal" G-d; see, e.g., R. Azriel of Geronah, *Perush Eser Sefirot*, Responsa 3-5; *Avodat Hakodesh* I:8, *Pardess Rimonim* 1:8 ff., and 2:6; *Shomer Emunim* I:41 ff., and II: 13 ff. (See also further on, and notes 18-20 of this chapter.)

6. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, beginning of sect. XX. (The word *beli-mah*, taken from *Job* 26:7, denotes that they are not anything substantial and apprehensible; cf. *Pardess Rimonim* 1:1; *Shomer Emunim* I:61.)

7. *Sefer Yetzirah* I:7; see the commentaries *a.l.*, especially the one attributed to Nachmanides.

holy crowns. With these He crowns Himself and in these He vests Himself. He is they and they are He, just as the flame is bound up in the coal, and there is no division there.”⁸ All differentiation is but from *our* perspective and relative to *our* knowledge, while above all is One; all is set in one balance, unvarying and eternal, as it is written “I, the Eternal, I have not changed.” (*Malachi* 3:6).⁹

Maimonides’ statement that with G-d His Essence, His Being and His Knowledge are absolutely one,¹⁰ a simple unity and not a compound one,¹¹ applies equally to all the Divine attributes and to all the holy Names ascribed to Him.¹² It is all an absolute, simple unity which is His very Essence and Being. However, as Mai-

8. *Zohar* III:70a; see also *ibid.*, I:50b f.

9. *Zohar* II:176a; cf. *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 17a. See also *Avodat Hakodesh* I:11-12; *Pardess Rimonim* 5:4; *Shomer Emunim* I:56 ff. and 67, and *ibid.*, II:11 and 57. The *Sefirot* are not some kind of actual intermediaries of intermediating powers. They are *beli-mah*, abstract concepts of Divine manifestations and nothing more. Hence the mystics emphasize and caution to bear this in mind, in particular at the time of prayer. Man addresses the very G-dhead and not any *Sefirot* or Attributes. Thus it is written “whensoever we call upon Him” (*Deut.* 4:7)—upon Him, *i.e.*, to exclude His attributes! See R. Bachya ben R. Asher, *Commentary* on *Deut.* 4:7 and on *Deut.* 11:13; *Pardess Rimonim* 32:2 (where this exclusion is attributed to the *Midrash Sifre*). Cf. R. Isaac bar Sheshet, *Teshuvot Haribash*, responsum 157; and *Likutei Torah* II:51c and III:30d. See also R. Menachem M. Schneerson, *Hayom Yom*, p. 95 (quoted in *Keter Shem Tov*, Addenda, p. 22 note 24).

10. *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* II:10; *Shemonah Perakim*, end of ch. VIII.

11. *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* I:7; cf. *Moreh Nevuchim* I:57.

12. See *Moreh Nevuchim* I:57.

monides stated,¹³ "This matter is beyond the power of speech to express and beyond the power of the ear to hear and the human heart to understand clearly."¹⁴ It is beyond apprehension to apprehend how He unites with them. That is why the attributes of the Holy One, blessed is He, which are the *Sefirot*, are referred to in the sacred *Zohar*¹⁵ as the "Mystery of the Faith"—which is faith that transcends the intellect.¹⁶

The Torah uses human phraseology only to enable the ear to hear what it can understand, and therefore permission was granted to the mystics to speak allegorically of *Sefirot*. It is, by way of illustration, like the unity of the light of the sun in its orb with the solar globe — (the solar globe being the luminary, while the radiation and beam that spreads forth and shines from it is called light). When the light is in its source, in the orb of the sun, it is united with it in absolute unity; for there is but one entity: the body of the luminary which emits light. All the attributes of the Holy One, blessed is He, His Will, and His Wisdom, are designated by these names only in relation to the creatures.¹⁷

This concept of the *Sefirot* or attributes also explains the very reason for creation. For even while the *Sefirot* or attributes are in absolute unity with the G-dhead, they have actual application

13. *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* II:10.

14. *Tanya* II:8.

15. See *Zohar* I:38a, 39a, 152b, 230b, 231a; *ibid.*, II:253a, and III:143a.

16. *Tanya* II: end of ch. 9; see *Likutei Torah* III:68d.

17. *Tanya* II:10. Cf. *ibid.*, ch. 3, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX.

in relation to creation only. Thus to actualise, as it were, these Divine potencies, powers or attributes (*e.g.*, wisdom, kindness, compassion, sovereignty and so on) G-d created the universe in which to manifest them (to have subjects upon whom to express or manifest His kindness and compassion, with whom to manifest His majesty, and so on).¹⁸

In a similar vein, creation also is a means through which G-d is able to manifest His power or potency in finite entities no less than in the infinite — thereby preserving the principle of absolute omnipotence.¹⁹

This does not mean that creation implies a change in the G-dhead, that creation lends the G-dhead a perfection It did not possess before. For all the attributes are eternally of the very Essence and Being of G-d, absolutely one with Him; it is only that they are *manifested* through creation.²⁰ For the *En Sof*, as stated earlier, is “absolute perfection without any deficiency”, and “You were before the world was created, You are since the world was

18. *Zohar* III:69b; *ibid.*, 257b f.; *Pardess Rimonim* 2:6; *Shi'ur Komah*, s.v. *Torah*, sect. XIII: Introd. and ch. 3; *Etz Chayim* 1:1, and *Sha'ar Hakelalim*, ch. 1; *Shomer Emunim* II:12 ff. See, though, note 21 *infra*.

19. *Perush Eser Sefirot*, Responsa 3 and 7; *Pardess Rimonim* 2:6. Cf. *supra* note 5 and the sources cited there, and *Likutei Torah* III:68d.

20. See *Shomer Emunim* II:12 ff., where the author also deals with a number of problems related to this concept. See also R. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Derech Emunah* (an exposition and elaboration of R. Azriel's *Perush Eser Sefirot*, dealing with most aspects relating to the doctrine of the *Sefirot*), *passim*.

21. *Tanya* I: ch. 20; see *supra*, ch. 2, note 18. In effect, thus, we

created'—exactly the same without any change, as it is written 'For I, the Eternal, I have not changed'."²¹

2. Order of the Sefirot

The *Sefirot* are ten spheres or classes²² in the following order: *Keter* (Crown); *Chochmah* (Wisdom); *Binah* (Understanding); *Chesed* (Kindness; Grace; Benevolence); *Gevurah* (Might; Power; Prevalence); *Tiferet* (Beauty), *Netzach* (Endurance; Victory); *Hod* (Splendour; Majesty); *Yesod* (Foundation); *Malchut* (Sovereignty; Kingship). In some schemes *Keter* is omitted from the order of the ten *Sefirot*²³—for reasons to be explained further on; these schemes take *Chochmah* as the first of the ten and insert *Da'at* (Knowledge) as a *Sefirah* after *Binah*.

The total order of the *Sefirot* is generally divided into two

must conclude that in final analysis the 'reasons' suggested for the Divine creation must ultimately break down, and as R. Dov Ber of Mezhirech stated incisively: "The reasons offered by the *mekubbalim* (mystics) for the [Divine] intent in the creation are unsatisfactory in terms of the *true* intent of creation . . . Strictly speaking no reason whatsoever is required . . . Above there is absolute perfection and there is no deficiency whatsoever . . . The root for the source of the creation is the aspect of an essential and simple Will (*Ratzon*), transcending altogether reason and delight," etc.; see in detail R. Hillel of Paritz, *Pelach Harimon*, Shir Hashirim, p. 38b (also quoted in the Maggid's *Or Torah*, Addenda, sect. 37).

22. "Ten and not nine; ten and not eleven"; *Sefer Yetzirah* I:4; see commentaries *a.l.*, and the references cited *supra*, note 3.

23. See note 38 *infra*.

groups referred to as the “three mothers and the seven multiples.”²⁴ That is, the first three are the principal *Sefirot*, the *immot* (mothers)²⁵ from and through which the other seven *Sefirot* issue forth.

When beginning with *Chochmah*, the triad of the first three *Sefirot* is also called *Sechel* (Intellect)²⁶ while the other seven *Sefirot* are called *Midot* (Attributes; Emotive Faculties).²⁷ Another distinction is made by calling the first three the “three *Rishonot*” (the three First Ones, or at times the three Upper Ones), and the other seven are called the “seven *Tachtonot*” (seven Lower Ones).

The “seven Lower Ones” are subdivided into the two triads of *Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet* and *Netzach-Hod-Yesod* (all these six together are called the “six *Ketzavot*”—the “six Extremeties”), and the singular last one of *Malchut*.²⁸ While there are a number of other such groupings and distinctions that abound in the mystical writings²⁹ (and some of these we shall meet up with in the chapters following), the above are the principal or most common ones.

24. *Tanya* I: ch. 3; *par. Sefer Yetzirah* I:10.

25. Sometimes also called the “three fathers,” in the same sense.

26. The faculties of the intellect, at times referred to as the three *Mochin* (Brains).

27. See *Tanya* I: ch. 3. In an extended sense, though, all the *Sefirot* are called *Midot* (Attributes); see *infra*, this chapter, note 149.

28. See *infra*, sections 4-7, and ch. VIII.

29. See, *e.g.*, *Derech Emunah*, ch. 9 (p. 36 f.); *Pardess Rimmonim* I:1-2 and VIII:25.

3. *Keter*

Keter is the highest level or sphere of the Sefirot. The term itself denotes its significance: As a crown is on top of the head and encompasses it, so *Keter* is on top of all the *Sefirot* and encompasses them all. The analogy is carried further: just as the crown is not a part of the head nor of the body, but distinct therefrom, so *Keter* is essentially distinct from the other *Sefirot*.³⁰ It is the first emanation, and as such the "lowest level", as it were, of the Emanator.³¹

That is why *Keter* is called *Temira dechol Temirin* (the most hidden of all hidden),³² and is referred to as *Ayin* (naught).³³ These terms signify the total concealment of the rank of *Keter* due to its supreme sublimity.³⁴ *Keter* is so sublime and concealed that nothing

30. *Etz Chayim* 25:5 and 42:1; see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XVII, XX, and XXIX.

31. *Ibid.*, and see *infra*, note 38.—For another interpretation of the term *Keter* see *Derech Emunah*, ch. 9 (p. 36).

32. *Zohar* I:147a; see *Pardess Rimonim* 5:4 and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XIII.

33. *Zohar* III:256b; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XVII and note 31 (37) *a.l.*

34. In the same sense it is also called *Atik* or *Atika Kadisha* (the Ancient One, or the Holy Ancient One), particularly in the context of the *Partzufim* (see *infra*, ch. VIII). The origin of this term is *Daniel* 7:9, 13 and 22 (*cf. Chagigah* 14a), and it abounds in *Sifra Detzeniyuta* and the *Idrot*. Though *Atik* is essentially a term applied to the *En Sof* (in the sense of being the First Cause, or the Most Ancient Being; also called *Atika dechol Atikin*—the Most Ancient of all Ancients, or *Atik Yomin*—the Ancient of Days; see, *e.g.*, *Zohar* III:288a *ff.*), it is sometimes applied to the highest aspect of *Keter*, *i.e.*, to the very core and essence of this *Sefirah*, because it is the most "ancient" or original emanation from the

can be said or postulated of it. The *Zohar*, therefore, applies to it Ben Sira's dictum:³⁵ "Seek not the things that are beyond you and search not out things that are hidden from you."³⁶

While the other *Sefirot* are sometimes represented by various letters of the alphabet,³⁷ no letter can describe or represent *Keter*.

That is why *Keter* is sometimes excluded from the scheme of the *Sefirot*. It is too sublime to be included. It is a category and class all in itself.³⁸ In fact, it is called the "intermediary" between

En Sof. See *Avodat Hakodesh* I:3, and R. Chaim Vital, *Mevoh She'arim* III:1:1. See also *Torah Or*, Esther, 98c, on the meaning of *Atik*.

35. See *Chagigah* 13a.

36. *Zohar* II:42b and 158a.

37. The four letters of the Tetragrammaton represent the ten *Sefirot*: *Yud*—*Chochmah*; (the first) *Hei*—*Binah*; *Vav*—*Tiferet*, or the unit of the six *Midot* from *Chesed* to *Yesod*; (the latter) *Hei*—*Malchut*. *Keter* is represented by the "thorn" of the *Yud* (thus not by any letter but a mere dot). *Zohar* III:17a, and *ibid.*, 258a, *et passim.*; see *Tanya* III:4; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V.

38. R. Moses Cordovero always counts *Keter* as part of the ten *Sefirot* and excludes *Da'at* as a separate *Sefirah* (see *Pardess Rimonim* 3:1 ff., and *Or Ne'erav* 6:1, par. 5). In the system of R. Isaac Luria, followed by Chassidism, *Da'at* is usually counted as one of the *Sefirot* while *Keter* is excluded (see *Etz Chayim* 23:1, 2, 5 and 8; *ibid.*, 25:6 and 42:1). This controversy evolves around the interpretation of *Zohar* I: beginning of 31b (see *Derech Emet* and other comment. *a.l.*, and R. Chaim David Azulay, *Nitzutzei Orot*, on *Zohar* I:31a; see also *Zohar* III: end of 269a and 289b) where the *peshat* appears to support the opinion of R. Isaac Luria, though R. Moses Cordovero (*a.l.c.*, and see also *ibid.*, 2:3 ff.) interprets otherwise. In fact this has long been a matter of dispute among the earliest Kabbalists. While all are agreed that *Keter* exceedingly excels the *Sefirot* (*Chochmah* to *Malchut*), some say that *Keter* is identical with

the *En Sof* and the *Sefirot*, bridging the gap, as it were: it is the "lowest level" of the Light of the *En Sof* and from it, and through it, issue forth the successive Divine emanations (thus being the very root or soul of the *Sefirot*).³⁹ *Keter* represents the "lever" of Divine manifestations and as such is called *Ratzon Ha'elyon*

the *En Sof* (rather with the *Or En Sof*) and therefore to be excluded from the scheme of *Sefirot*. Others, however, state that *Keter*, too, is an emanation and effect having a cause just like the other *Sefirot* and, hence, is to be counted among them. (See the discussion of these issues in *Pardess Rimmonim* 3:1 ff., and *Etz Chayim* 42:1.) The view of R. Isaac Luria is a third opinion to the effect that *Keter* is somewhere in between *Or En Sof* and the *Sefirot*, part of both, and bridging or linking them: the "lowest" level of the *En Sof* as well as the very root or source of the *Sefirot* following. Thus on the one hand it is an aspect of the *Or En Sof* and excluded, and on the other, it is part of the ten *Sefirot* (see *Etz Chayim a.l.c.*; what appears to be a similar view is that expounded by R. Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov, *Sefer Haemunot* IV: end of ch. 10—discussed in *Pardess Rimmonim* 3:3, though with the mistaken reference to IV:1—and by R. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Avodat Hakodesh* I:2-3). This issue (and the related problems as, e.g., how can one speak of "higher" and "lower" in relation to the *En Sof*, or how can one relate the actual essence of the *En Sof* to *Keter*, and so on) relates to the disputed issue whether the term *En Sof* itself has reference to the actual Essence and Being of G-d as He is in Himself, or to G-d *qua* First Cause (see *supra*, ch. II, note 11); for a wider discussion of all this see *Torah Or*, Vayechi: 105a; *Likutei Torah* V:8a f., and also *ibid.* II:53b; and *Yom Tov shel Rosh Hashanah* 5666, sect. XX, pp. 166ff.

In the context of the aforesaid, R. Isaac Luria adds that when speaking of the essential *Sefirot-Keter* is included, but when speaking of their general aspects (*Chitzoniyut* of the *Sefirot*) *Keter* is omitted and *Da'at* is inserted instead; see *Etz Chayim* 23:5 and 8, and *Likutei Torah* III:49c; cf. *Torah Or*, a.l.c., and *Likutei Torah* II:46c and V:8a. Cf. note 76 *infra*.

39. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XVII, XX and XXIX.

(the Supreme or Abyssal Will) of G-d: not a particular will focused on some specific goal but the original Divine Willingness (*Ratzon*) underlying the creative will; it is the “Will of all wills,”⁴⁰ the “essence-will” or the “will to will,” as it were, which precedes all powers or attributes (*i.e.*, the *Sefirot*).⁴¹

4. *Chochmah-Binah-Da'at*

These three Sefirot form a triad, in abbreviation called *ChaBaD*. Analogous to them are the three faculties in man's intellect of the same names, *i.e.*, wisdom, understanding and knowledge. *Chochmah* is the root of the succeeding attributes.

That is why it is called *Reishit* (Beginning).⁴² *Chochmah*

40. *Zohar* III:129a and 288b.

41. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXIX. Thus when we speak, *e.g.*, of the Torah as the blueprint for the world (*Genesis Rabba* I:1; *Zohar* I:5a), *Keter* would be the Supreme Will underlying this blueprint, the very source of origin of the Torah. This is the meaning of the frequent phrase (*e.g.*, *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. I, and notes 37-8 *a.l.*) “the Torah derives from *Chochmah* but its source and root surpasses exceedingly the rank of *Chochmah* and is called the Supreme Will.” That is, Torah is an expression of Reason or the Divine Wisdom (*Chochmah*). Reason is focused towards achieving a certain goal. But the very purpose of achieving that goal transcends the rational faculty and underlies it. When reason achieves its goal it fulfils a higher aim: the realisation of some deep-seated, innermost desire or will. This innermost desire or will is the Abyssal or Supreme Will (see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXIX, note 22 (24)).

42. *Zohar* I:3b, *et passim*. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V and the references cited in note 76 (82) *a.l.* *Chochmah* is called *Reishit* regard-

represents the first creative activity of G-d;⁴³ it is the initial Divine instrument of actual creation. The *En Sof*, through the mediation of *Keter*, is "vested" in *Chochmah*, and thence begins creation.⁴⁴ Thus it is written:⁴⁵ "You have made them all *be-Chochmah*"; and "the Eternal has founded the earth *be-Chochmah*". *Be-Chochmah*⁴⁶ may be translated in two interrelated ways, both of which are significant in our context. The first sense is *with*, or *by*, *Chochmah*; thus *Chochmah* is the *instrument* and *hyle* of creation.⁴⁷ Everything derives from *Chochmah*. *Chochmah* is immanent in everything (albeit in ever-increasing concealment) and animates everything, as it is

less of whether *Keter* is counted or not. When *Keter* is included we speak of two spheres that are called *Reishit*: *Keter* and *Chochmah* (as alluded in the first word of the Torah: *Be-Reishit*, i.e., Two (categories of) *Reishit*); see *Zohar* I:31b.

43. Thus in relation to *Keter* which is *Ayin*, *Chochmah* is called *Yesh* (a substance); see *Pardess Rimonim* 5:4; *Tanya* I, ch. 2 and II:9. See also R. Dov Ber of Mezhibezh, *Maggid Devarav Leya'akov*, ed. Kehot, sect. 176, and his *Or Torah*, *Kedoshim*, p. 82a.

44. See *Tanya* I: ch. 35; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. IV, note 20* (25).

45. *Psalms* 104:24; *Proverbs* 3:19.

46. The same applies to the first word of the Torah: *Be-Reishit* (*Reishit* referring to *Chochmah*, as said); see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V, notes 22 and 76 (82) ff.

47. See *Nachmanides* on *Genesis* I:1, and cf. *Moreh Nevuchim* II:30. —The term *hyle* is applied here to *Chochmah* in the extended sense of *Chochmah* being the basic "substance" of creation that can be referred to as *yesh* (cf. note 43 *supra*). Strictly speaking the term *hyle* relates to *Keter*, for "*Keter* is like unto the prime matter that is called *hyle* which contains within it — in potency, though not *in actu* — the root of all four elements"; *Etz Chayim* 42:1; see also R. Chaim Vital, *Arba Meot Shekel Kesef* (ed. Tel Aviv 1964), p. 94a-b.

written "*Chochmah* gives life to them that have it" (*Ecclesiastes* 7:12).⁴⁸

The second sense is in *Chochmah*. This means that in *Chochmah* is founded the creation, and the possibilities of all further beings exist there in *potentia*.⁴⁹ Thus the word *Chochmah* is interpreted to mean ח"כ מ"ח, the "potentiality" of "what is".⁵⁰ *Chochmah* is the *seed* of creation, the beginning and first revelation of creation.

However, *Chochmah* is so concentrated and compact that it is not apprehensible in itself. In itself *Chochmah* is a state of obscurity (*mocha setima*—the concealed brain). Among the letters of the Tetragrammaton which symbolise all the *Sefirot*, *Chochmah* is represented by the first letter, the *Yud*⁵¹—a small, simple, non-descriptive point; and it is referred to as Eden⁵² of which it is said⁵³ "no eye has seen it".⁵⁴ Thus there is little that can be said of *Chochmah*, for which reason *Chochmah*, too, is referred to as *ayin* (naught).⁵⁵

48. See *Tanya* I:ch. 18; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XIV and XVII.

49. *Ibid.* (note 48 *supra*), and *Tanya* I: ch. 19; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V, note 22. "All the lower ones are rooted and compounded in *Chochmah*, which is the mystical principle of 'you have made them all in *Chochmah*'"; *Etz Chayim* 25:1.

50. The letters of the word חכמה make up ח"כ מ"ח; *Zohar* III:235b. See also *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 4a and 69:112b; *Zohar Chadash*, 34b-c and 100a ff.; *Tanya* I: ch. 3.

51. See note 37, *supra*.

52. *Zohar* III:290a; see also *ibid.*, II:90a.

53. See *Berachot* 34b; *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 12a.

54. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V, and notes 16 ff. *a.l.*

55. See *infra*, note 63; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XI. Cf. *Tanya* I: ch. 19.

The *potentia* of *Chochmah* is brought out from total obscurity and externalised in *Binah*, the next *Sefirah*.⁵⁶ This will be understood by drawing on the analogy to the faculties of the human intellect: *Chochmah* corresponds to an intuitive flash of intellectual illumination: the original idea *per se*. It is the seminal idea, the "inner thought", the details of which are not yet differentiated and externalised; they are not yet processed but intensely concentrated in the intuitive flash. When cogitating on the idea, its details and implications will become revealed; the idea will be understood. The individuations concealed in the original flash are then externalised and become manifest in the mind. The hidden intellect is apprehended by the intellectually cognising subject. This is the faculty and state of *Binah* (understanding).⁵⁷

Binah is really the expansion and elucidation of *Chochmah*. *Chochmah* is informed in *Binah*, and "becomes known solely through *Binah*."⁵⁸ The standard definition of the faculty of *Binah* is "To understand or derive one matter out of another matter."⁵⁹

Among the letters of the Tetragrammaton *Binah* is represented by the *Hei*.⁶⁰ Unlike the simple non-dimensional point of *Yud*, the

That is, essentially, in itself, *Chochmah* is still called *ayin*, though in relation to *Keter* it is *yesh* (note 43 *supra*).

56. *Tanya*, I: ch. 3; cf. *Zohar* I:15b.

57. *Tanya* I: ch. 3; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V.

58. *Tikunei Zohar* 22:63b.

59. The process of induction-deduction; *Chagigah* 14a; *Zohar Chadash* 4a. Cf. *Sifre* on *Deut.* 1:13; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV and note 70 (87) *a.l.*

60. See *supra*, note 37.

Hei is a more concrete letter: it has dimensions of length and width signifying the dimensions of explanation, understanding and manifestation.⁶¹ Therefore the *Zohar* refers to the *Sefirot* of *Chochmah* and *Binah* as "The dot (*Chochmah*) in the palace (*Binah*),"⁶² symbolising the meaning of these categories and their relationship.

However, *Chochmah* and *Binah* by themselves are abstract. The concept is there and it is clear in the mind. But it is only in the mind, internally, while externally it is inaudible and invisible.⁶³ On its own, when in the mind, it does not lead to any conclusion, it is not fully realised. The concept, wisdom and understanding, are a potential power that needs to be, but has not yet been, actualised.⁶⁴ Moreover, strictly speaking, *Chochmah* and *Binah* are two separate faculties: the intuitive flash of intellectual cog-

61. *Tanya* III:4; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V. Cf. *Zohar* II:158a.

62. *Zohar* I:6a; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V, note 15.

63. That is why *Deut.* 29:30 ("the hidden things are unto the Eternal") is applied to the *Sefirot Chochmah* and *Binah*; see *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 17a. Thus all three, *Keter-Chochmah-Binah*, are on a plane of *AYiN*: A—*Keter*, Y—*Chochmah*, N—*Binah*; *Tikunei Zohar* 42:81b; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XI, note 11. See also *Zohar* I:1b, and *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, Hakd. I. Cf. notes 43 and 55 *supra*; and see my notes on the Maggid's *Or Torah*, Vayera (ed. Kehot, Addenda, p. 177).

64. See *Moreh Nevuchim* II:4 to the effect that wisdom or reason does not produce motion. The intellect which forms and develops an idea, and the ability to move to act upon this idea, will not produce motion without the existence of a desire (emotive disposition) for the object of which an idea has been formed. Cf. also *Shemona Perakim*, ch. 2, to the effect that every action or acting upon, originates in the appetitive faculty of the soul, thus in the emotive dispositions (*Midot*) of man. Hence it is *Da'at*, as essence of the *Midot*, that is the volitive power

nitition (*Chochmah*) may be there, and so is the power of induction-deduction — (*Binah*), the power of understanding this flash. But how are they joined? How does the “dot” come to, and become externalised and informed in, the “palace”?

These two states — the union of *Chochmah* with *Binah*, and the practical implementation of the informed concept — are effected by the faculty of *Da'at*. However, just as we are speaking of two states, effects or “activities” at two different levels, so we must speak of two categories of *Da'at* — that is, *Da'at* on two planes: *Da'at Elyon* (Upper or Superior *Da'at*) and *Da'at Tachton* (Lower or Inferior *Da'at*).⁶⁵

The etymological meaning of *Da'at* is attachment or union.⁶⁶ Thus *Da'at* is the unifying principle that brings together and joins the faculties of *Chochmah* and *Binah*. This unifying principle is called *Da'at Elyon*, for it transcends *Chochmah* and *Binah*; it is a direct derivative or aspect of *Keter*,⁶⁷ the Supernal Will that wishes and seeks — and hence is able to effect — the union of *Chochmah* and *Binah*.⁶⁸

moving to action, or acting upon that which is proposed by *Chochmah* and *Binah*. Cf. notes 70 and 73 *infra*.

65. See the detailed discussion of *Da'at* in *Pardess Rimonim* 3:8 and 9:5-6; *Etz Chayim*, Sha'ar 24 f.; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, *Derush Be'inyan Hada'at* (pp. 273b ff.); *Likutei Torah* III:87c f. (besides the sources mentioned in the notes following, especially note 72).

66. Cf. *Genesis* 4:1, 17, 25, *et passim*. *Tikunei Zohar* 69:99a; *Etz Chayim* 48:2.

67. See *Zohar* III:291a.

68. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, end of sect. XV, and the references in note 79 (97) *a.l.*; *Shenei Luchot Habrit*, Toldot Adam: Bet Hashem (p. 5a ff),

But to bring about this union is itself but a means towards a further end:⁶⁹ to implement or apply and bring to fruition the concept of *Chochmah* that has been informed in *Binah*. To possess wisdom or even understanding does not yet mean that it will actually be implemented and applied in practise.⁷⁰ The principle of wisdom need not only be understood but also felt and sensed. It must be channelled to the emotive attributes so that they will act upon it in terms of appropriate dispositions: to seek or pursue that which wisdom dictates should be sought, and to avoid that which wisdom dictates should be avoided.

The profound inner concentration on, and devotion to, the *Chochmah* informed in *Binah*, this personal sensing (*Hargashah*), is the faculty of *Da'at Tachton*. It is the full preoccupation in the apprehended and understood concept until an intense union is effected between the intellect and the emotions (*Sechel* and *Midot*)⁷¹ and the idea is brought to its logical conclusion in practical

especially the glossary notes *a.l.*, *s.v.* *Inyan Hada'at* and *Veaz Mevu'ar*.

69. See *Berachot* 17a: "The goal of *Chochmah* is repentance and good deeds"; "Study is greater because it leads to action" (*Kiddushin* 40b) — "for there is no action without *Chochmah*" (*Zohar* I:266a).

70. For example, a thief may be found to pray for Divine assistance in the very midst of his nefarious activities (*Berachot* 63a, *vs.* of *Ayin Ya'akov*); that is, he has the knowledge of G-d's existence and believes in the Divine ability to help him, but he does not carry this knowledge and understanding to its logical conclusion to apply it consistently with its inherent implications. Cf. *Derech Mitzvotcha*, *Haamanot Elokut*: ch. 2 See note 64 *supra*, and note 73 *infra*.

71. Thus this faculty of *Da'at Tachton* is the very root and essence, or soul and controlling guide, of the *Midot*.

application. This faculty of *Da'at Tachton* is below, and follows upon, *Chochmah* and *Binah*, and of it is said "If there is no *Binah* there can be no *Da'at*" (*Avot* 3:17).⁷² It is this faculty of *Da'at* that is usually referred to when the term *Da'at* appears unqualified.⁷³

In the metaphorical terminology of the Kabbalah and Chassidism *Chochmah* is called *Abba* (Father) and *Binah* is called *Imma* (Mother).⁷⁴ Metaphorically speaking, the seed of *Abba* is implanted in the womb of *Imma* and there the rudimentary plant of the seed is developed, expanded, externalised and informed.

Da'at is called *Ben* (Son), i.e., the offspring of this union of *Chochmah* and *Binah*.⁷⁵ In *Da'at* the original idea and concept has matured into corresponding dispositions. Therefore *Da'at* is the all-inclusive essence of the *Midot*, of the emotive powers or attributes of the lower *Sefirot*.⁷⁶ For the *Midot* express and reveal

72. See note 65 *supra*, and *Tanya* I, chs. 3 and 42; *Torah Or*, *Mishpatim*:74c ff.; *Likutei Torah* III:2d and 87c f.; *et passim*. See also *Derech Mitzvotcha*, a.l.c.—Cf. *Zohar* II:123a and III:289b f.

73. See *Etz Chayim* 22:1: "*Chochmah* and *Binah* (alone) are to no avail, for *Chochmah* and *Binah* are concealed and become manifest only by means of *Da'at*." Cf. *Mevoh She'arim* V:1:12 and 14 ("the principal illumination and manifestation of the brains in man is by means of *Da'at*").

74. *Zohar* III:290a ff.; *Pardess Rimonim* 8:17; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV, note 9, and *infra*, ch. 8.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Thus the *Midot* are called the children of *Chochmah* and *Binah*, or, alternatively, *Tiferet* (or the first six *Midot* in unison) is called the "son" and *Malchut* is called the "daughter". See references in note 74 *supra*.

these dispositions originating in *Sechel* in terms of *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod* and *Malchut*.⁷⁷

One final comment in relation to the aforesaid. In explaining these *Sefirot* and their interrelationship as we have done so far (and shall be doing in the chapters following), we did so by analogical reference to the soul-faculties of man: *Keter* (the all-encompassing will) leading to *Chochmah* (the intuitive or seminal intellectual flash) which is joined by *Da'at Elyon* to *Binah* (the faculty of understanding and elucidation) thence to be realised in *Da'at Tachton* and to become enacted in the dispositions of the *Midot*. In man there is, therefore, a temporal sequence, a gradual, developing process in temporally distinct stages. Obviously this cannot be said of the Divine process. As R. Isaiah Horowitz has stressed, the analogy is inadequate and breaks down for two basic reasons:

Firstly, with G-d there is no temporal sequence. All these "stages" are simultaneous to the extent that as soon as "it arises in G-d's Will" His Will is performed instantaneously and there is no "before" and "after" except in some extremely subtle, *qualitative*, sense. Secondly, with man the *execution* of his will and wisdom is a category distinct, dependent yet separate, from his will and

It is in this context as "soul (essence) of the *Midot*" that *Da'at* is not counted as a separate *Sefirah* to replace *Keter* (see *supra* note 38). For as a mere soul without its own independent vessel or body it cannot be included as one of the ten principles of the *Sefirot*; *Etz Chayim* 23:5 and 8; see also *ibid.*, 40:6. See also R. Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5700 (New York 1955), p. 38.

77. See *Tanya* I: ch. 3, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV.

wisdom, while with G-d they are one absolute and inseparable unity.⁷⁸

5. *Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet*

Chesed means kindness in a sense of absolute, gratuitous and unlimited benevolence.⁷⁹ It is the very crystallisation of the disposition to bestow good and kindness for the very sake of kindness, regardless of the merits of the recipient.⁸⁰

Chesed is the attribute or disposition that underlies the creation, to bring about recipients for the Divine benevolence, and thus it is written "The world was built by *Chesed*."⁸¹ That is, as it is intrinsic to the nature of the benevolent to be benevolent *in actu*, G-d brought into being — *ex nihilo* — the world and all the creatures.⁸² Creation, therefore, is an act of *Chesed*,⁸³ and it is from this attribute that the Divine life-force, animating all creation, issues forth. The implication of *Chesed* (creation and its continuous sustenance) is a manifestation of the infinite benevolence (*Chesed*) that is of the essence of G-d.⁸⁴

78. *Shenei Luchot Habrit*, a.l.c., s.v. Inyan Hada'at; see also *Avodat Hakodesh* I:3, and *Pardess Rimonim* 11:3. Cf. *supra*, ch. I, sect. 2.

79. *Etz Chayim* 18:5 (see *infra*, note 86); *Pardess Rimonim* 23:8, s.v. נחמ; see *Moreh Nevuchim* III:53, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XI.

80. See *Zohar* II:168b, and *Pardess Rimonim* 8:1; cf. *infra*, this chapter, note 103.

81. *Psalms* 89:3; see *Tanya* II:4, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V and X.

82. *Etz Chayim* I:1, *et passim*; *Pardess Rimonim* 2:6. Cf. *Zohar* III:69b and 257b f. See *supra*, section 1 and note 18 *ad loc.*

83. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V, and notes 77-82 (83-88) *a.l.*

84. See *Tanya* II:4; cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XIII and XV.—Though

However, the effulgence of the Divine *Chesed* is as boundless as its Source while the creatures to which it emanates are limited and finite. The finite creatures cannot possibly absorb and endure so abundant and powerful an effulgence as the Divine *Chesed*. If exposed to it they would become nullified in it and cease to exist. *Chesed* needs to be controlled, restrained, and its full force screened, concealed, limited. This is effected through *Gevurah*.

Gevurah means Might or Power in a sense of severity. It is the attribute of *Din* (Law and Judgment).⁸⁵ *Din* demands that *Chesed* be distributed justly, *i.e.*, in proportion to the prospective recipient's merit, and not in boundless, gratuitous fashion. Thus it is the principle that seeks to control, limit and restrain.⁸⁶

Gevurah implies *tzimtzum*,⁸⁷ contracting, withdrawing, concealing and limiting the Divine emanations. *In themselves*, *Chesed*

this principle and implication is mostly related to *Chesed* and *Malchut*, in fact it is relevant to all the *Sefirot* (as mentioned earlier, see *supra* end of section 1, and the references cited there in note 18): all the *Sefirot*, as Divine attributes, assume actualised manifestation through the process and presence of creation.

85. See *infra*, note 100.

86. See *Pardess Rimonim* 8:2, and *infra*, note 89.—*Etz Chayim* 18:5: "All fixed measures and limitations are but from the side of *Gevurah*. For *Chesed* indicates an extension in all matters beyond the limit. *Gevurah*, however, does not allow the Supernal Light to extend, but sets to it a limitation and measure to the point of (actual) need—for the light to extend that far but no further". Cf. *Mevoh She'arim* I:1:1, and *infra*, chapter V, note 6.

87. See *Mevoh She'arim* I:1:1: "Every limitation of emanation is from

and *Gevurah* pose an antimony as principles diametrically opposed to one another,⁸⁸ for *Gevurah* seeks to prevent, in whole or in part, the outflow of *Chesed*.⁸⁹ Thus from the severity of *Gevurah* derive also the stern Divine Judgments.⁹⁰

This is not to say, however, that *Gevurah* is a strictly negative concept. On the contrary, being one of the Divine attributes it must be seen as positive and contributory. In fact, the Divine benevolence as channelled through *Gevurah* may have an exclusively distinct advantage.⁹¹ Particularly in the context of the act of creation, *Gevurah* — verily, as expressed by *tzimtzum* — is, in effect, an expression of the Divine Love and Benevolence.⁹² For, as we have seen,⁹³ *tzimtzum* makes it possible for G-d's creatures to exist and subsist.

However, this is not the case if *Gevurah* were to be singularly dominant. Just as *Chesed* by itself would make it impossible for creation to subsist so *Gevurah* by itself would preclude the existence of creation. But as both *Chesed* and *Gevurah* are Divine attributes

[*Gevurah* and *Din*] . . . Every *tzimtzum* is [an aspect of] *Din*." See also *Tanya* II:4 and 6, and *cf.* preceding note.

88. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII.

89. See *Etz Chayim* 18:5 (*supra*, note 86), and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VIII, XII, XIII, and XV.

90. See *infra*, note 100.

91. See *Torah Or*, Noach: p. 9c, and *cf. infra*, chapter XI, note 9. *Cf.* also *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV, for positive aspects of *Gevurah*. As a general rule, though, the positive effects of *Gevurah* emerge only by prior stimulus or effort.

92. See *Tanya* II:6; *cf. Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV.

93. See *supra*, chapter II.

in absolute unity with the Divine essence they are neither separate principles nor do they counter one another.⁹⁴ They are able to “operate” successfully by a mediating faculty, the Divine attribute of *Tiferet*.

Tiferet harmonises and blends the free outpouring from *Chesed* with the severe *tzimtzum* of *Gevurah*. It blends them in such a way so that *Chesed* will still issue forth, though limited by *Gevurah* so as to make the *Chesed* enduring, i.e., that the creatures may continue to exist even while benefitting from *Chesed*. *Tiferet*, therefore, is not an equal mixture but tends towards *Chesed*.⁹⁵

This quality accounts for this *Sefirah* being called *Tiferet*, beauty: it blends the differing colours of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, and the harmonious colourfulness of this attribute makes it beautiful (*Tiferet*).⁹⁶

The relationship between these three *Sefirot* is clearly seen. That is why, together, they form a triad referred to by the acrostic *ChaGaT*. Also, these three are the basic or essential *Midot* in relation to which the others are but derivatives as will be seen in the following section. For all the *Midot* are either an aspect of *Chesed* (of outpouring and effluence) or of *Gevurah* (of withdrawal and restraint) or an aspect of *Tiferet* (of harmonious blending of the

94. See *Tanya* II:4-6, and *infra*, note 103.

95. *Pardess Rimmonim* 8:2, and 9:3; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII. See R. Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, *Likutei Levi Yitzchak-Zohar* (New York 1971), on Zohar I:168a, p. 132.

96. *Tikunei Zohar* 70:133b; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII and XV.

former two aspects). Moreover, quite frequently *Tiferet* alone⁹⁷ is spoken of as the principle of the *Midot* because it compounds within itself the basic dispositions of the *Midot*.⁹⁸

There are a number of terms that often appear as synonyms for these three *Midot*. Thus *Chesed* is called *Gedulah* (Greatness; Magnificence) because it expresses the infinite Greatness (Benevolence) of G-d;⁹⁹ *Gevurah* is synonymous with *Din* (Judgment),¹⁰⁰ and *Tiferet* with *Rachamim* (Compassion; Mercy).¹⁰¹

Rachamim, the Divine Compassion, is the harmonising princi-

97. Mostly in the context of the *Partzufim*; see *infra*, chapter VIII.

98. In this context, just like *Da'at* is the "soul" of the *Midot* (*supra*, note 61), so *Tiferet* is the "body" of the *Midot*.

99. *Zohar* III:302a, *et passim*; *Tikunei Zohar* 22:67b; *Tanya* II:4; *Likutei Torah* IV:17c ff.; cf. *Sifre* on Numbers 27:12 (sect. 134, in comment on *Deut.* 3:24).

In the Scriptural reference to the *Midot* in *I Chronicles* 29:11, the term *Gedulah* appears, and not *Chesed*; see *Zohar* I:31a and *passim*. However, strictly speaking, there is a distinct difference between these two terms with *Gedulah* denoting a superior level of Divine Benevolence than *Chesed*. For an extensive discussion of these two terms and their relationship, see R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, *Or Hatorah-Bereishit* (New York 1966), vol. I, Vayera: p. 179 ff., and R. Sh'muel Schneersohn, *Likutei Torah-Torat Sh'muel* (New York 1946), vol. III, ch. 46 ff.

100. *Zohar* II:175b, and also *ibid.* 51b; *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 17b; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII and XIII.

101. *Zohar Chadash*, Yitro, 31b; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VI and note 6 a.l., and sect. XII and XV. Obviously it is called *Rachamim* because of the predominance of *Chesed* (see *supra*, note 95); *Chesed per se* would thus be the very core of *Rachamim*, or "*Rachamim* within *Rachamim*" (*Zohar* III:145b).

ple that restrains excessive *Chesed* and mitigates severe *Gevurah*,¹⁰² and thus the Divine plan of creation is made possible and the “disposition of the benevolent to be benevolent” is actualised. In this context *Tiferet* is also called *Emet* (Truth).¹⁰³

Similarly, there is frequent reference to various other factors

102. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV.

103. *Zohar Chadash*, Toldot, 28c; *ibid.*, Yitro, 31b. See *Etz Chayim* 35:3; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VI, and cf. *ibid.*, sect. II, note 22 (26).

It need be understood that all the *Midot*, as Divine attributes, are *Emet* (truth), but they are so only when they stand on their own. The quality of *Chesed* to dispense benevolence in unlimited fashion, out of absolute, gratuitous and infinite benevolence without regard to the merits of the recipient, is an aspect of truth. For, strictly speaking, nothing is truly fit to receive the Divine benevolence except that from the Divine perspective it is all one (“even the darkness does not darken from You and the night shines as the day—the darkness is even as the light”; *Psalms* 139:12), and therefore “in the light of the King’s Countenance there is life” (*Proverbs* 16:15). On the other hand, the quality of *Gevurah* to withhold and restrict the Divine effusion is again truthful for the very reason that truth and justice demand distribution in justness and equity, *i.e.*, in proportion to the recipient’s merits. Thus, inasmuch as even “the heavens are not pure in His eyes” (*Job* 15:15) and “His angels He charges with deficiency” (*ibid.* 4:18; see *Moreh Nevuchim* III:13, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX and note 32 (35) *a.l.*), from the aspect of *Gevurah*, of law and justice, truth demands the withholding of the Divine Grace. But these aspects of truth are *relative* to these conflicting perspectives: the perspective of *Chesed* on its own and the perspective of *Gevurah* on its own. *Tiferet*, on the other hand, is *absolute* truth in the sense that it reconciles and harmonises *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, that it is not contradicted or opposed by either *Chesed* or *Gevurah* or any other attribute. For *Tiferet* recognises the validity of *Gevurah*—that strictly speaking the recipient is undeserving—but out of a sense of *Rachamim* (Compassion) permits a restrained flow of *Chesed*. Thus, because the motive is strictly

which correspond to these *Midot* as well as to the other *Sefirot*.¹⁰⁴ Thus the seven *Midot* have corresponding entities in the seven dominating figures of Scripture that are referred to as the "fathers of the universe": Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David.¹⁰⁵ Each of these, by his individual position, disposition and mode of service and worship, corresponds to one of the *Midot*. The most frequent reference, and the only one that concerns us in *Igeret Hakodesh*, is made to the three Patriarchs as they correspond to the first three *Midot*. Thus Abraham represents *Chesed* because his inclinations and activities expressed kindness and benevolence to the highest degree.¹⁰⁶ Isaac symbolises *Gevurah* as this attribute was most dominant in him.¹⁰⁷ Jacob represents *Tiferet* because he compounded the *Chesed* of his grandfather and the *Gevurah* of his father.¹⁰⁸

one of compassion, even *Gevurah* will agree to this flow, and, therefore, *Tiferet* is a truth recognised from every aspect, without any opposition: *Emet Le-amito*, absolute truth. See *Etz Chayim*, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, a.l.c., *Maamarei Admur Hazaken*—5565, vol. I, p. 376-7 (variant version); and *Yom Tov shel Rosh Hashanah* 5666, sect. 52, p. 434 f.

104. As the *Sefirot* are the Divine instruments through which everything comes into being, everything relates directly to one or more of the *Sefirot* in its own individual way, or by way of metaphor and analogy.

105. *Zohar Chadash*, a.l.c. (note 103); also *Zohar* II:276b, III:302a, *et passim*.

106. *Ibid.*; *Sefer Habahir* 48 (131); *Zohar* I:41a, *et passim*; see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. II, note 7 (9), and *ibid.*, sect. XIII.

107. *Supra*, note 105; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XIII, and note 27 (28) a.l.

108. *Supra*, note 105; references cited in *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. II, note 22 (26), and *ibid.*, sect. VI. See also *Zohar* I:74a and 146a; *Likutei Levi Yitzchak*, a.l.c. (note 95 *supra*).

6. *Netzach-Hod-Yesod*

These three *Sefirot*, too, form a triad known by the acrostic *NeHY*. Their basic significance, as well as the characteristic of their relationship, is that *Netzach*, *Hod* and *Yesod* are the receptacles for the three Patriarchs,¹⁰⁹ — i.e., for *Chesed*, *Gevurah* and *Tiferet*.¹¹⁰ In other words, these three “lower” *Midot* serve as tools, vessels, or channels through which the aforementioned “upper” *Midot* effect their purpose and factual application.¹¹¹ This does not mean that *NeHY* are identical with *ChaGaT*: *Netzach* is merely a branch and channel of *Chesed*, *Hod* of *Gevurah* and *Yesod* of *Tiferet*.¹¹²

Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet are the very essence of the attributes they signify and are directly influenced and directed by *Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Da'at*. Once the attributes of *ChaGaT* are established by *ChaBaD*, they form dispositions to actualise themselves. These dispositions are no longer directly influenced or controlled by *ChaBaD* but are the simple, supra-rational dispositions which seek to carry the attributes of *ChaGaT* to their logical conclusion.

These dispositions are *Netzach*, *Hod* and *Yesod*, which act, as it were, on simple faith, or “mechanically,” rather than on the stimulus of reason (*Sechel*) the way *ChaGaT* do.¹¹³

109. *Tikunei Zohar* 70:133b.

110. See *supra*, notes 105-108.

111. See *Tanya* II:5, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XIX.

112. See *Tikunei Zohar* 19:45a, 22:68b, and 30:74a; *Zohar* III:236a; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV and note 41 (48) *a.l.* See further, *Pardess Rimonim* 7:2, 8:17 and 24; *Likutei Torah* III:90c-d; (the latter two works being the principal sources for the explanation following).

113. *Likutei Torah*, *a.l.c.*, and *cf.* *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. I.

Also, despite their identification as branches or derivatives of their predecessors, *Netzach* is not even proportionally identical with *Chesed*, nor *Gevurah* with *Hod*, nor *Yesod* with *Tiferet*. For since they evolve through the comprehensive attribute of *Tiferet*, which includes within it both *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, *Netzach* does not possess the simple intensity of *Chesed* nor *Hod* that of *Gevurah*. Likewise with *Yesod*, though it mediates between *Netzach* and *Hod* as *Tiferet* mediates between *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, for the above-mentioned reason it differs from *Tiferet* not only in intensity, but more significantly because it tends towards *Hod* (the side of *Gevurah*) while *Tiferet* – as we have seen – tends towards *Chesed*.¹¹⁴

On the other hand, through *Tiferet*, *Netzach* is also able to receive and apply the positive aspects of *Gevurah* while *Hod* is able to receive the flow of *Chesed* – thus mitigating its aspect of the severity of *Gevurah*.¹¹⁵

Another substantive distinction is the following. Unlike the other *Midot*, *Netzach* and *Hod* usually go paired together. The *Zohar* refers to them as “two halves of one body, like unto twins.”¹¹⁶ And similarly the terms relating to these two attributes are usually such as are intimately related to one another.¹¹⁷ In this context, and

114. See *Pardess Rimonim* 7:2 and 8:24.

115. *Ibid.*, I:4.

116. *Zohar* III:236a.

117. E.g., the “two hips” (*Tikunei Zohar* 13:29a); “two thighs” (*Zohar* I:26b; *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 17a); “two kidneys” (*Zohar* III:296a); and so forth. Just as *ChaGaT* are the three Patriarchs, so *Netzach* and *Hod* are the two brothers Moses and Aaron (*Zohar* I:256b, and II:276b,

in light of the aforesaid, *Netzach* and *Hod* are called the “supports of the upper *Sefirot*” analogous to the loins, thighs or legs in the body of man which support and uphold the whole body (including the head).¹¹⁸ Hence they are seen to be outside the body itself, *i.e.*, outside the body of *ChaBaD* and *ChaGaT*, though they support the body – leading it to its destination in general and channeling *Chesed* and *Gevurah* in particular.¹¹⁹ Thus they are, as said, on the level of activity, directly concerned with the ultimate issuance of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*.

In the metaphor of the man-analogy, *Netzach* and *Hod* are the “kidneys that advise.” That is, at the time of the actual emanations from the upper *Midot* it is necessary to deliberate how they are to issue forth in such a way that would be most just and beneficial. For example, when a father seeks to convey some intellectual information to his son, he cannot teach him the simple facts by themselves as they are in his own mind. The father has already contemplated the facts; they are clear in his own mind; he understands them fully. But when he now confronts his son with that information (*i.e.*, the facts as they are in themselves and in their totality) without bringing the reasoning down to the child’s level, the latter will be unable to understand and absorb the information. If the information is to be conveyed effectively, the father

and ref. cited *supra*, note 105). Also, the Divine Names and other terms relating to these two attributes are usually a plural form of one concept; see *Pardess Rimonim a.l.c.*

118. *Zohar Chadash*, Vayera, 26d; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. I, and *ibid.*, sect. V and note 100 (109) *a.l.*

119. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. I, and *Likutei Torah* III:90c-d.

needs to consider the limited faculties of his son's mind and teach him accordingly.

There are two considerations: on the one hand to teach the child as much as possible (notion of *Chesed*), and on the other to withhold that which the child is, as yet, unable to absorb (notion of *Gevurah*). These considerations, the deliberation of the father and the arrangement of the facts and reasoning in such a way that the child will be able to grasp them effectively, are the functions of *Netzach* and *Hod*.¹²⁰

Netzach thus represents the attribute of *Endurance*, of prevailing and standing up against, and *conquering* all that would withhold or interfere (i.e., the aspects of *Gevurah*) with the flow of the Divine Benevolence (*Chesed*).¹²¹ *Hod* seeks to restrain (*Gevurah*) the excess of absorbability, to preserve the Divine Majesty and Splendour from being dissipated in the abundant Benevolence (*Chesed*).¹²²

Now, to carry the above metaphor further: If the father's mind is not set on teaching his son, then the son cannot be an efficacious recipient for the father's knowledge. If the conveyance of the information is to be fully effective, one requires not only an

120. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV.

121. See *ibid.*, note 41 (48) and the references cited there.

122. *Ibid.*, notes 64 (79) and 68 (83), and the ref. cited there. While *Hod* is the awe and restraint implicit in the awareness of the *concept* of majesty, *Gevurah* would be the awe and restraint implicit in the awareness of the *confrontation* or presence of majesty, thus much more intense and severe than *Hod*; see *Likutei Torah* III:90c-d.

illuminating clarification and presentation of the facts proportionate to the student's capacities, but also, and of no lesser importance, an inner bond between the teacher and the student-recipient. It is not sufficient for the father to place himself momentarily on the son's level, as it were (the deliberation of *Netzach* and *Hod*), but he must create a channel of communication. He must unite himself with the son, create a bond between them. In fact, the very degree of illuminating clarification depends on that bond.

The father's mind needs to be set on teaching his son. He must *want* to teach him. And the greater the father's desire and willingness to teach — stemming from the father's love for his child — the more intense is the bond uniting the two, and the greater and more intense is the efficacy of the father's efforts. If the son were to hear his father pronouncing the facts to himself, he would surely grasp some points of information — especially when he hears his father uttering them clearly and in detail. But this type of newly acquired knowledge is by no means comparable to the more profound knowledge he would have acquired had the father taught him directly, with love and willingness. Now this *bond* uniting Emanator and recipient is the attribute of *Yesod*.¹²³

As *Tiferet* mediates between *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, so *Yesod* mediates, blends and compounds *Netzach* and *Hod*.¹²⁴ Moreover, as the third, the harmonising principle, of these *active Sefirot* which

123. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV.

124. See *Pardess Rimoni* 8:24 and 9:4; and *Etz Chayim* 46:3. Cf. *supra*, notes 112 and 114.

compound within them the preceding essential *Sefirot*, *Yesod* is the blending channel of all the preceding *Sefirot*: all the *Sefirot* "pour" their light into *Yesod*,¹²⁵ and *Yesod* serves as the all-inclusive principle joining heaven to earth,¹²⁶ making it possible for the emanations of the *Sefirot* to issue forth effectively unto the creatures. Thus *Yesod* is the Foundation of the creation.¹²⁷

7. *Malchut*

Malchut is unique among the *Sefirot*. Kingship or Sovereignty is a state of being rather than an activity: when there are subjects subservient to the king one can speak of Kingship and Sovereignty, not so when there are no subjects.¹²⁸ Thus *Malchut*, the last and "lowest level" of the *Sefirot*,¹²⁹ does not exert any influence of its

125. See *Tikunei Zohar* 21:55b; *ibid.*, Addenda, 6:145b. See also next note.

126. In *I Chronicles* 29:11, which alludes to the seven *Midot* (see *supra*, note 99), the principle of *Yesod* is expressed by the words *כי כל בשמים ובארץ* which the *Zohar* (based on a *Targum*) interprets "for all (*kol*, i.e., the all-comprehensive *Sefirah* of *Yesod*) joins the heaven and the earth"; *Zohar* I:31a, II:116a, III:257a (and *Nitzutzei Orot*, a.l.) *et passim*. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV, note 44 (51), and *cf. Tikunei Zohar* 21:55b.

127. "The *Tzaddik* (Righteous; symbol of the *Sefirah Yesod*) is the Foundation (*Yesod*) of the world"; *Proverbs* 10:25. *Zohar*, a.l.c. (note 126), *et passim*.

128. *Zohar* III:271b; *cf. Pirkei de R. Eliezer*, ch. 3. "When by His Will was fashioned every thing, His appellation then was that of King"; *Liturgy*, Adon Olam. See also *Tossafot*, *Berachot* 40b, s.v. *אמר אביי*; *Tanya* II:7, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, and note 44 (47) a.l.

129. Hence the lowest level in spiritual categories is usually referred

own except that "which the other *Sefirot* pour into it."¹³⁰

On the other hand, *Malchut* plays an important role. It is the very instrument, as it were, through which the original creative plan is actualised. It is through *Malchut* that the latent and potential creation emerges into manifest reality and substantiality.¹³¹ Thus *Malchut* is referred to as the "Architect wherewith the whole creation was made"¹³² and "Nothing occurs among the lower beings unless it be through *Malchut*."¹³³

As *Binah* is the Supernal Mother (*Imma Ilaah*) so *Malchut* is the Nether Mother (*Imma Tataah*).¹³⁴ The *potentia* of the world (the seed of *Chochmah*) is externalised and individuated in the womb of *Binah* but remains concealed like a foetus. Therefore

to as the *Malchut* (or more emphatically yet, as *Malchut of Malchut*) of that category.

130. *Etz Chayim* 6:5, 8:5, *et passim*. *Malchut* is called "a dim speculum because it has no (light) of its own," (like unto "the moon that has no light of its own save that which is given unto it by the sun"; *Zohar* I:249b, and 251b; II:145b; *Tikunei Zohar* 44:82b; *et passim*. Cf. *Shabbat* 156a). See also *ibid.*, 36:1. See further *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXI, note 21 (24), and *cf. Nidah* 31b.

131. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX; see also *Tanya* II:7.

132. *Pardess Rimmonim* 11:2.

133. *Tikunei Zohar* 19:40b, and *Zohar Chadash*, 11a.—Probably for this reason did R. Joseph Albo suggest (in the context of identifying the Intelligences with the *Sefirot*) that *Malchut* is identical with the sphere of the Active Intellect (see *Ikkarim* II:11), but this has been severely criticised by the Kabbalists; see, *e.g.*, *Avodat Hakodesh* I:7.

134. See *Zohar* I:50a, II:22a, III:290a *ff.*; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VIII, note 25 (26), and *ibid.*, sect. XV, note 9, and sect. XX (and note 59 (62) *a.l.*).

Binah is called the concealed world (*Alma de-Itkassya*).¹³⁵ By way and means of the succeeding *Sefirot* (the *Midot*), *Binah*—the “concealed world”—is implanted in the womb of *Malchut* and thence egresses into manifest being. Thus *Malchut* is called the “manifest world” (*Alma de-Itgalya*).¹³⁶

Malchut is the “Mouth of G-d”:¹³⁷ the Word of the Eternal and the Breath of His Mouth by which the world came into actual, manifest being.¹³⁸ As *Chochmah* is ח”ח מ”ח, the potentiality of what is,¹³⁹ so *Malchut* is called ח”מ, that what is.¹⁴⁰ In *Malchut* the potentiality is finally actualised.¹⁴¹ Through *Malchut* everything comes into manifest being.¹⁴²

The attribute of *Malchut* actually explains its own term. For

135. Also *Alma Ilaah* (the Upper World); *Zohar* I:1b and II:127a.

136. [Also *Alma Tataah* (Lower World); *Zohar* I:1b and II:127a]. —*Tanya* I: ch. 52; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, and notes 50 (53) and 59 (62) *a.l.*; *ibid.*, sect. XXX.

137. *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 17a.

138. *Psalms* 33:6; see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V, and notes 43-45 (45-47) and 64 (67), *a.l.*; sect. XX, and notes 46-50 (49-53) *a.l.*, and sect. XXV, and notes 23-24 (25-26) *a.l.* By analogy to human speech, which is but the expression and manifestation or revelation of the speaker's inner thoughts and dispositions, *Malchut* is, as it were, the Divine speech (the ten fiat of *Genesis* I by which the world was created and came into being; *Avot* V:1; cf. *Tanya* II:11-12).

139. See *supra*, note 50.

140. See *Zohar* II:127a (cf. *ibid.*, I:1b); *Zohar Chadash*, beg. of *Tikunim*, 93a. Cf. *Pardess Rimonim* 23:13, *s.v.* מ”ח ש”ח.

141. *Zohar Chadash*, *Yitro* 34c.

142. See *Zohar* II:127a; *Tikunei Zohar* 70:121a, and *ibid.*, Addenda, 3:140a.

it is through *Malchut* that the disposition of the Benevolent to be benevolent can be actualised: a world and creatures come into being. The world and the creatures provide prospective recipients for G-d's benevolence. They make it possible to speak of a Divine Kingdom as "There cannot be a King without a nation" and people distinct from Himself over which to rule.¹⁴³ When finite creatures come into being through the *Sefirah* of *Malchut* the Divine attribute of Kingship, Sovereignty, becomes meaningful and real.¹⁴⁴

In *Malchut*, thus, is the origin of the revelation of the light of the *En Sof* which extends to, and illuminates, the world and creatures in a "revealed" manner. From this source there extends to each individual entity the particular light and vitality suitable for it: informing, animating and sustaining it. That is why *Malchut* is identical with *Shechinah*, the Divine Indwelling Presence or Immanence.¹⁴⁵

143. See *Tanya* II:7, and *supra*, note 128.

144. *Tanya* II:7; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX and XXV. Cf. notes 18 and 22 *supra*.

145. *Tanya*, I: ch. 52; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VIII, and esp. note 25 (26) *a.l.*, and *ibid.*, sect. XXV.—*Imma* and *Shechinah* thus are identical terms. Just as we speak of *Imma* on two levels ("higher" and "lower"; *Binah* and *Malchut*) so we speak of *Shechinah* on two levels ("higher" and "lower"; *Binah* and *Malchut*); cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VIII, note 22 (23). However, any unqualified mention of *Shechinah* usually refers to the lower level of *Malchut*.

For a further discussion of *Malchut* see *Pardess Rimonim* 7:3-4 and 8, and *ibid.*, 8: end of ch. 24 and ch. 26.

8. *Iggulim* and *Yosher*. The "Body of the Sefrot"

There are two basic schemes in the emanation of the *Sefrot* or Divine Lights after the concealment of *tzimtzum*.¹⁴⁶

As mentioned above, in the chapter on *Tzimtzum*, the Divine Light was manifested in the sphere of the primordial space (*chalal*) by means of the *kav*, the "line" or ray of light that descended from the *Or En Sof* encompassing the *chalal* to the very core or midst of the *chalal*.¹⁴⁷ This *kav* did not extend from the circumference to the central point in one immediate and complete manifestation, but gradually. That is, immediately upon "entering" the *chalal* it revolved parallel to the perimeter of the *chalal*, round about the inside of the *chalal*, thus establishing a concentric sphere within it.¹⁴⁸ This concentric sphere of dimmed *Or En Sof* is called *Keter*.

146. The principal sources for this section are *Etz Chayim* 1:2-5, and 2:1; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, Hakd. IV and V; *Pardess Rimonim* 6:7, and also *ibid.*, 2:7; *Likutei Torah* III:37c f. See also *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, note 29 (32), and *infra*, note 159.

147. This is how we obtain the relative terms of "above" and "below", "higher" and "lower", and so forth: the periphery of the *chalal* being the highest level, and the centre of the *chalal* being the lowest level.

148. At this stage we thus have (i) the all-encompassing sphere of the *Or En Sof* (manifest outside the *chalal* and concealed within the *chalal*); (ii) the concentric sphere in the upper realm (right adjacent to, but below or inside the perimeter) of the *chalal*; and (iii) the void (below said concentric sphere) of the remainder of the *chalal*. This first concentric sphere is as close to the all-encompassing *Or En Sof* as possible, but not really attached to it except by means of the *kav* from which it evolved. For if the Luminary (*Or En Sof*) and the sphere inside the *chalal* would be truly attached to each other, that part of the *chalal* (the sphere) and its aspect of *tzimtzum* would have been nullified: the inner

Thereupon the *kav* was extended somewhat further, again only partly, to repeat the same process: a new revolution around the *chalal* to form another concentric sphere immediately below that of *Keter*. This new sphere is *Chochmah*. And in this way the *kav* was extended ever further, gradually descending to the very centre of the *chalal*, expanding and revolving, circles within circles, until the tenth concentric sphere was formed, namely that of *Malchut*, in the very centre of the *chalal*.

Thus each of these ten spheres follows out of and succeeds the preceding one, with a successive dimming of the light so that each one is distinct from all others.¹⁴⁹ This is the scheme of *Iggulim* (circles, or concentric spheres).

In this initial scheme of *Iggulim* the *Sefirot* are like the skins of an onion — one within the other — or like a brain encompassed by many membranes one over the other.¹⁵⁰ The significant point of this scheme is that essentially all the *Sefirot* are related to one

sphere would have been absorbed by the outer one to revert to the state of one simple light of the *En Sof*. In fact, however, they are fully distinct one from another.

149. Hence also the term *Midot* for the *Sefirot*. *Midot* means fixed measures and dimensions (and, in an extended sense, garments). For every *Sefirah* has a determined measure and dimension (in a *qualitative* sense), and the *Sefirot* as a whole are also determined in number ("ten and not nine, ten and not eleven"). It is by their individually determined measures that the *Sefirot* are distinguished and differentiated one from another (as we shall see *infra*, chapter V); see *Zohar* III:257b; *Sefer Yetzirah* I:4-5; *Etz Chayim* 1:2; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, Hakd. IV.

150. See *Zohar* I:19b f. (and *Nitzutzei Orot*, a.l.) and III:9b f.

another only in terms of a successive process: the one emanating after the other but each one really a *separate, self-contained* sphere or point.

The second, subsequent scheme of emanating *Sefirot* is that of "*Yosher*—like unto the appearance of a man standing upright,"¹⁵¹ that is, "Analogous to man who divides into organs all of which exist level upon level and perfect one another, yet all of them (together) form one body."¹⁵² This analogy serves to point out the full inter-relationship between the *Sefirot* of *Yosher* (just as man's organs are interrelated to one another to form a single body), even while underscoring and retaining the unique characteristics of each one.

Thus in the scheme of *Yosher* the *Sefirot* are not simple faculties or principles independent of each other, but they form an essentially unified body. The analogy is carried further to the point

151. See *Pardess Rimonim* 6:3; *Etz Chayim* 1:1; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, Hakd. IV.

The term *Yosher* (Uprightness; Straightness) is derived from the verse "G-d made man *yashar* (upright)" (*Eccles.* 7:29); see *Etz Chayim* 8:1. In relation to this scheme of the *Sefirot* it is said "and G-d created man in His image" (*Gen.* 1:27)—*Etz Chayim* 1:2—for the inherent faculties and powers of man's soul and their interactions are analogous (albeit in a strictly homonymous sense) to the *Sefirot* (see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV).

152. *Zohar* I:134b; *Etz Chayim* 1:2.—In general, most references to the *Sefirot* in the *Zohar* relate to the scheme of *Yosher*, rather than to that of *Iggulim*; see *Etz Chayim*, and *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, a.l.c.

of relating the particular *Sefirot* to particular limbs or organs in the Body or Form (*Partzuf*) of Man:¹⁵³

Chochmah, *Binah* and *Da'at*, in an extended sense, are the three brains in man's head. More specifically, *Chochmah* corresponds to the brain in general, i.e., to the source of thought and intellect. *Binah* corresponds to the heart, the seat of understanding.

Chesed is the right arm while *Gevurah* is the left arm. *Tiferet* is the body, intervening and mediating between, and compounding, the sides of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*.

Netzach is the right leg or thigh while *Hod* is the left leg or thigh,¹⁵⁴ together supporting the whole body and leading it to its destination. *Yesod* is the organ of procreation¹⁵⁵ through which the emanations of the higher *Sefirot* issue forth to *Malchut* to bring about a manifest creation.

As *Malchut* is the manifesting aspect, it is said to correspond to the mouth, the organ of speech by means of which the speaker's inner thoughts and emotive dispositions are expressed and revealed.

Keter is the crown encompassing, thus related to, yet inde-

153. *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 17a, and cf. *supra*, in the explanatory notes for the individual *Sefirot*.

154. Also called the "kidneys that counsel"; see *supra*, note 117.

155. "The sign of the Holy Covenant," referring to circumcision (the sign or seal of the covenant or *bond* between G-d and Israel).— See *Etz Chayim*, and *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, a.l.c., with regards to the two aspects of *Yesod* relative to the two types of *Partzufim* (i.e., masculine and feminine).

pendent of, the body; more specifically, in the context of the man-metaphor, it is often referred to as the skull encompassing (thus transcending) the brain.¹⁵⁶

As mentioned, the scheme of *Yosher* underscores not only the functions of the *Sefirot* but also their inter-relationship as a unit or Body. Therefore in spite of the locations of the "physical counterparts" in the body of man, the *Sefirot* of *Yosher* are often illustrated by way of three lines—right, left, and centre. This is done by placing *Chochmah* on the right side, in line with but above *Chesed* and *Netzach*, and by placing *Binah* on the left side, in line with but above *Gevurah* and *Hod*. Thus we have three new triads:

(1) *Chochmah-Chesed-Netzach*, on the right side, the "side of *Chesed*," because there is an innate relationship between these three (*Chesed* is a branch of *Chochmah* and *Netzach* is a branch of *Chesed*); (2) *Binah-Gevurah-Hod* on the left side, the "side of *Gevurah*," because there is an innate relationship between these three (*Gevurah* is a branch of *Binah*, and *Hod* is a branch of *Gevurah*); and (3) *Keter-Tiferet-Yesod-Malchut* in the middle, symbolic of the central, mediating or all-inclusive harmonising principles they are.¹⁵⁷

It is also in this scheme of *Yosher* that we speak of the faculty of *Da'at Elyon*, the Supernal *Da'at*. This faculty, a branch or

156. In *Sifra Detzeniyuta*, and in the *Idrot*, *Keter* is frequently referred to as "skull".—See *Etz Chayim* 32:1 and 25:5 on the superiority of the "skull" [*Keter*] over the "brains" [*Chochmah-Binah-Da'at*].

157. See *Zohar* III:153b (*et passim*); *Etz Chayim* 1:2; *Sha'ar Ha-hakdamot*, Hakd. IV.

derivative of *Keter*, the unifying principle of *Chochmah* and *Binah*, would thus be placed in the middle line as the apex of the triangle *Chochmah-Binah-Da'at*.¹⁵⁸

The full significance of these two schemes of *Iggulim* and *Yosher* will emerge later on in the context of *Shevirat Hakelim*, *Partzufim*, and *Tohu* and *Tikun*.¹⁵⁹

9. *The Sefirot as Compounds*

So far we have discussed the *Sefirot* mainly in terms of particular attributes, as specific principles and potencies. At the same time we have also seen the inter-relationship and interaction of the *Sefirot* in a developmental sequence from *Keter* to *Malchut*. But this raises a question:

How, in fact, can the *Sefirot* interrelate and interact when they appear to be separate, and in some cases seemingly contradictory principles (*e.g.*, the antinomy between *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, and between *Netzach* and *Hod*)? For even when the *Sefirot* do not contradict each other, or some are spoken of as mediating principles, they still are essentially unique powers which, in order to interact, would require some "common denominator."

The mystics solve this problem by stating that, in effect, every

158. See *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5700, p. 38, and notes by R. Menachem M. Schneerson *a.l.*—*Da'at Tachton*, as essence of the *Midot*, obviously does not have a separate organ in this scheme; see *supra*, sect. 4, *s.v.* *Da'at*.

159. *Infra*, chapters VII-IX.

Sefirah is a compound of ten general levels: every *Sefirah* contains within itself aspects of all the ten *Sefirot*.¹⁶⁰ Thus the *Sefirah* of *Chochmah* divides into *Chochmah* of *Chochmah*, *Binah* of *Chochmah* and so on; the *Sefirah* of *Chesed* is divisible into *Chochmah* of *Chesed*, *Binah* of *Chesed*, and so forth.

The differentiation between the *Sefirot* is retained in full so that in every *Sefirah* its own aspect is predominant and determinative: *Chochmah* of *Chochmah* in *Chochmah*, *Binah* of *Binah* in *Binah*, and so on, so that every *Sefirah* can still be referred to by a specific name and differs radically from all others.¹⁶¹ This mutual inclusiveness has an important, two-fold significance:

(a) It indicates the integral bond between, and essential unity of, the *Sefirot* (as opposed to regarding each *Sefirah* as independent and non-related, thereby leading to a wrong conception of division in the *Sefirotic* scheme) even while retaining the specific identity of, and differentiation among, the *Sefirot*.

(b) It allows the necessary interaction of all *Sefirot* in everything even though their distinguishing aspects or determinative characteristics may appear to be opposed to each other (e.g., *Chesed* and *Gevurah*). Thus, for example, as the attribute of *Chesed*

160. See *Tikunei Zohar* 47:84a, and 69:116b; cf. also *Zohar* II:185b, and *Tikunei Zohar* 70:125b and 135a.—In referring to every *Sefirah* as a compound of “ten general levels”, the word “general” is an intentional qualification; for, in effect, as explained in the sources mentioned, these ten levels subdivide each into ten sub-levels, and so forth.

161. See *Tanya* II:10; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII and XIII; *Likutei Torah* III:87a ff., and 89d ff.; references cited *infra*, chapter IX.

will express and manifest itself, it will involve all other *Sefirot*, including *Gevurah*, by way of the aspect of *Chesed* included in every other *Sefirah*.¹⁶²

This concept of the *Sefirot* as Compounds is intimately related to the concept of the scheme of *Yosher* and, as with the latter, its full significance will emerge in the later chapters on *Shevirat Hakelim*, *Partzufim*, and *Tohu* and *Tikun*.

162. The issues mentioned here are dealt with in detail by R. Moses Cordovero in *Pardess Rimonim*, Sha'ar 5, especially ch. 5, and Sha'ar 8, esp. ch. 1, 2, 10 and 11. Cf. also Maimonides, *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* IV:1-2 (quoted by Cordovero, *ibid.*, 8:2) which reflects strikingly the argument in *Zohar* II:23b f. (quoted at length by Cordovero, *ibid.*, ch. 11); see also the glossary note in *Zohar* II:24a (and *Nitzutzei Zohar a.l.*). See also R. Dov Ber of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, pp. 153b and 189a-b.

Worlds

1. *The Concept of "Worlds"*

Tzimtzum, the process of a progressive dimming, occultation and condensation of the light of the *En Sof*, brought about numerous levels, one lower than the other. These numerous levels are divided into five comprehensive categories, referred to as the Five Realms or Worlds. The numerous other levels are the myriads of gradations into which these five worlds subdivide, each of which is a microcosm on its own.

Essentially these Worlds are Divine "Garments" in which the *Or En Sof* conceals and clothes Itself, thereby animating and lending them existence.¹ But just as *tzimtzum* and the *Sefirot* are allegorical concepts that assume substantive reality only in relation to man and creation, *i.e.*, from the creature's perspective (looking "from below upwards") but are non-real in essence, *i.e.*, relative

1. *Tanya* I: ch. 43.

to G-d (looking "from above downwards"),² so it is with these Worlds.

When we speak of different Worlds or Realms, any difference is due to the recipients, and that in two respects: firstly, because the "higher" worlds are those which receive a radiance infinitely greater than the "lower" ones, and secondly, in that the "higher" ones receive this radiance without as many garments and screens as the lower ones.³

To be sure, the light of the *En Sof* fills all worlds alike and there is no place void of Him.⁴ The core and essence of the blessed *En Sof* is identical in the higher and lower worlds, and as He is to be found in the higher worlds so He is to be found in the very lowest.

The difference between them is with regard to the stream of vitality from the *En Sof* in terms of "revelation out of concealment." For the higher worlds receive in a more revealed form than do the lower ones, and all creatures therein receive each according to its capacity and nature. The lower worlds, even the spiritual ones, do not receive the light in such a revealed form but only by means of numerous concealing "garments" which hide and screen the Divine Light so that ultimately – on the lowest level, in the physical world – "No light or vitality whatever is visibly revealed, but only corporeal and physical things that appear lifeless."⁵ Yet they, too,

2. See *supra*, ch. II, and note 18 *a.l.*, and ch. III, section 1.

3. *Tanya* I: ch. 40. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXV.

4. *Ibid.* Cf. *supra*, chapter II, notes 16-17.

5. "Even in completely inanimate matter, such as stones or earth

contain light and vitality from the *En Sof* which lends them existence *ex nihilo*, so that they will not revert to their state of naught and nothingness as they were prior to their creation. In that sense the Holy One, blessed is He, is the "Most Hidden of All Hidden"⁶ and is called the "hidden G-d" (*Isaiah* 45:12).⁷

This is analogous to the presence of the soul in the body. The entire soul is a single and simple (as opposed to compound) spiritual entity, without any dimensions of space or size, corporeal shape or physical limitation. Thus one cannot say that it divides into a number of parts corresponding to the number of organs in the body. Rather, the whole soul pervades the entire body equally, from head to foot, and its core and essence is, for example, in the feet no less than in the brain. But from the different kinds of potencies or powers and vitalities contained in the soul's intrinsic essence, each of the body's organs receives the power and vitality appropriate to itself according to its own capacity and character—the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, the mouth for speaking and so on.

Thus as the different bodily organs express and manifest different powers this is not due to a different soul, or part of the soul, being inherent in them, but it is due to their own unique

or water, there is a "soul" and spiritual life-force . . . which give life and existence to inanimate matter that it might arise out of the naught and nothingness that preceded the Six Days of Creation"; *Tanya* II:1, based on *Etz Chayim* 39:3. See also *Tanya* I: ch. 38; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXV; and *Etz Chayim* 50: *passim*.

6. *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 17a.

7. *Tanya* I: chs. 40 and 51.

composition and capacity. All powers of the soul are intrinsic to the whole soul and independent of the body, as is evident from the fact that a blind, or otherwise defective, person is able to give birth to a physically normal child.⁸

A similar analogy is to the light of the sun which penetrates the rooms of a house, and even into rooms within rooms. The light does so in accordance with the presence or absence of obstructions. There is thus no change in the light itself, but only in the condition or capacity of the place to be illuminated.⁹

Thus when we speak of "higher" and "lower," in proximity to, or distant from, the *En Sof* and so on, these terms do not refer to any spatial dimensions but to qualitative differences in degree and level.¹⁰

2. *The Division of the Worlds*

The five comprehensive worlds are:¹¹

(1) *Adam Kadmon*. This anthropomorphic term means Prim-

8. *Ibid.*, ch. 51; see also *Siddur im Perush Hamilot*, p. 164c-d, as well as *ibid.*, pp. 48a ff.

9. *Ibid.* (sources cited in preceding note).

10. Cf. Maimonides, *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* II:6; *Etz Chayim* 1:2.

In fact this concept of relative concealments and occultations may be read in the very term of world in Hebrew. For the word עולם is etymologically related to, and itself spelled sometimes as, עלם (to be concealed; hidden); see, e.g., *Exodus* 3:15, and the comment in *Pesachim* 50b, and *Rashi, a.l.*; also *Eccles.* 3:11, and *Midrash Rabba*, and *Rashi, a.l.* The term *Olamot* (Worlds) thus denotes the concealment and dimming of the Divine Light. See *Tikunei Zohar* 42:82a, and *Sefer Habahir* 8 (10).

11. The general sources for the following paragraphs are R. Chaim

ordial Man. *Kadmon* denotes "being primary of all primaries."¹² This World is also called the Realm of *Keter Elyon* (the Supreme *Keter*), the "lucid and luminous light" (אור צה ומצוח צה) and frequently referred to as *Tzachtzachot*¹³—implying the "pure, lucid *Sefirot* which are concealed and hidden."¹⁴

(2) *Atzilut*, the World of Emanation. The term is derived from the root לצי, as in *Numbers* 11:17 and *Ecclesiastes* 2:10.

(3) *Beriah*—the World of Creation;

(4) *Yetzirah*—the World of Formation; and

(5) *Asiyah* — the World of Action or Making. These latter three names are derived from the creative terms in *Isaiah* 43:7.

Adam Kadmon is the most pristine emanation. It is the first and highest stage after *tzimtzum* took place and yet so sublime that in a sense it may be spoken of as completely attached to, and united with, the *En Sof*.¹⁵ *Atzilut* is the stage following *Adam Kadmon*, thus further removed from the *En Sof*. This World re-

Vital, *Sha'arei Kedushah* III:1 f.; *Etz Chayim* 1:4, and 43: Intr.; *Mevoh She'arim* VI:2:1; *Pardess Rimonim* 5:4; *Shomer Emunim* I:46 ff.

12. *Tikunei Zohar* 19:42a, and 70:120a; cf. *Zohar* III:193b. See also *Shomer Emunim* I:62 f., and cf. *supra*, chapter II, note 34.

13. See the responsa by R. Hai Gaon and R. Chamaï Gaon in *Pardess Rimonim* 11:1 and 3. See also R. Bachya ben R. Asher, *Commentary on Exodus* 34:6.

14. See *Tikunei Zohar* 69:115b, and 70:135b. See *Pardess Rimonim* 11:2 ff.; *Etz Chayim* 1:4, and 12:5; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXIX; *Torah Or*, Esther, 98b.

15. Cf. *supra*, chapter II, note 38.

ceives its vivification (the Divine Emanation and Life-force) *via*, or from *Adam Kadmon*, thus in smaller measure and less intense than *Adam Kadmon*.¹⁶ But *Atzilut* is still in such close proximity to the *En Sof* that it, too, is "One with It," being, in effect, Divinity.¹⁷

Beriah is further removed, and draws its vivification through *Atzilut*,¹⁸ thus in smaller measure, and less intense, than that of *Atzilut*. In fact, the full intensity and effect of *tzimtzum* is first noticeable in this Realm. Although the particular aspects and rungs of *tzimtzum* are too numerous to count and generally are of many diverse kinds, there are, however, three levels of powerful and comprehensive contraction and condensation, which give rise to the three lower Worlds. The World of *Atzilut* (and *a fortiori*, *Adam Kadmon*) is G-dliness itself.¹⁹ Thus we speak of a *Massach*, or *Prassa* (curtain; covering) separating between *Atzilut* and *Beriah* (and between the subsequent worlds).²⁰ This denotes the immense separation and distinction between these levels.

Yetzirah is still further removed, and draws its vivification

16. In that sense *Adam Kadmon* is the "soul" of *Atzilut*. In an extended sense, though, it is also the "soul" or spiritual substratum and life-force of all worlds, for the emanation of *Adam Kadmon* extends from the highest level to the very central point of the *chalal* (the world of *Asiyah*), albeit in ever-increasing concealment; see *Etz Chayim* 1:4, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX; *infra*, chapter VIII, note 2.

17. See *Tanya* I: chs. 39 and 49; *Igeret Hakodesh*, beg. of sect. XX.

18. In that sense *Atzilut* is the "soul" of *Beriah*.

19. *Supra*, note 17; *cf.* also, *infra*, chapter VII, note 20.

20. See *Etz Chayim* 42:4 (*ibid.*, ch. 13 f. of *Klalut ABYA-I*), *ibid.*, 44:1; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX.

through *Beriah*, and *Asiyah* is the furthest removed having its vivification from *Yetzirah*.²¹

Like the ten *Sefirot*²² these Five Worlds correspond to the letters of the Tetragrammaton: *Atzilut* corresponds to the *Yud*, *Beriah* to the first *Hei*, *Yetzirah* to the *Vav*, and *Asiyah* to the latter *Hei*. *Adam Kadmon*, for its state of immense sublimity, cannot be represented by any specific letter but by the "thorn" of the *Yud*. As *Keter* is elevated above all *Sefirot*, so *Adam Kadmon* is elevated above all worlds. That is why, generally, only four Worlds are spoken of and referred to.²³

In fact, the Worlds correspond to the *Sefirot* themselves. Though all ten *Sefirot* emanate and "function" in every World in particular (*Keter* of *Atzilut*, *Chochmah* of *Atzilut*, *Binah* of *Atzilut* and so on),²⁴ specific *Sefirot* predominate in each of the Worlds.

21. Every Realm always being the "soul" of the succeeding one.

22. See *supra*, chapter III, note 37.

23. *Sha'arei Kedushah* III:1-2; *Mevoh She'arim* VI:2:1.

24. Moreover, just as the *Sefirot* are compounds dividing into themselves, the Worlds also divide into the general classes of the *Sefirot* as represented by the concept of the Worlds: thus we speak of *Atzilut* of *Atzilut*, *Beriah* of *Atzilut*, *Yetzirah* of *Atzilut*, *Asiyah* of *Atzilut*; *Atzilut* of *Beriah*, *Beriah* of *Beriah*, and so on until *Asiyah* of *Asiyah*. R. Moses Cordovero explains this division by means of an analogy to a silversmith who grades his silver according to the purity of the metal: The first grade is the most pure silver, free of base metals; the second one is less pure than the first, the third is about half pure and half impure, and the fourth contains more base metals than silver. However, even the first grade silver cannot be wholly and totally pure. There always are some drosses that cannot be removed. Thus even this first grade can be subdivided

Thus *Adam Kadmon* corresponds to *Keter*; it is the realm of *Keter*, because *Keter* is the predominant *Sefirah* in *Adam Kadmon*. *Atzilut* corresponds to *Chochmah*; it is the Realm of *Chochmah*, because *Chochmah* is the predominant *Sefirah* in *Atzilut*. *Beriah* corresponds to *Binah*, *Yetzirah* to the *Midot* (*Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet-Hod-Yesod*), and *Asiyah* to *Malchut*, because these are respectively the predominant *Sefirot* in these particular Realms.²⁵

In terms of the "Man-Image" of the *Sefirot* (the *Partzuf* of *Adam Kadmon*, the original emanation of the Divine Light), the World of *Adam Kadmon* is referred to as the *Atzmut* (the Essence, or soul); *Atzilut* as the Body containing this soul; and *Beriah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* as the outer Garments in which this Body is clothed.²⁶

The difference between these worlds is one of degree in concealment of the *Atzmut*, and is, therefore, often compared to four modes of perception referred to as *reshimah* (a mark), *chakikah* (an engraving), *chatzivah* (a carving), and *asiyah* (an enactment):

A *reshimah* is non-substantial; it is a mere sign marked down, barely denoting a distinction between non-marked and marked,

into more and less 'wholly pure,' indeed, into the four general categories of silver as such. The same would apply also to the other three grades, with each sub-division differing from the others in the degree of purity. (*Pardess Rimmonim* 24:10)

25. See *supra*, note 23; also *Tanya* I: chs. 39 and 52. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V, note 51 (53).

26. *Etz Chayim* 3:3.

thus, between absolute naught and reality (or, rather, the beginning of reality). Its type of reality is so close to naught that there is practically no difference between them. Precisely so, *Atzilut* is the first egression towards substantiality: between absolute naught and infinity and the category of substantiality and finitude. A *chakikah*, on the other hand, is already sensed and perceived in greater measure than the *reshimah*; correspondingly, *Beriah* is the stage of a more perceptible and finite being than *Atzilut*, though still very subtle. A *chatzivah* is more perceptible yet, just as an object hewn and carved is sensed in much greater degree than some engraving. Comparable to that is *Yetzirah*. Full perception, completely in the realm of distinct substantiality and corporeality, is the finished product of an *asiyah*, and corresponding to it is the World which is called by this name—*Asiyah*.²⁷

R. Moses Cordovero reads these differences between the Worlds in their very names. He suggests that the term *Atzilut* is also related to the preposition אצל (near-by), thus denoting the close proximity—to the point of unity—of the *Sefirot* to their Source. *Beriah* he relates to the verse “But if the Eternal בריאה יברא (*creates a creation*)” (*Numbers* 16:30), with the connotation of the coming into being of something new, *ex nihilo*.²⁸ Therefore *Beriah* is radically different and removed from *Atzilut*. *Yetzirah* he relates to the verse “וַיִּצַר—and the Eternal, G-d, *formed* man of the dust of the ground”. (*Genesis* 2:7) *Yetzirah* then is related to the “dust

27. *Pardess Rimmonim* 16:9; *Shomer Emunim* I:51. Cf. note 24 *supra*.

28. See commentary of Nachmanides on *Numbers* 16:30; *Zohar Chadash*, Bereishit 17b; and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, note 21 (23).

of the ground," a lower, much less spiritual, level than *Beriah*. *Asiyah* is self-explicit as the most material and perceptible of these terms, and this is also suggested by its appearance as the third and last term in the above-mentioned verse of *Isaiah* 43:7.²⁹

Now, as has been said, all the *Sefirot* emanate throughout all the Worlds, in general and in particular. All the *Sefirot* manifest themselves in *Atzilut*, as well as in *Beriah*, in *Yetzirah*, and in *Asiyah*. As the *Sefirot* are in *Atzilut* they are still in explicit unity with their Emanator.³⁰ Through *Malchut* of *Atzilut* (as is the "function" of *Malchut*) the *Sefirot* of *Atzilut* (latently immanent in *Malchut* of *Atzilut*) are projected further to manifest themselves in *Beriah*. *Malchut* of *Atzilut* thus serves as the mediary between *Atzilut* and *Beriah*. In that capacity *Malchut* of *Atzilut* assumes a characteristic of *Keter* which (as stated earlier in chapter III, section 3) serves as intermediary between a higher stage and the subsequent lower one. Therefore *Malchut* of *Atzilut*, the lowest level of *Atzilut*, re-emerges as *Keter* of *Beriah*, the highest level of *Beriah*.³¹

While the *Sefirot* of *Beriah* are the actual *Sefirot* of *Atzilut*, they are in *Beriah* in a state of great concealment and condensation. For the "downward transition" from *Atzilut* to *Beriah* involves "passage" through the immense *tzimtzum* of the *prassa* that separates these worlds.³² Therefore, in *Beriah*, the World of

29. *Pardess Rimmonim* 16:1.

30. See *supra*, note 17.

31. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, and notes 27* (30) and 43 (46) *a.l.*

32. See *supra*, note 20.

Creation, there is the first appearance of finite and limited creatures distinct from Divinity, though still strictly spiritual: the souls of the righteous (*Tzadikim*), and sublime angels.

The same process repeats itself in the next stage of the creative development. Through *Malchut of Beriah* the *Sefirot* (all latently present in *Malchut*) are projected further downwards to manifest themselves in *Yetzirah*, emerging there in still greater concealment and condensation. This allows for the appearance of creatures less sublime and more numerous than those of *Beriah*. As this process continues, it culminates in the physical creatures and entities of our physical world, in the lowest level of *Asiyah*.³³

The implications of this creative process are two-fold. On the one hand it allows for the possibility of a finite, physical world with finite, physical creatures to the point that – because of the immense *tzimtzum* involved – they appear distinct and separate from Divinity. On the other hand it implies the Divine Immanence or Indwelling Presence (*Shechinah*) even in the finite and physical. For it is no less than the actual light of the *En Sof* that issues forth from *Malchut* of *Atzilut*, albeit so strongly obscured and condensed that it is not manifest *per se*.³⁴ For the *En Sof* alone is able to create and sustain all beings *ex nihilo*; the *Sefirot* are not to be regarded as “creative agents” separate and distinct from Divinity.³⁵

33. See *Sha'arei Kedushah* III:2; *Tanya* I: ch. 39.

34. See *Tanya* I: chs. 38, 40, and 51 (quoted at the beginning of this chapter), and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VI and XXV.

35. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, and cf. *supra*, chapter III, note 9.

Orot and Kelim

1. *The Concepts of OROT AND KELIM*¹

It has already been explained how the emanations from the *En Sof* are condensed and obscured by means of *tzimtzum*. The numerous grades of condensation presented five comprehensive classes of obscured and concealed *Sefirot*, called the Five Worlds.

Now the actual emanations from the *En Sof* are called *Orot* (Lights; sometimes *Atzmut* — Essence). But by definition these *Orot*, the actual emanations, are absolutely bound up with their Source, united with their Emanator, the *En Sof*. Thus, strictly speak-

1. The subject of *Orot* and *Kelim* is another controversial topic much discussed since the times of the early mystics; see *Pardess Rimonim* 4:1-4. In the paragraphs following, the subject is discussed as it appears in Chassidism, an interpretation generally following the views of R. Moses Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria. For further perusal of this involved theme, in addition to the sources cited in the subsequent notes, see *Zohar* II:42b f., and commentaries *a.l.*; *Pardess Rimonim*, *Sha'ar* IV; *Etz Chayim* 1:3, 40:8, and 47:1; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, *Derush Keitzad Na'asim Hakelim*

ing, we cannot really refer to *Orot* (Lights in the plural), as different kinds of emanations or different kinds of *Sefirot*, but only to *Or En Sof*, the Light of the *En Sof* (singular).

A distinction between *Orot* (a scheme of *Sefirot* that differ from one another) can be made only after *tzimtzum* takes place — relative to *tzimtzum*. Only then, depending on the variations in the degrees of manifestation of the *Or En Sof*, we can speak of *Orot*, of ranks and levels, of different attributes, of the ten *Sefirot*.²

For all practical purposes the *Orot* themselves remain unchanged from their origin and Divine Source.³ A distinction between them is made possible by the *Kelim* (Vessels):

Tzimtzum screened the light of the *En Sof* to such an extent that it produced ten different classes of concealment through each of which the *Or En Sof* manifests itself in a different way. These general types of concealment are called *Kelim*, Vessels. They are the Vessels which contain the Lights, just as, by way of analogy

(pp. 50b ff.), and Derushei ABYA:1 (pp. 376 ff.). See also *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 390; *Maggid Devarav Leya'akov*, sect. 93 (p. 19c); R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch, *Sha'ar Hayichud* (*Kuntres Hahitbonenut*), ch. 27 ff.

2. "Prior to *tzimtzum* all the light was equal in absolute unity and likeness . . . thus there does not apply to it any name or term. For a name indicates something specific and limited, to recognize a distinction between one *Sefirah* and another. But as everything was a simple light, no name, term, letter or point, nor any image or form whatever, applies to it . . ."; *Mevoh She'arim* I:1:1 (see also the sequel *a.l.*). Cf. *Pardess Rimonim* 6:6.

3. This conception is at the core of the controversy mentioned *supra*, note 1.

and metaphor, bodies contain souls. Thus the Lights and the *Kelim* together make up the *Sefirot*.⁴

The purpose of *tzimtzum* is for the production of *Kelim*.⁵ In fact, *tzimtzum* may be taken as synonymous with *Kelim*, and just as there are various grades of *tzimtzum* so there are various types of *Kelim*.⁶

It is in this context of *Orot* and *Kelim* that R. Moses Cordovero introduces a famous simile to explain the differentiation

4. In interpretation of the Creation-account, in the verse "and G-d saw the light that it was good, and He separated" (*Gen.* 1:4), this separation refers to the formation of the *Kelim* which "set and fashion a separation, limitation, and measure, among the *Orot*"; *Etz Chayim* 4:3. See also *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, Hakd. IV, and *ibid.*, Derush II-Be'olam Hanekudim (p. 59).—The *Kelim* are themselves mixtures of the lowest levels of lights "brought about by a condensation (*hit'abut*) of the light" (*Etz Chayim* 47:1), and they originate in the *reshimu* (the faint residue) of the original light that had remained in the *chalal* after the initial *tzimtzum*; see at length R. Shalom Buzaglo, *Hadrat Melech* on *Zohar* I:15a, and *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, a.l.c. *supra*, note 1.

5. "The purpose of *trimtzum* is . . . to fashion the aspect of the *Kelim*. For by means of the condensation and dimming of the light it is possible for the *Kelim* to come into being and to be manifest"; *Etz Chayim* 1:3. See *Tanya* II:4.

6. *Tanya* II:4. Just as *trimtzum* is synonymous with *Gevurah* and *Din* (*supra*, ch. III, note 87), so *Kelim* becomes synonymous with *Gevurah* and *Din*: "The attribute of *Din* always restricts *Chesed* so that it will not exceed, just like a vessel restricts the waters so that they will not flow out. And this is the principal meaning of the term *Kelim*; within them the *Atzmut* (the Divine Essence; the Light) vests Itself"; *Mevoh She'arim* VI:2:1. *Tzimtzum*, *Gevurah*, *Din* and *Kelim*, thus have for their purpose to limit and restrain the Divine effulgence from excessive radiation.

wrought by the *Kelim*: When pouring water into a number of differently coloured glasses, these waters – though in themselves colourless – will appear coloured according to the hue of the vessels which contain them. So, too, it is with the *Sefirot*. The *Kelim* are the Divine tools that bear different colours corresponding to their individual character or activity (white for *Chesed*, red for *Gevurah* and so on).⁷ The Divine Light (the *Orot*) that is contained in, and acts through, the *Kelim* is the “colourless” essence like the colourless water that appears coloured only when, and as, vested in the *Kelim*.⁸

Similarly, the Essence (the *Orot*) is analogous to a ray of light radiating through several crystals and thus assuming different colours. Light in itself is simple and colourless but can be divided and coloured, intensified or dimmed and so forth, through the intervening crystals.

A third simile is that of the soul in the body of man. The soul acts through the limbs and organs of the body and manifests itself differently through various activities. Yet the soul is simple and unitary, it is the same soul acting throughout the body, and

7. On the concept of various colours symbolizing and representing the different *Sefirot* see *Zohar* III:248b; *Tikunei Zohar*, Introduction 1a (text, and the gloss which appears also in *Zohar Chadash*, Tikunim 117c), and XIX:39b. See also *Zohar Chadash* 34a-b, and *Zohar* I:18b; *Pardess Rimonim*, Sha'ar X. Cf. *Sefer Habahir* 49 (137), and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII.

8. *Pardess Rimonim* 4:4. (This simile appears already in *Chovot Halevovot*, *Sha'ar Habechinah*, ch. 1.)

all differences in manifestations (seeing, hearing, speaking and so on) are due to the differences in the organs.⁹

At the same time it must be kept in mind that when speaking of changes in the manifestations, or of limitations or fixed measures with regard to the *Kelim* of the *Sefirot*, this relates only to the measure and limitation in the activity geared towards the recipients in a set and limited fashion,¹⁰ and not to the *Kelim* (and, *a fortiori*, the *Orot*) themselves!¹¹

These *Kelim* differ not only from one plane to another (relative to the *Sefirot*), but more so from one World to another: there are the *Orot* and *Kelim* of *Adam Kadmon*, the *Orot* and *Kelim* of *Atzilut* and so on. On the level of *Adam Kadmon* the *Kelim* (like the state of *tzimtzum* in that Realm) are extremely subtle and diaphanous, hardly distinguishable from the *Orot*.¹² On the level of *Atzilut* the *Kelim* are still very subtle, less so than in *Adam Kadmon* but still totally spiritual. And so, successively the *Kelim* become ever more obstructive until the *Orot* are practically hidden completely in *Asiyah*.

9. *Ibid.*; cf. *supra*, chapter IV (notes 8 and 9 – where these similes are cited in the context of distinguishing between the Worlds).

10. Cf. *Etz Chayim* 6:3: “The *Kelim* are to garb the light for the sake of the recipients.”

11. *Pardess Rimonim a.l.*; see also *Elima Rabbaty, May'an* III:VI: ch. 55 (pp. 99c ff.). Cf. *supra*, chapter III, section 1.

12. “Do not err, Heaven forbid, in thinking that in *Adam Kadmon* there are *Kelim* in the literal sense, Heaven forbid . . . When we refer [there] to *Kelim* it is only relative to the Light and *Atzmut* in them. But the *Kelim* themselves are a very pure light, to the very extremity of purity and tenuity. Beware and do not err in this matter!” *Etz Chayim* 1:4.

Thus when we speak of the different classes of *Sefirot*, i.e., of more or less intense radiations from the *Sefirot* (as the Worlds proceed from, and succeed each other), this difference is not due to any change in the original *Orot* but because of the increasing intensity, concealment and condensation effected by the numerous, successive grades of *Kelim*.¹³

2. *Or Pnimi — Or Makif*

The *Atzmut* (*Orot*) as vested in the *Kelim* is also referred to as *Orot Pnimiym* (Inner — or Immanent — Lights) — radiating and illuminating within the *Kelim* analogous to the soul vested and radiating within the body of man.

Generally speaking, the term *Orot*, unqualified, mostly refers to this “inner soul”-aspect. There are, however, *two* aspects: *Orot Pnimiym* (Inner Lights) and *Orot Makifim* (Encompassing — or Transcending — Lights), usually referred to in singular form as *Or Pnimi* and *Or Makif*. The basic difference between these two aspects is as follows:¹⁴

Just as the soul of man is vested in all the limbs of the body, irradiates and vitalizes them from within, so the *Orot Pnimiym* are vested within the *Kelim* of the *Sefirot*. However, for the *Atzmut* to be vested in the *Kelim* it must be condensed and its intensity must be diminished. Only a minute “part” of the light is thus condensed and confined within the *Kelim*. It is the *Or Pnimi*.

13. See sources mentioned *supra*, note 1.

14. See *Etz Chayim* 2:3.

To take the analogy further: The soul of man is neither a self-sufficient nor original power of life. It is only a ray, a “part”, of the ultimate life-force, of the Divine Light sustaining all being. It would be impossible for the finite body to contain and absorb the original light. Thus the “Light of the Eternal which is the soul of man” (*Proverbs* 20.27) must be a strongly concealed and contracted illumination, in a state of occultation (*tzimtzum*) commensurate to the body’s capacity.

The light *per se*, however, in its full intensity, cannot be absorbed by the body or *Kelim*. Thus there remains a more intense aspect of the Divine Light which cannot be vested in the *Kelim* and remains beyond them – encompassing them from without. This is the *Or Makif* which irradiates the *Kelim* in a transcending, albeit pervasive, form.

We can compare this to the concept of *tzimtzum* discussed in Chapter Two: The light manifest within the *chalal* is contracted; its original intensity is concealed. Outside the *chalal* the light is in its pristine manifestation. The *Or Pnimi* compares to the light within, and the *Or Makif* compares to the light beyond or outside the *chalal*.

The *Or Pnimi* is analogous to the Immanence of G-d (*Memale Kol Almin* – Filling or Pervading all Worlds), while the *Or Makif* is analogous to the Transcendence of G-d (*Sovev Kol Almin* – Encompassing or Encircling all Worlds).¹⁵

15. See *Tanya*, chapter 48; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. III, and note 11 (12) *ad loc.*

But just as in the case of *Memale Kol Almin* and *Sovev Kol Almin*, we must beware of any spatial connotations in the literal sense (inside-outside; below-above; 'filling'-'encompassing'). These concepts relate strictly to the degree of revealed influence or emanation: The influence which is in a state of revelation or manifestation in the worlds (or *Kelim*; or body) is referred to in terms of investiture, being clothed within the worlds (or *Kelim*, or body). The influence which is not manifest, which is not apprehended by the worlds, but remains in occultation and concealment relative to the worlds (*Kelim* or body), is not described as being "invested" but as "encircling and encompassing" (*Makif*; *Sovev*).¹⁶

The *Or Makif* (or *Or Sovev*) is the principal light from which only an extremely minute and contracted reflection clothes and reveals itself in the worlds (or *Kelim*; or body), just sufficient to animate them in a limited state. Thus even while the *Or Makif* is altogether concealed within the worlds or *Kelim*, its influence is nonetheless pervasive and active there in a hidden manner.

In the analogy from the soul, the *Or Pnimi* compares to the various soul-powers which manifest themselves in specific limbs and organs according to their innate capacities. Though the soul pervades the whole body, from head to foot, being diffused throughout all the organs, it manifests its vitality and powers in each limb or organ according to its composition and character: the brain for

16. See *Tanya*, chapter 48, and the examples given there to illustrate and elucidate these concepts. Cf. *supra*, chapter IV, end of section 1 and note 10 *ad loc.*

reasoning, the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, the mouth for speaking, the feet for walking and so on. This is the aspect of *Or Pnimi* which manifests itself in different ways and gradations.

The *Or Makif* is analogous to the essence of the soul. It extends vitality and illumination equally throughout the body, without distinction between various parts, though it remains concealed and the individual capacities are not manifested by it in the limbs and organs. Thus the *Or Makif* constitutes the principal light and radiates in both pervasive and transcendent form without being manifest, remaining equally concealed throughout.¹⁷

17. See *Derech Mitzvotecha*, s.v. Achdut Hashem, p. 120 f., and s.v. Binyan Mikdash, p. 169 f.; cf. *Tanya*, chapter 51. In this context the *Or Makif* is the aspect of *Keter*, analogous to the concept of *ratzon* — the essence-will which both pervades and transcends (see *supra*, chapter III, section 3).

Pnimityut and Chitzoniyut

Pnimityut and *Chitzoniyut* are terms which occur frequently in Kabbalistic and Chassidic literature. The terms themselves suggest their meanings.

Pnimityut means Inwardness. It refers to the innermost point, the core, the essence or essential-being of the subject to which it is applied.¹

Opposed to *Pnimityut* is *Chitzoniyut*, Outwardness, External-ity. *Chitzoniyut* is the furthest point from the *Pnimityut*. It is the most external, the lowest level, of the subject to which it is applied.²

Synonymous terms are *Panim*, and *Achor* (pl. *Achorayim*), Face, and Back, respectively. *Panim* is an expression of *Pnimityut*. *Achor* is both literally and conceptually the antonym of *Panim*, and synonymous with the concept of *Chitzoniyut*.³

1. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. IV and XIX.

2. *Ibid.*, sect. XIX.

3. *Ibid.*, sect. IV, VII (see note 27 *a.l.*), XIX, XXIIa (see notes

When we speak of the *Pnimityut* of a *Sefirah*, we refer to the very essence of that *Sefirah*, i.e., the Divine Light. The *Achorayim*, or *Chitzoniyut* of a *Sefirah*, refers to the very lowest and most external rank and level of that *Sefirah*. For example, when we come across a term⁴ such as the "aspect of the *Chitzoniyut* of the *Kelim* of *Malchut* of *Atzilut*," this refers then to the lowest level of the *Kelim* of the *Sefirah* "*Malchut* of *Aztilut*."

29(31) and 36(38) *a.l.*), and *cf.* *Tanya* I:22. See Maimonides, *Shemonah Perakim*, ch. VII, and *Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah* I:10 (*cf.* the critique by R. Abraham ibn Daud, cited in *Kessef Mishneh a.l.*), elaborated in *Moreh Nevuchim* I:21 and 37.

4. *E.g.*, *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. V.

Shevirat Hakelim

Shevirat Hakelim, and the adjunct concepts to be explained in the chapters following, are central doctrines in the Kabbalah in general, and in the teachings of R. Isaac Luria in particular.¹ Their source is in the Zoharic books *Sifra Detzeniyuta*, *Idra Rabba*, and *Idra Zutta*.²

Shevirat Hakelim (the Breaking of the Vessels) is the key-concept in the explanation of the basic problem of multifariousness

1. The concept of *Shevirat Hakelim* appears throughout the various works of the Lurianic system, though see especially *Etz Chayim*, *Hechal Hanekudim* (Sha'ar 8 ff.); *Mevoh She'arim* II:2:1-11; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*, *Derush Be'olam Hanekudim* (pp. 81-109). In the writings of R. Schneur Zalman this concept is explained in *Torah Or*, *Vayeshev*, 27c f; *ibid.*, Va'eira, 56d f., and Yitro, 110d; *Likutei Torah*, II:37c ff., and III:82c. Cf. also R. Tzvi Hirsh Horowitz, *Aspaklarya Hameirah* on *Zohar* III:135a ff.

2. *Zohar* II:176b; *ibid.*, III:128a, 135a-b, 142a-b. [For R. Moses Cordovero's interpretation on these passages see *Pardess Rimonim* 5:4; *Shi'ur Komah*, ch. 60; *Elima Rabbaty*, Eyn Habedolach:I:ch. 6 ff. (p. 53c ff.).]

and the origin of evil. It is based on the Midrashic account of the building and destruction of the primordial worlds,³ and the mystical account of the eight kings who "reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel."⁴

The original emission of the *Sefirot* was that of the scheme of *Iggulim*. At first there issued forth a highly concentrated, seminal point of light, compounded of ten gradations, from which the ten *Sefirot* proceeded in gradual order. The most sublime aspect of the original point became *Keter*. It contained within it the successive radiations of *Chochmah* to *Malchut*. From the most sublime aspect of *Keter* issued forth the *Sefirah* of *Chochmah*, containing also the lights of the successive *Sefirot*, *Binah* to *Malchut*. From *Chochmah* emanated the *Sefirah Binah*, containing also the lights of the successive *Sefirot*; and from *Binah* issued forth the *Midot* in unison, and from the latter issued forth *Malchut*. When we speak of successive issuances, it must be remembered that the first issue is that of a *Keli* (Vessel) into which an *Or* (Light) can then emanate and be contained.

Now each *Keli* is commensurate with its respective *Sefirah*. As the *Sefirot* are on successively lower levels, their *Kelim* are also successively smaller. Thus the Vessel of *Chochmah* is smaller than the Vessel of *Keter*; the Vessel of *Binah* is smaller than the Vessel of *Chochmah*, and so forth. When the light of the *En Sof* radiated to the Vessel of *Keter* (including the lights destined for the suc-

3. *Genesis Rabba* 3:7, and 9:2.

4. *Genesis* 36:31 ff.; see also *I Chronicles* 1:43 ff.

cessive *Sefirot*), the point of *Keter* was able to contain and endure it. Likewise, when the light from *Keter* flowed to *Chochmah*, including the lights destined for the lower *Sefirot*, the Vessel of *Chochmah* was able to absorb practically all of it; the relatively minor excess of light encompassed this Vessel by way of an *Or Makif* (Encompassing, or Transcending Light.)⁵ The same occurred with the flow from *Chochmah* to *Binah*, though this emanation was already much less intense.

The *Kelim* of *Chochmah* and *Binah* could contain these lights because of their close proximity to *Keter*, being both “large” and “strong” enough. But as the Divine Light proceeded further, from *Binah* to *Da’at*, the Vessel of *Da’at* could not contain the light and was shattered by the intensity of the radiation. This was so because not only the light meant for *Da’at*, but also the lights meant for the lower *Sefirot* were projected into that Vessel, which were more than it could endure. The unequal proportion of extremely intense *Orot* and extremely subtle *Kelim* precipitated this eventful occurrence.

The total light was then projected to the Vessel of the next *Sefirah*, *Chesed*, and it, too, broke for the same reason. This process continued and repeated itself with the next *Sefirot*, thus all the Vessels broke. The only change occurred on the level of *Yesod*, to which was projected at first only the light destined for the remaining stage, i.e., *Malchut*. The Vessel of *Yesod* was able to contain this light and project it further. But then, as with the other *Sefirot*, when the total light emanated from the upper *Sefirot* to

5. See *supra*, chapter V, section 2, for this term.

Yesod — its Vessel also broke. However, by then the light of *Malchut*, was already absorbed in the Vessel of *Malchut*, thereby strengthening the lower and less subtle aspects of that Vessel. Therefore, when the total light of the *Midot* was projected to *Malchut*, only the higher and more subtle aspects broke, while the lower ones remained relatively intact. Hence in *Malchut* the breakage was only partial.⁶

The above account of the disproportion between the *Orot* and *Kelim* is a "descriptive account" of the "mechanical event" of *Shevirat Hakelim*. At its root, however, the principal "flaw" which precipitated the "breaking of the vessels" and the dissolution of the original scheme of the *Sefirot*, is the fact that these *Sefirot* were separate, independent points (the scheme of *Iggulim*).⁷ These *Sefirot* of *Iggulim* were a *Reshut Harabim* (a domain of pluralism) because there was no unison, bond or unity; they were rather like individuals, each going his own way without any love or affection between them. That is why their *Kelim* were unable to endure the *Orot* and they "died".

In opposition to this pluralism "it is written: "Ephraim is united in idolatry, let him alone" (*Hosea* 4:17);⁸ for unity effects preservation and maintenance. A common saying has it that when

6. On all the aforementioned see sources mentioned *supra*, note 1, and *Etz Chayim*, Sha'ar Hakelalim, ch. 1; *Limudei Atzilut* (Lemberg 1850), p. 1d f.

7. See *supra*, ch. III, section 8, and *cf. infra*, ch. IX.

8. *I.e.*, Ephraim's unity saved him despite his sinfulness; see *Genesis Rabba* 38:6.

you take ten reeds separately, they will break; but if you take just three together they will endure and will not break.”⁹ For this very reason the first three *Sefirot* were preserved, for they were not separate points but inter-related.¹⁰

Now, the eight Kings who reigned in the Land of Edom are the Eight *Sefirot* issuing from *Binah*: *Da’at* to *Malchut*. Of these Kings it is stated that they reigned and then died; this refers to the breaking of the Vessels. However, it is only of the first seven Kings that Scripture states that they died, but not of the eighth;¹¹ that is, only seven broke completely, but not the eighth. These Kings who died allude to the Vessels which broke; they are the primordial worlds which were destroyed.¹²

Death means the separation of soul from body: the soul ascends to return to its source, while the body, made of the dust of the earth, is returned to earth. The soul *per se*, therefore, is not affected by death, whereas for the body it is a lowering and degradation to be reduced from its erstwhile level of being part of man to the present level of a lifeless corpse. Analogous to this is that which occurred to the Kings: the “soul” [the *Orot* of the *Sefirot*] ascended to be re-absorbed in its source, while the remains

9. *Etz Chayim* 11:5; see also *ibid.*, 9:2 and 19:1.

10. *Ibid.*, and see *Likutei Torah* II:37c ff., and III:87a ff.

11. In the first account of the Kings, in *Genesis*; in the second account, in *Chronicles*, it is stated of all eight Kings that they died. Because the breakage was complete in the first seven, the sources speak mostly of the “seven Kings of Edom.”

12. *Zohar a.l.c.* (*supra* note 2).

of the "body", the fragmented *Kelim* of the *Sefirot*, fell to their "grave".

However, the analogy does not hold true altogether. For in the case of the "Kings" there was not a real and final death, a real and final separation in totality of the *Orot* from the *Kelim*. A residue of the *Orot* remained attached to the fragments. Death is used here in the figurative sense of applying to any degradation:¹³ as the broken *Kelim* fell, from a sublime level to lower levels, they are regarded as having died.¹⁴

As the parts of the vessels were projected downwards they broke further into an ever increasing number of fragments. Hence, the residue of the Divine Light attached to them was also "fragmented," as it were. Therefore, as the parts fell to the realm of *Atzilut*, we speak of 288 general sparks (*Nitzotzin*);¹⁵ but as they fell further, to *Beriah* and so on, these 288 sparks were subdivided

13. Cf. *Genesis Rabba* 96:3.

14. *Zohar* III:135b; *Etz Chayim* 11:4, and 18:1; *Likutei Torah* III:82c.

15. This is adduced in *Genesis* 1:2: "And the earth was *tohu* and *vohu* (unformed and unordered)"; this refers to the unformed *Sefirot* of the *Iggulim*, as they were not yet ordered and inter-related, but separate principles, thereby causing the "death of the Kings." "And the spirit of G-d מרחפת (hovered) . . ." (*ibid.*); the word מרחפת divides into two parts: מ"ח and רפ"ח ("died," and the number 288), referring to the death of the Kings and the division of the residue of the Divine Light into 288 sparks (the sparks encumbered in the midst of the word מות, i.e., within the "dead" or broken vessels). *Etz Chayim* 18:1; *Torah Or*, Vayeshev, 27d.

into an ever greater number of smaller sparks, each one attached to a fragment.

Also, as these fragments fell continuously deeper, they became not only more numerous but also less tenuous; not so much because the original fragments became cruder themselves, but because the more subtle aspects were gradually assimilated and absorbed among the successive grades and levels. The most subtle aspects of the broken *Kelim* are totally absorbed and assimilated in *Atzilut*; the next grade of aspects is absorbed and assimilated in *Beriah*; the next grade of aspects is absorbed and assimilated in *Yetzirah*; and the lowest grades are in *Asiyah*. The lowest grades which could not be assimilated in the realm of holiness become the realm of impurity; they are the substance of evil.¹⁶

R. Moses Cordovero, the great expositor of the Kabbalah, illustrates this process with an analogy to food:¹⁷ Man may select the best of foods in which, chemically speaking, there is no waste or useless matter whatever; it is totally and absolutely pure. Even so, when he consumes this food and it is digested and assimilated in his body, even the purest food will show some refuse that is expelled from the body for being unassimilable.

Precisely so, metaphorically speaking, the broken Vessels, though essentially pure mixtures of light, as they are projected down the various levels and assimilated among them, they have some unassimilable parts which, metaphorically speaking, are called their

16. R. Chaim Vital, *Sefer Hagilgulim* (Vilna 1886), ch. 1; *Mevoh She'arim* II:3:8.

17. *Pardess Rimonim* 25:1.

waste and refuse. This waste and refuse is the essence of evil and impurity.¹⁸

Now, because the fragments are deprived of the *Orot* and retain but a spark of holiness, just sufficient to sustain their existence, they lead ever more "independent" existences. They become more distinct entities and are, as such, the root-elements of all creations.¹⁹ As they fell to *Beriah*, those aspects that could be assimilated in that World became the creatures of *Beriah*. The unassimilable waste of *Beriah* was projected to *Yetzirah*, where some of it was assimilable and became the creatures of *Yetzirah*. The unassimilable waste of *Yetzirah* was projected to *Asiyah*, where some of it was assimilable

18. The substance of evil thus consists of the waste and remains of the Kings of Edom. *Edom* is the realm of Esau, son of Isaac. The attribute of Isaac is that of *Gevurah* (see *supra*, ch. III, note 107). The "waste" of Isaac's *Gevurah* extended to Esau, just as the waste of Abraham's *Chesed* extended to Ishmael. Hence, just as Ishmael is the aspect of impure *Chesed* (see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. II, and note 14(17) *a.l.*) so Esau is the aspect of impure *Gevurah* (*cf. ibid.*, note 13(16), and sect. XXV, note 57(63)). *Edom*, thus, is essentially a place to which *Gevurah* and *Din* are bound to and derive from (see sources cited *supra*, note 12), and *Edom* in its source is the aspect of the original *Kelim* (*cf. supra*, chapter V, that *tzimtzum*, *Gevurah*, *Din*, and *Kelim* may be taken as synonymous). Hence, the substance of evil is always referred to as the "waste" and "refuse" of the aspects of *Gevurah* (see *Zohar* I:74b; *ibid.*, 148a). *Cf. also infra*, end of chapter IX.

19. That is, the fragments are the origin and substance of matter; they form the four elements. On the higher levels they are the tenuous root-elements of the elements [which are practically spiritual; see *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, note 30 (33)], and the lower they fall the more tangible, material and cruder the elements become until they assume the characteristics of matter as we know it.

and became the creatures of *Asiyah*, while the unassimilable waste of *Asiyah* remained on the lower levels of this Realm as the elements of evil.²⁰

The fragments thus are responsible for the multifariousness in G-d's creation, and for the existence of evil. And this, indeed, is the very intent and purpose of *Shevirat Hakelim*: it brought about the subjects over which the King can rule in a meaningful way,²¹ and provides them with a choice between good and evil so that the King may manifest His attributes of *Chesed*, *Din*, *Rachamim* and so on.²²

20. See *Torah Or*, Vayeshev, 27d. Note, however, that on all levels, even on the lowest, there remain sparks of holiness attached to the fragments which sustain their existence, thus acting as their "animating principles" or "souls"; see *Etz Chayim*, Sha'ar Hakelalim, ch. 2, and *ibid.*, 19:3. Cf. *infra*, chapters X and XI.

Because of the multiplicity in them, the lower Worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* are called the Realm of *Pirud* (Division), while *Atzilut* is called the Realm of *Yichud* (Unity) because the *Orot* and *Kelim* of *Atzilut* are fully absorbed in Divinity and not separated from It; see *Zohar* II:234a f., and III:159a f.; *Etz Chayim* 43: Introduction. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, beginning of sect. XX.

21. See *supra*, chapter III, section 7, and notes 143-144 *a.l.*

22. See *infra*, chapter XI, and note 3 *a.l.*

Partzufim

The original scheme of the *Sefirot* was unable to exist, as seen in the preceding chapter. The *Sefirot*, therefore, were re-established in a new order in which the *Kelim* would be able to absorb and contain the *Orot* and the emanations could proceed in a gradual manner.

The reason for the breakage was that the original *Sefirot* were independent principles and had not been brought into harmony with each other. The *Kelim* of the *Midot* were for their own *Orot* only, and therefore could not absorb any additional light meant for others.

In the new order the *Sefirot* had to be repaired in such a way that a breakage would not ensue, thus allowing the

1. This chapter is based essentially on *Etz Chayim* 11:7, and *Sha'ar Hakelalim*, ch. 2; *Sha'ar Hahakdamot*. Hakd. I-II; *Mevoh She'arim* II:3:4; *Likutei Torah* II:37d, and V:19d; *Siddur im Perush Hamilot*, p. 179b. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XIX.

Divine emanations to proceed in such a way as would make it possible for a world to come into being. This is effected by extending, as it were, the *Sefirot*; by harmonising the *Sefirot*, causing them to function within one another. Thus the *Kelim* would be larger and stronger, and able to absorb the *Orot*.

In this new order the *Sefirot* appear as *Partzufim* (Forms; Visages; Configurations), according to the scheme of *Yosher*. *Keter* is no longer a simple point in which the other *Sefirot* are included as latent points, but it is converted into a configuration analogous to the Man-Image (referred to above, chapter III, section 8) in which every *Sefirah* functions, though *Keter* is the dominant aspect. This *Partzuf* is called *Arich Anpin* (the long, or Extended Face; *Macroprosopus*). In this Configuration we speak of *Keter* of *Arich Anpin*, *Chochmah* of *Arich Anpin*, *Binah* of *Arich Anpin*, and so forth.

Arich Anpin, also called the *Yosher* of *Adam Kadmon* (i.e., the basic *Sefirot*-scheme of *Yosher* as it is in the Realm of *Adam Kadmon*), is the substratum of everything. Thus it extends from the highest to the lowest level, from *Keter* of *Adam Kadmon* to *Malchut* of *Asiyah* (though in an ever more concealed mode).²

Subsequently, the other two *Sefirot* that remained intact were also transmuted. The principle of *Chochmah* is converted to the *Partzuf* of *Abba* (Father), and the principle of *Binah* is converted to the *Partzuf* of *Imma* (Mother; or Supernal Mother). Both *Abba* and *Imma* are complete *Partzufim*, each compounding all ten *Sefirot*.

2. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XX, and note 86(95) *a.l.*; cf. *supra*, chapter IV, note 16.

Thus we speak of *Keter* of *Abba*, *Chochmah* of *Abba*, *Binah* of *Abba*, and so on; and *Keter* of *Imma*, *Chochmah* of *Imma*, and so forth.

These two *Partzufim* are related by *Keter* (the faculty of *Da'at Elyon*): their Configurations issue both from *Arich Anpin* and, so to speak, are parallel to each other (as *Chochmah* and *Binah* are in the scheme of *Yosher*, one on the right and the other on the left). Thus they are, as it were, a dual Configuration and are referred to as the "firm friends who never separate".³

The six *Midot*, *Chesed* to *Yesod*, whose *Kelim* had been shattered completely, issue forth from *Imma* as a unit, as the *Partzuf* of *Ben* (the Son), known as *Z'eyr Anpin* (the Small, or Lesser Countenance; *Microprosopus*), again compounding the ten aspects of the *Sefirot*.

Through *Z'eyr Anpin* issues forth *Malchut*, as the *Partzuf* of *Bat* (the Daughter), known as *Nukvah* (the Female), or simply *Malchut*, again compounding all ten aspects of the *Sefirot*.

Malchut is essentially related to the *Midot*, but because its Vessel did not break altogether it is a *Partzuf*, or unit, on its own. Nevertheless the relationship remains, and it is called *Nukvah* in terms of the *Z'eyr Anpin*: the *Midot* are the masculine aspect of the *Z'eyr Anpin*. Hence *Malchut* yearns to be reunited with *Z'eyr Anpin*, to become one with it.⁴ To effect this union is the task of man, by means of his worship and service to G-d. This is the concept of the

3. *Zohar* III:4a.

4. See *Zohar* I:30b f., and III:4a.

"Unification (*Yichud*) of the Holy One, blessed is He, and His *Shechinah*,"⁵ to re-establish total unity in the universe.⁶

At this point we must remind ourselves once more that all these terms, and the concept of the *Partzufim*, do not imply any pluralism in the G-dhead. The *Partzufim* are *Faces*, i.e., Manifestations of the G-dhead, various aspects under which G-d manifests Himself. Said Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai:

"Whatever I said of the Holy Ancient-One,⁷ and whatever I said of the *Z'eyr Anpin*, is all One; everything is absolutely One. There is no division in Him, blessed be He and blessed be His Name foreverlasting."⁸

"The sum of all this is: the Ancient of the Ancient and the *Z'eyr Anpin* are absolutely One. All is, all was, and all shall be. He will not change. He is unchanging, and He has not changed . . . Should you ask, what then is the difference between the one and the other? It is all One, but from [above] His paths divide, and from [below] judgment is found. It is from *our* perspective that they differ one from another."⁹

5. See *Zohar* III:83a. Cf. R. Shalom Buzaglo, *Kissei Melech* on *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 3a, s.v. *ו*; *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 19; *Tanya* I:ch. 41; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. III.

6. See *infra*, chapter XI. Of this final goal it is said: "And the Eternal shall be King over all the earth. In that day shall the Eternal be One and His Name One." (*Zechariah* 14:9).

7. *Atika Kadisha* (see *supra*, ch. III, note 34), the essence of *Arich Anpin*.

8. *Zohar* III:290a f.

9. *Zohar* III:141a f. See *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 85.

Tohu and Tikun

We now have two schemes of *Sefirot*: the original scheme of *Iggulim* which precipitated *Shevirat Hakelim*, and the subsequent scheme of *Yosher* in which the *Sefirot* were rearranged and the fragments had been assimilated as much as possible.

These two orders are called the worlds of *Tohu* and *Tikun*. *Tohu* refers to the state of the original *Sefirot*, as unformed and unordered points.¹ *Tikun* (Correction; Restitution; Reformation) refers to the state of the *Sefirot* rearranged, mended and reformed as *Partzufim*.²

Thus among the *Sefirot* of *Tohu* there is no interrelationship. The *Midot* of *Tohu* are one below the other without any mutual inclusion whatever — each on its own, without relating

1. The term *Tohu* is taken from *Genesis* 1:2; see *supra*, chapter VII, note 15.

2. In this context R. Isaac Luria reads *Genesis* 1:2 as referring to the World of *Tohu*, and *Genesis* 1:3 ("Let there be light, and there was light") as referring to the World of *Tikun*; *Etz Chayim* 8:1.

to its opposite. *Chesed* is simple and absolute *Chesed*, and *Gevurah* is simple and absolute *Gevurah*. That is why the *Midot* assert themselves as *Midot per se*, without permitting the guidance of *Sechel* (*Chochmah*, *Binah*, *Da'at*); and, thus, as simple and absolute *Midot*, they oppose one another, they are fully separated and non-related, and precipitate *Shevirat Hakelim*.

The *Sefirot* of *Tikun*, on the other hand, compound one another. The *Midot* of *Tikun* permit the mitigating influence of *Sechel* and, therefore, are able to interrelate.³

The realm of *Tohu* refers to the primordial worlds that were destroyed, of which G-d said "These do not please Me." The realm of *Tikun* refers to the new worlds of which it is said: "And G-d saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good" (*Genesis* 1:31) and G-d said "These please Me".⁴

3. *Likutei Torah* II:37c ff., and III:87a ff.; *supra*, chapter VII (notes 7-10).

In this context man is said to be rooted in the realm of *Tikun* as his soul compounds all ten aspects of the *Sefirot* (see *supra*, chapter III, note 151), and these are in the full inter-relationship of the *Sefirot* as compounds. Hence man is able to control or mitigate his soul-powers of *Chesed* and *Gevurah* (e.g., love and anger, and so on). Animals, on the other hand, are rooted in *Tohu*: they express their natural emotive powers in a simple and extreme manner, unable to control or mitigate them. Though *Tohu*, for being the original emission of *Sefirot*, is said to be rooted higher than *Tikun*, *Tikun* has an advantage and superiority over *Tohu*: the perfection of the mutual inclusiveness and unity of *Tikun* is the condition drawing forth a manifest indwelling of the *Or En Sof* that is not to be found in *Tohu*. See *Likutei Torah* II:37c ff.

4. *Genesis Rabba* 3:7, and 9:2.—This is not to be understood in a sense of there being some accidental flaw in the original World of *Tohu*.

In the same context, *Tohu* is the original world created by the attribute of *Din* (*Gevurah*),⁵ and as this world could not subsist, the Creator mitigated the severity of *Din* by blending it with the attributes of *Chesed* and *Rachamim*, bringing into being the world of *Tikun*.⁶

Beside this descriptive connotation, the term *Tikun* has another, an active sense, which will be explained further on, in chapter XI on *Birur* and *Tikun*.

On the contrary, the flaw and defect of *Tohu* were intentionally and purposely formed to allow for the possibility of the effects of *Shevirat Hakelim*. Thus R. Isaac Luria interprets the *Mishnah* of *Avot* V:1 ("By ten sayings the world was created. And why does Scripture teach this? Could it not have been created by a single saying? But this was in order to exact penalty from the wicked . . . and to give good reward to the righteous") to the effect that the 'Ten Sayings' in the opening statement allude to the ten separate *Sefirot* of *Tohu*, and the 'single saying' in the question refers to the unified compound of the *Sefirot* of *Tikun*. The actual order of creations through the stages of *Tohu* and *Tikun* allows for the possibility of evil, providing man with an opportunity to choose between good and evil which, in turn, makes it possible for G-d to manifest His attributes of *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, and so forth (the principles of reward and punishment spoken of in the *Mishnah*). See *Etz Chayim* 11:6, and the discourse on this *Mishnah* in *Sha'ar Hahakdamot* (p. 228 f.); see also R. Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar Maamarei Rashby Ve-Razal, Avot a.l.* (II:pp. 73a ff.). Cf. *infra*, chapter XI, note 3.

5. Cf. *supra*, chapter V, and chapter VII, note 18.

6. *Genesis Rabba* 12:15; *Zohar* III: 38a. See *Zohar* I:180b and 280b; *Zohar Chadash*, *Toldot*, 27a. Cf. *Mevoh She'arim* II:3:8.

Kelipot; Chitzonim; Sitra Achra

The terms in this chapter-heading are synonymous. They are the names for evil and impurity. *Sitra Achra* means the "other side," i.e., the side distinguished from and opposed to holiness and purity. *Chitzonim* means the "external ones," i.e., the most exterior forces, the "waste" of holiness that constitutes evil. *Kelipot* means shells, or barks; the outer shells that contain the edible fruit but are themselves inedible.

The substance of evil, or the *Kelipot*, as already mentioned earlier, consists of the unassimilable parts of the broken Vessels, thus their waste and refuse. Each of these subsists by virtue of a spark of holiness attached to them. This holy spark, their vital force without which they would cease to exist,¹ is encumbered and enclosed by the shells just as the edible fruit is encumbered and

1. See *supra*, chapter VII, note 20, and *infra*, chapter XI.

enclosed by its shell. On its own, therefore, it is unable to make itself felt and to dominate over the shell. Hence we arrive at the analogous term of *Kelipot*.

There are four basic *Kelipot*, divided into two classes:² the three altogether impure and evil *Kelipot*, and *Kelipat Nogah*. *Kelipat Nogah* is the "skin" immediately covering the spark of holiness. Thus it is in direct contact with holiness, and not altogether evil. It is an intermediary between holy and profane, between absolute good and absolute evil. The other three *Kelipot* are further removed; they are not in direct contact with the spark but cover the *Kelipat Nogah*, one over the other. Their nurture and vitality from holiness comes to them through the medium of *Kelipat Nogah*.³

The four *Kelipot*, and the term *Nogah*, are adduced in *Ezekiel* I:14:⁴ "Stormy wind," "great cloud," and "a fire taking hold of itself," these denote the three totally impure *Kelipot*; and "a Brightness (*Nogah*) round about it" denotes the fourth *Kelipah*, *Kelipat Nogah* (the *Nogah* being a radiation from holiness). The significance of these two classes will be understood by the following:

The Torah, the revealed Word of G-d, is the criterion of absolute good and absolute evil.⁵ Whatever man is enjoined to do

2. On all this see *Etz Chayim* 49:2 ff.; *Tanya* I: ch. 6 f.; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXV and XXVI. Cf. *Zohar* III:227a.

3. *Tanya* I: ch. 37.

4. See *Zohar* II:203a-b.

5. Cf. *Mishnat R. Eliezer*, ch. 6; Maimonides, *Hilchot Melachim* VIII:11; *idem.*, *Shemonah Perakim*, chs. 4 and 6.

is absolute good; whatever man is prohibited from doing is absolute evil. Therefore all matters pertaining to the prohibitions of the Torah (the forbidden objects, actions, utterances, thoughts, and so on) flow and derive from the three altogether impure *Kelipot*. All matters pertaining to the realm of what is essentially permissible (according to the Torah) — in distinction from what is commanded, and to the exclusion of what is prohibited — essentially flow and derive from *Kelipat Nogah*.

Kelipat Nogah, being an intermediary category, between pure holiness and absolute impurity, has some relationship to both. This means that all derivations of *Kelipat Nogah* can fall to, and be absorbed in, the three evil *Kelipot*; or, alternatively, they can be elevated to, and be absorbed in, the realm of holiness.

When the permitted action (as, for example, simple eating and drinking) is intentionally performed for a higher purpose, for the sake of Heaven (*i.e.*, to have the strength and energy to serve G-d), then the vitality of this action (and the permitted objects it involves) is distilled and absorbed in the realm of holiness.^{5*}

If, on the other hand, the eating and drinking were for purely sensual pleasure, without any more sublime intention, then this vitality is degraded and temporarily absorbed in the three unclean *Kelipot*; temporarily, because whereas the food is essentially fit and permitted for consumption (thus not forbidden), its vitality can

^{5*} See Maimonides, *Hilchot De'ot* ch. 3-4, and *Shemonah Perakim*, ch. 5; *Tzavaat Harivash*, sect. 94-95 (and my notes *ad loc.* and on *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 282). Cf. commentaries by Nachmanides and R. Bachya ben R. Asher on *Leviticus* 19:2.

revert and ascend to holiness along with the consumer when he returns (*Teshuvah*) to the service of G-d.⁶

The etymology of the Hebrew terms for permitted and forbidden, *Muttar* and *Assur* respectively, elucidates this point. *Muttar* literally means "released," "free"; that is, the permitted matter is not tied and bound by the power of the *Chitzonim* so that it would be prevented from returning and ascending to holiness.

Assur literally means "chained," "bound." For the forbidden matter is bound and held captive in the power of the *Chitzonim*. The *Chitzonim* prevent it from ever ascending and becoming absorbed in holiness, until the day when death (another synonym for evil) will be devoured forever, as it is written (*Zechariah* 13:2): "And I will cause the unclean spirit to pass from the earth"; or until the sinner who intentionally partook of the forbidden repents to such an extent that his premeditated sins become transmuted into veritable merits,⁷ which is achieved through "repentance (*Teshuvah*) out of love," i.e., a *Teshuvah* coming from the depths of the heart, with great love and fervour, and from a soul passionately desiring to cleave to the blessed G-d and thirsting for G-d like a parched desert soil.⁸

The meaning and intent of the *Kelipot* will be discussed in the next chapter.

6. Though even then a trace of the evil remains in the body, necessitating the purgatory of the grave; *Tanya* I: ch. 8.

7. *Rosh Hashanah* 29a.

8. *Tanya* I: ch. 7; see also *ibid.*, ch. 8, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVI.

Birur and Tikun

Man created last but first in intent,¹ has his abode in this physical world which is also the abode of the *Kelipot*. For it is man's task and mission to subdue the *Kelipot* and prevail over them by means of Torah and the *Mitzvot* in order to realise the Divine Will – the making of this world an abode for Divinity.²

1. See *Tikunei Zohar*, Intr.: 6a, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VII, note 14. Cf. note 2, *infra*.

2. "Clearly the purpose of the evolution of the worlds and their gradual descent is not for the sake of the higher worlds . . . but the ultimate purpose [of creation] is the lowest world. For such was His blessed Will that He delights in the *sitra achra* being subdued and in darkness being turned to light so that the Divine Light of the blessed *En Sof* shall shine forth in the place of darkness and *sitra achra*, throughout the world . . . And for this purpose the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to Israel the Torah . . ."; *Tanya* I: ch. 36, in comment on the Midrashic statement that the purpose of the creation is the Divine wish to have an abode in the nether realms just as in the supernal ones (*Tanchuma*, *Bechukotai*: 3, and *Nasso*: 16).

"The purpose of all the contractions (*tzimtzumim*) is the creation of

It has already been explained that the *Kelipot* are derived from the "Breaking of the Vessels". This significant occurrence was not a catastrophic accident due to some flaw in the cosmogonic process. On the contrary, it was a lawful and purposive development in order to bring about evil. For only where there is an alternative between good and evil can man have freedom of choice. And only where man uses this free choice to perform his tasks and duties can he be rewarded accordingly, and receive his requirements from a perspective of law, righteousness, and equity.³ Evil therefore serves a Divine purpose.

In fact, the evil inclination in man is an instrument for the love of G-d. Accordingly it is written: "And you shall love the Eternal, your G-d, with all your heart" (*Deuteronomy* 6:5); "with all your heart" means with both your inclinations, the evil inclination as well as the good inclination.⁴ The Kabbalah and Chassidism are very emphatic on this, and state that there can be no greater service done to G-d than to bring the evil inclination into subjection by the power of love for G-d. For when man thus subdues evil

the material human body and the subjugation of the *sitra achra*, to bring about the preeminence of light supplanting darkness . . . as has been explained earlier [*Tanya* I, ch. 35-37] at length; for this is the purpose for the descent of the world . . . and this is the essence of man's devotion in his Divine service: to elicit the Light of the blessed *En Sof* down below"; *ibid.*, ch. 49.

Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VII, and see *Emunot Vede'ot* IV: Introd. and ch. 1; cf. Maimonides, Introduction to *Commentary on the Mishnah*.

3. *Pardess Rimmonim* 25:3; *Etz Chayim* 11:6, 37:2, 39:1, and *Sha'ar Hakelalim*, ch. 2; *supra*, chapter IX, note 4.

4. *Mishnah, Berachot* IX:5.

and harnesses its power, he becomes a true lover of G-d, because he has learnt how to make the very evil inclination serve G-d.^{4*}

“All that the Holy One, blessed is He, has made, above and below, is for the purpose of manifesting His glory and for His service. Now who has seen a servant working against his master and laying plans to counteract everything that is of his master’s will? It is the will of the Holy One, blessed is He, that men should worship Him and walk in the way of truth, continually, so that man may be rewarded with benefits. As this is the will of the Holy One, blessed is He, how, then, can an evil servant come and counteract the will of his master and tempt man to walk in an evil way, repulsing him from the good way and causing him to disobey the will of the Lord?”

To solve this apparent paradox the *Zohar* states that in fact the intended purpose of evil is merely to execute the Will of G-d, and illustrates this by the famous “parable of the harlot”:

A king instructed and cautioned his son to lead an exemplary moral life and not to fall prey to temptation. Then, secretly, the king brought before him a beautiful and clever woman and commanded her to seduce his son in order to test his obedience and devotion to his father. Obediently the woman used every blandishment to seduce the prince, but he, in fidelity to his father’s instructions, rejected her allurements and thrust her from himself. At this the royal father

4.* Cf. the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid’s comments on *Avot* IV:1, in *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 171 and Addenda sect. 91, and *Or Torah*, p. 203.

rejoiced exceedingly, and he bestowed upon his son the greatest gifts and highest honours.

Now, who caused all that glory to the prince? None other but the temptress! And the *Zohar* concludes: "Surely she is to be praised on all counts; for, firstly, she fulfilled the king's command, and secondly, she caused the son to receive all that good and led to that intense love of the king for his son."⁵

Thus it is man's purpose to subdue the *Sitra Achra* and to harness its power for good, for "When that *Sitra* is subdued, the Holy One, blessed is He, is exalted above⁶ and is aggrandized in His glory. In fact, there is no worship of G-d except when it issues forth from darkness, and no good except when it proceeds from evil . . .

5. *Zohar* II:163a. Cf. *Tanya* I: ch. 9, and end of ch. 29; also *ibid.*, ch. 24. See also the discussion of "evil" in *Tzavaat Harivash*, sect. 130 (and my notes *ad loc.* as well as on *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 26 and 253).

Evil, thus, is not a mere negation. In our sense it can be quite real. To be sure, the *Kelipot* exist only by virtue of the Divine Will and receive their vitality from the sources of holiness (the "sparks of holiness"), albeit in limited measure, just sufficient for their intended purpose; see *Etz Chayim* 31:2. But as man, through his sinful actions, lends additional vitality and strength to the *Kelipot*, they do not suffice with the seduction of man but seek "to conquer and prevail with full force," thus necessitating a severe battle against them; see R. Chaim Vital, *Sha'ar Hapessukim* on *Proverbs* 9:17 (p. 267), and *idem.*, *Sha'ar Hamitzvot* on *Exodus* 22:6 (p. 36); *Etz Chayim* 48:2.

6. That is, as the *sitra achra* is subdued below, its source in the supernal *Gevurot* is subdued above, thus causing a sublime unification (*Yichud*) and an immense manifestation which then radiates downwards. See the commentaries on this passage, and *Likutei Torah* III:37c ff.; cf. *infra*, note 9.

The perfection of all things is attained when the intermingled good and evil become totally good, for there is no good except if it issues out of evil. By that good His glory rises, and that is the perfect worship."⁷

As man arouses his own attribute of *gevurah*⁸ to subdue the waste of the Supernal *Gevurah* below⁹ and to prevail over it, he causes a reciprocal effect that the Divine attribute of *Gevurah* will subdue and prevail over the Supernal Judgments (*Hamtakat Hadinim*: the "mitigation of the Judgments") and the Divine *Chesed* and *Rachamim* will manifest themselves below unhindered.¹⁰

The *Kelipot* thus serve a distinct purpose. There is a spark (*Nitzotz*) of Divinity attached to them which allows them to subsist as a servant to serve the Master's purpose. When this spark is extricated from the *Kelipot* and restored to the realm of Holiness to be absorbed there, the *Kelipot* are deprived of their vitality and cease to exist. And this is the task of man: to extricate that spark

7. *Zohar* II:184a. See also *ibid.*, 67b and 128b; *Tanya* I: ch. 27.

8. The faculty in man's soul which corresponds to the *Sefirah Gevurah*; see *supra*, chapter I, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XV.

9. The *Kelipot* deriving from the original *Kelim* which, in turn, originate in the supernal *Gevurah*; see *supra*, chapter VII, note 18.

10. See *Derech Emunah*, section 2 (p. 9a f.). Cf. *Zohar Chadash*. Tik., 94b: "From the side of *Gevurah* they are called 'The valiant ones (*Giborim*) that stand in the breach, that repel the decrees [judgments]' (*Liturgy*, *Selichot*)." Cf. also note 6, *supra*, and sources cited there. See further *Siddur im Perush Hamilot*, p. 247a f., that precisely this "sweetening of the judgments," the mitigation of *Gevurah*, elicits the most abundant good.

This is essentially also the concept of "the righteous turn the attrib-

of holiness. This is called *Birur*, and this is the concept of *Tikun*.¹¹

Birur means Extrication, Disencumbrance. When man relates consciously to the derivatives of the *Kelipot*, actively or passively, in their Divinely intended context, he extricates the spark of Divinity (*Birur*) and restores it to its source, thus causing the Restitution and Reintegration (*Tikun*) of the whole Being. The "shell" is broken, the "fruit" is extracted, and the proper cosmic order is restored.

That is, the potentially holy objects (*Kelipat Nogah*) are sublimated and absorbed in the realm of holiness by the properly performed actions and by safeguarding them from the *Chitzonim*, i.e., by withstanding the temptations of evil. For as *Kelipat Nogah*

ute of *Din* and *Gevurah* into the attribute of *Rachamim*, while the wicked turn the attribute of *Rachamim* into the attribute of *Gevurah* and *Din*"; *Genesis Rabba* 33:3. *Chesed* is free to emanate as the concealment and restraint of *Gevurah* and *Din* are removed, while the limitations of *Gevurah* and the severity of *Din* emerge as the concealment implied by *Gevurah* is increased and strengthened by sin (the notion of *Hesster Panim*, the Concealment or "Hiding" of the Divine Countenance, mentioned in *Deut.* 31:17, as opposed to *Heorat Panim*, the Shining Illumination or Manifestation of the Divine Countenance, as in *Numbers* 6:25; cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, end of sect. II, and *supra*, ch. 6, s.v. *Panim*). The implication is that there is no change in G-d but only in, and relative to, man. See *Zohar* III:137b; and *supra*, end of ch. 9, and the sources cited there; also *Zohar* II:63a; *Pardess Rimonim* 25:3; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII and XIII.

11. See *Etz Chayim* 39:1. Most intimately related to, and practically identical with, this concept of *Birur* is the theme of *העלאת מ"ן* (the "elevation of *Mayin Nukvin* (feminine waters)"); see *Etz Chayim*, 39:1; *Tanya* I: chs. 10 and 53; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. IV and note 34(46) *a.l.* Cf. also *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVII and XXVIII.

is fully absorbed in the realm of holiness, the impure *Kelipot* (who receive their vitality through the medium of *Kelipat Nogah*) are deprived of their vitality and are annihilated.¹²

On the other hand, every improper act (sin) causes just the opposite. Sinful acts retain and sustain the *Sitra Achra*;¹³ *Kelipat Nogah* is absorbed among the impure *Kelipot*, thus strengthening them and increasing their power, and causing the spark of holiness to be further and increasingly imprisoned and encumbered among the *Kelipot*. This is known as the concept of the *Shechinah-in-exile*:¹⁴ the *Shechinah*, the Divine Indwelling Presence, the spark of Holiness, is exiled among the *Kelipot* to remain there bound up and without escape until the sinner repents intensely, or until the day when G-d will cause the spirit of impurity to pass from the earth.¹⁵

Every one has his share of sparks that he has to extricate and disencumber. For Adam, by his sin, strengthened and increased the power of evil.¹⁶ The many sparks that fell because of his cata-

12. *Tanya* I: ch. 37; cf. *Etz Chayim* 39:1.

13. See *Zohar* II:184a, and cf. note 10 *supra*.

14. See *Etz Chayim* 47:6. Cf. *Zohar* III:74a ff.; also *ibid.*, II:189a, and III:79a. See *Tanya* I: chs. 17, 37, and 45; *ibid.*, III:6; *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. IV, XXV, and XXVI. Cf. also *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXIII and XXXI.

15. *Tanya* I: ch. 7, quoted *supra*, end of ch. X.

16. See *Sha'ar Hapessukim*, Bereishit, on *Gen.* 2:17 (pp. 4a ff.) for a detailed discussion of the sin of Adam and its implication.

strophic act¹⁷ remain for his descendants¹⁸ to extricate.¹⁹ This is the cause and purpose of the *Galut* (Exile, and Diaspora).²⁰ And when all the sparks shall have been released, then the *Shechinah* is altogether freed from Its exile and Israel is redeemed: the Messianic Era is ushered in.²¹

17. *Ibid.*, and see also *Etz Chayim* 36:2, 39:1, *et passim*; *Sha'ar Maamarei Rashby* on *Zohar* II:254b (p. 165b f.). See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XII and XXVI. — Relative rectifications in the course of time were reversed and vacated by subsequent national sins of Israel (as in the Desert after the Exodus, and in the periods of the First and Second Temples), thereby prolonging the process of *Birur*; see the sources cited in notes 16-20.

18. The souls of all the descendants of Adam are "sparks" of the original soul of Adam; see *Exodus Rabba* 40:2 f., and *Tanchuma*, Ki Tissa: 12, as interpreted in *Sha'ar Hapessukim a.l.c.* (sect. III; p. 9b f.), and in R. Chaim Vital's Introduction to *Sha'ar Hahakdamot* and *Etz Chayim*. See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. VII.

19. *Etz Chayim* 50:3: "When man is born his soul needs to extricate those sparks that are of his share which had fallen unto *Kelipat Nogah* because of the sin of Adam." See also *ibid.*, 26:1; *Sha'ar Hapessukim* and *Likutei Torah* of R. Isaac Luria, Ekev; *Tzavaat Hariwash*, sect. 109 and my notes *ad loc.*

20. See *Sha'ar Hamitzvot*, *Re'ey* (pp. 111b ff.), for a detailed discussion of the concept of *Galut* and its various forms. Cf. also *Mevoh She'arim* II:3:8, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXVI.

21. See *Etz Chayim* 3:3, 19:3, 26:1, *et passim*; sources cited in the preceding notes of this chapter (especially note 14), and *Torah Or*, *Vayeshev*, 27d. Cf. also *Tanya* I: ch. 49.

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Index

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Index

- Aaron, 86, 88
 Abba, 78, 140
 Binah of —, 141
 Chochmah of —, 141
 Keter of —, 141
 Abraham, 11, 86, 136
 Abraham ibn Daud, R. (*Rabad*), 128
 Abraham Gershon of Kotov, R., 11
 Achor, 127
 Achorayim, 127-128
 Adam, 11, 157, 158
 Adam Kadmon, 108-112, 121, 140
 Kelim of —, 121
 Keter of —, 140
 Orot of —, 121
 Yosher of —, 140
 Albo, R. Joseph, 41, 44, 93
 Aliyat Haneshamah, 11
 Alma deItgalya, 94
 Alma deltkassya, 94
 Alma Ilaah, 94
 Alma Tataah, 94
 Anthropomorphism, 35-39
 Arich Anpin, 140, 141, 142
 Binah of —, 140
 Chochmah of —, 140
 Keter of —, 140
 Asey tov, 8f.
 Asiyah, World of, 109-115, 121, 135, 136, 137
 Asiyah of —, 111
 Malchut of —, 140
 Asiyah, 112f.
 Assur, 150
 Atik, 68, 69
 — *dechol Atikin*, 68
 — *Yomin*, 68
 Atika Kadisha, 68, 142
 Atzilut, World of, 109-115, 121, 134, 135, 137
 Asiyah of —, 111
 Atzilut of —, 111
 Beriah of —, 111
 Binah of —, 111
 Chochmah of —, 111
 Kelim of —, 121, 137
 Keter of —, 111
 Malchut of —, 114, 115, 128
 Orot of —, 121, 137
 Yetzirah of —, 111
 Atzmut, 112, 117, 119, 121, 122
 Ayin, 68, 72, 73
 AYiN, 75
 Azriel of Geronah, R., 51, 62, 65
 Azulay, R. Abraham, 15, 17
 Azulay, R. Chaim David (*Chida*), 9, 69
 Baal Shem Tov, see Israel Baal Shem Tov, R.
 Bachya ben Asher, R., 63, 109, 149
 Bachya ibn Pakuda, R., 36

- Bat*, 141
Bechochmah, see *Chochmah*
Beli-mah, 62, 63
Ben, 78, 141
Ben Sira, 69
Bereish galey, 12
Bereishit, 72
 see also *Reishit*
Beriah, World of —, 109-115, 134,
 135, 136, 137
 Atzilut of —, 111
 Beriah of —, 111
 Keter of —, 114
 Malchut of —, 115
Binah, 8, 66, 69, 71, 74-79, 87,
 92ff., 99, 100, 101, 112, 130,
 131, 133, 140, 141. See *Chabad*
 Binah of —, 102
 Kelim of —, 130f.
 '50 Gates of —,' 8
Binah-Gevurah-Hod, 100
Birur, 145, 151, 156
Bloch, R. Joseph Leib, 7
Botarel, R. Moses, 61
Brains, see *Mochin*
Buzaglo, R. Sholom, 21, 119, 142
Chabad, 71, 87, 89.
 See *Chochmah-Binah-Da'at*.
Chagat, 83, 87, 88, 89
Chakikah, 112f.
Chalal, 52-55, 96f., 110, 119, 123
Chamai Gaon, R., 109
Chassidut, 7ff.
Chatzivah, 112f.
Chesed, 66, 79, 80-86, 87ff., 99ff.,
 119, 120, 131, 136, 137, 144,
 145, 155, 156
 Binah of —, 102
 Chochmah of —, 102
Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet, 67, 80.
 See *Chagat*
Chitzonim, 147-150, 156
Chitzoniyut, 70, 127-128
Chochmah, 8, 66, 67, 69, 71-79,
 87, 93, 94, 97, 99, 100, 101,
 112, 130, 140, 141. See *Chabad*
Bechochmah, 72
Binah of —, 102
Chochmah of —, 102
Kelim of —, 130f.
 '32 Wondrous Paths of —,' 8
Chochmah-Binah-Da'at, 71, 100,
 101, 144. See also *Chabad*
Chochmah-Chesed-Netzach, 100
Chochmat Haemet, 15ff.
Chutzah, 12, 20
Colours, 120
Cordovero, R. Moses, 8, 9, 14, 16,
 17, 31, 38, 43, 44, 69, 103, 111,
 113, 117, 119, 129, 135
Creation, 47ff., 52, 54ff., 59ff.,
 64ff., 72, 93, 115, 151f.
Da'at, 66, 69-70, 71, 75, 76-79, 84,
 87, 99, 131. See *Chabad*
 — *Elyon*, 76, 79, 100, 141
 — *Tachton*, 76, 77, 78, 79, 101
 Kelim of —, 131
David, 11, 86
Death, 133f., 150
Derush, 10
De Fano, R. Menachem Azaryah,
 16, 50
De Lattes, R. Isaac, 17
Dilug, 49, 52, 54, 56
Din, 39, 81, 82, 84, 119, 136, 137,
 145, 156
Dov Ber of Lubavitch, R., 7, 8,
 20, 40, 118

- Dov Ber of Mezhirech, R.
 ('Maggid'), 14, 20, 53, 66, 75,
 103, 153
 Eden, 48, 73
 Edom, 130, 133, 136
 Kings of —, 130, 133, 134, 136
 Emet, 85
 — *LeAmito*, 86
 En Lo Techilah, 51
 En Sof, 48, 50-55, 59-62, 65, 68,
 70, 71, 95, 97, 105-110, 115,
 117. See *Or En Sof*
 Ephraim, 132
 Ergas, R. Joseph, 16, 17, 33, 38,
 43
 Esau, 136
 Evil, 130, 135f., 145, 148, 149,
 150, 152-155, 157
 Freedom of Choice, 152
 Galut, 158
 Gedulah, 84
 Gevurah, 66, 79, 81-86, 87ff., 99,
 100ff., 119f., 136, 144f., 155f.
 See *Chagat*
 Gevurot, 154
 Giborim, 155
 Gikatilla, R. Joseph, 38
 Gimatriya, 8, 42
 G-d, Attributes of —, 59ff., 65, 137,
 145. See *Midot*
 Benevolence of —, 80f., 82, 85,
 95. See *Chesed*
 Immanence of —, 55f., 95, 115,
 123f.
 Judgments of —, 82
 Names of —, 60f.
 Omnipresence of —, 53
 Sovereignty of —, 92, 95, 137
 Transcendence of —, 56, 123f.
 Unity of —, 47, 62ff., 83, 142
 Word of —, 94
 See also *En Sof*
Gulgulta, 100
 Hai Gaon, R., 109
Hala'at Mayin Nukvin, 156
Hamtakat Hadinim, 155
Hargasha, 77
 Harmony, 83ff., 88, 91, 101ff., 132,
 139
Hei, 74-75
 First —, 69, 111
 Latter —, 69, 111
Heorat Panim, 156
Hester Panim, 57, 156
 Hillel Halevi of Paritz, R., 7, 8, 66
Hit'abut, 119
Hod, 66, 79, 87-92, 99, 100, 101.
 See *Nehy*
 Horowitz, R. Isaiah (*Shelah*), 38,
 55, 79
 Horowitz, R. Tzvi Hirsh, 129
 Hyle, 72
Iggulim, 96-101, 130, 132, 134,
 143
Imma, 78, 95, 140, 141
 — *Ilaah*, 93
 — *Tataah*, 93
 Chochmah of —, 141
 Keter of —, 141
Immot, 67
 Intellect, Active, 93
 Isaac, 86, 136
 Isaac ben Sheshet, R. (*Ribash*), 63
 Ishmael, 136
 Israel Baal Shem Tov, R., 9, 10, 11,
 12, 19, 22, 23, 61, 153
 Jacob, 11, 86
 Jacob ibn Chabib, R., 40

- Jacob Joseph of Polnoy, R., 11
 Joseph, 86
 Judah Halevi, R., 36
 Judah Loewe of Prague, R.
 (*Maharal*), 55
 Kabbalah, 7ff.
 Kabbalists, 50, 69, 93
 Kadmon, 109
 Kav, 55-56, 96-97
 Kefitzah, 49, 52
 Keli, *Kelim*, 61, 117-125, 128, 129-
 137, 139, 140, 141, 155
 Kelipah, *Kelipot*, 12, 147-150, 151-
 152, 154, 155, 156, 157
 Kelipat Nogah, 148-149, 156, 157
 158
 Keter, 66, 68-71, 72, 74, 76, 79,
 96, 97, 99ff., 111, 112, 114,
 125, 130f., 140f.
 — *Elyon*, 109
 Kelim of —, 130-131
 Keter-Chochmah-Binah, 75
 Keter-Tiferet-Yesod-Malchut, 100
 Ketzavot, 67
 Koach-Mah, 73, 94
 Kol, 92
 Levanon, 8
 Light, 41-45. See *Or*
 Luria, R. Isaac (*Arizal*), 10, 16,
 19, 22, 31, 49, 50, 69, 70, 117,
 129, 143, 145, 158
 Maggid, see Dov Ber of
 Mezhitzech, R.
 Mah, 94. See *Koach-Mah*
 Maimonides, R. Moses, 14, 15, 18,
 23, 36, 37, 60, 61, 63f., 103,
 108, 128, 148, 149, 152
 Makif, 124
 Makom Panuy, 52
 Malchut, 66, 67, 69, 78, 79, 81, 92-
 95, 97, 99, 112, 114, 130, 131,
 132, 141
 Malchut of —, 93
 Ma'or, 51, 53
 Mashpia, 40
 Massach, 110
 Matter, 48, 136
 Mayin Nukvin, see *Hala'at Mayin*
 Nukvin
 Meir ibn Gabbai, R., 33, 38, 65, 70
 Mekabel, 40
 Memale kol Almin, 123f.
 Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch,
 R. (*Tzemach Tzedek*), 8, 11,
 41, 42, 44, 50, 84
 Merachefet, 134
 Messiah; Messianic Age, 11ff., 15,
 17, 19ff., 158
 Methuselah, 11
 Midot, 67, 69, 75, 77ff., 83ff., 92,
 94, 97, 101, 112, 132, 139, 141,
 143, 144
 Mispar, 60
 Mitzvot, 9, 151
 Mocha Setima, 73
 Mochin, 67, 99, 100
 Moses, 11, 86, 88
 Moses Hagoleh, R., 60
 Moshe Chaim Ephraim of
 Sudylkov, R., 12
 Multifariousness, 47, 62, 129, 137
 Mushpa, 40
 Muttar, 150
 Mystery of the Faith, 64
 Nachmanides, R. Moses, 14, 62,
 72, 113, 149
 Narboni, R. Moses, 42

- Nathan ben Yechiel, R. (*Aruch*), 49
Nehy, 87
Nekevah, see *Zachar*
Neshamah, 7, 8, 20. See *Soul*
Netzach, 66, 79, 87-92, 99, 100, 101
Netzach-Hod-Yesod, 67, 87.
 See *Nehy*
Nigleh, 18
Nistar, 18
Nitzotz; *Nitzotzin*, 134-137, 147, 154, 155, 157, 158
Nogah, 148. See *Kelipat Nogah*
Nukvah, 141
Nun, 8
Olam, 108
 — *Habah*, 48
Olamot, 108. See *Worlds*
Or, 42, 43, 130. See *Light*
 — *Makif*, 122-125, 131
 — *Pnimit*, 122-125
 — *Sovev*, 124
 — *Tzach Umetzuchtzach*, 109
Or En Sof, 51-55, 59-62, 70, 96, 97, 105-110, 115, 118, 152
Orot, 61, 117-125, 131ff., 136, 139, 140
 — *Makifin*, 122
 — *Pnimiyyim*, 122
Panim, 127
 Parable of the harlot, 153-154
Pardes, 10
Partzuf; *Partzufim*, 68, 84, 99, 101, 103, 112, 139-142, 143
 Patriarchs, 86, 87, 88
Peshat, 10
Pirud, Realm of, 137
Pnimiyyut, 127-128
Pnimiyyut Hatorah, 10f., 16ff.
Prassa, 110, 114
Rachamim, 39, 84, 137, 145, 155, 156
 — in *Rachamim*, 84
Rashi, 15, 108
Ratzon, 66, 71, 125. See *Will*
 — *Ha'elyon*, 70
Raz, 42, 43
Reishit, 71, 72
 Relativity, 55, 56f., 63ff., 105f., 108, 121f., 124f., 142, 156
Remez, 10
Reshimah, 112f.
Reshimu, 54, 119
Reshut Harabim, 132
Rishonot, 67
 Saadia Gaon, R., 42
Safra, 60
Sapar, 60
Sapir, 60
 Schneersohn, R. Joseph Isaac of Lubavitch, 12, 17, 23, 79
 Schneersohn, R. Shmuel of Lubavitch (*Maharash*), 9, 17, 84
 Schneersohn, R. Sholom Dov Ber of Lubavitch (*Reshab*), 13, 50
 Schneerson, R. Levi Yitzchak, 8, 83
 Schneerson, R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch שליט"א, 9, 10, 23, 53, 55, 63, 101
 Schneur Zalman of Liadi, R., 8, 10, 17, 20, 32, 40, 44, 50, 51, 54, 55, 60, 129
 Schochet, R. Dov Yehudah, 7
Sechel, 67, 77, 79, 87, 144
Sefer, 60
Sefirah, 60

- Sefirot*, 49, 51, 59-103, 105, 109, 111, 114, 117-122, 130-133, 134, 139, 140, 141, 143
Separ, 60
Seth, 11
Shechinah, 95, 115, 142, 157, 158
 — in Exile, 157
Shefa, 42
Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov, R., 70
Shepherds, Seven, 11
Shevirat Hakelim, 101, 103, 129-137, 143, 144, 145, 155
Shimon bar Yochai, R. (*Rashby*), 13, 14, 15, 17, 23, 142
Sin, 156, 157f.
Sitra Achara, 147-150, 151, 152, 154, 157
Skull, see *Gulgalta*
Sod, 10
Solomon ben Isaac, R., see *Rashi*
Solomon ibn Aderet, R. (*Rashba*), 38
Soul, 39-41, 107-108, 120, 122-125
Sovev, 124
Sovev kol Almin, 123f.
Sparks, see *Nitzotz*
Sur mera [*ve'asey tov*], 8f.
Tachtonot, 67
Talmud Torah, 10
Temira dechol Temirin, 68
Tannaim, 11
Teshuvah, 150
Tetragrammaton, 69, 73, 74, 111
Tiferet, 66, 69, 78, 79, 83-86, 87, 88, 91, 99, 145
Tikun, 101, 103, 143-145, 151, 156
 Midot of —, 144
 Sefirot of —, 144f.
Time, 52-53, 79
Tohu, 101, 103, 143-145
 Midot of —, 143
 Sefirot of —, 143, 145
Tohu and Vohu, 134
Torah, 9, 10, 71, 148, 149, 151
Tree of Knowledge, 13
Tree of Life, 13
Tzachtzachot, 109
Tzadik, 92
Tzadikim, 11, 115
Tzimtzum, 47-57, 59, 61, 62, 81, 82, 83, 96, 105, 109, 110, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 121, 123, 136, 151
Vav, 69, 111
Vital, R. Chaim, 10, 14, 16, 17, 22, 31, 39, 51, 69, 72, 108, 135, 145, 154, 158
Will, Supreme, 52, 70f., 76, 79f.
 See *Ratzon*.
Worlds, 56, 59, 105-115, 117, 121, 122, 151. See *Asiyah*; *Atzilut*; *Beriah*; *Yetzirah*
Worlds, Primordial, 130, 144
Yesh, 72, 74
Yesod, 66, 79, 87, 91-92, 99, 131, 132
Yetzirah, *World of*, 109-115, 135, 136, 137
Yichud (Unity; Unification), 142, 154
Yichud, Realm of, 137
Yosher, 96-101, 103, 140, 141, 143
Yud, 69, 73, 74, 111
Zachar-Nekevah, 39
Zacuto, R. Moses, 16
Zeyr Anpin, 141, 142
Ziv Hashechinah, 42
Zohar, 13-15

