

Secrets of the Future Temple

Mishkney Elyon

"Dwellings of the Supreme"

by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto ("Ramchal")

Translated by Avraham Yehoshua Greenbaum

"You, son of man: Tell the House of Israel about the Temple... Let them see the measurements of the plan... Let them know the form of the Temple and its structure, all its forms and all its laws... Write it before their eyes, and they will guard all its forms and all its laws and do them" (Ezekiel 43:10-11).

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Ezekiel said to the Holy One blessed-be-He: "Master of the World: We are now in exile, and You tell me to go and inform the Jewish People about the plan of the Temple? 'Write it before their eyes, and they will guard all its forms and all its laws and do them.' How can they 'do them'? Leave them until they go out of exile, and then I will tell them." The Holy One blessed-be-He said to Ezekiel: "Just because My children are in exile, does that mean the building of My House should be halted? Studying the plan of the Temple in the Torah is as great as actually building it. Go and tell them to make it their business to study the form of the Temple as explained in the Torah. As their reward for this study, I will give them credit as if they are actually building the Temple" (Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav #14).

SECRETS OF THE FUTURE TEMPLE is a translation of *Mishkney Elyon*, "Dwellings of the Supreme", by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (*Ramchal*, 1707-47). It discusses the significance of the design of the Third Temple as prophesied by Ezekiel and explains the purpose of the Temple services. This is a serious kabbalistic text that will be most meaningful to those who have a grasp of the Temple layout and services as well as some familiarity with kabbalistic concepts.

Translator's Preface

"If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill. Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not place Jerusalem at the head of my joy" (Psalms 137:5-6).

Time after time, day after day, for thousands of years, Jews have prayed for the speedy rebuilding of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Our prayers are a bitter cry of exile: "This world is far from what it should be! Please make it better!"

Our prophets teach that we lost our Temple and our Land because of our sins. We must repent. We are praying and waiting for redemption. But the exile is so deep that most people have little or no vision of how the world *should be*.

The Torah provides a perfect blueprint for universal peace and happiness based on justice and the pursuit of truth. Yet even students of the Torah in many cases pay scant attention to laws and concepts that apply in a state of restoration as opposed to one of exile. The dramatic return of Jews to Israel in modern times has been heralded as the beginning of the fulfillment of an ancient dream. But the reality of life in an unsympathetic, often hostile world sometimes seems more like a nightmare.

How will we wake up from our exile of soul and body except by dreaming the dream of redemption? "When God turned the captivity of Zion we were like *dreamers*" (Psalms 126:1). To play our role in the redemption we first and foremost need a guiding vision. We must continually focus on the ideal state to which we aspire.

The crowning glory of the future world will be the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. "And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of the House of God will be established at the top of the mountains and will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will flow to it. Many peoples will go and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of God, to the House of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem'" (Isaiah 2:2-3).

A clear, detailed vision of the design and form of the Future Temple was granted to the prophet Ezekiel, who recorded it for all time in the Bible (Ezekiel chapters 40-43). Yet for most people the meaning and purpose of the Temple remain obscure.

The keys to unlocking the mystery of the Third Temple were provided by the outstanding 18th century kabbalistic genius, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (known as "*Ramchal*") in a little-known work entitled *Mishkney Elyon*, "Dwellings of the Supreme". In it *Ramchal* provides the kabbalistic explanation of the form of the Temple prophesied by Ezekiel, showing it to be the channel through which blessing and prosperity flow to all parts and levels of creation.

The current impasse over the future of the Holy City of Jerusalem coincides with an extraordinary thirst for spirituality and truth among Jews and gentiles all over the world. This is therefore an opportune moment to make available the first English edition of *Ramchal's* unique work, in which he explains the true significance of "the House of Prayer for all the Nations" in Jerusalem.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught that a sick person may be healed by focusing intently on his purpose and mission in life (*Likutey Moharan I*, 268). The same would apply to the nation and indeed the whole world. The more we all focus on dreaming the future dream, the more we will actually realize it.

In another saying, Rebbe Nachman tells us that "thought, when intensely concentrated, can exert great influence. Every faculty of the mind down to the innermost point must be focused without distraction. When many people do this, their thoughts can actually force something to happen" (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* p. 170).

May *Secrets of the Future Temple* be an aid to help many, many people deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Temple and dream the future dream, until our eyes witness God's return to Zion in mercy speedily in our times. Amen.

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"I give thanks to you, God, for You were angry with me, but Your anger has turned away and You have comforted me" (Isaiah 12:1). I thank God for His endless mercies, for releasing me from my personal exile and bringing me to His Torah and its teachers, and for granting me a share in the Temple dream.

I wish to express my gratitude to all my teachers, especially to the "Rebbe of Rebbes", Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, whose influence has been the source of all that is of enduring value in my life. I particularly want to mention how my personal commitment to the Temple dream has been immeasurably deepened as a result of something that grew out of a visit to Rebbe Nachman's grave in Uman, Ukraine. In 5749 (1988) I had the privilege of being one of two hundred and fifty Breslover Chassidim who gathered in Uman for the first public celebration there of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, since the communist repression. Those who participated can testify to the many amazing things that occurred on that Rosh Hashanah despite the most trying physical conditions.

On the first morning of Rosh Hashanah it somehow came into my head that since Rebbe Nachman's essential mission was to rectify prayer, it would be proper at least this once to recite the sacrificial passages at the start of the prayer service instead of skipping them as I usually did. When it came to the afternoon service it also seemed proper to recite them. And so too the next morning. And the next.... And then it didn't seem proper to stop.

I had always found the sacrificial rituals and other aspects of the Temple obscure and of little practical relevance. But having taken on this commitment, I became increasingly familiar with the details of the various rituals. This made references to the Temple in my other studies more meaningful, which in turn invested these passages with deeper relevance. Reciting them daily in my prayers has given me a strong sense of personal involvement in the Temple idea.

This was greatly increased a few years later, shortly after the Gulf War, when I had the privilege of preparing *The Sweetest Hour*, an English translation and commentary on *Tikun Chatzot*, the midnight lament over the destruction of the Temple. My feeling of personal involvement has become ever stronger since 5754 (1994), when I started to follow a certain piece of general advice given by my other main Rebbe, the holy Lubavitcher Rebbe זצ"ל, and I embarked on daily study of the comprehensive code of Torah law, the *Mishneh Torah* of *Rambam* (Maimonides).

The Lubavitcher Rebbe urged all Jewish men, women and children to study *Rambam's* code and his *Sefer Hamitzvot* (Book of the Commandments), each according to his or her ability, in order to become familiar with the entire spectrum of Torah law. The Rebbe established three cycles for daily study of *Rambam*: (1) Three chapters of *Mishneh Torah* per day, completing the entire 14-volume work in just under one year; (2) One chapter of *Mishneh Torah* per day, completing the entire work in less than three years; (3) For those unable to study the more extensive code, daily study of the related commandments in *Sefer Hamitzvot* so as to complete that work each year.

It would be difficult to count the many blessings and other benefits that come from daily study of the *Rambam* as instituted by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. In the present context it is enough to say that *Rambam* explains all the different laws relating to the Temple with the same crystal clarity with which he treats all other areas of the Torah. Adding study of *Rambam* to my daily routine has helped me develop a vivid picture of the way things will be when there is a Temple as well as nurturing in me a strong yearning for redemption. This was clearly part of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's intention in his constant stress on the importance of studying matters relating to the Holy Temple.

Let me also express my deep gratitude to another great teacher, Reb Shlomo Carlebach שליט"א, who helped so many find their souls through music and song. Today Reb Shlomo's melodies are being sung in more and more communities throughout the world. Those who were privileged to pray with Reb Shlomo and experience his power to arouse entire congregations to joyous devotion had a foretaste of the ecstasy we will know in the rebuilt Temple, when the Psalms of King David will again be heard in the place of the Temple of Solomon (Shlomo) in Jerusalem.

The present translation of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto's *Mishkney Elyon* on the Third Temple is for me a return to an old love. Having studied *Ramchal's* sweet classic, *Mesilat Yesharim* ("Path of the Just") shortly after I started on the Torah path in the mid 1970's, I was overjoyed a couple of years later when I discovered Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan's translation of his *Derech HaShem*, "The Way of God". This superb work is the clearest comprehensive yet concise statement of the foundations of Jewish faith and belief I know. As my Hebrew improved I studied other writings of *Ramchal*, until one day I came upon the precious treasure of *Mishkney Elyon*. I have returned to it many times since, especially during *Bein Hametzarim* (17th Tamuz to 9th Av), the annual period of mourning over the lost Temple and yearning for the new. I am humbly grateful for the privilege of being able to deepen my connection with *Ramchal* through the preparation of this edition.

It is fitting that this first English translation of *Ramchal's* masterpiece on the Third Temple should be co-published by the Temple Institute, whose devoted team under the leadership of Rabbi Yisrael Ariel have done so much to spread knowledge and awareness of the Temple in Israel and throughout the world. As translator of this work and director of the Azamra Institute, I am greatly honored by the participation of the Temple Institute in this project together with Azamra, whose mission is to promote healing, environmental balance and world peace.

The link between the Temple Institute and Azamra has been my precious friend, ידיד ונפשי, Rabbi Chaim Richman, who has faithfully served the Temple Vision through his publications, educational and other work for the Temple Institute. I am thankful to Rabbi Menachem Makover, Director General of the Institute, for his encouragement and practical help in bringing this project to fruition.

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to my dear wife and children for your loving support and encouragement, as well as to the many other friends who I know are with me together on this great journey to the Third Temple.

Let me express my deep gratitude to the dear, true *Tomchey Oraiso* – Supporters of the Torah – whose wholehearted, generous fulfillment of the commandment of *Tzedakah* has made it possible to write, edit and publish this book. You prefer anonymity, but the light of your Mitzvah will shine forever in God's palace, and you will have your eternal share in building His House.

AVRAHAM YEHOSHUA BEN YAKOV GREENBAUM
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Eve of Rosh Hashanah 5760

Overview

The Gate of Heaven

Rabbi Elazar said: What does Isaiah mean when he says, "And many peoples will go and say: 'Come let us go up to the Mountain of God, to the House of the God of Jacob'"? Why the God of Jacob and not the God of Abraham and Isaac? The answer is: Not like Abraham, who saw it as a Mountain ("as it is said this day, On the *mountain* God is seen" – Genesis 22: 14). And not like Isaac, for whom it was a Field ("And Isaac went out to pray in the *field*" – Genesis 24: 63). But like Jacob, who called it a House: "And he called the name of that place the *House* of God" (Genesis 28: 19) (*Pesachim* 88a).

The story of the quest for the Temple begins with the patriarch Abraham, who changed the entire course of human history by finding God and teaching the world about Him.

According to tradition Abraham was abandoned in a cave as a tiny baby but miraculously survived. When at last he crawled out of the cave, it was night. He looked up in wonder at the millions and millions of stars high in the heavens. He said, "These must certainly be the most powerful forces in the whole universe. These must be the gods." But when dawn came and the stars disappeared, he said, "Those little lights can't be gods because something else has outshone them. When the sun rose and shone in all its glory, Abraham said, "This is the most powerful force. This is God." But when the sun declined and set, Abraham understood that the sun is also not God. When the moon appeared, Abraham realized that none of them is God. All were created by one supreme God Who alone has dominion over the heavens above and the earth below.

Abraham devoted his life to seeking out and revealing the unified Power that underlies the manifest plurality of creation. Abraham's search for God is expressed not only in the biblical narrative but also in *Sefer Yetzirah*, the "Book of Formation", foundational text of the Kabbalah, which is attributed to him. In it he presents the twenty-two letters of the *Aleph Beit* as the fundamental coordinates and elements of creation, showing how to combine and manipulate these Letters of Creation in order to channel beneficial influences through meditation and prayer.

Abraham made his life one of selfless service to God in all he did. His mission was to bring God "down to earth" by following the path of kindness and justice in practical everyday life. Abraham's vision was of a land whose people serve God in the way they grow and harvest

their crops, eat and drink, buy and sell, marry, have children and go about their other affairs.

Thus Abraham received the prophetic call: "Go to the Land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). He had to search until he found the place most fitted for this exalted purpose. Even when he came to the Land, he was tested time after time. Until at last he received God's command: "Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as an offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you" (*ibid.* 22:2).

"On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw *the place* from afar" (*ibid.* v. 4). With his prophet's eyes, Abraham knew as soon as he saw it that this was "The Place". At the climax of his lifelong search for the Source, here at Mount Moriah Abraham finally reached the center point where the Earth connects with the worlds above it. This mountain is the place of *Even Shetiyah*, the "Foundation Stone" from which the Earth emanated like a fetus growing out from its belly. This was the place where Adam was created, and here he sacrificed. Here Noah sacrificed after the flood. This was a fitting place for Abraham to "offer up" his son Isaac: to elevate him to a life of perfect submission to the will of God. Abraham called the place "the Mountain where God sees and is seen" (*ibid.* v.14).

The service to which Isaac was called was that of the heart: prayer, in which we reconnect with our spiritual roots through the use of words formed through combinations of the Letters of Creation. "And Isaac went out to pray in the field" (*ibid.* 24:63). Isaac's chosen field of labor was none other than the mountaintop where he came face to face with his destiny. Isaac turned this lofty mountain of self-sacrifice into something more attainable: a "field" of regular spiritual discipline.

It was to this same mountain-field that Isaac's son Jacob came when he was forced to flee from his brother Esau. As the sun went down, Jacob built a primitive structure where he could lie down and sleep. There he dreamed the dream of prophecy: "There was a ladder set on the ground and its top reached the heavens. Angels of God were going up and down on it, and God was standing over him... Jacob awoke from his sleep and he said, 'Indeed God is in this place... How awesome is this place. This is none other than the House of God and this is the Gate of Heaven'" (*ibid.* 28:12, 16-17).

Jacob recognized this as the place where Heaven and Earth meet, the spot where angels "go up" to Heaven on the wings of our prayers and angels "come down" with blessing and sustenance for the whole world. For Abraham it was a lofty mountain. For Isaac it was a field of disciplined labor. Jacob now brought the Temple idea within

everyone's grasp, establishing the stone on which he rested his head as the foundation of God's "House".

The idea of a house can be understood by all, as opposed to that of a mountain or field, which are more remote from most people's experience. Just as we dwell in our homes and houses, carrying out our most basic daily functions there, so the Divine Presence may be said to "dwell" in a House appropriately designed and conducted. The House that Jacob's descendants were to build on this spot would be a sign for all humanity of God's presence in the world. The establishment of this House was the end goal of the journey of destiny on which Jacob now set forth.

Design of the Sanctuary

Years after his dream of the ladder, when Jacob went with his children into exile in Egypt, he planted trees. These were to provide the beams his descendants would need to build the Sanctuary when they went out of Egypt. This was the Temple prototype that they would carry with them in the wilderness and erect at all their encampments.

"And God said to Moses: Tell the Children of Israel to take for Me an offering... and let them make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst. According to all that I show you, the design of the dwelling-place and the design of all its utensils, so shall you make it" (Exodus 25: 1ff).

The Bible gives a detailed account of the design of the Sanctuary and its vessels (Exodus chapters 25-31). The chief craftsman was Bezalel son of Uri of the tribe of Judah. The Midrash relates that when Moses saw Bezalel's ready grasp of the design, he said: "You must have been in the shadow of God (*Betzel El*, a play on Bezalel) when He showed me the design, and that's how you knew" (*Berachot* 55a). For "the design of the Sanctuary corresponds to the underlying scheme of creation" (*Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction p.12). The Rabbis taught: "Bezalel knew how to combine the letters with which heaven and earth were created" (*ibid.*). That is, he understood the different ways in which the supreme lights contained in the Letters of Creation combine to bring this world into being and sustain all its creatures. Correspondingly, he understood how to construct the physical Sanctuary in such a way that these lights would shine forth to all the creatures in the world in order to provide them with sustenance and blessing.

After the Israelites entered the Land of Israel they set up the Sanctuary in Gilgal and then built a more permanent structure in Shilo and subsequently in Nov and Givon. The secrets of the design of

the Sanctuary were handed down from generation to generation until they were entrusted to the prophet Samuel and the messianic King David. Having conquered Jerusalem, David instructed his son Solomon to build the Temple. "Then David gave to Solomon his son the design of the vestibule and buildings and treasuries and upper rooms and inner chambers and the place of the Ark.... All this in writing as God has made me wise with His hand upon me, all the works of this design" (I Chronicles 28:11 and 19).

Solomon began building the Temple in the year 2928 (832 B.C.E.) according to the traditional Jewish reckoning, and completed it seven years later. The design of Solomon's Temple is explained in detail in the First Book of Kings (chapters 6-7). Once the Temple was built in Jerusalem, it was strictly forbidden for Jews to build a temple or offer sacrifices anywhere else.

Solomon's Temple inaugurated an unprecedented period of peace, prosperity and cultural flowering. But having been built by human agency, this Temple could not last forever. When people abandoned the ideals it embodied, the Divine Presence departed, for it cannot dwell amidst corruption and evil. After standing for four hundred and ten years, the First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in the year 3338 (422 B.C.E.) and the Jews went into exile for seventy years. They repented and returned to the Land, and started building the Second Temple in the year 3408 (352 B.C.E.). It stood for four hundred and twenty years until its destruction by the Romans in the year 3828 (68 C.E.).

Full details of the design and rituals of the Second Temple were carefully preserved by the early generations of Tannaim, teachers of the Mishneh, who had actually seen the Temple and taken part in its ceremonies. The design of the Temple is the subject of the mishnaic tractate *Middot* ("Measurements") while its rituals are discussed in the other tractates in the order of *Kodshim* ("Holy Matters") and many other places throughout the Talmud.

But from the time of its destruction by the Romans, the Temple ceased to be a tangible reality in the world and instead became a distant dream. Jews have prayed daily for the realization of this dream ever since, even under the worst conditions of exile and persecution.

Ezekiel's Vision

"In the twenty-fifth year of our exile on the New Year, on the tenth day of the month in the fourteenth year after the city was struck, on this very day the hand of God was upon me and He brought me there. In visions of God He brought me to the Land of Israel and set me down upon a very high mountain where there was

the likeness of a city to the south. And He brought me there, and behold: there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a cord of linen in his hand and a measuring rod; and he stood in the gate. And the man said to me: 'Son of man, see with your eyes and hear with your ears and set your heart on all that I will show you, for it is in order to show you that you have been brought here. Declare all that you see to the House of Israel'" (Ezekiel 40:1-4).

Shortly after the destruction of the First Temple, the prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of the Third Temple with all its buildings, gateways and courtyards in all their details. The entire vision is recorded in the Book of Ezekiel (chapters 40-43:17).

There is an apparent contradiction in the opening verse of this prophecy, which dates it "on the New Year, on the tenth day of the month..." (Ezekiel 40:1). The Rabbis taught: "In which year is the New Year celebrated on the tenth of Tishri (and not at its usual time on the first of that month)? This was the Jubilee year [the fiftieth year in the count of sabbatical years, see Leviticus 25:9], fourteen years after the destruction of the Temple and twenty-five years after the exile of Jehoiachin" (*Rashi ad loc.* and *Erchin* 12a).

The Jubilee year is one of complete redemption in which all slaves go free, everyone returns to their ancestral lands and everything begins afresh. In kabbalistic thought, *Yovel*, the Jubilee, is associated with the redemptive *sefirah* of *Binah*, "Understanding", which has "Fifty Gates".

In Ezekiel's vision on this auspicious day, he rose in his prophetic *Binah* to a level beyond created space and time. He was thus able to see beyond the Second Temple that would rise fifty-six years later. He saw beyond its destruction over four hundred years afterwards, beyond the thousands of years of exile, trials and tribulations that were to follow... Ezekiel already saw a vision of the ultimate Heavenly Temple, which is destined to descend to earth at the climax of history as we know it and stand eternally on Mount Moriah.

Twenty years prior to this vision of the Heavenly Temple, as Ezekiel stood in exile in Babylon by the side of the River Kvar, "The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (Ezekiel 1:1). This was when Ezekiel saw the *Merkavah*, the "Chariot" with which God governs the world. The storm-wind, fire, brightness, *Chayot* and *Ofanim* that Ezekiel saw all exist in Heaven, wherever that may be. Only at rare moments, however, does a tiny chink open in the thick clouds of concealment that hide the spiritual worlds from normal human consciousness, affording outstanding masters of the spirit a brief glimpse beyond time and space into the inner workings of the universe.

"Everything that Ezekiel saw, Isaiah also saw. But Ezekiel was like a villager who saw the King, while Isaiah was like a big city dweller who saw the King" (*Chagigah* 13b). This rabbinic comment offers insight into why Ezekiel's visions, such as those of the Chariot and Heavenly Temple, are described in such graphic detail, in contrast to Isaiah's. Several generations prior to Ezekiel, Isaiah attained even higher levels of prophecy, having been in the Land of Israel when the First Temple stood in all its glory. Isaiah too saw the Chariot and the Heavenly Temple, as in his first vision, which opens with the words: "I saw God sitting upon a throne, high and lofty, and His train filled the Temple" (Isaiah 6:1).

Isaiah, Ezekiel and all the prophets saw one and the same God. They saw the same Throne of Glory and Heavenly Temple. But Isaiah lived in times which were better and more conducive to exalted spiritual vision. In this sense Isaiah was like a city dweller, who is less easily excited by the glory and bright lights. In Isaiah's time it was not so necessary to reveal all the details of the vision.

However, by Ezekiel's time the people were in exile under foreign rule. Many were increasingly assimilated and cut off from the ancestral vision that had been transmitted from generation to generation ever since the entire Jewish People prophetically glimpsed into the Heavens as they crossed the Red Sea and when they stood at Sinai. Precisely because the people were now in exile and on a lower spiritual level, it was necessary to fuel the vision and keep it alive, and Divine Providence decreed that Ezekiel be granted prophecy even in exile and that he should record and transmit what he saw.

The Kabbalah Tradition

When Ezekiel stood on the banks of the River Kvar and saw the heavenly "Chariot", it was a vision of the same heavenly order that had existed continuously from long, long before. The Hebrew word *Kvar* in fact means "before" or "already". When Ezekiel looked up at the sky, he saw the same stars and constellations at which Abraham had gazed. When the skies and heavens "opened up" for Ezekiel giving him a glimpse of the realm beyond physical space and time, it was through his use of methods of prophetic prayer and meditation that also went back to the author of *Sefer Yetzirah*.

Abraham's search for the power-source behind the manifest plurality of the world led him to the underlying coordinates and elements of creation as expressed in the letters of the *Aleph Beit*. From earliest childhood Abraham had faith that all the different powers in creation are interconnected as part of a single, unified, purposeful system or order. The stars and planets are governed by "angels" which in turn are governed by higher angels. Everything in creation is a manifestation of the power of the *Sefirot*, which are the ultimate coordinates and elements of creation, brought into being through the "Word of God", the letters of the *Aleph Beit* and their combinations. The purpose of Abraham's letter-manipulations was to connect with the Creator and harness the power of the letters so as to channel beneficial influences to the world.

Abraham transmitted his wisdom to Isaac, who taught it to Jacob. Jacob transmitted it to his sons, and especially Levi, who became chief guardian of the tradition. Levi passed it on to his son, Kehat, who passed it on to his son Amram. And Amram was father of the Lord of all the Prophets, Moses.

The plan of creation is that God should be revealed to all His creatures on all levels. Moses' greatness lay in his power to rise to the highest levels of prophecy ever achieved and bring his vision "down" so as to make it accessible to people on far lower levels. Thus Moses brought the Children of Israel to a state where "at the crossing of the Red Sea a simple maid saw more than Ezekiel", while at the Giving of the Torah at Sinai, God "opened up" all seven heavens to the Children of Israel (*Mechilta* on Exodus 15:2 and 19:11).

The "soul" of the Torah revealed at Sinai was the prophetic vision of the inner workings of the universe together with the prayer-power it gives to those who attain it. The Sanctuary that Moses built and the Temple that later took its place stand at the center of the Torah

system as a holographic model of those inner workings and the principle focus of devotion and prayer. At the peak of Jewish life in Israel, prophecy (which was integrally bound up with the Temple in Jerusalem) could almost be said to have been the national occupation: the Talmud states that *millions* of people practiced prophecy in biblical times (*Megillah* 14a).

But with the moral degeneration that started to set in, the pursuit of prophecy began to be abused by "false prophets" and practitioners of foreign cults. The voice of true prophecy was increasingly forced to become that of reproof, while faithful practitioners of Abraham's methods of prayer-power had to conceal much of their knowledge from the wider public.

Thus it was that the mystical dimension of the Torah tended to become hidden from view, leaving meticulous study and observance of the outer forms of the Law as the distinguishing hallmark of Judaism in the eyes of the majority of Jews and gentiles alike.

Nevertheless the mystical tradition or "Kabbalah" was pursued in a continuous tradition from biblical times onwards. Key figures in the transmission of the Oral Torah – from David, Solomon, Ezra and the Men of the Great Assembly to Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, Rabbi Akiva, and the other great talmudic sages – were at the same time supreme masters of mystical wisdom and devotion. *Maaseh Bereishit*, the "Work of Creation", dealing with the secrets of creation, and *Maaseh Merkavah*, the "Work of the Chariot", which is more concerned with devotion, meditation and prophecy, were the two main branches of the esoteric wisdom pursued in the private study chambers of the sages of Israel. However, in the public study halls and synagogues it was the "Revealed Torah" of practical observance and moral improvement that was stressed, while the secrets of Torah were hinted at allusively in the wordplays and parables of Midrash.

A body cannot live without a soul. The outer body of Torah law is truly alive only when it has inner spiritual meaning. The destruction of the Second Temple in the time of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai and the intensification of the exile under ruthless Roman persecution turned the Jewish dream into a horrendous nightmare. Precisely then Divine Providence decreed that the esoteric wisdom of the Torah should begin to shine forth beyond the confines of closed circles in order to sustain the nation and advance the world towards its ultimate goal.

At the height of the Roman persecution, permission was granted to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, outstanding student of Rabbi Akiva, to begin unveiling some of the secrets of *Maaseh Bereishit* and *Maaseh Merkavah* in his mystical discourses and those of his disciples as

transcribed in the *Zohar* and related literature. Yet even after this, many aspects of the esoteric wisdom were still kept completely secret, and the *Zohar* itself was for centuries available only to relatively restricted circles of scholars.

The tribulations of exile have characterized many of the historical periods in which the secret wisdom of the Kabbalah was successively revealed to ever wider circles. This was the case in the 16th century, in the chaotic aftermath of the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain. It was then that an influx of sages to the Holy City of Safed in the Galilee made it the center from which the Kabbalah, especially that of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the "*ARI*" (Lion), began to spread forth to the entire world.

The teachings of the *ARI* were put in writing by his outstanding student Rabbi Chaim Vital, in *Etz Chaim*, the "Tree of Life", and numerous other volumes. What emerges is a most complex, subtle, highly ramified system of multiple categories, subcategories, holy names and devotions.

The writings of the *ARI* contain all the keys to the celestial vision of Kabbalah as witnessed at Sinai and by all the prophets and embedded in the Bible, Midrash, Talmud and *Zohar*. But despite the increasing availability of kabbalistic literature, anyone who wanted to grasp the system required vast scholarship as well as strong resolve. There was no such thing as an introductory primer. The *Zohar* and writings of the *ARI* are voluminous and highly diffuse. In both cases the way the teachings are presented presupposes a grasp of the entire system. Even experienced Talmudists are likely to find these works quite baffling without the help of a reliable guide.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto

Ever since his brief sojourn in this world in the early 1700's Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the *Ramchal*, has been a faithful and beloved guide for generations of Jewish spiritual seekers. His admirers range from towering giants such as Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-97), to the growing thousands of present-day returnees to Judaism who are discovering in *Ramchal's* works a living source of profound insight and inspiration.

Ramchal's classic exposition of the Torah path of spiritual development, *Mesilat Yesharim*, "Path of the Just", has for hundreds of years been accepted by all sections of Jewry and is part of the curriculum in many yeshivas and other centers of Torah study. With the publication of more and more of *Ramchal's* other writings on *Hashkafah* (Torah world-view) and Kabbalah, he is now being recognized as one of the outstanding kabbalistic geniuses of all time.

The Gaon of Vilna said he would have walked all the way to Italy just to sit at the feet of *Ramchal*. The Gaon said that *Ramchal* was the only sage since the *ARI* who truly understood the Kabbalah.

The contribution of *Ramchal* to Kabbalah has been compared to that of *Rambam* (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, Maimonides, 1135-1204) to the *Halachah* (Torah law). Out of the vast "sea" of talmudic literature that only outstanding scholars could master, *Rambam* distilled his comprehensive Code of Torah Law, the *Mishneh Torah*, an all-time model of clarity and order easily understood even by a school-boy. Similarly *Ramchal* brought order and clarity to the labyrinth of kabbalistic concepts and teachings in the writings of the *ARI*, producing a ladder of ascent and entry into its mysteries that can be used profitably by any serious student.

Born in Padua, Italy, in 1707, *Ramchal* was a childhood prodigy who quickly mastered not only the intricacies of the Talmud but also other disciplines such as logic and rhetoric. He even wrote plays. At the age of fourteen he produced a summary of the entire system of the *Etz Chaim* in ten chapters written in the style of the Mishneh.

Ramchal clearly attained all the levels of piety, purity and holy spirit that he later elucidated in his *Mesilat Yesharim*. By the time he was twenty his *Beit Midrash* was a flourishing center of kabbalistic study and devotion, while his sermons in the synagogues of Padua inspired many estranged Jews to return to their roots.

But *Ramchal's* very success aroused the evil eye, and before long he found himself at the center of a furious controversy over his public teaching of Kabbalah. What especially aroused the ire of his opponents were the reports that he received regular visits from holy souls and *Maggidim*, spiritual guides, at whose dictation he wrote entire books and discourses including several in the style of the *Zohar*. The Jewish world was still suffering from the ructions caused by Shabbetai Tzvi's terrible perversion of Kabbalah only a generation or two earlier, providing extra fuel for the fierce campaign of persecution waged against *Ramchal* by leading figures in the community in Italy and beyond.

At the height of the controversy, *Ramchal* wrote to his teacher, Rabbi Yishayah Basan:

"My way is to nod my head at every wave that comes. No matter what those wicked people may say about me, it is of no more significance in my eyes than garlic peel. I am not disheartened. I pay no attention to them. I am not interested in honor or greatness. I will go in the purity of my heart within my house together with God who has ever been my Shepherd..."

For the sake of peace, *Ramchal* agreed to stop teaching and writing for a while. He even said he would allow his writings to be burned if it would help restore the peace, just as the Red Heifer has to be burned in order for its ashes to be used to purify those defiled by contact with the dead. Before long, however, *Ramchal* decided to leave Italy, and in 1737, at the age of twenty-nine, he moved to Amsterdam. There he was received with great respect. He supported himself by working as a lens grinder while writing some of the works for which he is best known, including *Mesilat Yesharim*, "Path of the Just", and *Derech HaShem*, "The Way of God".

Some years later he decided to journey to the Holy Land, where he died in an outbreak of plague in Acre in 1747. He was thirty-nine. His grave, overlooking Tiberias, is adjacent to the burial cave of Rabbi Akiva, of whom *Ramchal's* students considered their master to have been a reincarnation.

Kabbalistic Writings

In his introduction to *Derech HaShem*, his systematic exposition of the fundamentals of Jewish faith, *Ramchal* writes:

"Organized knowledge of a subject and the interrelationship of its various parts is superior to disorganized knowledge just as a beautiful garden arranged with beds of flowers, paths and rows of plants is

superior to a chaotically overgrown forest.... Any given subject contains such a multitude of individual details that the human mind cannot contain them all. A person should always endeavor to grasp general principles. Each general principle includes numerous individual details. When a person understands one principle he automatically understands a great number of details..."

What makes the study of *Ramchal's* writings so rewarding is that, whether dealing with *Hashkafah*, Kabbalah, talmudic logic or anything else, he invariably provides crystal-clear definitions and explanations of all the underlying concepts and categories and their interrelationships.

Derech HaShem was in fact written as the first "rung" of a carefully devised ladder of ascent from general knowledge of the foundations of Jewish faith and belief to deep understanding of the kabbalistic concepts that underlie them. The next rung in the ladder is *Daat Tevunot*, translated as "The Knowing Heart". Cast in the form of a philosophical dialogue between the intellect and the soul, this work explains all the basic contours of the kabbalistic view of creation and its purpose but without using kabbalistic terminology.

The third rung of the ladder consists of *Klalim Rishonim* ("First Principles") and *Pitchey Chochmah va-Daat* ("Openings of Wisdom and Understanding"), which present the entire array of kabbalistic concepts in *Etz Chaim* in a clear, orderly way. The top rung of the ladder is *Klach Pitchey Chochmah* ("One hundred and thirty-eight Openings of Wisdom"), an in-depth exploration of the meaning and significance of those concepts.

The above are among over ninety works known to have been written by *Ramchal* besides others that may have been lost. His works include commentary on Bible, *Zohar* and writings of the *ARI*, explanations of mystical devotions and collections of prayers as well as works on logic, grammar, rhetoric and talmudic reasoning. Until today numerous surviving works have never been printed.

Mesilat Yeshtarim has long been readily available but until relatively recently the few other works of *Ramchal* that were brought to press were often hard to find and poorly printed. Since the 1970's a series of fine, accurate Hebrew editions of many of *Ramchal's* most important works have been published through the efforts of the late Rabbi Chaim Friedlander ז"ל and a number of other scholars, bringing them within easy reach of growing numbers of students. In addition *Ramchal* is now accessible to those who do not know Hebrew through the translations of "The Path of the Just", "The Way of God" and "The Knowing Heart" as well as some of his works on logic and reasoning.

A Miracle of Providence

It is one of the great miracles of providence and a sign of God's love and compassion for the Jewish People that we have in our possession today the work translated in this volume, *Mishkney Elyon*.

Ramchal mentions the work by name in a letter he wrote to his teacher, Rabbi Yishayah Basan, in 1729 (Letters p. 31 #109). This was at the height of the fury against *Ramchal*, when his opponents sought to burn his writings and prevent him writing any more. The date of the letter indicates that *Ramchal* was no more than twenty-two years old when he wrote this work! Another contemporary reference is contained in a letter by Rabbi Yitzchak Pacifico of Venice, who mentions that *Ramchal* "wrote an explanation of Ezekiel's vision of the Temple and of the Heavenly Temple, which he called *Mishkney Elyon*" (Ms. Montefiore 111).

The work was not printed during *Ramchal's* lifetime, and nothing is known about what happened to it thereafter, until a single manuscript – the only known copy of the work in existence – came to light in 1956 in the Bodleian Library in Oxford in a bundle of unidentified kabbalistic manuscripts. The manuscript in question did not bear the name of its author, but the scholar Professor Yishayah Tishbi identified it as the work of *Ramchal*. The manuscript itself is thought to be in the hand of *Ramchal's* leading student, Rabbi Shlomo David Trevis.

Mishkney Elyon was transcribed by Rabbi Yosef Spinner שליט"א, who divided it into titled sections and added explanatory notes. The text was printed for the first time in 1980 in *Ginzey Ramchal*, a volume of *Ramchal's* kabbalistic writings published in Israel by the late Rabbi Chaim Friedlander. That edition included a short introduction by Rabbi Friedlander, Rabbi Spinner's notes, and a plan of the Third Temple prepared by Rabbis Moshe Dvir and Yosef Yitzchak Lipshitz שליט"א.

At the request of the Lubavitcher Rebbe זצ"ל a new edition of *Mishkney Elyon* was published in a separate volume in 1993 by the Ramchal Institute in Jerusalem. This edition contains an introduction by Rabbi Mordekhai Chriqui שליט"א, Director of the Institute, together with his commentary on the "Five Chapters".

The Heavenly Temple

Ramchal clearly explains the purpose of *Mishkney Elyon* in his opening words:

"My purpose in this work is to discuss the subject of the Heavenly Temple mentioned by our sages, to explain its form and structure in all their various details, and to show how the earthly Temple is in direct alignment with it in its structure and all its dimensions."

The Heavenly Temple is mentioned in a number of places in rabbinic literature. In the Talmud we find: "Rabbi Yochanan said: The Holy One blessed-be-He declared: 'I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I enter the earthly Jerusalem.' Is there then a heavenly Jerusalem? Yes, as it is written (Psalms 122:3): 'Jerusalem will be built like the city that is joined to it together'" (*Taanit* 5a).

The *Zohar* states: "The earthly Sanctuary depends upon the Upper Sanctuary, and that Upper Sanctuary depends in turn upon another Upper Sanctuary, which is the most exalted of all. All of them are included in one another, and this is the meaning of the verse (Exodus 26:6): 'And the Sanctuary was *one*'" (*Zohar Pekudey* II, 235a).

This statement of the *Zohar* indicates that there are *two* heavenly Sanctuaries, one above the other. This explains the phrase from the Psalms which *Ramchal* took as the title of his work, *Mishkney Elyon*. The phrase is contained in the following verse: "There is a river whose streams bring joy to the city of God, the holy place of the *dwelling of the Supreme (Mishkney Elyon)*" (Psalms 46:5). The Hebrew phrase *Mishkney Elyon* could also be translated as "the Sanctuaries above", alluding to the two heavenly Sanctuaries mentioned by the *Zohar*.

The lower of these two heavenly Sanctuaries is mentioned in a midrashic comment on the verse: "And it came to pass on the day that Moses completed erecting the Sanctuary" (Numbers 7:1). "Rabbi Simon said: At the time when the Holy One blessed-be-He told the Jewish People to erect the Sanctuary, he hinted to the Ministering Angels that they too should make a Sanctuary. When the Sanctuary was erected in the lower world, this angelic Sanctuary was erected above. This is the Sanctuary of the 'Iad', [the angel] whose name is Metatron, where he offers the souls of the Tzaddikim in order to atone for Israel during their time of exile" (*Bemidbar Rabbah* 12:13).

The passage from the *Zohar* quoted earlier indicates that even higher than this heavenly Sanctuary of the Angels stands another Sanctuary. This supreme Heavenly Temple is the subject of *Ramchal's Mishkney Elyon*. Of it he writes: "This holy House was created before the universe. For it is from this House that all created beings receive their power and sustenance." This is the Temple that Ezekiel saw in his vision, and it is the prototype of the Third Temple, which will be an actual physical structure in this world.

Structure of *Mishkney Elyon*

The work begins with an explanation of the relationship between the Heavenly Temple and its counterpart, the earthly Temple, which is a holographic image of the Heavenly Temple and emanates from it. *Ramchal* clarifies the differences between the First, Second and Third Temples on earth, explaining among other things why Ezekiel already saw the vision of the Third Temple at the time of the destruction of the First, and why the Divine Presence did not dwell in the Second Temple.

Ramchal then proceeds with a step-by-step "tour" of the various parts of the Sanctuary, Temple courtyards, gates and other buildings as seen by Ezekiel in his vision. In each case *Ramchal* explains how the form and very dimensions of each place are bound up with the corresponding spiritual "lights" – *Sefirot* and holy names – in the upper worlds.

In the second part of the work, *Ramchal* explains the Order of the Temple Service, and in particular the secret of the sacrifices:

"Every day the lower realms need to draw close to the upper realms in order that the 'branches' should be connected to the 'roots'. This way the angels are bound to their roots, and the souls to theirs. It is the animal offering that brings the angels close, while the incense offering brings the souls close."

Ramchal's account of how the "branches" of creation reconnect with their "roots" through the Temple service fulfills his promise to the reader at the outset of the book to "lay these matters before you in a single all-inclusive introductory work that will enable you to understand the way the world is run and how God gives each day's portion of food and sustenance to all His creatures, each in its proper time."

Ramchal's explanation of the sacrificial service also throws light on the deeper meaning and kabbalistic intentions of the daily prayer

services, which correspond to the regular Temple sacrifices and, in times of exile, take their place.

Five Chapters

After the end of the main body of *Ramchal's* discourse in *Mishkney Elyon*, he says: "I will now provide a concise, orderly account of all the measurements of the Temple and its courtyards in all their details in five chapters." He follows with five chapters written in the tersely elegant style of Mishneh summarizing the plan and measurements of all the different Temple buildings, courtyards, gates, steps, etc. These five chapters have many parallels to the five chapters of the mishnaic Tractate *Middot*, which explains the plan of the Second Temple. *Ramchal's* Five Chapters also bear certain resemblances to *Rambam's* account of the Second Temple in his *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit Habechirah*.

Thus at the end of *Mishkney Elyon*, as in quite a number of his other works, *Ramchal* performs the invaluable service of providing his readers with a clear, concise summary of the entire contents of the main work.

Keys to the Third Temple

In *Mishkney Elyon* *Ramchal* provides vital keys to understanding both the physical form and spiritual meaning of the Third Temple.

Rambam had written: "Even though the building destined to be built in the future is written about in Ezekiel, it is not explained nor is it clear" (*Hilchot Beit Habechirah* 1:4). Even the mishnaic sages were perplexed by difficulties in Ezekiel's prophecies, including certain apparent contradictions to the *Halachah*. In the words of the Talmud:

"Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Hananiah ben Hizkiah is most certainly remembered for good, for if it were not for him, the Book of Ezekiel would have been removed from the canon because his words seem to contradict the Torah. What did Hananiah do? They brought him up three hundred barrels of oil [for light and food] and he sat in an attic and reconciled all the difficulties" (*Shabbat* 13b and see *Menachot* 45a).

Notwithstanding the labors of Hananiah ben Hizkiah, Ezekiel's prophecies remained a closed book for all but the most outstanding of scholars. The account of Ezekiel's vision of the Third Temple contains many passages whose meaning is extremely hard to determine even with the help of the classical commentators. Trying to build a picture

of the basic design and layout of the Temple buildings as seen by Ezekiel can be a daunting task.

Rav's expression of appreciation for the labors of Hananiah ben Hizkiah can therefore surely be applied to *Ramchal*, who explained the structure and purpose of the Third Temple with the crystal clarity of a *Rambam*.

From the day the Sanctuary was erected in the wilderness, the Temple in its various manifestations has been the focal point of the entire devotional system of the Torah. It was from the Holy of Holies that Moses and all the later prophets received prophecy. It was to the Sanctuary in Shilo that the childless Hannah went to pour out her heart in whispered prayer, becoming the model of *Tefilah*, Prayer, for all time.

Hints about the meaning of various aspects of the Temple and its services can be found throughout the Zoharitic writings and those of the *ARI* and other kabbalistic sages. But nowhere in the whole of rabbinic literature is the significance of the Temple as a devotional focus for Jews and indeed all humanity explained systematically and with such clarity as in *Ramchal's Mishkney Elyon*.

This is not to suggest that *Mishkney Elyon* is "easy". It deals with matters that stand at the very summit of the universe. For the Temple "includes" all the *Sefirot* and all the worlds. A work about the meaning of the Temple must necessarily deal with the secrets of *Maaseh Bereishit* and *Maaseh Merkavah*. These matters must be approached with the utmost reverence and humility and with many prayers to God for enlightenment.

Ready Made from Heaven or Built by Man?

Does the Third Temple come down ready made and complete from Heaven, or do actual people have to build it?

According to *Rashi*, "The future Temple for which we are waiting will be revealed and come down from heaven fully built and complete, as it is written (Exodus 15:17): 'The Sanctuary, God, that *Your* hands established'" (*Rashi* on *Succah* 41a and see *Tosafot* there; see also *Rashi* on *Rosh Hashanah* 30a and *Tosafot* on *Shavuot* 15b).

On the other hand, *Rambam* states that the main identifying sign of the *Mashiach* will be that he will physically build the Third Temple in its proper place (*Hilchot Melachim* 11:4).

Ramchal helps us understand how both opinions express different aspects of the process by which the Third Temple will come into this world. He writes:

"In time to come, not only will the Heavenly and earthly Temples be similar. The Upper House will extend until it reaches the lower world. This is the meaning of the saying of our Rabbis that the Third Temple will be the work of the hands of God. For the Heavenly Temple will not be uprooted from its place. Rather it will extend until it reaches the lower world. Around it a physical structure will then be built as befits this material world, and the two structures will be joined and become one and will never again separate. God's glory will be fully revealed there, as it is said: 'And the glory of God will be revealed, and all flesh will see' (Isaiah 40:5). Then there will be complete peace and happiness forever."

In other words, a spiritual emanation of the Temple will come down into this world from the Upper World, and around it the physical reality of the Third Temple will be built.

In explaining Ezekiel's vision of the Third Temple, *Ramchal* has indeed brought the *idea* of the Third Temple down from Heaven into this world. The more that people study and grasp the Temple idea, the nearer will they bring the day when humanity will come to its senses, cease its futile cycles of war and destruction, and join together with one accord to worship the One God in the Third Temple.

Key Concepts in *Mishkney Elyon*

As already noted, *Ramchal* states the purpose of *Mishkney Elyon* in his opening words:

"My purpose in this work is to discuss the subject of the Heavenly Temple mentioned by our sages, to explain its form and structure in all their various details, and to show how the earthly Temple is in direct alignment with it in its structure and all its dimensions. Now I will lay these matters before you in a single, all-inclusive introductory work that will enable you to understand the way the world is run and how God gives each day's portion of food and sustenance to all His creatures, each in its proper time."

The primary focus of *Mishkney Elyon* is upon the form of the Heavenly Temple, but since this is the prototype of the earthly Temple, much of what applies to the Heavenly Temple also applies to the earthly Temple. In many passages in *Mishkney Elyon*, *Ramchal* speaks simultaneously on a number of different levels, a feat made possible by the richness of Hebrew.

Ramchal explains step by step how the entire Heavenly Temple in all its details emanates from a single "place" or "point". This point exists on a plane that is beyond space as we know it, one that we could perhaps call *metaspaces*. In the terminology of religion and Kabbalah, this is the spiritual plane "above" as opposed to the material world here "below". Indeed this "point", source of the Heavenly Temple, is ultimately the source of space as we know it.

This heavenly "place" or "point" corresponds to *Even Shetiyah*, the "Foundation Stone", in the earthly Temple. This is the rock on the Temple Mount that is called "the belly of the earth", the place from which the entire earth emanated like a fetus growing from the belly outwards. It is from the heavenly point corresponding to the earthly *Even Shetiyah* that all the lights that bring the Heavenly Temple into being shine forth. This point corresponds to the last of the Ten *Sefirot*, or Divine Attributes, of which the Kabbalah speaks. This is the *Sefirah* of *Malchut*, "Kingly Power", through which all the upper *Sefirot* shine. This *Sefirah* is also called *Shechinah*, the "Indwelling Presence of God".

Starting from this "point", *Ramchal* traces the emanation of the Heavenly Temple, beginning with the Holy of Holies and moving on

successively to the main Sanctuary with its Gate and Vestibule, the surrounding Inner Temple Courtyard with its massive stone sacrificial Altar and various chambers, the Outer Courtyard and its chambers and gates, and finally the Temple Mount.

Ramchal explains the principle governing his choice of route:

"I will follow the path of the flow of blessing (*Shefa*) as it emerges from the source and spreads forth on all sides. I begin therefore with the place from which it emerges, and I will tell you in which directions it travels after leaving there, and which path it takes at the beginning and which path it takes at the end."

Shefa

There is no simple one-word English equivalent of the Hebrew word שפע: *Shefa*. In most places in this translation of *Mishkney Elyon* phrases such as "the flow of blessing and sustenance" have been chosen in an attempt to convey something of the true meaning of the word.

In contemporary Hebrew, *Shefa* means "plenty" or "abundance", but the root word has the connotation of "influence", especially a positive, beneficial influence that one person or object has on another. The related word *HaShPAah* signifies the influence that a *MaShPiA*, a source of influence, has on the recipient of that influence.

In *Mishkney Elyon* and Kabbalah generally, *Shefa* refers to the spiritual influences which emanate from the higher levels of creation in order to sustain the lower and help bring them to their destiny.

The word "creation" here refers to all the different "worlds" and levels brought into being by God. These created worlds encompass not only this material World of *Asiyah* (Action) in which we live, including the Earth and all it contains, and all the planets, stars and galaxies to the outer limits of the physical universe but also the spiritual worlds that exist in the metaspaces that are "above" our World of *Asiyah*. These are the World of *Yetzirah* (Formation), world of the angelic hosts that sustain and govern the stars, planets and other natural phenomena of *Asiyah*, and the World of *Beriyah* (Creation), world of the higher angels, the "officers" that govern the angelic hosts of *Yetzirah*. The World of *Beriyah* is also known as the "World of the Throne".

Beyond *Beriyah* lies a realm of Godly unity that is the source of all these created worlds: this realm of unity is the World of *Atzilut* (Emanation), from which the light of the Ten *Sefirot* shines forth to create, sustain and govern all the lower worlds.

Creation is not only a single past act. It is also a continuing process in which all the worlds are governed in such a way as to bring all things to the ultimate goal, the complete revelation of God on all levels of creation. To accomplish this goal, there is a continuous influx of various kinds of "power" or "energy" into creation. These "powers" sustain and govern all the different levels of creation, spiritual and physical, so as to bring all things to the ultimate goal. This flow of power and energy is called *Shefa*.

The ultimate goal of creation is the end point to which everything is moving. The reason why everything is "going" in that direction is because that is where God is *making* everything go. To make something go is to *drive* it, as when one drives an animal or car. The Hebrew word for "driving" is *Hanhagah*, from the root *Nahag*, which means to drive or make something go.

The kabbalistic concept of *Hanhagah* refers to the way the worlds are actually governed in order to bring everything to the ultimate goal of creation. Creation is seen as being "driven" by God, somewhat as a chariot (*Merkavah*) and the animals pulling it are driven by the charioteer. The "animals" of the divine "Chariot" are the *Chayot*, the higher angels that are the vital forces of creation. As the *Chayot* "draw" the Chariot, the *Ofanim* (literally "wheels") go round and round: these are the lower angels that govern the great wheels or cycles of creation.

The *Hanhagah* or "driving" is ultimately determined by the One sitting "in the driver's seat", this being the Throne of Kingship. From it the King governs all His "armies" or "legions" – the souls, angels and other orders and levels of created beings. All these "hosts" are God's "armies" sent to accomplish His purpose, and He sustains them and provides all their needs according to their different levels, spiritual and physical.

The "sustenance" sent to sustain and influence all the different levels is *Shefa*. Central to *Mishkney Elyon* is the idea that it is from the Temple that the *Shefa* of blessing and sustenance is drawn down to all the worlds in positive, beneficial ways. The Temple service is what actually elicits the flow of *Shefa* and causes it to "come down" to all the various levels of creation according to their respective needs. The Temple is the King's "Palace", where all His "officers and captains" assemble, as it were, to receive what they need for themselves and those under them.

The entire "Palace" is laid out accordingly to provide appropriate areas for all the different grades and ranks. There are set times for them to come forward, all within their respective boundaries. Everything is arranged according to an overall *Seder*, "Order".

The key to understanding this order is to study the "path" by which the *Shefa* comes to its recipients. Understanding this pathway unlocks the mystery of the Temple layout and service. This is why *Ramchal* sets himself to "follow the path of the flow of blessing (*Shefa*) as it emerges from the source and spreads forth on all sides..."

Roots and Branches of the Tree

The array of the ten *Sefirot* through which God creates and sustains all the worlds constitutes the "Tree of Life". The first image conjured up by the word "tree" may be of those parts of a tree that are visible to the eye: the trunk and green foliage. But the life of the entire tree is in fact dependent on the flow of nutrients in the sap that rises up from the roots. The roots are normally invisible because they stretch deep underground.

The sap and its nutrients are the *Shefa* that flows to all parts of the tree. Only through this vitalizing flow of sap can the tree *live* and its branches produce their fruits.

All the different orders of creation, all the different species and all the individual creatures – from the souls and angels down to the animals, plants and other beings – "hang" somewhere on the "branches" of the Tree of Life, namely the *Sefirot* of creation. Each species and each individual creature manifests a different aspect of one or other of the *Sefirot*.

The "branches" of the Tree of Life receive their vitality from its "roots". These are the hidden Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge that are mother to the three main "columns" of the Tree of the *Sefirot*: *Chesed*, Kindness, *Din*, Judgment and *Rachamim*, balanced Mercy. When we think of a tree, we may think of the roots as being "below" in the ground. But in the case of the Tree of Life, the "roots" of the manifest phenomena of this world actually lie on planes that are "above" this world.

In order for all the branches of creation to live and flourish, they must receive vitality from the very roots of the Tree of Life. Each branch receives its vitality through particular channels or pathways through which the vital sap reaches it. The branches must thus be *connected* with the roots in order to receive their vitality.

Central to all the teachings in *Mishkney Elyon* is the idea that the Temple is the place where all the different branches of creation reconnect with their roots through the Temple service. It is through

this connection and joining of the branches to their roots that *Shefa* spreads to all the worlds.

Speaking of the "point" in heavenly "metaspace" that is the source of all the worlds, *Ramchal* writes:

"There is a special place where all these roots come together. In that place is the root of all things... In that place are the roots of the earth and all it contains, the heavens, the heavens of the heavens and all their hosts without exception. In the place where all these roots come together, in the middle, there is a single stone. This stone is most precious. It possesses every kind of beauty and charm. It is called the Foundation Stone (*Even Shetiyah*). There is a corresponding stone in this world – the lower world – in the place of the Holy of Holies...

"Stretching out in all directions from around this stone are channels and pathways leading to all things. At their start these channels are great highways governing and regulating all the different orders and species of created beings, all of which have a deep inner knowledge of their root paths. From here they all receive their share of the constant sustenance given to them by the King. Branching off from these highways are countless smaller pathways containing the individual roots of every single being in creation from the biggest to the smallest. Each one has its own unique pathway."

These pathways discussed by *Ramchal* are the subject of an illuminating teaching by Rabbi Nachman of Breslov:

"The world has a Foundation Stone. Channels emanate from this Stone, reaching every land. The wise King Solomon knew the details of these channels and was therefore able to plant all types of trees. If people knew the exact location of these subterranean channels, they would be able to grow fruit trees even in lands where they do not normally grow. Each channel has the power to stimulate a particular species. Even if a certain channel does not pass through a particular land, all the channels are intertwined and flow into each other. If one knew exactly where this happens, one could plant any type of tree. If one knew the location of all the channels, one could make any type of tree grow" (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom #60*).

An obvious implication of these teachings is that the growth of actual trees and plants all over the world depends on these channels and the energy they receive from their root pathways. Since it is in the Temple that all the pathways join together, the Temple is among other things the key link in the entire global food chain. Indeed, many of the Temple rituals center on produce, such as the daily

wheat and oil offerings, the wine libations, the *Omer* barley offering and that of the First Fruits.

This indicates that material prosperity throughout the world actually depends on the Temple. This explains why the sages of the Torah taught that since the destruction of the Temple the quality of all kinds of produce has declined (*Taanit* 23a etc.), while the prophets foresaw that with its rebuilding, the world will enter a new era of prosperity and peace.

Sources of *Shefa*: *Sefirot* and *Partzufim*

From where does the *Shefa* flowing to all levels of creation come? As stated earlier, the flow of sustenance and blessing through the Tree of Life is channeled through the *Sefirot*.

To gain a better understanding of the *Sefirot*, we must start with the ultimate source of all *Shefa*: God. We cannot know *why* God "wanted" the creation, but it is a fact that the creation exists, and it did not create itself. In the Kabbalah, as in the Torah, the power that God emanates in order to bring about and sustain creation is called Light. But God is infinite, and so too is God's light. In the endless light of the Infinite God, nothing else can have independent existence since all things are there subsumed in the perfect unity of God.

To make it possible for a separate creation to come into being in order to fulfill God's purpose, Kabbalah teaches that the Infinite Light was "contracted" or "dimmed". This enabled different grades, aspects and "colors" inherent in the light to be revealed, leading eventually to the creation of the finite material realm that is the stage where we play out our lives in this world.

Much of the Kabbalah is concerned with explaining what happens as the Infinite Light is successively muted so as to shine in a measured way, thereby creating worlds that can "receive" the divine light without being obliterated. The *Etz Chaim* of the *ARI* gives a complete "history" of creation beginning with the first *Tzimtzum*, the "contraction" of the Infinite Light. This produced *Chalal Panui*, the "Vacated Space" that made it possible for "separate" finite worlds to exist.

Within the limits of this work it is impossible to do more than list some of the chief stages in the kabbalistic "history of creation". After the "contraction" of the Infinite Light, a single "line" of divine light entered the Vacated Space and spread in the form of *Adam Kadmon*, Primordial Man. The divine light shone in ten successive radiations,

but the "vessels" were as yet unable to receive the intense light of the ten archetypal *Sefirot* and as a result the vessels "broke".

The "story" of the "breaking" and subsequent "repair" of the "vessels" intended to reveal the light of the *Sefirot* to God's creatures is central to the kabbalistic answer to the problem of evil. The "breaking of the vessels" brings into being a realm where Godliness becomes so hidden that evil may appear to be as strong and desirable as good. This sets the stage for the unfolding drama of God's choicest creature: *Adam*, Man, who is given the task of completing the process of *Tikun*, the "repair" or "rectification" of the sefirotic vessels. This he does by searching for, uncovering and embracing the true good that is itself the reward for his efforts in this world of good and evil.

The world attains a state of repair when the intended receivers of the good that God desires to give are properly aligned to receive it. The light must be suited to the vessels and the vessels to the light. In this way God's light can be perfectly revealed in a graded, balanced way on all levels. When the ten *Sefirot* shine in their rectified state, it is in a mode of alignment, balance and cooperative interaction between giver and receiver. When the *Sefirot* manifest in this rectified state, it is in the form of various levels of *Partzufim*.

A *Partzuf* is a person's "face" or "appearance" with his or her distinctive features, head, body, arms and legs. The human form reflects that of the Tree of Life, which is one of perfect balance. In the human body, the right and left sides meet and are balanced in the center column. The human form thus expresses the alignment and balance of right and left, giver and receiver. Another expression of this alignment and balance is when Male and Female interact and join together in mutual cooperation, stimulation, giving and receiving. In the terminology of the Kabbalah, this mutual interaction takes the form of *Chibur*, connecting, and *Zivug*, pairing and mating.

All these concepts of giver/receiver, right/left, male/female, mutual interaction, cooperation and stimulation are aspects of the array of *Partzufim* through which the ten *Sefirot* function in different ways on different levels to bring creation to its ultimate purpose. All the *Partzufim* have the same essential structure of "head, body, arms and legs", but the nature and function of each individual *Partzuf* depends on its level. Similarly, all people have the same fundamental bodily structure, but different individuals appear and function in very different ways because they are invested with different features and powers. In the garb of the various *Partzufim*, the *Sefirot* can send appropriate *Shefa* to the different levels of creation.

The main *Partzufim* of which the Kabbalah speaks are, starting from the top:

- *Atik*, the "Ancient One" (the Crown of the Crown).
- *Arich Anpin*, "The Long Face" (corresponding to the highest of the ten *Sefirot*, *Keter*, the "Crown").
- *Abba*, "Father" (corresponding to *Chochmah*, Wisdom).
- *Imma*, "Mother" (*Binah*, Understanding).
- *Zeir Anpin*, "The Small Face", the "Son" (comprising the six *Sefirot* of *Chesed*, Kindness, *Gevurah*, Strength, *Tiferet*, Balance, *Netzach*, Victory, *Hod*, Splendor, and *Yesod*, Foundation).
- *Nukva*, the "female", the "Daughter", corresponding to the last *Sefirah*, that of *Malchut*, Kingly Power, associated with *Shechinah*, God's Indwelling Presence.

The central focus in much of the Kabbalah is on the *Partzufim* of *Zeir Anpin* and *Nukva*, and their interrelationship. This is because it is primarily through these two *Partzufim* that the world in which we live is governed.

In *Mishkney Elyon* the *Nukva* is usually referred to as *Shechinah*, the Indwelling Presence, or *Malchut*, Kingly Power, and sometimes simply as "She". *Zeir Anpin* is referred to as *Melech*, the King.

It is through cooperative interaction between the *Partzufim* and especially between *Zeir Anpin* and *Nukva* that the *Shefa* of sustenance and blessing flows into the world.

Lights, Names and Numbers

The various *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* are different aspects of the Godly power or "light" that is the source of all creation. It is because of the different ways in which the unified light of God is "contracted" that it shines in these different ways on different levels.

In *Mishkney Elyon*, the various *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* are called *Meorot*, "luminaries" or "sources of light". (In the present translation this term has in most cases been translated as "lights" rather than by the more antiquated term "luminaries".)

Each different "light" is a particular kind of spiritual influence. Each of the different kinds of influences is called a *Middah*. The word *Middah* carries the connotations of both "measure" and "attribute". Each *Sefirah*, *Partzuf* or aspect thereof is a unique "measure" or level of the divine light. The particular "measure", level and intensity of any given aspect determine its unique quality and character, just as different wavelengths of light are seen as different colors. A given "measure" is thus at one and the same time an "attribute".

The very idea of measure involves number. Every day we measure distances, sizes, weights, heat, cold, electrical power, sound and much else using numerical scales of various kinds. Much of the success of modern science and technology is based on accurate, sophisticated measurement of different aspects of the physical world. For example, chemistry provides measurements of the electron configurations of the elements and precise formulae governing the ways they join together to form all kinds of compounds.

There would be less agreement between students of the mind and spirit about how to measure character traits and emotions. Yet it is precisely with the "measures" or *Middot* of Kindness, Strictness, Compassion, Balance and other spiritual qualities that Kabbalah is concerned. For it is with various combinations of these qualities that God governs the creation.

And the units of "measurement" are not numbers as we normally think of them but the twenty-two letters of the *Aleph Beit*, the "Letters of Creation".

Letters of Creation

A letter is an *Ot*, a "sign". When we write for everyday purposes, the letters on the page are "signs" indicating the successive sounds making up the words with which we communicate our meaning. But when a chemist writes the letters of a chemical formula, what is important is not the pronunciation of the letters but rather how they are used to signify different elements and compounds. Everyone knows that the lines and shapes making up the letters and numbers in chemical formulae are not the elements or compounds themselves. They are "signs" that point to certain aspects of physical matter, helping us understand and sometimes manipulate them.

The letters of the *Aleph Beit* are of course used in simple written communication to signify how to pronounce and read the words of some message. But as written in the Torah, the letters of *Aleph Beit* are not merely signs as to how to read the scriptures in order to derive practical lessons to apply in our lives. While the Torah is certainly a communication to humanity on our level, it is at the same time a revelation of Godly power that goes far beyond us. The Torah is made up of words that read as a message teaching us wisdom, understanding and a path in life. At the same time these words are divine Names that are the "power formula" of all creation. The ink letters written on the parchment in our Torah scrolls are "signs" expressing and helping us understand, relate to and even manipulate the elemental powers that create and sustain the universe.

These elemental powers of creation are the "Letters of Creation", the twenty-two letters of the *Aleph Beit* as explained by Abraham in *Sefer Yetzirah*. Each of the twenty-two Letters of Creation is a precise degree, level or kind of Godly power or "light" capable of combining and interacting with all the other elemental powers so as to produce infinite numbers of different "formulae" giving rise to all the different phenomena of creation on all levels. Since all these powers are different levels, degrees or "measures" of Godly light, it is understandable why each of the letters of the *Aleph Beit* has its own distinct numerical value or *Gematria*.

The Letters of Creation are themselves the "vessels" of which the Kabbalah speaks, through which the light and power of the *Sefirot* are revealed. The Hebrew word for "vessel", *Kli*, has a connotation of measure. A cup holding a given measure of liquid is one kind of vessel. A given combination of letters is also a "vessel" that "holds" and channels a given measure of power. By themselves, the individual letters are "broken vessels" that can accomplish very little. But when these elemental powers of creation combine and interact in highly specific configurations or "formulae", they have the power to serve as instruments of Godly creation and blessing.

Divine Names

The different configurations of letters making up the words of the Torah are all "Names". The Kabbalah sees the entire Torah as a fabric of mathematically and semantically interconnected "Names" and "Names of names" woven around certain underlying "generic" Names of God. The different Names signify different divine powers and attributes, *Sefirot* and *Partzufim*, that actually exert their influence through the Names themselves. It is through these "Names" that the "lights" – the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* – send *Shefa* into the creation.

The principle divine Names explicitly revealed in the Torah are:

- *YHVH*, the "essential" Name of God (*Shem HaEzem*), known as the Name of Four Letters or *Tetragrammaton*, which may not be pronounced and is referred to as *HaShem*, "The Name", or *HaVaYaH* (a rearrangement of the four letters, denoting the Source of all Existence). This Name is the root of all other Names and is especially associated with the *Sefirah* of *Tiferet*, Perfect Beauty and Harmony, and with the *Partzuf* of *Zeir Anpin*, "The Small Face".
- *YAH*, "God", associated with *Chochmah*, Wisdom, and the *Partzuf* of *Abba*, Father.
- *EHYH* (Exodus 3:14), "I will be", associated with *Binah*, Understanding, and the *Partzuf* of *Imma*, Mother.

- *EL*, literally "Power", associated with *Chesed*, Kindness.
- *ELOHIM*, literally "The Powers", denoting the unified Source of all the revealed powers in the universe, associated with *Gevurah*, Strength, and also with *Malchut*, Kingly Power.
- *YHVH TZEVA'OT* and *ELOHIM TZEVA'OT*, "God of Hosts", associated respectively with the *Sefirot* of *Netzach*, Victory, and *Hod*, Splendor.
- *SHADDAI*, "The Eternal", associated with *Yesod*, Foundation.
- *ADONAI*, "My Lord", associated with the lowest *Sefirah*, *Malchut*, Kingly Power, and with the *Partzuf* of *Nukva*, or *Shechinah*.

Miluim

Besides these Names, many others are embedded in the biblical text in hidden ciphers or alluded to in other ways. A highly significant category of Names in *Mishkney Elyon* and Kabbalah generally is that of *Miluim*, literally "fillings". Each of the letters of the *Aleph Beit* not only has its "simple" form, the individual letter as it appears when written in a word; each letter also has its name, made up of itself and one or two other specific letters with which it combines to form the unique power-configuration that is the essence of the letter in question. For example, the letter *Yud* is represented in the Torah scroll as a simple dot [י], yet the full name of the letter is spelled out with the letters *Yud Vav Dalet* [יוד]. The "filling" letters (in this case the *Vav* and the *Dalet*) are integral parts of the "formula" that gives the letter its power.

When the full name of each of the constituent letters of a Divine Name is written out, this is called a *Milui*, "filling" or "expansion" of that Name. For example the simple letters of the divine Name *EL* are *Aleph* (=1) and *Lamed* (= 30), having the combined numerical value of 31. Spelling out in full the names of the letters *Aleph* [אֱלֶפֶת] and *Lamed* [לִמְדָה] gives us the *Milui* of *EL*, אֱלֶפֶת לִמְדָה: *Aleph* (=1) + *Lamed* (=30) + *Peh* (=80) + *Lamed* (=30) + *Mem* (=40) + *Dalet* (=4) = 185. The manifestation of the letters that were previously "hidden" gives the *Milui* expanded power, as reflected in its total numerical value. This power was present *in potential* in the "simple" letters of the Name since the "hidden" letters making up the full names of the "simple letters" are integral parts of those letters. When the "simple" letters are "filled" with their constituent letters in the *Milui*, this potential power is actually manifested.

Because of the great power of *Heh* and *Vav*, two of the letters of the Essential Name, they are capable of being "filled" with different letters. Thus the *Heh* can be spelled in full either as *Heh Yud* [הי], *Heh*

Aleph [הא] or *Heh Heh* [הה], while the *Vav* can be spelled either as *Vav Yud Vav* [ויי], *Vav Aleph Vav* [ואו] or *Vav Vav* [וו].

This means that Names containing the letters *Heh* and *Vav*, such as the Essential Name and that of *EHYH*, can be "expanded" in various ways. Each of the different expansions is bound up with a particular *Sefirah* or *Partzuf* or aspect thereof. The four main expansions of the Essential Name of *YHVH* are:

- The expansion of 72 [ע"ב], so called because this is the numerical value of the sum of all the letters contained in this expansion: here the *Heh*'s and *Vav* are filled with *Yud*'s [יוד הי יוי [הי]]. This expansion is associated with the *Partzuf* of *Abba*, Father.
- The expansion of 63 [ס"ג], where the *Heh*'s are filled with *Yud*'s but the *Vav* is filled with an *Aleph* [יוד הי ואו הי], associated with *Imma*, Mother.
- The expansion of 45 [מ"ה], where the *Heh*'s and *Vav* are all filled with *Aleph*'s [יוד הא ואו הא], associated with *Zeir Anpin*, the "Small Face".
- The expansion of 52 [ב"ן], where the *Heh*'s are filled with *Heh* and the *Vav* is spelled simply [יוד הה וו הה]. This expansion is associated with *Nukva*, the Female aspect.

Union

The ultimate goal of creation is the complete revelation of God on all levels. In this rectified state, Giver and Receiver are perfectly aligned. The movement of creation towards this rectified state is characterized by various kinds of "joining" and "pairing" of the various *Partzufim*, some of which are more involved in "giving", while others are more associated with "receiving".

The supreme example of creative interaction, giving and receiving, is when Man and Wife align and join together in holy union – *Yichud* – to parent a child who will unite in one being essential qualities of both. They accomplish this through *Chibur*, joining together, and *Zivug*, cooperative interaction.

In a person's inner spiritual life, the Giver is God and the person or soul, the Receiver, is the "Wife", while the "children" are the person's spiritual achievements and good deeds. *Yichud*, holy union, comes about when the receiver "joins" him or herself to God. One makes oneself the vessel for Godly light by binding all one's limbs and faculties to His service and filling one's mind and soul with the words of prayer coming from one's mouth into one's ears. When a person

makes him or herself a vessel for Godly light on the level of thought, word and action, *Shechinah*, the Indwelling Presence, is aligned to receive from *Melech*, the King.

When this unification (*Yichud*) comes about, the receiving *Partzuf* of *Nukva*, the female, is aligned to receive from *Zeir Anpin*, the male. On the level of the Names of the two *Partzufim* involved, this union is expressed through the "joining" of the two Divine Names *YHVH* and *ADNY* to form new power-combinations. One of the better known examples of how these two names may be "joined together" is through *Shiluv*, "interweaving" the letters of the two names as in *YAHDVNHY* or *AYDHNVYH*, as printed in certain prayer-books. Those who know the meaning of these *Shiluvim* may visualize and contemplate them at appropriate points in their prayers, thereby unifying the Giver, the Holy One blessed-be-He, and the Receiver, the *Shechinah*.

Number and Space

It is the *Yichud* or union of different *Partzufim* through the joining and connection of their associated Names that "makes" the Heavenly Temple. This will be more understandable if we grasp a very simple point that is the key to the mathematics of *Mishkney Elyon*. These involve little more than simple addition and multiplication.

The mathematical system of *Mishkney Elyon* is what in Hebrew is known as *Gematria*, the "Study of Numbers" (or Torah numerology). The term *Gematria* is derived from the ancient Greek word for what we call geometry. It is common knowledge that *Gematria* is the study of the numerical values of the letters and words of the Hebrew Torah. What is not generally realized is that *Gematria*, like geometry, is also the mathematics of *space*.

This is alluded to in *Sefer Yetzirah*, which says that "Two stones build two houses, three stones build six houses, four stones build twenty-four houses..." (4:16). The "stones" are the letters of the *Aleph Beit*, the building blocks of creation. The concept of "stones" or "blocks" is intrinsically three-dimensional (see *Sefer Yetzirah* translated with a commentary by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan in which he discusses the creation of multi-dimensional realities).

Geometry, the mathematics of space, was initially a practical science employed by ancient architects as they sought to build more ambitious projects. *Ramchal* in *Mishkney Elyon* brings kabbalistic *Gematria* to the level of sacred architectural geometry as he explains how interactions between the Divine Names of the *Partzufim*, all of which are also numbers, "create" the "space" of the Holy Temple.

Consider an example of how numbers create space: A room that is forty feet in length, twenty feet wide and twenty feet high is "created" by walls of appropriate length and height. In the language of *Mishkney Elyon*, the floor-space of such a room is created through the "joining" (*Chibur*) of forty and twenty. *Chibur* is the Hebrew word for the mathematical relationship expressed by \times , the multiplication sign. We would say that the room is 40 by 20, and 20 high, or $40 \times 20 \times 20$. The mathematics of *Mishkney Elyon* are no more complicated than that.

As *Ramchal* proceeds with his "tour" of the various areas of the Temple, he shows how each individual Hall, Chamber, Wall, Gate and Courtyard "appears" as a result of the "joining together" of some or all of the letters of various Divine Names. These names correspond to the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim*, which are the *Middot*, "qualities" or "measures". *Chibur*, "joining" and "multiplication" of the "measures", brings into being three-dimensional "spaces" where the axes of "length", "breadth" and "height" are the three "lines" or "columns" of *Chesed*, Kindness, *Din*, Judgment and *Rachamim*, Mercy and Balance (see *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:13).

The Temple that *Ramchal* explains to us in *Mishkney Elyon* is that seen by Ezekiel in his prophetic vision. The Angel appeared to the Prophet with his "measuring rod" and "linen cord", taking him on what today would be called a "virtual" three-dimensional tour of the entire Temple, showing him every detail and giving him exact measurements. These "measurements" are the *Middot*, the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim*, and their interactions and "joining" create "space". The Temple that Ezekiel saw exists in *metaspace*, or in the language of religion and Kabbalah, space as it is "above", "in Heaven".

Yet the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* hold sway on all levels of creation, spiritual and physical. Numerical relationships between the various names are capable of being expressed in the form of the finite, physical three-dimensional "Halls", "Chambers", "Gates" and "Courtyards" of the Temple in this world. The Heavenly Temple is thus a hologram that exists on a level beyond space as we know it – "in Heaven" – and as such it is the very blueprint of creation. Yet this same hologram is destined to actually manifest in physical space in the form of the Third Temple on Earth. This will be the tangible embodiment of the holographic pattern.

The key principle governing all the relationships expressed in the holographic Temple is balance between the two "sides": the "right side" of *Chesed*, kindness and expansiveness, and the "left side" of *Din*, judgment and contraction. *Chesed* and *Din*, "right" and "left", are the Giver and Receiver/Male and Female of the Kabbalah equation.

Balancing these two "sides" is the center column of *Rachamim*, mercy and compassion.

For the goal of creation is that God, Master of Compassion, should be perfectly revealed on all levels so as to "give" all creatures their own unique share of pure goodness. This "giving" requires a state of perfect balance between Giver and Receiver on all levels. This balance is expressed in the form of the Halls and Courtyards of the Temple, which is located in the place where all the roots of creation join together. The Temple and its services are ordered in such a way that Giver and Receiver join "face to face". This way all the "branches" – the souls, angels and other orders and levels of created beings – reconnect with their roots and receive their respective shares of sustaining *Shefa* from the Creator.

Order

The key to this rectified state of creation is *Seder*, Order. The Temple buildings and courtyards are ordered in *space* to provide a properly balanced environment for the interaction between Giver and Receiver. Within this space, the various daily, weekly, monthly and festival services constitute an order in *time* through which this interaction is continually maintained.

Ramchal explains the inner meaning of the Temple services and their role in bringing *Shefa* to the souls on their level and to the angels on theirs. All the different ranks and orders have their own designated areas and levels on the Temple Mount and are able to "ascend" to higher levels at specific times in order to receive their portion of *Shefa* "from the table of the King". The angels "ascend" through the sacrificial offerings on the outer Altar while the souls ascend through the incense offering on the inner Altar.

Ramchal concludes his explanation of the Temple buildings and services with a discussion of the various levels of the Temple Mount and the steps that connect them. This links in with the discussion of *Shefa*, for it is on these "steps" that the various orders of creation "go up" to actually receive their share.

As the angels in the Heavenly Temple "ascend" to receive their *Shefa*, they chant, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the God of Hosts" (Isaiah 6:3) and "Blessed be the glory of God from His place" (Ezekiel 3:12). These verses are recited daily at high points in the Jewish prayer services. *Ramchal's* explanation of the "ascent of the angels" provides important keys to deeper understanding of the prayer services and how they channel *Shefa* to all the worlds. For the set daily prayers correspond to the Temple services (*Berachot* 26b) and the "order" or

Seder that governs them is embedded in the order of prayers or *Siddur*, the traditional Jewish prayer-book.

Studying *Mishkney Elyon*

Students of *Mishkney Elyon* are awed by the depth and holiness of the secrets it discusses, and rightly so. The Temple is the Gate of Heaven, a place which inspires utmost awe. It is a Torah commandment to respect and revere the Temple (Leviticus 19:30). Access to the innermost areas is strictly limited, and people may only ascend the Temple Mount in a state of purity and holiness.

Does it follow that knowledge of the inner meaning of the Third Temple should be out of bounds for most people?

The study of certain areas of Kabbalah requires due preparation as uninitiated students can seriously harm themselves and others if they gain a distorted view and misuse their knowledge. However the *ARI* and other towering sages of the later generations sanctioned and encouraged the wider dissemination of works that explain the kabbalistic foundations of Jewish faith and belief. These have the power to deepen people's faith and invest their religious practice with greater meaning.

Kabbalah secrets are gleanings of divine wisdom that ultimately lies beyond the grasp of human intelligence. "The true goal of knowledge is the realization of one's ignorance" (*Chovot Levavot* 1:10). Yet Kabbalah is an essential part of the Torah "brought down" by Moses from Heaven to earth so that people might study and fulfill it. Kabbalah is the inner *soul* of the Torah since it deals with our relationship with God. Kabbalah works dealing with the underlying concepts of faith may be safely studied as long as the student is sincere, serious and willing to make some effort.

Even a partial reading of *Mishkney Elyon* with little or no understanding can greatly strengthen one's faith in the Temple and its importance. In the words of Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, who was the first to publish *Mishkney Elyon* in Hebrew:

"Even a person who has no previous knowledge of Kabbalah comes away from this work with a feeling of enhancement and can gain a great deal of important basic information as well as an understanding of how every detail of the Temple buildings and service is rooted in the most exalted heights. Seeing the splendor and glory of the House cannot but inspire us to hope, wait and pray with greater strength that the House will be built quickly in our days" (Introduction to *Mishkney Elyon* in *Ginzey Ramchal* p. 147)

Suggestions for Further Reading

On the Temple:

The Holy Temple Revisited by Rabbi Leibel Reznick (Jason Aaronson). Scholarly exploration of the history and significance of the Sanctuary, walls, gates and courtyards of the Holy Temple based on talmudic, archeological and historical sources.

The Light of the Temple (Temple Institute). The world of the Temple comes to life in this lavishly illustrated account of its history and services.

The Second Temple according to Rambam by Dov Levanoni (Brit Shalom Publications). Includes numerous color pictures of a Second Temple model and large pull-out Temple map.

The Holy Temple of Jerusalem by Chaim Richman (Carta/Temple Institute). Visual depiction of the rites and functions of the Holy Temple and celebration of the annual pilgrimage festivals in biblical Israel.

The Mishkan and the Holy Garments by Rabbi Shalom Dov Steinberg (Toras Chaim). Elucidates the structure and meaning of the Tabernacle, its vessels and priestly garments based on Rashi and other commentators. With diagrams and illustrations.

On Kabbalah:

The Way of God (*Derech HaShem*) by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto translated by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (Feldheim).

The Knowing Heart (*Daat Tevunot*) by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto translated by Shraga Silverstein (Feldheim).

138 Openings of Wisdom (*Klach Pischey Chochmah*) by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto translated by Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum

Innerspace by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (Moznaim). Introduction to the Kabbalah view of the world.

Mystical Concepts in Chassidism by Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet (Kehot Publication Society). Clear systematic explanation of fundamental kabbalistic concepts.

Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation in Theory and Practice by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (Samuel Weiser). Translation of this foundational work together with an extensive commentary throwing light on the meaning and implications of central concepts in *Mishkney Elyon*.

The House of Prayer for all the Nations (Isaiah 56:7)

The Temple is not an object of worship. It is a holograph embodied in buildings and services showing all humanity that prayer actually *works!* It should not be surprising that the system of Holy Names, letters and numbers embodied in the Temple is so elaborate. People don't complain about the complexity of cars, computers and other wonders. They simply expect them to *work!* It is unnecessary to understand all the details of *Mishkney Elyon* in order to grasp that the power of the Temple as a channel of *Shefa* is bound up with the power of the Letters of Creation.

These "Letters of Creation" are the very "angels" that Jacob saw ascending and descending the ladder. The image of angels going up and down the ladder to heaven is a graphic symbol to all humanity, Jews and Gentiles, kabbalists and non-kabbalists alike, expressing how the letters of our prayers and songs "rise up" to God so as to elicit a descending flow of blessing and sustenance.

Letters and words are the building blocks of all human languages. The essential message of the Temple is that language is not only the medium of communication between people; it is our medium of communication with God. Prayer to God in any language creates a ladder of connection. The letters of our prayers channel power from the archetypal "Letters of Creation", the "Word of God" that brought all things into being.

Prayer may be offered at any time in any place. The system of letters that brings the Holy Temple into being is that of the "Holy Tongue", the sacred Hebrew language as revealed in the Bible. But all languages are rooted in the letters of the *Aleph Beit*, and therefore have the power to ascend the ladder to Heaven. In the words of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov:

"Your tongue and speech are holy when you sanctify them. When people speak to God in their own language it is also called the 'Holy Tongue'. Sanctify your tongue with words of holiness and guard against all forms of evil talk" (*Likutey Moharan I*, 19).

Only through the power of prayer will the House of Prayer for all the nations descend from heaven to be eternally established on earth. The more we focus our prayers and thoughts on the Temple, the nearer we bring the Temple dream.

In the words of the *Midrash*:

"Ezekiel said to the Holy One blessed-be-He: 'Master of the World: We are now in exile, and You tell me to go and inform the Jewish People about the plan of the Temple? "Write it before their eyes, and they will guard all its forms and all its laws and do them." How can they "do them"? Leave them until they go out of exile, and then I will go and tell them.' The Holy One blessed-be-He said to Ezekiel: 'Just because My children are in exile, does that mean the building of My House should be halted? Studying the plan of the Temple in the Torah is as great as actually building it. Go and tell them to make it their business to study the form of the Temple as explained in the Torah. As their reward for this study, I will give them credit as if they are actually building the Temple'" (*Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 14*).

Guide to the Layout of the Third Temple

The site of the Temple is in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount. From far away, visitors' eyes would immediately be drawn to the main Temple building, "The House", a most imposing stone structure positioned on the highest point of the mountain, somewhat nearer to the west and north than to the other sides of the mountain.

A visitor to the Temple would first enter the walled Mount through one of its five entrances and then pass through the *Soreg*, a lattice partition encircling the mount inside the wall, followed by the *Cheil*, which according to many opinions is a wall. The visitor would then proceed towards one of the three gates of the Outer Courtyard, an enormous walled square encompassing both the main Temple building and the Inner Courtyard. The latter stands in the very center of the Outer Courtyard in front of the Temple building and gives access to it.

Thus far we have briefly traced the route of a visitor coming from outside the Temple Mount into the Temple. This is the route followed by *Ramchal* in his Five Chapters (pp. 131-141), in which he explains the physical form of the Third Temple. But from now on in the present Guide, the discussion of the Temple building and courtyards will proceed from the center outwards. This is the route taken by *Ramchal* in the main part of *Mishkney Elyon*, where he discusses the meaning of the Temple buildings and services. Full details and measurements of all the buildings and courtyards mentioned here are given in the Five Chapters.

The Temple Building

The main Temple building rises to a height of 100 cubits, which is approximately 50 meters or 164 feet. (A cubit is the distance from an average man's elbow to the end of his middle finger, estimated at between 48-57.6 cm / 19-22.6 inches.) The Great Gate of the Sanctuary faces due east and the front of the building is 100 cubits wide. The building is somewhat narrower at the back, giving it a form reminiscent of a crouching lion.

The building consists of three main parts. To the west is the innermost and holiest of all: the Holy of Holies (*Kodesh Kodoshim* or *Dvir*), which is 20 cubits (10 m/33 ft) square. In it is the Foundation Stone (*Even Shetiyah*) upon which stands the Ark of the Covenant. No-one may enter the Holy of Holies except the High Priest once each year on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). The second main part of

the building is the Sanctuary (*Heicha*) which stands to the east of the Holy of Holies and has the same width but is twice as long from west to east. The Sanctuary contains the Candelabrum, lit morning and evening, the Golden Altar, on which incense is burned morning and evening, and the Show Bread Table, on which twelve loaves stand from Shabbat to Shabbat. The main entrance to the Sanctuary is through its Great Gate, which stands in the east wall flanked by smaller gates on either side. Outside the Great Gate is the third main part of the Temple building: the Vestibule (*Ulam*), a great portico flanked by two mighty Pillars.

The Vestibule, its Pillars and twelve imposing steps leading up to the building would give it a most striking front facade. The windows in the walls of the Temple and its chambers and courtyards are all narrow on the inside, widening on the outside, because the Temple does not require light from outside since it radiates light from within.

A system of cells built around the north, south and west walls of the Sanctuary and Holy of Holies adds significantly to the length and breadth of the building, as do two areas in front on either side of the Vestibule: these are known as "The Place of the Knives".

The Inner Courtyard

Access to the main Temple building is from the Inner Courtyard (*Azarah*), which stands in front of the Sanctuary to its east. As already stated, access to the Inner Courtyard is from the Outer Courtyard (see below), which encompasses both the Inner Courtyard and the Temple building. The Inner Courtyard is exactly in the center of the Outer Courtyard, with the Temple to its west.

Thus the Inner Courtyard is bounded by the Temple on its west side and by walls on its north, east and south sides. Each of the latter three walls has a gate in the center. The Inner Courtyard is one hundred cubits square and open to the sky. It is here that many of the main Temple services actually take place.

Visitors to the Inner Courtyard would be struck not only by the Temple building soaring upwards at the western end of the Inner Courtyard but also by the massive white-painted stone sacrificial Altar standing before the Temple in the very center of the Courtyard. The Altar is thus the center point of both the Inner and Outer Courtyards. At its base the Altar is thirty-two cubits (16 m/52 ft) square and rises to a height of ten cubits (5 m/16 ft). Access to the Altar is from the south up a thirty-two cubit long ramp with two side-ramps.

The Inner Courtyard contains designated areas of varying degrees of holiness. These include the Court of the Israelites and that of the Priests, which is one cubit higher, forming a raised level where the choir of Levites sings during the sacrificial services. Also in the Court of the Priests is the platform (*Duchan*) on which the priests stand to bless the people. Other areas and chambers in the Inner Courtyard are used for slaughtering and preparing the sacrifices and for storing the priestly clothes and musical instruments.

Access to the Inner Courtyard is through three identical massive gates fifty cubits (25 m/82 ft) in height and ten cubits (5 m/16 ft) wide standing in its east, north and south walls. Seen from the Outer Courtyard, these gates would be of particular note because of their striking Vestibules and Pillars, which stand outside the gates flanked by rows of three chambers on either side.

The Outer Courtyard

The Outer Courtyard corresponds to the Women's Courtyard (*Ezrat Nashim*) in the First and Second Temples. However it differs in that it encompasses both the Temple building and the Inner Courtyard, whereas in the earlier Temples the entire Women's Courtyard was situated to the east of the Inner Courtyard (*Azarah*). The Outer Courtyard of the Third Temple has gates on its east, north and south sides but not on the west.

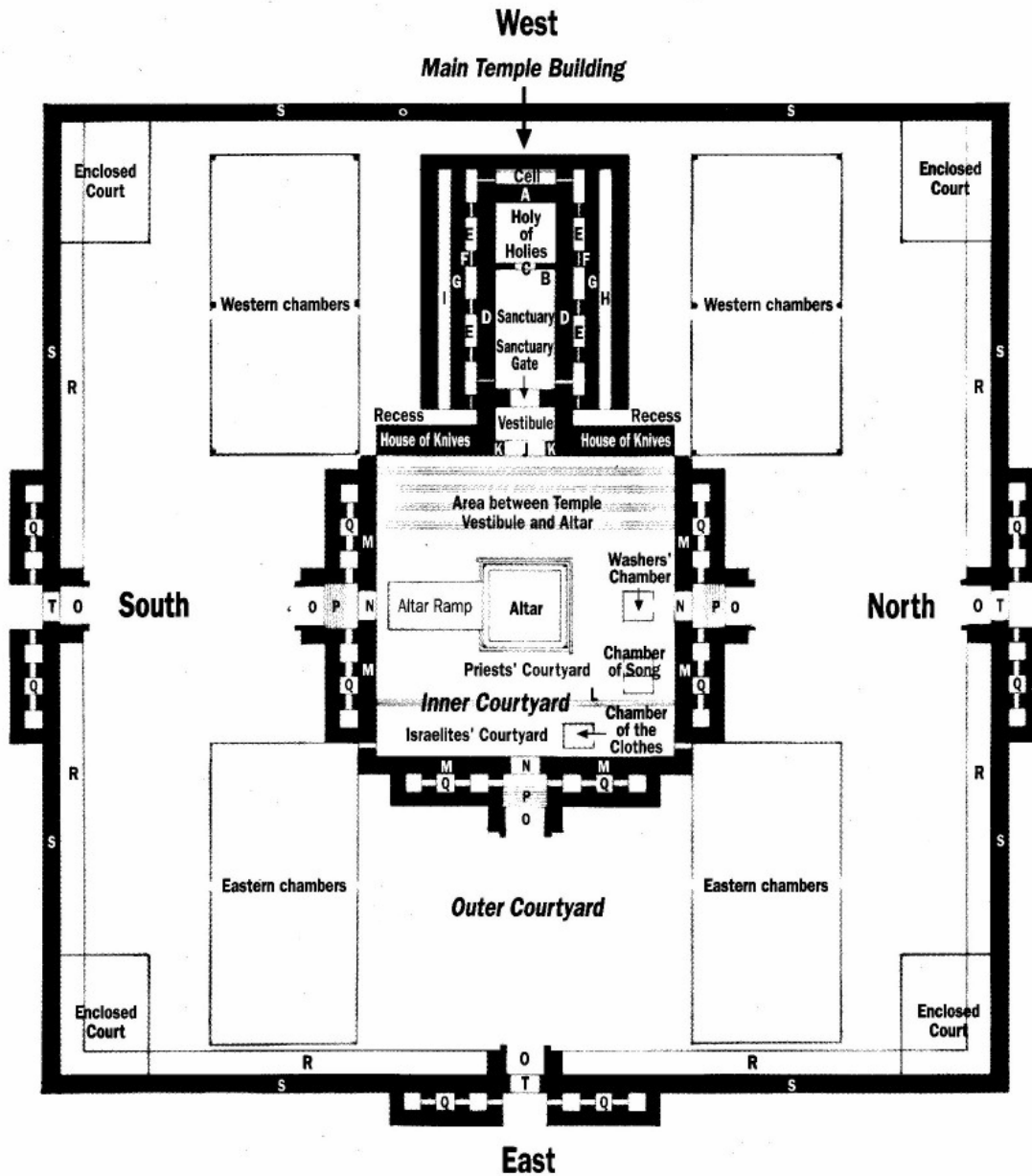
In the Outer Courtyard stand four rectangular three-storied buildings or "chambers" each of which is as long as the Temple building and half as wide. Two stand in the western section of the Outer Courtyard on either side of the Temple building, while the other two extend from the south and north-east corners of the Inner Courtyard into the eastern section of the Outer Courtyard. The upper floors of these buildings are supported on massive pillars. These buildings, which are designated for the eating of sacrificial portions, would be a most imposing sight, as would be the elevated paved gallery running along the north, east and south walls of the Outer Courtyard on the inside. There are thirty chambers on this gallery.

In the four corners of the Outer Courtyard stand four chambers reminiscent of the chambers of the Nazirites, Wood, Lepers and Oils in the four corners of the Women's Courtyard in the First and Second Temples. The gates of the Outer Courtyard have Vestibules, Pillars and chambers like those of the Inner Courtyard. However the Vestibules of the gates of the Outer Courtyard stand on the *inside* of the Outer Courtyard, while those of the Inner Courtyard stand *outside* their respective gates, and are actually positioned in the Outer Courtyard.

Rest of the Temple Mount

Ramchal says little about the rest of the Temple Mount. However he does state in the first paragraph of the Five Chapters that wherever the distance between the Temple and the side of the Mountain is greater (such as on the south side), that area is more in use. The buildings and courtyards of which he speaks in *Mishkney Elyon* are those involved in the actual Temple services. Without doubt the Temple Mount also provides all the facilities needed to run and maintain the Temple and to cater for the great streams of visitors coming to worship there, especially at the times of the festivals.

Plan of the Third Temple



Key:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| A: Back wall of Holy of Holies | K: Vestibule Wall |
| B: Wall of Holy of Holies | L: Platform and Duchan |
| C: Entrance to Holy of Holie | M: Inner Courtyard Wall |
| D: Sanctuary wall | N: Inner Courtyard Gate |
| E: Cells at the sides of the Sanctuary | O: Vestibule of the Gate |
| F: Cell wall | P: Eight steps |
| G: Exterior wall of cells | Q: Cells by the gate |
| H: Winding staircase | R: Elevated paved gallery |
| I: Rainwater spout | S: Wall of the Outer Courtyard |
| J: Vestibule Entrance | T: Gate of the Outer Courtyard |

Mishkney Elyon

"Dwellings of the Supreme"

By Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto

"There is a river whose streams bring joy to the city of God, the holy place of the *dwellings of the Supreme (Mishkney Elyon)*" (Psalms 46:5).

"Rabbi Yochanan said: The Holy One blessed-be-He declared: 'I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I enter the earthly Jerusalem.' Is there then a heavenly Jerusalem? Yes, as it is written (Psalms 122:3): 'Jerusalem will be built like the city that is joined to it together'" (*Taanit* 5a).

Introduction

My purpose in this work is to discuss the subject of the Heavenly Temple mentioned by our sages, to explain its form and structure in all their various details, and to show how the structure and dimensions of the earthly Temple are in direct alignment with those of the Heavenly Temple.

And you, dear, pleasant reader: Apply yourself with all your mental powers. Pay full attention, and I will teach you wondrous wisdom the like of which you have never heard. Then you will know how the King of the kings of kings watches over His creatures and conducts His universe in an ordered manner. He instituted the order of the universe so as to set it on a firm foundation and bring it to perfection in truth and faith.

These deep matters are way beyond the grasp of the human mind. No man has ever succeeded in fathoming the wisdom of his Creator and traveling the path of truth and justice in order to grasp and understand the works of God. But now I will lay these matters before you in a single, all-inclusive introductory work that will enable you to understand the way the world is run and how God gives each day's portion of food and sustenance to all His creatures, each in its proper time.

The Foundation Stone

When the Creator willed the creation of this world, He included everything in ten great lights [the ten *Sefirot*] from which all the different creatures emerged like branches extending from the trunk of the tree. There is nothing in the whole of existence that does not have its place in the supreme Chariot.

The last of these ten lights [*Malchut*] is called *Shechinah* [the Indwelling Presence]. It is here that all existing beings are rooted. Understand this well. For besides the roots that all existing beings have in the other higher lights, they also all have a root in the *Shechinah*, which is therefore called "the mother of children". Everything comes forth from her hands, and for this reason all things are rooted in her.

Understand that there is a special place known to her where all these roots come together. [This is the Heavenly Temple.] In that place is the root of all things, both those that depend on her and those that depend on the other higher lights. In that place are the roots of the earth and all it contains, the heavens, the heavens of the heavens and all their hosts without exception.

In the middle of the place where all these roots come together, there is a single "stone". [This is in the Holy of Holies of the Heavenly Temple.] This stone is most precious. It possesses every kind of beauty and charm. It is called the Foundation Stone (*Even Shetiyah*). There is a corresponding stone in this world – the lower world – in the place of the Holy of Holies, as will be explained later.

Stretching out in all directions from this stone are channels and pathways leading to all things. At their start these channels are great highways governing and regulating all the different orders and species of created beings, all of which have a deep inner knowledge of their root paths. From here they all receive their share of the constant sustenance given to them by the King.

Branching off from these highways are countless smaller pathways containing the individual roots of every single being in creation from the biggest to the smallest. Each one has its own unique pathway.

All these channels and pathways start in the place I mentioned at the outset. From the point where they all join together in the stone in the middle of this place, the Creator watches over them and scans them all with a single glance. This is the secret of the verse: "He forms their hearts *together*, He understands all their works" (Psalms 33:15). For this stone stands at the heart of the universe, and there all things are gathered in and joined together and scanned in a single glance by the King.

The Land of Israel

In this place that I mentioned there is a single great path surrounding the stone. This path is like a vast land containing great fortified cities the like of whose beauty and splendor has never been seen. This

entire path emerged from the light emanating in full beauty and splendor from the very essence of the luminary of which I am speaking [*Shechinah*]. For this reason this place is very holy. The earth there is holy earth. And from it emanated in the world below the land that God watches with special care, the Land of Israel.

The rest of the world

Around this land are numerous other paths extending from one end of the world to the other, some inclining to the right (*Chesed*, Kindness) and others to the left (*Din*, Judgment). These roads were designed to produce many different lands. These are all the countries of the world. They are all under the supervision of great and powerful ministers [the *Sarim*, Angels of the seventy nations]. For this reason all the other countries in the world should also have been pure like the Land of Israel, and this also applies to the ministers appointed over them.

However, when humanity became corrupt, everything was thrown into turmoil and the world was spoiled. Even the ministers were drawn into impurity. This is why all the other countries became impure. Impurity took hold on every level, dividing these lands up among the impure ministers, and for this reason they remained impure.

However, this was not so when they stood in their proper order in the beginning. Nor will it be so when they are set right in the future. Eventually the other countries will also be pure, though not with the same degree of holiness as in the good land that God has given eternally to His people Israel.

Understand this well. For I am revealing to you great and awesome secrets that are rooted in the deepest wisdom. Use your intelligence and be resolute in the pursuit of wisdom and understanding in order to know something of the greatness of our God, at least a drop in the ocean. For one who reaches this level of understanding will have attained a good measure of what lies within the power of the human mind to grasp of God's greatness and mystery. And now, listen carefully and hear, and I will tell you an awesome, wondrous secret.

Building the House by connecting the lights

When the last of the ten lights [*Shechinah*] was complete with all its lights shining and everything fixed and functioning properly, there appeared at the end a certain place that is most awesome [the Holy

of Holies of the Heavenly Temple]. This is the place of great desire, the place of love and peace. This place is hidden and secret. Only the King may come there. No one may enter except for Him. This place contains all the beauty of this light and all its radiance and perfection. In it are found all pleasantness and delight. When the King enters, who can express His great beauty and goodness? None can compare to Him in all His glory and holiness. Being so hidden, the light is all the greater and more intense.

It was from this holy place that the other place of which I was speaking previously [i.e. the rest of the Heavenly Temple] emanated, and the Foundation Stone (*Even Shetiyah*) has its firm place within it.

Therefore understand: This hidden and concealed place contains all the beauty of this light [i.e. of *Malchut*], while the second place contains all the sources and roots of all created beings. The first place is the Holy of Holies, where the Ark and the Testimony are situated, and where the Foundation Stone stands in all its power. The second place is the rest of the Temple structure, which emerged from this stone as I will explain later.

See now: When the light called *Malchut* (royal power) joined with the *Melech* (King), the resulting state of blissful tranquility (*Menuchah*) gave rise to this House in all its details with all its various courtyards and chambers, interior and exterior. All the different dimensions of the Temple correspond to the related lights, whether few or many.

For in this House are the great highways that stretch out to all the different orders and species of created beings, as mentioned earlier. These highways have glorious names full of strength and power. It is from these highways that the pathways I mentioned branch out. Each pathway has its own special name. Everything is arranged with the greatest wisdom. It is from here that all things receive their power. It is to these names that they attach themselves when they ascend from the lower realm to the upper. When they reach these highways they take cover under the great names I mentioned, so that nothing can be seen of the individual pathways. It is only when they emerge, each one in its own place, that they take on their own particular names. For this reason in the House itself only the highways have names but not the pathways. Understand this well.

Since the House emerges with such blissful tranquility, it is called *Menuchah*. Once this House was built, it was never again concealed. This holy House was created before the universe. For it is from this House that all created beings receive their power and sustenance. When the flow of blessing and sustenance reaches the House from the King, all its courtyards and chambers are seen to be full of power and strength to give to all who draw near, each according to his level.

For this reason the flow of blessing and sustenance to this House has never ever ceased. If it were to be interrupted for even a moment, all created beings would immediately cease to exist. The King never turns His eyes away from His palace. If you counter that it was only of the upper levels [*Abba* and *Imma*] that they said "they never separate" but not of the lower levels [*Zeir Anpin* and *Nukva*], this is not a valid objection. You have not plumbed the depths of wisdom and you have not found its roots.

You must understand that pairing and union (*Zivug*) on the one hand and connection (*Chibur*) on the other are two distinct phenomena. We speak of connection (*Chibur*) when two lights shine towards each other from their respective places without drawing closer to one another. For this reason the further the light is from its source, the weaker it becomes. The sages called this "separation" (*Pirud*), although there is no actual separation between the lights, God forbid. It is just that when they are not close to each other it is called "separation". This is the idea of "uprooting the plants".

This flaw is only possible in the lower realms and cannot reach the upper plane. Thus the two lights of *Yud* and *Heh* (the first two letters of the Tetragrammaton) are always perfectly connected, with the cusp of the *Yud* above them. All three [the cusp of the *Yud*, alluding to *Keter*, the Crown, the *Yud* itself, alluding to *Chochmah*, Wisdom, and the *Heh*, alluding to *Binah*, Understanding] are bound together with a strong, firm bond. But in the lower realms we do find separation as a result of men's sins. The *Yud* separates from the *Heh*, the *Heh* from the *Vav*, and the *Vav* from the [second] *Heh*.

On the other hand, pairing and union (*Zivug*) occurs when the lights draw close to each other. When they join together in this way, who can express the great beauty of their holiness and the power of their radiance? Like a raging fire they flash passionately to each other and become tightly bound together in great unity. The resulting power and delight bring joy to all the lights, one after the other, right up to the perfect, unified source, the Infinite One [*Eyn Sof*] blessed-be-He. And because of this great joy, a flow of abundant blessings comes forth from Him and descends to every level.

This pairing and union [*Zivug*] is absent in the lower realms. For this reason the sages said: "The Holy One blessed-be-He, said: I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I enter the earthly Jerusalem" (*Taanit* 5a). For until the earthly Jerusalem is firmly established as the praise of all the earth, the King will not fully enter the heavenly Jerusalem. But as the repair of the lights brings them to greater and greater perfection, their power will spread with great force and the Holy Temple will be built in the lower world. But in the absence of this state of repair as a result of sin, the earthly House is destroyed.

Nevertheless, the Heavenly Temple never ceased to exist. If it did, the entire universe would be destroyed in a moment, as I said earlier. It is just that its original brilliance has grown dim and it lacks the intense joy it radiated when it was the glorious residence and resting place of the King. But when the sinners are removed from the earth, things will return to the way they were at first; the light will be brighter and the flow of blessing will pour forth in abundance. For this reason, the Temple will indeed be rebuilt in the lower world and its glory will be greater than that of the first two Temples, as I will discuss more fully later on.

The different areas of the Temple correspond to the different orders of existing beings

I will now begin to explain the design of the Temple in detail, area by area, corner by corner. [First, a number of general principles governing the overall design.] The entire design of the Temple is based on a great secret that stands at the very summit of the universe. I have already told you how this House emerged from the intensity of blissful tranquility that came about when the two great lights [*Tiferet* and *Malchut*] were joined as one. It was then that there appeared in the lower light [*Malchut*] the Sanctuary [*Heicha*] and its chambers and the other glorious buildings from which all the King's servants and officers receive their portions, each in his proper place with no disorder and no exceptions.

The Temple consists of three main areas after the emergence of the channels and highways extending from the great stone that I mentioned at the beginning. These three areas are the places of the three orders of created beings that exist in the world. The first order includes all the "external" creations, the creatures of this world, from the largest to the smallest without exception. The second consists of all the angels at their appointed posts ready to carry out the service of the King. The third consists of the souls of the Children of Israel, the holy seed, a unique people on earth.

The corresponding places in the Temple are: (1) the main Sanctuary building (*Heicha*) together with the Holy of Holies (*Dvir*) and Vestibule (*Ulam*): this is the innermost part of the Temple [the place of the souls]; (2) The Temple Courtyards, i.e. the Upper [or Inner] Courtyard and the Lower [or Outer] Courtyard [the place of the angels]; (3) the rest of the Temple Mount [the place of the creatures of this world].

You must understand that the angels require two kinds of sustenance, one for their own subsistence and a second to hand on to the creatures over which they are appointed. For if they did not receive, what would they have to give? If you are familiar with the ways of wisdom you will see that even though I have divided these areas into three, they are actually four: (1) The main Temple building (*Heichal*); (2) the Upper [Inner] Courtyard; (3) the Lower [Outer] Courtyard; (4) the Temple Mount.

These are the places of the inhabitants of the four worlds, *Atzilut* [Emanation], *Beriyah* [Creation], *Yetzirah* [Formation] and *Asiyah* [Action]. [The Temple building, place of the souls, corresponds to *Atzilut*; the Inner Courtyard, place of the captains of the angels, corresponds to *Beriyah*; the Outer Courtyard, place of the angelic hosts, corresponds to *Yetzirah*, while the rest of Temple Mount corresponds to *Asiyah*.] In addition, the Temple building (*Heichal*) is divided into two. For within the *Heichal* proper is the Holy of Holies (*Dvir*) corresponding to the cusp of the *Yud*, which is always connected to the *Yud* and never moves from it.

These places have the greatest, choicest names. They are general names. In the face of these names, all the other powerful, awesome names are hidden away as if they never existed. Because of the great holiness of these names, their power is limitless. All existence is bound to them from beginning to end. These are the four "expansions" [*Miluim*] of the Tetragrammaton known to the sages: the expansion of 72 [in which the four "simple" letters of the Name are spelled out in full and where possible "filled" with *Yud*'s: יוד הי ויו הי]; that of 63 [where the *Vav* is "filled" with an *Aleph*: יוד הי ואו הי]; that of 45 [where the letters are "filled" with *Aleph*'s: יוד הא ואו הא]; and that of 52 [where the *Heh*'s are "filled" with *Heh*'s: יוד הה וו הה]. This is why I said in the Introduction that in these places no other name is seen besides these four. All the other names emerge from these four names and have dominion in their own particular places, but they cannot hold sway in the place where their roots are so powerful.

Why the dimensions of the Third Temple differ from those of the First and Second: two roots of creation

Now I will explain to you why the future Temple will be different from the first and second. This is no empty matter. Pay careful attention and make every effort to follow. There are certain important points that you must understand first.

It is written: "In the beginning [*Bereishit*] God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The sages commented that the letter *Beit* in the word *Bereishit* also has the connotation of "two", this being the numerical value of the letter *Beit*. The word *Bereishit* thus indicates *two* beginnings. You must grasp this great fundamental in order to understand things clearly and know the meaning of the idea of the rectification (*Tikun*) of the world.

When the Creator blessed-be-He decided to create this world, He set the lights in their proper places and the guards at their posts, arranging all the different orders of creation in His Wisdom. This Wisdom (*Chochmah*) was exalted above all His other works, and upon this Wisdom everything depends. This Wisdom is signified by the *Yud* of His glorious, awesome Name.

But above Wisdom is found another beginning (*Keter*, the Crown) that is wholly concealed: "Deep, deep, who can find it?" (Ecclesiastes 7:24). This is what gives Wisdom its power and strength. Because of its intense holiness, this higher beginning is totally hidden within Wisdom and completely invisible from outside. When all the ministers and officers who receive from the King see that they all receive from Wisdom, they say, "Surely this is the beginning (*Reishit*) of everything, this is the source that never ceases." For this reason Wisdom is called "the beginning".

But included within Wisdom is this other, higher "beginning" [*Keter*]. There is no separation between the two. Everything brought about by Wisdom derives from this higher beginning, and it is from here that Wisdom receives its orders. There is nothing in the world that Wisdom brings about that does not derive from this other beginning, signified by the cusp of the *Yud*. You will find that the cusp is never separated from the *Yud* nor the *Yud* from the cusp. Thus all things have a beginning, and, in addition, there is the beginning of the beginning. This is the concept of the two beginnings (*Be-reishit*) of which I spoke above.

Why did scripture use an expression that bears two meanings? The reason is that since the day the world was created until the present time the world has not attained perfection. Everything depends on man's deeds. Had man not sinned, the universe would have come to perfection. Because of his sin, it was not perfected. So far the creation has only come to the level of rectification corresponding to Wisdom. But there is a far greater, higher level that is still to be attained. For when the hidden beginning (*Keter*) is revealed in all its power and glory, all the lights will come to a far greater, higher level, after which there will be no more decline. The lights have not yet attained this level, but in time to come they will indeed attain it. And then abundant good will come into the world. Peace and tranquility

will reign everywhere, and sadness and sighing will be banished. Of those days it is said: "On that day *YHVH* will be one and His Name one".

If I were to expand on this matter, it would lead into very extensive discussions that would take me way beyond the bounds of my subject. It is humanly impossible to grasp every single detail to the very end. Accordingly I will not stray far from the path. I will simply set before you a number of introductory explanations. Examine them carefully and you will gain an understanding of hidden secrets that are sealed up and reserved for the remnants whom God calls, secrets that serve as the garb of the Ancient One (cf. Isaiah 23:18 as explained in *Pesachim* 118a).

The First Temple: *Chochmah*

What you must know is that until now all the lights and all the levels have been based only on Wisdom (*Chochmah*), whereas in the future the concealed beginning [*Keter*] will be revealed and all things will ascend to the greatest, most precious levels.

Know too that the sin of Adam spoiled everything and caused all perfection to become concealed, with the result that the world was not even able to return to its previous state [i.e. the level of Wisdom] except in the days of Solomon, when the Temple was first built. Thus it is written: "And God gave *wisdom* to Solomon" (1 Kings 5:26). For then Wisdom was revealed in all its beauty and radiant glory, enabling all the lights to shine with great strength and joy. In those days, on every level in all the worlds there was only holy power and delight the like of which had never been seen. Even so, because everything was based only on Wisdom and did not reach the ultimate goal [of *Keter*], this peace and tranquility came to an end and the Temple was destroyed.

The Future Temple: *Keter*

But in time to come, when the hidden beginning I mentioned [*Keter*] is revealed, the happiness will be far, far greater, and it will never cease. All things emanate from their source. Likewise, all the rules governing the lights and their functioning, whether in motion or at rest, follow their source. Any change in the source from which the lights receive affects the whole world. For this reason, in time to come the world will undergo many changes, and the Holy Temple will certainly be different since this is the place from which life is channeled to all the creatures in all the worlds.

The First Temple, then, corresponds to *Chochmah*, the Wisdom that was given to Solomon and with which he built the Temple, as I have explained, while the future Temple corresponds to the hidden beginning [*Keter*] that has yet to be revealed.

Nevertheless, there is certainly nothing new under the sun. All the changes and developments that have taken place and continue to take place every single day for the six thousand years of creation were decreed at the very outset. Even so, in time to come, when the boundaries of *Chochmah* are surpassed, the world will enter a new state of joy. This is a great fundamental, though I will not discuss it at length now. Let me just say briefly that initially God made all things the way they are now on the basis of *Chochmah* alone, yet they contain within them the power to be ordered according to the supreme beginning [*Keter*]. And when this beginning is revealed, everything will be drawn after it through the original power already planted within them at the outset. The entire creation will then be renewed as if it was born at that moment. That is why Isaiah spoke of: "The new heavens and the new earth" (Isaiah 66:22).

The Third Temple was built above at the time of the destruction of the First Temple

And now I will reveal a very great secret, so apply your intelligence resolutely in order to descend to the depths of the matter. Know that this future Temple is the one that Ezekiel the Prophet saw immediately after the destruction of the First Temple. You have already heard that the Temple above never ceased to exist even though the Temple below was destroyed. For the Temple in this world could only be built through the great power of the lights [the *Sefirot*], which radiated from level to level until they reached this world, producing the Temple. In the absence of this power the Temple could not remain in this world. But this did not mean that the Heavenly Temple had to be destroyed. It simply became darkened and did not shine as at first.

However, those familiar with the paths of wisdom know a great secret: had those who lived when Solomon built the First Temple not fallen into sin but held firm to the path of purity, they would have ascended from level to level until everything was perfected. The world would then simply have changed directly from one state to another, and what was to have been revealed would have been revealed.

But the influence of evil and the proliferation of sinners caused the destruction of the First Temple that was built according to the initial design. When this happened, the Heavenly Temple no longer stood in its original form. In a single moment it disappeared and was rebuilt in a different form and structure: that of the future Temple. One building disappeared and the other appeared without so much as a hairsbreadth between them. However the new structure was not revealed in the lower world. Only in the future will it be revealed. But in the upper world, from that day on, so it was and so it is.

That is why Ezekiel saw it, for it was already built and standing. Had the Jewish People only been worthy, the redemption in the time of Ezra should have been like the redemption from Egypt, and their entry into the land should have been like Joshua's entry. Then they would have built the Temple according to the plan seen by Ezekiel, and the two Temples, above and below, would have been perfectly aligned.

Differences between the presence of the *Shechinah* in the First and Second Temples

Since the people failed to improve their ways, the redemption in the time of Ezra was a quiet affair and they did not have the strength to build the Temple according to the plan of the future Temple. On the instructions of the prophets among them they built it partly like the First Temple and partly like the future Temple which already existed above. But the time was not ripe for them to build it entirely like the future Temple.

Thus in the time of Solomon the two Temples – in this world and the higher world – were in perfect alignment, and accordingly the *Shechinah* found a resting-place and dwelled in the earthly Temple. But the Second Temple was not similar to the Heavenly Temple and the *Shechinah* did not dwell in it.

Presence of the *Shechinah* in the future Temple

However, in time to come, not only will the two Temples be similar, but the Upper House will extend until it reaches the lower world. This is the meaning of the saying of our Rabbis that the Third Temple will be the work of the hands of God. For the Heavenly Temple will not be uprooted from its place. Rather, it will extend until it reaches the lower world, and then around it will be built a physical structure as

fitting in this material world, and the two structures will be joined and become one and will never again separate. God's glory will be fully revealed there, as it is written: "And the glory of God will be revealed, and all flesh will see" (Isaiah 40:5). Then there will be complete peace and happiness forever.

There is an allusion to this secret in the verse: "... the Sanctuary, *ADNY*, that Your hands *established* [*Konenu* כִּנְנוּ]" (Exodus 15:17). The beauty of the limbs and ornaments of the *Shechinah* is revealed according to the way she receives. When the light of this beginning will shine, the glory of Her crown [*Keter*] will be greatly exalted. Thus the Sanctuary will be built on the foundation of *Keter*, and the numerical value of the letters of the word *KoNeNU*, כִּנְנוּ (126) is equivalent to that of א"ד א"י א"ד א"י א"ד א"י which shines in this Crown. All these matters are very deep and far more rooted in wisdom than might appear.

Measuring the House with a measuring rod and linen Cord

"... And behold, there was a man whose appearance was like brass with a linen cord in his hand and a measuring rod. And the man said to me: 'Son of man, see with your eyes and hear with your ears and set your heart on all that I will show you...'" (Ezekiel 40:3-4).

Note that all the dimensions of this House were measured with a "measuring rod" [*Kney Hamidah*, קְנֵה הַמֵּדָה] (see Ezekiel 40:3). This great secret relates to my discussion about how this building is constructed in accordance with the lights of *Keter*. No matter where the lights spread out, every single one of them has within it the appropriate measure as it emerges from the source. It is this measure that keeps each individual light within its proper boundaries. Therefore, as this House is built in its proper form, the correct measure of every single part is fixed, and everything stands in the proper order.

Let me explain this. All the various chambers, courtyards and other places are built by one "builder": this is the ninth light [*Yesod*, Foundation], called by the sages "the life of the worlds", since it is the source of life for all. This light is called "a rod", and now indeed it is the "measuring rod", since it includes the quality of strict measure in order to set limits to the various buildings and structures that emerge from it.

It is really the "linen cord" [פְּתִיל] that signifies the quality of strict measure, for linen is rooted in *Gevurah*, strength, strict judgment and limitation. The "cord" consists of ten very powerful lights drawn from *Gevurah* to set limits to all things and keep each creature within its

proper boundaries. These ten lights are ten names of *YHVH* all expanded with *Heh*'s [the "expansion" of 52] as known to the sages. [52 x 10 = 520, numerical value of the letters of פתיל.] These are the names of *Gevurah* which give measure and limits to all. It is from this cord that the light I mentioned [i.e. *Yesod*, the "rod"] receives its quality of strict measure. It is then called the "measuring rod", and all its buildings therefore emerge from it with their proper measurements.

Know that six hundred and twenty great and powerful lights emerge from the first light, the hidden beginning [*Keter*] that I mentioned earlier. They are rooted in two great names filled with power and strength: *EI EI* [א"ל א"ל]. For as these two names display their great power and glory, each one spreads into three hundred and ten worlds. [The numerical value of א"ל is 31; 31 x 10 = 310.] Twice three hundred and ten is six hundred and twenty, the numerical value of *KeTeR*, the Crown. For these two names are set in a most exalted, awesome crown. Three hundred and ten of these lights remained in their place, while the other three hundred and ten were given from *Keter* to *Chochmah* and *Binah*. They were divided between them so that each received one hundred and fifty-five (numerical value of the word *KaNeH*, "a rod"). This is the secret of the verse, "Acquire [*kneh*] wisdom [*Chochmah*], acquire [*kneh*] understanding [*Binah*]" (Proverbs 4:5).

It is *Binah* that sets limits and measures, for she is their source. When the quality of strict measure reaches *Yesod* it takes on her name and is called "the measuring rod". See how all this results from the revelation of that "beginning", for it is the source of these two rods. The left rod [the 155 lights, or *KaNeH*, taken by *Binah*] is for measuring, as I have said. The length of the rod is six cubits. Each cubit is six handbreadths. See, therefore, how all the lights are bound together in this light, which is called "All," since all are contained within it. There are six directions [the six *ketzavot*, alluding to the six *sefirot* from *Chesed* to *Yesod*, all of which are included in *Yesod*], and when they are all connected to one another, they make thirty-six, corresponding to the length of this rod [36 handbreadths].

Until now I have spoken in general terms and set forth a comprehensive introduction to the subject. Now I will turn to specifics and with the help of Heaven I will provide a clear, detailed explanation of the form and structure of the Temple in detail. I will follow the path of the flow of sustenance and blessing [*Shefa*] as it emerges from the source and spreads forth on all sides. I begin therefore with the place from which the flow emerges, and I will tell you in which directions it travels after leaving there, and which path it takes at the beginning and which path it takes at the end.

The Temple Building

The Holy of Holies

The first place that emanated from the Foundation Stone is a place of intense light and abundant blessing. For as she [i.e. *Malchut*] goes forth from before the King, there she stands at first in all her beauty and glory. Who can describe her power and brilliance? This power is given only to Israel. A great screen separates the Sanctuary from the Holy of Holies.

And now I must ask you to apply your intelligence in order to understand the secrets of this great place. When the two great lights whose identity you already know [*Tiferet* and *Malchut*] joined together, the resulting blissful tranquility greatly strengthened the two last letters of the holy name of *YHVH* blessed-be-He, *Vav* and *Heh*. A great hall then came into being: the Holy of Holies. This hall was hidden deep inside and was not visible outside. For a curtain [*Parochet*] stands before it covering the entrance and preventing it from being seen. I will reveal more great secrets about this curtain later on.

This hall is thus for the King alone and none other. Only once each year [on *Yom Kippur*] when the High Priest in the lower world enters the Holy of Holies with the incense, is permission to enter granted to the one who is permitted to enter. This is because of God's great love for His people, who are more precious to Him than the ministering angels. This is expressed in the verse: "At that time it will be said to Jacob and Israel, 'What has God done?'" (Numbers 23:23) [i.e. as the angels are "outside", they have to ask the Jewish People what God has done].

Out of the state of utmost bliss and tranquility in this hall there radiates a most holy light called *YAHDEVNHY* [the *shiluv* of *YHVH* and *ADNY*]. Understand the secrets of this name: it starts and ends with a *Yud*, alluding to the secret: "I am the first and I am the last" (Isaiah 44:6). For all the lights are included in it in unity. For this reason these two *Yud*'s shone in all their glory and splendor and built the length and breadth of this hall according to their measure, for they spread from the beginning to the end and from the end to the beginning. Thus there are twenty here and twenty there, and the dimensions of this hall are twenty by twenty. Together they make up a closed *Mem* [=40] which is the measure of the *Mikveh* [i.e. 40 *se'ah*'s of water].

East wall of the Holy of Holies

As these lights spread out from their place of glory, the attribute of exact measure kept them within their boundaries. Through the great power of restraint [*Gevurah*] inherent in this quality of measure, a wall was built in front of them, keeping the lights within and preventing them from spreading further.

Understand the underlying principle of the walls of the various buildings: The power of each wall directly corresponds to the intensity of the light that it restricts. The nature of the wall corresponds to the light it hides and the intensity of the light corresponds to the wall. Neither possesses greater power or importance than the other. Since the entire Temple building was built from the lights of the two letters *Vav* and *Heh*, as mentioned above, the wall of the Holy of Holies also came into being through the power of these two letters. The wall is thus two cubits thick and holds within it all the lights that emerge from these two letters. Understand this well. It is this wall that separates the Holy of Holies from the main Sanctuary, to which I will now turn.

Gate of the Holy of Holies

As the great and powerful letter *Vav* asserted itself (for it was from the *Vav* that the light emerged), its force was so great that it broke through the wall and made there a gate as high as the measure of the *Vav* [=6]: six cubits. And since the *Vav* was joined with its mate [$6 + 1 = 7$], the width of the gate was seven cubits.

When I come to discuss the other Temple gates I will explain the meaning of these openings in the walls at greater length. Until this point everything was completely hidden and, as I have stated, the only opening was this gate made by the *Vav*. Were it not for the fact that this gate is open, the entire universe would be in a state of total deprivation and would therefore cease to exist. This is why this gate had to be opened first. As the flow of blessing and sustenance went out from this gate, it spread in all directions, forging a multitude of highways and pathways according to the needs of the various worlds.

The Sanctuary

As this great light emerged from this gate, it spread on all sides and made a second hall. The first hall, discussed above, is the Holy of Holies, while the second hall is the Sanctuary.

This is the place from which the souls of Israel receive their sustenance, and this is where the inner Incense Altar is located. This is the Altar where the sacrifice of the souls is offered when they bring their gift before the King. I will explain this matter further when I

discuss the sacrificial system, and I will tell you what this gift is, who offers it, who brings it before the King and how those who bring it are rewarded when the King receives it with favor. But now let me complete my discussion of the Sanctuary.

In this Sanctuary shine great and powerful lights emerging from the two letters *Vav* and *Heh* that I mentioned and from the two *Yud's*. As the *Vav* and *Heh* became more strongly connected, they emitted sixty great and powerful lights. These shone forth in the Sanctuary and divided into three groups, one to the south, one to the north and one to the east. Thus there were twenty lights on each side: ten lights from the *Vav* and ten from the *Heh*. It was the two *Yud's* that caused the light emerging from the *Vav* and *Heh* to split into ten. When the *Vav* and the *Heh* joined together and caused these lights to emerge, each emitted ten lights. The twenty lights in the north (*Gevurah*) became inseparably joined with the twenty lights in the south (*Chesed*). Thus there were forty lights on each side along the length of the Sanctuary and twenty across its breadth. The dimensions of the Sanctuary were therefore forty by twenty cubits.

Understand that when the lights on the south and north sides emerged from the gate of the Holy of Holies, they traveled eastwards. This is because it was from the eastern end that they were to spread further. For that reason we find that these forty lights spread from west to east. Immediately afterwards, the lights of the eastern side came forth. As they went to their appointed place, they spread out on both sides in order to join together the lights of the south and north sides, since this is their constant task [i.e. the task of the lights of the "east", *Tiferet*, the center column, is to mediate between those of the "south", *Chesed*, and "north", *Gevurah*].

In this way the lights spread out until they reached their appointed place, and this is why there are forty lights along the length of the Sanctuary on its south and north sides but only twenty across its breadth on the eastern side.

When the "measuring rod" formed a wall for the lights, the southern and northern walls were both forty cubits long, for when the lights joined together they became bound with a strong bond and included one another. However the eastern wall was only twenty cubits in length corresponding to the number of its lights. When I come to explain the path along which blessing and sustenance [*Shefa*] flow into the world, you will understand the function of this wall and the part it plays in the running of the world and the distribution of sustenance and blessing.

The Priestly Blessing and the dimensions of the Sanctuary and Holy of Holies

"May God bless you and protect you; may God shine His countenance to you and be gracious to you; may God turn His countenance to you and grant you peace" (Numbers 6:24-25).

Altogether the lights of the Sanctuary are sixty, corresponding to the number of letters in the Priestly Blessing (Numbers 6:24-26). For it is from the Sanctuary that blessing goes forth to Israel through the Priests, who are entrusted with the service of the Temple and the Altar, as I will discuss further, with the help of God. Adding these sixty lights to the forty in the Holy of Holies gives a total of one hundred. These lights derive from the twenty lights of the two *Yud's*.

This secret is alluded to in the verse: "Better is a handful of gratification [*Nachat*] than two fistfuls of labor in pursuit of the wind" (Ecclesiastes 4:6). This refers to the place of tranquility and spiritual delight that we have been discussing. The verse speaks of it as a "handful" [*Melo Kaf*], for the letter *Kaf* has the numerical value of 20, corresponding to the two *Yud's* which built the Holy of Holies, the innermost part of the Temple. When they spread out with great force and power, they caused the dimensions of the inner hall [the Holy of Holies] to be forty [i.e. twenty long by twenty wide] and those of the Sanctuary to be sixty [i.e. forty long and twenty wide]. Adding forty and sixty gives a total of one hundred, corresponding to the numerical value of the "filling" of *Kaf* when spelled out in full, *Kaf Feh* (*Kaf* = 20, *Feh* = 80; 20 + 80 = 100).

Note that the Priestly Blessing is made up of three blessings corresponding to the three groups of lights that spread to the north, south and east. Three *Yud's* emerged from the *Vav* and three from the *Heh*. This is why each of the three blessings begins with a *Yud* [יברכך יאר ישא]. These are the three *Yud's* of the *Vav*, which are the source of blessing, as I have indicated. When they join with the *Yud's* of the *Heh* it gives a total of one hundred in each direction. This is why each of the three blessings ends with the letter *Kaf* [= 20, corresponding in each case to the union of a *Yud* from the *Vav* with one from the *Heh*]. The third *Kaf* is that of the word אלֵיך in the third blessing [ישא], for that is the end of the main blessing. From there the blessing spreads out further, concluding with the final *Mem* of the word "peace" [שלום], alluding to the forty lights of the Holy of Holies.

Walls and gates

Now I will explain to you the meaning of the gates in the walls. Examine carefully what I say, for these are important matters involving awesome secrets. Know that all things have a root in the highest of levels. From there they extend, descending from level to level until they reach the lower world.

The root of all things is found in the Supreme Wisdom (*Mocha Stimo'e*, literally the "Hidden Brain") that stands at the peak of all levels and gives power to all the hosts of heaven and the heavens of the heavens. Not even a hint of what lies beyond that level is known except in the depths of the hearts of the wise, who know that everything comes forth from a single unified One Who has no name and cannot be described. "He made us and we are His" (Psalm 100:3): the Infinite One blessed-be-He.

This Wisdom possesses mighty "gates" from which its radiance and glory shine to all the creatures in the lower worlds that crave to delight in its great pleasantness. Two of these gates are especially great, and they are as important as all the others combined. These are two great, powerful lights that cause everything that happens in the world to come about through wisdom. These two lights are metaphorically called two "constellations" [*Mazalot*], the upper and the lower [corresponding to the eighth and thirteenth of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy revealed in Exodus 34:7]. From them flow sweet, pleasant waters to satisfy all life with favor. [*Mazal* has the connotation of "flowing".] They govern everything in the world from start to finish, and nothing comes about without their influence. Seeing this great secret, the sages said: "Everything depends on *Mazal*, even the Torah scroll in the Temple" (*Zohar* 3, 134a).

When the Supreme Wisdom prepared to spread downwards through the "upper opening" [the *Mazal* of "preserving kindness" (Exodus 34:7), eighth of the Thirteen Attributes], three great lights of limitless power and radiance shone forth. The names of these lights are: *YHVH*, *YHVH*, *YHVH*. When these lights emerged from Wisdom, they went forth and came to this entrance, and all the gates of mercy opened before them. When these gates are open, none of the lower gates can remain closed, for everything that happens in the lower worlds depends on the upper worlds, since everything from top to bottom is linked in a single chain.

When these three lights came forth from their place of glory and reached the lower opening [the *Mazal* of "and cleanses" (*ibid.*), the thirteenth attribute], they encountered three other names that are their worthy match: *EHYH*, *EHYH*, *EHYH*. Each of the names in each set joined tightly with its partner in the other, and they descended together to the lower realms. It is the three names in the first set that dominate, for they are "male", while the three names in the

second set are "female". These lights descended until they reached the deepest point of the universe. At this end stood another set of three choice names: *ADNY*, *ADNY*, *ADNY*. When the descending lights reached them, all were filled with blessing and favor, causing the names of *ADNY* to be "filled" with their letters, twelve to each one [אלף דלת נון יוד], thereby opening the gates.

Let me explain this matter to you. Each "wall" is called *ADNY*. For this reason it is written: "Behold *ADNY* standing on a *wall*..." (Amos 7:7), and Solomon said "I am a *wall*" (Song of Songs 8:10). This matter will be clear to anyone who has followed the paths of wisdom to the very roots. This quality [of *Malchut*] is a "glass that does not shine", i.e. a barrier that stands before the lights and prevents them from shining through.

This wall has gates, for without gates how would blessing and sustenance go forth to the lower realms? These gates came into being when at a certain point along the wall the light became so powerful that the place in question became filled with great mercy and turned into an opening or gateway for the light to pass through. Understand this. For when the name of *ADNY* is "filled" as mentioned above, its numerical value is 671 corresponding to that of *Tar'a* [תרעא], which is Aramaic for "gate".

For this reason, when the two sets of three names descending from the aforementioned "entrances" [the gates of *Mocha Stimo'e*, the two *Mazalot*] reached the three names of *ADNY* at the bottom "end" of the universe, the latter became "filled" with abundant light and each of them became a "gate". For this reason the Temple courtyards have three gates, as you will see. However, here [in the Sanctuary] there is only one gate with two small side entrances to the right and left.

The Sanctuary gate and its two side entrances

Let me now explain this matter to you. These three names [of *YHVH* shining from *Mocha Stimo'e*] correspond to the three columns of Kindness [*Chesed*, to the right], Judgment [*Gevurah*, to the left] and Mercy [*Tiferet*, in the center]. In this place of connection and blissful tranquility, it is the center column that holds sway. Because of its great glory and splendor, the two side columns are subordinate. For this reason there is only one gate here with two small gates on each side corresponding to the two side columns.

As the lights spreading out within the Sanctuary prepared to go forth, despite their great number, they all became included in ten great lights, for the root is also divided into ten. They stood five on one

side and five on the other, making two "shoulders" for the opening: five to the right on the side of Kindness and five to the left on the side of Judgment. The width of the opening was ten cubits in order for the lights that I mentioned to pass through the gate.

Vestibule of the Sanctuary

When these supreme lights joined together to open the gate, they displayed their power and glory right there in the place of the gate. As they spread out at the gate they caused a fine, broad, glorious structure to appear called the "Vestibule [*Ulam*] of the Gate". Why is it called the *Ulam*? Because these three lights are joined together in such unity that all three appear in each one of them, and their number ($26 \times 3 = 78$) is the same as the value of the letters of *Ulam* (*Aleph* 1 + *Vav* 6 + *Lamed* 30 + *Mem* 40 + 1 for the word as a whole = 78).

When the center column asserted itself, it displayed its power and beauty, causing the letters of the associated names of *YHVH* and *EHYH* to become "filled": יוד הי ויו הי, אלהי הי יוד הי. Altogether these two names contain twenty letters: twenty wondrous lights acting with great power. When the names joined together, these lights became perfectly interconnected: אילופ"ד ההי"י יויד"ו ההי"י. Thus all the lights were included between the two standing at each end, namely *Aleph* and *Yud*. These lights determined the dimensions of this Vestibule: twenty cubits in length [i.e. north-south, corresponding to the twenty letters in the two expansions] and eleven in width [east-west, corresponding to the sum of the *Aleph* = 1 and the *Yud* = 10; $1 + 10 = 11$].

House of the Knives

Similarly [the light from] the two side entrances spread out to the sides of the Vestibule, bringing into being two glorious places, one on either side. These are known as "The House of the Knives" [where the sacrificial slaughtering-knives are kept].

Understand that when the names of *YHVH* and *EHYH* went forth from the side gates, they were outshone by the overwhelming light from the center gate and could not display their power. For that reason their constituent letters were not "filled" but stood alone in their simple form. Moreover, the names here did not interconnect in the same way as the names coming from the center gate.

This is reflected in the dimensions of these two structures on the two sides of the Vestibule. The two names on each side consist of eight letters, eight lights, and these are accompanied by two additional

lights that came forth from the two "constellations" to strengthen them. Accordingly these two structures are ten cubits wide. At the two ends stand two lights: a *Yud* at one end and a *Heh* at the other [these being the first *Yud* of *YHVH* and the final *Heh* of *EHYH*]. This determines the length of the two structures, which is fifteen cubits [*Yud* 10 + *Heh* 5 = 15]. When I come to speak about the sacrificial service I will explain why this place is called the House of the Knives.

Thickness of the walls of the Sanctuary and Vestibule

If you consider all these different lights carefully you will see that they all derive from the *Vav* and *Heh* that joined together at the beginning. For this reason, when the measuring line determined the proper dimensions of the walls, it built the Sanctuary wall on the foundation of the *Vav* and the Vestibule wall on the foundation of the *Heh*, the latter being the exterior wall. These walls are therefore respectively six and five cubits thick, and extend according to the lights enclosed within them.

The Vestibule gateway

The intensity of the light in the Vestibule caused a gate to appear in the wall. Let me explain the form of this gate. When the twenty lights spreading from side to side across the Vestibule sought to emerge, they took a different order. The lights of *EHYH* became included in the lights of *YHVH*, making ten within ten. By the side of these ten lights appeared four very great lights which were in fact the source of those ten, making a total of fourteen lights: *יוד הוי וייה* and the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. These fourteen lights broke through the wall and made a gate of corresponding width: fourteen cubits.

The two pillars

Outside this gate appeared two glorious lights in the form of two great pillars standing by the entrance, one to the right and one to the left. Understand the meaning of these pillars. They are branches of the two supreme "constellations" [*Mazalot*] mentioned earlier. These are the source of all light and all blessing, and have a decisive influence on everything that happens in the upper and lower worlds. From them emerged the three great names of *YHVH*, *YHVH*, *YHVH* that opened the Sanctuary gate and created the Vestibule before it, showing that the branch is never separated from the root. No matter how far the light descends, it always remains connected with its source. That is why these two lights appeared here in the form of

these two pillars, a lower manifestation of the two supreme lights that are the source of the heavens and ultimately control all things.

These columns are very tall, as is known to those who understand the Tree and its branches and their source. The truth is that the distance between the place where these lights emerge and the place where they cease to shine is sixty cubits, after which their light is given over to the two great lights of *Tiferet* and *Malchut*, which determine everything that happens in the world. It is from here that everything destined to come down from the two "constellations" descends, until it reaches the bottom and makes the appropriate gates.

So far I have discussed the way the Temple was built, and I have explained the structure of the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies and the Vestibule, and the measurements of their walls and gates. Let me now tell you something about what is inside them, and you will learn many precious secrets.

The Curtain before the entrance to the Holy of Holies

Before the entrance to the Holy of Holies hangs a great curtain of exactly the same width and height as the entrance, neither more nor less. Let me explain the purpose of this curtain. It was formed by several lights which joined together here to prevent anything that should not pass through from so doing.

The two great "constellations" [*Mazalot*] bring about all things at all times, and they themselves include all thirteen of the great springs known to the wise, namely the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. No man could ever stand in the face of their great radiance and holiness. All are in fear and trembling lest they be consumed in the great fire. After them, seven great and wondrous names hold sway: these are the four main expansions of *YHVH* [$72 + 63 + 45 + 52 = 232$] belonging to the upper *Mazal*, and the three main expansions of *EHYH* [$161 + 151 + 143 = 455$] belonging to the lower *Mazal*. It is from all these lights joined together that this curtain [*Parochet*] is formed. The numerical value of the letters of *PaRoCheT* [פּרֹכֶת] is 700 corresponding to these seven names and the thirteen attributes of mercy. [*Peh* 80 + *Resh* 200 + *Chaf* 20 + *Tav* 400 = 700 = 232 + 455 + 13.]

The Ark of Testimony

Behind the curtain, inside the Holy of Holies, stands the Ark of Testimony, testifying to the inseparable hidden unity of God. The Ark

stands on the Foundation Stone for reasons that will be clear on the basis of what I explained in the Introduction.

The Candelabrum, Table and Incense Altar

In the Sanctuary are three great, precious lights, one to the right, one to the left, and one in the center serving both sides at once. Let me explain these three lights. The light on the right side spread out in all its strength and glory, appearing as a candelabrum [*Menorah*] made entirely of gold with seven great lamps extending on both sides. This light comes from the Upper *Shechinah*. For it is here [in the Sanctuary] that she reveals her power since this is the place where all the souls are rectified, as you will see later when we discuss the sacrifices. Why are her lights seven in number? Because she is on the seventh level counting from above.

Likewise, to the left there is a single light that extends along and across in the form of a table set with all manner of dainties. The Show Bread is on this table at all times. The table is two cubits long and three cubits high, making a total of five. This is the light coming forth from the Lower *Shechinah*. Since she is fifth counting down from the levels above her, her measure is five. Three of these five levels joined together, while the fourth, *Yesod*, does not separate from *Malchut*. This is why the dimensions of the table are three by two.

Between these two lights [i.e. the Candelabrum and the Table] stands a third serving both of them. This is called the Inner [or Incense] Altar, where the sacrifice of the souls of Israel is offered, as I will explain later.

Wood and gold lining on the walls

When the Sanctuary stood with all its walls in place according to their correct measurements, a lining appeared inside covering the walls from top to bottom. Over it appeared a second lining. Let me explain the secret of these linings. The walls themselves are built of stones, which come from *Malchut*. Over them hovers the glory of the King [*Melech*] which completely covers them so that they are invisible. This lining is made of wood because it comes from the Tree of Life. Covering it is a second lining, which is much more splendid than both the stones and the wood. This second lining derives from *Binah*, which hides her children under her wings. It is therefore of pure gold.

Let me now reveal a great secret: When all levels reach a state of rectification and the holy union of the lights gives rise to the most blissful tranquility, nothing is seen of *Tiferet* or *Malchut* because *Binah* constantly hovers over them, as the verse says: "Like the eagle rouses his nest" (Deuteronomy 32:11). The great glory hovering over them hides them from the eyes of all living. This is only fitting, for it says: "Go humbly before the Lord your God" (Micah 6:8). This is why the Torah forbids placing wood in the lower Temple unless it is covered with gold. This will help you to understand the ways of God and see how deep and far removed they are from human wisdom.

Cherubs and palms on the walls

Inside the Sanctuary, the most beautiful lights appear on all the walls. They all receive from one another as they spread out from amidst the radiance caused by the perfect union all around. These lights shine in the form of cherubs and palm trees. Understand the greatness and importance of these lights. There are male and female palms. Of this it is said: "The Tzaddik will flourish like the palm" (Psalms 92:13), referring to Tzaddik (*Yesod*) and his mate (*Malchut*).

The cherubs have two faces: that of a man on one side and that of a lion on the other. Know that the building of this Temple is accomplished through the power of the right side (*Chesed*) in mercy (*Tiferet*). This is the secret of the verse, "The mountain of the House of *YHVH* will be firmly established on the top of the mountains" (Isaiah 2:2). The "top of the mountains" alludes to the right side, that of the lion, of which it is said, "And the face of the lion to the *right*" (Ezekiel 1:10). This joins with *Adam*, man, corresponding to *Tiferet*, the center column. It is from the light of these two that the holy union symbolized by the palm tree derives. For this reason the faces of the cherubs are turned towards the palm tree, for the lion is on one side, the face of the man on the other, and the palm tree stands between the two.

The narrow windows

These lights illuminated the entire Sanctuary, filling it with blessing and favor. The palms and cherubs increased the strength of the welling stream of blessing concentrated in the Sanctuary. Even as it goes forth from the presence of its masters, it does not weaken. As the intense light within the Sanctuary burst outwards, not only did it open the gate but also breached numerous apertures in the walls.

Even though these apertures are very narrow on the inside, the light shining out from them spreads forth on all sides. For this reason these apertures in the walls are called "closed windows", because

they are narrow on the inside and wide outside. Such apertures are found in all the walls of the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies and the Vestibules. Numerous lights shine forth from these windows at all times in addition to the flow of blessing that goes forth from the gates. For the flow of blessing goes out only at its appointed times, whereas the lights from these windows never cease to shine, giving strength and power to the lower worlds.

Moreover even those who ascend to receive from the gates first go up to the windows. They look inside through the window. Seeing the intensity of light and joy inside, they are filled with rejoicing and yearn to delight in that hidden goodness. Their yearning and desire bring them running to the gate exulting and singing praises. There they stand until their portion is given to them, each according to his share. By first gazing in through the windows their souls gain sufficient strength to withstand the intensity of the flow of blessing that comes forth from the gate.

"Pillar facing pillar" (Ezekiel 42:3)

When the walls were built, three pillars appeared within their structure. They were visible on both sides since they were embedded in the thickness of the wall. They stand "pillar facing pillar" (Ezekiel 42:3) corresponding to the three columns [of the *Sefirot*: kindness, judgment and mercy] in order to strengthen the mighty building and keep it stable.

Doors of the Sanctuary

At the gate of the Sanctuary there are square door-posts with two doors to the right and two to the left. The secret of these doors is rooted in the name *ADNY*, two of whose four letters – the *Aleph* and the *Yud* – stand to the right, and two – the *Dalet* and the *Nun* – to the left. When these doors are closed no-one leaves or enters. Only when they are opened is it possible to enter or leave. This is the "Holy Way" by which all visitors to the House enter and leave.

There is another secret here for the wise. At this gate stand twenty-two lights to the right and twenty-two to the left. These are the twenty-two letters of the Torah. Joined together in separate groups to the right and the left, they appear in the form of two facing doors. On each side stand two groups of six letters joined together by a third group of ten behind them. These three groups of letters on each side take the form of a "hinge" and a "door": one on the right and one on the left. [The "door", *Delet* = *Dalet* (ד), is made up of two *Vav*'s (ו = 6) attached from "behind" by a "hinge", the *Yud* (י = 10). 6 + 6 + 10 = 22.] When the two doors are closed and joined together, they form

a closed *Mem* [מ, made up of two attached *Dalet*'s], and the gate remains closed until such time as it opens again.

Although I said that there are twenty-two lights to the right and twenty-two to the left, the truth is that [on each side] there are twenty-two interior lights and twenty-two exterior lights. For this is the place of the Upper *Shechinah* and Lower *Shechinah*, both of which possess these lights. For this reason the lights are doubled and there are four doors.

Height of the gates

Understand that, with the exception of the Inner Gate, all the gates are very tall, for they are designed to meet the needs of those receiving from them. The gates are fifty cubits high, the entire array of souls and angels being divided into five. However, the first gate [of the Holy of Holies] is smaller than the others. As you surely understand, the light that reaches the lower worlds has only a tiny fraction of the intensity of the light that shines in His Supreme Dwelling. This small share is proportionate to the scale of the lower worlds and is quite sufficient for them.

Height of the First, Second and Third Temples

The height of the Third Temple is one hundred cubits, although this is not stated explicitly by Ezekiel, who simply said, "I saw the height of the House" (Ezekiel 41:8). The height is uniform along the entire length and breadth of the Temple, and he did not need to specify it. Let me explain a great secret, for this is not the same as the height of the First Temple either in the upper world or on earth. The First Temple was a hundred and twenty cubits high (II Chronicles 3:4). This was because it had an upper floor that brought it to this height. However the Temple seen by Ezekiel was only a hundred cubits high and did not have an upper floor.

Understand that each divine attribute [*Sefirah*] measures one hundred [since each individual *Sefirah* contains all ten *Sefirot*, and each component *Sefirah* itself consists of all ten: $1 \times 10 \times 10 = 100$]. Since the First Temple was built through *Chochmah*, its height was a hundred cubits by virtue of *Chochmah*, with an additional twenty cubits shining upon it from *Keter* in order to bring *Chochmah* to perfection. This is why the First Temple was built with an upper floor, indicating how the *Keter*, signified by the letter *Kaf* (= 20) hovers above *Chochmah* and radiates within it. This is why there were only twenty cubits from *Keter* and a hundred from *Chochmah*.

However the Third Temple [being built by *Keter* itself] has no upper floor, for *Keter* is the "head" and is raised above all else. The height of the Third Temple is a hundred cubits, these being the hundred of *Keter*. These hundred cubits are thus far greater than the entire hundred and twenty cubits of the height of the First Temple. Accordingly it is written: "Great will be the glory of this last House" (Hagai 2:9). The Second Temple was also built to a height of a hundred cubits as in the Heavenly Temple seen by Ezekiel in his prophetic vision. Had those who built it not known this they would not have made any changes on their own initiative without having a firm basis, but would have retained the measurements of the First Temple.

The Temple roof

From the wall of the Sanctuary to the wall of the Vestibule great lights appeared in the form of beams holding and strengthening the walls and keeping them in position. Each beam is a *Vav* emanating from the supreme *Vav* of the holy Name, blessed-be-He. There is a fundamental principle that you should understand: Every "house" derives from *Malchut* while every roof derives from *Tiferet*. It is from the beams, therefore, that the flow of blessing is drawn down to the House, just as *Tiferet* shines the light down to *Malchut*. In front of the Vestibule are steps, which I will explain later, with the help of God, when I come to discuss the Temple service.

Dimensions of the House

The prophet mentions three figures when speaking of the dimensions of the Temple: one hundred, ninety and seventy (Ezekiel 41:12-13). Each of these figures is connected with the lights [*Sefirot*]. Altogether the *Sefirot* amount to a hundred [i.e. there are ten *Sefirot* each of which contains all ten *Sefirot*: $10 \times 10 = 100$]. However one of these lights [*Keter*] is concealed, leaving ninety. But the lower lights through which the world is actually conducted are seventy [i.e. the seven *Sefirot* from *Chesed* to *Malchut*: $7 \times 10 = 70$].

This is the secret of the verse: "Man walks about as a shadow [*TzeLeM*]" (Psalms 39:7). From one point of view there are ninety lights, corresponding to the *Tzadi* [=90]; from another there are seventy, corresponding to the *Lamed* [=30] and *Mem* [=40; $30 + 40 = 70$], while from the point of view of the Supreme *Keter* there are one hundred.

The Temple Courtyards

Let me now discuss the Temple Courtyards in all their various details, and you will hear the most glorious wisdom. I will skip over certain other subjects that I should have discussed now and leave them until the end, because I am following the path of the flow of blessing, as I have already stated.

As the highways and pathways extended from the Foundation Stone outwards, two great areas appeared, one in front of the Temple building and the other surrounding both the Temple and this first area. Let me explain all this in detail.

These two areas were in the form of two great courtyards standing in front of and around the Temple. The first is called the Inner Courtyard, the second the Outer Courtyard. These are the places of all the King's armies and attendants who stand at His service. They have leaders who are in charge of the entire army. These leaders have their own special areas. These leaders are the *Serafim*, whose power is enormous. They stand by the Throne. All the other troops are encamped under their various flags. Over them stand officers, lower than the *Serafim*, who give them their orders and supervise all their activities so that everything runs properly without a hitch. The officers receive from the Inner Courtyard, while the lower angels and other troops receive from the Outer Courtyard.

These Courtyards are surrounded by lofty walls, which keep all the lights within their limits. The thickness of the walls is the same as the [length of the] measuring rod [six cubits], and they have gates enabling the flow of light and blessing to go forth, as I will explain in more detail later on.

Three gates of the Inner Courtyard

The Inner Courtyard has three gates: one to the south, one to the north and one to the east. Each gate is ten cubits wide since ten groups of angels must receive from each one. The height of the gates is fifty cubits. I have already explained this secret above (see "Height of the gates" p. 87).

However, since the lights had already traveled some distance from the place of amazing connection, the center column no longer had the same great power as when it first emerged from the Sanctuary, for its strength was already weakened. For this reason the east gate of the Inner Courtyard, corresponding to the center column, was no

different from the gates on the two sides. Now all three were alike, and each had a gateway to itself.

Vestibules of the Inner Courtyard

As each of the gates opened up, a vestibule appeared before it, as I have already explained. For what occurred only in the case of the center column [when the light went out of the Sanctuary gate] now occurred in the case of the two side columns [as the light went out of the gates of the Israelite Court]. However, the dimensions of the Vestibules of these gates are different from those of the Sanctuary Vestibule, for the lights going forth from the gates of the Israelite Court are not the same as the lights that go forth from the Sanctuary. In the case of the gates of the Israelite Court, the names of *YHVH* and *EHYH* made their vestibules eight cubits wide [corresponding to the eight letters of the two names]. Joined to them were the two columns whose identity and measurements you already know.

Three chambers on each side of the gates

As these gates opened up in the walls to allow the flow of blessing to pass outwards, the most beautiful chambers appeared on both sides of each gate, three to the right and three to the left. The three chambers on each side of the gate open into one another, while the entrances to the two chambers immediately adjoining the gate on either side face one another.

Let me now tell you some great secrets concerning these entrances. You must understand that in order for the flow of blessing that goes out into the worlds to be perfectly balanced and suited to the needs of their inhabitants, it must always have the proper blend of Judgment and Mercy. "Right" and "left" in the Chariot allude respectively to Mercy and Judgment. Nothing is able to attain its properly rectified state except through male and female. For this reason the lights are "male" and "female", and together they adjust and balance the flow of blessing so as to bring all things to a state of perfection.

This explains why these chambers are found here. Their secret is bound up with their root: a triad of *Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet* to the right and a similar triad to the left. The inside measurement of each chamber is six cubits, for here the *Vav*, the male element, predominates. The thickness of the walls of the chambers is five cubits, for here the *Heh*, the female element, predominates. Thus each of these chambers is a union of male and female.

The blessing and sustenance suitable for all the *Serafim* is already gathered within the Inner Courtyard. When the flow of blessing passes through the gate, it immediately enters these chambers first, for the flow of blessing leaving from the right enters the left-hand chambers, while the flow leaving from the left enters the right-hand chambers. The flow of blessing is rectified in the three chambers on each side and adjusted in a balance of Kindness, Judgment and Mercy depending on whether Kindness or strict Judgment holds sway. It is the *Vav* and *Heh*, male and female, that make the adjustment. Afterwards the flow goes forth with perfect balance ready to be given to those who require it.

Roofs of the chambers

Let me tell you what causes the flow of blessing emerging from the gates to make a detour into these chambers instead of going straight out. When the gate opened, the three lights that made thirteen, as mentioned earlier [see "Walls and gates" p. 77], passed through. As they went out, they joined together with twelve other lights standing at the gate itself. These are the twelve letters אֵלֶּף דָּלֶת נוּן יוֹד. Together they make a total of twenty-five. These twenty-five lights spread out on both sides from the roof of the extreme right-hand chamber to the roof of the extreme left-hand chamber. These lights did not go very far out. They simply spread out across the width of the chambers on both sides above their roofs but not below.

Thus as the flow of blessing leaves the gate, these lights shine down into it from above. The power of this light causes the flow of blessing to broaden and flow to the sides like the lights above instead of simply spreading outwards. It is then that the right side of the flow enters the chambers on the left while the left side of the flow enters the chambers on the right until everything is brought into perfect balance.

After being rectified in these chambers, the flow of blessing goes forth from the openings of the two chambers immediately adjacent to the gate on either side, and the two streams join together in the middle to make one. Then another light shines on it and brings it outside to be given to its intended recipients.

The prophet alludes to this when he says: "And he measured the gate from the roof of the chamber to the roof" (Ezekiel 40:13). You should understand that all the various measurements and dimensions are only mentioned because they allude to some aspect of wisdom and are known to be necessary for the proper government of the worlds.

The Temple Service

It is in this Inner Courtyard that the outside altar, or "Altar of the Burnt Offering", is located. This is where the daily sacrifices are offered. I must now explain the order of the Temple services and offerings to the King. Make every effort to understand.

Know that all the heavenly hosts – the angels and the souls – receive from the array of holy lights [the *Sefirot*] the flow of sustenance and power they need in order to survive and carry out their duties. Every day all created beings must receive blessing and sustenance from their Creator. Why do I say "every day"? Because each day is a unique level, and no day is like any other. I cannot go into this in depth as it would require lengthy explanation, so I will be brief. Use all your powers of intellect to plumb the depths of these matters.

Every day the lower realms need to draw close [*KaRoV*] to the upper realms in order that the branches should be connected to the roots. This way the angels are bound to their roots, and the souls to theirs. It is the animal offering [*KoRBan*] that brings the angels close, while the incense offering brings the souls close. Understand this well, for this is the secret of "man and animal" (Psalms 36:7): the innermost beings [*Pnimi'im*] are called "man" while the exterior creations [*Chitzoni'im*] are called "animal".

Types of sacrificial animals and birds

The sacrifices consist of animals (oxen, sheep and goats) and birds (doves and pigeons) but not wild animals. Each of these three categories has its unique place in the order of creation: the domesticated animals in the world of *Beriyah* (Creation), the birds in that of *Yetzirah* (Formation) and the wild animals in that of *Asiyah* (Action). The wild animals are on such a lowly level they are not brought as offerings. Because of the powerful hold of impurity on their level, they would not have the strength to ascend to such an exalted place.

The actual altar is the special place prepared for the performance of this service. The intrinsic quality of the altar derives from the "point" (see "Building the House by connecting the lights" p.60), the place of desire. Here burns the blazing fire of which it is said: "This is the burnt offering on the pyre" (Leviticus 6:1). Make every effort to understand, for these are very deep matters.

Priests, Levites and Israelites

Let me now explain the sacrificial service. Understand that there are three main columns: Kindness [*Chesed*], Judgment [*Din*] and Mercy [*Rachamim*], corresponding to the three categories of Priests [*Cohanim*], Levites and Israelites. Closest of all [to the higher levels] is Kindness, corresponding to the Priest, who actually performs the service. All three must be joined in a single bond. Beauty, *Tiferet* [= Mercy, the center column] must be joined with and included in Strength, *Gevurah* [=Judgment, the left column]. Then Strength, *Gevurah*, must be joined with and included in Kindness, *Chesed* [the right column], while Kindness, *Chesed*, finally offers the gift in a fitting manner.

This is why the Israelites, Levites and Priests each have their own special places in the Inner Courtyard starting from below and going upwards. All are present at the time of the offering, though the actual sacrifice may only be performed by the Priest. The Priest offers the sacrifice, the Levite sings with all his strength, and the Israelite stands by focusing intently, so that all are elevated together. To be more precise, the Courtyard has places for four categories of people: the Priests, Levites, Israelites and women. The women's place is outside in the Outer Courtyard, while the other three categories have their places inside.

Three parts of the animal included in the sacrifice

You must know that living beings are made up of three components. The limbs and fat are rooted in Kindness [*Chesed*], the blood in Strength [*Gevurah*] and the soul in Beauty [*Tiferet*]. This is why the blood is sprinkled on the altar while the limbs and fats are burned on it. And as the soul leaves the animal, it joins them both and thereby ascends and becomes bound to the lofty place to which it rises.

All these phenomena are visible and manifest in our world here below in accordance with the King's command, while their inner secret is known in the upper worlds as these three aspects join together in a single bond so as to rise and become included in the place to which they ascend. One part of the sacrifice corresponds to the Priest, another to the Levite, and another to the Israelite. Note how all the different aspects of the Temple are bound up with creation in general and not merely with specific details. Only later [in the chain of creation that begins with the Temple] is there a descent from the general plane and division into specifics.

Slaughter and sprinkling the blood

Let me now explain the sacrificial ritual. First comes the slaughter of the offering, which may be performed even by one who is not a Priest. The purpose of slaughter [*Shechitah*] is to bring out the blood, which being rooted on the "left" side [*Gevurah*] is all the stronger. This is where the destructive angels have their hold. For this reason the blood has to be brought out by means of the "knife" [*Sakin*], which is an awesomely holy light emanating from Understanding [*Binah*]. The numerical value of the letters of the word *SaKiN* is 140, corresponding to the sum of the letters that make up this light: ל"ף י' ו"ד י'. These are the "filling" letters of the expansion of *EHYH* with *Yud's* [אלף הי יוד הי]. Through the power of this light the strong blood that is not fitted to come before the King is removed. Until this point the service is on the level of the pure [*Tahor*] but not the holy [*Kadosh*]. Afterwards the portion of blood that is fit for the altar is taken and sprinkled upon it, this being the portion that is offered from this part of the animal.

The House of the Knives

Let me now explain to you the great and awesome secret of why the two places [on either side of the *Ulam*, the Vestibule of the Sanctuary Gate] that I mentioned earlier are called "The House of Knives". For this is where the knives are kept. Great wisdom may be seen here. Understand that in general, each of the places we will discuss as we proceed, whether within the courtyards or elsewhere, has its own particular function. This is because special lights shine in each place providing the power to carry out the specific activity associated with it.

The knives are kept here because this is the place from which these knives receive the power to fulfill their function properly. To explain this matter further: The Gate of the Sanctuary is for the souls, and so the angels do not receive anything from there. They receive nothing at all from the great Gate itself. What they do receive from here comes only from the side entrances and the adjacent "Houses of the Knives". From here they receive a little, including the power to prepare their offering and banish all impurity, purifying and rectifying the sacrifice through the power of this knife.

Let me explain how they receive their power from these side entrances. For here we find two simple names of *EHYH* without the "expansion" with *Yud's* found in the case of the center Gate. Instead, the "filling letters" are drawn down to make these knives. [As explained above, the Hebrew word for "knife", *SaKiN*, has the same numerical value as the "filling" letters of the expansion of *EHYH* with

Yud's, ל"ף י' ו"ד י'.] Thus the knives are put away in these places in order to join them to their root, which here takes the form of the simple names of *EHYH*. From here they receive the strength and power they need in order to carry out their function properly. One side is for the knives that are fit for use while the other side is for those that need repair.

Benefits of the sacrifices for the angels and souls

Understand that even though the animal sacrifices come to rectify the angels, it is Israel who are commanded to offer them since they are entrusted with the task of rectifying all the worlds on all their different levels. This is because all the worlds were created for the sake of Israel, whose service gives them merit before the King. Here in the lower world the People of Israel offer the animal sacrifice, through which the angels are rectified. After this they offer the incense, which brings about their own rectification.

The sacrificial service therefore starts with the sprinkling of the blood of the daily animal offering [on the outside Altar in the Temple courtyard], in order to go from the lower levels upwards. The animal sacrifice rectifies the external aspects of creation, and at the same time the souls themselves are also rectified by virtue of the fact that they are carrying out the King's command.

Immediately afterwards they burn the incense [on the Golden Altar inside the Sanctuary]. This brings about the rectification of the inner aspects of creation. They then go back outside to complete the sacrificial service [i.e. the burning of the animal portions]. For the only way to ascend to the supreme level is by starting on the lowest level. Yet the lower worlds can only come to perfection through the rectification of the upper worlds. Understand this well.

Slaughter of the "most holy" offerings in the north

The slaughter of the "most holy" offerings [i.e. the burnt, sin and guilt offerings, *Kodshey Kodshim*] is carried out in the northern section [of the Temple courtyard]. This is because the beneficial effects of the sacrificial services are brought about through Strength [*Gevurah* = "north"], which "goes up but does not come down". In addition slaughtering these sacrifices in the north breaks the root power of anger and the destroyer.

The slaughter area

Adjacent to the vestibule of the north gate of the Inner Courtyard is the Slaughter Area (*Beit Mitbachaim*). Remember the underlying principle which I explained earlier, that all the various areas of the Temple are differentiated in accordance with the specific lights that shine in each one providing the power to carry out the specific activity associated with that place.

Four lights emerge from the radiance of the Lower *Shechinah* and stand in the Vestibule, two to the east and two to the west. They spread out in the form of four tables. Know that it is through the power of *Malchut* that all things come into being. These four lights are the four letters of *ADNY*. And four others exactly like them stand above at the "shoulders" of the gate, and they go forth from the Upper *Shechinah*.

The Washers' Chamber

Also in the Inner Courtyard is a place where the slaughtered sacrifice goes through a major purification, because here the waters of mercy spread forth and cleanse it of all filth and impurity. This place is therefore called "The Washers' Chamber". In it shine four other lights in the form of four tables whose measurements correspond to their underlying secret. Each table is one cubit high, and one and a half cubits in length and breadth. The table's height of one cubit added to the sum of its length and breadth (=3) make a total of four, corresponding to the four letters of *ADNY*. When the constituent letters of the name are "expanded" they are made up of three letters each. It is here that the slaughtering utensils are placed ready for use, and from here they receive their power.

Iron hooks for skinning the sacrifice

In this chamber are choice names. They are all *HaVaYaH*'s filled with light and power. As the sacrifice of the angels begins to rise, it connects with these names, receiving great light from them, which prepares it until it is fit to go up on the altar of the King. Correspondingly the Slaughter Area in the Temple below contains "hooks of one handbreadth" (Ezekiel 40:43) for hanging the sacrificial animals [while they are skinned]. Understand that a handbreadth is sometimes considered to be four fingers wide and sometimes five. This is because the Divine Name *YHVH* to which the "handbreadth" alludes is made up of four letters, and when the cusp of the *Yud* is included it makes five.

The entrance to this chamber is at the side of the Gate of the Courtyard [to the north]. Understand that when I speak about the entrance of any given chamber, this is the place where the light enters to carry out its function.

As the light spread forth to leave through the Gate of the Courtyard it entered this chamber and dwelled there.

The Chamber of Song

Besides the Washers' Chamber, this courtyard contains other chambers including two located at the side of the northern gate facing south. The truth is that from the outside they appear to be one chamber but inside it is divided into two. This is where the musical instruments with which the holy *Chayot* sing are kept.

I will be very brief in my explanation of this matter. Make every effort to understand. Melody and song emerge from *Malchut*, as indicated in the verse: "And at *night* His song is with me" (Psalms 42:9) ["night" alludes to *Malchut*]. The roots of melody and song lie in *Gevurah*, Strength, tempered with Mercy, for she [*Gevurah*] yearns to ascend and to be connected with the right side [*Chesed*, Kindness], as it is written: "And your urge will be for your husband" (Genesis 3:16).

All who rise can do so only through *Gevurah*, which is why they only ascend through song. And the truth is that song has tremendous power to arouse love and desire. There are known to be seven basic notes. It is just the pitch and timbre that vary, creating the great variety of actual musical sounds. The lights manifest themselves in many different ways. How the various root lights shine determines the nature of the corresponding musical instruments. The sole function of any given instrument is to play the particular kind of song that corresponds to the level from which the instrument derives.

Song and music derive their power from these two chambers, which correspond to the Upper and Lower *Shechinah*. The chambers face south because, as you already know, melody derives from *Gevurah* tempered with mercy.

Chamber of the garments

Near the eastern gate is another chamber facing north where the priests dress in their priestly garments. Let me explain a deep secret about the priestly garments. They are all made of linen, which is rooted in Strength, *Gevurah* [on the left], yet they are white, which indicates mercy [the center column]. And they are worn by the Priest, who as you know is the man of Kindness, *Chesed* [on the right].

Let me explain this: Understand that *Chesed* and *Gevurah* are quite separate from one another. Each faces in a different direction and there is no connection between them until a third deciding factor [Mercy, *Rachamim*] comes and makes peace between them. For *Rachamim* takes the lights of *Gevurah* and joins them to itself, thereby extinguishing something of the burning intensity of *Gevurah*, which now becomes tempered with *Rachamim*. Then it is the turn of *Chesed* to connect with these two, forging such tremendous interconnectedness between them that they become a single inseparable unity. The entire process can be seen in the case of the garments kept in this chamber. The lights of *Gevurah* travel from the north and enter this chamber, which is in the east [= *Rachamim*]. Here they are tempered with *Rachamim*, producing beautiful white garments with which to clothe the Priest [= *Chesed*]. Understand this well.

The Flow of Blessing: *Shefa*

Ascent and descent of the ranks

Let me now complete my explanation of the Temple service in order to give you a proper understanding of how the flow of sustenance and blessing descends and spreads throughout the world. The lower ranks of creation rise and become merged with those above them. The *Ofanim* become merged with the *Chayot*, which in turn become merged with the *Serafim*. Their place in the upper world is in this Inner Courtyard. It is therefore here that the Altar is located and from here they rise to higher levels. The souls, on the other hand, ascend from within the Sanctuary [where the incense is offered].

In this way the roots [*Sefirot*] and branches [souls and angels] join together and complete one another inside and outside. Who can describe the joy of this moment of connection and the radiance of the light that shines on all levels? Through this awesomely holy connection [*Chibur*], blessing and sustenance flow to all who share in the gift rising to the King.

Distribution of sustenance

The flow of blessing and sustenance first emerges in the Sanctuary, and this is where the souls receive their sustenance. You must understand that it is from the gates that all the recipients receive their due from the places from which they receive. Blessing and sustenance well up in each place and then go forth to their recipients through the gates. The walls of a given place set bounds to the blessing in that place, enabling sustenance to flow out in a measured way to its various recipients. The boundaries formed by the walls of any given place determine how the light emerges, for the light always shines within bounds and limits.

When the souls join and merge together, all are included in the twelve Tribes of *YaH*, these being the roots of all the souls. The Tribes merge under the Patriarchs, all of whom are then included in Abraham, the first father. He is the High Priest, who is permitted to enter the Holy of Holies once each year.

The service of the High Priest elicits a flow of blessing from the supreme *Chesed*. As blessing and sustenance descend, they come first to the patriarchs and then to their children, flowing from level to level until they reach every individual creature.

From the Inner Courtyard shines the light fit for the angels of the world of *Beriyah* (Creation), who receive it at the Courtyard gates. From the Outer Courtyard shines the light fit for the angels of the world of *Yetzirah* (Formation), while the light fit for the officers of the world of *Asiyah* (Action) and its creatures shines from the Temple Mount.

Thirty-three cells surrounding the Temple building

Surrounding the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies are structures in the form of rooms or cells built one on top of the other. Everything that comes forth from the Holy of Holies divides into three [columns]. Thus there are [three rows of] five cells along the south wall, [three rows of] five along the north wall, and three cells [on top of one another] along the west wall. Thus the Sanctuary is surrounded by cells on three sides except for the last five cubits at the eastern end of its north and south walls, where the cells do not reach.

Let me explain the purpose of these cells. Besides the sustenance that the armies of angels receive from the gates of the Inner Courtyard and beyond, they also receive a share from behind the walls of the Sanctuary itself. Later I will explain how they receive it. This is extra sustenance. Even though it comes to them from outside [the Sanctuary], it is on the highest level, as opposed to the sustenance they receive from the gates, which is already on a lower level even though it comes from inside.

The Recess

[Outside the north and south walls of the Sanctuary at the east end is a five cubit Recess (*Munach*) since the cells stop short five cubits from the end of the walls.] Through the five cubits of the Recess the light emerging from the Sanctuary is able to go out to the right and the left. The entrance to the outermost cell is from the Recess while all the other cells open into one another. Through this entrance the light from the Sanctuary enters the cells.

Altogether there are thirty-three cells arranged in three levels of eleven cells each. This is because they derive from the union of the *Vav* [=6] and *Heh* [=5] in the Holy of Holies [6 + 5 = 11]. Thus the light that brought the cells into being existed from before.

Understand that the power of these cells is not enormous. It derives only from the *Heh*, which is why the Recess from which the cells receive is five cubits wide. This *Heh* created the boundary of the cells

in the form of a wall five cubits thick. Inside the cells the light shone only through the four letters of her name *ADNY* [and the cells are therefore four cubits wide]. The *Vav* displayed only a small fraction of its power, forming only the foundation upon which the cells are built [which is six cubits thick]. From this you can appreciate how the intensity of the light is diminished before it reaches its recipients.

The Winding Staircase

Consider some other important factors. The angelic hosts are unable to receive even from the cells. Accordingly there are two other places to the right and left [i.e. along the south and north walls, outside the cells] ten cubits wide in each case. Unlike the cells that I have been discussing, these two areas are not divided into five. They are undivided spaces in which all the light emerging from the cells gathers. Why are they ten cubits wide? The reason is that ten groups [of angels] receive from them. It is from here that this extra sustenance goes out to them, as I will explain. Corresponding to this place in the lower Temple is the Winding Staircase [*Mesibah*].

On the subject of the cells: those on each successive tier are wider than the ones beneath them. This is because the wall of the Sanctuary [which is the inside wall of the cells] becomes narrower in steps as it rises. Since the wall forming the boundary of the light becomes successively thinner, the light itself becomes more abundant, so that the radiance of the upper chambers is greater than that of the lower chambers.

The abundance of light depends on the ceiling for, as you already know, it is the beams of any structure that draw the light into the space beneath them. However, these beams do not penetrate the actual wall of the Sanctuary but rest on these steps, for it is from the outside that they receive and not from the inside. Stairs lead up from cell to cell: all the lights have these steps to make it possible to rise from level to level.

The north-east cell opens to the Sanctuary and side gate

It is through the small gates at the side of the Great Gate of the Sanctuary that sustenance flows into these cells via the Recess. Let me explain some great secrets. The first cell [at the eastern end] of the north wall of the Sanctuary opens into the Sanctuary, while access to the cell [from the outside] is through the side gate.

Why is this the case? The reason is that when the flow of sustenance emerges from the Sanctuary it must spread out into these cells. In addition, repairs effected in the lower worlds can only rise through this access route. It is through this opening that the rectification ascends. However, the descending flow of sustenance is received not from there but only from the recess [*Munach*], as I stated earlier.

The northern side gate is open at all times in order to give access to the cell, for here are the "Lower Waters", which are female. However, the southern side gate is closed, for there are the Upper Waters, which are male. For this reason, it is said of the southern side gate: "For *YHVH* the God of Israel comes through it" (Ezekiel 44:2), and only the High Priest, who is on the south side [*Chesed*], may come there.

Let me now complete my discussion of the Inner Courtyard. I will come to the Outer Courtyard later. The Inner Courtyard is one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits wide for, as you already know, when all the levels are included in one another they number one hundred [for each of the ten *Sefirot* contains all ten *Sefirot*: $10 \times 10 = 100$].

The Altar

Height of the Altar

It is here in the Inner Courtyard that the sacrificial Altar is located, as I have already stated. Let me explain its measurements, which involve the deepest secrets, for the Altar provides a place for all who need to ascend on it. The total height of the Altar is ten cubits built on three distinct levels. The height of the top level is four cubits as is that of the second [or middle] level, while the third [or bottom] level is two cubits high.

This is because there is a place here for all the Palaces [*Heichalot*] of the World of *Beriyah* according to their order of ascent. The top four cubits correspond to *Keter*, *Chochmah* and *Binah* in the Palace known as Holy of Holies, together with Desire [= *Tiferet*], which ascends higher than all the others. The middle four cubits correspond to *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Netzach* and *Hod*. The bottom two cubits correspond to *Yesod* and *Malchut*, which join together in the Palace of Sapphire Stone.

Length and breadth of the Altar

Let me now explain to you the underlying principles governing the length and breadth of the Altar. Know that the Supreme Wisdom [*Chochmah*] contains thirty-two pathways under which all things are subsumed: these are the ten *Sefirot* together with the twenty-two letters of the *Aleph Beit* from top to bottom. Correspondingly the Lower Wisdom – *Shechinah* – is called "Glory" [*KaVoD* = 32], because like the Upper Wisdom she too contains thirty-two pathways, only in this case they are ordered from the bottom upwards.

Four lights descended from the *Shechinah* into the World of *Beriyah*. They are called Glory. When these lights reached their bottom level [i.e. the base (*Yesod*) of the Altar, which is thirty-two cubits square] all thirty-two appeared merged together in one place, as I will explain.

The Altar Woodpile

As these four lights descended, a corresponding place came into being in this Altar [at the top, i.e. the Woodpile, *Ma'arachah*]. Initially it was twenty-four cubits square, corresponding to the twenty-four permutations of the letters of the name *ADNY*. Correspondingly, twenty-four divisions of Priests and Levites serve in the Temple, and thus the branches join with the roots.

Pathway for the Priests to step around the Altar

When *Tiferet* and *Yesod* – which are two *Vav*'s – joined with the *Shechinah*, an additional cubit was added to the length and breadth [each cubit is made up of six (= *Vav*) handbreadths]. This formed a place twenty-six cubits long and twenty-six cubits wide, corresponding to the numerical value of the holy name of *YHVH* blessed-be-He. This place is called the Pathway for the Priests to step around the Altar [*Mekom Hiluch Ragley Haco'hanim*], while the previous area is called the Place of the Woodpile [*Mekom Hama'arachah*].

Horns of the Altar

Afterwards *Netzach* and *Hod* also joined with the *Shechinah*. These two *Sefirot* are the two mighty horns of which it says, "And his horns are the horns of the wild ox" (Deuteronomy 33:17). This formed a place twenty-eight cubits square. This is because the *Shechinah* is called *Bat Sheva* [since it is through her that the seven lower *Sefirot* are revealed]. When she stands facing the four, namely *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod* and *Malchut* [i.e. when the *Shechinah* stands "face to face" with the bottom four *Sefirot* of *Zeir Anpin*], these twenty-eight lights appear [$7 \times 4 = 28$]. These are the twenty-eight camps of the *Shechinah*.

As a result of the rectification brought about when the *Shechinah* stands facing these four [*Sefirot* of *Zeir Anpin*], four lights came down from above into the World of *Beriyah*. This explains the presence of four horns here [at the four corners at the top of the Altar]. They are the four letters of *ADNY*.

You must understand that the cubit of measurement used in the Temple consists sometimes of six handbreadths and sometimes of five. The cubit of six handbreadths derives from the male aspect, while the cubit of five handbreadths derives from the female aspect. The Glory revealed in the Altar is bound up with the *Heh* [female aspect] of the Divine Name, and for this reason the cubits of the horns are of five handbreadths.

The surrounding ledge

The light now descended four levels, for in this way all the levels are joined together as one. Afterwards the *Heh* welled up again with great force and spread out even further than before, protruding another two cubits (of five handbreadths) in both directions [forming

the surrounding ledge, *Sovev*]. Let me tell you where these two cubits came from. They are drawn down from the Palace of Desire, for each of the individual Palaces receives from its corresponding aspect in the Palace of Desire. Accordingly this section of the Altar is thirty cubits square.

The foundation

After another four levels [four cubits] the Glory spread out further. When it reached its lowest level it radiated in all its strength and greatness in the form of thirty-two great lights corresponding to the numerical value of the letters of *KaVoD*. At the base, therefore, the Altar is thirty-two cubits square.

Position of the Altar and Ramp

The Altar in the future Temple is in front of the Sanctuary in direct alignment with its south and north walls, for it is written: "And the Altar *in front of* the House" (Ezekiel 40:47). The Altar Ramp is to the south. Let me explain to you the significance of this Ramp. The Altar itself derives from *Malchut*, while the Ramp standing at its side derives from *Yesod*. The Ramp is positioned to the south of the Altar [south = *Chesed*, the "right hand"] in order to rectify the Altar by connecting it to the right-hand side. This is why the Ramp is to the south, for in this way the Altar is drawn to the south.

This is in accordance with the underlying secret of the verse: "The mountain of the House of the Lord will be firmly established on the top of the mountains" (Isaiah 2:2) as I explained above [see "Cherubs and palms on the walls" p. 84]. The Altar itself does not intrinsically lean to the right since it is positioned in the center. But [through the position of the Ramp, which gives access to the top of the Altar from the south] the Altar "starts" on the south side. Since the Altar is thirty-two cubits from south to north, its north side is in direct alignment with the end of the north wall of the Sanctuary.

The Ramp itself is also thirty-two cubits long. Its length is thus identical to that of the base of the Altar, neither less nor more. In addition there are two smaller side ramps giving access from the main Ramp to the surrounding ledge [*Sovev*] and the base of the Altar [*Yesod*], which are the two bottom levels.

The Priests' Courtyard and *Duchan*

In this Inner Courtyard [*Azarah*] one step leads up [from the eastern section, the "Israelite Court", *Ezrat Yisrael*] to the place of the Levites

[also known as the "Court of the Priests", which is thus a platform one step higher than the *Ezrat Yisrael*]. On this platform another three steps lead up to the place of the Priests [the *Duchan*].

The reason for these steps is that the place of the Levites [*Gevurah*] is one level higher than that of the Israelites [*Tiferet*]. Afterwards, however, the three levels [*Chesed*, *Gevurah* and *Tiferet*] join together so that all three are included in the place where the Priests [*Chesed*] perform the Temple service. The reason why there are not merely two steps up to the place of the Priests is that it is not exclusively theirs but rather it is the place where all three levels join together as one in *Chesed* itself. Understand this well.

The Outer Courtyard

Let me now explain the details of the Outer Courtyard [also known as the "Women's Courtyard"]. This is the place where the *Chayot*, angels of the World of *Yetzirah*, receive their sustenance. The distance from the outer wall of the Inner Courtyard to the outer wall of the Outer Courtyard [which surrounds the Inner Courtyard on all sides] is one hundred cubits in all directions, and you already know the secret of "one hundred".

The Outer Courtyard includes the area behind the Holy of Holies

The Outer Courtyard surrounds the entire Temple building including the back [i.e. the Holy of Holies]. From the back [west] wall of the Temple building to the west wall of the Outer Courtyard is a distance of eleven cubits corresponding to the *Vav* [=6] and *Heh* [=5; 6 + 5 = 11].

In the first two Temples the Outer Courtyard did not surround the Temple building [but was situated to the east of the Inner Courtyard, the *Azarah*]. What is the reason for this difference? It is because behind the Temple, way, way down, is the place of impurity and the angels of vengeance. The original Courtyard did not encompass this place so as not to give them any share. But in the future, the world will be purified and the false gods will totally disappear. All that remains will be pure. This is alluded to in the verse, "For then I will turn to the nations a pure language that they may all call upon the name of *YHVH* to serve Him with one consent" (Zephaniah 3:9). This is why the Courtyard will surround the Temple building on all sides, for nothing will prevent this.

Position of the Vestibules of the gates of the Outer Courtyard

The Outer Courtyard has three gates. They are exactly the same as the gates of the Inner Courtyard except that the vestibules of the gates of the Inner Courtyard are *outside* their gates [i.e. they stand in the Outer Courtyard] whereas the vestibules of the gates of the Outer Courtyard stand *inside* their gates, inside the Outer Courtyard.

The reason is that the vestibule [*ULaM* = 77 plus 1 for the word as a whole] provides the holy bread [*LeCheM* = 78] that is given to all Israel and passes to the outside through the gates. The Outer Courtyard is strong enough to withstand the intensity of the light

emerging there, which is why the vestibules of the gates of the Inner Courtyard are located outside their gates in the Outer Courtyard. However the Temple Mount [i.e. the area surrounding the Outer Courtyard] does not have the strength to bear this intensity, and therefore the vestibules of the gates of the Outer Courtyard stand inside their gates, inside the Outer Courtyard.

[As we have seen, there are three cells on each side of each gate to balance the flow of sustenance emerging from the gate.] The walls of these chambers derive from the vestibule walls, except that the vestibule walls are built with the light of the *Vav* [=6] while the chamber walls are built with the light of the *Heh* [=5]. For this reason, in the case of the gates of the Outer Courtyard, the walls of the two chambers immediately adjoining each gate on either side [on the outside] are set back one cubit further from the gate than the corresponding walls of the vestibule [on the inside]. For the vestibule walls are six cubits thick while those of the chambers are only five cubits thick. For this reason the prophet states very precisely: "And a border of one cubit before the chambers" (Ezekiel 40:12), and he relates the chambers not to the gates but to the vestibules.

See and understand: The bread [*Lechem* = 78], i.e. the Vestibule [*Ulam* = 78], goes no further than three levels: the Sanctuary and the two Courtyards [for the Sanctuary gates, which are on the level of *Atzilut*, and those of the Inner and Outer Courtyards, corresponding respectively to *Beriyah* and *Yetzirah*, all have their own vestibules]. But on the Temple Mount no vestibule is to be seen. This is because the Temple Mount corresponds to the world of *Asiyah*, while the bread we have been discussing is "bread from Heaven". This is the food of the angels, and this is what the Israelites also ate when they were in the wilderness. The bread of *Asiyah*, on the other hand, is literally the bread that comes forth from the earth, and this is on a far lower level since it only comes forth after many changes and transformations. This is why these vestibules reached only the inside of the Outer Courtyard.

The Gallery surrounding the Courtyard

Inside the walls of the Outer Courtyard stands a magnificent paved gallery at the same height as the gates. It surrounds the entire Courtyard [except on the west]. On this gallery stand thirty chambers. As you already know, ground level always corresponds to *Malchut*. The flow of blessing and sustenance first enters these chambers, and from there it descends to the Courtyard below.

Let me explain the purpose of these chambers on this gallery. They are for the three great and exalted chiefs, Shmu'el, Metatron and

Yehuel [שמועא ל מטטרו"ן יהוא"ל], who are captains over all the armies of angels in the World of *Yetzirah*. Each has ten chambers. Not that they ascend in these chambers for, as I have already told you, all the recipients receive from the gates. But it is into these chambers that the sustenance and blessing destined for these angels flows first, after which it is then given over to them. It is from these chambers that sustenance flows down to the rest of the Courtyard.

"The Chamber to the side of the Sanctuary" (Ezekiel 42:1)

Outside the Inner Courtyard at the two ends of its western wall stand two extraordinary chambers one hundred cubits in length. They are situated in the western section of the Outer Courtyard parallel to the main Temple building on its north and south sides. The width of these chambers is fifty cubits. Each has three stories, one on top of the other.

Understand that these chambers are where the angels actually receive the sustenance given to them from around the outside of the Sanctuary building, as discussed earlier. The sustenance flows out from the recess [*Munach*] into the cells [adjoining the Sanctuary walls]. As it leaves the cells it merges into a single flow in the Winding Staircase [*Mesibah*]. Then at a distance of twenty cubits it reaches these chambers, where the angels receive it.

These chambers are designated for eating the holy sacrificial portions, for this is the sustenance that comes down to the branches after they rejoin their root and after the beautiful unification [*Zivug*] that is brought about [through the sacrifice]. But note how far away they [i.e. the angels] are when they receive their share of the holy offering as compared to the souls of Israel, who receive their share from inside the Sanctuary [since their sustenance comes from the incense, which is burned inside]. This is why the sages said: "Israel's appointed place is further within than that of the ministering angels" (*Yerushalmi Shabbat 2*).

Although these chambers are considered part of the Inner Courtyard [for even the holiest portions, *Kodshey Kodshim*, may be eaten in these chambers, as in the *Azarah*], see how far away they are. The distance between the Sanctuary building and these chambers on either side is twenty cubits, because of the great light of the two *Yud's* [$10 \times 2 = 20$] that built the interior of the Sanctuary. Indeed, the entrances to these chambers actually face the Temple building since it is from there that they receive. These chambers also have other entrances on the side not facing the Temple. These lead out [to

the north-west and south-west sections of the Outer Courtyard]. I have already explained to you why the gates are fifty cubits high. These chambers are thus literally facing the cells [around the Sanctuary walls] for it is from there that they receive.

However the chambers on the uppermost stories are shorter than the lower level chambers because they receive from a very exalted place. Extending downwards from underneath the uppermost chambers are three great pillars. They descend from underneath the walls of the upper chambers: the walls are actually supported on these pillars. Thus these three pillars come out from the uppermost walls and reach all the way down to the ground below. The walls of the lower chambers are built behind the pillars, and because of this the lower chambers are wider than the upper chambers.

This is mentioned in the verse: "And the uppermost chambers were narrow, for the pillars consumed part of them, [namely] part of the lower and middle [chambers] in the building" (Ezekiel 42:5). That is, the pillars consume part of the space of the lower chambers, which are built around them, while the pillar itself provides support for the wall of the upper chambers [which are therefore narrower than the lower chambers].

For these pillars are not like the Courtyard pillars [at the ends of the walls of the vestibules of the gates]. The latter are outside and receive from their respective courtyards, which is why they rest upon them. But the function of the pillars of these chambers is to strengthen the building and they enter into its very thickness. That is why these pillars pushed their way down into the lower chambers in order to provide a foundation for the upper chambers. The truth is that they emerged prior to the upper chambers, and after the emergence of the pillars the wall was closed around them. As for the words in the verse, "the pillars consumed *part of them*" [מדהנה], this indicates that not in every chamber is there a pillar, but there are three pillars in the entire wall.

Place for cooking the holiest sacrificial portions

There is a place in the north of the Outer Courtyard bounded on one side by these chambers and the Temple building and on the other by the western edge of the Courtyard. This is where the sacrificial portions are cooked in preparation for the Priests to eat them. Understand that cooking takes place in water [*Chesed*] on fire [*Gevurah*].

Eastern chambers of the Outer Courtyard

Two more chambers similar to the first are situated in the eastern section of the Outer Courtyard, east of the Inner Court. One of these chambers is situated to the north-east of the third eastern chamber of the north gate, while the second chamber is situated to the south-east of the third eastern chamber of the south gate. In each case these chambers are one hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide, with entrances on both sides.

Let me explain their function. The "upper" chambers [i.e. those discussed previously, which are in the western section of the Outer Courtyard, parallel to the Temple building] belong to the Inner Courtyard, for that is where the captains of the angels of the World of *Beriyah* receive their share from behind the Temple building. However, those we are discussing now belong to the Outer Courtyard. Here the armies of the World of *Yetzirah* receive their share from the Inner Courtyard.

The main flow of sustenance comes out through the gates, while the sustenance which the angels receive from these chambers derives from more exalted lights of which the angels take their share here.

These eastern chambers have openings directly into the Inner Courtyard itself. Thus there are numerous openings for sustenance to reach the angels of *Yetzirah*. The inner [western] chambers are at some distance from the Temple building. However, the eastern chambers are directly adjacent to [the north-east and south-east corners of] the Inner Courtyard, for the light here does not have the same power as the light there, and therefore they are better able to withstand it.

Place for cooking the less holy sacrificial portions

At the four corners of the Outer Court there appeared four courts measuring forty cubits long and thirty cubits wide. In them shine four great lights. Their function is to put power into the less holy sacrificial portions [*Kodshim Kalim*] that may be eaten outside [the Temple Mount, anywhere in Jerusalem] in order to prepare them and make them fit for their recipients. All preparations take place on the level of *Malchut*. Accordingly these four lights are four names of *ADNY*. The reason why these courts are all forty cubits long and thirty wide is that each of the four root letters of these names when "expanded" consists of three "filling" letters [and every letter contains all ten *Sefirot*: 4 roots x 10 = 40; 3 "filling" letters x 10 = 30].

Vestibules in the courtyard walls

In the walls of the Outer Courtyard appeared structures in the form of vestibules which act as receivers for the light spreading out from the Temple building to the Courtyard. When the light reached the walls it made for itself places to dwell, but it did not have the power to burst through the walls except at those points where the gates are, because the light of the three great luminaries reached these points. All these vestibules are based on the secret of the *Heh's*: this is true of all dwelling places. For this reason these vestibules are five cubits wide [*Heh* = 5]. As the *Heh's* asserted themselves the light intensified, making their length five times five, i.e. twenty-five cubits.

The Temple Mount

Let me now discuss the Temple Mount. This is the place from which the officers of the World of *Asiyah* receive, and thus its walls, which set bounds for all the light contained within it, total five hundred rods by five hundred rods. [The measuring rod is six cubits long – Ezekiel 40: 5.]

The rationale of these dimensions is bound up with the fact that all the lights that govern the running of the world work together in complete accord and perfect unison. They all join and become interconnected with each other instead of going each in its own direction. All their faces are turned towards one place, and likewise the spirit in them is directed to one place. Ezekiel refers to this in his vision [of the Chariot]: "Wherever the spirit was to go, they went" (Ezekiel 1:12). Therefore nothing is ever executed through Kingly Power [*Malchut*] that was not commanded by the King [*Zeir Anpin*], Who is the Tree of Life. This is a journey of five hundred years. That is why the measure of the Temple Mount is the greatest of all: five hundred. But it did not spread out any further, for as she [*Malchut*] receives, so she gives.

Greater size of the future Temple Mount

This future Temple will be superior to the earlier Temples. In the First Temple, each of the four sides of the Temple Mount was five hundred *cubits* in length, while in the Third Temple each side will be five hundred *rods*. The use of the rod as the unit of measurement in the Third Temple is bound up with fact that it will be built through the revelation of the hidden "Beginning" [*Keter*], as I discussed earlier [see "Measuring the House with a measuring rod and linen cord" p. 70]. Note that there are no chambers, rooms or cells on the rest of the Temple Mount [i.e. beyond the Outer Courtyard], because God's providence over His other creatures is not so directly attuned to each individual creature as it is in the case of man.

Gates of the Temple Mount

There are five gates in the walls of the Temple Mount, two to the south and one on each of the other three sides. The height and width of the gates are the same as those of all the other Temple gates. Understand that the wall itself is *ADNY*, as I have already explained (see "Walls and gates" p. 77) while the doors of the gates are simple letters of *ADNY*. The *Aleph* and *Yud* stand to the right and the *Dalet* and *Nun* to the left, and they are the ones that actually close the gate.

The light shining inside the walls is all drawn down through the name *YHVH* blessed-be-He. This is why it is written: "This is the gate to *YHVH*" (Psalms 118:20), for this is the name that radiates and goes forth through the gate.

Whenever any of these gates is opened, each one has known letters that stand out and flash up and down. These letters are in command of the "heads" of their particular gate [cf. Psalms 24:7] and therefore when these letters shine, those called to the gates may come forward and stand at the entrance to receive their due. Afterwards they return to their places. These letters are then hidden away again and can no longer be seen, and the gate is closed.

In the case of the gates of the Temple Courtyards, thirteen letters stand out at each gate, and similarly the number of those coming to each gate is thirteen. The three gates thus have a total of thirty-nine recipients according to the numerical value of the first three letters of *YHVH* when expanded [יוד הא ואו], for these are the lights that open the gate.

Jerusalem south of the Temple Mount

Let me now explain to you a very great secret relating to the four directions on the Temple Mount. It is written: "He set me down on a very high mountain, and on it was a structure in the form of a city *on the south*" (Ezekiel 40:2). Thus we find that the city is to the south, while the Temple is to the north. This involves a very deep secret, so make every effort to understand.

Malchut is inclined towards the left-hand column of *Gevurah*, while *Tiferet* is on the side of Mercy [*Rachamim*, which inclines more to the right-hand column of *Chesed*]. These two opposites must join together in order for the world to be run in a balanced way. The essence of pairing [*Zivug*] and connection [*Chibur*] is when right joins with left. Since the Temple is the place where this pairing and connection comes about, both right and left must be present. For when the left-hand force in this place is joined to the right-hand force, the harshness of the left is mitigated. All the different levels and branches of *Gevurah* are then sweetened through the influence of this right-hand force, and all become tempered with mercy.

This is why the Temple, which is the place where this joining takes place, is to the north, while the city is to the south. For it is after the sweetening of the north [*Gevurah*] through the influence of the right [*Chesed*] that the city emerges in this way. Understand this.

The four sides of the Temple Mount

You should understand that all parts of the Temple Mount, west, north, east and south, are in use. Even though the Temple itself is situated to the north, the southern area of the Mount has great power, and for this reason the area between the Temple building and the south side of the mountain is greater than on any other side. The second largest area is between the Temple and the eastern side of the Mount, corresponding to Mercy [*Rachamim*]. Third in size is the area to the north of the Temple, which is on the left [*Gevurah*], while the smallest area is on the west [*Malchut*], for this is the one that receives from the others and is less than them.

As to the five gates: The two gates on the south are the gates of *Keter* and *Chochmah*, corresponding to the *Yud* [of *YHVH*] and its cusp. The other gates are those of *Binah* [north], *Tiferet* [east] and *Malchut* [west], corresponding to the first *Heh*, *Vav* and final *Heh* of the Name blessed-be-He.

The Distribution of Sustenance

First Stage: The Temple Mount Survival of the Creatures

Let me now explain some great secrets relating to the sustenance given to all the creatures of this world from the greatest to the smallest. All are ultimately rooted in the twenty-two letters of the *Aleph Beit*, for everything in creation derives from these letters and their various combinations and permutations. These twenty-two letters sit at the helm of the government [*Malchut*] generating infinite numbers of permutations.

The basic letter-combinations are the "two hundred and thirty-one gates" forwards and backwards. These in turn generate countless more complex combinations. Three ciphers appeared at first, and they head all the others: אבג"ד [*Aleph-Beit-Gimel-Dalet* in order] to the right, תשר"ק [*Tav-Shin-Resh-Kuf* backwards] to the left, and אתב"ש [*Aleph-Tav, Beit-Shin* or *ATBaSh*] in the center.

When the light from the holy union [*Zivug*] shone in this place, the abundant light and radiance gave new strength and power to the twenty-two letters standing there. One light in particular welled up with very great power. This light is composed of all twenty-two letters of the *Aleph Beit* as well as five others: MaNTzPaCh [מ' נ' ז' פ' ח' ד', these being the five letters that take a different form when at the end of a word]. This light is called *Ochazah*, אוֹחָזָה, as in the verse: "I said I will climb up into the palm tree, I will take hold [אוֹחָזָה] of its branches" (Song of Songs 7:9). The numerical value of the letters of this word is twenty-seven [corresponding to the twenty-seven letters].

After the union [*Zivug*], this light shines forth so strongly that it overshadows all the others. It is therefore very holy and has tremendous power to bring holiness into a person, together with the other names connected with it, which are embedded in the very same verse. Since this name arises out of connection and unity [*Zivug*], the verse says: "I will climb up into the *palm tree*." For as you already know, the palm tree always indicates connection and unity. It is then that this name *Ochazah*, which includes all the letters of *Aleph Beit*, gains power. The idea of the "branches" alludes to permutations generated by the letters.

This is the source of all the sustenance given to all those who need it. It therefore says: "And let your *breasts* be as clusters of the vine..." (*ibid.*). "Breasts" is the name given to the supreme lights that give

sustenance to the beings in the lower worlds. Why are they compared to "clusters of the vine"? For when the creatures of the lower worlds ascend to receive at the gates, they connect with and cling to the letters shining at the gate, as I discussed above, for these letters are their very roots. When attached there, they are like grapes attached to a cluster. As to the continuation of the verse, "The smell of your countenance [lit. nose] is like apples" (*ibid.*), this alludes to the odor of the sacrifice that rises up into the nose to sweeten the severity [*Gevurah*] found there.

Let me now complete my explanation of the subject of the sustenance. When *Tiferet* and *Malchut* joined together, three great lights emerged from the head of *Tiferet* and came down via *Yesod* to *Malchut*, where they reached these three ciphers. When they did so, who can describe the great splendor and radiance with which they shone? The light goes up and down each one of them repeatedly with tremendous force, spreading to all their derivative generations at once, and this is what gives every creature in the world the power it needs.

Second Stage: The *Soreg* – Renewal of the Creatures

After this, another light radiated from the head [of *Tiferet*] and shone down to the three ciphers and all their derivative generations. Through this great radiance, all the derivative generations were able to reconnect with their roots, making everything tightly bound together and deeply interconnected. As a result they all shone with a very great new light that gave them regenerative power for themselves as well as the power to produce new generations. However, these new generations came forth only through the mutual joining and interconnection of these lights.

As these lights embraced and combined with one another, a structure appeared in this place in the form of a partition of interlaced wood known as the *Soreg*. This encompasses the entire Temple Mount inside the outer wall. The outermost area [between the *Soreg* and the outer wall] contains the basic sustenance required to enable all the different species to survive. This sustenance comes from the first light that shone down to the twenty-two letters, as I explained above. This area surrounds all the others because it includes everything in creation, and everything else is located within it. The height of this partition is exactly ten handbreadths, neither more nor less. You already know the significance of the handbreadth and the measure of ten. This measure is sufficient to provide for all the creatures in the world.

Third Stage: The *Cheil* – Perfection of the Creatures

Finally a third light radiated from the head [of *Tiferet*] and reached the ciphers. This light encompassed all the lights and all the letters in their entirety, joining them all together in a single bond. This bond is expressed in the glorious, awesome name of *YHVH* blessed-be-He. This gave everything in creation the power to attain perfection through the mystery of *Adam*. This great secret is known to those versed in the ways of wisdom, who understand the actual process through which the world comes to be rectified.

The name to which I am referring is *Adam*, i.e. the expansion of *YHVH* with *Aleph*'s: *יוד הא ואו הא* [= 45, sum of the numerical value of the letters of *ADaM*]. All God's works came into being through *Binah*, associated with the name *EHYH*. When the latter name is "expanded" as *אֵלֶּף הָא יוֹד הָא*, it enters the middle *Aleph* of the expanded *YHVH* I mentioned, so that everything – *YHVH*, *EHYH* and everything else – is included in *Adam*.

Surrounding the area in which the light that I have been discussing spread out stands a wall ten cubits high known as the *Cheil*. The sum of the numerical values of the letters of *Cheil* [48] is equivalent to that of *YHVH* (26) and *EHYH* (21) [plus 1 for the *kolel*]. Thus all the measurements of the House are duly complete.

Steps leading up from the *Cheil* to the Courtyard

It remains for me to explain to you the meaning of the steps between the various areas of the Temple. These steps involve great secrets, for they are literally the steps upon which the worlds and their inhabitants ascend from world to world. Thus all the gates have steps leading up to them, though they differ in number in each case depending on their respective secrets.

Leading up from the *Cheil* to the Outer Courtyard on the eastern side there are twelve most imposing steps, while on the north and south sides there are seven steps each. Let me explain this matter. The lights are arranged in two different ways, which is why there are two different paths for their ascent, each path corresponding to one of these different arrangements. For the lights are divided into ten and seven. They are seven when arranged in the order of the Palaces [*Heichalot*] but ten when arranged in the order of the ten levels [*Sefirot*] themselves. Both need to ascend. How do they do so? They always start from the bottom. Each lower light joins and merges with

the light above it until all are bound together in a single unity. For this reason there are as many steps as there are levels, in order to elevate them, step after step, to the top. That is why there are seven steps to the north and south corresponding to the seven *Heichalot*.

On the eastern side, however, there are twelve steps. Let me tell you why they are twelve. This is a very deep secret, and you must apply your powers of understanding. The *Malchut* of the level of the *Chayot* [angels of *Yetzirah*] remained on the level of the *Ofanim* [angels of *Asiyah*, for *Malchut* of the higher level becomes *Keter* of the lower level]. There on the level of the *Ofanim* this *Malchut* divided into two, completing the number of steps. [It would appear that the reference is to the steps leading from the *Cheil* (corresponding to *Asiyah*) to the Outer Courtyard (corresponding to *Yetzirah*).]

A new *Malchut* then came forth on the level of the *Chayot* and from this *Malchut* were formed two great heads over all the *Ofanim*. They stand over them in the form of a male and female. Thus there are ten levels with two heads over them. Since some of these heads were already in the world [of the *Ofanim*] itself, i.e. the first *Malchut* that I mentioned [which remained on the level of the *Ofanim* and divided into two], there had to be two more steps corresponding to these heads themselves [i.e. the two heads formed from the new *Malchut* of the *Chayot*, which stand over the *Ofanim*].

Steps from the Women's Courtyard to the Israelite Courtyard

From the Outer Courtyard to the Inner Courtyard are eight steps on all three sides. They occupy part of the vestibules leading up to the gates of the Inner Courtyard in between the cells of the gates. Let me explain to you the secret of these eight steps. They have known names of their own. These are two names containing a total of eight letters out of which these steps were formed.

For when the worlds need to ascend, power and energy go forth from the higher worlds to give the lower worlds the strength to ascend. When the *Chayot* [angels of *Yetzirah*, corresponding to the Outer Courtyard] want to come up to the Throne [World of *Beriyah*, corresponding to the Inner Courtyard], two most powerful lights shine forth to them from the throne, giving them the strength to ascend. As they go up, the power of these lights makes them sing a most pleasant song, for it is these lights that give them the strength to rise up. For this reason the angels will not leave them so as not to lose their strength.

These two lights come out from the Wisdom [*Chochmah*] and Understanding [*Binah*] in the Throne. The name of the first light is *Kadosh* while the name of the second is *Baruch*. Their roots are respectively *YHVH* and *EHYH*. When these lights shine on the *Chayot*, who can describe the thunderous surge of agitation and trembling and the roar the *Chayot* send back as they receive them in awe and fear, holiness and purity. From these lights the *Chayot* gain the strength to ascend. This is what is written: "And one called to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy [*Kadosh*] is *YHVH* of hosts'" (Isaiah 6:3), while Ezekiel said: "And a wind lifted me up, and I heard behind me the sound of a great noise: 'Blessed [*Baruch*] be the glory of *YHVH* from His place'" (Ezekiel 3:12).

It is through these two names that the angels go up, and this is why the People of Israel rise on their toes when saying these two verses in their prayers. For when the *Chayot* move forward to ascend, they too say these words. At first it says: "And I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters..." (Ezekiel 1:24). But when they stand at the higher level to which they rise, it says of them: "When they *stood*, they let down their wings" (*ibid.* vv. 24, 25).

Understand how the steps came to be in front of the gates. It was when the light burst through the walls and spread forth outside that these lights [which brought the steps into being] were revealed to the creatures of the lower worlds.

Steps between the Altar and the Vestibule of the Sanctuary

Twelve steps lead up from the Inner Courtyard to the Vestibule of the Sanctuary. They are twelve because they correspond to the Palaces [*Heichalot*] of the Throne [*Beriyah*, i.e. the Inner Courtyard], of which there are six in the Palace of Desire [*Heichal Haratzon*] and another six, making a total of twelve. The highest of all, "Holy of Holies", is the one that goes up to the World of *Atzilut* [i.e. it is the "top step" leading into the Sanctuary and its Vestibule, which correspond to the world of *Atzilut*].

"The gate facing east shall be shut" (Ezekiel 46:1)

Let me now explain to you a secret relating to the instructions given to Ezekiel as to "the Gate of the Inner Court facing east" (Ezekiel 46:1). The East Gate is a place of the most intense light and power, and cannot be opened for the creatures of the lower worlds except on Shabbat and the New Moon. This is because it is in direct alignment

with the Great Gate [the center column], and must therefore be kept closed. It can only be opened for the Prince, namely the Messianic King. Because of his great strength and paramount importance, this gate will be open for him, but no-one else will be able to enter except on those two days.

Let me explain to you what is special about these two days. On these days the *Shechinah* receives a very great light indeed from *Tiferet*. Now let me tell you the difference between Shabbat and the New Moon. The New Moon is "down below" in the sense that the *Shechinah* [does not rise from her place but stays below and there] receives power from *Tiferet* – a new power to govern all her armies for her entire thirty-day circuit. Shabbat, on the other hand, rises to far higher levels. For these reasons this gate will be opened on these two days and the people will come to prostrate themselves and share its great light.

Pilgrims' exit route from the Temple

However, the obligation to appear in the Temple on festivals is bound up with a different secret. The purpose is to reconnect the branches with their roots three times a year. The roots are divided into two, one to the right and one to the left. The pilgrims [branches] must enter by one gate, proceed across the Temple and leave by the opposite gate in order for all the roots to be joined to one another and thus become interconnected and unified. When this happens, it is said, "And who is like your People Israel, one nation in the earth!" (II Samuel 7:23).

Water flowing from the Holy of Holies

By the entrance to the Inner House is a small path where the sweetest waters flow. Let me tell you where these waters come from and where they are going. These waters come from the innermost place of delight, a place of the most powerful Mercy [*Rachamim*]. For that reason, as these waters come out, their direction of flow is to the south [*Chesed*]. They then flow out of the Temple.

Where to? This is explained in the verse: "... And they will come into the sea, into the sea of the putrid waters, and the waters shall be healed" (Ezekiel 47:8). For their mission is to heal all gatherings of water from their saltiness by means of the tremendous mercy they contain. These waters are not the same as the basic sustenance given to enable all things to subsist, but rather a most precious light that shines from the Holy of Holies in order to temper the severity of *Gevurah* in any place that it is strong.

Even so, it says: "But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will serve to supply salt" (*ibid.* v. 11). For some *Gevurah* is needed in the world, and this is the significance of the salt required with all sacrifices. For this reason "they will serve to supply salt", and this is why some was left. If it were not so, Mercy would spread out on every side and all the powers of *Gevurah* would disappear.

In the time of the Mashiach mercy will spread throughout the world, and all things will be rectified and brought to perfection. All the lights will shine with a radiance unlike anything ever known. Holiness will spread without bounds, and all the worlds will be filled with serenity, bliss and joy, as it says: "This is the day that God made, we will rejoice and be glad on it" (Psalms 118:24).

And may it be the will of our Father in Heaven to quickly bring about His redemption in kindness and mercy, "And the city will be built on its hill and the palace will sit in its appointed place" (Jeremiah 30:18) speedily in our days. Amen!

Five Chapters

I will now provide in five chapters a concise, orderly account of all the measurements of the Temple and its courtyards in all their details.

Chapter 1: The Temple Mount and Outer Courtyard

1. The Temple Mount is three thousand cubits square. The Temple is situated on the Mount in such a way as to be further away from the southern side of the Mount than it is from any of the other sides. It is somewhat closer to the eastern side of the Mount, and still nearer to the northern side. The shortest distance of all is between the Temple and the western side of the Mount. The greater the area between the Temple and the side of the Mount, the more that area is in use.

2. The Temple Mount has five entrances, two in the south, one in the east, one in the north and one in the west. The height of the wall is six cubits and its thickness six. The gates are fifty cubits high and ten cubits wide. The thickness of the hollow of the gates corresponds to the thickness of the walls in which the gates stand.

3. Just inside the outer wall of the Mount is a lattice partition [*Soreg*] ten handbreadths in height. This encircles the entire Mount. Further inside is the *Cheil*, a wall of ten cubits [also encompassing the entire Mount]. Twelve steps lead up from the area within the *Cheil* to the Outer Courtyard on the east, while seven steps lead up to it on each of the north and south sides.

4. The Outer or Women's Courtyard [*Ezrat Nashim*] is 317 cubits long by 312 wide. It has three gates, one to the south, one to the north and one to the east. The vestibules of these gates are on the inside of the Courtyard. The walls of the vestibules are six cubits thick, and they jut out at right angles to the Courtyard walls on both sides of each gate at a distance of one and a half cubits from the gate itself. Since the gates are ten cubits wide, these vestibules are a total of thirteen cubits in length, and they are eight cubits wide. Two pillars stand at the ends of the two walls of each vestibule, one to the right and one to the left. The decorative work on these pillars is in the form of palms. The pillars are sixty cubits high and two cubits thick. When these pillars are included, each vestibule is a total of ten cubits wide. The gates themselves are fifty cubits high and ten cubits wide. The entrance sills are six cubits wide, corresponding to the thickness of the wall.

5. Outside the Outer Courtyard wall adjacent to each of the gates stand six cells, three on either side of the gate. The two cells immediately adjoining the gate on either side are set one cubit further back from the gates than the walls of the vestibules [which jut out at right angles to the Outer Courtyard wall on the other side, inside the Courtyard]. Thus the outer walls of the cells immediately adjoining the gate on each of its two sides stand at a distance of two and a half cubits from the gate. The walls of the cells are five cubits thick while their inside area is six by six cubits. From the beginning of the roof of the chamber immediately adjoining the gate on one side to the end of the roof of the chamber immediately adjoining it on the other side is a total of twenty-five cubits. [With the exception of the two cells immediately adjoining the gate on either side] these cells are not open to the outside. They open into one another, while the entrances of the two cells adjoining the gate on either side face each other across the hollow of the gate.

6. There are open windows in the walls of these cells and on either side of their entrances, and also in the walls of the vestibules. These windows are narrow inside, widening outwards.

7. Running along the inside of the walls of the Outer Courtyard on three sides there are paved galleries on which stand thirty chambers. The height of the galleries is the same as the height of the gates, which break the continuity of the galleries. Two chambers of one hundred cubits length and fifty cubits width stand in the north and south of the eastern section of the Outer Courtyard, starting from a point parallel to where the cells of the gates end. Each of these chambers has two entrances, one to the north and one to the south, as well as an entrance into the Israelite Courtyard. Between these two chambers and the north and south walls of the Women's Courtyard are areas fifty cubits wide and one hundred cubits long. In the four corners of the Outer Courtyard stand four courts of forty by thirty cubits each. This is where the offerings of lesser holiness [*Kodshim Kalim*] are cooked. Two of them are in front of the main Temple Courtyard and two behind the Holy of Holies.

8. Behind the western end of the Inner Courtyard [*Azarah*] to the north and south stand two other chambers. Their length is one hundred cubits, the same as that of the Temple building, and they are fifty cubits wide. Each chamber has three stories, one above the other. Three pillars are built in the thickness of the chamber wall, one at each end and one in the middle. The pillars protrude on both sides. Three other pillars are built into the facing wall, as it says, "pillar facing pillar on account of the three stories" (Ezekiel 42:3). These pillars give support to the walls of the upper stories. The upper stories are narrower than the lower stories, as it is said: "And the upper chambers were narrow for the pillars consumed of them" (*ibid.* 42:5).

9. Between these chambers and the House of the Knives is a space of five cubits. Between these chambers and the outer wall of the main Temple building [*Heichal*] is a space twenty cubits wide. On each side of the Temple at the end of the House of Knives there is an indent of one cubit in the wall to give access to the areas between the chambers and the Temple building. The chambers have gates leading on one side to the Outer Courtyard and on the other to the area between the chamber and the Temple building. These chambers possess the same degree of holiness as inside the Inner Courtyard [*Azarah*], for the holiest offerings [*Kodshey Kodshim*] may be eaten there, as it says: "And he said to me, the chambers of the north and the chambers of the south... for the place is holy" (*ibid.* 42:13).

10. In the north section of the Outer Courtyard to the west of the Inner Courtyard near where the chambers end is the place where the priests bake the *Minchah*-offering and cook the holiest offerings.

Chapter 2: The Inner Courtyard and Altar

1. The Israelite Courtyard [*Ezrat Yisrael*, the eastern section of the Inner Courtyard, *Azarah*] is one hundred cubits long [from north to south] and seventeen cubits wide. Similarly the Courtyard of the Priests [which immediately adjoins the Israelite Courtyard to its west] is one hundred cubits long and seventeen cubits wide. It is a step of one cubit up from the Israelite Courtyard to the Courtyard of the Priests. In the latter stands the *Duchan*, a platform with three steps leading up to it. Each of these steps is one half-cubit high and one half-cubit deep. Altogether the Courtyard of the Priests [i.e. on the level of the *Duchan*] is two and a half cubits higher than the Israelite Courtyard.

2. The Inner Courtyard has three gates, one to the south, one to the north and one to the east. The gates of the Upper [Inner] Courtyard are similar to those of the Lower [Outer] Courtyard, except that the vestibules of the gates of the Lower Courtyard stand inside their Courtyard, whereas those of the Upper Courtyard stand outside their Courtyard. The cells of the gates protrude eleven cubits from the wall. There are three cells on either side of each gate, and the vestibule of the gate stands between them in the middle. Thus from the Courtyard gate to the end of the vestibule is a distance of eleven cubits, in which eight steps lead up from the Women's Courtyard to the Israelite Courtyard.

3. Altogether the Inner Courtyard [*Azarah*] is one hundred cubits square. The Courtyard wall is six cubits thick. From the walls of the Inner Courtyard to the walls of the Outer Courtyard is a distance of one hundred cubits in each direction. Inside the Inner Courtyard are

three chambers. Two of them are situated near the northern gate. One is the Washers' Chamber, which actually faces the gate. Inside this chamber are four marble tables on which the sacrificial portions are rinsed. Each table is one cubit high, one and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. Fixed in the tables are metal hooks one handbreadth in length on which the animal carcasses are hung for skinning. The second chamber is the Chamber of Song, which faces south. It is built as one chamber from the outside, but inside it is divided into two. Here the Levites place their harps, lyres, cymbals and other musical instruments. The third chamber is by the eastern gate facing north. Here the Priests dress in their priestly garments and go out to perform their service.

4. At its base the Altar is thirty-two cubits square. The Base of the Altar [*Yesod*] rises to a height of two cubits. The Altar then recedes by one cubit on all sides, so that the next section of the Altar is thirty cubits square. This section of the Altar is called the *Sovev*. It rises to a height of four cubits. Above the *Sovev* the Altar recedes by another cubit on all sides, so that on this next level the Altar is twenty-eight cubits square. At the four corners of the Altar stand the "Horns", which are one cubit square. The area bounded by the Horns is thus twenty-six cubits square. There is a path one cubit wide for the Priests to walk around the Woodpile. The area bounded by this path – the area of the Woodpile – is thus twenty-four cubits square. The cubit used for measuring the Altar is the cubit of six handbreadths, with the exception of the cubits by which the Horns and indents of the Base (*Yesod*) and Ledge (*Sovev*) are measured. In these three cases the measurement used is the cubit of five handbreadths. A scarlet line runs horizontally around the middle of the Altar. The Base (*Yesod*) of the Altar is intact along the entire north and west sides, but at the southeast corner along the last cubit of the south side and the last cubit of the east side there is no Base.

5. The Ramp leading up to the Altar is on the east side of the Altar. It is thirty-two cubits long and sixteen wide. To the north of the Altar is the Slaughter Area. There are eight tables, four in the Vestibule, two to the east and two to the west, and four in the gate, two to the east and two to the west. On these tables the burnt, sin and guilt offerings are slaughtered.

Chapter 3: The Temple Building

1. Between the Altar and the Vestibule [of the main Temple building] is a distance of thirty-four cubits, in which there are twelve steps going up to the Vestibule. The Vestibule wall is five cubits thick. The Vestibule itself is eleven cubits wide [i.e. from east to west], while its length [i.e. from south to north] is the same as the breadth of the

Sanctuary. The width of the entrance of the Vestibule is fourteen cubits. At the two ends of the Vestibule, the Sanctuary walls jut out five cubits. Stretching out on both sides of the Vestibule are the Houses of the Knives, which in each case are fifteen cubits wide with walls ten cubits thick.

2. The wall of the Sanctuary is six cubits thick. The Sanctuary entrance is ten cubits wide. The Sanctuary is forty cubits long and twenty cubits wide. Its door-posts are square. There are four doors, two on the inside and two on the outside. The outer doors open into the hollow of the entrance, while the inner doors open into the Sanctuary itself.

3. The Great Gate has two side gates, one to the north and one to the south. No one passes through the southern side gate except the High Priest when he goes to eat the sacrificial portions, as it says: "And God said to me, This gate will be closed... But the Prince – for he is the Prince – will sit there to eat bread" (Ezekiel 44:2-3). The Priest who opens the Sanctuary in the morning takes the key and opens the northern side gate. From there he enters the cell, and from the cell he goes into the Sanctuary. He then opens the Sanctuary gate, goes out and leaves.

4. The Sanctuary wall and the wall of the Vestibule are supported by cedar beams which run between them. All the walls are covered with planks of cedar coated with gold. All the walls and doors are decorated with cherubs having the face of a lion on one side and the face of a man on the other, with palms between each cherub. Thus facing each palm is the face of a lion on one side and the face of a man on the other.

5. The Candelabrum stands on the south side of the Sanctuary while the Show Bread Table is on the north side. The Table is three cubits high and two cubits long. The Incense Altar stands in the center but somewhat nearer the Gate. The pillars and widening windows of the Vestibule, the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies are all of the same design.

Chapter 4: The Temple Building (cont.)

1. A wall two cubits thick stands between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies. The entrance of the Holy of Holies is six cubits high and seven cubits wide. The hollow of the entrance has the same thickness as the wall: two cubits. The Holy of Holies is twenty cubits square. Its wall is six cubits thick.

2. Surrounding the walls of the Temple building are thirty-three cells: fifteen on the north side, fifteen on the south side and three on the west side. The cells on the north and south sides are in three successive tiers, each of which contains five adjacent cells. The three cells at the west end are built one on top of the other. Around the whole building there are thus three levels of cells with a total of eleven cells on each level. The cell walls are five cubits thick, the foundations six cubits thick and the cell itself four cubits wide. Each of the cells of the bottom layer has three entrances: one to the right, one to the left and one to the cell above it. The north-eastern cell has five entrances: one leading to the cell to its right, one leading up to the cell above it, one to the Winding Staircase [*Mesibah*], one to the side gate and one leading into the Sanctuary itself.

3. The length of the cells on the bottom tier is five cubits. Above the ceilings of the cells of the bottom tier, the Temple wall recedes by one cubit. The floor created by the ceilings of the bottom tier of cells together with this one cubit recession is six cubits, this being the length of the cells of the second row. Similarly, a further one cubit recession in the Temple wall at the level of the ceilings of the cells of the second row creates a floor of seven cubits for the cells of the third floor, whose length is thus seven cubits. The Winding Staircase gives access from the cells on each level to those on the level above, as it says, "The side chambers widened as they wound around higher and higher" (Ezekiel 41: 7).

4. The three tiers of five cells on each side of the Temple start at its western end and run for a total of eighty-five cubits alongside the north and south walls of the Temple. Where the chambers end at the east end of the Temple there is a space of five cubits [*the Munach*] giving access to the openings of the last cells on the bottom level on each side. These are open to the north and the south. The wall of the cell is five cubits and the cell eleven.

Chapter 5: Dimensions of the Temple Building and Courtyards

1. The main Temple building is one hundred cubits long, one hundred cubits wide and one hundred cubits high. The hundred cubits from east to west are made up as follows: The wall of the Vestibule is five cubits, while the Vestibule itself is eleven cubits wide. The wall of the Sanctuary is six cubits thick. The length of the Sanctuary is forty cubits. The wall between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies is two cubits thick. The Holy of Holies is twenty cubits long. The western wall of the Sanctuary is six cubits thick, the cell four and the wall of the cell six. The width of the Temple building from north to south [excluding the House of the Knives] is seventy cubits, made up as

follows: The Winding Staircase including its wall is ten cubits thick, the wall of the cell is five cubits thick, the cell itself is four cubits thick, the Sanctuary wall is six cubits thick, the Sanctuary is twenty cubits wide, the Sanctuary wall is six, the cell four, the wall of the cell five, and the Rainwater Spout [where the rainwater runs down from the roof, *Beit Horadat Hamayim*] including its wall is ten cubits thick. The Vestibule juts out fifteen cubits to the north and fifteen cubits to the south. These two areas of the Vestibule are called the House of the Knives. Thus the Temple building has the form of a squatting lion, narrow behind and broad in front.

2. The Inner Courtyard (*Azarah*) is one hundred cubits square. From east to west the hundred cubits consist of: seventeen cubits of the Courtyard of the Israelites, seventeen cubits of the Courtyard of the Priests, thirty-two cubits occupied by the Altar and thirty-four from the Altar to the Vestibule. From south to north the hundred cubits consist of: four cubits from the wall to the Altar Ramp, and sixty-four occupied by the Ramp and the Altar. The Altar is thus directly in front of the Sanctuary, as it says: "And the Altar in front of the House" (Ezekiel 40:47). The remaining thirty-two cubits are the distance from the Altar to the north wall.

3. The Outer Court is three hundred and seventeen cubits long and three hundred and twelve cubits wide. From east to west, the three hundred and seventeen cubits are made up as follows: from the wall of the Outer Courtyard to that of the Inner Courtyard is a distance of one hundred cubits. The east wall of the Inner Courtyard is six cubits thick. The inside length of the Inner Courtyard from east to west is one hundred cubits. The Sanctuary is one hundred cubits long, and there are another eleven cubits behind the Holy of Holies. From north to south the three hundred and twelve cubits are made up as follows: from the north wall of the Outer Courtyard to the wall of the Inner Courtyard is a distance of one hundred cubits. The north wall of the Inner Courtyard is six cubits thick. The Inner Courtyard is one hundred cubits wide inside. The southern wall is six cubits thick, and from there to the south wall of the Outer Courtyard is a distance of one hundred cubits.

4. Everyone who enters the Inner Courtyard goes out through the same gate through which he entered. The only exception is when fulfilling the precept of appearing in the Temple on the pilgrim festivals. In this case one exits from the opposite gate, as it says: "And he who enters through the gate in the south will leave from the gate in the north" (*ibid.* 46:9). The eastern gate is opened only for the Prince, and on Shabbat and the New Moon it is opened until the evening, as it says: "The Gate of the Courtyard will be closed... On the Shabbat day it will be opened and on the New Moon it will be opened" (*ibid.* 46:1).

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