

AND I WILL TAKE YOU TO ME FOR A PEOPLE AND I WILL BE TO YOU A GOD, AND YE SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. This is the first of all commandments, the root of all precepts of the Law: the knowledge of God in a general way, namely that there is a Supernal Ruler, Lord of the universe and of all life, Creator of heaven and earth and all their hosts. But this general knowledge of God must lead on to a particular knowledge of Him. This is the inner meaning of man being "male and female together." When the Israelites were about to come out of Egypt they had no knowledge of the Holy One, blessed be He, and Moses had to teach them the first principle of Divine knowledge. Without this doctrine they would not have believed in all those signs and wonders which they were about to experience. At the end of the forty years in the desert, after having been instructed by Moses in all the commandments, both in those which are directly connected with the Holy Land and in those which are not, he taught them in an individual, particular way, the knowledge of God, as it says: "Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart that the Lord he is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath; there is none else" (Deut. IV, 39). "That the Lord (TETRAGRAMMATON) is God (ELOHIM), this is the particular aspect of cognition. This particular mode of knowledge is essentially identical with the general concept of God as Creator and Lord. Should the question arise: Is not "the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 1, 7, i.e. the first commandment)? the answer would be that the fear of the Lord (which is connected with the commandments) must precede the second, the particular grade of knowledge, although, of course, one has to fear the Lord even before one has an intellectual knowledge of Him in His revelational individual aspects. Thus the ultimate and whole duty of man is to know the Holy One, blessed be He, in a general and in a particular way. The verse, "I am the first, and I am the last" (Isa. XLIV, 7) has a symbolic reference to this twofold mode of knowledge; "I am the first," to the general apprehension of Him, and "I am the last," to the particular, and these two are one. As a result of a proper knowledge of God as Creator and Lord, the two hundred and forty-eight organs of the human body become organs of the two hundred and forty-eight positive commandments of the Law, and man's life becomes something complete and harmonious, and the particular, individual, knowledge of God causes salvation and blessing to enter into every day of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year (corresponding to the three hundred and sixty-five negative commandments). For as it is above so it is below: as all the supernal "days" are filled with blessing by the (heavenly) Man, so are the days here below filled with blessing through the agency of Man (i.e. the righteous). Blessed are the Israelites in this world through having the commandments of the Torah! The word "Man" is applied to them only, but not to the heathen (Ezek. XXXIV, 31), therefore they must endeavour to keep the commandments with zeal and diligence, that all may become one in the inner meaning of Man. When the Holy One gave Israel the Torah on Mount Sinai, his first word was "Anokhi", I. This "Anokhi" contains many mysteries; here, however,

we are concerned with the fact that it is the first of all commandments, the root of all precepts of the Law: "I am the Lord,". This is the general axiom. The particular is "thy God,". The same is true of "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire. (Deut. IV, 24).

[Note: The translation for this page appears above, together with the translation for page 25a.]

AND THE PEOPLE TOOK THEIR DOUGH BEFORE IT WAS LEAVENED. On the strength of this is founded the precept that the leaven should be burned on the Passover Eve. "Leaven," and "unleaven" symbolize the evil and the good inclinations in man.

It is obligatory for every Israelite to relate the story of the Exodus on the Passover night. He who does so fervently and joyously, telling the tale with a high heart, shall be found worthy to rejoice in the Shekinah in the world to come, for rejoicing brings forth rejoicing; and the joy of Israel causes the Holy One Himself to be glad, so that He calls together all the Family above and says unto them: "Come ye and hearken unto the praises which My children bring unto Me! Behold how they rejoice in My Redemption!" Then all the angels and supernal beings gather round and observe Israel, how she sings and rejoices because of her Lord's own Redemption-and seeing the rejoicings below, the supernal beings also break into jubilation for that the Holy One possesses on earth a people so holy, whose joy in the Redemption of their Lord is so great and so powerful. For all that terrestrial rejoicing increases the power of the Lord and His hosts in the regions above, just as an earthly king gains strength from the praises of his subjects, the fame of his glory being thus spread throughout the world.

And similarly a man should acknowledge and proclaim any wonder that God has wrought for him. This should he do, not in order that the Omniscient should become aware of all His wonderful acts, since to Him all things of the past, as well as of the future, are already known, but rather in order that the praises may ascend even unto the highest spheres and awaken among the supernal beings a responsive outburst of praise and worshipful delight in the faithfulness of His people and in the invincible greatness of His glory, who is Himself rejoiced at the rejoicings of His people and His heavenly hosts. Conversely, with the confession of sin: the Holy One is aware of all man's sins and needs no reminder thereof; yet, since Satan, the supernal adversary and accuser, continually lies in wait, ever ready to bring man's sins before the Holy One, it is but a natural precaution to hasten on in advance of him, making full confession of one's sins, so that the Accuser, when he comes, may find himself anticipated and left without ground for his denunciations, and so be discouraged and leave his intended victim alone. Then, should the sinner carry out his repentance fully, he will be fully exonerated, and all will be well; and if not, Satan will thus obtain a just opportunity to rise up

against the impious one, saying: "Here is a man who has had the audacity to appear before Thee, and yet has rebelled against his Lord!" Therefore man should at all times beware lest he falter in his fealty, and strive ever to be found a faithful servant before the Holy One, blessed be He. Then follows the command that we should eat unleavened bread during Passover, it being a memorial, throughout the generations, of the true secret of Faith. For, as already stated elsewhere, Israel at that time emerged from the association with idolatry and entered into the mystery of Faith. THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER: THERE SHALL NO STRANGER EAT THEREOF. This commandment is a memorial of the Passover of Egypt. The lamb had to be kept from the tenth day of the month, because on that date the moon begins to increase her light until the fifteenth day, when she is in her full strength. The lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth, "between the evenings", namely at an hour when judgement hangs over the world. It signified the removal of the impurity from the holy sign (of the circumcision). Therefore "no uncircumcised person should eat thereof" (v. 48); for this sacrifice was brought by sons of the covenant, in order to break down the power of the "other side", to remove the "foreskin," from the sign of the holy covenant. When the Holy One came to Egypt He saw the blood of the Passover lamb smeared on the door, as well as the blood of the covenant, and the doors purged with hyssop, in order, as has already been explained, that the powers of impurity might be exorcised at the time of the supreme redemption of Israel. This memorial of the past redemption is, however, at the same time a sign and a token of the future Redemption, when the Holy One will "slaughter" the evil inclination once and for all.

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And because He killed all the firstborn of the "other side", He ordered that the firstborn of Israel should be redeemed, so that nothing of that "side" should cleave to them. In all things He watched over Israel like a father over his children. WITH BITTER HERBS THEY SHALL EAT IT... NEITHER SHALL YE BREAK A BONE THEREOF. The bitter herbs signify the Shekinah's exile with Israel in all their bitter afflictions in Egypt. Why were the bones of the Passover lamb not allowed to be broken? So that the dogs might drag them about and the Egyptians be thus made to realize the nothingness of that which they worshipped, and so be put to shame, and the Holy One be glorified. SANCTIFY UNTO ME ALL THE FIRSTBORN. The am haarez (ordinary man) requires redemption from the power of the evil impulse, which is his lord and master, as Jacob averred when he said: "Let my lord (Esau=evil) pass over before his servant" (Gen. XXXIII, 14). In this world the "evil impulse" is indeed the lord, because of the multitude of sins and evils which attack the body of man; as it has been truly said: "The righteous is judged by the good impulse, the sinner by the evil impulse, and the intermediate, he who is between these two extremes, is judged by both". Thus, he who is of the intermediate sort is a "brother," to the good as well as to the evil impulse, as Esau, the evil one, said to Jacob: "My brother, keep that thou hast unto thyself" (Gen. XXXIII, 9) When, however, there is a preponderance of meritorious works, the spirit breaks down the two

"nightwatches of asses and dogs" and he ascends to the morning watch wherein resides man, and becomes master of his animal nature. As for the intermediate person, a war is continually being waged between the principalities of justification and of condemnation to gain control of him; and when the side of condemnation sees that it cannot prevail against him, it tries to make him forget all his Torah, by transferring him into one of the seven regions of forgetfulness. For when a man is about to be born into the world the angel Gabriel wrestles with the dust of which man is formed, and inculcates into the potential man seventy languages, which, however, he retains not when he enters into this world, since the evil impulse wipes them out from his mind, so that the battle between the conflicting principles begins even before the man is born. Before all this, there are four angels which descend with him if he comes of pious stock. One of the four angels will be Michael, in remembrance of Abraham; one Gabriel, in remembrance of Isaac; one Nuriel, in remembrance of Jacob; and one Raphael, in remembrance of Adam; and the good impulse hovers over him. But if he himself is unworthy and possesses no heritage of righteousness to assist him, four powers of evil shall be his companions when he enters into this world, namely, Anger, Destruction, Depravity, and Wrath; and the evil impulse hovers over him to become his judge in the world to come. This explains the aforesaid saying, that, "the wicked is judged by the evil inclination, the righteous by the good, and the intermediate by good and evil mingled". In the case of the last-mentioned, Gabriel, who represents the good impulse,

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and Samael, who represents the evil, become his judges. For every man who is compounded of the four elements is accompanied by four angels on his right hand and four on his left, those already named; and from the side of his body Metatron presses close to him at the right and Samael at the left. Now all men are formed of the four elements, but on the order in which these elements are found-that is, the order of the planets with which each man is connected-depends the order of the angels who accompany him, and also the potential characteristics of the man. Thus, if his ruling planet be the Lion, Michael will lead, and be followed by Gabriel, and after him Raphael, and lastly Nuriel. If, however, his planet is the Ox, first comes Gabriel, then Michael, then Nuriel, then Raphael. If the Eagle be the planet by which he is influenced, Nuriel will be first, then Michael, followed first by Gabriel and then by Raphael. And should his planet be Man, then will Raphael lead, with Michael, Gabriel and Nuriel coming after in the order named. Now all aspects of Michael are of the attribute of mercy. A man whose leading angel is Michael will be benevolent, he will be pious and wise ; but all this applies only if he is a student of the Torah, for if he is not so he will be the very reverse of all this, since he will be formed after the evil inclination; he will be stupid and unfeeling, without benevolence or worth-for no ignorant man can be truly pious. Should a man be from the side of Gabriel, his attributes will all partake chiefly of the quality of justice: he will stand up courageously against the wicked; he will prevail over his own evil inclinations, will abhor sin and cleave unto all things righteous, and he will

become a judge by profession ; but again, all this will only come to pass if he study the Torah with diligence and attain proficiency; should he neglect this, he will be as strong in iniquity as otherwise in holiness; he will rejoice in the tribulations of the righteous; he will be hard in his condemnations, bold in evildoing, with no fear of sin; he will have a red face, and will be of the type of Esau-a blood-shedder. He whose planet is the Eagle possesses neither the attribute of mercy nor that of justice in a marked degree, but is either moderately good or moderately bad, as his good or evil inclination obtains influence over him, as his countenance reveals, red and white being blended therein. He who is under the guidance of the planet Man combines in himself- in so far as he derives his characteristics from the good side-all the good qualities: he is wise and pious, strong in intellectual apprehension, sin-fearing, full of excellent virtues; and the colour of his countenance is dark. But if he is governed by the principle of evil, he will be full of bad qualities. Now if a man's evil actions predominate, all the (angelic) hosts of the good prompting will leave him and those of the evil prompting obtain control, and Samael will become completely master of him and ruler over all the members of his body-Samael and his whole band. On the other hand, should his good actions be plentiful, all his evil concomitants will be removed, and his good inclinations permeate his whole being, so that the powers of holiness may obtain entire sway over him and the holy name TETRAGRAMMATON will rule over him. Should he by nature belong to the class of intermediaries, the heavenly hosts will be ranged at his right hand and on his left, the one side accusing and the other defending, and his ultimate salvation or destruction will depend on the relative strength of these conflicting celestial hosts, for whichever wins will claim him, be it for justice or for mercy. Therefore it has been said that man should always imagine that the fate of the whole world depends upon him. Now he who emanates from the side of Michael is called "firstborn". Michael's grade is white silver, and therefore the redemption of the firstborn is silver: five sel 'as, according to the numerical value of the letter he' in Abraham. Should such a man be successful in the study of the Torah, then a letter yod is added to him, which symbolizes holiness: for with the numerical value of yod-namely ten- the firstborn of cattle had to be redeemed. And when a man shall have reached this degree of holiness, then the words "Israel is holy to the Lord" (Jer' II, 3) can indeed be applied to him. Now all the supernal holy beings (hayoth) are called according to the letters of the Holy Name, as it is written, "Every one that is called by my name, I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him" (Isa. XLIII, 7). And not only these celestial creatures themselves, but also all lesser creatures created through the instrumentality of these holy beings are stamped with this name in order that it may proclaim Him who created it. The Yod is the symbol of the head of all creatures- the two He's represent the five fingers of the right hand and the left; the Vau is the symbol of the body. Yet God says, "to whom then will ye liken me that I should be equal to him?" (Ibid. XL, 25), which means, "among all created things there is none that could be likened to Me even among the number of those whom I have created in the likeness of the signs of My Name; for I can efface the form and then create newly again and yet again, but there is no god above

Me who could efface

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My likeness". Should one ask: "Is it not written, Ye saw no manner of similitude?" the answer would be: "Truly we did behold him under a certain similitude, for is it not written, 'and the similitude of the Lord should he (Moses) behold, (Num. XII, 8)?,' But only in the similitude which Moses beheld was the Lord revealed, not in any other similitude of any creature formed by His signs. Hence it is written: "To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isa. XL, 18). Even that "similitude" was a likeness of the Holy One, blessed be He, not in His own place, for that cannot be penetrated, but in the aspect of the King when He shows forth His power to rule over the whole of His creation, appearing, therefore, to each of His creatures according to the capacity of each to comprehend Him, as it is written: "And through the prophets I am represented in similitudes" (Hos. XII, 11). And therefore He says: "Although I represent Myself to you in your own likeness, to whom will ye liken Me that I should be equal to him?" For in the beginning, before shape and form had been created, He was without form and similitude. Therefore it is forbidden to one who apprehends Him as He is before creation to picture Him under any form or shape whatsoever, not even by His letters He and Vau, nor by the whole of His Holy Name, nor by any letter or sign soever. The words, "For ye saw no manner of similitude" thus mean, "Ye saw nothing which could be represented by any form or shape, nothing which ye could present or simulate by any finite conception". But when He had created the form of supernal Man it was to Him as a chariot, and He descended on it, to be known according to the style "TETRAGRAMMATON", in order that He might be known by His attributes and perceived in each attribute separately. For this reason He let Himself be called "El, Elohim, Shaddai, Zebaoth, and TETRAGRAMMATON", each being a symbol to men of His various Divine attributes, that it may be made manifest that the world is sustained by mercy and by justice, according to the works of men. Had the brightness of the glory of the Holy One, blessed be His Name, not been shed over the whole of His creation, how could He have been perceived even by the wise? He would have remained unapprehendable, and the words "The whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. VI, 3) could never be spoken with truth. But woe unto the man who should presume to compare the Lord with any attribute, even one which is His own, much less any human created form, "whose foundation is in the dust, (Job IV, 19), and whose products are frail creatures, soon vanishing, soon forgotten. The only conception of the Holy One, blessed be He, which man dare frame is of His sovereignty over some particular attribute or over creation as a whole. And if we perceive Him not under those manifestations, there is left neither attribute, nor similitude, nor form in Him; even as the sea, whose waters have neither form nor tangibility in themselves, but only when they are spread over a certain vessel which is the earth. On the basis of this fact we can calculate thus: The source of the sea is one. A current issues from it with a revolution which is Yod. The source is one and the current makes two. Next it

makes a great basin, like a channel dug in the earth, which is filled by the waters which emanate from the source. It is this basin which we know as "Sea": this is the third factor involved. This large basin is split up into seven channels, which are like so many long tubes. Thus the waters are conveyed from the sea into these seven channels. The source, the current, the sea, and the seven channels form together the number ten. Should the master who constructed these tubes come to break them up, then the waters return to their source, and there remains nought but broken vessels, dry, without water. It is thus that the Cause of causes has brought forth the ten Sephiroth, and called the Crown the "Source", an inexhaustible fount of light, wherefore He designates Himself "En-sof", Limitless. He has neither shape nor form, and there is no vessel that could contain Him, no means to comprehend Him. It is in this sense that it has been said, "Search not the things that are too hard for thee, and seek not the thing which is hidden from thee" (Ben Sira, 320-324). Then He formed a vessel, small as the letter Yod, which is filled from Him, and He called it "Wisdom-gushing Fountain", and Himself in virtue of it "wise". Afterwards He made a large vessel and called it "Sea", and designated it "Understanding" (Binah) and Himself in virtue of it "understanding". He is both "wise" and "understanding" in His own essence: for Wisdom does not merit the title by itself, but only through Him who is wise and who has filled it from His "fountain"; and Understanding does not merit the title by itself, but only through Him who filled it from His own essence: if He were to depart from it it would be turned into aridity. In regard to this it is written, "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up" (Job XIV, 11). Finally, "He smites (the sea) into seven streams" (Isa. XI, 15), i.e. He diverts it into seven precious vessels, and calls them "Greatness", "Strength", "Beauty", "Victory", "Majesty", "Foundation", "Sovereignty"; and Himself He calls "great" in the "Greatness", "strong" in the "Strength", "beauteous" in "Beauty", "victorious" in "Victory"; in "Majesty" He calls His Name "the beauty of our Fashioner" and in "Foundation" "righteous" (cf. Prov. x, 25). In "Foundation" He sustains all things: all vessels and all worlds.

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Finally, in "Sovereignty" He calls Himself "King", whose is "the greatness, the strength, the beauty, the victory, the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (I Chr. XXIX, 11). All things are in His power, whether He wills to lessen the number of vessels or to increase the light which springs from them, or whether He wills the contrary. Above Him, however, there is no god who could increase or lessen. Then He created ministering beings to those vessels: one throne supported on four columns and six steps to the throne: ten altogether. And the whole throne is like the chalice of benediction, in regard to which ten things are formulated, in harmony with the Torah which was given in Ten Words (Decalogue), and with the Ten Words by which the world was created. Then He prepared for the throne angelic hierarchies to serve Him: malachim (angels), erelim, seraphim, hayoth (living beings), ophanim, hamshalim, elim,

elohim, be'ne (sons of) elohim, ishim (supernal "men"). To these He appointed as ministers Samael and all his groups- these are like clouds to ride upon when He descends to earth: they are like horses. That the clouds are called "chariots" is expressed in the words, "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt" (Isa. XIX, 1). Thus the Egyptians saw their Chieftain like a horse bearing the chariot of the Holy One, and straightway "the idols of Egypt were moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt melted in the midst of it" (Ibid.), i.e. they were "moved" from their "faith" in their own Chieftain. AND EVERY FIRSTLING OF AN ASS THOU SHALT REDEEM WITH A LAMB, AND IF THOU WILT NOT REDEEM IT... THOU SHALT BREAK HIS NECK. The ass and the lamb symbolize the evil and the good inclinations. The very evil can be turned into good by repentance: the "ass" must be redeemed by a "lamb". In other words, even if a man is an "ass", a spiritual ignoramus, he can be redeemed from the exile of darkness and be included in the redemption of Israel, "the scattered sheep" (Jer. L, 17). But if he does not repent, "thou shalt break his neck", meaning, he belongs to the stiffnecked ones who will be blotted out from the Book of Life, for concerning such unrepentant sinners it is written: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Ex. XXII, 33). AND IT SHALL BE FOR A TOKEN UPON THINE HAND AND FOR FRONTLETS BETWEEN THINE EYES. This commandment has also another significance besides being a Divine ordinance, for the phylacteries are signs and means of sanctification, symbols of the beauty of the supernal colours. It is written: "And thou shalt do that what is right and good." "Right" here indicates the phylactery of the hand, which has to be supplemented by and joined with the phylactery of the forehead. The four Biblical sections (Ex. XIII, 1-10, 11-16; Deut. VI, 4-9, XI, 13-21) are in the head-phylactery in four compartments, but in the hand-phylactery in one, for the latter has nothing of itself but what it receives from above (the head). This mystery is expressed in the words, "all rivers run into the sea" (Eccl. 1, 7). And because it draws the influx of Divine light from that which is above, it is called tephillah (entreaty, prayer, the traditional name for phylactery); and because it derives holiness, it is called kedushah, and it also symbolizes "Sovereignty", "Kingdom", the Kingdom of God in its completeness. The symbolism of the four sections has been explained in various places. The first of them (Ex. XIII, 1-10)

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is of supreme significance, containing all the four divisions of the supernal light which emanates from Ain (lit. "nothing", the hidden, unapproachable, transcendent). Each word in the verse, "sanctify unto Me all the firstborn" stands for something connected with the Divine attributes: "sanctify" is related to the hidden region of supernal Holiness, the mystery of the Wisdom which comes from above; "unto Me" refers to Binah-Understanding, the Mystery of the supernal world, the inner Hall-as it is written, "unto Me are the children of Israel slaves"; "unto Me belongs every firstborn"; "ye shall be unto Me a precious people"-all these are connected with Binah. "All" signifies Grace: grace above and grace below; "firstborn" has a

symbolic reference to "Israel my firstborn" (Ex. IV, 22), who represents all the sides and all the colours. These four words, esoterically considered, contain all the truths which are given in greater detail in the four Scripture sections written on the parchment scrolls of the phylacteries. Thus the first section is a summary of all the four. The second section (Ex. XIII, 11-16), referring, as it does, to the Exodus from Egypt, symbolizes the freedom of the "Jubilee", and represents Binah. The third section, the Shema, contains the mystery of the right side, called "The Supernal Grace", for it effects the union of all things extending unto the four quarters of the universe; and the Holy One, blessed be He, through the medium of this attribute, brings forth order and harmony in the whole universe, a harmony which extends even to the lowest depths. By this attribute of Grace the Holy One created the world, when He wrapped Himself in the garment of light. This Supernal Grace is the Unifier. For this reason the section of the Shema is joined to that of "And it shall be"; for the act which makes each day a unity and likewise forms the whole sum of separate days into the perfect whole, is the fact of following the Divine Will in knowledge and action; and through this act alone (of concentration on the union during prayer and the recitation of the Shema) can that union of which we have frequently spoken be attained: that is, the union of each day, the union which is expressed in the sentence: "Hear, O Israel, TETRAGRAMMATON Eloheinu TETRAGRAMMATON is one". These three are one. How can the three Names be one? Only through the perception of Faith: in the vision of the Holy Spirit, in the beholding of the hidden eyes alone. The mystery of the audible voice is similar to this, for though it is one yet it consists of three elements-fire, air, and water, which have, however, become one in the mystery of the voice. Even so it is with the mystery of the threefold Divine manifestations designated by TETRAGRAMMATON Eloheinu TETRAGRAMMATON - three modes which yet form one unity. This is the significance of the voice which man produces in the act of unification, when his intent is to unify all from the En-sof to the end of creation. This is the daily unification, the secret of which has been revealed in the holy spirit. There are many kinds of unification, and all are appropriate, one involving the other, but the one which is effected on earth by the symbolism of the voice is the most appropriate.

The fourth section (Deut. XI, 13-21) contains the mystery of rigorous Judgement: "Take heed to yourselves that your heart be not deceived" (v. 16). We have already dealt with the symbolism of the relationship of the two phylacteries to one another. The strap that is passed through the head-phylactery ends at the back of the head in a knot representing the letter Daleth (D. in Shaddai), and concerning it it is written: "And thou shalt see My hinder-parts", for all is tied up there in one knot. The strap that is passed through the hand-phylactery is fastened in a knot in the shape of the letter Yod, the sign of the mystery of the holy covenant, to which we have frequently referred. It is all a part of one mystery. Blessed are the Israelites for being made aware of this mystery. It is essential that every man should put on the phylacteries daily, in order that he may achieve the likeness of the supernal Prototype, and then "all the people of the earth shall

see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of thee" (Deut. XXVIII, 10).

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THE PLACE WHICH THOU HAST MADE FOR THY DWELLING-PLACE, LORD, FOR THE SANCTUARY, LORD, WHICH THY HANDS PREPARED.[Tr. note: This passage, down to "ordinary field", is from the Ray'a Mehemna.] This implies the necessity of building a sanctuary below, corresponding to the Sanctuary above, wherein the Holy One is daily served and worshipped. Now prayer itself has the character of service, and is called so. A synagogue should be a handsome structure, beautifully decorated, for it is an earthly copy of a heavenly prototype. The Temple below had its counterpart in the Temple above, and everything there, holy vessels and holy ministers, corresponded to something above. The same was true of the Tabernacle which Moses erected in the desert. And a synagogue must have the same object: it must be a true house of prayer. A sanctuary must have windows, as Daniel had in his upper chamber where he prayed (Dan. VI, 11) corresponding to the "windows" in heaven, as it is written: "My beloved... he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice" (S.S. II, 9). We might think that it is more proper to pray in the open air in order to allow the spirit a free ascent. This, however, is not so! There must be a house to correspond to the "House" above. Besides, prayer and the spirit must issue forth from a narrow, limited space, in a straight line towards Jerusalem,

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without deviating right or left. This is symbolized by the sound of the Shophar, which is thrust forth in a straight line from a narrow opening and breaks through the firmaments in order to stir up the Spirit above. It is true, we are told, that "Isaac did meditate in the field" (Gen. XXIV, 63); but there are special reasons for this; and besides, the field where he prayed was not an ordinary field.

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[Note: The Hebrew text is not translated as explained in the Translator's note on page 90b of the main Zohar text, section 2.]

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