

*Dear Friends,*

*What follows is Dr. Miles Krassen's translation of the Peri Ez Hadar, "The Fruit of the Tree of Splendor." Miles translated this for Shomrei Adamah in 1992. At the time, we knew of no other English translations of this work.*

*The Peri Ez Hadar is a densely layered kabbalistic text, which will be beyond the reach of most people who have no schooling in kabbalah. It is extremely esoteric—and difficult even for those trained in kabbalah. I have included it here, as I believe it is an important resource for those students of kabbalah who are looking for the source of the Tu bi Shevat seder.*

*If you wish to use this material or make copies of it, please acknowledge Dr. Krassen and Shomrei Adamah.*

*I hope you will enjoy the fruits of the Tree of Splendor!*

*Ellen B.*

## INTRODUCTION

PERI EZ HADAR

FRUIT OF THE TREE OF SPLENDOR

KABBALISTIC HAGGADAH FOR A TU BI-SHEVAT SEDER

BY MILES KRASSEN

The notion of a *Tu bi-Shevat seder*, that is, a ritual involving the eating of specific fruit, drinking wine, and studying or reciting specific selections from the sacred literature of Judaism, does not seem to have been known before the late seventeenth-century. While the 15th of *Shevat* was recognized as the New Year's Day for Trees by the School of Hillel in the Mishnah, *Rosh ha-Shanah*, its significance lay mainly in fixing the date from which fruit-bearing trees must be tithed. Otherwise, no specific laws or customs governed its observance. It may be for this reason that the thirteenth-century Spanish kabbalistic classic, the *Zohar*, fails to deal with the day. Kabbalists of this period were more concerned with providing mystical bases that would strengthen the motivation for observing the laws and traditions of classical Judaism, than with creating new rituals. However, the kabbalists of sixteenth-century Safed did create some new rituals, most notably the *kabbalat Shabbat* service. The kabbalistic *Tu bi-Shevat seder* seems to have been created in the wake of kabbalistic creativity in sixteenth-century Safed and is particularly influenced by the teachings of the School of Isaac Luria, which emphasize the need for *tiqqun*, or cosmic restoration.

The text of the *seder*, which has come to be known as *Peri 'Ez Hadar*, seems to have been first published as part of the Sabbatian influenced anthology of kabbalistic customs, *Hemdat Yamim* (Izmir, 1731-32). However, it is not yet possible to determine when the text was actually composed or who its author may

have been. The *Hemdat Yamim* was, itself, primarily a reworking of materials copied from a variety of writings by earlier kabbalists, some of which, at least, date back to the final decades of the seventeenth-century.<sup>1</sup> It seems probable, therefore, that the compiler of the *Hemdat Yamim* copied the *Tu bi-Shevat seder* from some earlier source. At any rate, the text has been printed separately many times as a pamphlet entitled *Peri 'Ez Hadar*, since its first edition in Venice, 1728.<sup>2</sup>

Both the text of *Peri 'Ez Hadar* and the *seder* that it contains seem to have been popular only among the Sefardic communities of the East. No mention of the text or its customs is to be found in the Hasidic literature of Eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> This may be due to the fact that *Hemdat Yamim* was condemned as a heretical Sabbatian text by Jacob Emden, who attributed it to the Sabbatian theologian, Nathan of Gaza. Emden's influence, it seems, did not extend beyond the Ashkenazic community. In the East, the *Peri 'Ez Hadar* continued to be reprinted until the present day. It now appears that as a result of the unique historical conditions that have resulted from the establishment of the State of Israel, the *Tu bi-Shevat seder*, *Peri 'Ez Hadar*, is finally gaining acceptance among certain elements in the contemporary Askenazic communities as well. This is due, in part, to the unprecedented proximity of diverse Jewish communities in Jerusalem, which is resulting in a period of mutual influencing. Sefardic Torah scholars study in Ashkenazic *yeshivot* and sages of Baghdad and Morocco have become experts in the writings of Hasidic masters. At the same time, Ashkenazic kabbalists have increasingly come under the influence of works composed or popularized among the Sefardic communities. It may be

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of authorship, dating, and sources of the *Hemdat Yamim*, see Isaiah Tishby's Hebrew articles, reprinted in *Paths of Faith and Heresy* (Jerusalem, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>See Friedberg, *Beyt 'Eqed Sefarim*, vol. 3, p. 851, #777.

<sup>3</sup>See the volume in the series *Sefarim Qedoshim*, *Seder Hamishah 'Eser be-Shevat ve-Hamishah 'Eser be-'Av* (Brooklyn, 1990). This anthology contains material on *Tu-ve-Shevat*, which has been gathered from seventy works, many of which are Hasidic. It also contains the full text of the *Peri 'Ez Hadar*, despite the fact that it is not mentioned in any of the East European sources.

added that under these favorable conditions kabbalistic works of all types and periods are appearing in print with ever greater frequency.

Formally, *Peri 'Ez Hadar* contains four basic sections. There is an introduction that explains the basis for the *Tu bi-Shevat seder*. There is a prayer to be said before the actual *seder* begins. There is a description of the order of the fruit to be eaten and the way wine should be blended in each of the four cups. However, the bulk of the *seder* consists of selections from the Bible, early rabbinic texts, and the zoharic literature. In fact, the greatest portion of this material is taken from the *Zohar*.

As a result, the *Peri 'Ez Hadar* is essentially a kabbalistic work, meant to be read and applied by a reader thoroughly schooled in the outlook of the Kabbalah, particularly as it developed in the School of Isaac Luria. This fact renders the text, even in translation, virtually incomprehensible for a modern reader. This is due to several factors. First, the text does not explain the rather complex basic principles of Kabbalah as they developed since the late twelfth-century. In particular, the text assumes that its reader is familiar and comfortable with the kabbalistic classic, *Sefer ha-Zohar*, an esoteric work characterized by obscure allusions and highly symbolic language.<sup>1</sup> In addition the author's outlook involves certain fundamental notions about nature, the cosmos, and the spiritual role that human beings are meant to play, which may be unfamiliar and even strange to a contemporary reader. Such notions, moreover, are not defended or justified, but are implicit in the author's and the intended reader's worldview. Some of these difficulties will be alleviated, to some extent, by comments included in the notes that accompany the translation. In addition, each selection from the zoharic literature is prefaced by a brief, explanatory lead-in. Nevertheless, it seems best to prepare the reader for an

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<sup>1</sup>The modern reader, unfamiliar with the *Zohar* and its outlook, is referred to Daniel Matt's introduction and translation: *Zohar: the Book of Enlightenment* (New York, 1983).

encounter with the text by first addressing some of its most basic and implicit issues.

The *Tu bi-Shevat seder* celebrates an important moment in the yearly cycle of nature, the appearance of fruit on trees. In the Land of Israel, this stage occurred during mid-winter. In order to understand how the *Peri 'Ez Hadar* approaches this celebration, it is necessary to gain some understanding of how the kabbalists viewed nature. In general, the kabbalistic view shared many traits that were typical of other pre-modern cosmological systems, which tended to regard nature as in some sense sacred. This approach to nature is in marked contrast to those that have become typical of the modern period.<sup>1</sup> For the kabbalist, nature is neither a source to be exploited for utilitarian benefits, nor a sentimental vestige of the past to be romanticized by poets and naturalists. It is rather an ultimate link in a chain of divine manifestation that directly emerges from the divine source of life. Implicit here, is a notion of sacred cosmology, which is not limited to material existence. The kabbalists' faith involves a hierarchy of worlds that are ontologically higher than the material world. These worlds are populated by angels and spiritual forces that span the ontological regions that separate humanity and the material world from God. Moreover, the forces in these worlds serve as conduits and sources for the divine energy that becomes manifest in nature and in Creation in general.

Although each world is characterized by an increasing degree of opacity that veils its divine root, all worlds share a common underlying structure. Thus contemplation of any world can lead to knowledge of the structure of the ultimate theosophical realm. This realm is the world of the ten *sefirot*, which is composed of the ten divine qualities and aspects that constitute the inner life of God, insofar

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<sup>1</sup>For an interesting discussion of the differences between such traditional and modern conceptions of nature, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: the Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man* (London, 1988). Much of Nasr's account of Christian and Islamic cosmology applies to the view of nature that is found in the *Zohar*.

as it is accessible to human imagining. This principle is no less true of nature. Indeed, nature (along with the human body) is, in a sense, the most available arena of divine revelation, since the higher worlds are not apparent to the senses. As such, nature may serve as a mirror in which all of the mysteries of the concealed Godhead are reflected.

This fundamentally sacred view of nature renders it comparable to the Torah itself. For the kabbalist, the Torah is not merely an account of the sacred history of Israel and its divinely mandated laws. It is a primary manifestation of divine revelation. All of the secrets and mysteries of the cosmos and the inner workings of the Godhead are somehow contained within it. However, it is a cipher, which only yields its concealed meanings to those who hold the keys of divine gnosis, the kabbalists, who through contemplation and mystical experience have gained access to the symbol system that opens the Torah's deeper levels of meaning. For the kabbalist, nature parallels the Torah. The very same secrets that are concealed within the quintessential sacred text may be learned through directly contemplating aspects of nature. The structure of different kinds of fruit, the growing patterns of trees, the habits of birds, indeed all natural phenomena are, in essence, aspects of a divine epiphany that proclaims the truth of God's existence.

However, here it should be added that the kabbalist's position is not identical to that of medieval religious philosophers, like Maimonides, who also viewed nature as a source for knowledge of God. In their view, the knowledge of the wondrous construction of nature and its laws led to an appreciation for its Creator. Here, knowledge of God is theosophical. It regards nature as a symbolic representation of the hidden divine realm and not merely as an immaculately designed product of divine engineering.

We have thus far been considering nature as source for divine knowledge. There is another aspect of the kabbalist's view of nature that is equally fundamental. This is related to the question of humanity's relation to nature.

The kabbalistic cosmos in its present state, especially according to the School of Isaac Luria, is dualistic. Evil as well as good is present in some sense and to some degree in each of the worlds that exist below the world of divine emanation itself. Indeed, the way in which evil is present in each world is symbolized in the *seder* by the classification of fruits, according to the location of their shells, skin, or rind. Thus the presence of evil in our material world is also a reflection of conditions in the higher worlds, which themselves reflect the state of things in the theosophical realm. There, however, evil by definition cannot exist, although its roots, or potential for existence, are located in the highest ontological levels of divinity.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, while evil is external to the divine realm of holiness itself, it is located in proximity to its tenth *sefirah*, *Malkhut*. Thus, as long as evil has not been entirely vanquished, it has the capacity to threaten the tenth *sefirah* and to separate Her<sup>2</sup> from the higher *sefirot*. The ascendancy of evil above is reflected by various conditions in the material world that are characterized by injustice. In terms of the sacred history of Judaism, the disruption of the divine realm is represented by Israel's exile among the nations, which symbolizes the absence of God's Kingdom on earth.

The duality of good and evil is also symbolically present within nature. Sources of life, such as food, represent the powers of holiness. That which may not be eaten symbolizes the external evil forces.<sup>3</sup> The edible portion of wheat, for

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<sup>1</sup>For an account of the Lurianic theory of evil, see Isaiah Tishby's Hebrew work, *The Doctrine of Evil and the 'Kelippah' in Lurianic Kabbalism* (Jerusalem, 1984). The English reader should see Joseph Dan's article, "'No Evil Descends from Heaven'-- Sixteenth-Century Jewish Concepts of Evil," in Bernard Dov Cooperman, ed., *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

<sup>2</sup>The tenth *sefirah* is typically characterized as a female divine aspect.

<sup>3</sup>The examples found in medieval kabbalistic texts are decidedly anthropocentric. However, a more contemporary expression of kabbalistic symbolism might be extended to view all natural phenomena that threaten the ecosystem as symbols of the forces of evil, whereas those that maintain the ecosystem might be

example, symbolizes the tenth *sefirah* , while chaff represents the external forces. The edible portion of fruit is associated with forces of holiness, while its shell represents the forces of evil. Here we should note that the symbolism compels us to recognize that the "external forces" have an important role to play. They are not evil in an absolute sense. Indeed, the examples from nature teach us that when the cosmos is in a harmonious state, the "external forces" perform the positive function of acting as guardians that protect the more vulnerable manifestations of holiness.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is obvious that nature alone is not sufficient for maintaining a harmonious state. Just as evil may assail the tenth *sefirah* above, those aspects of nature that should protect its life-giving elements can, under certain conditions, overrun them. As a result, the forces of holiness in nature can be cut off from the sources of life that sustain them, just as *Malkhut* can be separated from the higher *sefirot* .

If, then, neither the divine realm nor nature can be counted on to maintain a state of cosmic harmony, what factor remains which might act to fulfill this function? For the kabbalist, the answer is humanity. Indeed, according to kabbalistic exegesis, the separation of the tenth *sefirah* was first caused by the sin of Adam. Symbolically, through eating the fruit in direct violation of the divine command, Adam separated the forces of holiness in nature from their divine source, thus empowering the external forces. As a result, the edenic state of harmony was broken and humanity and nature became adversaries. Thus, from the kabbalistic point of view, the sin of Adam testifies to the awesome power that humanity possesses. It is humanity that is primarily responsible for the state of nature and the cosmos.

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equated with holiness.

<sup>1</sup>This notion of the *qelippot* as *shomer* (guardian) is discussed in detail by Isaiah Horowitz in his classic work, *Sheney Luhot ha-Berit* (Amsterdam, 1648). See my forthcoming translation in the Paulist Press, Classics of Western Spirituality Series, *Isaiah Horowitz: Toledot Adam (The Generations of Adam)* .



If the first human misused his power to disrupt the edenic state of harmony, the kabbalists believe that that same power may still be used positively in order to reestablish and maintain the fragile cosmic balance. It is important to understand how, from the kabbalistic point of view, this power may be exercised. First, we should recall that Adam's sin consisted in separating an aspect of nature from its divine source. From this we may infer that a positive exercise of the human power to affect the cosmos involves connecting it, or more correctly, maintaining its connection, to the forces above. To a certain extent, this is directly accomplished by observing those laws concerning nature that are explicitly mandated by the Torah and interpreted and elaborated upon by the rabbinic authorities. However, while the kabbalist believes implicitly in the cosmic efficacy of such divine commandments, he also believes that their effectiveness depends fundamentally on a deeper, essentially human quality, intentionality.

The kabbalist not only fulfills the obligations of Jewish law, but transforms them into theurgic acts by having their specific cosmic effects in mind at the time that he performs them. Thus in fulfilling a specific commandment, he has in mind a precise effect, which he believes will occur in the upper worlds as a result of his action and intention. This intention is called the *kavvanah* of the commandment. Knowledge of these *kavvanot* constitutes one of the most important areas of kabbalistic concern.<sup>1</sup>

Knowledge and practice of the *kavvanot* has important ramifications in the realm of nature. Indeed, nature's well-being, from the kabbalistic point of view, is largely dependent on the *kavvanot* of commandments that pertain to nature, such as blessings said over food. The *kavvanot* that accompany the fulfillment of these

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<sup>1</sup>While a comprehensive academic study of *kavvanot* remains to be written, a useful introduction to the subject is provided by Daniel Matt's article, "The Mystic and the Mizvot," in Arthur Green, ed., *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible through the Middle Ages* (New York, 1986). A detailed presentation of Lurianic *kavvanot* can be found in the several volumes of Yehiel Abraham Barlev's *Sefer Yedid Nefesh* (B'nei Brak, 1988).

commandments are meant to insure that divine energy, or *shefa'* , will be drawn down from its ultimate source of life in the divine realm, through the intermediate channels that deliver it to the realm of nature. Failure to perform this sacred role of guardianship impairs the functioning of this concealed process and threatens the ability of the guardian angels to replenish nature.

The School of Isaac Luria places emphasis on two additional concepts that are relevant to our text. According to this school, kabbalists are not only concerned with taking responsibility for the ongoing process of maintaining cosmic harmony. The cosmos has suffered serious structural damage in a catastrophic process of creation. Thus a long historical process of rectification, or *tiqqun* , is required in order to restore the cosmos to its proper state. As a result of the catastrophe, sparks of divine light fell from their allotted places in the upper worlds and became embedded and concealed in the lower orders. A primary responsibility, according to kabbalists of the Lurianic school, is the retrieval of these sparks, which must be elevated through performing the commandments and studying Torah with *kavvanah* .<sup>1</sup>

However, the catastrophic effect was not limited to the lights of the world of emanation. As a result of Adam's sin, a parallel shattering occurred within the unity of the human soul. Sparks from the collective soul became separated and fell. Consequently, the sacred history of Israel was interpreted by Lurianic kabbalists as a complex process of transmigration. In order to return to a state of perfection, the various elements of Adam's original soul had to gradually restore themselves through penitential acts, performed over the course of a series of lives. However, this process was further impeded by human sin. As a result, some of the soul-sparks fell to lower levels of existence and became sources of vitality for non-

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the Lurianic creation myth and its implications for spiritual practice, see Lawrence Fine's "The Contemplative Practice of *Yihudim* in Lurianic Kabbalah," in Arthur Greed, ed, *Jewish Spirituality: From the Sixteenth-Century Revival to the Present* (New York, 1987).

human aspects of creation, such as plants and animals. Thus the sacred act of eating food took on additional kabbalistic significance, since it was believed that fallen soul-sparks, awaiting redemption, were present in food.<sup>1</sup> This belief added an additional significance to the *Tu bi-Shevat seder*, with its emphasis on eating and blessing fruit. While the Lurianic theory of transmigration may strike modern sensibilities as strange, it may be well to observe that this theory serves to connect humanity to nature in a fundamentally spiritual way. Every aspect of nature, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral, may potentially contain sparks of holiness that are essential for the completion and redemption of a person's soul and those of his relatives.

Because of the kabbalistic perspective, *Tu bi-Shevat* takes on a significance that goes beyond a simple celebration of an important stage in the cycle of nature. For one thing, the symbol of the cosmic tree is so central to kabbalistic thinking that any dramatic change affecting trees in the material world must be seen as a reflection of a cosmic event of the greatest importance. Thus *Tu bi-Shevat* represents not only the New Year's Day for trees in this world, but even more importantly, for the kabbalist, the time when the cosmic tree becomes fecund. Since nature and all of creation is directly dependent on the spiritual bounty that is received from the cosmic tree, the kabbalistic perspective of the *Peri 'Ez Hadar* considerably magnifies the importance of *Tu bi-Shevat*. Indeed, one may say that the day becomes associated with a cosmic myth of divine potency and fertility. Thus the introduction to the *Peri 'Ez Hadar* indicates that the central focus of the *tiqqun* is the ninth *sefirah*, *Yesod*, which represents the divine phallus, or male generative principle within God. An emphasis is placed on contemplating the relationship between *Yesod* and

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<sup>1</sup>See Louis Jacobs' articles, "The Uplifting of Sparks in Later Jewish Mysticism," in Arthur Green, ed, *op. cit.*, and "Eating as an Act of Worship in Hasidic Thought," in *Studies in Jewish Intellectual History: Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Alabama, 1979).

*Malkhut* , the female principle, which "bears fruit" as a result of being impregnated by *Yesod* .

The mythological perspective is complemented by a theurgic practice. As is often the case, kabbalistic practice involves numerical correspondences between words, or *gematria* . In this case, the letters of the Hebrew word for tree, '*ilan* , have the same value as the sum of the letters that spell two divine Names, *YHVH* and '*ADoNaY* . This indicates that the New Year's Day for the '*ilan* involves the union of the two Names. Moreover, in kabbalistic tradition, these two Names represent the male and female divine principles. When the letters of these two Names are combined to form *Y'AHDVNHY* , they become an object on which a kabbalist can meditate in order to bring about the actual union of the corresponding *sefirot*. This meditation is appropriate for *Tu bi-Shevat* .

As a result of the association of the *tiqqun* of *Tu bi-Shevat* with divine potency, an additional motive is discussed in the introduction to the *Peri 'Ez Hadar* . It is assumed that the harmony of the relationship between *Yesod* and *Malkhut* is adversely affected by human sexual improprieties. Thus *Tu bi-Shevat* , with its emphasis on rectifying the *sefirah* , *Yesod* , becomes an occasion for correcting, or atoning for, the damage that was done to *Yesod* by improper sexual behavior. This introduces another mythic and magical element, the tendency to view nature's bounty as related to, and even dependent upon, human sexuality. However, this motive is addressed through the theurgic, contemplative focus on *Yesod* and devotionally, through adopting an attitude of atonement. The pietistic element, which seems to conflict to a certain extent with the otherwise celebrational character of the *seder* , may be a compensation for the fact that *Tu bi-Shevat* occurs during a penitential period. This period, called *Shovavim* , is otherwise characterized by fasting and penitential acts.

To sum up, the *Tu bi-Shevat seder* , which is presented in *Peri 'Ez*

*Hadar* , is essentially a *tiqqun* for the *sefirah* , *Yesod* . Through this *tiqqun* , the fertility of the cosmic tree is enhanced . This ultimately results in nature's receiving the vitality required in order to bring forth its bounty. The *tiqqun* , involves three types of activity, blessing fruit, eating fruit, and meditating on the kabbalistic symbolism of the fruit. This latter activity primarily involves the contemplative study of selections from the zoharic literature.

### *Peri Ez Hadar*

Although the 15th of Shevat occurs during the "days of the *Shovavim* ,"<sup>1</sup> it is not a fast day, since it is the New Year's Day for the fruits of the tree. Through the *tiqqun* that is performed on this day with fruit, these *sefirah* , "*Zaddiq* , Life of the Worlds," is aroused.<sup>2</sup> This mystery is mentioned in the *Zohar* , *Bereishit* ,<sup>3</sup> "on the third day, the earth made fruit from the potency of that [supernal] *zaddiq* . As it is written, '*And God said, let the earth bring forth... fruit trees that produce fruit...*'<sup>4</sup> 'Fruit trees ' refers to '*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*' that bears fruit.<sup>5</sup> '*That produce fruit*' alludes to *zaddiq*, the foundation of the world..."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The six weeks during which the first six portions of the book of Exodus are read are considered a period of repentance. This is related to the fact that the first letter of the Hebrew name for each of these six portions spells *shovavim*, "repenters."

<sup>2</sup>According to Zoharic Kabbalah, earthly acts that are performed with theurgic intention may positively affect the ten inner aspects of the Godhead called *sefirot* . In this case, the religious acts concerning fruit that are performed on the 15th of Shevat are said to effect the ninth *sefirah* , *Yesod*, or "foundation." This *sefirah* represents the male generative principle within the divine world called *Zaddiq*, or "righteous one." This *sefirah* is often anthropomorphically represented as a phallus.

<sup>3</sup>*Zohar*, v. 1, 33a. Also see *Zohar*, v. 3, p. 87a. The meaning is that the production of fruit depends on the union of both male and female elements. Although the female tree bears the fruit, it depends on the male for fertilization.

<sup>4</sup>Genesis 1:12.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., the tenth *sefirah*, *Malkhut*, which is female.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., the ninth *sefirah*, *Yesod*, the male.

It is a fine custom for the upright to eat many fruits on this day and to celebrate them with words of praise, just as I have instructed my companions. Even though this custom is not mentioned in the Lurianic writings, it is nevertheless a wonderous *tiqqun* ,<sup>1</sup> according to both exoteric and esoteric sources.

For in the Palestinian Talmud, *Yuhasin*, ch. 10,<sup>2</sup> the following appears. "'Listen, humble ones, and rejoice.'"<sup>3</sup> R. Abbun said, 'In the future a person will have to account for the fact that he saw species of fine fruit and did not eat them. R. Eleazar used to bind up small coins [to purchase] all kinds of new fruit to eat.'"<sup>4</sup> This is related to the teaching that whoever enjoys produce in this world without pronouncing a blessing is called a robber.<sup>5</sup> For by means of the blessing, one draws down *shefa* . The angel who is assigned to that fruit [which was eaten] is filled by the *shefa* ' so that a second fruit can replace the first. Thus one who enjoys the fruit without blessing it is a robber. For through eating an aspect of creation [without blessing it], he eliminated the spiritual element that it contained. [Thus he] prevented that divine power from being manifest in the world, when he should have drawn down a blessing from above. As a result, the angel's power is annulled, since it no longer possesses the *shefa* ' [that it needs in order to replace the fruit]. That is why the person is called a robber.

He also said that it is as if he robbed from his father and mother. For through the *kavvanah* <sup>6</sup> of the blessing recited when eating fruit, a person who eats rectifies

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<sup>1</sup>The term *tiqqun* has two primary connotations. First, it refers to an act of rectification in which some aspect of the damaged cosmos is restored to its desired state. However, it may also mean an act of preparation in which a specific cosmic aspect is made ready for some subsequent development or process. In either case, the implication here is that the custom of celebrating the 15th of Shevat through eating and praising fruit has a powerful theurgic effect. The male and female *sefirot*, *Yesod* and *Malkhut* , that are responsible for releasing divine abundance into the world are positively effected. The desired result is the production of fine *etrogim*, the *peri ez hadar*, which are required for the observance of *Sukkot* , during the following fall.

<sup>2</sup>Check this. Is there such a tractate?

<sup>3</sup>Psalms 34:3.

<sup>4</sup>Each year a special blessing is said whenever a fruit is eaten for the first time.

<sup>5</sup>See B.T., *Berakhot* , 35b.

<sup>6</sup>The mystical or theurgic intention that is contemplated, when one utters the blessing.

the sparks of his own soul as well as the sparks that pertain to the souls of his parents. This is the esoteric meaning of, "*I will make him disgorge what he has swallowed*,"<sup>1</sup> which is in accord with [the secret of the verse], "*the riches he swallowed, he vomits, [God empties it out of his stomach.]*"<sup>2</sup> So if one enjoys the fruit without a blessing, it is as if he robbed his parents of the divine sparks that pertain to their souls. He is a comrade of the Destroyer. For the Destroyer's only intention is to rob the divine sparks and to absorb them [in the realm of evil] and to [prevent them from] returning to [their source] in holiness. For that is the esoteric meaning of "*for a person does not live on bread alone, but on all that goes forth from the mouth of the Lord.*"<sup>3</sup> This alludes to the secret of the blessing, which retrieves [the sparks] from impurity to holiness.<sup>4</sup> It is brought about through the "*mouth of the Lord*," i.e., by means of the chewing of the 32 teeth which correspond to the 32 times that '*Elohim*' is mentioned in the Act of Creation,<sup>5</sup> as we have explained at length in the previous section concerning the *tiqqun* of the meal.

The punishments [for these transgressions] also apply to someone who sees species of fine fruit and allows them to dry up and go bad without eating them. [By not eating them], he prevented the angels of the fruit from receiving [their share of] divine goodness. Since he did not say a blessing over the fruit, the angel's power is annulled and it is bereft of the *shefa'* that depends on the blessing. He also robs his parents. For since he did not eat the fruit, he also neglected to eat the sparks that pertain to their souls, as has been explained. Accordingly, R. Eleazar used to bind up small coins [to purchase] all kinds of new fruit to eat. [For he

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<sup>1</sup>Jeremiah 51:44.

<sup>2</sup>Job 20:15.

<sup>3</sup>Deut. 8:3.

<sup>4</sup>The blessing prevents the divine sparks in the food from being appropriated by the evil forces and restores them to the forces of holiness.

<sup>5</sup>The divine name '*Elohim*' appears 32 times in the first section of Genesis that details the stages of Creation. The 32 teeth which chew the food that has been blessed and return the divine sparks to holiness, correspond to these 32 divine names. Thus they are alluded to by the "*mouth of the Lord*," mentioned in Deuteronomy 8:3.

wanted] to increase blessings and perform the *tiqqun* immediately, so as not to miss the [opportunity for fulfilling] the *mizvot* .

In order to effect this *tiqqun* , it is well for us to eat all kinds of fruit on this very day and to bless them with this intention. For a *mizvah* is best when performed at the proper time.

According to the *Zohar* , "R. Yehudah said, why is it written, '*even this God made corresponding to that*'"?<sup>1</sup> God made the earth to correspond to the firmament. Everything [below] alludes to what is above. For when R. Abba would see a certain tree whose fruit became a bird that flew from it, he would weep and say, 'if human beings only knew to what this alludes...' As R. Yose said, 'these trees from which wisdom can be learned,<sup>2</sup> such as the carob, palm, pistachio, and the like were all borne in one chariot.<sup>3</sup> All those [trees] that bear fruit, except the apple tree, allude to one supernal mystery... And all the small ones, except for the hyssop, are the offspring of one mother. In heaven, powerful intermediaries are placed over each of the earth's plants, and each has its own mystery, just as above."<sup>4</sup>

From this you can understand that although the blessed Creator placed Its rule on the earth and everything has an angel assigned to it, nevertheless of greatest importance is the fact that everything is connected to the supernal attributes.<sup>5</sup> As they said there in the *Zohar* : "why is it written, '*I went down to my walnut garden* '?"<sup>6</sup> He said to him, come and see. This is the garden that went forth from Eden and it is the *Shekhinah* .<sup>7</sup> 'Walnut' refers to the Holy Chariot,<sup>8</sup> the four tributaries that spread out from the garden like a nut..."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:14.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., their nature alludes to some characteristic of the divine world of the *sefirot* .

<sup>3</sup>Or, "were all compounded in one compounding."

<sup>4</sup>*Zohar*, *Shemot* , 15b.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., to the *sefirot* .

<sup>6</sup>Song of Songs, 6:11.

<sup>7</sup>The tenth *sefirah*, *Malkhut* . It is often called *Shekhinah* , the divine presence.

<sup>8</sup>The chariot is described in Ezekiel's vision. It is located under the tenth *sefirah*.

<sup>9</sup>*Zohar*, *ibid*.



From this we can infer that herbs can be distinguished by the pre-eminence of their divine roots above.

R. Hayyim Vital explained that there are thirty kinds of fruit trees. Ten [have their divine roots] in the World of Creation, corresponding to the ten *sefirot* of that world. Since their roots are far removed from *tuma'ah* <sup>1</sup> and close to the purely divine World of Emanation, they have no shell, either within or without.<sup>2</sup> They may be eaten as they are.<sup>3</sup> They include the following: grapes, figs, apples, citrons, lemons, pears, quince, strawberries, *sorbash* ,<sup>4</sup> and carob.

There are ten types of fruit [whose roots are] in the World of Formation. Esoterically, they correspond to the ten *sefirot* of Formation, which are intermediate, between the World of Creation and the World of Making. They are neither as close to the forces of evil as [the *sefirot* ] of the World of Making nor as distant as the [*sefirot* ] of the World of Creation. Consequently, the seed kernels within the fruit are not eaten, since they are not soft like the seeds within the fruit that correspond to the World of Creation. They include: olives, dates, cherries, *shofaipash* , *pishqush* , *zirgoilash* , apricots, *wishnash* , *aqaranis* , *nishpolash* .

There are ten other kinds of fruit [whose roots are] in the World of Making, corresponding to the ten *sefirot* [of that world]. Consequently, we eat what is within and discard what is without. For the fruit's shell is a barrier between it and the World of Delights,<sup>5</sup> so that it will not take on the impurity [of the evil forces].<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Literally, "impurity." Here, the meaning is "forces of evil," represented by the *qelippot* (shells).

<sup>2</sup>The cosmology assumed by the author consists of four worlds that are hierarchically arranged between the the divine source, or holiness, and the forces of evil, or impurity. The thirty species of fruit have their roots in the second, third, and fourth worlds, called Creation, Formation, and Making. They are classified according to the nature of their shells which symbolize the type of protection required, due to the world's proximity to the forces of evil. The fruit, which correspond to the World of Creation, have no shells because their roots are so far from the forces of evil that no protection is required.

<sup>3</sup>They may be eaten in their entirety. There is no shell or kernel to discard.

<sup>4</sup>I have not been able to identify fruit whose names are transliterated.

<sup>5</sup>The World of Making is bordered by the realm of evil forces that is characterized by lust or pleasures entirely separated from holiness.

<sup>6</sup>The spiritual battle that must be waged between good and evil, or holiness and impurity, is confronted directly in the World of Making. Consequently, the fruit that correspond to that world require a hard outer shell. The fruit that symbolize the World of Formation have only a hard inner kernel, because that world is

This is the esoteric meaning of the evil urge and 'the *qelippah* ' cleave to the *nefesh* .<sup>1</sup> The following correspond to *sefirot* of the World of Making: pomegranites, walnuts, almonds, chestnuts, hazelnuts, *alonim* , *perisin* , *penyones* , *botenim* ,<sup>2</sup> *mauzish* .

Now the ten kinds of fruit [that represent the World] of Creation have been purified of everything that relates to the forces of evil (*pesolet* )<sup>3</sup> and are left completely good. But a barren tree [represents] the opposite. It corresponds to pure evil, containing nothing but the *qelippah* .<sup>4</sup> Just as the ten kinds of fruit [that correspond to the World] of Formation have an edible exterior and a hard interior, the kernel within, so it is with the *qelippah* .<sup>5</sup> When a fallen holy spark is great, the *qelippah* is not able to contain all of that light within itself. So [the *qelippah* ] enters within the holiness and surrounds it.

The ten kinds of fruit [that correspond to] the World of Making have a soft interior surrounded by a hard shell. This is like the *qelippah* , when it takes a holy spark within itself, in order to be enlivened by it. It surrounds the spark just as a shell encompasses the fruit. Consequently, we learn that there is no physical thing here below that does not correspond to something above. "*For one is protected by another on a higher level, and both of these by still higher ones* ." <sup>6</sup> As things are below, so they are above. For there would be no shadow if there were none to cast it.

My father perceived the esoteric wisdom [alluded to by the] wording of the Mishnah, which says, "New Year's Day for fruit of the tree," rather than "for fruit of the trees." The [sages of the Mishnah] were alluding to the Holy Tree, the Tree of

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not directly assailable by the forces of evil, but may only be penetrated by evil/impurity.

<sup>1</sup>The human soul potentially contains a series of grades or parts that hierarchically correspond to the series of worlds. The lowest grade, *nefesh* , like the World of Making is directly assailable by the forces of evil.

<sup>2</sup>Although "*botenim* " means "peanuts" in Modern Hebrew, this could not have been the meaning here. Only "fruit of the tree" are included in the *tiqqun* . Peanuts are "fruit of the earth."

<sup>3</sup>Literally, "of all refuse."

<sup>4</sup>It bears no edible fruit. Thus it contains no divine sparks.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., the forces of evil.

<sup>6</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:7.

Life,<sup>1</sup> as Isaac Luria's disciples explained. For tree ('*ilan* ') has the same numerical value as the holy name, *YAHVDNHY* ,<sup>2</sup> as they wrote in their explanation of the following passage from the *Zohar* , '*Aharey Mot* . "That great and mighty tree [which contains nourishment for all is called the Tree of Life], the tree that planted its roots in these living ones."<sup>3</sup> Also, the Lurianic writings state that when the word tree ('*ilan* ') is spelled out fully, its numerical value is the same as twelve permutations of the name *YHVH* .<sup>4</sup> Thus [tree] alludes to *Tif'eret* , the Tree of Life, which contains twelve permutations of *YHVH* , as stated in *Zohar, beshalah* , "twelve [supernal, engraved] regions ascended [in the scale], in the great and powerful holy Tree."<sup>5</sup> Also see the passage, "'And they came to Elim and there were twelve springs of water there and seventy date palms...'<sup>6</sup> and the Holy Tree grew strong in twelve regions..."<sup>7</sup>

The meaning is that the 15th of Shevat is the New Year's Day for tithing the fruit of trees. For most of the year's rain has already fallen. The sap has begun to ascend through the trees and fruit begin to take form on the trees from this time. Similarly, in the divine realm, it is the New Year's Day for the fruit of the supernal tree which bestows its holy abundance on its fruit, the [upper worlds]. From them the *shefa'* descends until it reaches the trees in our world below and the powers that oversee them.

"And establish for us, the work of our hands,"<sup>8</sup> Through the special power of this *tiqqun* , performed on this very day, through the power of the blessings and

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., they were alluding to the *sefirah*, *Tiferet*, which is symbolized by the 'Tree of Life.'

<sup>2</sup>The letters that spell '*ilan* ' have the numerical value of 91. This equals the value of the sum of the two divine names, *YHVH* and *ADoNaY*. The combination of these two names, *YAHVDNHY* represents the union of the *sefirot*, *Tiferet* and *Malkhut* , respectively, i.e., the sacred union of the male and female principles within the Godhead.

<sup>3</sup>*Zohar*, v. 3, 58a.

<sup>4</sup>When '*ilan* ' is spelled *ALF YVD LMD NVN* it equals 311 plus one for the word itself, total 312. Twelve permutations of *YHVH* equal 312.

<sup>5</sup>*Zohar*, vol. 2, 66b.

<sup>6</sup>Exodus 15:27.

<sup>7</sup>*Zohar*, vol.2, 62b.

<sup>8</sup>Psalms 90:17.

contemplation of the mystery of the fruit's divine roots, an effect will be produced in their structure and character above. Moreover the person performing the *tiqqun* can also be affected. For through the beauty of this *tiqqun*, he can correct what he distorted (*me'uvat lo yukhal litqon*)<sup>1</sup> in damaging the covenant through in chastity.<sup>2</sup> By virtue of performing this *tiqqun* for the fruit tree, he will heal his part<sup>3</sup> in the flawing of *Zaddiq* who makes fruit.<sup>4</sup> There is the added benefit of the penitential period, mentioned above.<sup>5</sup> Thus a *tiqqun* for the flaw of the covenant is performed, as explained in the first chapter.

My teacher used to say that one should intend through eating the fruit to correct the sin that Adam committed with the fruit of the tree. Even though our intention is directed toward this end all the days of the year, a *mizvah* is best when observed at its proper time and this day is the beginning for fruit of the tree. Moreover, as we have frequently stated, speech has the power to arouse the *sefirot* and to cause them to shine more wonderously with a very great light that sheds abundance, favor, blessing, and benefit throughout all the worlds. Consequently, before eating each fruit, it is proper to meditate on the mystery of its divine root, as found in the *Zohar* and, in some cases, in the *Tiqqunim*, in order to arouse their roots above. But, first of all, read the following selections.

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<sup>1</sup>A pun on Ecclesiastes 1:15: "That which is crooked cannot be made straight (*me'uvat l'o yukhal litqon* )."

<sup>2</sup>Although various forms of male sexual incontinence may be alluded to here, it is possible that the author has masturbation specifically in mind. The *Zohar* views ejaculation that does not occur during 'normal' intercourse with a woman as an especially serious sin that cannot be rectified. If this is indeed the meaning, *Peri 'Ez Hadar* would have to be considered an earlier corrective for *shikhvat zer'a le-vatalah* than the *Tiqqun ha-Kelali* of Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav.

<sup>3</sup>Literally, "his wound."

<sup>4</sup>See above, page 1, note 3. Sexual irregularities, the 'flaw of the covenant,' have a negative effect on the ninth *sefirah*, *Yesod*, the *zaddiq*, which represents the divine phallus. Since the 15th of Shevat *tiqqun* affects this *sefirah* and deals with supernal potency, it can also correct the damage caused in that region by aberrant sexuality. It is interesting to note the implied magical relationship between human sexuality and the fecundity of nature. Male irregularities in this area damage the divine quality that is ultimately responsible for the quality of the year's fruit.

<sup>5</sup>See page 1, note 1.

This passage concerns the mysteries of creation. Although it makes use of images and elements drawn from the natural world, its intention is to understand aspects of creation that are found within the hidden theosophic realm, the world of the *sefirot*. The first part focuses especially on the on the male and female generative principles within the divine realm, i.e., *Zaddiq* (*Yesod*) and *Malkhut*. The union of these two is required in order "to bear fruit," i.e, to produce *shefa'* or holy souls. The passage was probably chosen to begin the *tiqqun* for *Tu be-Shevat* because of the prominence it gives to the cosmic tree (*Malkhut*) and its dependence on the male vitality of *Zaddiq*. This motif forms the contemplative focus that is essential to the theurgic intention of the *tiqqun*.

However, while *Yesod* and *Malkhut* represent the generative organs of creation, they participate in a process that is initiated at higher levels within the world of the *sefirot*. The second half of the passage contains speculations on the stages of the creative process that occur within the divine realm, prior to the union of *Yesod* and *Malkhut*. Although the kabbalistic references are obscure, the discussion alludes to the deep mysteries that underlay the final stage of the process. These speculations may be related to the hidden forces that function within nature and human procreation at deeper levels than the more obvious stage involving the union of male and female organs of procreation.

Rabbi Hiyya said, the [gathering of waters] alludes to *Zaddiq*.<sup>1</sup> For it is written, "[God] called [the gathering of waters] seas."<sup>2</sup> For [*Zaddiq*] gathers all of the streams,

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., the ninth *sefirah*, *Yesod*.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 1:10.

springs and rivers. It is the source of all of them and it gathers all of them.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, [the verse says] "*seas* ." Thus [the verse continues] "*And God saw that it was good* ." <sup>2</sup> But, it [is also] written, "*Hail the zaddiq , for he is good* ." <sup>3</sup> Because [zaddiq ] is indicated, he made a distinction between the third day and the first day and did not say "for it is good" concerning [the second day].<sup>4</sup> For on the third day the earth bore fruit from the vitality of that *zaddiq* . For it is written, "*And God said, 'let the earth bring forth... a fruit tree [producing fruit in its likeness,<sup>5</sup> containing its seed on the earth]...*" <sup>6</sup> What is the '*fruit tree* ?' The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for it bears fruit.<sup>7</sup> "*Producing fruit* " refers to *Zaddiq* , foundation of the world. "*In its likeness* " because all men who possess a holy spirit, which is the fruit of that tree, are distinguished by a marking that is in its likeness. What is it? The holy covenant, the covenant of peace.<sup>8</sup> Thus the faithful<sup>9</sup> are in its likeness. In its likeness, they enter [the covenant] and they never separate themselves from it. The *zaddiq* is truly a producer of fruit.<sup>10</sup>

And that tree becomes pregnant and bears that fruit in its likeness: in the likeness of that producer of fruit, so that they will be like him. Fortunate is the portion of one who resembles [both] his father and mother. Consequently, the holy mark [of the circumcision] is made on the eighth day, so that he will be like his

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<sup>1</sup>All of the upper *sefirot* , which are likened to streams, flow into the ninth *sefirah* . It is the source from which those streams "water" the tenth *sefirah*, *Malkhut* .

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 1:10.

<sup>3</sup>Isaiah 3:10.

<sup>4</sup>Some commentaries explain that the second day corresponds to *Gevurah*, which implies restriction.

<sup>5</sup>Literally, "according to its kind."

<sup>6</sup>Gen. 1:11.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., the tenth *sefirah*, *malkhut* , which releases holy souls (fruit) into the worlds below.

<sup>8</sup>The holy covenant is represented by the mark of circumcision. Thus the male penis is marked so as to be in the image of the divine phallus, the ninth *sefirah*, *Yesod* , or *Zaddiq* .

<sup>9</sup>Literally, "the sons of faith." The reference is to the kabbalists who produce holy souls in the world, just as *Yesod* , the supernal *Zaddiq* , unites with *Malkhut* to produce "fruit." The divine phallus has no foreskin, because it is not impeded by the evil *qelippot* . Mythically, the rite of circumcision separates the male genitals from the forces of evil and enables it to produce "holy fruit."

<sup>10</sup>I.e., both the earthly and supernal *zaddiq* produce fruit.

mother.<sup>1</sup> When the foreskin is split and pulled back, the holy mark<sup>2</sup> is revealed, so that he will be like his father. Therefore, "*fruit tree*" refers to [the lower] mother.<sup>3</sup> "*Producing fruit*" alludes to the holy covenant, his father.<sup>4</sup> "*In its likeness*" so that [the son] will be like his father and marked [by the sign of the covenant].

"*Containing its seed on the earth* ." "*Containing its seed ?*" It should say, "containing seed." What is [the meaning of] "*its seed* ?" It contains the seed of "*vav*"<sup>5</sup> on the earth. And so it is indeed! For it sprinkles that seed upon the earth. Fortunate is the portion of Israel for they [themselves] are holy and are like the holy ones [above]. Indeed, that is why it is written, "*all of your people are zaddiqim* ." <sup>6</sup> They are all *zaddiqim* indeed. For they came out of [*Zaddiq* ] and they resemble [*Zaddiq* ]. Fortunate are they in this world and in the world that is coming.

Rabbi Hiyya said, it is written, "*maker of the earth with His might, [preparer of the world with His wisdom]* ." <sup>7</sup> What is "*maker of the earth* ?" It is the Holy Blessed One.<sup>8</sup> "*With His might*" refers to the *Zaddiq* . "*Preparer of the world with His wisdom* ." "*World*" is the earth below. "*With His wisdom*" alludes to *Zedeq* .<sup>9</sup> For it is written, "*And He will judge the world with righteousness (zedeq)* ." <sup>10</sup> "*Maker of earth*" is the Holy Blessed One for He establishes the earth and its paths. With what? "*With His might* ," as we explained.

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<sup>1</sup>*Malkhut* is the eighth *sefirah* that emerges from the beginning point (*Hokhmah*).

<sup>2</sup>The crown of the penis.

<sup>3</sup>In the world of the *sefirot* , *Malkhut* is called the lower mother which parallels the supernal mother, *Binah* .

<sup>4</sup>I.e., *yesod* .

<sup>5</sup>In Hebrew the third person possessive pronoun is indicated by the sixth letter of the alphabet, *vav* , which represents the sixth *sefirah*, *Tiferet* . Thus the seed that *Yesod* deposits in the earth (*Malkhut* ) is the seed of *Tiferet* , the male divine principle called the Blessed Holy One.

<sup>6</sup>Isaiah 60:21.

<sup>7</sup>Jeremiah 10:12.

<sup>8</sup>I.e., the sixth *sefirah*, *tiferet* .

<sup>9</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* .

<sup>10</sup>Psalms 9:9.

Rabbi Yehudah said, ["*with His might* " means] with the inscribed letters of Rabbi Eleazar.<sup>1</sup> There are permutations of the letters, 22 permutations as one.<sup>2</sup> Two letters [determine each of them].<sup>3</sup> One ascends and one descends. The one that ascends descends and the one that descends ascends.<sup>4</sup> This is represented by '*a"kh b"kh 'e"l*'.<sup>5</sup>

Rabbi Yose said, the fulcrum of the scale stands in the middle,<sup>6</sup> as indicated [in the verse], "*with measure and with balance (mishqal )...*"<sup>7</sup> "*Balance* " is the fulcrum that stands in the middle.<sup>8</sup> This mystery is the holy *sheqel* . It is written, "*And scales [of justice]...*"<sup>9</sup> In it they stand and are weighed. What are "*scales* ?" As the verse says, "*scales of justice* ." <sup>10</sup> They all stand in balance with the holy *sheqel* .

Rabbi Yehudah said, "*with the holy sheqel* " alludes to the holy spirit.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>According to the 'Or ha-Hamah , Rabbi Yehudah is questioning Rabbi Hiyya's association of "*with His might* " with *Hokhmah* . Instead, he suggests that *Binah* is the *sefirah* alluded to in the verse. *Binah* is the origin of the letters which are considered to be the instruments of creation. However, this allusion is obscure. Several attempts to explain this passage appear in the commentaries. Most assume that the *Zohar* had in mind *Sefer Yezirah* , chapter 2, mishnah 4 and 5: "22 foundation letters fixed in a wheel in 231 Gates. The wheel turns back and forth... How did He weigh and exchange them? *Alef* with all of them and all of them with *Alef*, *Bet* with all of them and all of them with *bet* , and so on..."

<sup>2</sup>According to the commentary, *Derekh Emet* , there are twenty two ways of transposing letters of the alphabet, one for each of the twenty two letters. The commentaries based on *Sefer Yezirah* , such as *Ketem Paz* , note that there are 21 series of combinations since no letter is combined with itself.

<sup>3</sup>Since two letters determine each of the Gates, there are eleven Gates in each of the 21 "alphabets." Thus the total is 231 as stated in *Sefer Yezirah* . For a discussion of various ways in which these Gates have been interpreted, see Aryeh Kaplan, *Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation* , chapter 2.

<sup>4</sup>According to *Ketem Paz* , the first series following *alef bet* proceeds as follows: *gimmel tav* , *dalet shin* , *heh resh* , etc. Thus the letters at the beginning of the alphabet, which have low numerical values, ascend while the letters at the end, which "go up" in value, descend in the series. However, this manner of constructing the 231 Gates is not typical. Kaplan, *op. cit.*, traces it to Abraham Abulafia.

<sup>5</sup>The mnemonic spells "only in You is God." (Isaiah 45:14). *Ketem Paz* explains that the first word has the numerical value of 21, indicating the 21 series of Gates. The second word has the numerical value of 22, indicating the letters of the alphabet. The third word alludes to the middle series which begins with *alef lamed* . The middle series would, thus, represent *Yesod* , which joins the upper *sefirot* with *Malkhut* .

<sup>6</sup>According to the 'Or ha-Hamah , Rabbi Yose is challenging Rabbi Yehudah's view. Creation is not brought about by the 231 Gates , but by means of the four letters of the Tetragrammaton which are arranged in the form of scales.

<sup>7</sup>Lev. 19:35.

<sup>8</sup>*Yod* is the fulcrum of the two scales (the two letters *heh* ) which hang from a horizontal *vav* .

<sup>9</sup>Lev. 19:36.

<sup>10</sup>Justice (*zedeq* ) refers to either *Malkhut* or *Binah* , the *sefirot* represented by the two letters *heh* in the Tetragrammaton. The prooftext is Deuteronomy 16:20, "*Justice (zedeq), Justice, you shall pursue* ." The scales can tip either to the side of judgment or compassion.

<sup>11</sup>He is arguing that the balance depends on "the holy spirit," i.e., on *vav* and not on *yod* .



Rabbi Isaac said,<sup>1</sup> it is written, "*with the word of YHVH, heaven was made and with the spirit of His mouth, all of [heaven's] hosts* ."<sup>2</sup>

"*With the word of YHVH, heaven was made* ." These are the heavens below that were made by the word of the heaven above, with the spirit that sent out a voice that reached that river which descends and goes out and whose waters never cease.<sup>3</sup>

"*And with the spirit of His mouth, all of [heaven's] hosts* ." Everything below stands by virtue of the spirit which is male.<sup>4</sup>

"*He waters the mountains from His upper realms, from the fruit of Your deeds the earth will be sated.*"<sup>5</sup>

"*He waters the mountains from His upper realms* ."<sup>6</sup> Why "*upper realms* ?" As we have explained, for it is written, "*who covers His upper realms with water.*"<sup>7</sup> "*From the fruit of Your deeds, the earth will be sated.*" This alludes to that stream that descends and goes out to the lower realms. As it is written, "*producing fruit... which contain its seed* ." <sup>8</sup> Thus it is explained.

## **Zohar, Qedoshim**

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The theme of this passage is that all aspects of nature are governed by a metaphysical divine order. Every element of creation is sustained by a specific angelic power that has been assigned to oversee its growth and existence.

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<sup>1</sup>Rabbi Isaac is arguing that *Tiferet* , represented by the heavens above, plays the central role in creation. See *Or ha-Hamah* .

<sup>2</sup>Psalms 33:6.

<sup>3</sup>"Word" and "spirit that sent out a voice" refers to the extension of *Tiferet* that reaches *Yesod* , "the river which descends" to *Malkhut* .

<sup>4</sup>Everything below *Malkhut* is also sustained by *Tiferet* .

<sup>5</sup>Psalms 104:13.

<sup>6</sup>The remainder of the passage is meant to indicate that the process through which *Malkhut* is "watered," ultimately affects the world below.

<sup>7</sup>Psalms 104:2.

<sup>8</sup>Genesis 1:11.

However, the responsibility for maintaining this order lies with human beings. Proper human action assures that the metaphysical power will be able to function as intended. Conversely, human behavior that violates the distinction between types and species within the natural order, impairs the functioning of the angelic order and causes harm both above and below. This principle is invoked in order to explain two biblical laws: "*kil'ayim* ," the prohibition against mixing species (see Deuteronomy 22:9-12 and Leviticus 19:19) and "*'orlah* ," the prohibition against eating fruit from a tree before the fourth year after it has been planted (see Leviticus 19:23,24). In effect, the *Zohar* is here providing a mystical rationale for two laws which the rabbis classified as "*huqqim* ," divine decrees for which there is no apparent reason.

Transgressing the prohibition against mixing species (*kil'ayim* ) is explained as an act which confuses the angels assigned to the species in question. As a result, the "powers of evil," which are warded off by the proper functioning of the metaphysical order, are able to intervene and negatively affect the bestowal of divine energy. In the examples that are adduced, there is a further suggestion that the mixing of species may directly join together the sides of holiness and impurity. This is illustrated by the case of Cain and Abel. Cain, according to a rabbinic tradition, is considered to be the offspring of the serpent, whereas Abel is the product of Adam's seed.

The prohibition against yoking together an ox and a donkey illustrates the necessity for keeping the two domains entirely distinct. The ox is a member of the cattle family which may be eaten in holiness, while the donkey is not a kosher animal. Failing to keep the two domains separate in the natural world, allows the forces of impurity to penetrate the side of holiness in the metaphysical domain.

Certain exceptions to the general prohibition against mixing species are interpreted as symbolically representative of the state of wholeness. For example,

a prayershawl (*tallit* ) made of flax may contain woolen fringes (*zizit* ). Ordinarily, garments containing such a mixture would be considered *kil'ayim* and would confound the metaphysical order. However, in this case it is permitted since the garment is required by religious law and alludes to the quality of wholeness in the divine realm which contains all sides.

The prohibition against eating the fruit of a tree during the first three years after it has been planted (*'orlah* ), is also explained within the context of the metaphysical powers. The tree is not considered whole and firmly established until the fourth year. Until that time, no angel is assigned to it. Thus a person who eats the fruit before the fourth year does not participate in the sacred responsibility for maintaining the metaphysical cosmic order. Even if a blessing is said before eating such fruit, it has no effect. For the function of a blessing is to replenish the supply of divine vitality that the tree's angel requires in order to enable the tree to continue bearing fruit.

After the fourth year, the fruit may be eaten, as long as it has been tithed and blessed. However, the fruit of the fourth year has a particularly sacred status. This is because, according to kabbalistic symbolism, "fourth" represents both the male and female principles within the divine realm, i.e., *Tif'eret* (the Holy One, blessed be He) and *Malkhut* (*Keneset* Israel). Thus fruit of the fourth year alludes to the divine union of the two principles. As such, it is the product of cosmic wholeness and divine favor.

Although not explicitly discussed, the text can be related to a number of questions that are relevant to ecological concerns. Does the mixture of species result in a weakening of the natural order? Does the elimination of types of plants and creatures which are intrinsic to nature threaten the delicate ecological balance? Perhaps species in their "natural" form have some essential role to play which is not evident to man. Can it be that tampering with this natural order destroys the

potential for harmony between man and nature? Do the forces of nature become chaotic and destructive as a result of violating the integrity of species? If so, what are the boundaries that should not be violated? Are there cases where certain mixing of species could be compared to *zizit* , permitted because they are not destructive? What mixtures could be considered as symbols of the unity of creation?

Rabbi Eleazar opened with the verse: "*You are My witnesses said YHVH and my servant whom I have chosen, so you will know and believe [Me and you will understand that I am He , before Me no God was formed and there will be none after Me]* ." <sup>1</sup>

"*You are My witnesses :*" This refers to Israel and we [also] learn that [the witnesses] are heaven and earth. For it is written, "*I make heaven and earth witnesses to what I say today ...*" <sup>2</sup> Israel witnesses each other and heaven and earth and the entire universe bear witness to them.

"*And My servant whom I have chosen :*" this [servant] is Jacob. As it is written: "*You are My servant Israel; <sup>3</sup>in you I take pride .*" <sup>4</sup> And it is also written: "*And you, My servant Jacob, do not fear .*" <sup>5</sup> And some say it refers to David. As it is written: "*For My sake and for the sake of David, My servant, whom I have chosen .*" <sup>6</sup> This refers to the upper David. <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Isaiah 43:10.

<sup>2</sup>Deut. 30:19.

<sup>3</sup>Israel is the name given to Jacob.

<sup>4</sup>Isaiah 49:3.

<sup>5</sup>Jeremiah 30:10.

<sup>6</sup>Isaiah 37:35.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* .

"So that You will know and believe in Me and understand that I am He :"  
What is the meaning of "*that I am He ?*" I have chosen that David and that Jacob. I am truly that One.<sup>1</sup>

"Before Me no God (El )was formed :"  
we have learned that the Holy Blessed One called Jacob "God" (El ). As it is written: "*He called him El, God of Israel .*"<sup>2</sup> The Holy Blessed One called Jacob "El !" <sup>3</sup>

And it is written: "*before Me no God was formed and there will be none after Me .*"

Therefore "*I am He .*" The whole. As it is said: "*there will be none after Me .*" Thus David is indicated and there is none after him.<sup>4</sup>

Come and see.

When the Holy Blessed One created the world, He established each and every thing. Each has its side.<sup>5</sup> Over each thing, He assigned a higher power. Even the tiniest herb does not lack a higher power over it.<sup>6</sup> Everything that happens to each and every thing depends on the power of the angel assigned to it above.

All the customs are ordained by the law. By the law one receives; by the law one exists. None can escape its jurisdiction. Since the day that the world was created, the authority of every angel was established over each and every thing. And all of the angels are guided by the higher law which each one receives. As it is written: "*she arises while it is still night and gives sustenance to her home and law to her maid-servants .*"<sup>7</sup>

Since the angels receive the law, they themselves are called laws. That law which is given to them, comes from heaven. Thus they are called "*heaven's laws .*"<sup>8</sup> How

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<sup>1</sup>Although the divine qualities as represented by the *sefirot* appear to be distinct, in actuality the One God unites all of them.

<sup>2</sup>Genesis 33:20.

<sup>3</sup>The verse really should be read "*He (Jacob) called Him, El , God of Israel.*" The source of this *midrash* is B.T., *Megillah* 18a.

<sup>4</sup>David refers to *Malkhut* which is the last of the *sefirot* .

<sup>5</sup>Each thing is somehow associated with the world of the *sefirot* .

<sup>6</sup>Compare *Bereishit Rabbah* , 10:6.

<sup>7</sup>Proverbs 31:15. The *Shekhinah* presides over the angels and bestows "law" to each of them.

<sup>8</sup>Jeremiah 33:25.

do we know that they come from heaven? For it is written: "*for it is Israel's law* ." <sup>1</sup>  
 Concerning this is written: "*you shall keep My laws* ." <sup>2</sup> That is, according to the law, each and every thing is assigned to a unique being in the world. Consequently, it is forbidden to confound species, to introduce one into [the place] of another. For in so doing, one removes each power from its place and impairs what the King has ordained.

"*Kil'ayim* :"<sup>3</sup> What is the meaning of *kil'ayim* ?

"*Kil'ayim* :"<sup>4</sup> It is like putting someone in prison so that he is restrained from doing harm. As it is written: "*to the house of Kele' (prison)* ." <sup>4</sup>

"*Kil'ayim* :"<sup>5</sup> It is preventing the powers from carrying out there functions.

"*Kil'ayim* :"<sup>6</sup> It is a mixing up, a confusion: he caused a confusion among the upper powers and impaired the manifest order of the King. As it is said: "*Do not let a garment of kil'ayim shatnez* <sup>5</sup> *go upon you* ." <sup>6</sup>

Come and see.

It is written: "*Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for on the day that you eat of it, you will surely die* ." <sup>7</sup> So, it is said that by eating he changed the King's laws.<sup>8</sup> [He] abandoned the tree of life<sup>9</sup> in which everything is perfected and upon which faith depends. And he joined himself to the "other side."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Psalms 81:5. In the symbolism of the *sefirot* , *Tiferet* is associated with both Israel and heaven.

<sup>2</sup>Leviticus 18:4.

<sup>3</sup>The *Zohar* here continues a discussion of Leviticus 19:19 which includes the word "*kilayim* (mixed species)."

<sup>4</sup>Jeremiah 37:18.

<sup>5</sup>Literally, a garment woven of mixed species.

<sup>6</sup>Leviticus 19:19.

<sup>7</sup>Genesis 2:17.

<sup>8</sup>I.e., Adam's sin affected the cosmic order.

<sup>9</sup>I.e., the holy world of the *sefirot* .

<sup>10</sup>A common kabbalistic euphemism for the unholy world of *tuma'ah* , that parallels the world of the *sefirot* . Also called the external or evil forces, associated with the *qelippot* .

Behold. We have learned that a person's deeds must reflect the holy model of the world above and be performed in the way that is required. If he deviates from the path [of holiness], he brings down upon himself something that is not required.<sup>1</sup>

Come and see.

Whenever a person's action below follows the straight path, as is required, he causes a holy spirit from above to emerge, descend, and rest upon him. But, whenever his action follows the crooked path, he causes the "other" spirit to emerge, descend, and rest upon him. This "other" spirit, which is not required, turns a person to the "other side." What is it that draws down this evil spirit upon him? Actions which accord with the "other side."

It is written: "*She demands wool and flax* ." <sup>2</sup>

What is the meaning of "*demands* ?" She<sup>3</sup> demands [retribution against the one who joins] wool and flax as one. If you say, then why are *zizit* permitted?<sup>4</sup> They explained, in that case the garment has been established in accordance with the perfection of its action, as is proper.<sup>5</sup>

"*She demands wool and flax* ." she calls for vengeance against the person who joined them as one. When is mixing permitted? When the [species] are joined through the perfection of a *mizvah* . For it is written: "*She acts with what her hands desire* ." <sup>6</sup> And *zizit* , we have explained. That case comes under the rule of perfection [of a *mizvah* ] and does not bring down an evil spirit. But when [flax and wool] are not in a state of perfection, then the person who joins them as one, brings an unwelcome spirit upon himself. What is the proof of this?

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<sup>1</sup>He arouses an evil spirit or energy in the world which does not contribute to the maintenance of the holy order.

<sup>2</sup>Proverbs 31:13.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., the *Shekhinah* .

<sup>4</sup>Woolen *zizit* are permitted on a linen *talit* . See B.T., *Yevamot* 4b.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., it exists to fulfill a *mizvah* which serves to unite matters that are otherwise required to be separate. The *mizvah* , as ordained by God, raises the action to a realm of wholeness or perfection where the distinctions that are found below are transcended.

<sup>6</sup>Proverbs 31:13.

Cain and Abel prove it. One came from one side and one came from the "other side." Therefore they must not be joined as one. The offering of Cain was rejected because of the offering of Abel. Concerning this [is written], "*do not let a garment woven of mixed species go upon you* ." <sup>1</sup>

"Do not let... go upon you " is obscure. [It teaches] do not let another spirit go upon you, to have power over you. For a person has to act in a way that is right and proper. Through such an act, a holy spirit from above rests upon him to sanctify him. When one's intention is to be sanctified, he is sanctified, as it is written:

"*sanctify yourselves and be holy for I ,YHVH , your God , am holy* ." <sup>2</sup>

It is written: "*and from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [do not eat]* ." <sup>3</sup> If Adam brought death upon the world through [violating] this commandment, how much more so, a person whose action brings another [spirit] that is not required.

Ox and donkey prove it. <sup>4</sup> For ox refers to one side <sup>5</sup> and donkey refers to the "other.

" Concerning this is written, "*do not plow with an ox and donkey together* ." <sup>6</sup> Do not make a mixture together, because it arouses the "other side" to join itself as one, in order to do evil to the world. Whoever separates them increases peace in the world. Similarly, whoever separates them in the manner that has been indicated, [so that] carding, spinning, and twining <sup>7</sup> [of mixed materials] are not found together, that person increases peace upon himself and upon the whole world.

The offering of Cain was flax and the offering of Abel was wool. These two are not at all alike. The secret of the matter: Cain was *kil'ayim* , a mixture

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<sup>1</sup>Leviticus 19:19. The case of Cain and Abel is further explained below.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 20:7.

<sup>3</sup>Gen. 2:17.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., like the case of Cain and Abel, the prohibition against yoking together an ox and a donkey proves that mixing species, except when required to fulfill a *mizvah* , brings an evil spirit.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., the side of holiness.

<sup>6</sup>Deut. 22:10.

<sup>7</sup>In Hebrew, *shu'a*, *tavvuy*, and *nuz* . Offered by the Rabbis as a possible explanation of the word *SHaTNeZ* . See Mishnah, *Kil'ayim* , 9:8.



that was not required, the other side. For he was not of the kind of Adam and Eve. And his offering came from that side. Abel was of the same kind as Adam and Eve. In Eve's womb these two sides were joined together. Since they were joined as one, they were of no benefit to the world and perished.

To this day their side exists.<sup>1</sup> Whoever performs the act of this union, summons up these sides over him as one. He is liable to be harmed. And another spirit rests upon him that is not required. But Israel has to arouse a holy spirit over them, to be holy, to exist in peace in this world and the coming world.

*"And the priest shall dress in linen clothing and linen trousers shall be on his flesh ..."*<sup>2</sup>  
[And it is written,] *"and he shall gird himself with a linen belt..."*<sup>3</sup> Why is it called linen (*bad*)? [It means] alone.<sup>4</sup> Because they should not join this flax with another. Therefore, it is not written, flax clothing, but linen (*bad*), alone.

Why does the priest have to appear in this manner? He had to appear in these linen garments before the altar of the *olah*,<sup>5</sup> when he would clean the ashes of the *olah*. For the *olah* is from the side of idle worship and evil thought.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, he has to appear in these alone and not in a mixture, as we have explained, so that all of a person's transgressions which come from that side will be atoned for.

But when he entered the Temple, the place where wholeness and all those services of wholeness are found, even though [flax and wool] are joined together, we are not concerned. It is just as we explained regarding *zizit*. For there, all of these higher kinds exist and are joined together along with all of the vessels of the Temple. A number of different kinds are found within it. And all are included there just as above. Fortunate are Israel. For the Holy Blessed One gave them a

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<sup>1</sup>I.e, their power of destruction.

<sup>2</sup>Leviticus 6:3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 16:4.

<sup>4</sup>The root *badad* means alone.

<sup>5</sup>The burnt offering.

<sup>6</sup>An *olah* is offered when one is guilty of evil thought.

Torah of truth, a Torah of faith, and loved them more than the rest of the nations, the idol worshippers. As it is written, *"I have loved you, said YHVH."*<sup>1</sup>

After him, Rabbi Hiyya opened the verse, *"when you come to the Land and you plant any kind of tree for food. [And you shall regard its fruit as uncircumcised. For three years they will be uncircumcised for you, not to be eaten]. And in the fourth year all its fruit shall be sacred for rejoicing before YHVH."*<sup>2</sup>

*"When you come to the Land.."* This has been explained by the *havrayya*. But come and see. For this tree only bears fruit in the earth. The earth brings them forth and shows that fruit to the world. But the earth only makes fruit through another power that is above it, just as a female only bears fruit through the power of the male.

That fruit does not reach fullness until the third year. And the power above is not assigned to it until it is whole. Once it has become whole, a power is assigned over it and the earth is established with it. For three years the earth is not established with it and is not whole with it. After [the earth] has become whole and they have been established as one, then there is wholeness.

Come and see. Until a woman has become pregnant three times, the fruit of her womb is not whole.<sup>3</sup> After three pregnancies, the female is established with that fruit and they are considered as one.<sup>4</sup> Then that fruit is the completion of everything and the beauty of everything. After it has emerged, for three years it has no power above. Then its ripening is complete. Levi is the most favored, the third [child] of his mother. For she was established with him and perfumed with him.

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<sup>1</sup>Malachi 1:2.

<sup>2</sup>Leviticus 19:23,24.

<sup>3</sup>According to the *Miqdash Melekh*, the *Zohar*'s position may be based on the case of the *'egla tilta*, mentioned several times in the Talmud. Although the literal meaning is probably "a calf that has reached a third of its growth," it has also been understood to mean a third-born calf. See, e.g., Rashi's comment on B.T. *Eruvin*, 63a. However, on B.T., *Shabbat*, 11a., Rashi explains that the third-born is superior because a young mother has not yet reached her strength and her first two offspring are not healthy.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., whole and complete.

After three years, a higher power is assigned over it, above. "*And in the fourth year, all its fruit shall be sacred for rejoicing ...*"<sup>1</sup>

What is "*sacred for rejoicing*?" Praise offerings, to praise the Holy Blessed One.

To this point, [we have explained the simple meaning of the verses]. Now we shall go on to the secret meaning.<sup>2</sup> For in the fourth year, *Keneset Israel* and the Holy Blessed One couple.<sup>3</sup> And there is a single rejoicing.<sup>4</sup> For it is written, "*sacred for rejoicing* ." Rejoicing and joy at one time.

What is the "*fourth year*?" This is the Holy Blessed One. And we have learned, "*fourth year* " is *Keneset Israel* , for it is the fourth leg of the Throne.<sup>5</sup> But it is all one. For then the Holy Blessed One couples with *Keneset Israel* . Then she is sacred and rejoicing and sacredness are found. Then powers are assigned over the world, over each and every thing as it deserves. From this point, everything is blessed, and it is permitted to eat [the fruit]. For everything partakes of the general wholeness, in the wholeness of above and below.

But before it is entirely complete, from below and above, it is forbidden to eat it. Whoever eats it is like one who has no portion in the Holy Blessed One and *Keneset Israel* . For that fruit exists without any higher sacred authority. For it does not rest upon it until it is complete. And it also lacks any lower authority. For the power of the earth is not sweetened<sup>6</sup> in it. Whoever eats it demonstrates that he has no portion above and below. If he says a blessing over it, it is a blessing said in vain. For at this point, the Holy Blessed One [still] does not rest upon [the fruit] and has no portion in it. May the Merciful One spare us from those who do not look out for the glory of their Lord.

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<sup>1</sup>Leviticus 19:24.

<sup>2</sup>Now the verse will be interpreted in terms of the *sefirot* .

<sup>3</sup>*Tiferet* and *Malkhut* are joined in union.

<sup>4</sup>The Aramaic term *hillula* can mean any occasion for rejoicing or, more specifically, a wedding.

<sup>5</sup>The Throne of Glory is supported by four legs, the *sefirot hesed* , *gevurah* , *tiferet* , and *Keneset Israel* (*malkhut* ).

<sup>6</sup>*Itbasmat* has the sense of being made fragrant at the moment of ripening.

Fortunate are the righteous in this world and the world that is coming. Concerning them, the verse is written, "*and the path of the righteous is like radiant light* ."<sup>7</sup>

**Zohar**

**Egev**

Vol. 3, 270b

This passage concerns the theurgic power of blessings. The bestowal of *shefa'* upon the lower worlds is dependent on the contemplative act of offering blessings. Although *shefa'* descends to the lower worlds from *Malkhut* , the tenth *sefirah* , it must first be released from the ultimate source above. From there it descends by way of a complex process, which involves the intervening *sefirot* . The blessings offered below are necessary in order to release the *shefa'* and to channel it through the various stages of the process that conducts it to *Yesod* and *Malkhut* . Each of the various stages requires a particular contemplative focus, or *kavvanah* . It is as if the person offering the blessing must guide the energy of the blessing, which ascends, and the *shefa'* that descends, through each of the stages of the process, by means of the appropriate *kavvanah* .

In the second half of the passage, the *kavvanot* are presented that are meant to be contemplated while the words of the blessing are recited. The *sefirah* alluded to by each of the words is identified, along with the kabbalistic rationale for making the association. A distinction is made between two types of blessings, those said when specific pleasures and events of the world are experienced and the eighteen blessings of the standing prayer that are central to every prayer service. Although

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<sup>7</sup>Proverbs 4:18.

some of the words are common to both types of blessing, the theurgic process is different in each of the two cases. Therefore, the *kavvanot* that accompany the words vary and must be distinguished.

"And it shall be, if you will hearken to these statutes ..." <sup>1</sup> And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless YHVH, your God ... <sup>2</sup> This commandment is to bless the Holy Blessed one for all that one eats, drinks, and enjoys in this world. If one does not bless, he is called a thief in regard to the Holy Blessed One. For it is written, "He robs his father and mother ." <sup>3</sup> The *havrayya* has explained this. <sup>4</sup> The blessings that a person offers to the Holy Blessed One ascend and draw forth life from "the source of life" <sup>5</sup> to the holy name of the Holy Blessed One, and they pour high oil upon it. <sup>6</sup> And it continues from there to the entire world.

And it is written, "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless YHVH, your God ." <sup>7</sup> Through the words of these blessings, a person pours out [*shefa* ] from that high source. And all these levels and sources <sup>8</sup> are blessed and filled so that they can pour out [*shefa* ] over all the worlds. And everything is blessed as one.

Thus a person has to make his will accord <sup>9</sup> with the secret of the blessings, so that parents and children will be blessed as one. Whoever blesses the Holy Blessed One is blessed, and takes the first portion of these blessings, for all the world below.

Since the name of the Holy Blessed One is blessed from there, the first portion descends and rests on his head. <sup>10</sup> We have already explained this, for it is written,

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<sup>1</sup>Deut. 7:12.

<sup>2</sup>Deut. 8:10.

<sup>3</sup>Proverbs 28:24.

<sup>4</sup>See B.T., *Berakhot* 35b.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., *Binah*.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., on *Tiferet*.

<sup>7</sup>See note 3.

<sup>8</sup>All the intermediate *sefirot* are filled from above and pour out *shefa* below.

<sup>9</sup>Or, "put his will into the secret of the blessings."

<sup>10</sup>I.e., on the head of the person who blesses.

"in every place where I cause my name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you ."<sup>1</sup>

Once that blessing comes and rests on his head, from there it is extended to the whole world.

When these blessings descend, they are crowned within the Holy Apple Orchard<sup>2</sup> and many levels of angels in the world meet them. They descend with them and proclaim, "this is the gift that a certain person sent to the Holy Blessed One. From what place do they<sup>3</sup> descend? Afterwards, they descend from the place of the head of the *zaddiq* .<sup>4</sup> There they ascend in order to arouse other [blessings] to descend from above. And it<sup>5</sup> is filled from above and below. As it is written, "*blessings are on the head of the zaddiq* ." <sup>6</sup> Once that level is full, it pours out [blessings] to that bride,<sup>7</sup> and from there they continue to descend below.

When these blessings ascend from below, there is no gate or angel above that does not open. In all of the firmaments, they proclaim, "this is the king's gift that a certain person sent. This is a gift in its fullness, as it should be." And what is it? A blessing over which *amen* was answered. That is "in its fullness, as it should be."

When that blessing ascends, all the levels above are summoned before that light that does not shine,<sup>8</sup> in order to shine upon it. And all the more so, if it is a blessing that many bless and crown with holy crowns with the secret of *amen* . *Amen* is the secret of the knots [that bind together] every *yihud* and *qedushah* <sup>9</sup> through the secret of its master. It crowns that blessing with high crowns, as it should be.

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<sup>1</sup>Exodus 20:21.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., *Malkhut*.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., the blessings.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., *Yesod*.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., the *zaddiq*, *yesod* .

<sup>6</sup>Proverbs 10:6.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* .

<sup>8</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* . It is called a "light that does not shine" because it has no single quality of its own. It reflects the qualities of the higher *sefirot* which shine into her.

<sup>9</sup>*Amen* has the effect of binding all of the *sefirot* , both when uttered after blessings and during the *qaddish* . See *Zohar* , vol. 3, 285b. The *kavvanah* of *amen* reaches the highest *sefirah* , *Keter* , which is higher than the *kavvanah* of the blessing itself.

The Holy Blessed One favors those that bless Him and longs for the blessing below. For that blessing ascends and illuminates the lamp that does not shine<sup>1</sup> and greatly increases its strength to ascend above. Concerning this mystery, the verse says, "*for I will honor those that honor Me ...*"<sup>2</sup> These are those that bless the Holy Blessed One. "*And those that insult me will be cursed .*" These are those who do not bless the Holy Blessed one and withhold blessing from their mouths.

Here is the secret of secrets for those that know the wisdom of their Master: through the secret [*kavvanot* ] of the blessings over the commandments of the Torah and every pleasure of this world, blessings are poured out from above to below.<sup>3</sup> The blessings of prayer are different.<sup>4</sup> For these are a *tiqqun* of their Master from below to above and from above to below. Blessings that are not said during the [standing] prayer ascend from below to above until they reach the light that does not shine and powerfully arouse that light that does not shine with this blessing.<sup>5</sup> And the arousal ascends above, until it reaches the high throne, source of all life.<sup>6</sup> Then other blessings emerge from that high source. And these two meet and kiss.<sup>7</sup> And they go and rest on the head of *zaddiq* ,<sup>8</sup> to pour out [*shefa* ] below. When they descend, parents and children and all of their lights are blessed.<sup>9</sup> And the secret of these blessings, which arouse from above to below, is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* .

<sup>2</sup>I Samuel 2:30.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., they primarily draw down blessings from *Binah* to *Malkhut*.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., the standing benedictions, or *amidah* . The difference is that these blessings are addressed to *Malkhut* which is aroused from below. But *Malkhut* cleaves to *Hesed* which arouses it from above. See below.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., the blessing first ascends to *Malkhut* .

<sup>6</sup>I.e., *Binah* .

<sup>7</sup>The ascending and descending blessings meet and merge.

<sup>8</sup>I.e., *Yesod* .

<sup>9</sup>When the blessings descend from *Binah* , they illuminate all of the *sefirot* , *Hesed* , *Gevurah* , and *Tiferet* , which are called the *Avot* (parents), and their "children," *Nezah* , *Hod* , and *Yesod* . See 'Or ha-Hamah .

*Barukh* :<sup>1</sup> this is the mystery of the source that is higher than all,<sup>2</sup> which pours out, extends, and illuminates all lamps. It is constantly blessed, for its waters never cease [flowing]. The beginning that is called "the world that is coming"<sup>3</sup> is located there. It is one end of heaven.<sup>4</sup> For this end is the upper end, since there is another end like it below, which is [called] lower world.<sup>5</sup> And it is also called *barukh* (blessed) in relation to [the worlds] below. For it pours out [*shefa* ] below as [a result of the] arousal from below to above that [characterizes] the blessings of the [standing] prayer.<sup>6</sup>

But *barukh* that is said here<sup>7</sup> is the secret of high *hokhmah* which fills that place<sup>8</sup> with one thin path that it causes to enter into it.<sup>9</sup>

*Atah* :<sup>10</sup> afterwards [divinity] begins to be revealed, for that *barukh* is concealed and thus is only named indirectly, "blessed," high source that is not revealed. *Atah* is beginning of outer revelation. Thus, it is called *atah* (You). And what is it? It is the secret of the right side<sup>11</sup> and it is called *Kohen* (priest) in relation to that place.<sup>12</sup> This is the secret [of the verse] "*atah is the priest for world* ."<sup>13</sup> Who is priest for that world? *Atah* . And this is the high right side which is found revealed.

YHVH : this is the secret of the middle.<sup>14</sup> The secret of faith in all sides.

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<sup>1</sup>Literally, "blessed." The first word of the blessing.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., *Binah*.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., *Binah* .

<sup>4</sup>I.e., *Binah* is one end of *Tiferet* .

<sup>5</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* .

<sup>6</sup>This is the difference between the two types of blessing, mentioned above.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., when blessings are said which are not part of the *amidah* .

<sup>8</sup>I.e., *Binah* . *Binah* is called "*barukh* (blessed)" because it is blessed by *Hokhmah* .

<sup>9</sup>The sexual imagery implicit in the relations between *Hokhmah* and *Binah* is obvious.

<sup>10</sup>Literally, "are You." The second word of the blessing.

<sup>11</sup>I.e., *Hesed*.

<sup>12</sup>I.e., *Hesed* is the priest of *Binah* .

<sup>13</sup>Psalms 110:4. Literally, "you are a priest forever." The author of the *Ra'aya Meheymena* reads the word "forever" super-literally as "for world." Thus he understands the verse as alluding to *Binah* , the world that is coming.

<sup>14</sup>I.e., *Tiferet* , which joins the left and right sides, judgment and loving kindness.



*Elohenu* : this is the left side which is contained in the right and the right in it.<sup>1</sup> The two are included together,<sup>2</sup> to be one. At this point, the blessings are joined together. For since these are blessed, everything below is blessed.

After these are blessed and take blessings for themselves, they return to that source,<sup>3</sup> contained as one. For these cannot return to that place until they are blessed. Once they have been blessed, they return and enter that place, to receive other additional blessings, which they pour out below. Before they are blessed, they neither enter nor return to it.<sup>4</sup> This is the secret [of the verse], "*and they shall not see My face empty-handed* ."<sup>5</sup>

When they return to that place and enter there, that place is called "*melekh* ." <sup>6</sup> But it is only called *melekh* (king) when these draw near to it and are blessed. And when is a king called king? When his ministers came to him enriched, provided with all that they need, without any lack.<sup>7</sup> Then he is king. [There is also] a king below,<sup>8</sup> when these crown him sufficiently with holy crowns. Thus it is [also] called king. So who is He?<sup>9</sup> The *olam* which sanctified and commanded us.<sup>10</sup> Since it is a world that is not externally revealed, but is concealed, it is invoked indirectly. Therefore, it is only invoked indirectly.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., it is addressed to *Gevurah* (the left side of judgment) which is tempered by *Hesed* (the right side of compassion).

<sup>2</sup>I.e., through *Tiferet* .

<sup>3</sup>I.e., *Binah* .

<sup>4</sup>I.e., to *Binah* .

<sup>5</sup>Exodus 23:15.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., "king," the next word in the blessing.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., when *Hesed* , *Gevurah* , and *Tiferet* have been blessed and return.

<sup>8</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* can also be called "King" when it is addressed as *Barukh* .

<sup>9</sup>I.e., which king is invoked at this point of the blessing, *Malkhut* or *Binah*?

<sup>10</sup>I.e., *Binah* , which is called *olam* or world. Here the author of the *Ra'aya Meheymna* is explaining the section of the blessing which literally means "king of the world, who sanctified and commanded us."

<sup>11</sup>I.e., it is referred to, but not directly addressed.

The right side is always called *atah* (you),<sup>1</sup> as we have explained. Therefore, the priest bends toward that place at the beginning and end [of the blessing].<sup>2</sup>

The world below<sup>3</sup> is called *barukh* (blessed) from below to above, when it is joined to the right side and cleaves to it. But it is only called *barukh* through the secret of the source to which it cleaves, enters, and fills. *Atah* (You) is the secret of that priest, to which it cleaves.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, during the [standing] prayer, a person bends [the knees] on [the word] *barukh*.<sup>5</sup> For it is the world that is bent over in relation to what is above.<sup>6</sup> This is the difference between the *barukh* of the [standing] prayer and the *barukh* [that is said at the beginning of] the other blessings.<sup>7</sup> But all cases involve the secret of pouring out blessings to all the worlds.

When the *barukh* of the [standing] prayer is said, a person bends the knees, and the head is inclined on the word *atah*. For *atah* is called head. Concerning this [the sages said], "the priest receives at the head."<sup>8</sup> And he is always the head.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, the bending is on *barukh* and we incline the head on *atah*. A priest inclines the head during the [standing] prayer, whenever *atah* is said. Once a king inclines his head, he keeps it lowered.<sup>10</sup> What is the reason? The Holy Blessed One said to the moon, go and make yourself smaller. And she did not straighten up again.<sup>11</sup> Thus the blessing with which a person blesses the Holy Blessed One is

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., *atah* always refers to *Hesed*.

<sup>2</sup>See B.T., *Berakhot*, 34b. The *Gemara* only states that the high priest bows at the end of each blessing. However, Maimonides apparently had a different text which also mentioned bowing before each blessing. Thus the *Ra'aya Meheymena*'s source may have been Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Tefillah*, ch. 8:10.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., *Malkhut*.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., to *Hesed*.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., *Malkhut*.

<sup>6</sup>*Malkhut* is bent over to bestow *shefa* on the worlds below.

<sup>7</sup>A person does not bend over when *barukh* is said in other blessings, because *Malkhut* is not then addressed.

<sup>8</sup>See B.T., *Yoma*, 14a. In certain circumstances, a priest is honored first before other Jews. He is, so to speak, at the "head" of the line.

<sup>9</sup>According to 'Or ha-Hamah, *Hesed* receives from *Binah* before the blessing reaches *Malkhut*.

<sup>10</sup>See B.T., *Berakhot* 34b.

<sup>11</sup>See B.T., *Hulin*, 60b. The moon is associated with *Malkhut*, literally kingship. Thus the king can be related to the moon. *Malkhut* reduces itself in order to receive blessings from above and to bestow them below.

aroused in order to pour out blessings from above to all the worlds, as we explained. Fortunate is Israel in this world and in the world that is coming. [But], It is written,<sup>1</sup> "*for You are our father, for Abraham [did not know us]*"<sup>2</sup> It is taught, in the time that is coming, they will say to Isaac [that you are our father...]<sup>3</sup> For the left is [then] included in the right.<sup>4</sup> But how do we know the right side is called father? For it is written, "*and he set him as a father and as a priest.*"<sup>5</sup> Although above [the right side] is called father, even the light that does not shine<sup>6</sup> is called *atah* when it cleaves to the right side, as it is written, "*Atah (You), YHVH, are our father, our redeemer ...*"<sup>7</sup>

### **After this say the following prayer**

Please, God who makes, forms, creates, and emanates supernal worlds. According to their form and character you created their like on the earth below. "*You made all of them with wisdom,*"<sup>8</sup> supernal [forms] above and lower [forms] below, to join together the tent so as to be one. You caused trees and grass to grow from the earth, according to the structure and character of [the forms] above, so that human beings might know wisdom and understanding through them, in order to grasp the hidden [forms]. You appointed your holy angels over them as agents to oversee their growing. And you caused *shefa'* and the power of your supernal

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<sup>1</sup>An objection is now raised. It was previously stated that *atah* (You) always refers to *Hesed*, the right side. Yet this midrash implies that Isaac, who represents *Gevurah*, the left side, is also called *atah*!

<sup>2</sup>Isaiah 63:16.

<sup>3</sup>See B.T., *Shabbat*, 89b.

<sup>4</sup>The answer is that the left side, represented by Isaac, is only called "[*You are our*] father" when it is joined to the right side, lovingkindness.

<sup>5</sup>The verse as quoted is not found in the Hebrew Bible. The reference is probably, Judges 17:10, "*you shall be a father and priest for me.*" The verse was said by Micah to a Levite. This it may be taken as a kabbalistic proof text to indicate that the left side, represented by the Levites, can be included in the right side, represented by the priests, who are here also called a father, which indicates that the right side draws from *Hokhmah*.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., *Malkhut*.

<sup>7</sup>Isaiah 63:16. Thus other *sefirot* may also be called "*atah*" when they cleave to the right side.

<sup>8</sup>Psalms 104:24.

qualities to flow upon them. *"The fruit yielded a harvest,"*<sup>1</sup> every *"fruit tree producing fruit according to its kind."*<sup>2</sup> *"The earth is sated from the fruit of Your work,"*<sup>3</sup> so one may *"eat of its fruit and be sated by its bounty."*<sup>4</sup> From [the fruit], every living soul is enlivened through the spiritual power that is in them, [which is] the fruit of the mouth of your holy angels who guard its fruit. *"From me your fruit is found,"*<sup>5</sup> the reward of children. *"Its fruit is food and its leaves a source of healing."*<sup>6</sup> So on this day, the beginning of Your deeds concerning [the trees'] budding and renewal, *"a person will earn with its fruit...,"*<sup>7</sup> *"producing fruit after its kind."*<sup>8</sup> For so the days of budding will be full for the fruit of the supernal tree, *"the tree of life which is in the midst of the garden"*<sup>9</sup> and it makes fruit above.

May it be Your will O Lord our God and God of our ancestors, that through the sacred power of our eating fruit, which we are now eating and blessing, while reflecting on the secret of their supernal roots upon which they depend, that *shefa'*, favor, blessing, and bounty be bestowed upon them. May the angels appointed over them also be filled by the powerful *shefa'* of their glory, may it return and cause them to grow a second time, from the beginning of the year and until its end, for bounty and blessing, for good life and peace. And fulfill for us the word which you promised us through Malachi, Your seer, *"And I will banish the devourer from among you and he will not destroy the fruit of your earth and the vine of your field will not miscarry, says the Lord of Hosts."*<sup>10</sup> Look down from your sacred dwelling place in heaven and bless us this year with bounty and blessing. *"You will make him a source*

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<sup>1</sup>Paraphrase of Psalms 107:37.

<sup>2</sup>Genesis 1:11.

<sup>3</sup>Psalms 104:13.

<sup>4</sup>Paraphrase of Jeremiah 2:7.

<sup>5</sup>Hosea 14:9.

<sup>6</sup>Ezekiel 47:12.

<sup>7</sup>Song of Songs 8:11.

<sup>8</sup>Genesis 1:11.

<sup>9</sup>Genesis 2:9.

<sup>10</sup>Malachi 3:11.

*of blessings forever, you will cause him to rejoice in the joy of Your countenance."*<sup>1</sup> *"And the earth will bestow its harvest and the tree of the field will yield its fruit."*<sup>2</sup> The blessing of goodness will come upon them, that its fruits will be blessed within us. Whether one eats a lot or a little, the health of his body will also be blessed. *"There YHVH commanded blessing, eternal life."*<sup>3</sup> **And may the splendid power of the blessings [said] while eating the fruit illuminate the source of blessings, Zaddiq , the Life of the Worlds, and let the rainbow appear, proudly rejoicing in its colors.** From there, may *shefa'* , favor, and compassion be bestowed upon us, to pardon and forgive the iniquities and misdeeds that we committed and sinned. We violated the covenant and damaged the fruit of *Zaddiq* , the Life of the Worlds, and caused the rains of its beneficence to be withheld, so that all the sources [of *shefa'* ] were harmed. Now let everything return to its original might *"and let His bow remain taut."*<sup>4</sup> *"For You, YHVH , bless the zaddiq , favor crowns him like a shield."*<sup>5</sup> And may all the holy sparks which were dispersed by us or by our ancestors and [also] through the sin that Adam committed with the fruit of the tree, now return to be included in the splendid power of the Tree of Life. May all evil be removed from them through the power of Your great name which emerges from the verse, *"the power that he swallows, he vomits out."*<sup>6</sup> And may everything return to its original might and not be rejected. For only You, YHVH , restore the dispersed of Israel. Therefore, swiftly cause the offshoot of Your servant David to flower and raise up its might through Your salvation. And the hand of YHVH is upon the whole world in its entirety, *"instead of a brier, a cyprus will arise, instead of the nettle, a myrtle will arise. And it will be a testimony for YHVH and an everlasting sign which will never*

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<sup>1</sup>Psalms 21:7.

<sup>2</sup>Leviticus 26:4.

<sup>3</sup>Psalms 133:3.

<sup>4</sup>Genesis 49:24.

<sup>5</sup>Psalms 5:13.

<sup>6</sup>Job 20:15.

be effaced."<sup>1</sup> *"Let abundant grain be in the land to the mountain top, let its fruit tremble like [the cedars of] Lebanon and may the inhabitants of cities sprout like the land's grass."*<sup>2</sup> *"Then the trees of the forest will rejoice"*<sup>3</sup> **and the tree of the field lift its branch and bear fruit daily.** *"And you shall take from the first of the fruit of the earth "*<sup>4</sup> **to bring first fruits before the altar of YHVH in praise and thanksgiving to YHVH, our God,** and [it shall result in] great good for the house of Israel. *"The arid desert will be glad and the wilderness will rejoice and blossom like a rose, it shall greatly flower and also rejoice and be glad. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the Glory of YHVH, the splendor of our God."*<sup>5</sup> May it occur swiftly, in our days, *amen* . Act for the sake of Your Name. Act for the sake of Your lovingkindness. Act for the sake of Your right hand. Act for the sake of Your Torah. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart find favor before You, YHVH, my rock and my redeemer. *"May the favor of the Lord, our God, be upon us..."*<sup>6</sup>

## Wheat

*Zohar: Balak*

Vol. 3, 188b

This section deals with barley and wheat, which are understood as two aspects of *Malkhut* , called "the Land." Barley is the discernable portion of *Malkhut* . It is offered as *Omer* for forty-nine days, from the second day of Passover until

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<sup>1</sup>Isaiah 55:13.

<sup>2</sup>Psalms 72:16.

<sup>3</sup>Psalms 96:12.

<sup>4</sup>Deut. 26:2.

<sup>5</sup>Isaiah 35:1-3.

<sup>6</sup>Psalms 90:17.

*Shavuot* . Although this offering is technically a "waive-offering," the wonderchild explains that, for kabbalistic reasons, it may be considered a "heave offering." For it theurgically raises *Malkhut* to *Tiferet* . Through this offering, the faithfulness of "the Land" is tested. If things are in order, a year of abundant produce is the result.

Wheat represents *Malkhut* in its perfected state. Although *Malkhut* is located in proximity to the evil "other side," when perfected it is inviolate. This condition is alluded to by the Hebrew word for wheat, *hittah* . The word contains the two consonants of the word for sin, *het* and *tet* , next to the letter *heh* of the divine Name. Nevertheless, the *heh* is protected by a *dagesh* in the *tet* . Thus wheat represents the subjugation of the "other side" to the side of holiness. Since wheat alludes to this somewhat precarious state of balance, it also serves as a symbol for the fruit with which Adam sinned.

The wonderchild began, saying, "*and it shall be, when you eat of the bread of the land , you shall raise up a terumah (heave-offering )to the Lord...* " (Numbers 15:19). This verse concerns the *Omer* of the *tenufah* (waive-offering).<sup>1</sup> Why "*tenufah* "? If it is a "*tenufah* " because the priest waives it above, what do we care if he waives it or lowers it? But, certainly he has to raise it above. That is why it is a *terumah* ,<sup>2</sup> even though we explain [the etymology of *terumah* ] as two from a hundred (*tre mi-meah* ) and thus it is.<sup>3</sup> But why "*tenufah* ?" This is lifting up! There is secret wisdom here. Alas, holy *hasidim* , spear masters, you did not serve Rabbi Shemaiya the Pious. Otherwise, you would know what "*tenufah* " is, what wheat is, what barley is.

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<sup>1</sup>Although this verse is usually understood to concern the commandment to offer a portion of the dough from which bread is made, the wonderchild relates it to the offering of barley that was made on the day after Passover. See Leviticus 23:10-14.

<sup>2</sup>The root of the word for "heave-offering" (*terumah* ) is related to the verb for raising up. In order to prove that the verse applies to the *Omer* , which is a waive-offering, the wonderchild has to explain why it is here referred to as *terumah* , a heave-offering.

<sup>3</sup>See Mishnah, *Terumot* , 4:3. The sages ruled that an average person has to offer a portion equal to one-fiftieth of his produce.

"*Tenufah* ," as we explained, means *tenu peh* .<sup>1</sup> The verse that alludes to its secret is, "give honor to the Lord, your God " (Jeremiah 13:16). For "mouth" is "honor" (*kavod* ),<sup>2</sup> which we have to give to the Blessed Holy One.<sup>3</sup> Thus we have to raise [the offering] above, to show that we are raising that "mouth" to Him. For there is only praise for the supernal king when Israel rectifies (*metaqneney* ) that "honor" and gives honor to the king. This is "*tenu peh* ," give honor. It is indeed [an act of] raising up.<sup>4</sup>

Back to the verse that we began to explain, "*and it shall be when you eat of the bread of the land...* " And is the "*bread of the land* " only barley? Not so. We offer barley because it is the first of the grains of the land.<sup>5</sup> Barley (*Se'uRaH* ) is the measure of [the letter] *heh* (*Shi'uR H* ). For it is a known place, in the measure of [the letter] *heh* .<sup>6</sup>

Wheat (*hittah* ) has a point in the middle,<sup>7</sup> for there is no portion for the other side (*sitra ahara* ) of blame there.<sup>8</sup> Wheat is a daughter who has made expiation before her father and he did her will. What is wheat? The totality of the 22 letters.<sup>9</sup>

R. Eleazar said, even though we should listen [to what you are saying], here we have to speak and draw the bow.<sup>10</sup> The wonderchild replied, a shield is against the arrow. R. Eleazar continued, surely we call [that aspect of *Malkhut* ] wheat

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<sup>1</sup>In other words, the word *tenufah* (waive-offering) is formed of the letters that spell *tenu peh* (give "mouth"). "Mouth" is a kabbalistic symbol for the tenth *sefirah*, *malkhut* which is elevated by the waive-offering.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., both refer to *malkhut* .

<sup>3</sup>I.e., to *tiferet*.

<sup>4</sup>Thus the verse may be understood to refer to *tenufah* (a waive-offering) even though it speaks of *terumah* (a heave-offering). The offering raises *Malkhut* to *Tiferet* .

<sup>5</sup>According to the 'Or ha-Hamah , the various grains each allude to a specific aspect of *Malkhut* , "the land."

<sup>6</sup>I.e., it refers to that aspect of *Malkhut* that may be known "in measure." The other aspects of *Malkhut* are more concealed.

<sup>7</sup>The word *hittah* (wheat) has a *dagesh* in the middle letter, *tet* .

<sup>8</sup>Wheat is the highest of the five aspects of *Malkhut* and cannot be reached by the *qelippot* .

<sup>9</sup>The numerical value of the letters that spell *hittah* is 8+9+5=22. This highest aspect of *Malkhut* , which is called the King's Daughter, contains all wisdom, symbolized by the totality of the alphabet.

<sup>10</sup>I.e., an objection or problem has to be raised.



(*hittah*). But we have seen that in all the [names of the] 12 tribes the letters *het* and *tet* are lacking.<sup>1</sup> But here there are *het* and *tet* and we say [it is] *hittah*.<sup>2</sup>

That wonderchild answered, indeed it is so, because *het* and *tet* are located near it.<sup>3</sup> In the [names of the] tribes these letters do not appear, for they come from the side of holiness which is above. But in the case of *malkhut*, [these letters] are present.<sup>4</sup>

And if you want to draw the sword, you can ask why this daughter took those letters. But if you knew the sin of Adam,<sup>5</sup> which they said was with wheat,<sup>6</sup> you would know this. When this tree is victorious, all is the side of good, it takes the whole "other side" and subdues it.<sup>7</sup> The first *haverim* explained this word and began from afar, simply [explaining] *hittah* [as an allusion to sin (*het'*)].<sup>8</sup> The later teachers came and said [he really sinned with] wheat.<sup>9</sup> Isaiah came and explained it, as it is written, "[*you shall be safe from oppression...*] and from harm (*mi-mehittah*), and it not come near you" (Isaiah 54:14).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>These letters allude to the word for sin, *het'*.

<sup>2</sup>R. Eleazar is objecting that the "other side" does have a connection to wheat since *hittah* contains the letters *het* and *tet*.

<sup>3</sup>The "other side" is located next to *malkhut*. The letters *het* and *tet* (the "other side") are next to *heh* (*malkhut*) in the word *hittah*.

<sup>4</sup>I.e., in the word for wheat, *hittah*.

<sup>5</sup>Or, "the first person."

<sup>6</sup>According to *Berakhot* 40a, the fruit of the tree of knowledge was wheat.

<sup>7</sup>*Malkhut* is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When she is reunited with *Tiferet*, the "other side" is vanquished.

<sup>8</sup>I.e., Adam did not really eat wheat which is a symbol for the King's Daughter. For wheat, in this sense, indicates the subjugation of the *qelippot*, whereas he caused the power of the "other side" to increase. See *'Or ha-Hamah*.

<sup>9</sup>I.e., they erred.

<sup>10</sup>Since the later teachers erred, Isaiah had to explain the matter. The verse involves a pun. Isaiah "spelled" *hittah* with a *tav* instead of a *tet* to indicate that Adam did not really eat wheat (*hittah* with a *tet*).

Therefore, the point is in the middle [letter of the word, *hittah* ,] so that it will not be *hata'ah* . For if the point were not there, it would be *hata'ah* .<sup>1</sup> The exchanging of *tet* for *tav* breaks the "other side." It is its refinement.<sup>2</sup>

You, *havrayya* , who have not served R. Shemaiya the Pious say that the "other side" has no portion in the five kinds of grain. But it is not so. For the "other side" has a portion in everything that rots in the earth.<sup>3</sup> And what is its portion? Chaff that the wind scatters. As it is written, "*but not so the wicked, [everything they do will be] like chaff that the wind scatters* " (Psalms 1:4). This is the spirit of holiness.<sup>4</sup> As it is written, "*for a wind/spirit passes over it, and it does not exist* " (Psalms 103:16). Because the holy spirit scatters it in all directions of the world, so that it may not be found. This [chaff] is the female [of the *qelippah* ]. What is the male? Straw.

Chaff and straw go together and are thus exempt from the tithe. For they have no portion in holiness. The [letter] *heh* of *hittah* is clean grain without straw or chaff. *Het* and *tet* , male and female, chaff and straw. *Heh* refers to clean grain.

Therefore, the perfection of the tree is wheat (*hittah* ) and the tree with which Adam sinned was wheat. For everything is in the secret and word, *hittah* .

R. Eleazar was amazed and the *havrayya* was amazed. R. Eleazar said, indeed, so it is. The wonderchild said, so it is indeed, the verse that we began with, for barley is the first to come to the world. It is set up to be merely animal fodder. It is the secret of a thousand mountains that grow every day and [the beast] consumes them.<sup>5</sup> It is called "bread of *terumah* ," food of that *terumah* .<sup>6</sup> And it is offered at

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<sup>1</sup>The point (*dagesh* ) in the *tet* serves as a barrier between the *qelippot* , represented by the letters *het* and *tet* , and *Malkhut* , represented by the letter *heh* . If the *dagesh* were not there, the *qelippot* would not be subjugated. Then the letters might be pronounced *hata'ah* , sin. See 'Or *ha-Hamah* . This interpretation is weakened by the fact that the word *hatta'ah* also has a *dagesh* in the *tet* .

<sup>2</sup>The *hittah* (harm) mentioned by Isaiah becomes *hittah* (wheat) in which the "other side" is subdued by *Malkhut* .

<sup>3</sup>Everything that grows on the earth requires spiritual refinement since nothing is completely holy.

<sup>4</sup>"spirit" and "wind" are the same word, *ruah* .

<sup>5</sup>See *Midrash Rabbah* , *Pinhas* , 21:18.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., food for *malkhut* which is called *terumah* because it is raised up.

night, for it is written, "*and when the sun sets , he is pure. Afterwards he can eat of the holy things, for it is his bread* " (Lev. 22:7). *From the holy things* refers to *terumah* . *From the holy things* [is written] and not *the holy things* . For [when it] simply [says] holy, it does not mean *terumah* . For we are taught, "there is a greater stringency regarding the holy than in the case of *terumah*" (*Hagigah* , 2b).

The holy land<sup>1</sup> is under the authority of the Holy Blessed One and no other authority enters there. How is the earth checked to see whether it stands in faith and has not joined itself to another authority? Through the offering of this *terumah* , barley, like the mystery of the woman accused of adultery.<sup>2</sup> R. Abba said, indeed the sword was sharpened against you. The wonderchild replied, indeed I strengthened myself with shield and buckler to defend against it.

"*A land of wheat and barley, vine and fig and pomegranate. A land of olive , oil, and honey* " (Deut. 8:8).

## Olive

*Zohar, Pinhas*

Vol. 3, 247a

The olive and its oil have several symbolic meanings. On the most exoteric level, olive oil represents the wisdom of Torah. It is called "*beaten oil* ," because its acquisition requires effort and some material sacrifice and suffering. More esoterically, the oil represents the viscous *shefa'* , which has to be drawn down through the *sefirot* before it reaches *Yesod* . According to this metaphor, the *sefirot* are represented by olives, which are drained of their oil, as *Yesod* unites sexually with *Malkhut* .

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., *malkhut*.

<sup>2</sup>The similarity of the *Omer* to case of the accused adulteress is explained in detail in *parashat Emor* . See *Zohar* , vol. 3, 97a. The *Sotah* is tested by the water that she has to drink. If she is not guilty, she becomes pregnant. If she is guilty, her womb withers. The offering of the *Omer* blesses the produce in the field. See B.T., *Rosh Ha-Shanah* , 16a.

"[And as a meal offering, there shall be a tenth of an 'eyfah of choice flour with a quarter of a hin of] beaten oil mixed in..." (Num. 28:5). "With oil " means with that oil that descends and emerges from above.<sup>1</sup>

R. Shimon said, you said well. But what is "beaten ?" It is an allusion to making love to the female, to bring down beaten oil to her, as befits her. The [oil] has to be beaten out of the olives, which are the limbs of the body. [It has to be beaten] in order to draw out that effluence from above to each and every limb.<sup>2</sup>

It is the *zaddiq* <sup>3</sup> that does the pounding. From all of those supernal limbs, which are holy olives, he brings out anointing oil in perfect desire to the female.<sup>4</sup> If he does not pound, the oil comes out without the desire of the limbs and the female does not enjoy the effluence, it won't be as it should be until it is mixed with all of the limbs. Thus it is written, "*with beaten oil mixed in* ," so one may enjoy and be nourished by it.

*Ra'aya Meheymna*

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<sup>1</sup>The *shefa'* that is released by the *sefirot* .

<sup>2</sup>The "limbs of the body" are the *sefirot* . The female is *malkhut* . The oil descends from *hokhmah* . The "oil" that befits *Malkhut* has to be drawn out of all the *sefirot* .

<sup>3</sup>I.e., *yesod* .

<sup>4</sup>According to the sexual analogy, *Yesod* , the *Zaddiq* , is the divine phallus which transmits the "oil" to *Malkhut* , the female.

The Faithful Shepherd said, Holy Lamp,<sup>1</sup> how sweet are your words, indeed it is thus said, "*with beaten oil mixed in* ." And it is said there in the oral Torah,<sup>2</sup> [that the wisdom of the Torah is] "*mixed in* " with the Bible, the Mishnah, and the Talmud. There is also a second secret [meaning] of "*with beaten oil mixed in* ." Indeed, Torah is only "*mixed in* " for one who has suffered many afflictions for it. As the masters of the Mishnah explained, "Torah is only fulfilled for one who kills himself over it."<sup>3</sup> They also said, "when you are cutting your feet [walking] from country to country, you will merit to see the face of the Shekhinah."<sup>4</sup>

A further meaning for "*with beaten oil mixed in* ." This refers to the person who fulfills "you shall eat bread with salt and drink water in moderation."<sup>5</sup> Another meaning for "*with beaten oil mixed in* ." As it is written, "*he was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our transgressions* " (Isaiah 53:5).

Another meaning for "*with beaten oil mixed in* ." This is *Zaddiq* , the Life of the Worlds,<sup>6</sup> who sends down holy drops from the supernal brain, forming lumps in the shape of olives,<sup>7</sup> . These are "*one tenth* " corresponding to *yod* .<sup>8</sup> "*Two-tenths* " corresponding to *yod yod* . And "*three-tenths* " for a cow [is] *yod yod yod* . These are a tenth [of an '*eyfah* ' of flour] for a sheep, two-tenths for a ram and three-tenths for a cow.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In the *Ra'aya Meheymna* , Moses, the Faithful Shepherd, speaks to R. Shimon ben Yohai, the Holy Lamp. Typically, the conversation concerns the secret (i.e., kabbalistic) reasons for the *mizvot* . Here the discussion begins by understanding "*beaten oil* " as an allusion to Torah wisdom.

<sup>2</sup>See B.T., *Sanhedrin* , 24a. "Rabbi Yohanan said, *Bavel* (Babylonia) [owes its name to the fact that there Torah study] is mixed (*BeLulah* ) with Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud."

<sup>3</sup>B.T., *Berakhot* , 63b.

<sup>4</sup>B.T., *Baba Batra* , 8a.

<sup>5</sup>*Avot* , 6:4.

<sup>6</sup>The discussion now goes on to a kabbalistic explanation. *Zaddiq* or *Yesod* sends down oil to the female, *malhut* . According to this interpretation, the olives do not represent the *sefirot* , but the mixture of meal and oil which is shaped like olives. The oil originates in *hokhmah* , the holy brain. Here the Zohar mystically applies the medieval notion that sperm originates in the male's brain and is drawn down from there to the penis, kabbalistically represented by *yesod* .

<sup>7</sup>When oil is mixed in to the dry meal offering, lumps of moistened meal are formed.

<sup>8</sup>The letter *yod* is shaped like a drop and has the numerical value of ten.

<sup>9</sup>The amount of meal offered with an animal sacrifice varies with the animal. See, e.g., Numbers 28:28,29.

They mentioned the secret of the matter in *Ta'anit* : "no drop descends from above for which two drops do not ascend towards it."<sup>1</sup> They are the secret of this: .!.

They allude to the three aspects of the mind. One is the memory. The second is thought. The third is the imagination. The imagination and memory ascend from the heart. Thought descends upon the heart. They<sup>2</sup> receive it like a king, because this person who is thought, rides and rules over the third animal. He descends from above it, toward the two animals.<sup>3</sup> They open their wings to receive it, like a *holem* over a *zere* which becomes a *segol* . And this is supernal *Keter* over *Hokhmah* and

*Binah* .<sup>4</sup>

"A tenth " and "two-tenths [of an '*eyfah* ' of flour]" are allusions to the three animals of the holy chariot.<sup>5</sup> These are: *Gedulah* ,<sup>6</sup> *Gevurah* , *Tif'eret* . "Three-tenths " allude to: *Nezah* , *Hod* , *Yesod* . The second chariot. A fourth of a *hin* :<sup>7</sup> this is holy *Malkhut* , *heh* , the fourth letter of the name *YHVH* , which contains four faces of man.<sup>8</sup>

## Dates

*Zohar, Leviticus*

Vol. 3, 16a

The focus of the passage is eschatological mysteries including redemption from exile, the messianic age, and the resurrection of the dead. The righteous who will

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<sup>1</sup>B.T., *Ta'anit* , 25b. However, the *Ra'aya Meheymna* 's text is closer to the variant in *Midrash Rabbah* , *Bereishit* , 13:13. "No drop falls from above for which the earth does not rise two spans (*tepahayyim* ) towards it."

<sup>2</sup>I.e., the imagination and memory receive thought as their king.

<sup>3</sup>Compare Plato's analogy of the parts of the soul to a charioteer who must control two unruly horses. See *Phaedrus* .

<sup>4</sup>These *sefirot* are arranged in the form of a *segol*

<sup>5</sup>I.e., "one-tenth " plus "two-tenths " equals the three *sefirot* indicated. The three animals are a lion, ox, and eagle. See Ezekiel, chapter 1.

<sup>6</sup>Also called *hesed* .

<sup>7</sup>The liquid measure, mentioned in Numbers 28:5.

<sup>8</sup>In Ezekiel's vision, each of the four animals that support the Chariot had four faces. The human face is associated with *Malkhut* .

be redeemed are compared in Psalm 92 to two trees, the date palm and the cedar. These trees are respectively related to the redemption from Babylonian exile and the final redemption. The slow growth of the date palm alludes to the seventy year period that had to pass before cosmic and historical conditions were right for the end of the Babylonian exile. The loftiness of the cedar alludes to the fact that the final redemption depends on the involvement of the uppermost *sefirot*. The passage well illustrates the kabbalistic principle that deep truths can be learned by directly observing nature.

Rabbi Abba was sitting before Rabbi Shimon. His son, Rabbi Eleazar entered. Rabbi Shimon said, it is written, "*a zaddiq will flower like a date palm...*" (Psalms 92:13). "*A zaddiq ... [is] like a date palm .*" Why "*like a date palm ?*" Because of all the world's fruit trees, there is none that is as late to blossom as the date palm. For it continues to grow for seventy years.<sup>1</sup> So what is the reason [that the *zaddiq* is said to be] "*like a date palm ?*" Even though scripture attests to this, the whole *havrayya* did not want to reveal it.<sup>2</sup> But "*a zaddiq will flower like a date palm*" was said concerning the Babylonian exile. For the *Shekhinah* only returned to her place at the end of seventy years. As it is written, "*For when seventy years have been completed in Babylon, I will visit you...*" (Jeremiah 29:10). So this is [the meaning of] "*zaddiq will flower like a date palm .*" The male and female continue to grow for seventy years.<sup>3</sup>

*Zaddiq* : this is the Holy Blessed One. As it is written, "*for a zaddiq is*

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<sup>1</sup>This quality suggests that it is inferior to other trees.

<sup>2</sup>Because it concerns the great secret of redemption.

<sup>3</sup>Or, "require seventy years to complete their growth." The secret is that redemption cannot occur until the female, the *Shekhinah*, returns to her place, which in this case took 70 years.

YHVH , lover of righteousnesses " (Psalms 11:7).<sup>1</sup> And it is written, "YHVH is the zaddiq..." (Ex. 9:27), and "Hail the zaddiq, for He is good " (Isaiah 3:10).<sup>2</sup>

"They will be exalted like a cedar in Lebanon " (Psalms 92:13). What is a cedar? This is the Holy Blessed One. As it is written, "select, like the cedars " (Song of Songs 5:15). "[He] will be exalted in Lebanon " in Lebanon, indeed. This is the upper Eden,<sup>3</sup> concerning which is written, "no eye has seen [it], O God, but You " (Isaiah 64:3). And this cedar will be exalted in that high place .<sup>4</sup> This refers to the last exile, [then] He will be like that cedar, which grows slowly.<sup>5</sup> From the time that it begins its growth,<sup>6</sup> until it stands in its place, it is a day. And the beginning of another day [passes],<sup>7</sup> until it makes a shadow with the light of day.<sup>8</sup> A cedar only rises up in the delight of water, as it is written, "like cedars on the water " (Num. 24:6). Thus a cedar will be exalted in Lebanon, for from there a spring emerges and a stream of water to water [the cedar].<sup>9</sup> And the cedar is the Holy Blessed One, as it is written, "select as cedars ."

"Planted in the House of YHVH " (Psalms 92:14) for the time of King Messiah.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The two "righteousnesses" are *Binah* and *Malkhut* .

<sup>2</sup>According to the *'Or ha-Hamah* , the three verses represent *Tiferet* , *Malkhut* , and *Yesod* . *Tiferet* unites *Binah* and *Malkhut* . *Malkhut* cuts off the wicked, as in the context of Exodus 9:27. *Yesod* is called "good." The three together are called *Zaddiq* in our verse.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., *Keter*. Some commentators identify "upper Eden" with *Hokhmah*.

<sup>4</sup>According to the *'Or ha-Hamah* , the "cedar" refers to the hidden *sefirah* , *Da'at* , which is more concealed than *Tiferet* .

<sup>5</sup>*Zaddiq* as "cedar" requires even more time to reach its power than the "date palm." The "secret" here is that whereas the first exile depended on *Tiferet* (and *Malkhut* ), the final one depends on *Da'at* .

<sup>6</sup>Literally, "ascends."

<sup>7</sup>According to the commentary, *Or ha-Hamah* , this passage alludes to the 1500 years that will pass until the redemption. Each day of the Lord is equal to 1000 years. Thus the *havrayya* did not want to reveal the secret so that their contemporaries would not despair. Since the text was actually written at the end of the thirteenth-century, it was really an expression of messianic hope. Indeed such Zoharic passages led sixteenth-century kabbalists to believe that they were living in the prelude to the Messianic Age.

<sup>8</sup>The Jewish day begins with the night. Therefore, daylight arises in the second half of the day.

<sup>9</sup>The "cedar," *Tiferet* , receives its energy from "the stream," *Binah* , which comes from the "spring in Lebanon," *Hokhmah*.

<sup>10</sup>The "House of YHVH " is *Malkhut* .



*"In the Courts of our God, he will flower "* (Psalms 92:14) at the [time of the] resurrection of the dead.<sup>11</sup>

*"He will still be fertile in old age "* (Psalms 92:15) on the day that the world is found destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

*"They will be full of sap and fresh "* after [the destruction], as it is written, *"the new heavens and the new earth "* (Isaiah 66:22).<sup>3</sup>

Then, *"YHVH will rejoice in His deeds "* (Psalms 104:31) is written. And why? *"to proclaim that YHVH, my rock, is upright and there is no iniquity in Him "* (Psalms 92:16).

*Your stature is like a date palm, and your breasts like clusters. I thought: I will climb the date palm; I will hold its branches. Let your breasts be like clusters of the vine and the scent of your mouth like apples .* (Song of Songs 7:7-9).

*A zaddiq will flower like a date palm, he will be exalted like a cedar in Lebanon "* (Psalms 92:13).

## Grapes

*Zohar, Va-Yeshev*

Vol. 1, 192a

The vine, mentioned in the cupbearer's dream in Genesis 40, serves as a basis for presenting the kabbalistic symbolism of grapes. First, the branches of the vine are compared to the three columns of the *sefirot* . In the second part the symbolic meaning of the difference between white and black grapes is the theme. Dark grapes indicate that the *shefa'* collected in *Malkhut* is permeated by the forces of

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<sup>11</sup>The "Courts" refer to regions below *Malkhut* , to which the benefit of the *Zaddiq* will be extended in the period of resurrection which follows the Messianic Age.

<sup>2</sup>The potency of the *Zaddiq* continues even through the subsequent destruction of the world.

<sup>3</sup>Even greater refinement of the *Zaddiq* occurs when the new world is created.

judgment. Thus they are not a good omen and indicate that human beings should be especially careful.

"*And on the vine, three branches*" (Genesis 40:10). Joseph said, surely this is completely joyous news. What is the reason? Because this vine appeared to him concerning the Community of Israel (*Keneset Israel*).<sup>1</sup> And Joseph proclaimed good tidings concerning it.

"*And on the vine, three branches*." These are the three supernal levels that emerge from that vine: Priests, Levites, and Israelites.<sup>2</sup>

"*And as it was flowering, a bud appeared*." For because of them, the Community of Israel ascends and is blessed by the Supernal King.<sup>3</sup>

"*Its clusters ripened [into] grapes*." These are the righteous of the world. For they are like properly cooked grapes.

Another explanation: "*its clusters ripened [into] grapes*." This is the wine that has been preserved in its grapes from the six days of creation.<sup>4</sup>

To this point Joseph received good news concerning his dream.<sup>5</sup> From this point on the dream was [the cupbearer's].<sup>6</sup> For some of the dream concerns the dreamer and some concerns others. "*And I took the grapes*" (Genesis 40:11) for himself.<sup>7</sup>

We have learned,<sup>8</sup> when white grapes are seen in a dream, it is a favorable omen.<sup>9</sup> Black grapes are not. What is the reason? Because this is the secret of two specific

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<sup>1</sup>Or, "symbolized the Community of Israel." The reference is to *Malkhut*.

<sup>2</sup>Priests, Levites, and Israelites represent *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tiferet*.

<sup>3</sup>Because of the worship of the Priests, Levites, and Israelites, *Malkhut* ascends.

<sup>4</sup>See B.T., *Berakhot*, 34b.

<sup>5</sup>To this point the dream concerned the world of the *sefirot*

<sup>6</sup>It now deals with the effect the grapes have on human beings.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., for the cupbearer and not for Joseph.

<sup>8</sup>See B.T., *Berakhot*, 56b. The kabbalistic meaning is the forces of judgment that are collected in *Malkhut* from the six *sefirot* above her, called the "six days of creation."

<sup>9</sup>White grapes indicate judgment that has been tempered with compassion.

levels, black and white. The one is favorable and the other is not. All of these grapes depend on the mystery of faith.<sup>1</sup> Thus they are interpreted with wisdom either for good or ill. These need compassion.<sup>2</sup> And those are the sign of compassionate providence.<sup>3</sup>

Come and see, Adam's wife strained grapes for him and caused death for him, all Israel, and the whole world.<sup>4</sup>

Noah came to these grapes and was not as careful as was required. What is written, "*he drank from the wine, became drunk, and revealed himself within her tent*" (Genesis 9:20). [ "*Tent* " ] is spelled with a *heh* .<sup>5</sup>

The sons of Aaron drank wine [made] from [these grapes], offered a sacrifice with that wine, and they died. This has been explained.<sup>6</sup> Thus it is written, "*its grapes are grapes of poison, bitter clusters for them*" (Deut. 32:32). For these grapes caused all of this.

He' [however], saw grapes that are good in that vineyard. For they raise up pleasure and fragrance in perfect levels as it should be.

*Zohar, Naso*

Vol. 3, 127a

The passage focuses on the kabbalistic implications of the *nazir* , one who has vowed to abstain from wine, grapes, and their by-products. The nazirite vow is interpreted as a commitment to avoid all actions that allude to the forces of

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<sup>1</sup>They must be interpreted in terms of the interworkings of the *sefirot* , which is called the *raza de-meheymnuta* , the mystery of faith. According to the *'Or ha-Hamah* , the "grapes" are the six *sefirot* (from *Hesed* to *Yesod* ), filled with judgment.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., the black grapes.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., the white grapes.

<sup>4</sup>Eve gave him black grapes.

<sup>5</sup>Literally, the verse says "*his tent* ." However, *heh* indicates the third person feminine personal pronoun and not the masculine. Hence, the verse is here being read "*her tent* ." In other words, it alluded to *Malkhut* , which was filled with judgment.

<sup>6</sup>See *Midrash Rabbah* , Leviticus, 12:1.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., the cupbearer.

judgment, which are channeled into *Malkhut* via the *sefirot* of the left side, *Binah* , *Gevurah* , *Hod* . Here grapes allude to *Malkhut* . For they contain the juices of wine and strong drink, the forces of judgment of the left side.

Another aspect of the nazirite vow, refraining from trimming the hair and beard, is also explained according to this symbolism. Long hair alludes to the forces of compassion that flow without limit. Thus the *nazir* 's vow, not to cut the hair, also symbolizes his avoidance of the forces of judgment.

Another important aspect of this symbolism is that judgment is associated with purity, represented by the Levites who serve in the Temple, while the forces of compassion and love are associated with holiness, represented by the *nazir* .

"He shall abstain from wine and strong drink, vinegar of wine..." (Numbers 6:3). This requires inquiry. Since wine is forbidden to him, why grapes [also]? For concerning the priests it is written, "you shall not drink wine and strong drink..." (Lev. 10:9). Perhaps grapes are also [prohibited to the priests]? No. Grapes are permitted. In the case of the *nazir* , what is the reason that grapes are forbidden to him?<sup>1</sup>

But, this act and this matter is a supernal mystery: [the *nazir* is required] to separate himself from judgment entirely.<sup>2</sup> And it is known that the tree with which Adam sinned was grapes. This is the mystery of the matter, for wine, strong drink, and grapes are connected to one side.<sup>3</sup> Wine is above, as has been explained.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The question is raised because one might think that the *nazir* 's vow is meant to avoid intoxication, as in the case of officiating priests. If that is the case, grapes should be permitted. However, the *nazir* is compelled to avoid grapes in any form. (see 'Or ha-Hamah ).

<sup>2</sup>This is the mystical meaning of the *nazir* 's vow to abstain from wine and anything produced from grapes.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., the left side which is associated with judgment.

<sup>4</sup>The source of wine is identified as *Binah* . See *Zohar* , v. 3, 39a.

Strong drink is on the left,<sup>1</sup> for strong drink comes out of wine. Grapes, which gather everything to itself, is the tree with which Adam sinned.<sup>2</sup> Thus all [three] are connected to one side. But, if you say that this *nazir* has abandoned the supernal faith,<sup>3</sup> it is not so. Only, it is not proper for him to perform any act of the left side at all.<sup>4</sup>

Come and see. For thus I learned from the book of Rav Hamnuna Saba, and so it is. It is written "*the hair of his head shall grow untrimmed*" (Num. 6:5). He has to let the hair of his head and beard grow and to abstain from wine, strong drink, and grapes, because they are all [of] the left side and do not have long, flowing hair.<sup>5</sup> Wine is the upper mother.<sup>6</sup> Strong drink is the side to which the Levites are connected. It comes out of supernal wine and does not have long, flowing hair.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, when the Levites ascend to that place,<sup>8</sup> they have to remove all their hair, as it is said, "*and they shall pass a razor over all of their flesh*" (Numbers 8:7). Grapes are the lower mother which gathers wine and strong drink to itself. Thus he has to separate himself from all of the left side, so that no action [pertaining to these *sefirot*] be seen in him. Grapes do not grow hair and beard.<sup>9</sup> For a female has to cut her hair when she enters to couple with the male.<sup>10</sup> And she has no beard. Consequently, he lets the hair of his head and beard grow.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., *Gevurah* .

<sup>2</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* , which receives the forces of judgment from the *sefirot* above.

<sup>3</sup>Since he is not connected to the *sefirot* of the left side, *Binah* , *Gevurah* , and *Malkhut* .

<sup>4</sup>He is connected to all of the ten *sefirot* , but he may not perform any act connected with the *sefirot* of judgment.

<sup>5</sup>According to the *'Or ha-Hamah* , there are three types of hair explained in the *Tiqqunim* . Short and stiff hair is associated with judgment, while long and soft hair is associated with *Hesed* . The long hair draws compassion from the supernal *parzuf* , *'Arikh 'Anpin*, the "long-suffering one." The *sefirot* of the left side of judgment are not said to have long, flowing hair because they do not channel compassion.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., *Binah* .

<sup>7</sup>I.e., *Gevurah* is associated with the Levites. This *sefirah* has its source in *Binah* .

<sup>8</sup>The purification of the Levites that prepares them to serve the priests requires that all of their body hair be removed.

<sup>9</sup>Grapes represented the female *sefirah*, *Malkhut*.

<sup>10</sup>women, who are symbolically associated with the left side of judgment, cut their hair before marriage.

<sup>11</sup>This symbolically shows that he separates himself from the left side.

The secret of the matter: he is called "*nazir of Elohim* " and not "*nazir of YHVH* ." He separates from judgment entirely.<sup>1</sup>

Come and see.

Concerning this, it is written, "*and he shall atone in his behalf for having sinned against the nefesh ...*" (Num. 6:11).<sup>2</sup> "Against his *nefesh* " is not written, but only "against the *nefesh* ." And what is it? Grapes which are called *nefesh* .<sup>3</sup> Thus it is written "*sinned* " because its side is wine and strong drink.<sup>4</sup> And he removed the place of judgment from it. "*Sinned* " what is the meaning of "*sinned* ?" He removed the judgment of the *nefesh* .<sup>5</sup>

If so, then why [does it say], "*and he shall atone in his behalf* ?"<sup>6</sup> For now he comes to join together with them. And those places do not receive him until he consults with the priest. "*And he atones in his behalf* " because at first he threw them out. Since now he comes to them, he has to join through *tiqqunim* of atonement. [Then] they will receive him. This is the secret of the matter.<sup>7</sup>

If you say, Samson was a *nazir* of *Elohim* .<sup>8</sup> [So,] why was he punished? However, the matter was well done. For he married a worshipper of a foreign god.<sup>9</sup> He should have gotten together with one of his own, with one who was right for him. But he who was holy, diluted that holiness with the worshipper of a foreign god.

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<sup>1</sup>"*Elohim* " (God) is associated with judgment; *YHVH* is associated with mercy and compassion. Since the *nazir* separates himself from judgment, he is called "*nazir Elohim* ."

<sup>2</sup>If a *nazir* is rendered impure through coming inadvertently in contact with a corpse, he must undergo a period of repurification and atonement.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* . According to the simple meaning of the verse, *nefesh* probably refers to the corpse. However, a *midrash* says that sinning against the *nefesh* means that "he denied himself the enjoyment of wine." See Rashi, *ad loc*. Also see B.T., *Nedarim* , 10a; *Nazir* , 19a, 22a.

<sup>4</sup>Grapes are associated with *Malkhut* which is connected to the left side of wine and strong drink (*Binah* and *Gevurah* ).

<sup>5</sup>The *nazir* sinned because *Malkhut* requires the influx of the left side. Thus while the *nazir* 's abstention from the side of judgment may seem praiseworthy, it causes an imbalance through restricting the flow of the forces of judgment which have a legitimate place in the world of the *sefirot* .

<sup>6</sup>The question is, since he did not really sin, why does he need an atonement?

<sup>7</sup>His atonement is an at-one-ment.

<sup>8</sup>This is an objection. If the *nazir* reduces the forces of judgment, why was Samson punished?

<sup>9</sup>Or, "an idol worshipper."

He abandoned the place that was worthy of holiness. That is why he was punished.

And there is one who says that he has no portion in that world [to come].<sup>1</sup> What is the reason? Because he said, "*let my soul die with the Philistines* " (Judges 16:30) and gave his portion to the portion of the Philistines.<sup>2</sup> His soul would die with them in that world.

Thus they would call out for the *nazir* : "go away, go away." They would say to the *nazir* : "go around, go around!" "Do not come near to the vineyard." The *havrayya* already explained this.<sup>3</sup>

What is written concerning the Levites? "*And so you will do to them to purify them. Sprinkle over them water of expiation and pass a razor over all of their flesh...* " (Num. 8:7)

Once their hair has been removed and all of this has been done, the Levites are called pure, but not holy. But since this *nazir* has separated from that side, [he] is called holy, but not pure.<sup>4</sup> Therefore it is written, "*all the days that he has vowed to be a nazir ...that he has set apart for YHVH... holy he will be...* " (Num. 6:6-8).

"*The hair of his head shall grow untrimmed...* " Therefore, it is written, "*and the hair of its head was like pure wool* " (Daniel 7:9). In this, he resembled [the countenance] above.<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Yehudah the son of Rav said, because of the hair indeed, his holiness is apparent. As it is written, "*his locks are curled* " (Song of Songs 5:11).

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<sup>1</sup>See *Eruvin* ,19a.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., he knew that his profanation of the holiness of the *nazir* would deny him a portion in the world to come.

<sup>3</sup>See *Shabbat* , 13a; *Yevamot* , 46a. Since it was so difficult to fulfill the nazirite vow and the consequences of violating it could be so severe, it was customary to warn a *nazir* who came near a vineyard. The kabbalistic meaning is that the *nazir* had to be entirely separated from the left side. This is in contrast to the Levites, who do not occupy such a high level of holiness.

<sup>4</sup>Here purity is associated with the left side, represented by the Levites. Holiness comes from the right side, associated with the *nazir* .

<sup>5</sup>The verse from Daniel refers to the head of the supreme divine *parzuf* called "Ancient of Days." The hair of its head channels *hesed* to the lower *parzufim*. The long hair of the *nazir* who has separated himself from the side of judgment resembles the head of Ancient of Days. This matter is discussed in the *'Idra Rabbah* .

Rabbi Shimon taught, if only people knew what is being communicated through this hair and its secret, just as it is in the secret of secrets, they would know their master, in supernal wisdom.

To this point, secrets of the Torah. From this point, crowns of the Torah, "*her profits and hire are holy to YHVH ...*" (Isaiah 23:18).

*Bring me to the wine house and his flag of love over me* (Song of Songs: 2:4).

## **Pomegranate**

*Tiqquney Zohar, Tiqqun 24*

This passage associates the Sabbath and its customs with aspects of *Malkhut* , the *Shekhinah* . The restrictions of the Sabbath allude to the need to protect *Malkhut* from the evil forces that surround and threaten it. This protection allows *Malkhut* , as the *Shekhinah* , or female divine aspect, to prepare herself for nuptial union with Her mate, the Holy One, blessed be He, *Tif'eret* .

The second half of the selection deals with the conflicting rabbinic opinions concerning the identity of the fruit with which Adam sinned. The kabbalistic resolution of the problem is that "all the opinions are true." The Bible mentions seven species that grew in the Land of Israel. Since each of these is a symbol for *Malkhut* , any one of the species can be considered as the fruit with which Adam sinned. The symbolism for each of these is briefly reviewed. The pomegranate is associated with the Talmudic legend of a mystical experience involving "four who entered paradise." "Paradise" (*pardes* ) is here understood as a grove of pomegranates, symbolizing immersion in the *Shekhinah* .



"BeReiSHIT " [may be read] *YeRe' SHaBBaT* .<sup>1</sup> Fear my Sabbaths. Fear the Torah. Fear the covenant.<sup>2</sup> How much safeguarding is required so that no foreign power enters the covenant. In the same measure a person must safeguard Shabbat<sup>3</sup> so as not to remove [something] from the private domain and enter the public domain.<sup>4</sup> The private domain is the *Shekhinah* .<sup>5</sup> Its width is four [fathoms]. These are *YHVH* .<sup>6</sup> Its height is ten [fathoms]. These are *Yod Ha Vav Ha* .<sup>7</sup> The public domain is the snake, the adulterous wife, the drug of the other god who is *Samael* . It is the totality of the seventy nations, the *halalah* <sup>8</sup> and the prostitute.<sup>9</sup> Her husband is the profanation of Shabbat. Thus whoever takes something from the private domain to the public domain is punished by stoning. *Eruv* <sup>10</sup> is the central pillar.<sup>11</sup> With it, one can move things from house to house. These are the upper *Shekhinah* and lower *Shekhinah* .<sup>12</sup> Concerning them, it is said, "keep my Sabbaths,<sup>13</sup> and fear *Miqdashy* (My sanctuary) " (Lev. 19:30). This is [spelled] *miqdash yod* .<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The first word of the Torah, *bereishit* , means "in the beginning. However, its letters can be rearranged to spell "fear Shabbat," or "be in awe of Shabbat."

<sup>2</sup>The letters of *shabbat* can themselves be taken as an acronym for *SHabbat* , *Berit* (covenant), and *Torah* . Thus fear of all three are implied by the letters of the word, *bereishit* .

<sup>3</sup>*Shabbat* alludes to *Malkhut* , the *Shekhinah* .

<sup>4</sup>The removal of something from one domain to the other during *Shabbat* is considered an act of work that violates the *Shabbat*. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah* , *Hilkhos Shabbat* , ch. 12, 8.

<sup>5</sup>She is, as it were, the private domain of *Tiferet* .

<sup>6</sup>I.e., the four letters of the tetragrammaton.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., the ten letters that spell the names of the four letters of the tetragrammaton. These are indeed the dimensions of the private domain.

<sup>8</sup>Literally, "a profaned woman." This category is applied to Jewish women whom a priest is not permitted to marry because she is the daughter of a priest and a woman not permitted to him.

<sup>9</sup>See *Zohar* , vol. 3, 244a.

<sup>10</sup>Literally, "mixing together or amalgamation." The term refers to several legal fictions by means of which the area of the private domain may be extended.

<sup>11</sup>I.e., the *sefirot* that are situated between the left and right sides, especially *Tiferet* and *Yesod* .

<sup>12</sup>I.e., *Binah* and *Malkhut* .

<sup>13</sup>I.e., *Binah* and *Malkhut* .

<sup>14</sup>The *yod* here may refer to *Yesod* . In other words, the author of the *Tiqqunim* is understanding the verse to say, respect the source from which *shefa* descends, *Binah* , and the place where it is received, *Malkhut* , and the central pillar which connects the two.

The sign of Shabbat [is the covenant], which one has to keep with his mate.<sup>1</sup> For she is his holiness and his blessing. Upon it, is said, "*and God blessed the seventh day and made it holy*" (Genesis 2:3). "*And [He] blessed*" is [its] blessing. "*And He made it holy*" is [its] holiness.

And for both of them,<sup>2</sup> the early masters used to go out to greet the bride. They would say twice, "come bride, come bride."<sup>3</sup> At that moment, "*the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride*" (Jeremiah 33:11).<sup>4</sup>

Also *miqdashy* [is spelled] with the letter *yod*, because there is no holiness less than ten.<sup>5</sup> One must bless and sanctify them with a *qiddush* over wine, with the seventy words of the *qiddush*. *Va-yekhullu* (and they were completed)<sup>6</sup> has the same numerical value as *be-yayin* (with wine).<sup>7</sup>

One has to say, "with your permission, gentlemen." Those that answer say "*le-hayyim*" (to life), since they are connected to the tree of life,<sup>8</sup> not to the tree of death. It is the vine<sup>9</sup> with which Adam sinned. One said it was wheat, and one said the vine.<sup>10</sup> And all are true.

There are seven species: wheat, barley, the vine (grapes), dates, pomegranate, olive oil, and honey. This has been explained.<sup>11</sup> And it is necessary to review them.

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<sup>1</sup>The kabbalists, following the rabbinic prescription for Torah scholars, restricted their sexual activities to Shabbat.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., for both the upper and lower *shekhinah*, *Binah* and *Malkhut*.

<sup>3</sup>See *Shabbat*, 119a.

<sup>4</sup>On the eve of *Shabbat*, the Holy One, Blessed be He (*Tiferet*) and the *Shekhinah* are brought together, like a bride and groom. According to the commentary, *Be'er le-Hay Ro'iy*, the wedding melodies, alluded to by the "voice" of the bride and groom are produced by the wings of the holy animals [that support the Throne of Glory].

<sup>5</sup>The letter *yod* has the value of ten. On the association of holiness with ten people, see B.T., *Megillah*, 23b.

<sup>6</sup>The word that begins the *qiddush*.

<sup>7</sup>I.e., seventy-two. The *Be'er le-Hay Ro'iy* notes that the 70 words of the *Qiddush* are divided into two sections of 35 words. These are the 35 words of *va-yekhullu* and the 35 words of the blessing, itself. The two parts represent the two Sabbaths (*Binah* and *Malkhut*) that must be joined.

<sup>8</sup>I.e., they are now connected to *Binah*.

<sup>9</sup>I.e., grapes.

<sup>10</sup>See *Berakhot*, 40a and *Sanhedrin*, 70b.

<sup>11</sup>See *Zohar Hadash*, *Tiqqunim*, 80a. Here it taught that Adam sinned with all seven of the species for which the Land of Israel is praised. Thus "all are true." Adam sinned with wheat and with grapes.

**Wheat** has been explained.<sup>1</sup>

**Barley** (*Se'uRaH*). He removed the *heh* from its measure (*SHi'uR*).<sup>2</sup>

**Vine**. She squeezed the grapes into the "other power"<sup>3</sup> and made wine that is not fit for a libation.<sup>4</sup> And the tree of good and evil was produced.<sup>5</sup>

**Date**. He picked a date before its time, before it was ripe.<sup>6</sup> Thus he was plucked from the world before his time.<sup>7</sup> This is the secret of the person who caused his children to die before their time, as it is written, "*why should God be angry over your voice and destroy the work of your hands*" (Eccles. 5:5). The secret of the matter is, "*I struck your children le-shav*"<sup>8</sup> (Jeremiah 2:30). Therefore, "*Do not take the name of YHVH your God in vain*" (Exodus 20:7).

**Pomegranate**. Ben Zoma<sup>9</sup> sinned with it.<sup>10</sup> But Rabbi Meir ate the inner part and discarded the shell. The shells (*qelippot*) are the nations of the world. Israel is the marrow (*Moah*) in their midst.

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<sup>1</sup>See the section on wheat.

<sup>2</sup>See the section on wheat above. Here, according to the *Be'er le-Hay Ro'iy*, the meaning may be that the upper *heh*, *Binah*, was separated from *Malkhut*.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., into the "public domain." See *Midrash Rabbah*, *Bereishit*, 19:5. "She squeezed the grapes and gave them to him to eat."

<sup>4</sup>According to Jewish Law, based on Deuteronomy 32:38, wine that has not been prepared by Jews may not be used. The *Be'er le-Hay Ro'iy* notes that "wine" is the wisdom of the heart. If it is not guarded, it becomes tainted by the "evil urge." In this sense, an impure heart can be understood as *yeyn neseekh* (an idolater's wine).

<sup>5</sup>*Malkhut*, the "private domain" became the tree of good and evil when she was mixed with the "public domain."

<sup>6</sup>See *Midrash Rabbah*, *Bereishit*, 21:7. According to the *midrash*, Adam could not wait until *Shabbat*, the appointed time for coupling with his wife.

<sup>7</sup>His sin brought death to the world.

<sup>8</sup>Literally, "in vain." However, here the verse is being read "because of *shav*", a reference to idolatry which is worthless.

<sup>9</sup>According to Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna, the text should read: "*Aher* sinned with it." The reference is to "four who entered paradise." See *Hagigah* 14b. One of the four, Elisha ben Abuyah, became an apostate. As a punishment, his name is traditionally not mentioned, but he is simply referred to as "*aher*", (the other one). Rabbi Meir continued to learn from his master, *aher*. Once, when asked how could learn from an apostate, he replied that he took the inner part and rejected what had to be discarded.

<sup>10</sup>The shell was too much for him.

Similarly, the *Shekhinah* is an orchard in exile. And it is the marrow within.<sup>1</sup> It is called "walnut."<sup>2</sup> As King Solomon said, "*I went down to my walnut garden*" (Song of Songs 6:11). The *Shekhinah* 's fruit is within.<sup>3</sup> As it is written, "*All the princess's glory lies within her garment of golden embroidery*" (Psalms 45:14).

And the *qelippot* are many foreign powers. On Shabbat, [the *Shekhinah*] divests herself of all of them and dresses in beautiful clothes. Similarly, Israel has to renew itself below on Shabbat in beautiful clothing.

*Your temple behind your hair is like a slice of pomegranate* (Song of Songs 4:3).

## Etrog

*Zohar, Mishpatim*

Vol. 2, 120b

In Jewish law, a distinction is made between the fruit of trees and grains or herbs that grow in the field. Trees are tithes as soon as fruit begins to form on them, whereas produce that grows in the field is only tithed when it is ready to be gathered. The *etrog* is unique in that it is sometimes treated as a tree and at other times as an herb. In this passage, the *etrog* becomes a symbol for Israel and *Malkhut*. Israel is both like the fruit of a tree and like grain and herbs. Specifically, the masses of Israel are compared to herbs that grow in a field. They require the watering of Torah in order to ripen. Only after they have so ripened are they tithed, i.e., gathered from exile and rendered holy to God. However, the righteous of Israel are like the fruit of the tree. They are rendered holy as soon as they

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<sup>1</sup>Like Israel, the *Shekhinah* is the marrow within the "shells."

<sup>2</sup>The *Shekhinah* is called "walnut," because the walnut has four shells and the *Shekhinah* is surrounded by four unholy *qelippot*. See *Tiqqun* 70, 125a.

<sup>3</sup>She is concealed within the shells of the world.

become fruit, i.e., even before redemption. Through their cleaving to the Torah, the righteous cause *shefa'* to descend, which sustains the entire cosmos.

Kabbalistically, the *etrog* is a symbol for *Malkhut* . Both are connected "above and below." *Malkhut* is the link that connects the *sefirot* above with creation below. Thus the *etrog* also represents the spiritual mission of Israel to unite creation with its divine source.

The next commandment is to bring first fruits,<sup>1</sup> and afterwards to make confession over the first fruits, and then to confess concerning the tithe. But the masters of the Mishnah disagree over whether the tithe is applied before or after the fruit is picked.<sup>2</sup> This [disagreement] concerns the *etrog* , for some say it follows the rule concerning trees which are tithed from the time that its fruit take form.<sup>3</sup> Others say it is tithed from the time that its fruit is ripe.<sup>4</sup> For the *etrog* is partly like a tree and partly like grain,<sup>5</sup> which [grow from] seeds. These are to be tithed after they are picked, not like a tree, but only after their fruit is ripe.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, they established that the *mozi'* <sup>7</sup> is said over a part of the bread that has been nicely cooked. Not where the bread has been burned, but where it has been made tasty.<sup>8</sup> Thus grain is tithed after it is picked, for then it is as if the fruit has been cooked.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Exodus 23:19.

<sup>2</sup>See *Mishnah, Bikkurim* , 2:6.

<sup>3</sup>This is Rabbi Eliezer's position in the *Mishnah* .

<sup>4</sup>This is the position of Rabban Gamaliel. Also See *Kiddushin* , 3a.

<sup>5</sup>Although it is a tree, it is like produce, in that it requires watering in addition to rainfall. In terms of Jewish law, the *etrog* is considered like a tree in regard to 'orlah and fruit of the fourth year, but like grain in regard to the tithe and fruit of the seventh year of the *shemithah* .

<sup>6</sup>The question concerns whether a fruit is tithed in the year that it first begins to take form or not until the following year when it has ripened and is picked.

<sup>7</sup>The blessing over bread. See *Sanhedrin* , 102b.

<sup>8</sup>Bread is made from grain, which is not "tithed until it is fully ripe." Kabbalistically, this may mean, according to the 'Or ha-Hamah , that grain ("bread brought forth from the earth"), which represents *Malkhut* , must be tithed when flavorful, i.e. when it is no longer under the effect of the forces of judgment.

<sup>9</sup>I.e., its flavor has reached its peak.

Israel are compared to a tree and to grain.<sup>1</sup> For concerning them, it is said, "*the choice first fruits of your soil you shall bring to the house of YHVH your God* " (Exodus 23:19). And thus, "*the first shearing of your flock you shall give to him* " (Deut. 18:4). For these are Israel, since it said concerning them, "*and you are my flock* " (Ezekiel 34:31). And thus Israel [is compared to grain, since] "*Israel is holy to YHVH, the first fruits of His harvest* " (Jeremiah 2:3). [Thus] after their gleaning from exile, they will be tithed and be called "*holy to YHVH* ."<sup>2</sup>

And Israel are called a great and mighty tree, containing food for all. In it is the Torah, the food above. In it is prayer, the food below. Even angels only receive food through Israel. For if Israel were not busy with Torah, food would not descend to them from the side of Torah that is compared to a tree. As it is written, "*she is a tree of life for those that hold fast to her* " (Proverbs 3:18). And its fruit are the *mizvot* .

Thus Torah is compared to water and to fire. For water would not descend from above, and sun which is fire would not shine down to ripen the fruit of the tree, were it not for Israel. Thus it is said concerning Israel, "*the green figs form* " (Song of Songs 2:13) for they are full of *mizvot* . "*And on the vines, the young grapes are fragrant* ," when they open in repentance. And immediately it is said to Israel, "*arise, my darling, my lovely, go* ," from exile.

Consequently, the Torah, which is the tree of life for those who adhere to her, is a tree which is tithed as soon as it buds. For *yod* , which is

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<sup>1</sup>Thus Israel resembles the *etrog* . Kabbalistically, the tree is *tiferet* and the produce is *Malkhut* . The souls of Israel are the product of these two *sefirot* .

<sup>2</sup>The offering of the first fruits at the Temple becomes a metaphor for the redemption of Israel from exile.

*Hokhmah* , rests upon it. [Therefore, it is tithed] one from ten.<sup>1</sup> With it *heh* is gathered together, for these are the fruit of the tree.<sup>2</sup> And what is the tree? *Vav* .<sup>3</sup> However, the rest of the nation is tithed, after being plucked from exile.<sup>4</sup> But concerning these *zaddiqim* , it is said, "**and on the first day you shall take for yourself the fruit of the beautiful tree (*peri ez hadar*)...**" (Lev. 23:40). [It is] beautiful because of the deeds which are performed by masters of the Torah and *mizvot* . They are tithed as soon as they bud, like a tree.

That is why, in tractate *Kiddushin* , they said, "but we hold that an *etrog* is like an herb, just as an herb's growth requires watering [in addition to rain] and is tithed when it is picked, so an *etrog* also [requires watering in order to] grow..."<sup>5</sup> **For only the *Hokhmah* (wisdom) of the Torah is called water.**<sup>6</sup> And in another passage above, "thus we have learned, an *etrog* is like a tree in three ways."<sup>7</sup> For an *etrog* holds two sides,<sup>8</sup> and an *etrog* is shaped like a heart which is connected above and below.<sup>9</sup> Connected above, the heart sees.<sup>10</sup> Connected below to *Da'at* .<sup>11</sup> As has been explained, the heart knows. *Da'at* is the tree.<sup>12</sup> Torah is its fruit. Eyes are the *mizvot* . With them the heart sees.

*Like a lily among thorns , so is my darling among the maidens* (Song of Songs 2:2).

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<sup>1</sup>*Yod* equals ten.

<sup>2</sup>The letter *heh* of the Tetragrammaton represents the righteous (the *zaddiqim* ), those who hold fast to the Torah. They are its fruit and are immediately gathered, as soon as they "bud." *Hokhmah* rests on them.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., *Tiferet* , the "Torah."

<sup>4</sup>I.e., are like produce which is only tithed after the fruit has ripened.

<sup>5</sup>*Kiddushin* , 3a.

<sup>6</sup>The members of Israel who are compared to produce, require additional watering, i.e. Torah, before they are "tithed."

<sup>7</sup>*Rosh Ha-Shanah* , 14b.

<sup>8</sup>I.e., *Hesed* and *Gevurah* .

<sup>9</sup>The *etrog* is *Malkhut* . Since it is likened to a heart, it is similar to *Tiferet* , the tree. The heart is in the center of the body and *Tiferet* is in the center of the *sefirot* . *Tiferet* is connected to *sefirot* above and below. *Malkhut* is connected to the *sefirot* above and to the worlds below.

<sup>10</sup>Its power depends on the upper *sefirot* .

<sup>11</sup>*Da'at* (knowing) refers to the union of *Malkhut* and *Tiferet* , as in the verse "Adam knew Eve his wife " (Genesis 4:1). It depends on the the spiritual efforts of people who are connected to *Malkhut* from below.

<sup>12</sup>I.e., *Tiferet* .

*While the king was on his couch, my nard spread its fragrance* (Song of Songs 1:12).

## Apple

*Zohar, Aharey Mot*

Vol. 3, 74a

The two selections that follow provide a kabbalistic explanation for the verses in Song of Songs, in which the female likens her lover to an apple tree and the male compares her to a lily. The male is *Tif'eret*, the Holy One, blessed be He, and the female is *malkhut*, here representing the Community of Israel, which is God's lover. *Tif'eret* is primarily compared to an apple, because of the fruit's three colors. *Tif'eret*, characterized by the quality of compassion, is represented by greed. However, it also combines within it the qualities of lovingkindness and judgment, represented by white and red. *Malkhut* is symbolized by the lily, because of its two colors, red and white, which represent the qualities of judgment and lovingkindness that it channels. Its six leaves are the upper *sefirot*, which it holds.

Rabbi Hiyya began with the verse, "*Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the youths ...*" (Song of Songs 2:3). The *havrayya* explained this verse.<sup>1</sup> But how favored is the Community of Israel before the Holy Blessed One.<sup>2</sup> For She praises Him with this [verse]. Here we have to consider, why she praises Him [by comparing Him to] an apple and not to something else, or to colors, scent, or taste? But since the verse says "*apple*," She praises Him with all of these: with color, scent, and taste.<sup>3</sup> Just as an apple heals everything, so the Holy Blessed One

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<sup>1</sup>See *Zohar*, v. 2, 60b.

<sup>2</sup>The Community of Israel (*Keneset Israel*) is *Malkhut* and the Holy Blessed One is *Tif'eret*.

<sup>3</sup>Other trees surpass the apple in each of these categories, but only the apple excels in all three. ('*Or ha-Hamah*).



heals everything. Just as an apple appears in colors, as I explained,<sup>1</sup> so the Holy Blessed One has supernal colors.<sup>2</sup> Just as the apple has a scent that is more delicate than that of all the other trees, so, concerning the Holy Blessed one, it is written, "*and his scent is like Lebanon* " (Hosea 14:7). Just as an apple has a sweet taste, so concerning the Holy Blessed One, it is written, "*his mouth is delicious* " (Song of Songs 5:16). And the Holy Blessed One praises the Community of Israel [by comparing Her] to a lily. I explained [why she is praised] as a lily,<sup>3</sup> and it has been learned.

*Zohar, Ha'azinu*

Vol. 3, 286b

Rabbi Isaac began with the verse, "*like an apple tree among the trees of the forest...* " (Song of Songs 2:3). More fortunate is the portion of Israel than that of all the nations [that worship] stars and constellations. For all of the other nations are given over to intermediate powers that rule over them. But Israel is holy. Fortunate is their portion in this world and the World that is Coming. For the Holy Blessed One will not give them to any angel or other power, but He retains them for His portion. As it is written, "*for the portion of YHVH is His people* " (Deut. 32:9). And it is written, "*For Yah chose Jacob for Himself* " (Psalms 135:4). "*As an apple tree among the trees of the forest...* " Just as an apple is distinguished by its colors from all the other trees of the field, so the Holy Blessed One is distinguished and makes an impression over all the upper and lower powers. Consequently, "*YHVH of Hosts is His name* " (Isaiah 48:2). He is a sign in all the power that is above.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>I.e., white, red, and green. See *Zohar* , v. 3, 133b.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., the *sefirot* *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tiferet* , which correspond to white, red, and green. See following text from *Zohar* , v. 3, 286b.

<sup>3</sup>See Song of Songs 2:2.

<sup>4</sup>See B.T., *Hagigah*, 16a. The *midrash* is based on Deuteronomy 33:2. "*He came ('atah) from Rivevot Qodesh.*" This can be read as "He is a sign amongst multitudes of holiness."

Come and see. The Holy Blessed One is like an apple. For He has three colors.<sup>1</sup> The Community of Israel is like a lily. What is a lily? Rabbi Abba said, a fenced-in lily which is concealed.<sup>2</sup> A lily contained in six leaves.<sup>3</sup> The colors of this lily are white and red. It is entirely these two colors: red and white. So is the Community of Israel.<sup>4</sup>

The Holy Blessed One is like an apple. The Community of Israel is like a lily. For thus the Community of Israel spoke, "*I aroused you under the apple tree*" (Song of Songs 8:5). "*Under the apple tree* ." What place is this? But these are the patriarchs, as we explained.<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Yose said, it is the Jubilee.<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Abba said, it is all well said. But these are the patriarchs, as we explained, they are the three colors that are joined in the apple.

Rabbi Isaac said, where is the Community of Israel contained in a lily? In those kisses of love with which she cleaves to the supernal king, she receives two lilies. As it is said, "*his lips are lilies*" (Song of Songs 5:13). That is why the Community of Israel said, "*let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*" (Song of Songs 1:2). As it is written, "*all of my people shall kiss your mouth*" (Genesis 41:40). Because she was contained in lilies.

*As an apple among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the youths, I love to sit in his shade and his fruit is sweet to my mouth* (Song of Songs 2:2).

## Walnut

*Zohar, Exodus*

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<sup>1</sup>White, red and green, corresponding to *Hesed* , *Gevurah* , and *Tiferet* .

<sup>2</sup>*Malkhut* is guarded against the *qelippot* .

<sup>3</sup>I.e., the six *sefirot* that flow into *Malkhut* .

<sup>4</sup>I.e., it is a mixture of compassion(white) and judgment (red).

<sup>5</sup>I.e., *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tiferet* . According to the *Miqdash Melekh*, *Malkhut* spoke this verse to Israel and said "I aroused you from My place which is under the apple tree... and brought you to this world."

<sup>6</sup>I.e., *Binah* .

The first portion of this passage deals with the Holy Chariot, mentioned in Ezekiel's vision, and with the *qelippot* that surround it. The Chariot, which came to be associated with the World of Creation, represents the locus for the visionary experiences of early Jewish mystics and prophets. It is located below *Malkhut*, here called the Walnut Garden. The walnut itself is the Chariot. Its four inner chambers are the heads of the four animals surrounding the throne in the first chapter of Ezekiel. The walnut's shell alludes to the evil *qelippot*.

The second portion emphasizes the principle of the Kabbalah's approach to nature. Creation is a reflection of the structure and innerworkings of the divine realm. Thus there is much to be learned from observing nature. For every element of creation can reveal secrets of the concealed upper world.

Rabbi Akiba said to him,<sup>1</sup> what is the meaning of "*I descended to the walnut garden*" (Song of Songs 6:11)? He answered, come and see. That garden went out of Eden and it is the *Shekhinah*.

**Walnut:** this is the supernal holy chariot, the four river heads that branch out from the garden like that walnut which contains four holy heads within.<sup>2</sup> And why does it say "*I descended*"? As we have learned, a person would descend to the chariot.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Akiba said to him, if so, he should have said, "I descended to the walnut."

Why, "*I descended to the walnut garden*"?<sup>4</sup> He replied, because it is the walnut's

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<sup>1</sup>The conversation is between Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Eliezer.

<sup>2</sup>The four heads are those of the holy animals that support the Throne or chariot. The image of the walnut is used because it has four shells. The "heads" are located within them. The four "*qelippot*" are named in Ezekiel 1:4.

<sup>3</sup>In the *heikhalot* tradition, a visionary mystical experience was pursued. Those who entered into this experience were said to "descend to the chariot."

<sup>4</sup>The verse implies descent to *Malkhut*, which is the garden, located above the Chariot. Thus it would seem to refer to the descent of *Tiferet* to *Malkhut* rather than the mystic or prophet's experience, which only reaches "the walnut," or Chariot.

praise.<sup>1</sup> Just as the walnut is hidden and concealed from all sides,<sup>2</sup> so the chariot that goes out of the garden is concealed on all sides. Just as the four pieces in the walnut are joined at one side and separate out from that side, so the chariot is joined in unity, joy and perfection, yet each part becomes distinct in the place to which it assigned. As it is written, "[the name of the first tributary is Pishon] the one that goes around the entire land of Havilah..." (Gen. 2:11) "[And the name of the third stream is Tigris] the one that flows east of Asshur..." (Gen. 2:14), and so on.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Akiba said, what does this filth which is in the shells of the walnut refer to? He answered, although the Torah did not reveal this, it is revealed in this.<sup>4</sup> Come and see.

**Almonds** (*SHeQeDim*): some are bitter and some are sweet.<sup>5</sup> This tells us something. There are forces of strict judgment and there are forces of service.<sup>6</sup> But we have seen that the Torah only alludes to [almonds] as judgment. And so it was for Jeremiah. He took them as a sign of judgment. As it is written, "I see a rod of almond" (Jeremiah 1:11). What is almond? Actual almonds! And similarly with Aaron's staff, "it bore almonds" (Numbers 17:23). And the scriptural use of the word itself, shows that it indicates strict judgment.<sup>7</sup> As it is written, "And YHVH was intent (*yiSHeQoD*) on [bringing] evil [upon us]" (Daniel 9:14). Similarly, "I am diligent to keep my word" (Jeremiah 1:12). And similarly in the rest of the cases.

Rabbi Akiba said to him, the meaning is that great wisdom can be learned from all that the Holy Blessed One does. As it is written, "all that YHVH does has a purpose"

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<sup>1</sup>The garden is joined to the Chariot, which praises it.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., the nut is concealed within its shell.

<sup>3</sup>The four rivers refer to the four animals, the lion, ox, man, and eagle, corresponding to *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, and *Malkhut* and the Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Rafael. ('*Or ha-Hamah*). In other sources it seems that the eagle is associated with *Tiferet* and man with *Malkhut*.

<sup>4</sup>The verses concerning the four rivers do not allude to the *qelippot*. However, they are alluded to in the Torah's discussion of almonds.

<sup>5</sup>The almond has a bitter, inedible shell and an inner shell which is eaten.

<sup>6</sup>I.e., that serve holiness.

<sup>7</sup>The verb *SHQoD*, formed from the same letters that spell the Hebrew word for almond, appears in a number of biblical passages involving divine judgment.

(Proverbs 16:4). Rabbi Eleazar said from here, it is written, "*and God saw all that He had done and it was very good*" (Genesis 1:31). Why "*very*"? [Because] one can learn high wisdom from it.<sup>1</sup>

Rabbi Judah said, why is it written, "*God even made this corresponding to that*" (Ecclesiastes 7:14)? The Holy Blessed One made the earth as a reflection of what is in the firmament. So everything alludes to what is above. For whenever Rabbi Abba saw a tree whose fruit became a bird that flew from it, he would weep and say, if people knew what these things allude to, they would tear their clothes to their navel for having forgotten this wisdom. Even more so for the rest of the things the Holy Blessed One has made on the earth.<sup>2</sup>

As Rabbi Yose said, trees which reveal wisdom, such as the carob, palm, pistachio, and so on were all mounted on one chariot. For all these trees that produce fruit, except for apple trees, share the same secret,<sup>3</sup> except for the different paths.<sup>4</sup>

All those that do not produce fruit, and are great, except for the willow that has its own mystery as above,<sup>5</sup> suck from one wet nurse.<sup>6</sup>

And all the small ones, except for the hyssop, were borne by one mother.<sup>7</sup>

All the herbs of the earth have mighty angels assigned to them in heaven. Each of them has its own secret, reflecting something above.<sup>8</sup> Thus it is written, "*do not seed your field with mixed species (kil'ayim)*" (Leviticus 19:19).<sup>9</sup> For each enters and exits by itself.<sup>10</sup> As it is written, "*do you know the laws of heaven or place its authority on*

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<sup>1</sup>Creation was not only good in itself, but had the added merit of reflecting the truths of the divine world as well.

<sup>2</sup>Their kabbalistic significance is even more wonderful than this strange example.

<sup>3</sup>The *Or ha-Hamah* cites Hayyim Vital as having taught that all these trees are under the charge of the same governing angel.

<sup>4</sup>Despite their differences, they all allude to *Tiferet*.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., the willow alludes to *Nezah* and *Hod*.

<sup>6</sup>Since they do not bear fruit, they all allude to external forces.

<sup>7</sup>Small, fruit bearing trees allude to *Malkhut*. The hyssop alludes to *Yesod*. (*Or ha-Hamah*).

<sup>8</sup>They are all related to distinct forces of judgment.

<sup>9</sup>Since all trees have one secret, the verse forbids mixing of seeds and not trees. (*Or ha-Hamah*).

<sup>10</sup>The angels assigned to each species function independently.

earth " (Job 38:33). And it is written, "*He calls each of them by name* " (Isaiah 40:26). ...Everything in the world has its own secret which the Holy Blessed One did not want to remove [from its place] and mix with another, and He called them by names...<sup>1</sup>

*I descended to my walnut garden to see the fruit of the stream, to see if the vine flowered, if the pomegranate budded* (Song of Songs 6:11).

## **Hazelnuts**

Zohar, Va-Yeze'

Vol. 1, 161b:

The passages that follow interpret the plight of Jacob, when he was serving his father-in-law, and the kabbalistic significance of his staff of poplar, hazelnut, and plane. In the first portion, the mysterious Mishnah proclaims in solemn, moralistic tones that God may be served even in the lowest depths. It may be that implicit here is an echo of the rabbinic question regarding how the patriarchs were able to fulfill the commandments before the Torah was given. Their discussion often involves the staff of Jacob.<sup>2</sup>

Kabbalistically, Jacob represents *Tif'eret* , which includes the three sides of lovingkindness, judgment, and compassion. These three qualities are symbolized by the three types of wood that make up Jacob's staff. Hazelnut is associated with judgment, because of its reddish color. Nevertheless, although Jacob, as *Tif'eret* , holds both judgment and lovingkindness, he strips the bark away from the wood,

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., God took great measures to keep the powers distinct. Therefore human beings should act accordingly.

<sup>2</sup>See Arthur Green, *Devotion and Commandment* (Cincinnati, 1989).

"laying bare the white ." I.e., he chooses to incline towards the side of lovingkindness. In this is his perfection.

### Secrets of the Torah

"Jacob took for himself a staff of poplar, hazelnut, and plane and he split them into white strips, exposing the white that was on the staffs ." (Gen. 30:37).

**Mishnah:**<sup>1</sup> The intention of the deed concerned the bindings of faith.<sup>2</sup> The voice that becomes many voices<sup>3</sup> was aroused from above to below and our eyes were opened.<sup>4</sup> The sphere<sup>5</sup> turns from above to many sides and the voice of pleasantness was aroused. Wake up slumberers and sleepers with sleep in their eyes who do not know, look or see. Those whose ears are shut, heavy of heart, slumbering and not knowing. The Torah stands before them. They do not take note, nor know where to look. Seeing without seeing. The Torah raises voices: look fools, open your eyes and know. There is no one who will take note and no one who will incline his ears. How long will you be within the darkness of your wills? Look in order to know and the light that shines will be revealed to you. When perfect Jacob was within the anguish of the other land and power,<sup>6</sup> within foreign levels, he

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<sup>1</sup>This is one of a number of passages in the *Zohar* which consist of two sections called "Mishnah " and "Tosefta ." In them the author tries to imitate the concise style of the early rabbinic texts called by those names. These passages have been studied by Efraim Gottlieb. See *Studies in the Kabbala* [sic] *Literature* (Hebrew) (Tel-Aviv, 1976), pp. 163-214. Also see Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* , p. 161.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., it was not simply a physical act, but was meant to connect the *sefirot* .

<sup>3</sup>Literally, "the voice of the voice of voices." According to the 'Or ha-Hamah, the reference is to *Tiferet* which is called "voice." But it is a voice that divides itself into many voices "to rebuke human beings and to return them [to God]."

<sup>4</sup>This refers to the angels who do not sleep.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., *Malkhut* , which turns in various directions to receive the *shefa'* of the other *sefirot* , either as judgment or compassion.

<sup>6</sup>When Jacob was suffering outside of the holy Land of Israel.

rejected everything, choosing the portion of his destiny and inheritance: light from darkness, wisdom from folly. And he honored his Lord while he was standing within the domain of a foreign god.<sup>1</sup> Concerning this is written, "*Not now will Jacob be ashamed, not now will his face turn pale* " (Isaiah 29:22).

## **Tosefta**

The pure connection ascended deep within.<sup>2</sup> Before it found a resting place, that place was no place. It did not exist above or below. It was bereft of everything. Everything was destruction. Destruction is a male, Samael, who emerged from the superfluous part of the *Gevurah* of Isaac.<sup>3</sup> And Death is its female consort, the primordial snake, wife of adultery, as it is written, "*her legs descend to death* " (Proverbs 5:5). These two: Destruction and Death, heard the power of the King's command.<sup>4</sup>

**Hidden secret.** The high concealment,<sup>5</sup> hidden from all, beyond all concepts and thoughts, from it emerged a *yod* , the high point.<sup>6</sup> From that high point, everything emerges. Continuing, it produces a *heh* , high mother that waters everything.<sup>7</sup> From it, *vav* emerges, the mystery of six that holds all the sides.<sup>8</sup> It is the, "*staff of fresh poplar, hazelnut, and plane* " (Gen. 30:37).

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<sup>1</sup>According to the *'Or ha-Hamah* , the meaning of this passage is that Jacob found God from within the *qelippot* , themselves. Even there, a spark of holiness can be found.

<sup>2</sup>Jacob, connected to holiness, entered the depths of the *qelippot* .

<sup>3</sup>The *Zohar* often views evil as originating as a waste product of judgment. It is, in a sense, that aspect of judgment that cannot be used for holiness.

<sup>4</sup>The divine extends even to these depths of the *qelippot* .

<sup>5</sup>*Keter* .

<sup>6</sup>*Hokhmah* .

<sup>7</sup>*Binah* .

<sup>8</sup>*Tiferet* . *Vav* has the value of six. It is the center of the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* to *Yesod* .



Two arms hold it.<sup>1</sup> These emerge and hold the lower *heh* ,<sup>2</sup> to join the extension as one, so as to be one. Then thirteen attributes are one. And white is engraved on the colors and ascends over all the colors.<sup>3</sup> As it is written, "*laying bare the white* " (Gen. 30:37). Then is said, "*YHVH is one and His name is one* " (Zach. 14:9). And then, "*YHVH is my shepherd, I shall not lack* " (Psalms 23:1). And it is written, "*He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me to waters of rest . He restores my soul...* " (Psalms 23:2,3).

"*And Jacob took for himself*:" He chose for himself, for his portion and destiny.

"*a staff of fresh poplar*:" The right side, the color white.<sup>4</sup>

"*fresh*:" It is the side of water.<sup>5</sup>

"*and hazelnut*:" This is the left side, red as a rose.<sup>6</sup>

"*and plane*:" it contains the two sides together.<sup>7</sup>

Everything holds to the right side and its color, white, and ascends with it. As it is written, "*laying bare the white* ." For, although it holds two sides, it takes as its portion the right side and engraves it everywhere, on this side and on that.<sup>8</sup> Then he is called a whole person,<sup>9</sup> complete in everything.

## Carob

*Zohar, Pinhas*

Vol. 3, 216b

*Ra'aya Meheymna*

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<sup>1</sup>*Hesed* and *gevurah* .

<sup>2</sup>*Malkhut* .

<sup>3</sup>White is associated with *hesed* .

<sup>4</sup>I.e., the side of *Hesed* .

<sup>5</sup>The word for fresh, *lah* , can also mean damp. Water is also associated with the right side of *Hokhmah* and *Hesed* .

<sup>6</sup>I.e., the side of judgment.

<sup>7</sup>It is the central pillar, *Tiferet* , which joins the two sides.

<sup>8</sup>Even though both sides must be joined to produce wholeness, the right side of kindness takes precedence over the left side of judgment.

<sup>9</sup>Jacob, who represents *tiferet* , is called an *ish tam* (Gen. 25:27), here understood as meaning a complete person.

In this selection, the *Zohar*'s views concerning the transmigration of souls and astrology are presented. The theory of transmigration serves as a basis for justifying the suffering of the righteous. It is argued that they brought about their afflictions in a previous life. Carobs allude to this mystery. The letters that spell carob in Hebrew can also be read as "dried up." According to Talmudic legend, several exceptional rabbis are said to have subsisted on a diet of only a small measure of carobs. According to the *Zohar*, this means that their deeds in a past life dried up the efficacy of their blessings and holiness. Thus they were living their present lives under conditions of privation.

All of creation was originally subject to the laws of astrology. However, the Torah unites people to the source of all power. Thus those who cleave to the Torah, i.e., Israel, are no longer subject to astrological influences. Abraham is the prime example of this. According to his horoscope, Abram was not destined to have offspring. However, as a result of his cleaving to God, his name was changed to Abraham. He was then promised descendants who also would be given the opportunity to transcend astrological influences, through the gift of the Torah.

The Holy Lamp arose and said, concerning this is written, "*I acquired a man with YHVH*" (Gen. 4:1).<sup>1</sup> For she saw with the Holy Spirit that his descendants would sit in the chamber of hewn stones.<sup>2</sup>

Also,<sup>3</sup> Rabbi [Eleazar ben] Pedat came upon hard times and only had a small measure (*qav*) of carobs (*HaRuVim*) to subsist on from one Shabbat to the next, like

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<sup>1</sup>The Holy Lamp, Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai, is explaining the connection between Jethro and Cain. The descendants of Jethro were called Kenites (*Qeyni*). See Judges 1:16. Some of these descendants would sit in the Sanhedrin. Eve foresaw Jethro's descendants when Cain was born. Thus she gave him the name Cain (*Qayin*) which is related to the root *QNoH* (to acquire). Thus "*a man with YHVH*" refers not to Cain, but to the righteous descendants.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., in the Sanhedrin.

<sup>3</sup>This is one of a series of examples that are explained by the theory of reincarnation.

Rabbi Hanina.<sup>1</sup> Why was this? For a voice from heaven already said that the whole world is only nourished because of Hanina, my son. But he had previously brought this about.<sup>2</sup> For he dried up (*harav*) *qof* and *vav* from *yod* which is *YaBoQ*.<sup>3</sup> Thus he only had a "dried up" *qav*!<sup>4</sup> For the letter *yod* is *yihud* (uniting) and from it [energy] flows to the letter *bet*, which is *berakhah* (blessing). It is *qadosh* (holy) and from it, (the letter) *qof* is made holy, which is *qedushah* (holiness). Rabbi [Eleazar ben] Pedat caused his carobs to be *qav*, which are blessing and holiness. But he only had a "dried up" *qav*.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, Job was the son of a *yevamah*.<sup>6</sup> Thus he was punished for what he had done in his previous life.<sup>7</sup>

Those that do not know this mystery,<sup>8</sup> say that one's children, life,<sup>9</sup> and sustenance do not depend on merit, but on one's constellation.<sup>10</sup> But, we have seen that Abraham saw that, according to his constellation, he was not destined to have a son. And yet the Holy Blessed One sent him a son. As it is written, "*He brought him outside and said, look [at the heavens]...*" (Gen. 15:5). And it has been explained,<sup>11</sup> He told him, "leave your astrology." And He raised him above the stars. He said to him, "*look at the heavens and count the stars.*" To this point, the words of the rabbis. We have to interpret them esoterically.

<sup>1</sup>On Rabbi Eleazar ben Padat, see *Ta'anit*, 25a. On Hanina ben Dosa, see *Berakhot*, 17b.

<sup>2</sup>I.e., in an earlier incarnation.

<sup>3</sup>*Yaboq* is the source from which blessing and holiness flow. Eleazar ben Padat's transgressions in a previous life prevented him from joining his holiness (the letter *qof*) and blessing (the letter *bet*) to that source. Thus they dried up.

<sup>4</sup>Although *qav haruvim* literally means "a small measure of carobs," it can also be read as "a dried up QaV."

<sup>5</sup>I.e., as a result of his previous life, he could not manage to join his blessing and holiness to the supreme source that waters them, *Yaboq*.

<sup>6</sup>A woman who marries her brother-in-law after her husband died without issue. The *Zohar* tends to understand this *mizvah* as an opportunity for the husband to be reborn as the offspring of his wife and brother!

<sup>7</sup>His apparently undeserved sufferings were the just deserts of his actions in his previous incarnation (as his father's brother).

<sup>8</sup>I.e., the mystery of previous lives.

<sup>9</sup>I.e., length of life.

<sup>10</sup>See B.T., *Moed Qatan*, 28a.

<sup>11</sup>B.T., *Shabbat*, 156a.

Come and see. All the creatures of the world, before the Torah was given to Israel, were dependent on the constellations.<sup>1</sup> [This was so,] even in regard to their children, lives, and sustenance. But after the Torah was given to Israel, He removed them from the determination of stars and constellations. This, we learned from Abraham. For his offspring were destined to receive *heh* from Abraham.<sup>2</sup> These are the five books of the Torah. Concerning it, is said, "*these are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created*" (Gen. 2:4) With *heh* , He created them.<sup>3</sup> He told Abraham, because of this *heh* that is added to your name, the heavens are beneath you and all the stars and constellations that shine with *heh* .<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it is said concerning it, "*Heh* <sup>5</sup>*will be seed for you and you will sow...*" (Gen. 47:23) with *heh* . "*For Isaac will be called your seed*" (Gen. 21:12).<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, whoever learns<sup>7</sup> Torah is released from the obligatory influence of the stars and constellations, if he learns it in order to keep its commandments. Otherwise, it is as if he did not learn it and the obligatory influence of the stars and constellations still applies to him. How much more so, the ignorant, who are compared to animals. Concerning them, the verse was applied, "*cursed is one who lies with any beast*" (Deut. 27:21).<sup>8</sup> For them, the obligatory influence of the stars and constellations is not rescinded.

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., their fate was determined by astrological influences.

<sup>2</sup>Abram's name became Abraham when God added a *heh* to his name. *Heh* has the value of five and was taken to allude to the five sections of the Pentateuch.

<sup>3</sup>*Menahot* , 29b. The word for "when they were created" (*be-hibar'am* ) can be read "with *heh* , He created them" (*be-h baram* ).

<sup>4</sup>The letter *Heh* here refers to *Malkhut* , the *Shekhinah* which rules over everything below. Through the merit of Abraham, Israel received the Torah which connects them to the *Shekhinah* . Thus while the other nations remain subject to heavenly powers, Israel is governed by the *Shekhinah* .

<sup>5</sup>Literally, "here is seed for you." The author of the *Ra'ya Meheymna* reads the *Shekhinah* will be the basis of your sowing.

<sup>6</sup>Even though Abraham's constellation indicated that he could not have a son, he had one through the *Shekhinah* .

<sup>7</sup>Literally, "whoever makes an effort" or "struggles" with the Torah.

<sup>8</sup>See B.T., *Pesahim* , 49b.

"Man, his days are like grass, he blooms like a flower of the field" (Psalms 103:15). And it is said concerning him, "I was young and am now old..." (Psalms 37:25).

Afterwards, "he returns to the days of his youth" (Job 33:25). For when a tree's old branches are trimmed, they grow from its roots as before, they return to the world as at first. The old die and return to this world, young. This is the secret of, "the Holy Blessed One constantly renews the work of creation, every day."<sup>1</sup> For a thousand die everyday and a thousand are renewed.

**"And wine gladdens the heart of man" (Psalms 104:15). This is the wine of Torah. For the letters that spell wine have the same value as the letters that spell secret.<sup>2</sup> Just as wine has to be concealed and sealed, so as not to be used for idol worship, so the secret of the Torah, with all its mysteries, has to be concealed and sealed and only poured out to those that fear it.** And it is not for nothing that many *mizvot* are done with wine and that with it one blesses the Holy Blessed One. **Wine has two colors, white and red, judgment and compassion.<sup>3</sup>** That is why the *bet* is added [in the word] *be-yayin* (with wine).<sup>4</sup> It is white and red like the lily. White from the right side and red from the left side.<sup>5</sup>

And what is "the *levav* of man"? It should have [just] said "*lev* (heart)."<sup>6</sup> But there is a *lev* which is given over to *lev*. These are the thirty-two<sup>7</sup> times that *Elohim* (God) is mentioned in the work of creation. And the letter *bet* from *bereishit*<sup>8</sup> and *lamed* from "in the eyes of all Israel" (Deut. 34:12) is a second *lev*.<sup>9</sup> So twice thirty-two equals sixty-four, eight less than seventy-two, which is "*va-yekhullu*"<sup>10</sup> (and they

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<sup>1</sup>From the morning blessings said before the *Shema*.

<sup>2</sup>Wine is *YaYiN* (10+10+50=70) and secret is *SOD* (60+6+4=70).

<sup>3</sup>I.e., white is compassion and red is judgment.

<sup>4</sup>*Bet* has the value of two. As stated above, "many *mizvot* are done *be-yayin* (with wine).

<sup>5</sup>White and the right side allude to *hesed* (or *rahamim*) and red and the left side represent *din* (judgment).

<sup>6</sup>Heart may be spelled both ways.

<sup>7</sup>*Lev* has the value of 32.

<sup>8</sup>The first word of the Torah begins with *bet*.

<sup>9</sup>The last letter of the last word of the Torah is *lamed*. Hence the first and last letters spell *lev*.

<sup>10</sup>The consonants of *Ve-yekhullu* are 6+10+20+30+6=72.

were completed) (Gen. 2:1), which refers to the seven days of creation. What is the eighth? The seven days of creation plus "*this is the book of the history of man* " (Gen. 5:1). This is seventy-two which equals *be-yayin* (with wine).

What is "*to make the face shine from oil* " (Psalms 104:15)? These are the twelve faces [of Ezekiel's chariot]. Four of a lion, four of a bull, four of an eagle. Of these, Michael is the lion, his four faces are *YHVH* . There are four faces of the bull who is Gabriel and these are *YHVH* . There are four faces of the eagle who is Nuriel. These angels are under the levels of *hesed* , *pahad* , and *emet* , the levels of the three patriarchs.<sup>1</sup> The rabbis explained this: "*the patriarchs are the chariot* ."<sup>2</sup> The lights equal *yaboq* .<sup>3</sup> These are "[*YHVH*] is king , was king, will be king ."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>I.e., Michael is *hesed* , Gabriel is *gevurah*, and Nuriel is *tiferet* .

<sup>2</sup>See *Genesis Rabbah* , ch. 47, 6.

<sup>3</sup>I.e., one hundred and twelve. There are ten lights for each of the twelve faces.

<sup>4</sup>These are associated with the divine names *YHVH*, *AHYH*, *ADNY* which also equal one hundred twelve.