

"Sha'ar ha-Yihud weha-Emunah"

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Submitted by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1- Introduction
- 2- Biographical note
- 3- History of the "Tanya"
- 4- Translation and Notes.
- 5- Bibliography.

The philosophical system of Shneur Zalman may be divided into two parts. First, the nature of God and second the nature of creation. In Zalman's work however, the two are woven together with little regard for a systematic approach to the problem. It must be added that in spite of this seeming confusion Zalman's concept of creation is in no conflict with Zalman's conception of the creator.

Let us first consider the nature of God as Zalman conceived Him. God is the force which vitalizes the entire universe. His method of disseminating this vitality is through the means of the "Word". God's utterance is the force which holds the universe together. If the Word or vitality is removed from the universe all would be chaos and destruction.

This is the basic and central theme of Zalman's philosophical system. The word of God created all things. The words, of course, are made up of letters, therefore the basic power of life and vitality is to be found in the letters of the alphabet. Zalman expresses this thought very ingeniously. He points to

the word "Thou, אלהים" which we use in referring to God. Of what is the word comprised? The letters א to ח which comprise the entire alphabet and the ו or breath which makes possible the utterance of those letters. Thus when we refer to God as אלהים we are in reality referring to the word of God which is the basis of all creation. Zalman hastens to assure us that this in no way implies a dualism in God's nature, for God and His word are one. God merely manifests Himself and His power through His utterance.

Zalman tells us that the world was created by the ten utterances of God found in the first chapter of the Torah. God not only uttered the words once but they remain uttered and give the world its continued existence. If, however, these utterances ceased to exist even for a moment then the result would be that the entire world would cease to exist.

We are then told that all things which came into existence following the original creation were derived from these original ten utterances. This was accomplished by methods of computation and permutation.

Should be 2 lines  
1st line: This  
ancient stones  
+ similar  
3

Thus even the stone, by virtue of the fact that it contains the letters  $\text{י} \text{ל} \text{א}$  also contains some of God's essence. For these letters are derived originally from the words of creation.

Zalman then raises the question why did not God create all things directly from the original ten utterances and eliminate the necessity for additional combinations and permutations. He answers this question by saying that the strength of these utterances was too great to be used for the purpose of creating individual objects. The strength of God therefore diminished itself, or contracted itself by placing itself in new letters and combinations, and finally brings into existence the creature or thing which is called by this new combination of letters. Zalman goes on to say, that just as the greater creation of the universe depends on the continued existence of the ten utterances, so the creation of the lesser creatures and even inanimate things depend on the continued existence of the uttered word. God therefore, must remain in all things, unlike

4

the creative methods of man who creates an object and then may depart from it and the object still remains as created.

All things, therefore, in small or large degree contain God's essence. But if we were able to perceive this Godliness in creatures and things then the tangibility and concreteness of the world would disappear. In view of this God and His vitality remain graciously invisible so that the world might remain visible.

Zalman drew extensively on the work of Maimonides. His whole concept of the nature of God's knowledge is taken from Maimonides and Zalman readily admits the source of his ideas, going so far as to quote Maimonides by name.

However, the Cabalist Zalman had one advantage over the rationalist Maimonides. Maimonides states that God is the Known Knower, and Knowledge Himself, that God is a perfect unity whose knowledge is complete and to whom nothing can be added. But Maimonides must ask that we accept this idea on the basis of faith alone. Zalman however, shows us

? Aristotle has similar identification  
+ is a common replacement -  
identity of concept, conception + conception

by means of his theory of the word, how all this is possible. All things come into existence when they assume the names by which they are called. These names have been derived by one of the two-hundred and thirty-one methods of derivation from the original ten utterances of God. Therefore nothing can be derived which is not already part of God.

Zalman then describes the various attributes of God and the part that each played in the creation of man. All of these attributes, he said, were to be found in the three great catagories of *אסתר* , *בינה* , and *חסד* . Within these are to be found the source of all other qualities. In view of Zalman's constant use of these three terms, Zalman's system of of thought and finally Zalman himself became known as the *אור* .

Of course Zalman was a mixture of Cabalist and rationalist. This combination gave rise to a simplification of many of Luria's concepts. For instance let us consider Luria's concept of *אור* . Before the creation of the world, says Luria, God

filled infinite space. When the creation was decided upon God retired into His own nature or to use the Cabalistic term, contracted Himself. From this contraction proceeded the infinite light. When in its turn the light concentrated, there appeared in the center an empty space encompassed by ten circles. Luria goes on to explain this complicated theory of creation. To Zalman *P. 343* is a much simpler affair. God has the great infinite strength. God uttered the words which created the world during the six days of creation. Then because God desired the existence of man He had to diminish His own strength so that the physical entity "man" might achieve this existence. Therefore, through permutation and combination He achieved this contraction and man appeared. God in a lesser manifestation of strength exists in man.

There is another great difference between Luria and Zalman. According to Luria man's soul because of its moral deficiency is broken off from its original source; God, and must await the coming



7

of the Messiah in order to accomplish this return to God. According to Zalman this is unthinkable. Nothing is broken off from God. All is a strict unchanging unity. God is to be found in the whole of the universe. To break off from God would mean to remove the name by which it is called. This would mean, in turn a state of non-existence.

Because Zalman is a combination of Cabalist and rationalist, he simplifies many involved cabalistic concepts, but he also refuses to follow Maimonides through all the intricacies of a philosophical argument. Maimonides is greatly bothered by the question of evil in the world. The question of good and evil is a simple one for Zalman. Wisdom is the great source of vitality. From wisdom are derived understanding and knowledge, and from these all the qualities of the intelligent soul, such as love, kindness, etc. Thus we see that a child who has not yet acquired wisdom is cruel and thoughtless. As wisdom grows evil disappears.

Luria's God is a strange, unfriendly and un-

8

knowable force. Zalman's God is a big but friendly one, who created everything by His words and who continues to stay with us in order to maintain life. Zalman's God is neither mysterious, as is Luria's God, or is He a God whose reason for the creation of the universe is unknown, as is the God of Maimonides. Zalman's God created the universe in order to reveal His own kingdom. For as Zalman says, "There can be no king without a people."

In evaluating Zalman's contribution to Cabalistic thought I think we can safely say that he was the one who emphasized the role of the <sup>123</sup>, God's word. Upon this concept he basés his entire philosophical system.

### INTRODUCTION

It was with a great sense of inadequacy that I approached the task of translating the "Sha'ar ha-Yihud weha-Emunah". Aside from the difficulties involved because of my unfamiliarity with Cabbalism and Chassidism, there was the more prosaic difficulty of language. The book is written for the great part in Aramaic and therefore presented many mechanical problems. However, I have, to the best of my ability, attempted to translate the philosophical ideas of Shneur Zalman.

I must add that I feel that these same ideas have been presented more clearly and with more philosophical finesse by other Jewish philosophers, especially Maimonides upon whom Zalman depends for a great number of his concepts. It further seems to me that had Maimonides lived in the eighteenth century he would have imbibed more of the enlightenment of that period. In spite of the fact that he was sent to prison because of his work, despite the fact that he died while fleeing the troops of Napoleon, these worldly happenings are not reflected in his philosophical approach.

Zalman's style and thought are quaint in their naivete. It reminds one of a Rebbe, sitting with his followers on a Saturday afternoon, expounding to this awed group, the wonders of the universe, and the greatness of God.

As the shadows deepen the thoughts of the Rebbe take flight and soar through the seven heavens, carrying the imaginations of his listeners with him. It seems blasphemous to take ~~these~~ winged thoughts and attempt to cage ~~them~~ with a translation, but this was my task and I hope I have fulfilled it with some degree of success.

J.G.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Shneor Zalman ben Baruch was born at Liozna in the government of Moghilif in the year 1747. Liozna is in White Russia and in Zalman's day had a population of about twelve hundred.(1) He had three other brothers, Judah Leb, Mordechai, and Moshe. Rebekah was his mothers name. All four sons grew up to be great scholars in Israel.(3) As far as can be determined his father was born in Galicia.(4)

Concerning his early childhood we know very little. It is only after his twelfth year that we begin to learn something more definite about Zalman. This is due to the fact that he became known as an "Illuy" or boy-wonder in Talmudics and therefore special notice was taken of him. When Zalman was Bar Mitzvah he was accepted into membership of the "Chevra Kaddisha". At that time when his name was entered into the minutes he was given the title, "Rabbi".(5)

His reputation as a scholar spread abroad and Zalman, like many other of his young, learned contemporaries, faced early marriage, usually to the daughter of some wealthy merchant. At the age of fifteen he

was married to the daughter of a wealthy merchant in Vitebsk, and as was the custom he lived with his wife's parents.(6)

Zalman gave himself over completely to the study of Torah and gave little or no thought to the world outside of his attic-study. This attitude, however, found little favor in the eyes of his father-in-law. Vitebsk was a city of practical merchants and worldly rabbis. His father-in-law was concerned with the welfare of his daughter and therefore tried to discourage Zalman's studies. He even tried to bring about a divorce between the two but was unsuccessful.(7) He then deprived the youth of candlelight by which to study but all to no avail.(8) If Zalman could not study by man made light he used the light of the moon and stars.

At the age of eighteen Shneur Zalman was a master of "Halacha". But he had also dipped into the study of Kabbalah, and found its intimacy and warmth a source of recreation after the dry and hard bread of the Talmud.(9)

The great turn in the life of Shneur Zalman came when he heard of Rabbi Dov Baer of Mereritz.

Whatever the cause, and such secrets must lie locked forever in the inaccessible depths of the heart, Zalman felt a profound dissatisfaction with his Talmudic studies.

Two strong emotions struggled for supremacy within him. As a student of the Talmud he felt it his duty to visit Vilna and study with the great Gaon, but he was also drawn, as if by a magnet, to Meseritz where lived the great Chassidic master, Dob Baer. The heart rather than the head of Zalman triumphed and at the age of twenty he went to Meseritz.

He kept a diary during his stay at Meseritz (14) and from this we can secure a portrait of the man which is quite clear. He finally felt that he had achieved purpose in his life and this helped dispel the restlessness which he had felt before his pilgrimage to Meseritz.

Dob Baer appreciated the great stature of his new disciple and placed great trust in him. He even entrusted the training of his son, Abraham, "The Angel" to Zalman. In spite of the affection which Baer felt for Zalman there was some opposition to the

latter. The disciples of Baer were, for the main part, Galicians, and they distrusted and very often snubbed their Lithuanian brother. After eighteen months Zalman went back to Vitebsk. But after a short time he again returned to Meseritz and never again left the side of his teacher, Dob Baer.

Although Zalman continued his study of Kabbala he did not neglect his Talmudic studies, and never lowered himself to the barbarisms of many of his chassidic contemporaries. It was to Zalman, therefore, that Baer turned when he sought to make a new compilation of the law. Zalman, by training and clarity of style was well fitted to the task, and the resultant work, ~~was~~ Zalman's Shulchan Aruch, ~~is one of the outstanding works of Jewish scholarship.~~ In 1772 Dob Baer died and Zalman was offered his place. But Zalman declined the honor in favor of an older colleague.

At this time Chassidism was facing great and serious opposition. Rabbinism recognized the inherent danger to themselves and to Talmudic Judaism and sought to build dikes against the flood. The greatest of the opponents of Chassidism was Rabbi Elijah



of Vilna.

This great saint and scholar in Israel began a great struggle against Chassidism. He looked upon the movement as a new Sabbatianism or Frankism which threatened to engulf the entire Jewish community. He felt that as a leader in Jewry he had the obligation to save his people from this great danger.

It was at this time that Zalman took his place at the head of the Chassidic world. Menachem Mendel, in whose favor he declined to succeed Baer, was now advanced in years and preparing to leave for Palestine to spend his last years on holy ground. Shneur Zalman hit upon a daring plan. He was going to meet the Gaon personally, and by a discussion try to end the great dispute between the parties for all time. He went to Vilna and tried to gain an audience with the Gaon but found this impossible. Elijah of Vilna felt that those who knocked upon his door were wicked men.(10) After repeated attempts to interview the Gaon of Vilna, Zalman returned to Meseritz.

In 1772 Rabbi Elijah had proclaimed a ban against the Chassidim, but since that time had remained

silent on the subject. The Chassidim tried to take advantage of this silence and use it to perpetrate a ruse. In 1796 a mysterious person going about Germany claiming to be the son of Elijah. It was also reported that this son of Elijah was performing the penance of "Galuth" for his father in order to atone for his cruel treatment of the Chassidim.(11) This trick was eventually exposed and the result was a deepening of the chasm between the two sects. On October 14, 1796 Elijah issued an encyclical, excommunicating the Chassidim. The tone was bitter and showed the irrevocable differences between the two groups.

Less than a year later, on October 9, 1797, Elijah, Gaon of Vilna died. The Chassidim of Vilna committed a great blunder and proclaimed the day one of rejoicing and dancing as though celebrating a great national deliverance.(12) After this thoughtless, and horrible blunder the feud reached the boiling point.

The final break came when an individual by the name of Avigdor, a ~~government~~ <sup>of Pinsk</sup> rabbi, denounced Zalman and twenty-two other Chassidim as traitors to the

Russian government. The whole Jewish world was shocked to hear that Zalman and the twenty-two other Chassidim had been committed to prison in chains like common criminals.(13) The sympathy of the entire Jewish world was aroused. A great defense fund of thirty thousand dollars was collected and eventually all were freed. Zalman returned to Meseritz in glory and was looked upon as a great martyr by both sides. But Avigdor was not satisfied and again brought Zalman to St. Petersburg on charges of treason. Again Zalman was chained and put into prison, and again faced the court and was acquitted. This time however, his acquittal was final and he was left to carry on his work, eventually winning for the Chassidim recognition as a separate group in the eyes of the law.

During the campaigns of Napoleon, Jewish opinion was divided as to the benefits to be derived from the Corsican. The entire subject of Napoleon and the Jews is far too great to even begin at this point, but it is suffice to say that Zalman belonged to that group which remained loyal to Russia and preached against Napoleon. As legions of Napoleon's soldiers

neared his home Zalman fled from before them. For some time the Rabbi and his family lived as fugitives, often spending the night in the forest. Upon one of these occasions he suffered from exposure and became ill. On December 28, 1812, Shneor Zalman died and was buried at Hadiatz, in the province of Poltavia.

NOTES

Biographical Note

- 1- Teitlebaum, Chapter 1, Note 2.
- 2- Ibid. Note 1.
- 3- Ibid. Note 3.
- 4 Teitlebaum, pg. 2.
- 5- Ibid pg. ~~18~~ 3. For full inscription see pg 3, note 1.
- 6- Stirni was his wife's name. Teitlebaum, pg.3, note3.
- 7- Minkin, pg. 183
- 8- Ibid.
- 9- Ibid. pg.184
- 10- Teitlebaum, pg. 43-44
- 11- Minkin, pg.195
- 12- Dubnow, Geschichte, Vol.11, pg.135.
- 13- Teitlebaum, Pg.72.
- 14- I could find no record of this diary.

## HISTORY OF THE "TANYA"

In the year 1796 there was published a small book by the name of "Tanya", or as the sub-title reads, "A Collection of Discourses." The name of the author was not mentioned and even the letters of commendation which were written in praise of the book called the author by anonymous names such as "The Genius", "The pure and holy man", "The righteous and humble one". It seems that Shneur Zalman feared lest he be denounced and so he hid his true identity. But the authorship of the book was known to many, for before the book had been printed parts of it had existed in manuscripts form.(1)

The Zaddik, Meshulam Zusya of Anopoli, who was a friend to Zalman when they both were at Meseritz tell us that Zalman had no intention of publishing the book.(2) But because the pamphlets had been spread throughout Russia, and in the re-copying many mistakes had been made, the author was forced to publish a correct copy of the manuscript. The first edition of the manuscript was divided into two parts, The " **ספר של בינונים** The Book of the Average Man", and the " **שער היחוד והאמונה** The Book of Unity

and Belief."

The book spread all through Russia, but owing to a prohibition in Austria against the importation of Russian books, the book was not obtainable in that country. The Chassidim thereupon went to Austria and made a second printing within the country at Zolk<sup>ev</sup> in 1799. In the year 1806 the author published a third edition with the addition of a new section called, " **אגרת התשובה** Letter of Repentance" After his death there was published the "Book of the Tanya" with a new addition, " **אגרת הקודש** Letter of Holiness".

The teachings of Shneor Zalman are divided into the first two parts of the "Book of the Tanya". But in view of the contents of these two sections one should change the order. The second part is rather short, containing twelve chapters, and is entitled "The Gate of Unity and Belief". This section forms the metaphysical basis for the whole system, the study of creation, theology, cosmology, and theosophy are contained therein. The first section is greater in length, having fifty-three chapters, and is entitled, "The Book of the Average Man". This contains

teachings concerning the morality, psychology and ethics of Chassidism. These two sections together make up the system of Chassidism known as the "Chabad" system. The name being derived from the three words, CHACHMA, BINAH, and DAYAH. It was also by this name of "Chabad" that his followers became known.

Whereas the first section of the "Tanya" is meant for the average reader, the second section, is intended for more enlightened readers who are capable of investigating that which is behind nature's curtain, and who are able to deal in abstract ideas. It is this second section which I have made an attempt to translate.

Notes

1- Lubnow

pg. 232

2- Ibid.





departed from it, even for one moment, then the earth would return to a state of non existence, just as before the days of creation.

That is what the "לך" (7) meant when he said that even in the inanimate such as stone, dust and water, there is <sup>the category</sup> some degree of soul and spiritual vitality <sup>life</sup> which is the <sup>names</sup> clothing of the letters of the <sup>speech</sup> words of the ten utterances, <sup>which</sup> This brings the inanimate into the state of existence from that of non-existence, in which it was before the days of creation. (8)

Even though the name לך "stone" is not mentioned in the original ten utterances, nevertheless the stone derives its vitality from the combinations and permutations of letters achieved through the revolving of the 231 gates, (9) as it is written in the פסוק צורה "The Book of Creation." In this way <sup>there is</sup> we derive from the original ten sayings the name, לך, <sup>and thus</sup> and thus does the stone achieve existence. <sup>which contributes to the life or being of the stone</sup>

And so it is with all the created things in the world. The names given to these in the Holy Tongue are comprised of the letters of the <sup>speech</sup> words which were derived degree by degree, from the original ten utterances of the Torah. This is done by the combinations and permutations through the 231 gates until the name of the creature is reached and thus given life.

These letters reach & clothe themselves in that created thing & thus give it life

The individual creatures cannot receive their vitality from the ten utterances themselves. For the vitality emanating from these utterances is too great for the individual creatures, and they lack the strength to receive this vitality except by the descent and decrease of that force from one degree to a lower one. This is accomplished by the changes of letters and the numerical values of the letters until the original vitality has contracted(10) itself and placed itself in a sheath so that it could bring into existence an individual being. The name by which it is called in the Holy Tongue is the vessel for this contracted vitality in the letters of that name. This is derived, in turn, from the original ten utterances of the Torah, which have the power and vitality to create something ex-nihilo, and to vitalize that created thing forever; for the Torah and God are one.

from nothing

NOTES

Chapter One.

- 1- Deut. 4:39
- 2- Psalms, 119:89
- 3- The Ba'al Shem Tob. Israel ben Eliezer-1700-1760.

It is to be noted that Zalman, whose original roots were in Talmudism rather than Chassidism, is more closely allied with the "Besht" rather than with Luria. This is especially true as regards the theory of "eminations". The "Besht" declared that the whole universe, including the words and action of man, were not emanations from God. All things are rather forms in which He reveals Himself. Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume 11, p.384.

It has often been said that at the beginning of his career the "Besht" was not an opponent of Talmudism. In fact, it was claimed that the "Besht" was one of three delegates of the Talmudists to a disputation held between the Talmudists and the Frankists, at Lemberg in 1759. Ibid.

This last fact however, has been disproven by later scholars. Livre D'Hommage a la Memoire Du Dr. Samuel Poznanski. Article by Balaban, p. 25.

- 4- The phrase, "Let there be an expansion in the midst of the heavens" יהי רקיע בתוך השמים is incorrect and probably a printers error. It should read, "Let there

be an expansion in the midst of the waters". י"ה

Gen. 1:6 רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם

5- The words וְדָבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְקוֹם לְעוֹלָם וְדָבָר חַיִּים וְקִיּוֹם are derived from two different quotations.

The first, וְדָבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְקוֹם לְעוֹלָם Is. 40:8

The second, וְדָבָר חַיִּים וְקִיּוֹם לְעוֹלָם is from

the prayer book, in the passage following the three paragraphs of the "שְׁמַע", with the following reading,

וְדָבָר חַיִּים וְקִיּוֹם לְעוֹלָם וְנִחְמָדִים לְעוֹלָם

6- In Genesis 1, the phrase "And God said" וַאֲמַר אֱלֹהִים occurs nine times. Gen. 1:1, "In the beginning God created the Heaven and earth בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ is computed as another utterance, thus making ten in number.

7- Isaac ben Solomon Ashkenazi Luria, 1534-1572.

8- The reality of every individual thing is the letter or letters. The physical appearance is merely the garment of the letter.

9- The "Gates" שְׁעָרִים, are methods of permutation and combination.

9a- The סֵפֶר יִצְרָה is the title of two esoteric books.

The older is called the "Laws of Creation" הַלְכוּת יִצְרָה

and is a thaumaturgical work popular in the Talmudic period. The date of its appearance is placed in the

second century B.C. by Ruzenstein. The later סֵפֶר יִצְרָה

"Book of Creation" is devoted to speculation concerning

God and the angels. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol.XII, p.602.

- 10- The word "contraction" or קטנות . is a Cabalistic concept whose meaning changes in accordance with the Cabalistic system used. According to Luria, the word means God's voluntary diminishing of his own strength and glory so that the material world could come into existence.

## CHAPTER TWO

From the previous chapter we may secure an answer to the heretics and uncover the roots of the infidel's mistakes with reference to the concept of a personal God and the wonders and miracles of the Torah. Those who compare the work of God, the creator of heaven and earth, to the work of man and his contrivances, are erring because of their false analogy. For when the smith has produced the vessel, it no longer needs the hands of the smith. And if he should go to the market place the vessel would still exist just as it had come from the hands of the smith. So, these fools imagine, are the works of heaven and earth. But their eyes are too dull to see the great difference between the work of man and his inventions, who creates something out of something else, merely changing the form and image from the image of a piece of silver to that of a vessel, and the works of heaven and earth which are created ex-nihilo.

This is a greater miracle than the cleaving of the Red Sea, for example, where God directed the sea with a strong east wind all the night, and the waters were divided and stood up like a heap and a wall. Now if God had stopped the wind for a moment the waters would have returned to their downward flow which is the natural way, and doubtlessly would not have stood up like a wall. (Even though this new nature of the water is also a type of creation ex-nihilo, for a wall



of stones would stand up alone without the aid of wind, but the nature of water is not thus.) Thus we have a קל וחמר, an inference from minor to major, in the creation of something ex-nihilo which is super-natural and a marvel more wonderful than the dividing of the Red Sea. How much more the effect if the force of the creator would depart from the creature, and the creatures would return to nothingness. (1) But the force of the cause must forever remain in the effect in order to establish it. And this (sustaining of being) is the virtue of the letters of the words of the ten utterances by which the world was created. Concerning this it is said, "Thou revivest all" ואתה בחיה את כולם (2). Do not read בניה, but אתה, "Thou givest being". Now this word "you" אתה refers to the alphabet from א to ת and the ה which is the basis of the five phonetical forms and the source of letters. Even though He has no bodily image, nevertheless, the Bible says explicitly, "God spoke" וידבר אלהים "God said" נאמר אלהים. This is used in the sense of the revelation of the twenty two supreme letters to the prophets who array themselves in mind and conception with the prophetic vision and also in their thoughts and words. As it is written, "The spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was upon my tongue." (3) רוח ה' היה דבר בי ומלתי על-לשונך. And as the א"ל said in "THE GATE OF PROPHECY" שער הנבואה (4): In this manner the letters cloth themselves in the creatures.



As it is written, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made:  
and all the hosts by the breath of his mouth 'היה 7171

שמי'ק נעשו וברוח פיו כל יצאP (5) Only  
this means by the many changes and devolutions, until they  
(the words) descend to the actual material creation. This  
is not the case with prophetic conceptions which is of the  
Azilutic or uppermost world,(6) and clothed in the briatic  
or world of creative ideas.

## Chapter two

- 1- The idea being that the cessation of the wind would merely mean the re-establishing of the natural tendency of the water, namely to flow downward. But the cessation of God's word would mean the voiding of creation.
- 2- Neh. 9:6.
- 3- 2Sam. 23:2.
- 4- In the list of works attributed to Luria this book or essay is not mentioned. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol.VIII p. 211.  
In the list of Vital's works comprised of notes from Luria's discourses, there is also no mention of it.
- 5- The four worlds named in the Cabala, are in the order of their spirituality,
  - 1- עולם האצילות realm of emanations
  - 2- עולם הבריאה world of creative ideas.
  - 3- עולם היצירה world of creative formations.
  - 4- עולם העשיה world of creative matter.
1. עולם האצילות or Azilutic world contains the ספירות the "Sefiroth".
2. עולם הבריאה or Briatic world, contains the souls of the pious, the divine throne, and the divine halls.
3. עולם היצירה -- Yeziratic world, is the seat of the ten classes of angels with their chiefs, presided over by the Metatron, who was changed into fire. There also are the souls of men

- 4- עולל פ' העש' or Asiyyatic world. Here are the "ofanim", the angels that receive the prayers and control the actions of men and wage war against evil or Samael.

CHAPTER THREE

Now after these words and truths any enlightened person will understand clearly how every creature and being may be considered as naught in comparison to the force which cause it and the breath of His mouth which is in the effect and which constantly brings it into being ex-nihilo. The fact that every creature and effect appears to us to have material existence and to be tangible is due to the fact that we cannot see with human eyes the power of God and the breath of his mouth which is in every creature. If, however, permission had been granted to perceive the vitality and spirituality which flows in every creature and which comes from the mouth of God and the breath of His mouth, then the concreteness of the matter and its tangibility would be invisible to our eyes, for it would be completely void in comparison to the vitality and spirituality which is in it.

Without this spirituality, matter would be null and void as before the six days of creation. This spirituality flows upon it from the utterance of the mouth of God and the breath of His mouth and is solely responsible for its creation ex-nihilo. Thus, indeed, nothing exists without Him.

An analogy to this is the light of the sun, which illumines the earth and its inhabitants; which shines

forth and spreads from the body of the sun and is visible to all, giving light upon the earth and the interstellar spaces of the universe. Now it is clear that this light and ray exist also in the body and matter of the ball of the sun. For if it spreads and can cast its light such great distances from itself certainly it can cast light in its own locale. But in its immediate locale this radiance is considered as non-existent, for in truth it is as nothing in proportion to the body of the ball of the sun which is the source of this light and ray. For this radiance and light shine not only from the body and essence of the ball of the sun but in the world under the sky and on the earth where the body of the sun does not exist. Here this light and radiance appear to all eyes as a concrete entity, and in truth here the term entity may be applied to it. This is not the case where the radiance is in its origin, in the body of the sun. There the name entity cannot be applied to it, for it is, in truth, void. For nothing exists there but the origin alone, which is the radiant body of the sun which gives the light and there is naught beside it.

And exactly like these things are the forms and shapes of all creatures in relation to the divine emanation from the breath of his mouth, which flows upon them and brings

them into existence. He is their origin and they, by themselves, are nothing. They exist only in the sense of the radiance and light which spread from the abundance and spirit of God which clothes itself within them and brings them from the state of non-existence to existence. But in relation to their origin they are void, just as the light of the sun is void and considered as naught, unworthy of the name entity, when in its origin. Only under the sky away from its origin, (there it is an entity). So also, we cannot apply the name "entity" to anything except as seen through the human eye. Since we cannot conceive the origin, the spirit of God, which brings them into existence, therefore, the material of the creatures and their substance and tangibility appear to us as if they were actual entities. Just as the light of the sun appears to be an actual entity when it is not in its origin.

But in this case the example is not entirely analogous. For in the analogy the origin does not exist at all in the interstellar spaces of the world and on the earth where the light is seen as an actual entity. This, however, is not the case with the creatures who are always within their origin, but whose source is not seen to human eyes. Why are they not voided (in proportion) to their origin? To understand this you must set up a preface.

# CHAPTER FOUR

For behold it is written, "For the Lord God is a sun and a shield. כִּשְׁשֵׁשׁ וְזָרָה יְהוָה" (1)

Now the meaning of the word "shield" is that it acts as a sheath for the sun in order to shield humankind and make it bearable for them. As our rabbis said; in the future God will take the sun out of its sheath and the wicked will be judged thereby.(2)

Just as the sheath protects us from the sun, so the name אֱלֹהִים shields us from the name הוּא. For the meaning of the name הוּא is that it brings into existence ex-nihilo. The letter 'Yad' of the word refers to the action for the 'Yad' is a means of indicating the present tense and the future; continuous action. This is in accordance with Rashi's interpretation of the phrase, "Thus did Job continually, וַיַּעַשׂ אֱיֹב כֹּל הַיּוֹמִים;(3) that is, the vitality emanates continuously into all His creatures. This utterance of God and His spirit continuously brings them into being ex-nihilo, for it is not enough that they were created during the six days of creation, as we have said previously.

Now in the order of the praises it is written, "The Great One, the Strong One. הַגָּדוֹל, הַגִּבּוֹר(4) The meaning of the term "הַגָּדוֹל" is the quality of kindness and the permeation of vitality unto all the world and unto all creatures without end or limit so that they are created

ex-nihilo through unearned grace. It is called greatness because it comes from the greatness of the Holy One Himself, blessed be his name. For God is great without limit, therefore he pours forth his vitality and creates ex-nihilo a limitless number of worlds and creatures, for it is the nature of good to do good. This quality is the praise of glory of God alone, for no creature has the ability to create ex-nihilo or to give it life. Further, this quality is beyond the reason and conception of all creatures, for it is not within the mental grasp of any creature to understand or conceive of this quality to create ex-nihilo and to give it life, for the creation ex-nihilo is above the understanding of the created.

Just as it is not within the power of the reason of any creature to conceive of his creator, so it is impossible for him to conceive of the attribute of His greatness which is the ability to create ex-nihilo and to vitalize it, as it is written, "He builds a world with kindness. *וְיִבְנֶה עִלְיוֹן עוֹלָם בְּחֶסֶד*"

*וְיִבְנֶה עִלְיוֹן*.(5) So too, it is not within the intellectual capacity of creatures to conceive of the attribute of the strength of God which is the attribute of " *קִצְרֵי הַיָּד* contraction", His self-imposed limitation and His refraining from spreading the vitality of His greatness and His refraining from allowing it to descend and reveal itself openly to



the creatures, but rather in secret. For this vitality hides itself in the body of the creature as if the body was a thing by itself and the spreading of the vitality and spirituality (of God) is not like the light and radiance of the sun but is a thing by itself. Although forsooth, it is not something existing by itself, but is like the emanation from the sun so also is the strength of God, who is all-powerful and can contract the vitality and spirituality which is poured out by the breath of His mouth, and can conceal it so that the material bodies of creatures should not be voided. This quality of contraction is not within the mental grasp of any creature, just as the mind of no creature has the power to conceive the quality of creation ex-nihilo, nevertheless the body of the creature is created ex-nihilo.

Now the quality of contraction and concealment is called "vessals" and the vitality is called light. For just as the vessal covers all that is within it, so the quality of contraction covers and conceals the light and vitality which pours forth in abundance. Now these veassals whose roots are the five letters, ה' ו' ל' פ' ד'. which have final forms, are the five strengths which separate and distinguish the breath from the voice in the five utterances of the mouth in order to render into being the twenty-two letters of the

alphabet. The root of the five strengths is the hidden light which is the upper strength of God. This is the root of the kindness which is also the kindness of God as is known to those who know Cabbala.

# Chapter Four

1- Psalms 84:12.

2- This is found in, עבודת לילה, and reads, דאמר  
רבי שמעון בן לדיש אין גיהנום לעתיד לבא אלא הקדוש  
ברוך הוא מוציא חמה כנגמיקה ומקדיק כשיש נידון בזה

The same idea is found in Koh. Rab. to vs 1-5.

3- The phrase. ככה יעשה יצויב כל הימים is explained

by Rashi thus: כבנו היה עושה כשהיה מדבר בדבר ההוא  
ומהדי פעמים שכתב בו לשון עוב ופעמים לי עתיד

"Thus he did" for when the writer speaks concerning  
the present, there are times when he will write the  
verb in the past and at times in the future."

4- In the first blessing of the Amidah.

5- There are conflicting interpretations as to the meaning  
of this verse. Some commentators make מסד the sub-  
ject and עולם the adverb of time; "Forever He establishes  
mercy". But the Midrash to the verse explains it in  
the following way: למה הרב דומה, למא שהיו לו אנבי  
נגלים ויהיה האחד בורא מופת. כל שהיה קטנה. נפל צבוח  
וסמכו. כך היה נא של מעלה כביכול, שמה מופת עד  
שסמכו. הקב"ה ומה סמכו במסד, הוי אלוהי עולם מסד וינה

The verse in the text too, is meant to show God's creative  
ability.

# CHAPTER FIVE

Concerning this our Rabbis said that in the beginning it occurred (to God) to create the world solely with the quality of pure justice. But He saw that it would not be able to exist so He joined to it the quality of mercy; namely the revelation of the God-hood through the Zaddickim and the wonders and miracles of the Torah.(1)

Concerning this the Zohar relates that in the world above there is a right and a left side, that is mercy and strength. The explanation for this is that both are divine attributes of God, beyond the mind and understanding of the creatures. For He and His effects are one in the Azilutic world or world of emanations. Not even the conception of Moses, our teacher, in his prophecy, was in the Azilutic world, but clothed itself in the Briatic world. Here too, not in these two qualities of mercy and strength, but by their clothing themselves in the qualities which are below them in degree, namely the qualities of *חַסֵּד*, *דִּינָה*, and *דְּיוֹר*, (as it says in the "Gate of Prophecy" -) (2)

The reward of the righteous in *עֵדֶן* is the conception and light which is drawn from these two attributes of kindness *חַסֵּד* and strength *גְּבוּרָה*. That is the food of the souls of the righteous men who busied themselves with Torah for its own sake in this world. For from the pouring forth of these two qualities the firmament is stretched out over them and this firmament is called the secret of the Torah.

In it are the secret of the twenty-two letters of the Torah which are derived from these two qualities. As it is written. "At His right hand was a fiery law unto them, **בְּיָמֵינוּ** **לְמַלְאכָה**" (3). And from this firmament there flows the dew for the food of the soul; that is the knowledge of the secrets of the twenty-two letters of the Torah. For this firmament is the secret of knowledge, and the Torah is the food of the souls in Paradise **לְמַלְאכָה** and the **מַעֲוָה** are the clothes as is explained in the Zohar.

Chapter Five

- 1- Ber. Rabbah
- 2- See chapter two, note 4.
- 3- Deut. 33:2.

CHAPTER SIX

Behold the name **אלהים** is the name of the attributes of strength and contraction. Therefore it also has the same numerical value as "nature **הטבע**", because the name **אלהים** hides the light from above which gives being and existence to the world and makes it seem as if the world exists and conducts itself in a natural way.(1) The name **אלהים** is a shield and sheath to the name **היה**. Its purpose is to hide the light and vitality which is derived from the name **היה**, which brings into existence ex-nihilo, so that its full strength is not revealed to the creatures lest they be voided in existence.

Therefore this quality of strength and contraction is also the quality of mercy with which the world is created, and this quality of strength is included in mercy. From the interfusion of the attributes, one inside the other, we see clearly that He and His effects, namely His attributes, are one. Since the attributes are in complete unity with Him, they therefore unite with one another and are infused one with the other. As Elijah says, "Thou art the One who binds them and unites them etc. Aside from You there is no unity in the higher spheres etc." Thus He says, "Thou shalt put in your hearts that **היה** is **אלהים**".(2) This means that the two names are absolutely one, and even

the name **אלהים** which contracts and hides the light, possesses the quality of mercy just as does the name **יהוה**. The attributes of God unite with Him in absolute unity, and He and His name are one; for His attributes are his names. Therefore, it is clearly known to you that "In the Heavens above and on the earth below there is no other". (3) This means that even the material earth which seems to be an actual entity is nothing in comparison to the Holy One, blessed be He. For the name **אלהים** does not hide or contract except in the lower spheres, but not in relation to God since He and the name **אלהים** are one. Therefore, the earth and all beneath the earth are nothing in relation to God. They cannot be called by any name at all, even the one of "**יהוה** also" which is a term of subordination and addition; as our sages explained the words "**יהוה יהוה**" (4) and thus is the body subordinate in its relation to the soul and the life which is contained therein. That is what is said in the Bible, "I will praise the Lord while I live, I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being". (5) This indicates that life is derived from the name **יהוה** and the **יהוה** or body, which is subordinate comes from **אלהים**. It is not the soul which gives existence to the body ex-nihilo, but the Holy One blessed be He. Everything is voided of existence near Him, just as the light of the sun is voided in the sun. Therefore, the verse



had to warn and stress, "Thou shalt know and put in your heart." It should not occur to you that the heavens and all its hosts and the earth and the fullness thereof are actually separate unto themselves and that God fills the whole world like the soul which clothes itself in the body. Nor should we think that nature and the motion of the spheres are informed by God and that He moves and guides them according to His will, as the soul moves and guides the body according to her will. For indeed the truth is that the comparison does not hold. The soul and the body are indeed separated from one another at their root. For the coming into being of the root of the body and its essence is not from the soul but from the drops of the father and mother. And also afterward, its growth is not from the soul alone but from the eating and drinking of its mother during the nine months and subsequently from its own eating and drinking.

But this is not the case with the heaven and the earth whose very essence and being came into existence from absolute nothing only by the word of God and the breath of His mouth may it be blessed. And the word of God continues to stand and informs continually, making a continuous creation, as the existence of the light within the globe of the sun itself, speaking figuratively. Therefore, the heaven and earth are truly nothing in relation to the word of God and

the breath of His mouth which are united in the essence and quality of God( as will be explained below) like the voiding of the light of the sun within the sun. Except that these are His strengths through the qualities of אור and אור, to hide and cover the vitality which flows in them so that the heaven and the earth and all their hosts might appear as if they are entities separate unto themselves. But the contraction and concealment do not apply except to the lower spheres. In relation to God Himself they are non-existent. They are like the light of the sun in the sun. Therefore the attribute of אור does not hide before God for it is not an entity by itself. But the Lord He is God.

Notes

Chapter Six

- 1- Both **אלהים** and **חטט** add up to eighty-six.
- 2- Deut. 4:39
- 3- Deut. 4:29
- 4- This quotation is taken from Hosea 12:1. The words read **י'הודה עוֹד** , but Ibn Ezra explains that the words mean to imply **ועוֹד י'הודה** , Also Judah" and is used to show subordination and addition.
- 5- Ps: 146:2. The author translates, "I shall praise **י'הוה** for my life and I shall sing to **אלהים** for my **ד/ע** or body."

# CHAPTER SEVEN

Therefore, we may understand what is written in the Holy Zohar, that the verse, "Hear O Israel **שמע** **שׁוֹמֵר**" is a higher unity and "Blessed be His name, **ברוך** **שׁוֹמֵר**" is a lower unity. For the word "**ועד**" is "**אחד**" by the changing of letters.(1) For behold the cause and the reason for this concealment is that God hid and covered the life source of the world so that the world may be seen as an entity separate unto itself. And behold it is a well known fact that the creation of the world was for the sake of the revelation of His kingdom, may It be blessed. For there is no king without a people **עם**. The word "**עם**" comes from the word "**עממות**" which means separate and alien things and removed from the majesty of the king. For even if he had very many sons the name "Royalty" could not apply to them, nor even to the princes alone, but only when there are great hordes of people is the glory of the king revealed. The name which indicated his quality of royalty is the name "Lordship **אדנות**". For He is the Lord of all the earth. Hence this attribute and this name are the ones which render existent and sustain the world so that it may be as it is now, namely a complete entity and a separate thing by itself, which is

not voided in existence. For by the removal or departure of this quality, **חַס וְשָׁלוֹם**, the world would return to its source, into the word of the Lord and the breath of His mouth, and there it would be altogether voided in existence. And the word "**עוֹלָם**" would not apply to it at all. Behold the definition and quality of the name **עוֹלָם** applies to the criteria of space and time. The criteria of space are east, west, north, and south. The criteria of time are past, present and future. All these criteria have no relationship with the higher attributes with the exception of the attribute of **מַלְכוּת**, which is God alone. Only in the term **מַלְכוּת** may one say that He is king above without limit and king below without limit. And so to the four sides and the criteria of time; "God reigned, God reigns, God will reign". You see, then, that the life source of space and the life source of time, and their creation ex-nihilo, and their creation as long as they exist, all this comes from the attribute of **מַלְכוּת** and from the name **אֱדֹנָי**. Since the attribute **מַלְכוּת** is united in His essence and self in absolute unity, therefore the criteria of time and space are actually voided in existence in relation to His essence and existence, as the voiding of the light of the sun in the sun. That is

the connection of the name **אֲדֹנִי** with the name **הוּיָהּ**. For the name **הוּיָהּ** indicates that He is above time, that He was, is and will be at each moment as it is written in **פְּנִימָה, נִצְיָה מִהֵימָנָה**. (2) Similarly, He is above the criteria of space, for He constantly brings into being the criteria of space, from up to down and on all sides. Now then, even though He is above space and time, nevertheless he exist below too, within time and space. That is to say that He is united with the attribute of **מִלְכוּת**, from which space and time draw their existence. And that is what is meant by the lower unity, the inter-weaving of **אֲדֹנִי** and **הוּיָהּ**. That is to say that His substance and selfhood which are called by the name "Infinite **אין סוף**" fill the whole earth in time and space. For in the heavens above and on the earth, on all sides, all is filled with the light of the **אין סוף** equally, for it is the same on the earth below just as in the heavens above. For all this is the criterion of space which is voided in existence within the light of infinity which clothes itself within it (space) by the attribute of **מִלְכוּת** which is united with Him. The attribute of **מִלְכוּת** is the attribute of contraction and concealment, hiding the light of infinity in order that time and space should not cease to exist, for then there would be no attribute of time and space

even below.

Now then from what I have said will be understood the statement, "I am God, I have not changed".(3) The meaning of this is that there is no change whatsoever. Just as He was alone before the creation so He is alone after creation. That is what is meant by, "Thou wast before the world was created", (4) without any change in His substance or knowledge. For by the knowledge of Himself He knows all creatures, for everything is from Him and is voided out of existence near Him. As Maimonides said, "He is the known, knower and knowledge itself." (5) This idea is not in the power of the tongue to utter, the ear to hear or the heart to understand. God, His quality, substance and knowledge are one from every side and angle, in every manner of unity. His knowledge is not something added to His quality and essence as is the case with man whose knowledge of something adds to the soul's essence and fuses with the same. For when man studies and learns something his soul capable of learning has existed even before he learned and knew. But after he learned and knew this knowledge was added to his soul, and thus every single day. "The<sup>days</sup> should speak and the years and multitudes of years should teach wisdom." (6) This is not a single unity but a combination. But God is a simple unity without any combination or plural side at all.

Therefore, His quality and substance and knowledge are all actually one thing without any combinations. Thus just as it ~~as it~~ is impossible for any creature in the world to conceive the quality of the creator and His substance, so it is impossible to conceive the essence of His knowledge. We must have faith that is above understanding, that God is a single unity and His knowledge is all actually one. And by the knowledge of Himself He recognizes and knows all the higher and lower entities to the smallest little ripple in the sea and the smallest mosquito in the center of the earth. Nothing is hidden from Him. This knowledge however, adds nothing at all to Him since it is only the knowledge of His own self, and His self and His knowledge are all one. Since this is very difficult to picture in our own minds, therefore the prophet said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than yours and my thoughts higher than yours". (7) And it says, "Can you attempt to search the deep things of God?" (8) Further it says, "Are Thine eyes human or seeest Thou as man seest?" (9) For man sees and knows all things with a knowledge that is outside of himself. Up to here I have quoted from Maimonides. ( see his הלכות יסודי התורה . The students of Cabbala have agreed with him as did Moses Cordovera in his " **OTZOT** **2** **MIKOTZ** The Garden of Pomegranates." (10).



From this we can understand the mistake of some of the scholars (God forgive them) who erred when they investigated the writings of Isaac Luria, and they understood the subject of "Contraction" mentioned there in a literal sense; that God withdrew Himself and His substance *חַס וְשְׁלוֹם*, from the world and He only watches from above, through His personal providence, over all the creatures which are in the heavens above and the earth below. Now then, aside from the fact that it is impossible to take the matter of "contraction" in its literal sense, for it is like applying the human, physical qualities to God who differs from them in a million ways. They ~~also~~ speak without knowledge since they believe as those before them believed that God knows all creatures of this lower world and exercised providence over them and that His knowledge of them does not mark any increase, for He knows everything through a knowledge of Himself. Therefore, so to speak, His essence, His self, and knowledge are all one. That is what is said in the "*תְּקוּנַי הַזֶּה*" (11), that there is no place vacant of Him, either in the upper or lower spheres.

In another source, the "*רַעֲיָא כְּהוֹלִיכָהּ*" we read, "He holds everything but nothing holds Him. He surrounds and includes the worlds and there is nothing that is excluded from His possession. He fills the world and ties

and unites kind to kind, upper and lower. There is no affinity in the four elements excepting God, for He is in their midst." So far the quotation.

What is meant by "No one holds Him"? He means that there is no one who can hold Him in his mind, and this is also true of the heavenly minds, the essence and the substance of God. As it is written in the *ἑκτοῦ*, "Thou art the secret of secrets, and no thought can hold Thee. In the lower spheres, even though He fills all the world He is not like the soul of man in his body, which is held within the body until it is affected by and receives changes from the changes of the body and his sufferings from beatings, from cold or heat or fire etc. This is not the case with God who is not affected by any changes of this world; from summer to winter and from day to night, as it is written, "Even the darkness is not too dark for Thee. But the night shineth as the day; the darkness is even as the light."(12) For He is not held at all in the worlds even though He fills them. This is also the meaning of the matter that He surrounds and includes the world. This means for example, when a man examines some wise matter with his mind, or he examines a material thing with his thought, then his mind and thought surround that thing which is pictured in his thought or mind.

But he does not surround it tangibly. But God about whom it written that "My thoughts are not thy thoughts etc." (13), His thoughts and His knowledge with which He knows the creatures surround those creatures, for God's knowledge of the creature is its life and essence which actualizes it ex-nihilo. This is the quality which clothes itself in the essence of that which is created. It contracts itself in proportion to the value of the creature created which is limited and finite in quantity and quality. This is as the sun whose body has limit and finitude in its quantity, about one hundred-sixty-seven times as large as the globe of the earth. Its quality and importance which is light, also has limit in its power of illumination, for it cannot shine forever, for it was created and therefore is like all creatures, limited and finite. For the distance from the earth to the sky is a trip of five hundred years etc. Therefore the life source which is clothed in them in in the position of a tremendous contraction. It first must contract itself into many great contractions, until there should come into being from out of the force and light, the substance of the creatures as they are, namely, limited and finite. For the source of vitality is the breath of the mouth God clothed in the ten utterances of the Torah. His breath

could have expanded itself without end or limit and created an infinite world without limit in reference to its quality and quantity. He could have vitalized them for ever and ever and this world would not have been created at all. For just as God is called infinite, so are all His attributes and actions, for He and His effects are one. That is to say, the life source which is derived from His attributes *א' ב' ג' ד' ה' ו' ז' ח' ט' י'* *Top* and His other holy attributes, by their clothing themselves with the breath of His mouth, "For He spoke and there was a world." (14) The world is built because of mercy, by the words of God and the breath of His mouth which becomes a vessel and a cloak for this mercy like the fist, whose cover is part of itself.. But God contracted the light and the life that could have expanded from the breath of His mouth and He clothed it within the combinations of the ten utterances and the combination of their combinations, thorough their calculations and enumeration. For each change and variation indicates a descent of the life and light from degree to degree. That is to say, it could create and vitalize creatures whose degree of quality and eminance is inferior to the degree of the quality and eminance of the creatures that were created from the letters and the words of the ten

utterances themselves in which God in His glory and might clothes Himself. For they are His attributes and the calculations indicate the lessening of the life and light by progressive subtraction until there is left of it only the last criterion which is the criterion of calculation and enumeration. A great many types of forces and degrees are included in this light and life which is clothed in any particular combination of a word, for after all these contractions and similiar ones that His wisdom decreed, life and light could have clothed themselves also in the lower objects such as stones and inanimate dust. "Stone אבן" for example, has letters which indicate that its root is from a name that is /1 52 in its root and an added "א" from another name. (ed. note: the original had "לישעם" to help them which makes no sense, it should read "לשעם".) for a reason known to its creator. Now then the name "/1" 52 itself is in very high worlds. Only through a great many contractions there decreased from it, little by little, its vitality, until it reached a point where it could clothe itself with the stone. And this is the soul of the inanimate which vitalizes it and brings it into being ex-nihilo each moment as I stated above. This is in the category of מלכות ק.

תלכות כל עולמים (15) which is not in the category of  
כל עולמים He surrounds all the world. And every  
force and each degree can create creatures in proportion  
to the quality of this particular degree, also unlimited and infinite in their quality and quantity, and to vitalize them for ever and ever, since it is the power of God which is expanded and emanates from the breath of His mouth and there is no limit or end to it. But their quality and eminence are not as great as are the quality and eminence of the creatures that could be created from the strength and degree of the letters themselves, for the former are created from the letters and not God. (God allows the שמים to become self-active.

NOTES

Chapter Seven

- 1- We will have to take Zalman's word for this for I could not accomplish the feat in any way.
- 2- **רַעֲיָא מִהֵימְנָה** refers to a supposed utterance of Moses and is to be found in the portion **פְּנִיחָה** in the Zohar.
- 3- Malachi, 3:6
- 4- From the Palestinian Talmud, Tractate Berachoth, ch. 1X. Also quoted in the Midrash Yalkut, Numbers 336, as a eulogy spoken by the heavenly hosts.
- 5- Part 3 chapter 20 of the Guide has a full discussion of this subject.
- 6- Job, 32:7.
- 7- Is. 55:9
- 8- Job, 11:7
- 9- Job, 10:4
- 10- Cordovera or Cordobera, a Palestinian mystic. Rabbi of Safed. Born 1522, died June 25, 1570. Most famous work **פְּרִדָּס נְמוּנָה**.
- 11- **הַזֶּה הוּא הַתּוֹרָה** supplementary passages of the Zohar attributed to **רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָאי** purported author of the Zohar.
- 12- Ps. 139: 12.
- 13- Is. 55:9
- 14- Ps. 33:9.
- 150 Is. 145:13

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Now concerning that which Maimonides said; that God, His quality and His substance and His knowledge are all one, a simple unity and not combined, so exactly is the case with all the attributes of God and all His holy names and appellations with which the prophets and sages called Him, such as Gracious, and Merciful, and Pious and similar ones. So also He was called wise, as it is written, "And He is also wise." (1) And similarly there is reference to His will, "For God wants those who fear Him", (2) "God wishes mercy", (3) "God wishes the repentance of the wicked and not their death," (5) "His eyes are too pure to see evil." (4) His will, wisdom, attribute of mercy and kindness and all His other attributes do not add any increase or combination in His quantity or substance, God forbid. But His own substance and quantity and will and wisdom and understanding and knowledge, His attribute of mercy and His strength, His pity and His glory which is derived from His kingdom and strength, as also His other holy attributes, are a simple unity and this unity is His substance and quality. As the **מנצח** said, no mouth is able to say it, no ear can hear it nor is the human heart capable of understanding it clearly. Man pictures in his mind all the propositions which he wishes to



understand and grasp, just as they are. For example, he wishes to picture in his mind the quality of will or wisdom or understanding or knowledge or the quality of kindness and mercy etc. So he pictures them as they are in himself. But God, in truth, is high and exalted and His name is holy which means that He is sacred and separate to the nth degree; higher than any estimation or type of praise and exaltation which the creatures could conceive or picture in their minds. The first step and degree among creatures is wisdom, therefore, it is called the beginning, ('נאש'י חכמה ראשונה').

For indeed it is the beginning and source of all vitality within the creatures. For from wisdom are derived understanding and knowledge and from these are derived all the qualities of the intelligent soul such as love, kindness, and mercy etc. We see, in truth, that the child who has no knowledge is always angry or cruel. Even his love is for petty things which do not merit his love. For he hasn't the knowledge to love those things worthy of love. For we love in proportion to our knowledge. From the qualities of the soul there are drawn the words and letters of thought which the soul thinks concerning the matter which it loves. So also from the soul is derived mercy and kindness. All other

qualities and all thought in the world are clothed in a certain quality which brings this thought to conscious cogitation. Therefore this quality is the life source of thought. From the letters of thought are derived the letters of speech, and are actually the life source of speech. Speech brings about the deed of charity and kindness, just as a king commands his servants to give. When man performs an action, the force and life of the soul are as nothing compared to the force and life of the soul which is clothed in the speech of man. And the same value relationship exists between body and soul as between the letters of speech and the letters of thought. The same value ratio exists between the letters of thought and the quality or attribute which is clothed in thought and which vitalizes it. The same value ratio exists between this attribute and wisdom, understanding and knowledge whose whole composition is the mind from which this quality is derived. All this is in the soul of man, and the souls of all creatures of all the higher and lower worlds for in them there is wisdom, and this is the beginning and very source of life.

NOTES

Chapter Eight

- 1- Is. 31:2
- 2- Ps. 147:11
- 3- Mich. 7:18
- 4- Hab. 1:13
- 5- Prayer book. Rosh Hashonah Service

CHAPTER NINE

However, concerning God, the degree of wisdom which is the beginning and source of thought is the ultimate act to the Holy One. That is to say it is considered as if it (חכמה) is of the category and degree of 'act' in relation to the Holy One. As it is written, "Thou hast made them all in wisdom".(1) That is to say, as the "elan" of the physical act is to the "elan" of wisdom, which is the origin and source of life in man and all corporality and which is as nothing, so is the value of wisdom compared to God Himself. For deed is nothing when compared to speech and speech is nothing when compared to thought, which is nothing when compared to the life and degree of the qualities from which thought is derived, which in turn is nothing when compared to the life and degree of חכמה, בינה, דעת, the source of these qualities.

God is exalted and elevated innumerable degrees above the degree of wisdom which is above the category of the physical act by only five degrees; action, speech, thought, quality and mind. But God is high and exalted over the degree of wisdom thousands of degrees.

But because creatures can only conceive the evolution from the degree of wisdom to the degree of action, (the lowest) therefore, we say that compared to God, the degree of wisdom is considered as the degree of action. God is high and exalted, far above the degree of wisdom. It is even wrong to relate to Him a matter applicable to wisdom, even if this relationship be high and exalted, such as saying that it is impossible for any creature high or low to conceive God's wisdom or quality. For the matter of conception applies and pertains to wisdom and mind; namely that it is possible or impossible to conceive it because of the depth of that which is conceived. But it is not fitting to say concerning God who is above the mind and wisdom that it is impossible to conceive Him because of the depth to be conceived. For God is not in the category of conception. Any one who says concerning God that it is impossible to conceive Him is as one who says concerning a deep idea that it is impossible to feel it with the hand because of the depth of the conception. Any one hearing him would laugh at him for the sense of touch does not apply or relate to the intangible. So also is the degree of mind and conception considered in relation to God. This is true even of the conceptions of the

higher worlds and even the degree of supreme wisdom which vitalizes them all, as it is written, "Thou hast made them all in wisdom".

The fact that God is called "wise" in the Bible and that all the sages called Him with the degrees and emanances of wisdom was because He is the source of wisdom. From Him is derived the quality of the degree of the high wisdom of the Azilutic world. Similarly He is called merciful and kind, because He is the source of mercy and loving kindness. Thus He is referred to by the other attributes because they are all derived and emanate from Him. And the manner and matter of the derivations and emanations, of how and what, that is known to the wise ones. Behold, we have nothing to do with hidden things. But we must believe in the open things with complete faith; that He and His effects; namely the attributes of God, His will and His **וְיָנִק אֶת־הַמַּיִם** ,

**וְיָנִק**, together with His quality and substance which are elevated to an infinity of elevations from the category of wisdom, mind and conception, are one. Therefore this unity which means the union of all His attributes with Him and which emanate from Him, also is not in the category of the conceivable. Neither is the means by which He establishes this unity. Therefore these are

called the attributes of God, which are the spheres  
of the Holy Zohar, "The secret of faith", which is the  
faith that is above mind.

NOTES

Chapter Nine

1- Ps. 104:24.

# CHAPTER TEN

But since the Torah speaks in human terms so that man may understand permission has been given to the sages to speak of the "spheres" in terms of analogy. They call the "spheres" lights in order that we may better understand the concept of the unity of God and His attributes. They use the analogy of the unity of the light of the sun with the body of the sun. The body of the sun is called " **החור הגדול** The large light"(1), and the radiance and brilliance which emanates is called, **אור** as it is written, " **ויקרא אלהים לאור יום** And God called the light day."(2) When the **אור** is in its source, in the body of the sun it is united with the sun in perfect unity. For then nothing exists but the one object, the **ח'אור** , or body of the sun which radiates. For the radiance or the **אור** is identical with the body of the sun, the **ח'אור** . The **אור** has no separate existence of its own. This same analogy is used concerning God, His will and wisdom in the Azilutic world and the essence and self-hood of God so to speak. The latter clothes itself with the former and unites with them in absolute unity in the same manner as the analogy of the **אור** and **ח'אור** . Yet, in truth, the analogy is not exact but merely indicative, for God's methods are too



remote and wonderful for our conception, for His ways are higher than our ways. Nevertheless, in order that we may secure some understanding we use the analogy of the light of the sun which is united and nullified in its source and by itself has no name. The origin or **חַיָּוִת** alone has a name when the **אֵל** are united. So also are the qualities of God, His will and wisdom. All of these do not exist by themselves but are called by specific names for the sake of the higher and lower creatures whom God created. For God renders them into being and guides them with His will and His **חַיָּוִת**, which are clothed in His holy qualities.

As it says in the Midrash, "With ten utterances was the world created.(3) He created it with **חַיָּוִת** **חַיָּוִת**, for it written, "By wisdom the Lord founded the earth. By understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths were broken up", etc.(6) As is the phrase of Elijah, "Ten modes (**תִּקּוּנִים**) arose which we call the ten spheres, to conduct the hidden, unrevealed worlds, and also the revealed worlds in which it is clothed. For example, on the first day of the six days of creation the quality of **חַיָּוִת** was revealed. **חַיָּוִת** is comprised

of all His holy qualities, will and **ה"ו** .  
God created the light with **אור**, and with the utterance, "Let there be light."(4) This is in the category of emanation. And the attracting of the light to the world from above and its scattering in the world from one end to the other is in the category of the quality of **אור** only because it is comprised also of the quality of **אברהם**. Therefore, it wasn't as spiritual as the light from above. And it also clothed itself with this world which is in the category of the finite and limited, there being a distance of 500 years of travel from the earth to the sky and from the east to the west. So also on the second day the quality of **אברהם** was revealed which is comprised of the rest of His qualities and His will. With **אברהם** He created the firmament with the utterance, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it separate between waters and waters."(5). This is the quality of **אברהם**, contraction and strength. By hiding the higher, spiritual waters from the lower waters, and by their separation the lower waters become materialized. The quality of **אברהם** is included in it. "For the world is built on kindness." All this was done so that dry land might

be seen and man may exist upon it to worship God.  
And so on with the other days of creation. That  
is what Elijah said in the **תקו"ם**, so that we  
might see how the world is conducted by **צדק** and  
**משפט**. **צדק** is **דין**, justice and **משפט** is  
**רחמים** mercy. All this to see how the world is  
conducted. But it is not true that you have justice  
by the knowledge that it is **דין** or **משפט** by the  
knowledge that it is **רחמים**. For these are not  
part of the attributes at all.

NOTES

Chapter Ten

- 1- Gen. 1:16
- 2- Gen. 1:5
- 3- See chapter 1, note 6.
- 4- Gen. 1:3
- 5- Gen 1:6
- 6- Prov. 3:13.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Behold the ten utterances were also called utterances for the sake of the creatures. This is as the qualities of the soul of man which when revealed in action come clothed with the letters of thought. For example, the qualities of mercy and kindness which are in the soul cannot come to materialization in actual deed except thorough thought in the mind and cogitating the act of justice and mercy in order to translate it into actual deed. It is impossible to do this without thought. And if he should command as a king does then the quality of kindness and also the letters of thought cloth themselves with the letters of speech. This is also true when one speaks words of kindness and mercy to a friend. An analogy to this would be the actual revelation and materialization of the attributes of God in the lower world.

The revelation and emanation of this action is called by the name of utterance and combination of letters. For it is impossible that there be any action derived from His Holy attributes without the combination of that which is called by the name letters. For example, to the creation of the light from the attribute of kindness there is derived the materialization of the force to act and create the light. This derived force and

this vitality are called by the name "utterance".  
Now the letter  $\aleph$   $\iota$   $\eta$   $\kappa$  although they are not  
like the letters of our thought  $\text{הושיענו}$ , neverthe-  
less they are the symbol representing the coming  
into existence of light ex-nihilo. Thus the light  
was created from this derived force. But nothing else  
was created from it although it might likewise stem  
from the same original attribute of  $\text{דוד}$ , such as  
water etc. For in these were clothed forces in the  
forms of other combinations which indicate the coming  
into being of water, etc. We see that all vitalities  
and forces are derived from His holy attributes to the  
lower creatures to create them ex-nihilo, to enliven  
the creatures and sustain them. They are called by  
the names of the holy letters which are the emanations  
of life from His will, wisdom and attributes, for the  
purpose of creating worlds and vitalizing them.

There are two kinds of worlds; the secret worlds  
which are not revealed and which take shape and exist  
from secret forces and emanations as, for example, the  
letters of thought in the human soul. Second, are  
the visible worlds which are created as the result  
of the materialization of those concealed forces  
which we have already compared to the letters of thought

but having become visable are to be considered as letters of speech even as it is written the word of God and the breathe of His mouth which are as the letters of speech in man, figuratively speaking, which reveal to the hearers what is hidden and covered in his heart.

But, indeed, the letters of speech of the higher spheres are higher than the degree and essence of the wisdom and mind of the lower creatures. For with the utterance, "Let us make man in our own image"(1) man was created who is the possessor of wisdom and mind and he was also created with the breathe of the Almighty Himself, as it is written, "And He breathed into his nostrils the breathe of life"(2). Therefore, the higher speech and breathe is the source of wisdom and mind in the soul of the first man. This first soul includes all the souls of the righteous who are greater than the angels. That is because the letters of His speech are in the catagory of derivations from the force and vitality of His attributes which are united in essence and substance in absolute unity. This source is infinitely higher than the degree of wisdom of His creatures. The creatures are not the embodiment of the letters of that word by which we name it. They

are merely indicative of the attributes represented by these letters.

Behold, there are twenty-two kinds of emanations of life and force, different from each other, and from which all the upper and lower worlds and all the creatures that are in them were created. For thus was His will and His wisdom, to create the world from exactly twenty-two kinds of emanations, neither more nor less. These twenty-two are the twenty-two fixed letters of the mouth and tongue.(3) as we find in the ספר יצירה . And their written images indicate the picture of the emanation as we will explain later. The letters of speech and thought in the human soul too, are emanations from the mind and quality of the soul, in their quality and substance as it is written elsewhere.



NOTES

Chapter Eleven

1- Gen. 1:26

2- Gen. 2:7

3- This is true of course using the Hebrew tongue as the Holy tongue, implying that God used Hebrew as His language of creation.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

The creatures are divided into their general and specific kinds by the combinations, variations and changes of the letters, as was stated above. Every letter is the emanation of a special vitality and a specific force. When many letters are combined to become one word then in addition to the increase of the kinds of forces and vitalities which are derived from the number of letters in the word, there is also over and above them all, the derivation of a Godly force and general vitality which comprises and balances all the special forces and vitalities of the individual letters and rises above them. This force unites them and brings them together in order to infuse the created world with life, vitality and power through this word in its sum and in its parts.

For example, in the words of the utterance, "Let there be a firmament"(1) by which were created the seven firmaments and all the hosts of heaven, which were in them, as in the phrases of our sages, the " שחקים Heavens" (2) in which millstones stand and grind manna for the righteous. The " רבול Heavens", (3) in which Jerusalem, the Temple, and

and the altar stand, the " יְהוָה Heavens", in which are treasures of snow and hail etc. All the totality of the heavens were created and vitalized and sustained by the totality of the words of the utterance, "Let there be a firmament". The individual creatures of the seven firmaments and details of each were created and preserved by some combination of letters from these words, by changes and variations which are in relation to the degree of the vitality of that particular creature. Every change of combination is a different formation and weaving of the forces and vitality. Every letter which preceeds in the combination is the strongest and is the main one in their creation. The rest are unimportant in relation to it. They are included in its light and thereby a new creature is created. Also by the changes of the letters or their variations new creatures are created by the letters themselves. They are, for example, as the light of the moon which illumines the earth, but which really comes from the sun. This light is actually the light of the sun.

Thus we find too, the letters of the utter-

ances which are the totality of the derivation of the vitality of the light and of the force from the qualities of the light and of the force from the qualities of the Holy One, in order to create the world ex-nihilo, to vitalize it and to sustain it. From the totality of this great emanation and radiation which God shone forth, there is derived, derivations of kind and its branches which are the derivations and emanations of the light from the letters. These are the changes of the letters and their variations. He created with them the individual creatures of every world. Thus God continued to shine and He continued deriving one emanation from another, which comes from the original radiation of the letters.

Thus God continued further, as the linking of a chain, until the lowest or inanimate was created, as stone and dust. The names **אבן** and **עפר** are the result of many variations and the results of many changes as stated above.

NOTES

Chapter Twelve

1- Gen.1:6

2- The root  $\text{גחש}$  means to grind

3- The word  $\text{קודש}$  means holy place, exalted place.

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