Rabbi Hizkiyahu opened, “Like a rose among thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens (Song of Songs 2:2). Who is a rose? Assembly of Israel. For there is a rose, and then there is a rose! Just as a rose among thorns is colored red and white, so Assembly of Israel includes judgment and compassion. Just as a rose has thirteen petals, so Assembly of Israel has thirteen qualities of compassion surrounding Her on every side. Similarly, from the moment אלוהים (Elchim),

1. rose דנית (Shoshannah) probably means “lily” or “lotus” in Song of Songs, but here Rabbi Hizkiyahu has in mind a rose. See Vayiqra Rabbah 23:3; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 2:2; Zohar 1:137a, 221a; 2:20a (MibN), 189b; 3:107a, 180b, 233b, 288b; Ezra of Gerona, Peirush Shir ha-Shirim, 489 (lily); Joseph ibn Aknin, Peirush Shir ha-Shirim, 63–65 (rose); Moses de León, Sefer ha-Rimmon, 183–84; Zoharei Ya’bets.

A Ladino translation of the verse (The Ladino Five Scrolls, ed. Lazar, 4–5) reads: Como la rosa entre los espinos, ansi mi compañera entre las dueñas.

2. Assembly of Israel כנסת ישראエル (Keneset Yisra‘el). In rabbinic Hebrew, this phrase denotes the people of Israel. The midrash on the Song of Songs describes an allegorical love affair between the maiden (the earthly community of Israel) and her lover (the Holy One, blessed be He). See Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 2:1. In the Zohar, Keneset Yisra‘el can refer to the earthly community but also (often primarily) to Shekhinah, the divine feminine counterpart of the people, the aspect of God most intimately connected with them. The lovers in the Song of Songs are pictured as the divine couple: Ti‘eret and Shekhinah.

3. colored red and white As is Rosa gallica versicolor (also known as Rosa mundi), one of the oldest of the striped roses, whose flowers are crimson splashed on a white background. The striping varies and occasionally flowers revert to the solid pink of their parent, Rosa gallica. The parent was introduced to Europe in the twelfth or thirteenth century by Crusaders returning from Palestine. Both parent and sport were famous for their aromatic and medicinal qualities. Elsewhere (2:20a–b) the Zohar alludes to the process of distilling oil from the petals of the flower to produce rose water, a popular remedy. During this process the color gradually changes from red to white.

4. thirteen petals...thirteen qualities of compassion... A rose blossom can have thirteen petals in its second tier. In rabbinic tradition, God’s thirteen attributes of compassion are derived from Exodus 34:6–7. See BT Rosh ha-Shanah 17b. According to Kabbalah, these qualities originate in Keter, the
God, is mentioned, it generates thirteen words to surround Assembly of Israel and protect Her; then it is mentioned again. Why again? To produce five sturdy leaves surrounding the rose. These five are called Salvation; they are five gates. Concerning this mystery it is written: I raise the cup of salvation (Psalms 116:13). This is the cup of blessing, which should rest on five fingers—and no more—like the rose, sitting on five sturdy leaves, paradigm of five fingers. This rose is the cup of blessing.

"From the second שְּבִיבָה (Elohim) till the third, five words appear. From here on: light—created, concealed, contained in the covenant, entering the rose, emitting seed into Her. This is the tree bearing fruit with its seed in it (Genesis 1:12). That seed endures in the actual sign of covenant. Just as the image of the covenant is sown in forty-two couplings of that seed, so the engraved, explicit name is sown in forty-two letters of the act of Creation."

highest selirah, the realm of total compassion untainted by judgment.

5. שְּבִיבָה (Elohim), God, is mentioned… The divine name שְּבִיבָה (Elohim), God, refers here to Binah, the Divine Mother. Between its first and second occurrences in the opening verses of Genesis there are thirteen words, which allude to the thirteen qualities of compassion originating in Keter, emanating from Binah and surrounding the rose of Shekhinah.

6. five sturdy leaves… The leaves of rose plants grow in clusters of five, nine, or thirteen leaves. And between the second and third occurrences of שְּבִיבָה (Elohim) in Genesis are five words, alluding to five divine leaves: the five selirat emanating from Binah and transmitting the flow to Shekhinah. These selirat are Hesed, Gevurah, Tiferet (including Yesod), Netzah, and Hod.

7. Salvation The flow of emanation saves the rose of Shekhinah from the demonic thorns surrounding Her.

8. five gates By which one enters the divine realm.

9. cup of blessing… on five fingers… According to the Talmud, the cup of wine is held in the right hand during the blessing after food. See BT Berakhot 92a: "One takes it with both hands and places it on the right hand." Cf. Zohar 215b (ST), 250a; 213b, 143b, 157b.

10. light—created, concealed… See BT Haggah 12a: "Rabbi Elazar said, 'With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, one could gaze and see from one end of the universe to the other. When the blessed Holy One foresaw the corrupt deeds of the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersion [the generation of the Tower of Babel], He immediately hid it from them, as is written: The light of the wicked is withheld (Job 38:15). For whom did He hide it? For the righteous in the time to come.'"

Elsewhere, the Midrash links the hidden light with Psalms 97:11: Light is sown for the righteous. See Tanhuma, Shemini 9; Shenot Rabbah 351; Midrash Tehillim 271.

Rabbi Hizkiyah now specifies where the primordial light was concealed: in the covenant, which is a name for the selirah of Yesod—the divine phallus, site of the covenant of circumcision. Yesod is also known as Righteous. See Zohar 1:21a, 31b–32a, 45b; 2:35a, 148b–149a; 166b–167a, 230a.

11. tree bearing fruit… The tree symbolizes male divinity.

12. explicit name The Ineffable Name, יהוה: See Devarim Rabbah 38; Midrash Tehillim 1149; Zohar 2:48a.

13. forty-two couplings… forty-two letters of the act of Creation The forty-two-letter name is mentioned in the name of
Rabbi Shim'on opened, "The blossoms have appeared on the earth, the time of pruning has arrived; the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land (Song of Songs 2:12). The blossoms are the act of Creation, which appeared on the earth. When? On the third day, as is written: The earth brought forth vegetation (Genesis 1:12). Then they appeared on the earth. The time of pruning has arrived—the fourth day, on which the pruning of tyrants (Isaiah 25:5) took place. The voice of the turtledove is the fifth day, as is written: Let the waters swarm [with a swarm of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth, across the expanse of the sky] (Genesis 1:20), generating offspring. Is heard is the sixth day, as is written: Let us make a human being (Genesis 1:26), who was destined to declare acting before hearing, for here is written: [ib] הוהי (Na`aseh), Let us make, a human being, and there is written: הוהי (Na`aseh). We will do, and we will listen (Exodus 24:7). In our land is the Sabbath day, paradigm of the land of eternal life."

Raw, though not recorded, in BT Qiddushin 71a. According to one later view, it consists of the first forty-two letters of the Torah, from the ב (bet) of והיֵה (Be-reshit) through the ב (bet) of רבו (bohu), void (Genesis 1:2).

See Tosafot, Haqigah 11b, s.v. ein doreshin; KP 1:46c–d; Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition, 94–95; cf. Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, 1:62. Cordovero (OT) describes how the name הוהי ("the engraved, explicit name") can be permuted into a forty-two-letter name; cf. Zohar 2:260a. In Zohar 1:9a, Moses' staff is described as "radiating the engraved name in every direction with the radiance of the wise who engraved the explicit name in forty-two colors." Cf. Zohar 1:15b, 30a; 2:30b, and 175b; "...the forty-two holy letters of the holy name, by which heaven and earth were created."

14. pruning of tyrants...וּזָמָיר (Zemir) is usually translated "singing of" in this verse, but Rabbi Shim'on understands it as "pruning of," i.e., the pruning of the demonic powers, the tyrants (KP; cf. Zohar 3:4b), or the pruning of humans by the demonic tyrants (OT).

15. הָעַטֶרֶת (Me'orot), lights, spelled deficiently In Genesis 1:4, the word הָעַטֶרֶת (me'orot) is written without vav, the vowel letters. (Such variant spelling is common in the Torah and affects neither pronunciation nor the plain meaning of the words.) This deficient spelling implies that something was missing on the fourth day of Creation, a lack representing the potential for evil or "curse": הָעַטֶרֶת (me'orah).

See Proverbs 3:33; JT Ta'anit 4:4, 68b; Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana 5:1; Soferim 17:4; Rashi and Minhaj Shai on Genesis 1:14; Zohar 1:12a, 19b, 33b.

16. We will do and we will listen Spoken by the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. With these words, Israel demonstrated true faith by committing themselves to fulfill and enact God's word even before hearing the details. See BT Shabbat 88a.

17. paradigm of the land... According to BT Berakhot 57b, the Sabbath is "a reflection of the world to come."
"The blossoms are the Patriarchs, who entered the divine mind before Creation and entered the world that is coming, where they were treasured away. From there, they emerged secretly and were concealed within prophets of truth. When Joseph was born, they were concealed within him. When Joseph entered the Holy Land, he planted them there. Then they appeared on earth, were revealed there. When are they visible? When the rainbow is revealed in the world. Then, the time of pruning has arrived, time to excise the wicked from the world. Why are they spared? Because the blossoms have appeared on the earth. Had they not appeared, they would not remain in the world, nor would the world endure. Who sustains the world, enabling the Patriarchs to be revealed? The voice of children engaging in Torah. For the sake of those children, the world is saved. Corresponding to them, We will make you wreathe of gold (Song of Songs 1:11).

28. Patriarchs, who entered... See Bereshit Rabbah 1:4: “Six things preceded Creation... The Patriarchs arose in thought [i.e., were intended] to be created.” In the Kabbalah, the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) represent the triad of sefirot: Hessed, Gevurah, and Tiferet. Cf. Zohar 139b, 97a-b; 3:4b.

29. the world that is coming (Alma de-ateil), the Aramaic equivalent of the rabbinic Hebrew הָאֹלָם הַבָּא, “the world that is coming.” This concept is often understood as referring to the hereafter and is usually translated as “the world to come.” From another point of view, however, “the world that is coming” already exists, occupying another dimension. See Tanhuma, Vayiga 8: “The wise call it הָאֹלָם הַבָּא not because it does not exist now, but for us today in this world it is still to come.” Cf. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah 8:8; and Guttmann, Philosophies of Judaism, 37: “The world to come” does not succeed ‘this world’ in time, but exists from eternity as a reality outside and above time, to which the soul ascends.”

In Kabbalah “the world that is coming” often refers to Birah, the continuous source of emanation, who gives birth to the lower sefirot. See Zohar 329b (IZ): “the world that is coming, constantly coming, never ceasing.”

Cf. Bahir 106 (160); Asher ben David, Pirush Sheshosh Erech Middot, in Kabbalah 2 (1997): 293; Moses de León, Sheqel ha-Qodesh, 26 (30); idem, Sod Eser Sefirot, 375; Zohar 1:83a, 92a.

20. prophets of truth The sefirot of Netsah and Hod, the source of prophecy.

21. Joseph... Joseph symbolizes the sefirot of Yesod, the divine phallus, since he withstood the test of sexual temptation in Egypt (Genesis 39). The upper triad of sefirot (Hessed, Gevurah, and Tiferet) flow into him, and when Yesod enters Shekhinah (“the Holy Land,” “earth”), the sefirotic triad is planted there and revealed. Though Joseph never returned to the land of Israel, his bones did. See Joshua 24:32.

22. When the rainbow is revealed... The rainbow symbolizes both Yesod and Shekhinah, in whose union Hessed, Gevurah, and Tiferet are revealed in their respective colors: white, red, and green.

23. they would not remain... The wicked would not remain.

24. voice of children... See BT Shabbat 119b: “Rabbi Lakish said in the name of Rabbi Yehudah the Prince, ‘The world endures only for the sake of the breath of children in the house of study.’” Cf. Zohar 1:146b; 317b.
These are little children, youngsters, as is written: *Make two cherubim of gold* (Exodus 25:18).25

Rabbi El’azar opened, “Lift your eyes on high and see: Who created these? (Isaiah 40:26). Lift your eyes on high. To which site? The site toward which all eyes gaze. Which is that? *Opening of the eyes*.26 There you will discover that this concealed ancient one, susceptible to questioning, *created these*. Who is that? Who?27 The one called End of Heaven above,28 whose domain extends over everything. Since it can be questioned, yet remains concealed and unrevealed, it is called *Who*. Beyond, there is no question.29

25. *Make two cherubim*. . . In BT Sukkah 5b, Rabbi Abbahu interprets the word *כארוב* (ke-rova), “cherub,” as *כארובא* (ke-rava), “like a child.” The plump childlike angels of Christian art derive either from this tradition or from the Greco-Roman Erotes, “loves.” Here Rabbi Shim’on relates the golden cherubim to the golden wreaths of the Song of Songs, concluding that both images allude to children.

26. *Opening of the eyes*. מה שנעשית (Petah einayim). The phrase originates in Genesis 38:14, where it means “the entrance to Einayim,” a village where Tamar seduced her father-in-law, Judah. The midrash on Genesis (Bereishit Rabbah 85:7) discovers a deeper meaning: “Rabbi [Yehudah the Prince] said, ‘We have searched through the entire Bible and have not found a place called Petah Einayim. What is Petah Einayim?’ This indicates that she [Tamar] gazed at the opening toward which all eyes gaze and said, ‘May it be the divine will that I not leave this house empty.’” In the Zohar, this opening is identified with Shekhinah, gateway to the divine. See 3:7b–72a.

27. *Who* (Ha). Binah, the Divine Mother, is called *Who*. A spiritual seeker may inquire about Her, but such questions do not yield ordinary answers. The identity of the divine is discovered only in a realm beyond words. The mystical name *Who* becomes a focus of meditation, as question turns into quest. See Shim’on Lavi, *KP*, 1:91a: “Concerning everything that cannot be grasped, its question constitutes its answer.”

See Zohar 1:29b–30a, 45b, 85b–86a, 237b; 2:126b–127a, 138a, 139b, 226a, 231b.

28. *End of Heaven above*. See Deuteronomy 4:32: For ask now of primal days, which were before you: from the day that God created humankind on earth, and from one end of heaven to the other. In BT Hagi-ghah 11b, this verse is interpreted as imposing a limit on cosmological speculation: “You may inquire concerning from one end of heaven to the other, but you may not inquire concerning what is above, what is below, what came before, what will come after.” See M Haggah 2:1; Bereishit Rabbah 110.

These restrictions on cosmological speculation recall the Gnostic striving after “the knowledge of who we were, what we have become, where we were, where we have been thrown, where we hasten, from what we are redeemed, what birth is and what rebirth” (Clement of Alexandria, *Excerptis from Theodotus* 78:2). See Zohar 1:30a; Moses de León, *Sha’qd ha-Qodesh*, 31; idem, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 20, 375; idem, *Sod Eser Sefirot Be’imah*, 371.

29. *Beyond*. . . The realms beyond Binah, namely, Haokhamah, Keter, and Ein Sof, are so unknowable that no question concerning them can even be formulated.
“This end of heaven is called Who. There is another below, called What.30 What distinguishes the two? The first, concealed one—called Who—can be questioned. Once a human being questions and searches,31 contemplating and knowing rung after rung to the very last rung—once one reaches there: What? What do you know? What have you contemplated? For what have you searched? All is concealed, as before.

“Concerning this mystery it is written: What can I take as a witness to you? What can I compare to you? (Lamentations 2:13). When the holy Temple was destroyed, a voice cried out: ‘What can I take as a witness to you? What can I compare to you? I take What as a witness to you. Every single day I have called witnesses against you, since days of old, as is written: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day’ (Deuteronomy 30:19).32 I compare you to What, precisely?33 I crowned you with holy crowns, gave you dominion over the world, as is written: Is this the city that was called perfect crown of beauty, joy of all the earth? (Lamentations 2:15). I called you Jerusalem built up, a city bound together (Psalms 122:3). Now, What can I liken to you, to console you? (Lamentations, ibid., 13).34 Just as you sit desolate, so it is above, as it were. Just as now, the holy people do not enter you in holy array, so I swear to you that I Myself will not enter above until your inhabitants enter you below.35 This is your consolation: I compare this rung to you completely.36 But now that you are here, your ruin is vast as the ocean (ibid.).37 Yet if you say you cannot endure or be healed, then Who will heal you (ibid.), really! That concealed, high rung in which all exists will heal you and raise you up.

30. What ויהי (Mah), a name for Shekhinah, last of the ten sefirot, daughter of Binah. See Zohar 2:127a. Binah and Shekhinah comprise the two ends of heaven, above and below Tiferet, who is called Heaven.

31. and searches שואל, Umphashpesh. Cr reads here: שואל, um-mitpashbet, “and expands.” See Bahir 134 (194); and Azriel of Gerona, Parush ha-Aggadot, 39: “Thought expands (טעם, mitpashbet) and ascends to its source. When it reaches there, it is stopped and can ascend no further.”

32. I call heaven and earth... Earth symbolizes Shekhinah.

33. I compare you to What, precisely! Israel resembles Shekhinah perfectly.

34. What can I liken… Again, Israel and Shekhinah (What) are compared.

35. I Myself will not enter... The blessed Holy One promises not to enter the heavenly Jerusalem, Shekhinah, until the earthly Jerusalem is restored. See Tanhuma, Pequdei 1: “There is a Jerusalem above aligned with Jerusalem below. Out of His love for the one below, He fashioned another above... He has sworn that His presence will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until the earthly Jerusalem is rebuilt.”

See Revelation 21:2; Targum Yonatan, Psalms 122:3; BT Ta'anit 5a; Zohar 1:80b (ST), 128b, 183b, 231a; 335b, 68b, 147b.

36. this rung Shekhinah.

37. But now that you are here, your ruin is vast... Now that Israel has fallen to the low state of exile, her ruin is vast as the ocean, another name for Shekhinah, who shares Israel’s exile.
"Who is End of Heaven above; What is End of Heaven below. Jacob inherited this, running from end to end (Exodus 26:28), 38 from first end, Who, to last end, What, for he stands in the middle. So, Who created these."

Rabbi Shim'on said, “El’azar, my son, cease your words, 39 so that the concealed mystery on high, unknown to any human, may be revealed.”

Rabbi El’azar was silent.

Rabbi Shim’on wept and paused for a moment. Then he said, "El’azar, what is these? 40 If you answer, 'Stars and constellations,' they are always visible there 41 and were created by What, as is said: By the word of YHVH the heavens were made (Psalms 33:6). 42 As for things concealed, such would not be referred to as these, for that word indicates something revealed. This mystery was only revealed one day when I was at the seashore. Elijah 43 came and asked me, 'Rabbi, do you know the meaning of Who created these?' I answered, 'These are the heavens and their array, the work of the blessed Holy One. Human beings should contemplate them and bless Him, as is written: When I behold Your heavens, the work of [2a] Your fingers, the moon and stars that You set in place, . . . YHVH our Lord, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth! (Psalms 8:4, 10).

38. running from end to end A description of the central wooden beam of the Tabernacle in the desert. The Zohar applies this description to Tī’eret, the central sefirah, symbolized by Jacob, who spans the sefirot from Binah (Who) to Shekinah (What). See Zohar 1:48a (ST).

39. cease your words רכmakt קיום, Pesq millekha. The phrase could also be translated: "utter your words." See BT Haggaiah 15a–b; סכמ קיום, pesq ḥ pesaqekha, "Recite for me your verse"; cf. Zohar 1:238b. "Cease" fits the context of our passage, but the ambiguity may be intentional, in which case a better rendering would be: "Complete your words," or "Cut your words."

40. these In the verse from Isaiah 40:26: Lift up your eyes and see. Who created these? Now that the mystical meaning of Who has been established, Rabbi Shim'on explores the meaning of these.

41. they are always visible there So why would the verse say, Lift up your eyes and see, implying that there is something new to see?

42. By the word of YHVH. . . The word of YHVH symbolizes Shekinah, who conveys the divine essence. Thus the heavens were made by Her (also known as What), not by Binah (Who).

See Zohar 1:19b; 3:191a, 191b.

43. Elijah According to the Bible (2 Kings 11:12), the prophet Elijah did not die a normal death but was carried off to heaven in a chariot of fire. He became associated with the Messianic age (Malachi 3:23–24) and in rabbinc tradition is described as "still existing" (BT Bava Batra 121b) and revealing divine secrets to righteous humans (BT Bava Metz’a 59b).

In Kabbalah mystical experiences are known as revelations of Elijah. See Scholem, On the Kabbalah, 19–21; Zohar 1:151a; 3:221a, 231a; ZH 59d. In Zohar 3:241b Elijah turns to Rabbi Shim'on for instruction! Elsewhere (ZH 63d, 70d, 73c [ShS]) Elijah encourages him to reveal the secrets and says (62c), "My words will be written by you."
“Elijah said to me, ‘Rabbi, the word was concealed with the blessed Holy One and revealed in the Academy on High.’ Here it is:

When Concealed of all Concealed\textsuperscript{45} verged on being revealed, it produced at first a single point,\textsuperscript{46} which ascended to become thought. Within, it drew all drawings, graved all engravings,\textsuperscript{47} carving within the concealed holy lamp\textsuperscript{48} a graving of one hidden design, holy of holies, a deep structure emerging from thought, called ים (Mi), Who, origin of structure.\textsuperscript{49} Existent and non-existent, deep and hidden, called by no name but Who.

Seeking to be revealed, to be named, it garbed itself in a splendid, radiant garment and created הָלַא (elleh), these.\textsuperscript{50} הָלַא (Elleh) attained the name: these letters joined with those, culminating in the name שִׁליָת אֱלֹהִים (Elohim).\textsuperscript{51} Until it created הָלַא (Elleh), it did not attain the name שִׁליָת אֱלֹהִים (Elohim).\textsuperscript{52} Based on this mystery, those who sinned with the Golden Calf said "יהוה (Elleh), These, are your gods, O Israel!" (Exodus 32:8).\textsuperscript{53} Just as ים (mi) is combined with הָלַא (Elleh), so the name שִׁליָת אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) is constantly polysemous.\textsuperscript{54} Through this mystery, the universe exists.’

Then Elijah flew off; I did not see him. From him I discovered the word, whose mysterious secret I have demonstrated.”

Rabbi Elazar and all the Companions came and bowed down in front of him. Weeping, they said, “If we have come into the world only to hear this, it is enough.”\textsuperscript{55}

44. Academy on High The Heavenly Academy, where souls of the righteous study Torah with God.
45. Concealed of all Concealed En Se’or Keter, the most hidden recesses of divinity.
46. single point The primordial point of Hokhmah (“Wisdom”), the first emanation.
47. It drew all drawings... The sefirot were prefigured within divine thought before they emerged in the process of emanation.
48. concealed holy lamp Hokhmah.
49. graving of one hidden design... Binah, the origin of the structure of the seven lower sefirot.
50. created הָלַא (elleh), these... Binah emanated the seven lower sefirot, which are less hidden than Binah and therefore referred to as these.
51. these letters joined... שִׁליָת אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) The letters הָלַא (elleh) (these) joined with the letters ים (mi) (who) to form the divine name שִׁליָת אֱלֹהִים (Elohim). See Zohar 2:105a.
52. Until it created... Binah was not called שִׁליָת אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) until She emanated the seven lower sefirot.
53. "יהוה (Elleh), These are your gods..." Their sin was that they separated the lower, more concrete sefirot (יָד [elleh], these) from their mysterious source, Binah (יָד [Mi], Who), and worshiped these alone.
54. constantly polysemous The name Elohim refers not only to Binah, but also to Gevurah and Shekhinah, as well as to angels and human judges. See Moses de León, Sefer ha-Mishqal, 42–43.
55. "If we have come..." Similar exclamations appear in rabbinic literature and often in the Zohar. See Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana 1:3; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 3:11; Qohelet Rabbah on 6:2; Qohelet Zuta 5:17; BT Berakhot 16a, 24b; Shabbat 41a; Zohar 1:148b, 164b, 240a; 2:99a, 121b, 122a, 193b; 3:26a; KP 1:20d.
Rabbi Shim'on said, "So the heavens and their array were created by מָה (Mah), What,56 as is written: When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and stars that You set in place, . . . מְהַ (mah), how, majestic is Your name throughout the earth! Your splendor is celebrated above heaven. (Psalms 8:4, 1). Above heaven,57 to attain the name. For it created a light for its light, one clothed in the other, and it attained a high name. So, In the beginning אֱלֹהָם (Elohim) created (Genesis 1:1), אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) above.58 For מָה (Mah) was not so, is not composed until these letters—ךִּלֵּא (Elleh)—are drawn from above to below and Mother lends Daughter Her garments, though not adorning Her with Her adornments.59 When does She adorn Her fittingly? When all males appear before Her, as is written: [All your males shall appear] before the Sovereign, YHWH (Exodus 23:17).60 This one is called Sovereign, as is said: Behold, the ark of the covenant, Sovereign of all the earth (Joshua 3:11).61 Then the letter י (he) departs and ו (yod) enters, and She adorns Herself in masculine clothing in the presence of every male in Israel.62 Other letters Israel draws from above to this site: סבּ (Elleh), These, I remember (Psalms 42:5).63 "With my mouth I mentioned them, in my yearning I poured out my tears, drawing forth these letters. Then I conduct them from above to the house of Elohim, to be Elohim, like Him."64 With what? With joyous shouts of praise, the festive throng."

56. מָה (Mah), What Shekhinah.
57. Above heaven . . . Heaven refers to Tiferet, above which lies Binah.
58. In the beginning אֱלֹהָם (Elohim) created . . . By emanating the lower sefirot, "a light for its light," Binah attained the name Elohim.
59. מָה (Mah) was not so . . . Shekhinah does not emerge until Binah emanates the seven lower sefirot. Only then can Binah, the Divine Mother, lend Her garments, the lower sefirot, to Her daughter, Shekhinah.
60. All your males . . . All Israelite males are commanded to appear in God’s Temple in Jerusalem three times a year on the pilgrimage festivals: Pesah ("Passover"), Shavuot (Festival of "Weeks"), and Sukkot (Festival of "Booths"). Here the command implies that the masculine power of the sefirot must be drawn down to Shekhinah, the Sovereign. Through the ritual of pilgrimage, Shekhinah is adorned.
61. Behold, the ark . . . Shekhinah is the ark housing the sefirot of Yesod, the covenant.
62. letter י (he) . . . The letter י (he) signifies the feminine; the letter ו (yod), the masculine. When the masculine powers of the sefirot reach Shekhinah, She is transformed from feminine to masculine, from מָה (Mah) to ו (Mi). Then She rules the world.
63. סבּ (Elleh), These I remember The verse continues: and pour out my soul! how I walked with the crowd, conducting them to the house of Elohim with joyous shouts of praise, the festive throng. With the arrival of these letters, Shekhinah also attains the name of אֱלֹהִים (Elohim): מְהַ (Mah) plus סבּ (Elleh). Here the verse describes both the earthly pilgrimage to the Temple and the divine procession of emanation to Shekhinah. The two meanings are linked since the human ritual below stimulates the sefirot above.
64. to be Elohim, like Him So Shekhinah will be Elohim, like Binah. On the masculine nature of Binah, see Zohar 1:3b, 17b, 96a; 2:127b; ZA 72b (Sh5).
Rabbi El’azar said, “My silence assembled a temple above, a temple below.\textsuperscript{65} Indeed, ‘a word is worth one coin; silence, two.’\textsuperscript{66} ‘A word is worth one coin’: what I said, the meaning I aroused. ‘Silence, two’: by holding my silence, two worlds were created, erected as one.”

Rabbi Shim’on said, “From here on, the completion of the verse, as is written: The one who brings forth their array by number (Isaiah 40:26).\textsuperscript{67} These are two rungs, each of which should be inscribed. One is \textit{What}; the other, \textit{Who}. This is above, that is below. The one above is inscribed by the words: \textit{The one who brings forth their array by number}, the one who is known, beyond compare.\textsuperscript{68} Similarly, “The one who brings forth bread from the earth,”\textsuperscript{69} the one who is known, the lower rung,\textsuperscript{70} and all is one. \textit{By number: 600,000}, standing together, generating forces according to their kind, beyond number.\textsuperscript{71} \textit{And calls them each by name}, both the 600,000 and their forces. What does this mean: \textit{by name}? If you say they were called individually by name—not so, for then the verse should read \textit{each by its name}. Rather, as long as this rung had not ascended and was still called \textit{מ (?)} (Mi), \textit{Who}, it did not give birth nor bring forth what was hidden, each according to its kind, though all of them were hidden within. Once it \textit{created} ה\textit{ני} (elleh), \textit{these}, and attained its name, \textit{神} (Elohim), then by the power of this name, it yielded them perfectly. This is the meaning of \textit{calls them each by name}: by its very name, it called forth each and every kind to exist perfectly. Similarly, \textit{See, I have called by name Bezalel} (Exodus 31:2).\textsuperscript{72} I mentioned My name so that Bezalel would attain perfect

\textsuperscript{65} temple above...below The temple above is \textit{Binah}; the one below, \textit{Shekhinah}. See BT \textit{Sanhedrin} 99a: “Rav said, [Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake,] it is as if he built the heavenly and earthly palaces.”

On the heavenly and earthly temples, see \textit{Mekhilta}, \textit{Shirata} 10; \textit{JT Berakhot} 45, 8c; \textit{Tan\textsuperscript{h}uma}, \textit{Vayaqhel} 7; \textit{Pequdei} 1–3; \textit{Shemot Rabbah} 33:4; \textit{Midrash Tehillim} 30:1.

Rabbi El’azar’s silence stimulated his father, Rabbi Shim’on, to reveal mysteries of two realms.

\textsuperscript{66} a word is worth... A proverb cited by Rav Dimi in BT \textit{Megillah} 18a.

\textsuperscript{67} completion of the verse... The verse that Rabbi Shim’on and his son have been expounding continues: \textit{Who brings forth their array by number and calls them each by name: because of His great might and vast power, not one is missing.}

\textsuperscript{68} the one who is known, beyond compare \textit{Binah}. Rabbi Shim’on interprets the opening letter \textit{ת (be) of נוּני (ha-motei), who brings forth, as a definite article (“the one who”) rather than simply a relative pronoun (“who”).}

\textsuperscript{69} The one who brings forth bread...’ The traditional blessing over bread, derived from Psalms 104:14. Again, the \textit{ת (be) is interpreted as a definite article.}

\textsuperscript{70} the one who is known, the lower rung, and all is one \textit{Shekhinah} is modeled on \textit{Binah}, shares Her name (\textit{Elohim}), and is also known as \textit{Earth}.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{71} 600,000...beyond number The number represents the six \textit{sefirot} between \textit{Binah} and \textit{Shekhinah}, which generate innumerable offspring. See \textit{Zohar} 1:21b–22a.

\textsuperscript{72} See, I have called by name Bezalel Referring to the chief artisan of the Tabernacle in the Sinai Desert.
existence. His great might (Isaiah 40:26). What is this? First of rungs, to which all desires ascend, ascending there [2b] secretly. And vast power—mystery of the upper world, which attained the name Elohim, as we have said. Not one is missing—not one of those 600,000 generated by the power of the name. Because not one is missing whenever any of the Children of Israel died as punishment for their sins, the people were counted, and not even one of the 600,000 was lacking, so that everything accorded with the paradigm: just as not one is missing above, so not one is missing below.

Rav Hamnuna Sava said, “We find the letters backward. ב (Bet) first, followed by ב (bet): בראשית (Be-reshit), In the beginning, followed by ב (bet): בראשית (Be-reshit), In the beginning, followed by ב (bet): בראשית (Be-reshit), In the beginning, followed by ב (bet): ראשית (Reshit). Then א (Alef) first, followed by א (Alef): אלוהים (Elohim), followed by א (Alef). The reason is: When the blessed Holy One wished to fashion the world, all the letters were hidden away. For two thousand years before creating the world, the blessed Holy One contemplated them and played with them. As He merged on creating the world, all the letters presented themselves before Him, from last to first.

73. **His great might** This is the continuation of the verse from Isaiah: Because of His great might and vast power, not one is missing; cited above, note 67.

74. **First of rungs...** Either Keter, also known as Ratzon (‘Will, Desire’), or Hokhmah, the first sefirah that can be identified. See Zohar 2:23b.

75. **The upper world** Binah.

76. **Children of Israel...** 600,000... The total number of male Israelites above the age of twenty who left Egypt was approximately 600,000. See Exodus 12:37; Numbers 11:21. The precise total of the first census taken in the Sinai Desert was 603,550 (Exodus 38:26; Numbers 1:46; cf. Numbers 26:51; Levah Tov, Numbers 1:46). The 600,000 Israelites parallel the 600,000 divine forces.

See Mekhilta, Bahodesh 3: “If even one of them had been missing [at Mount Sinai], they would not have been worthy of receiving [the Torah].” Cf. Mekhilta de-Rabbi, on Exodus 19:11; Devarim Rabbah 7:8.

77. **We find the letters backward...** The first two words of the Torah begin with the second letter of the alphabet, ב (bet); the next two words of the Torah begin with the first letter, א (Alef).

78. **hidden away** Before Creation, the letters were concealed within the divine mind and arranged in reverse order.

79. **For two thousand years...** See Bereshit Rabbah 8:2: “Rabbi Shim’on son of Lakish said, The Torah preceded the creation of the world by two thousand years.”

80. **all the letters presented themselves before Him...** A similar story appears in Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Agiva, Version 2 (Battei Midrashot, 2:396–404); Midrash Asaret ha-Dibberot (Beit ha-Midrash, 1:62–63); Midrash Shir ha-Shirim (ed. L. Greenhut) 521; Zohar 1205b; ZH 88c–d (MhN, Rut); TZ, Haqdamah, 16a. The Zohar draws primarily on Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Agiva. See Michael Oron, in Mehgerei Yershulayim be-Malashevet Yisra’el 3 (1984): 97–109.
“The letter נ (tav) entered first of all. She said, ‘Master of the worlds, may it please You to create the world by me, for I complete Your seal: רמם (emet), truth’—and You are called Truth. It is fitting for the King of Truth to begin with a letter of truth and to create the world by me.’

“The blessed Holy One replied, ‘You are seemly and worthy, but not deserving to initiate Creation, since you are destined to be marked on the foreheads of the faithful who fulfilled the Torah from א (alef) to נ (tav), and by your mark they will die. Furthermore you are the seal of ל (mavet), death. So you do not deserve to serve as the instrument of Creation.’ She immediately departed.

“The letter ש (shin) came before Him. She said, ‘Master of the worlds, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me You are named שֵׁש (Shaddai), and it is fitting to create the world by a holy name.’

“He replied, ‘You are seemly, you are good, and you are true, but since letters of deceit take you as their accomplice, I do not wish to create the world by you. For a lie cannot exist unless שֵׁש (qot-resh) take you.’ So whoever wants to tell a lie will first lay a foundation of truth and then construct the lie. For ש (shin) is a letter of truth, a true letter of the Patriarchs, who were united in it; רמם (qot-resh) are letters that appear on the evil side. In order to survive, they entangle the letter ש (shin), forming שמ (qesher), conspiracy. Seeing this, she left His presence.

81. Your seal: רמם (emet), “truth” According to Rabbi Hanina (BT Shabbat 55a), God’s seal is רמם (emet), “truth,” the final letter of which is נ (tav).

82. You are called Truth See Jeremiah 10:1: רמם (ויהיה) is the God of truth.

83. destined to be marked… See Ezekiel 9:3–4: יז [רמם (ויהיה)] called to the man dressed in linen with the scribe’s kit at his waist, and רמם (ויהיה) said to him, “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark [רמם (tav)] on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over all the abominations being committed in it.” See Greenberg, Ezekiel, 177. In the old Hebrew script, the נ (tav) was shaped like an X, the simplest mark. Its purpose in Ezekiel was to distinguish the righteous from the rest of the population, but according to Rabbi Aha son of Rabbi Hanina (BT Shabbat 55a), even those marked were killed, since their silence in the face of the wicked implicated them.

84. seal of ל (mavet), “death” The word ל (mavet) ends with the letter נ (tav).

85. letters of deceit…רמם (qot-resh)… The word ש (sheqer), “lie,” begins with ש (shin) and continues: רמם (qot-resh). See BT Shabbat 104a; Judah ben Barzillai, Parush Sefer Yetzirah, 146.

86. whoever wants to tell a lie… See Rashi on Numbers 13:27, who paraphrases BT Shabbat 35a; Zohar 2:235b, 264a; 3:161a.

87. ש (shin) is a letter of truth… The three prongs of the ש (shin) stand for the three Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who symbolize the triad of sefirot: Hesed, Gevurah, and Tiferet. See Zohar 1:23b (TZ); 2:204a.

The letter א (tsadi) entered. She said to Him, 'Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for יִשְׂרָאֵל (tsaddiqm), the righteous, are sealed by me, and You, who are called יִשְׂרָאֵל (tsadik), Righteous, are signified by me, as is written: For יְהוָה (YHVH) is יִשְׂרָאֵל (tsadik) —loving righteousness (Psalms 11:7). It is fitting to create the world by me!' He replied, 'א (tsadi), you are יִשְׂרָאֵל (tsaddiq), but you should remain hidden—not so revealed—so as not to provide the world a pretext.' How so? She is א (non). א (Yod) from the name of the holy covenant comes and rides on her, is united with her. This is the mystery: When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces. So the א (Yod) faces backward, like this: יִשְׂרָאֵל (Shaddai). It looked upward like this: א. It looked downward like this: א. The blessed Holy One said to her, 'Turn back, for I intend to split you and transfigure you face-to-face, but you will arise elsewhere.' She left His presence and departed.

89. She is א (non) ... The letter א (tsadi) consists of א (non) and א (Yod). See Bahir 42 (61); Sefer ha-Temunah, 2, 21a. The א (non) symbolizes Shekhinah, the feminine (ריה) [requevah]. The א (Yod) symbolizes Yosod, the divine phallus, who is called "covenant." The mark of the covenant of circumcision is pictured as the smallest of the Hebrew letters. In Tanhuma, Tsav 14, Shemini 8, this mark is identified with the א (Yod) of the divine name יִשְׂרָאֵל (Shaddai). A German Hasidic tradition identifies the mark with the א of יְהוָה (YHVH).

See Zohar 2:13a, 56a, 93a-b; 2:16a, 216b; 3:42a (IR), 215b, 220a, 3:56a (RM); Wolfson, in JQR 78 (1987): 77–112; idem, Circle in the Square, 29–48. Liebes (Studies, 154–58) suggests that the א (tsadi) alludes to Jesus.

90. two faces א (Da partuš) ... See Bereshit Rabbah 8:11: 'Rabbi Yirmiyyah son of El'azar said, 'When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him androgynous, as is said: Male and female He created them (Genesis 1:27).' Rabbi Shemu'el son of Nahamani said, 'When the blessed Holy One created Adam, He created him with two faces. Then He sawed him and gave him two backs, one on this side and one on that.'

See BT Berakhot 61a; Eruv 18a; Plato, Symposium 189d–191d; Zohar 1:13b, 47a; 2:55a, 35a, 44b; Matt. Zohar, 217.

91. א (Yod) faces backward ... This reflects the Sephardic practice of writing the א (tsadi). See Scholem; Friedman, Tsidqat ha-Tsadik, 41–55; Mashi-Zahav, Qovets Sifrei Setam, intro, 36: 8, 149–52, 239–40; Havlin, in Alei Sefer 12 (1986): 13–19; Ta-Shma, Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar, 65, 139, nn. 163–66.

92. not turned face-to-face ... Initially the union between the masculine and feminine aspects of God was back-to-back and thus incomplete. See Zohar 2:176b (SIT); 3:292b (IZ); BT Bava Batra 99a. This incomplete union is symbolized by the configuration of the א (tsadik). The א (tsadi) must remain hidden so that this secret will not become widely known and "provide the world a pretext" to impugn the divine union.

93. It looked upward ... downward ... Trying to face its partner. See Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, 2:564.

94. you will arise elsewhere ... א (Yod) and א (non) will face one another not here but in another letter: א (tet). See KP.
“The letter פ (pe) entered. She said to Him, ‘Master of the worlds, may it please You to create the world by me, for I signify פיiras (purqena), the redemption, that You will someday bring to the world, also called פדו (pedut), deliverance. It is fitting to create the world by me!’

“He replied, ‘You are seemly, but you signify hidden transgression, like a serpent striking, then tucking its head into its body.’ 95 so one who sins bows his head, stretching out his hands.’

“Similarly י (ayin) stands for יטש (avon), iniquity. Although she said, ‘I imply יטש (anavah), humility,’ the blessed Holy One replied, ‘I will not create the world by you.’ She left His presence.

“The letter ס (samekh) entered. She said to Him, ‘Master of the worlds, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me You are called סומך (semikha), support, exists for those who fall, as is written: הוי סומך (Samekh YHVH), YHVH supports all who fall (Psalms 145:14).’

“He replied, ‘So you are needed where you are; do not move! If you leave, what would happen to the fallen, who depend on you?’ She immediately left His presence.

“The letter נ (nun) entered. She said to Him, ‘Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me You are called נואר (Nora), Awesome, in praises (Exodus 15:11). By me, the praise of the righteous is called נוא (navah), comely (Psalms 33:1).’

“He replied, ‘נ (Nun), return to your place, for because of you ס (samekh) returned to her place. 96 Depend on her.’ She returned immediately, leaving His presence.

“The letter מ (mem) entered. She said to him, ‘Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me You are called מלך (Melek), King.’

“He replied, ‘Certainly so, but I will not create the world by you, since the world needs a king. Return to your place, you along with נ (lamed) and ק (kaf), for the world should not be without a king.’

“At that moment the letter כ (kaf) descended from His throne of glory. 98 Trembling, she said to Him, ‘Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for I am Your כבוד (Kavod), “Glory.”’

95. hidden transgression… The form of the letter פ (pe) resembles someone trying to hide his head. See Zohar 5:119b.

96. because of you… נ (Nun) stands for נוא (navah), the “fallen.”

97. נ (lamed) and ק (kaf) The other two letters in the word מלך (melek), “king,” which precede the letter מ (mem) in the alphabet.

98. letter כ (kaf) descended… The final ק (kaf) in the word מלך (melek) was eliminated, but now the regular כ (kaf) approaches God.
"When י (kaf) descended from the throne of glory, 200,000 worlds trembled, the throne trembled, and all the worlds verged on collapse. The blessed Holy One said to her, 'י, כ (Kaf, kaf), what are you doing here? I will not create the world by you. Return to your place, for you imply חל לו (kelayah), destruction—a decree of destruction (Isaiah 10:23). Return to your throne and stay there.' She thereupon left His presence and returned to her place.

“The letter י (yod) entered. She said to Him, 'Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for I am the beginning of the holy Name.' It is fitting for You to create the world by me!

‘He replied, 'It is enough for you to be engraved in Me, inscribed in Me. I desire you entirely. Ascend! You should not be uprooted from My name.'

“The letter ו (tet) entered. She said to Him, 'Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me You are called רש יבש (tor veh-yashar), good and upright (Psalms 25:8).'

‘He replied, 'I will not create the world by you, for your goodness is concealed and hidden within you,’ as is written: How abundant is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those in awe of You (Psalms 31:20). Since it is hidden within you, it plays no part in this world that I am about to create, but rather in the world to come. Furthermore, because your goodness is hidden within you, the gates of the Temple will sink, as is written: Her gates תעש (tave'u), have sunk, into the earth (Lamentations 2:9). Further, facing you is ה (het), and when you join together you spell עט (hets), sin.' So these two letters are not inscribed in the holy tribes. She immediately left His presence.

“The letter ז (zayin) entered. She said to Him, 'Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me Your children observe the Sabbath, as is written: זכר (Zakhor), Remember, the Sabbath day, to hallow it (Exodus 20:8).'

99. beginning… The first letter of זכר (YHVH).
100. hidden within you The point at the upper right of the ו (tet) is turned inward. See Zohar 130b.
101. rather in the world to come See BT Hagbah 12a (cited above, note 10); Bereshit Rabbah 35:4; 45:3; Shemot Rabbah 35:1; Tanhuma, Shemini 9; Bahir 147–98 (147); Zohar 131b–32a, 45b–46a, 47a; 2:127a, 148b–149a, 220a–b; 3:88a, 173b.
102. facing you is ה (het) The letter preceding ו (tet) in the alphabet.
104. these letters are not inscribed… The letters ה (het) and ו (tet) do not appear in the names of the twelve tribes, which were engraved on the jewels of the breastplate worn by the high priest. See BT Yoma 73b; JT Yoma 77. 44c; Zohar 2:152a, 230a; 3:188b.
“He replied, ‘I will not create the world by you, for you imply war—a sharp sword and a spear for battle, like a ₯ (nun).’ She immediately left His presence.

The letter ₯ (vav) entered. She said to Him, ‘Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for I am a letter of Your name.’

“He replied, ‘ جاء (Vav), it is enough for you and ₯ (he) to be letters of My name, included in the mystery of My name, engraved and carved in My name. I will not create the world by either of you.’

The letters ₯ (dalet) and ₡ (gimel) entered and made the same request. He replied to them as well. ‘It is enough for you to be with each other, since the poor will never cease from the world and need to be treated kindly. ₯ (Dalet) is poor; ₡ (Gimel) יְשַׁלֵּם (gome) renders, goodness to her. Do not separate from one another! It is enough for one of you to sustain the other.’

The letter ב (bet) entered. She said to Him, ‘Master of the world, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me You are blessed above and below.’

“The blessed Holy One replied, ‘Indeed, by you I will create the world. You will be the beginning of Creation.’

“The letter ק (alef) stood and did not enter. The blessed Holy One said to her, ‘ק, ק (Aleph, alef), why do you not enter My presence like all the other letters?’

“She replied, ‘Master of the world! Because I saw all the letters leaving Your presence fruitlessly. What could I do there? Furthermore, look, [3b] You have given this enormous gift to the letter ב (bet), and it is not fitting for the exalted King to take back a gift He has given to his servant and give it to another!’

“The blessed Holy One said, ‘ק, ק (Aleph, alef)! Although I will create the world with the letter ב (bet), you will be the first of all the letters. Only through you do I become one. With you all counting begins and every deed in the world. No union is actualized except by ק (alef).’

“The blessed Holy One fashioned high, large letters and low, small letters. So, ב, ב (Bet, bet): בראשה ברא (Be-reshit bara); ק, ק (Aleph, alef): אלוהים אֲחָד

105. like a ₯ (nun) Like the straight line of a ₯ (final nun). The word ₯ (zayin) means “weapon.”

106. letter of Your name The third letter of the name יְהֹוָה (YHWH).

107. poor will never cease… See Deuteronomy 15:11.

108. ₯ (Dalet) is poor… The letter ₯ (dalet) signifies יְהֹוָה (dalet), “poor.” See BT Shabbat 104a: יְהֹוָה אלֹהִים יִשְׂרָאֵל (Gimel dalet: gomei daliim). Render kindness to the poor.”

109. By me, You are blessed… ב (Bet) stands for רָבָר (berakha), “blessing.” See JT Hagigah 211, 77c; Bereshit Rabbah 1:10; Midrash ha-Gadol, Genesis 21, 10.

110. Only through you do I become one… The ק (alef) stands for the number one and also for Keter, the first sefirah. The word יְהֹוָה (ehad), “one,” begins with ק (alef).

111. high, large letters and low, small letters The initial letters of the first four words of the Torah are ב, ב (bet, bet), then
(Bohim et). Letters above and letters below. They were all as one, from the upper world and the lower world.

Rabbi Judai said, “What is רָאָשִׁית (Be-reshit), In the beginning. (Be-reshit)? With Wisdom.¹¹² This is the Wisdom on which the world stands—through which one enters hidden, high mysteries. Here were engraved six vast, supernal dimensions, from which everything emerges, from which issued six springs and streams, flowing into the immense ocean.¹¹³ This is 바로 שית (bara shit), created six,¹¹⁴ created from here. Who created them? The unmentioned, the hidden unknown.”¹¹⁵

Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yose were walking on the way. As they reached the site of a certain field, Rabbi Hiyya said to Rabbi Yose, “What you have said— 바로 שית (bara shit)—is certainly true, for there are six supernal days in the Torah, not more; the others are concealed.¹¹⁶ But in the Secrets of Creation we have discovered this:

“The holy hidden one”¹¹⁷ engraved an engraving in the innards of a recess, punctuated by a thrust point.¹¹⁸ He engraved that engraving, hiding it away, like one who locks up everything under a single key, which locks everything

κ, ι (alef, alef). Although the first word, רָאָשִׁית (Be-reshit), does open with a large ב (bet), the emphasis here is not on the size of the letters but rather their origin. The first of each pair derives from בֵּית (Binah), the higher world; the second of each from שֶׁקֶחֶית, the lower world.

See Zohar 115b; 2:13a, 174a, 180b; 3:2a, 220a; ZH 66c (ShS), 74c (ShS).

112. רָאָשִׁית (Be-reshit)? With Wisdom See Targum Yerushalmi (frag.), Genesis 1:1: “With wisdom God created.” Wisdom (Hokhmah) is the second seiráh, the primordial point of emanation.

The identification of רָאָשִׁית (reshit), beginning, with Wisdom appears widely. See Wollstonecraft, Philo, 1:242–45, 266–69; Bereit Rabbah 11; Azriel of Gerona, Paarith ha-Aggadot, 85; Nahmanides on Genesis 1:1; Zohar 1:2a, 15a, 16b, 20a, 145a; Moshe de León, Sheqel ha-Qodesh, 21–22 (25–26); Scholem, Major Trends, 391, n. 80.

113. six vast, supernal dimensions… Within Hokhmah, the six seiráh from Hesed to Yesod are etched, subsequently emerging and flowing to the ocean of Shekhinah. See Sefer Yetzira 1:13.

114. 바로 שית (bara shit)… The word רָאָשִׁית (Be-reshit) is divided into two and read as 바로 אֶש (bara shit), “created six.” See Midrash ha-Gadol, Genesis 1:1, 11–12; Sefer Rabbah di-Yeshuat, 1 (Ravbi Midrashot, 1:19), where it is said that the world was created by six letters (the divine names ז y and Z כ y); BT Sukkah 49a; Zohar 115b, 39b.

115. The unmentioned, the hidden unknown The hidden source of emanation, Ein Sof or Keter; the unnamed subject of the verb 바로 (bara), “created.”

116. six supernal days… the others… The mystical Torah, Tiferet, includes the six seiráh from Hesed to Yesod, the six primordial days of Creation, whereas the higher seiráh are concealed.

117. holy hidden one Apparently Keter. See Zohar 110a; 356b.

118. recess… thrust point Binah is the recess, or womb, penetrated by the primordial point of Hokhmah.
within a single palace. Although everything is hidden within that palace, the essence of everything lies in that key, which closes and opens. Within that palace lie hidden treasures, one greater than the other. Within that palace stand gates built cryptically, fifty of them. Carved into four sides, they were forty-nine. One gate has no side. No one knows whether it is above or below; it is shut. In those gates is one lock and one precise place for inserting the key, marked only by the impress of the key, known only to the key. Concerning this mystery it is written: בָּרָא אלהים בַּר אֶרֶץ (Bar-eshet bara Elohim), In the beginning God created. בָּרָא אֶרֶץ (Bara), created, is always concealed, closing, not opening.”

Rabbi Yose said, “Certainly so! I heard the Holy Lamp say so, that בָּרָא (bara) is a concealed word, closing, not opening. As long as the world was locked within the word בָּרָא (bara), it was not, did not exist. Enveloping as a path unknown to any vulture (Job 28:7).

121. Six gates… The six sefirot hidden within Hokhmah. See Zohar 2:176b (SD3).

122. revealed word…concealed word… The word word בָּרָא (Bar-eshet) contains two words: בָּרָא (bara), “created,” referring to the hidden mystery of creation, and אֶרֶץ (eshet), “six,” referring to the revelation of the six sefirot.

Yehuda Liebes argues that the insistence on the concealed nature of בָּרָא (bara) alludes to a different pronunciation and meaning: בָּרָה (bara), “son,” the Divine Son. See Zohar 2:176b (SD3); and Liebes, Studies in the Zohar, 146–52.

124. Holy Lamp הַמַּרְאֶשׁ הַקְּדִישָׁה (Batsina Qadisha), the Zoharic title of Rabbi Shim'on son of Yohai. See Zohar 1:4a, 156a, 197b; 3:171a; ZH 85d (MnN, Rut).

See 2 Samuel 2:117; Bereshit Rabbah 85:4; BT Ketubbot 17a, where Rabbi Abbahu is called: מְרוֹאֶשׁ בַּר נְבָרָא (Batsina di-Nhora), "Lamp of Light"; and Berakhot 28b, where Rabban Yohanan son of Zakkai is called נְרִי יִשְׁרָאֵל (Ner Isra'el), "Lamp of Israel."

125. world The lower sefirot, which constitute the pattern of all the worlds.
everything was תוהו (tohu), chaos,\textsuperscript{126} and as long as תוהו (tohu) reigned, the world was not, did not exist. When did that key open gates? When was it fit to be fruitful, to generate offspring? When Abraham arrived,\textsuperscript{127} as is written: 

\textit{These are the generations of heaven and earth (be-h Rib b’re’am)}, when they were created (Genesis 2:4), and we have learned: אבראהם (be-Araham), through Abraham.\textsuperscript{128} Whereas everything was concealed in the word אבר (bara), now the letters were transposed and rendered fruitful. A pillar emerged, generating offspring: אבר (ever), organ—Holy Foundation on which the world stands.\textsuperscript{129}

When אבר (ever) was inscribed in the word אבר (bara), the supernal concealed one inscribed another inscription for its glorious name. This is מאיה (Mi vara elleh), Who created these (Isaiah 40:26).\textsuperscript{130} The holy blessed name אבר (Mah), What, was also inscribed.\textsuperscript{131} Out of אבר (bara) it generated אבר (ever), inscribing אלוהי (elleh) at one end and אבר (ever) at the other.\textsuperscript{132} Holy concealed one! אלהי (Elah) exists, אבר (ever) exists. As one was completed, so was the other. In אר (ever) it engraved ה (he); in אלהי (elleh), י (yod). Letters were aroused to complete one side and the other. It produced מ ב (two mems), moving one to this side, one to that. The holy name was completed—becoming אלהים (Elohim)—and the name אבר (Avraham) as well.\textsuperscript{44} As one was completed, so was the other.\textsuperscript{133} Then life was generated and the complete

\textsuperscript{126} תוהו (tohu), chaos Hokhmah, the primordial divine substance representing pure potential, corresponding to the Greek philosophical concept of \textit{hyle}, primordial matter.

\textsuperscript{127} When Abraham arrived Abraham symbolizes the sekhah of Hesed, first of the lower sekhah emanating from Binah.

\textsuperscript{128} אבראהם (be-Araham) ... According to Rabbi Yehoshua’s son of Korah (Bereishit Rabbah 12:9), רRib b’re’am (be-h Rib b’re’am), when they were created, is an anagram of אבר (be-Araham), “through Abraham,” indicating the world was created for his sake.

See Zohar 186b, 91a, 105b, 135b, 230b; 3:137a.

\textsuperscript{129} Whereas everything was concealed ... אבר (ever) ... The letters of the word אבר (bara) were rearranged into אבר (ever), which not only forms the beginning of אבר (Avraham) but also signifies the male “organ,” Yesod (“Foundation”), the divine phallic and cosmic pillar.

\textsuperscript{130} מאיה (Mi vara elleh) ... Binah, known as מאיה (Ma‘), Who (see above, pages XX27–XX62), emanated אלהים (elleh), the lower sekhah. The transition from מאיה (Ma‘) to אלהי (elleh) corresponds to the transposition of אבר (bara) into אבר (ever).

\textsuperscript{131} מא (Mah), What ... Shekhinah is known as מא (mah), What (see above, pages XX30–XX62). When מא (mah) was added to אבר (ever), the name אבר (Avraham) was formed.

\textsuperscript{132} אלהי (elleh) at one end and אבר (ever) at the other The verse These are the generations of heaven and earth, when they were created contains אלהי (elleh), These, at one end and אבר (ever) (included in the word רRib b’re’am (be-h Rib b’re’am), when they were created, at the other.

\textsuperscript{133} As one was completed ... The letters ה (he) and מ (mem) were added to אבר (ever) to complete the name אבר (Avraham); the letters י (yod) and מ (mem) were added to אלהי (elleh) to complete the name אלהים (Elohim).
Name emerged, unlike before, as is written: *These are the generations of heaven and earth* (be-hibbare’am), *when they were created.* All remained suspended until the name of Abraham was created. Once that name was completed, the holy name was completed, as the verse concludes: *on the day that* Elohim (יהוה אלהים) *made earth and heaven* (*Genesis* 2:4).”

Rabbi Ḥiyya prostrated himself on the ground, kissing the dust and weeping. He cried out, ‘Dust, dust, how stubborn you are, how impudent! All delights of the eye decay in you. All pillars of light in the world you consume and pulverize. How insolent you are! The Holy Lamp* has illumined the world, majestic ruler, prince whose merit sustains the world, decays in you. O Rabbi Shim’on, radiance of the lamp, radiance of the worlds, you decompose in the dust, yet you subsist and guide the world!’”

For a moment he was shocked, and then exclaimed, ‘Dust, dust, do not boast! The pillars of the world will not be surrendered to you. Rabbi Shim’on has not decayed in you!”

Still weeping, Rabbi Ḥiyya rose and walked on together with Rabbi Yose. From that day on, he fasted forty days to envision Rabbi Shim’on. “Rabbi Ḥiyya (according to another version: Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Kor-hah [Bereishit Rabbah 12:9] referred to above: be-misraim) is an anagram of be-raham (be-Araham).

35. *on the day* … *Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Kor-hah* (be-hibbare’am) *is an anagram of be-raham* (be-Araham). In rabbinic literature these two names represent, respectively, the divine qualities of compassion and justice. See Sifrei, Deuteronomy 26; Bereishit Rabbah 12:15; 33:3; and 13:3, where יהוה אלהים is called “a complete name.” CL, *Zohar* 12a, 48b; 2:161a, 229a; 3:136b (IR); *ZaI* 70d (SHS).

36. Holy Lamp … Rabbi Shim’on, who had recently died; see above, note 124. On the following passage see Wineman, *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*, 19–32.

37. yet you subsist… The soul of Rabbi Shim’on endures in the Garden of Eden, and his spiritual power still guides the world.

38. has not decayed… The bodies of the righteous do not decay. See BT Bava Metzi’a 84b, concerning Rabbi El’azar son of Rabbi Shim’on.

39. he fasted forty days to envision Rabbi Shim’on … See Qohelet Rabbah on 9:10: “Rabbi Assi fasted for thirty days to envision Rabbi Ḥiyya Rabbah but did not see him. He was told, ‘You are not worthy.’ He said to them, ‘Show him to me, and let happen what happens!’ He saw his steps [the steps of Rabbi Ḥiyya’s throne in heaven], and his eyes grew dim.” See *JT Kil’ayim* 9:4, 32b; Lerner, in *Sinai* 59 (1966): 20–21.

In the *Zohar* Rabbi Ḥiyya is no longer the saint whose appearance is sought by fasting, but rather the devotee who seeks. Rabbi
told, “You are not entitled to see him.” He wept and fasted another forty days. In a vision he was shown Rabbi Shim’on and his son Rabbi E’azar, studying the word that Rabbi Yose had spoken, with thousands listening. Meanwhile he noticed many huge celestial wings, which Rabbi Shim’on and his son Rabbi E’azar mounted, and they soared to the Academy of Heaven. All those wings waited for them. He saw them returning, their splendor renewed, and they shone more brilliantly than the dazzle of the sun.

Rabbi Shim’on opened, saying, “Let Rabbi Hyya enter and see how the blessed Holy One intends to rejuvenate the faces of the righteous in the time to come.” Happy is one who enters here without shame. Happy is one who stands in that world! as a sturdy pillar.”

Rabbi Hyya saw himself entering. Rabbi E’azar rose together with the other pillars sitting there. Embarrassed, he drew back, then entered and sat at the feet of Rabbi Shim’on. A voice issued: “Lower your eyes, do not raise your head, do not gaze!” Lowering his eyes, he saw a light shining in the distance. The voice returned: “O high, hidden, concealed ones, open-eyed, roaming the

Shim’on, who has replaced him as the spiritual hero, welcomes him to heaven.

On Mount Sinai Moses fasted for forty days (Exodus 34:28). According to Rabbi Tanhum son of Hanilai (Midrash Mishlei 1:1), Solomon did the same “so that God would give him a spirit of wisdom and understanding.” See BT Bava Metzia 85a, where Rabbi Yosef is said to have fasted forty fasts, then forty more, then forty more, in order to ensure that Torah not depart from him. On the following page (85b) we read of Rabbi Hyya’s glorious state in heaven, a passage which influences the Zohar’s description here of Rabbi Shim’on and Rabbi E’azar: “Rabbi Ḥaviva said, ‘Rabbi Ḥaviva son of Surmaki told me: ‘I saw one of the rabbis whom Elijah used to frequent. In the morning his eyes were lovely, but in the evening they looked as if they had been burnt by fire. I asked him, ‘What is this?’ He told me that he had asked Elijah, ‘Show me the [departed] rabbis as they ascend to the Heavenly Academy.’ He [Elijah] replied: ‘You can gaze at all of them except for the carriage of Rabbi Hyya, at which you cannot gaze.’ What is their sign? [How can I distinguish between them?]’ All are accompanied by angels as they ascend and descend, except for Rabbi Hyya’s carriage, which ascends and descends on its own.’” Unable to restrain myself, I gazed at it. Two sparks of fire shot forth and struck that man [i.e., me], blinding him. The next day I went and prostrated myself upon his [Rabbi Hyya’s] grave, crying out, ‘Your mishnah is my mishnah,” and I was healed.”

On the special relationship between Rabbi Hyya and Rabbi Shim’on, see Zohar 2:14a (MdmN). On weeping as a technique for attaining a vision, see Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives, 75–88.

140. the word that Rabbi Yose had spoken. Rabbi Yose had transmitted a teaching of Rabbi Shim’on’s concerning be-reshit bara. See above, pages XX124–XX135.

141. wings. Of angels, or “winged beings.”

142. rejuvenate the faces. See Qohelet Rabbah on 1:7: “Rabbi Yirmeyah son of Rabbi E’azar said, ‘In the time to come, the blessed Holy One will rejuvenate the light of the faces of the righteous, as is said: But may those that love him be as the sun going forth in its might (Judges 5:31).”

143. in that world. On earth.
entire world, gaze and see! O low, sleeping ones, close-eyed, awake! Who among you turns darkness into light, bitter into sweet before arriving here? Who among you awaits each day the light that shines when the King visits the doe and is glorified—declared King of all kings of the world? Whoever does not await this each day in that world has no portion here."

Meanwhile he noticed many of the Companions surrounding all those erect pillars, and he saw them being raised to the Academy of Heaven—some ascending, some descending. Above them all, he saw the Master of Wings approaching. When he arrived, he solemnly swore that he had heard from behind the curtain that the King remembers the doe who lies in the dust and visits Her every day. At that moment He kicks the 390 firmaments, which all

144. O high, hidden, concealed ones... Referring to the angels or perhaps the souls of the righteous. See ZH 76d (MihN, Rut); and Zechariah 4:10: the eyes of YHVH roaming the whole earth.

145. O low, sleeping ones... Human beings.

146. darkness into light, bitter into sweet By acting righteously on earth.

147. visits the doe Joins Shekhinah and redeems Her from exile. The Zohar identifies Shekhinah with the doe of love (Psalms 51:9) and the doe of dawn (Psalms 115:1). See Zohar 2:7b; 3:21b, 25b; JT Berakhot 11:2c.

148. Whoever does not await... See BT Shabbat 31a: "Rava said, 'When a human is led in for judgment, he is asked, 'Were you honest in your business dealings, did you set aside time for Torah, did you generate new life, did you await salvation, did you engage in the dialectics of wisdom, did you understand one thing from another?""

149. saw them being raised to the Academy... See the passage from BT Bava Metz'ia 85b, cited above, note 139. Again, what is said in rabbinic literature about Rabbi Hiyya is transferred here to Rabbi Shim'on.

150. Master of Wings (Marzi de-gadpei). Apparently Metatron, the chief angel. Cf. Proverbs 1:27; Ecclesiastes 11:20 (in both of which the corresponding Hebrew expression means simply "a winged creature," "a bird"); BT Shabbat 49a (where the title is applied to Elisha, who wore netilin despite a Roman prohibition). Elsewhere in the Zohar, the expression means simply "angel." See 1:44a, 92a, 152a, 2:113a, 122b; 3:80b. At times (e.g., above; 2:171a), קָטָר (gadpin), "wings," itself means "angels," so "the Master of wings" would be the chief angel.

Metatron is often associated with the Heavenly Academy. See BT Avoth Zarah 3b; Bereshit Rabbati 5:24; Sefer Hanokh (Beit ha-Midrash, 2:15–16); Seder Gan Eden (Beit ha-Midrash, 3:34–35); Zohar 2:169b; ZH 36b (ST).

In Targum Qohlet 10:20 and Ma'ayan Hokhmah (Beit ha-Midrash, 60), Elijah is identified as "Master of Wings." See BT Bava Metz'ia 85b, a passage which influences the Zohar here (cited above, note 139): "He [Rabbi Hova] had asked Elijah, Show me the [departed] rabbis as they ascend to the Heavenly Academy."

151. behind the curtain The curtain concealing God from the world. See BT Ḥagigah 15a; Ma'ayan Hokhmah (Beit ha-Midrash, 60).

152. He kicks the 390 firmaments See Derekh Erets Rabbah, 2, 56a: "He is one and dwelleth in 390 firmaments." The gimatriyya of שמים (shanayim), "heaven," is 390.

On kicking the firmament, see BT Berakhot 59a; Zohar 1:231a; 2:195b–196a; ZH 53b.
tremble and quake [4b] before Him. He sheds tears over this,\textsuperscript{153} and those tears of bubbling fire fall into the vast ocean. From those tears the Prince of the Ocean\textsuperscript{154} emerges—by them he is sustained. And he hallows the name of the Holy King, agreeing to swallow up all the waters of Creation and absorb them when all the nations gather against the holy people,\textsuperscript{155} so that the waters will dry up and they will pass through on dry land.\textsuperscript{156}

Meanwhile he\textsuperscript{157} heard a voice proclaiming, "Make way, make way—for King Messiah is coming to the Academy of Rabbi Shim'on!" For all the righteous present there are heads of academies, and those academies are designated there; and all members of each academy ascend from the Academy here\textsuperscript{158} to the Academy of Heaven. The Messiah visits all those academies, setting his seal on the Torah issuing from the mouths of the rabbis.\textsuperscript{159} At that moment the Messiah arrived, adorned by the heads of the academies with celestial crowns. At that moment all the Companions rose and Rabbi Shim'on rose, his light radiating to the vault of heaven.

He said to him,\textsuperscript{160} "Happy are you, Rabbi, for your Torah ascends in 370 lights,\textsuperscript{161} each and every light refracting into 613 senses,\textsuperscript{162} ascending and bathing in rivers of pure balsam.\textsuperscript{163} The blessed Holy One sets His seal on the

\textsuperscript{153} sheds tears over this Over the exile of Shekhirah. See BT Berakhot 59a: "When the blessed Holy One remembers His children, who are plunged in suffering among the nations of the world, He sheds two tears into the Great Sea, and His voice resounds from one end of the world to the other."

See Zohar 2:9a, 19a-b (MhN), 19b; 3:72a-b; Seder Gan Eden (Beit ha-Midrash, 3:33).

\textsuperscript{154} Prince of the Ocean Apparently Leviathan, mentioned below, page XX68.

\textsuperscript{155} to swallow up all the waters... See Tanhuma, Haqqat 1, and BT Bava Batra 74b (in the name of Rav), where God commands the Prince of the Ocean to swallow the chaotic waters of creation. When he refuses, God kicks and slays him. Here, the prince obeys the divine command.

On the parallel between the waters and the nations, see Avot de-Rabbi Natan A, 35, where both gatherings (of the water and of the nations) are peaceful. Cf. Zohar 1:192a; Wineman, Mystic Tales from the Zohar, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{156} pass through on dry land Recalling the crossing of the Red Sea. See Micah 7:15:

As in the days when You went forth from the land of Egypt, I will show him wonders. Cf. Exodus 14:21-22; Isaiah 11:15-16; Vayiqra Rabbah 27:4.

\textsuperscript{157} he Rabbi Hyya.

\textsuperscript{158} the Academy here In the Garden of Eden.

\textsuperscript{159} setting his seal... Endorsing their teachings. See Zohar 3:73a; ZH 80b (MhN, Rut); BT Hagigah 15b. The image of sealing Torah originates in Isaiah 8:16: Bind up the testimony, seal Torah among my disciples.

\textsuperscript{160} He said to him The Messiah said to Rabbi Shim'on.

\textsuperscript{161} 370 lights Apparently the number 300 signifies the three highest se'erot, while the number 70 represents the seven lower se'erot emanating from them. See OF, Zohar 2:14a-b (MhN); 3:128b (IR). KP reads: 390, corresponding to the 390 firmaments.

\textsuperscript{162} 613 senses Corresponding to the 613 mitzvot of the Torah. See Zohar 3:128a (IR).

\textsuperscript{163} pure balsam Thirteen rivers of balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. See BT Ta'anit 25a; Bereshit Rabbah
Torah of your academy, and of the academy of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and of the academy of Ahiyah of Shiloh. I have not come to set my seal on what issues from your academy. Rather, the Master of Wings has come here, for I know he enters no academy but yours. Then Rabbi Shim'on told him the oath that the Master of Wings had sworn. The Messiah began trembling and cried aloud. The heavens trembled, the vast ocean trembled, Leviathan trembled, and the world verged on overturning. At that moment, he noticed Rabbi Hiyya sitting at the feet of Rabbi Shim'on. He said, “Who placed a human here, clothed in the garb of that world?”

Rabbi Shim'on answered, “This is Rabbi Hiyya, radiance of the lamp of Torah!”

The Messiah said, “Let him be gathered in, together with his sons, so that they become members of your academy.”

Rabbi Shim'on said, “Let him be granted time.”

62:2. In the Zohar (2:127a; 3:181a), the rivers of balsam are the fragrant flow of emanation from Briah to Shehinah.

164. Hezekiah ... King of Judah toward the end of the eighth century B.C.E. According to rabbinic tradition, Hezekiah was extremely devoted to the study and teaching of Torah. See Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 4:8; BT Sanhedrin 94b. According to Rabbi Hizkiyya Rabbah 35:2, there was no need of the covenantal sign of the rainbow in the generations of Hezekiah and of Rabbi Shim'on because of the righteousness of those two figures.

165. Ahiyah of Shiloh Ahiyah was the prophet who revealed to King Jeroboam that Solomon’s kingdom would be divided (1 Kings 11:29–39). According to rabbinic tradition, he was a master of the secrets of Torah (BT Sanhedrin 102a; Midrash Tehillim 5:8) and the teacher of Elijah (JT Eruvin 51, 22b).

Rabbi Shim'on associates himself with Ahiyah in Bereshit Rabbah 35:2; Zohar 3:287b (IZ); ZII 19a (MHN). Hasidic legend portrays Ahiyah as the mentor of Israel Ba’al Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism.

166. I have not come... Your teachings do not need my confirmation, as your teachings have been confirmed by God. Rather, I have come to hear the words of Metatron.

167. told him Told the Messiah.

168. clothed in the garb of that world In a physical body. See the reaction of the angels when Moses ascends to receive the Torah (BT Shabbat 88b): “Rabbi Yehoshu’a son of Levi said, ‘When Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels said before the blessed Holy One, “Master of the Universe! What is one born of woman doing here among us?”’

169. “Let him be gathered in” Let his life on earth come to an end. Cf. the biblical idiom “to be gathered to one’s people” (Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 49:29).

170. together with his sons The amoraim Rabbi Hizkiyya and Rabbi Yehudah. In BT Bava Metzia 85b (which, as already noted, influences the Zohar here), Elijah compares Rabbi Hiyya and his sons with the Patriarchs. See Qohelet Rabbah on 9:10 (which also influences this Zohar passage).

171. “Let him be granted time” Let Rabbi Hiyya remain alive on earth a while longer. See ZII 80c (MHN, Rut); and Zohar 1:17b–218b, where Rabbi Shim’on intercedes with God to spare the life of Rabbi
Time was granted to him. He emerged trembling, his eyes streaming with tears. Quivering, he cried, "Happy is the share of the righteous in that world! Happy is the share of the son of Yohai who has attained this! Of him is written: So that I may endow those who love Me with substance and fill their treasuries (Proverbs 8:21)."  

Rabbi Shim'on opened, "I have put רָאָשִׁים (Be-reishit), In the beginning. My words in your mouth (Isaiah 51:16). How vital it is for a human being to engage in Torah day and night! For the blessed Holy One listens to the voice of those who occupy themselves with Torah, and with every word innovated in Torah by one engaged in Torah, He fashions one heaven.

We have learned: The moment a new word of Torah originates from the mouth of a human being, that word ascends and presents itself before the blessed Holy One,  who lifts that word, kisses her, and adorns her with seventy crowns—engraved and inscribed. But an innovated word of wisdom ascends and settles on the head of רָאָשִׁים (Tsaddiq), Righteous One—Vitality of the Worlds. From there, it flies and soars through 70,000 worlds,  ascending to the Ancient of Days  All the words of the Ancient

Yitshak when it was decreed that he was to die.

The theme of a holy person remaining on earth appears in a contemporary thirteenth-century Spanish hagiography, Vida de Santa Oria, composed by Gonzola de Berceo. There St. Oria ascends to heaven and sees her reward as a throne but is told that for now she must return to earth and continue her spiritual practice. See Wineman, Mystic Tales from the Zohar, 28–29.

172. So that I may endow those who love Me with substance... According to rabbinic tradition, this verse describes the reward of the righteous in the afterlife. See M Avo 5:19; Uqsim 3:12; Pesiyya de-Rav Kahana, nispalim, Vezot Haberakhah, 451; BT Sanhedrin 100a; Zohar 1:158a, 206a, 242b; 2:166b.

173. the blessed Holy One Til'orah.

174. seventy crowns The number seventy appears in the context of revelation in BT Shabbat 88b: "Rabbi Yoḥanan said, ‘...Every utterance emerging from the mouth of Power branched into seventy languages.’" See Bensilbar Rabbah 13:16, where Torah is compared to wine: “Just as יין (yayin), wine, is numerically equivalent to seventy, so Torah assumes seventy faces.”

175. innovated word of wisdom A new mystical insight, which rises higher than other new interpretations. Cf. OY: "One is able to innovate in Torah matters that Moses himself was not permitted to reveal."

176. רָאָשִׁים (Tsaddiq), Righteous One—Vitality of the Worlds Yesod, who channels the flow of emanation to Shekhinah and the worlds below.

On various senses of the title "Vitality of the Worlds," see Daniel 12:7; Mekhilta, Psalms 16; Bereshit Rabbah 1:9; Schäfer, Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur, § 275; Zohar 1:212a, 133b, 167b.

177. 70,000 worlds Corresponding to the seven lower sefirot.

178. Ancient of Days בִּין יְשֵׁי (Binn yshiy). See Daniel 7:9: The Ancient of Days sits, the hair on His head like clean fleece, His
of Days are words of wisdom, conveying supernal, concealed mysteries.\(^{179}\)
When that secret word of wisdom, innovated here, ascends, it joins those words of the Ancient of Days. Along with them, it ascends and descends, entering eighteen hidden worlds, which no eye has seen, O God, but You (Isaiah 64:3).\(^{180}\) Emerging from there, they roam until they arrive, full and complete, presenting themselves before the Ancient of Days. At that moment, the Ancient of Days inhales the aroma of that word and it pleases Him more than anything. Lifting that word, He adorns her with 370,000 crowns.\(^{181}\) The word flies, ascending and descending, and is transformed into a heaven. So each and every word of wisdom is transformed into a heaven, existing enduringly in the presence of the Ancient of Days. He calls them new heavens, newly created heavens, hidden mysteries of supernal wisdom. As for all other innovated words of Torah,\(^{182}\) they stand before [5a] the blessed Holy One, then ascend and are transformed into earths of the living (Psalms 116:9). Then they descend, crowning themselves upon one earth,\(^{183}\) which is renewed and transformed into a new earth through that renewed word of Torah. Concerning this is written: As the new heavens and the new earth that I am making endure before Me… (Isaiah 66:22). The verse does not read I have made,\(^{184}\) but rather I am making, for He makes them continually out of those innovations and mysteries.

\(^{179}\) words of the Ancient of Days… In BT Pesahim 119a, secrets of Torah are referred to as “things hidden by the Ancient of Days.” See the rabbinic blessing in BT Berakhot 17a: “May your steps run to hear words of the Ancient of Days.”

\(^{180}\) eighteen hidden worlds… Recalling the phrase above, יְשָׁרֵי יָדִים (Ye'arim), “vitality of the worlds,” describing Yesod; the word יָדִים (Ye’arim) has a numerical value of eighteen. See BT Avodah Zarah 3b: “Rabbi Abba said to Rabbi Nahman son of Yitschak, ‘…What does [God] do at night?…He rides his light cherub and sails through 18,000 worlds.’”

\(^{181}\) all the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You]…All the prophets prophesied only concerning masters of return [those who succeed in turning back to God], but as for the completely righteous, No eye has seen, O God, but You.”

\(^{182}\) An allusion to the three higher selichot (3 × 100,000) and seven lower selichot (7 × 10,000). See Zohar 1:4b; 2:14a-b (MbH); 3:128b (IR).

\(^{183}\) earths of the living…one earth Shekhira is the singular “earth of the living,” who is adored and renewed by human insights of Torah, which have been transformed into planetoids, miniature earths of the living orbiting Her.

\(^{184}\) The verse does not read I have made In the past tense, referring to the original creation of heaven and earth.
of Torah. Of this is written: I have put My words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand, to plant heavens and establish earth (Isaiah 51:16). The verse does not read the heavens, but rather heavens.”

Rabbi Elazar asked, “What is the meaning of: I have covered you with the shadow of My hand?”

He replied, “When Torah was transmitted to Moses, myriads of celestial angels came to scorch him with flames from their mouths, but the blessed Holy One sheltered him. Now when this word ascends, is crowned, and stands before the blessed Holy One, He shelters that word and covers that person so that he will not be discovered by them—arousing their jealousy—before that word is transformed into new heavens and a new earth, as is written: I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to plant heavens and establish earth. From this we learn that every word concealed from the eyes attains supernal value, as is written: I have covered you with the shadow of My hand. Why was it covered and hidden from view? For the sake of supernal value, as is written: to plant heavens and establish earth, as already explained.

“To say to Zion: You are ים (אימ), My people!” (ibid.). To say to those gates, those distinguished words, these above those: You are ים (אימ).”

185. The verse does not read the heavens... The reference is not to the existing heavens, but to new heavens. See BT Sanhedrin 99b: “Rav said, [Concerning one who studies Torah for her own sake,] it is as though he built heavenly and earthly palaces, as is written: I have put My words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand, to plant heavens and establish earth.” Rabbi Shim'on amplifies this teaching and radicalizes it; note how the phrase “it is as though” has disappeared.

186. angels came to scorch him... Jealous that a mere mortal dared to enter the celestial realm. See Pesiqta Rabbati 20: “When Moses ascended on high... a band of angels of destruction... sought to scorch him with the breath of their mouths. What did the blessed Holy One do? He spread over him some of His splendor.”

See Ma’yan Hokhmah (Beit ha-Midrash, 1:58–60); and BT Shabbat 88b: “Rabbi Yehoshua, son of Levi said, When Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels said before the blessed Holy One, “Master of the Universe! What is one born of woman doing here among us?” He answered, “He has come to receive Torah.” They said, “That precious treasure hidden by You for 974 generations before the world was created, You desire to give to flesh and blood! What is a human that You are mindful of him, a human being that You take note of him?” (Psalms 8:5). “Answer them,” said the blessed Holy One to Moses. “Master of the Universe,” he replied, “I fear they could scorch me with the breath of their mouths.” He said, “Grasp My throne of Glory, and answer them...”” Rabbi Nahman observed, “This teaches that the Almighty spread some of the luster of His Shekinah and His cloud over him.” See Zohar 2:58a, 156b.

187. every word concealed... See BT Ta’anit 8b: “Blessing is not found in anything weighed, measured, or counted, but only in that which is hidden from the eye.” Cf. Zohar 1:64b, 202.

188. Zion... gates... distinguished words In BT Berakhot 8a, the phrase gates of ים (טיים), Zion (Psalms 87:2) is interpreted in the name of Rav HJason as “gates משלים (משלים), distinguished by halakha.” Based on this passage, Rabbi Shim'on iden-
Do not read ‘You are רֵעַ (עָמִי), My people,’ but rather ‘You are רֵעַ (יםִי), with Me, becoming My partner! Just as I made heaven and earth by speaking, as is said: By the word of יְהוָה, the heavens were made (Psalms 33:6), so do you.’ Happy are those engaged with Torah!

“Now if you say that the word of any ignorant person has the same effect, come and see: One who is unaccustomed to the mysteries of Torah and innovates words he does not fully understand—when that word ascends, a man of perversity, tongue of falsehood (Proverbs 16:28; 6:17), bursts forth from the chasm of the immense abyss, leaping 500 parasangs to obtain that word. Grabbing her, he takes that word back to his chasm and transmogrifies her into a distorted heaven called ‘chaos.’ The man of perversity flies through that heaven—6,000 parasangs in one glide. As soon as the distorted heaven is established, a woman of whoredom (Hosea 1:2) emerges, clinging to it, joining with it. From there she sets out, killing thousands, myriads. For as long as she endures in that heaven, she is empowered to swoop through the entire world in a single moment. Concerning this is written: Woe unto them who haul iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as with a cart rope (Isaiah 5:18). Iniquity is the male. Who is sin? The female. He hauls the one called iniquity with those cords of falsehood, and then sin as with a cart rope, that female called sin, who is empowered there to fly and kill human beings. So, Many are those she has struck dead (Proverbs 7:26). Who has struck them dead? This sin who slays human beings. Who causes this? A disciple unqualified to teach who teaches. May the Compassionate One save us!”

tifies original interpretations of Torah as Zion.

889. man of perversity... Samael, the male demon who schemes and accuses falsely.

890. chasm of the immense abyss The abode of demons.

891. parasangs The Greek parasang equals about 3.5 miles.

892. in one glide The distorted heaven empowers Samael, providing him a fast celestial highway.

893. woman of whoredom Lilith, the female demon, wife of Samael. Together they comprise Sira Abba, “the Other Side.” See Zohar 1:148a (ST); 2:245a; Scholem, Kabbalah, 356–61.

894. in a single moment See BT Berakhot 4b: “A tana taught: Michael [reaches his destination] in one [glide]. Gabriel in two, Elijah in four, and the Angel of Death in eight—in time of plague, however, in one.”

895. Woe unto them... See BT Sukkah 52a: “Rabbi Assi said, ‘The evil impulse at first resembles the thread of a spider but ultimately it resembles cart ropes, as is said: Woe unto them who haul iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as with a cart rope.’” Cf. Zohar 1:57a.

896. He The distorted heaven.

897. A disciple unqualified... See BT Sotah 22a: “Rav said, ‘What is the meaning of the verse Many are those she has struck dead, numerous are her slain! Many are those she has struck dead—this refers to a disciple unqualified to teach [to decide questions of law] who teaches. Numerous are her slain—this refers to a disciple qualified to teach who does not.”
Rabbi Shim'on said to the Companions, “I beg of you not to utter a word of Torah that you do not know and have not heard properly from a lofty tree, lest you enable sin to slay multitudes without cause.”

They all opened, saying, “May the Compassionate One save us! May the Compassionate One save us!”

“Come and see: With Torah the blessed Holy One created the world. This has been established, as is written: *I was with Him as a nursing, I was a daily delight* (Proverbs 8:30). He gazed upon her once, twice, three and four times, then spoke, creating through her. To teach human beings not to err in her, as is written: *Then He saw and declared her, arranged her and probed her. He told humanity* (Job 28:27). The blessed Holy One created what He created corresponding to those four times: *He saw and declared her, arranged her and probed her.* Before generating His work, He introduced four words: הָרֶשֶׁת בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֻלֹהִים (Be-reshit bara Elohim et), In the beginning God created. First, these four; then, השם (ha-shamayim), the heavens. These correspond to the four times that the blessed Holy One contemplated Torah before actualizing His work of art.”

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198. from a lofty tree From a recognized authority. See the similar expression: “from high tamarisks” (BT Beisahah 27a). One of the five things that the imprisoned Rabbi Akiva taught Rabbi Shim'on (BT Pesahim 12a) was: “If you want to be strangled, then be hanged on a large tree,” which according to Rashi (ad loc.) means: If you must depend on an authority, see that it is a great one.

See Kallah Rabbati, 2; Zohar 2:87a; 3:76a–b; and BT Berakhot 27b: “Rabbi Eliezer says, ‘. . . One who says something that he has not heard from his teacher causes Shekhinah to depart from Israel.’”

The conservative attitude here contrasts with the preceding encouragement to innovate. See OT and KP.

199. slay multitudes without cause Righteous and sinners die together in the plagues and disease brought by Lilith.

200. With Torah . . . This has been established . . . According to M Avot 3:14, Torah is the “precious instrument by which the world was created.” See Bereshit Rabbah 21: “Rabbi Oshaya opened, *I was with Him as a mursling . . . as a craftsman (aman)*—an artisan. Torah says, “I was the artistic tool of the blessed Holy One.” . . . The blessed Holy One gazed into Torah and created the world.”

See Zohar 1:47a; 1:45a-b; 2:161a-b; 3:35b; Wolfson, Philo, 1:243–45.

201. then spoke . . . Only after perusing Torah did God proclaim her words, thereby creating the world.

202. not to err . . . But rather to imitate God and study Torah thoroughly. Cf. BT Eruvin 54b: “Rabbi Eliezer said, ‘One must teach his student four times.’”

203. Then He saw . . . declared . . . arranged . . . probed . . . See Bereshit Rabbah 24-5. The four verbs correspond to the four times that God gazed into Torah, perhaps also to the four methods of interpretation: literal, allegorical, midrashic, and mystical. After creating the world, God told humanity to imitate Him by studying Torah intensively.

204. corresponding to those four times . . . Perhaps a reference to the four worlds, containing respectively the seliot, the Chariot, the angels, and the physical world.
Rabbi El'azar was going to see Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya, his father-in-law.²⁰⁵ [5b] Rabbi Abba accompanied him, and a man was goading the donkeys behind them.

Rabbi Abba said, "Let us open openings of Torah, for the time is ripe to adorn ourselves on our way."

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, "My Sabbaths you are to observe (Leviticus 19:30). Come and see: In six days the blessed Holy One created the world.

Every single day revealed its work, transmitting its power through that day.²⁰⁶ When did it reveal its work and transmit its power? On the fourth day,²⁰⁷ for those first three days were all concealed, not revealed. When the fourth day arrived, it generated the work and power of them all, since fire, water, and air—although they are three ethereal elements²⁰⁸—were all suspended, their work unrevealed until earth revealed them. Then the skill of each one of them was made known.

"Now you might say this happened on the third day, concerning which is written: Let the earth sprout vegetation, and The earth brought forth vegetation (Genesis 1:11–12). But although written of the third day, it was really the fourth,

²⁰⁵. Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya, his father-in-law. See the similar setting in Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana 11:20: "Rabbi El'azar son of Rabbi Shim'on was going to Rabbi Shim'on son of Rabbi Yose son of Lekonya, his father-in-law..." According to this rabbincic tradition, El'azar's father-in-law was named Shim'on son of Yose.

See JT Ma'aserot 3:8, 50d; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 4:11; Devarim Rabbah 7:11; Seder ha-Dorot, s.v. Shim'on ben Yose ben Lekonya. (In BT Bava Metz'a 85a the name of Rabbi El'azar's brother-in-law is given as Rabbi Shim'on son of Issi [Yose] son of Lekonya, which would make Yose his father-in-law, as here in the Zohar, but nowhere in rabbinic literature is he named Yose son of Shim'on.)

The author of the Zohar consistently switches father and son, transforming Shim'on son of Yose into Yose son of Shim'on. See 1:6b, 143b; 3:84b, 188a, 191a; ZH 10d, 14a (MkhN), 22c (MkhN). El'azar's own father, of course, is Rabbi Shim'on son of Yohai. Note who accompanies Rabbi El'azar: Rabbi Abba ("father"). Soon another father and son appear.

²⁰⁶. In six days... The six days of Creation correspond to six primordial days, the se'erot from Hesed through Yesod, through which God fashioned the world. Each sefirotic day displayed its creative power on the corresponding day of the week.

²⁰⁷. On the fourth day Corresponding to Shekinah. Although usually pictured as seventh of the lower se'erot. She can also be characterized as the fourth primordial day (the middle of the cosmic week), completing the triad of Hesed, Gevurah, and Tiferet. Shekinah actualizes the potential of the other se'erot.

²⁰⁸. three ethereal elements According to Empedocles and later Greek and medieval thought, the four elements—water, fire, air, and earth—are the ultimate root of all things. By their combination and separation, everything in nature comes into being and passes away.

See Sefer Yetzirah 33; Bemidbar Rabbah 14:32; Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah 4:1. In the Zohar, the four
included in the third to be one without division. From the fourth day on, its work was revealed, yielding an artisan for each and every skill, for the fourth day constitutes the fourth leg of the celestial throne. All the work of all of them, both earlier and later days, was dependent on the Sabbath day, as is written: God included in the seventh day His work that He had made (Genesis 2:2). This is Sabbath, fourth leg of the throne.

"Now you might ask, 'If so, why My Sabbaths you are to observe, two?' The answer is: the Sabbath of Sabbath eve and the Sabbath of the day itself, which are indivisible."

That Arab donkey-driver goading behind them said, "And what is My sanctuary you are to hold in awe (Leviticus 19:30)?"

He replied, "This is the holiness of the Sabbath."

He said, "What is the holiness of the Sabbath?"

He replied, "This is the holiness drawn down from above."

elements symbolize the quartet of sefirot: Hesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, and Shekhinah.

209. included in the third... The third primordial day is Tiferet, the male sefirot. The activity of the female, Shekhinah, symbolized by earth, took place on the fourth day but is included in His day to ensure and demonstrate their union.

210. From the fourth day on... an artisan... Beginning on the fourth day, the lower triad of sefirot emerged: Netsah, Hod, and Yesod. These three artisans completed the work of the preceding skilled trio: Hesed, Gevurah, and Tiferet. See OY.

211. fourth leg... The four sefirot (Hesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, and Shekhinah), the four elements, also constitute the four legs of the divine throne upon which sits Birah. See Zohar 1:20a.

212. earlier and later days... Sabbath Shekhinah completes the triad of Hesed, Gevurah, and Tiferet, as well as the next triad: Netsah, Hod, and Yesod. She is the Sabbath, culmination of the primordial week of Creation.

213. included לַכְלָכָה (Vaykhil), "And He completed," from the root בִּילָכ (khl). Rabbi El'azar understand this word in light of the related root בִּיל (kll), "include, comprise, gather."

214. Sabbath of Sabbath eve... There are two aspects of the Sabbath: the feminine Sabbath eve, symbolized by Shekhinah, and the masculine Sabbath day, symbolized by Tiferet or Yesod. Cf. Moses de León, Sefer ha-Mishkal, 1–10.

215. Arab donkey-driver קֵקַח (Tayya'a), "Arab, Arab merchant, traveler," apparently derived from the name of the Arabian tribe Tay. The prophet Elijah returns to earth to appear as a Tayya'a in BT Berakhot 6b, and as an עָרְבִי (arabi), "Arab" in Rut Zuta 1:20; 4:11. See Rosh ha-Shanah 26b; Yevamot 120b; Bava Batra 73b; Sanhedrin 110a; Hullin 7a.

In the Zohar, Tayya'a indicates one of several wandering donkey-drivers who annoy, perplex, and enlighten the Companions on the road. See 2:45b, 94b–114a, 145b, 155b–157a, 3:21b–23a, 152b; ZHI 83a–d (MhN, Rut); TZ 23, 69a. Cf. Tosefta, Haggah 2:1 (BT Hagigah 14b; JT Hagigah 2:1, 77a); BT Mo'ed Qatan 25a–b; Bereshit Rabbah 32:10; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 4:3; Steinschneider, Polemische und apologetische Literatur, 248–54; Pushinski, in Yavneh 2 (1940): 140–47; Scholem, Major Trends, 165, 388, n. 46; idem, Kabbalah, 227.

216. My sanctuary... The continuation of the verse with which Rabbi El'azar opened: My Sabbaths you are to observe... (Leviticus 19:30).
He said, “If so, you have turned the Sabbath into something not holy except for the holiness that rests upon it from above!”

Rabbi Abba said, “So it is: Call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of YHWH honored (Isaiah 58:13). Sabbath and holy of YHWH are each mentioned separately.”

He said, “If so, who is holy of YHWH?”

He replied, “Holiness that descends from above, resting upon it.”

He said, “If holiness drawn down from above is called honored, then it appears that the Sabbath is not honored. Yet it is written: And honor it (ibid.)!”

Rabbi E’azar said to Rabbi Abba, “Let this man be! Within him lies a new word we do not know.”

They said to him, “Speak!”

He opened, saying, “נָא נָא שָבָת (Et Shabbatot), My Sabbaths. נָא (Et) amplifies the meaning to include the range of Sabbath, which is 2000 cubits in every direction. So the meaning is expanded: נָא נָא שָבָת (Et Shabbatot), My Sabbaths— one is the higher Sabbath; the other, the lower Sabbath, both included as one, concealed as one.

“Another Sabbath” was left unmentioned and felt ashamed. She said before Him, ‘Master of the universe, since the day You created me, I have been called Sabbath—and there can be no day without night.’ He replied, ‘My daughter, you are Sabbath—I call you Sabbath—but I am about to crown you with a higher crown.’ He issued a proclamation: My sanctuary you are to hold in awe. This is the Sabbath of Sabbath eve, who is awe and in whom awe dwells.”

217. נָא (Et) Grammatically, the accusative particle נָא (et) has no ascertainable independent sense, but Naḥum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that when et appears in a biblical verse, it amplifies the original meaning. See BT Pesahim 2:2; Haggah 12a-b; Zohar 1:79b, 244a, 2:90a, 133b.

218. amplifies the meaning to include (le-aga’ah), “To increase,” a Zoharic rendering of the rabbinic Hebrew תַּמִיד (Le-rabbit), “to increase”—that is, to include, amplify, or widen the scope of meaning.

219. 2000 cubits The traditional limitation on how far one may walk beyond the city limits on the Sabbath. See Mekhilta, Vayassa 6; cf. Zohar 2:207a. Here it refers to the range of holiness beyond the realm of the selōrot; according to KP, the feet of the divine chariot.

220. the higher Sabbath . . . the lower Sabbath The higher Sabbath is Binah, the seventh selōrah counting up from Yesod. The lower Sabbath is Yesod, the seventh selōrah counting down from Binah.

221. Another Sabbath Sabbath eve, symbolizing Shekhinah.

222. there can be no day . . . The sephatic day of Yesod needs the night of Shekhinah. See Bereshit Rabbah 118, where according to Rabbi Shim’on son of Yoḥai, the Sabbath complains to God that she has no partner among the days of the week, and she is told: “The Assembly of Israel is your partner.” See BT Hullin 60b.

223. who is awe . . . The “Sabbath of Sabbath eve” (Friday night) is Shekhinah, who conveys the attribute of Judgment, inspiring awe and fear. The selōrah of Hokhmah, the father of Shekhinah, is also called
Who is that? The one included by the blessed Holy One when He said I am \textit{YHVH}.\textsuperscript{224}

I heard my father say so precisely: רֶא (Re) includes the range of Sabbath. \textit{My Sabbaths} are a circle with a square inscribed within.\textsuperscript{225} They are two, corresponding to which are two hallowings we should recite. One is \textit{vaiskhulu} (Vaykhulu), And they \textit{[heaven and earth] were completed}… (Genesis 2:1–3);\textsuperscript{226} the other, \textit{qiddush} (Qiddush), Hallowing\textsuperscript{227} Vaykhulu contains thirty-five words, and in the \textit{qiddush} that we recite there are thirty-five words,\textsuperscript{228} altogether amounting to seventy names of the blessed Holy One,\textsuperscript{229} with which Assembly of Israel is adorned.\textsuperscript{230} Since this circle and square are \textit{My Sabbaths}, they are both included in \textit{Shamor} (Shamor), \textit{Observe} (Deuteronomy 5:12), as is written: 

כעבש (ki vanu vaharta ve-otanu qiddusha mi-kol ha-ammin), “for You have chosen us and hallowed us from among all nations.”

See Scholem, 493 (unnamed); Ta-Shma, \textit{Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar}, 63, 138–39, n. 159. The \textit{Zohar’s} phrase “that we recite” indicates a particular custom, which differs from the standard \textit{qiddush}.

\textit{seventy names}… See \textit{Bemidbar} Rabbah 14:12: Nahmanides, \textit{Kittel Ramban}, 1335; cf. Zohar 2:207b. For various lists of these names, see Alfa Beita de-Rabbi Aqiva (Battei Midrashot, 2:350–51); Shir ha-Shirim Zuta 1:1; Midrash ha-Gadol, Genesis 46:8; and Ba’al ha-Turim, Numbers 11:16.

\textit{Assembly of Israel} (Keneset Yisra’el). In rabbinic Hebrew this phrase denotes the people of Israel. The midrash on the Song of Songs describes the love affair between the maiden (the earthly community of Israel) and her lover (the Holy One, blessed be He). See \textit{Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah} on 2:1. In the \textit{Zohar}, Keneset Yisra’el can refer to the earthly community but also (often primarily) to Shekhinah, the divine feminine counterpart of the people, the aspect of God most intimately connected with them. The lovers in the Song of Songs are pictured as the divine couple: \textit{Tiferet} and Shekhinah.

\textit{are both included}… Both aspects of the Sabbath, the masculine \textit{Yesod} and the feminine \textit{Shekhinah}, are included in...

“awe” and is reflected in His daughter, who is lower \textit{Hokmah}.

224. \textit{I am YHVH} The full verse reads: \textit{My Sabbaths you are to observe. My sanctuary you are to hold in awe, I am YHVH} (Leviticus 19:30). Through Shekhinah, God reveals the full spectrum of divine personality and is thus called I. In this phrase, I is joined with \textit{YHVH} (Tiferet). Shekhinah manifests in both sacred time (Sabbath) and sacred space (sanctuary).

225. circle with a square inscribed within The phrase derives from BT \textit{Eruvin} 76b; cf. Bahir 83 (14-16). Here the reference is to the higher \textit{kitur} (beginning with Birah and culminating in Yesod) and Shekhinah.

See KP; Scholem. Cf. Zohar 2:127a, where the circle of the letter ה (samekh) symbolizes Birah, while the square of the letter ח (final mem) symbolizes Shekhinah.

226. \textit{vaiskhulu} (Vaykhulu)… The opening lines of the \textit{qiddush} (“hallowing, sanctification”), the prayer recited over wine Friday evening to hallow the Sabbath.

227. \textit{qiddush} (Qiddush)… The rest of the prayer, which includes the blessing over wine and the blessing of hallowing the Sabbath.

228. in the \textit{qiddush} that we recite… thirty-five words This total requires the omission of the following ten words from the \textit{qiddush}: יִרְבָּה יִשְׁרָאֵל (ki hu yom), “for it is the day,” and...
Sabbath is not included here in שמר (Shamor), Observe, but rather in זכר (Zakhor), Remember (Exodus 20:8), for the supreme King is completed by זכר (zakhor). So He is called 'the King who possesses peace,' and His peace is זכר (zakhor). That is why there is no strife above, because of the two peaces below: one, Jacob; the other, Joseph. So it is written twice: Peace, peace to the far and the near (Isaiah 57:19). To the far refers to Jacob, [6a] and the near refers to Joseph. To the far, as is said: From afar, יHVH appeared to me (Jeremiah 31:2). His sister stood far off (Exodus 2:4). And the near, as is said: New [gods] who came from nearby (Deuteronomy 32:17). From afar is the highest point, standing in its palace. So it is written: תשמירא (Tishmor), You are to observe, included in שמר (Shamor), Observe. My sanctuary you are to hold in the feminine, which is signified by the opening word of the fourth of the Ten Commandments: שמר (Shamor), Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. This word signifies the feminine because the other version of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8) reads: זכר (Zakhor), Remember, the Sabbath day, and זכר (zakhor) suggests זכר (zakhor), “male.” In the verse in Leviticus 19, the plural verb תשמיר (Tishmor), You are to observe, indicates the union of male and female.

See BT Berakhot 20b; Bahr 124 (182); Ezra of Gerona, Peirush Shir ha-Shirim, 496–97; Nahmanides on Exodus 20:8; Zohar 1:47b, 48b, 164b; Moses de León, Sefer ha-Rimmon, 118.

232. completed by זכר (zakhor). Binah, the supreme King and higher Sabbath, finds its completion in the masculine נסורה of Yesod, signified by זכר (zakhor), which implies זכר (zakhor), “male.” Although often depicted as the Divine Mother, Binah is also described as “World of the Male,” encompassing the entire configuration of נסורה from Hesed through Yesod. Together they constitute a masculine entity ready to join Shekhinah.

See Zohar 196a, 147a, 149a, 160b, 246a, 248b; 2:127b; ZII 72b (ShS). Cf. 1:17b, 46b, 164a, 2:44.

233. 'the King who possesses peace'… In midrashic literature this phrase is applied to God. See Pesiga de-Rav Kahana 1:2; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 1:2. Here it designates Binah, who contains Yesod, who is called “peace” either because He mediates between the right and left poles of the נסורה, or because He unites נסורה with Shekhinah. See BT Shabbat 152a, where Rabbi Shim'on son of Halafta refers to the phallus as “peacemaker of the home.”

234. two peaces below… Jacob symbolizes נסורה; Joseph symbolizes Yesod, the divine phallus, since he withstood the test of sexual temptation in Egypt (Genesis 39). See TZ 21, 43b, 45b. Both of these mediate between right and left, and unite with Shekhinah, insuring peace in the sefirotic realm.

235. From afar, יHVH appeared… נסורת, who is called יHVH, appeared from afar. See Rashi, ad loc.; Zohar 1:120a.

236. His sister stood far off Miriam, the subject of the sentence, symbolizes Shekhinah, who faces נסורת. See BT Sotah 11a.

237. from nearby Idiomatic for “recently.” Joseph, Yesod, represents a more recent emanation than Jacob, נסורת. This citation is striking, since the verse in Deuteronomy refers to false gods.

238. From afar is the highest point… Hokhma, the primordial point of emanation, is situated in the palace of Binah, נסורת issues from them, from afar.

239. So it is written…שמור (Shamor), Observe. Referring back to the two Sabbaths, Yesod and Shekhinah, who are indicated together by the plural verb תשמירא (Tishmor), You are to observe.
awe is the point standing in the center, which one should fear more than anything, for its punishment is death, as is written: (Mehaleka), Those who profane it, shall surely be put to death (Exodus 31:14). Who are (mehaleka), those who profane it? Whoever enters the holy (halal), hollow, of the circle and the square—the site where that point rests—and damages it shall surely be put to death. So it is written: You are to hold in awe. That point is called I and on it rests that high concealed one, unrevealed. This is YHVH, and all is one.”

Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba dismounted and kissed him. They said, “All this wisdom in your hand, and you are goading our donkeys behind us? Who are you?”

He replied, “Do not ask who I am! Rather, let us go together, engaging in Torah. Let each one speak words of wisdom to illumine the way.”

They said to him, “Who appointed you to go here, goading donkeys?

He replied, “The (Yod) waged war with two letters, כ (Kaf) and samekh, to be bound together with me. כ (Kaf) did not want to depart and be bound, since it cannot survive for a moment anywhere else. samekh (Samekh) did not want to depart, so it could support those who fall, for without samekh (Samekh) they cannot survive. Alone, the (Yod) came to me, kissing and

240. point standing in the center The central point of Shekhinah inside the square inscribed within the circle.

See Zohar 2:204a-b; 3:250a; Moses de León, Sefer ha-Mishqal, 110; Joseph Gikatilla, cited in Elijah de Vidas, Redkit Hokhmah, Sha’ar ha-Qedushah, 2. On the Sabbath as sacred center, see Ginsburg. The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah, 85-92.

241. Whoever enters...damages it Profaning the Sabbath damages the core of Shekhinah. See Moses de León, Sefer ha-Rimmon, 332-33; idem, Sefer ha-Mishqal, 111.

242. called I Shekhinah, who fully expresses the personality of God, is called I.

243. that high concealed one... Til’eret, more concealed than Shekhinah.

244. all is one The conclusion of the verse, I am YHVH, indicates that Til’eret and Shekhinah are united.

245. dismounted Out of respect for the sanctity of Torah. See Tosefta, Haggah 21, where Yohanan son of Zakkai dismounts from his donkey to hear an exposition of ma’aseh mekhavah, “the account of the chariot,” from El’azar son of Arakh, who had been driving the donkey from behind.

See BT Hagigah 14b; JT Hagigah 21. 77a; Zohar 1:160a.

246. to be bound together... These three letters spell the word כו (ko), “pocket.” If all three had joined together, then the wandering donkey-driver would have been wealthy, but such was not the case.

247. כ (Kaf) did not want... כ (Kaf) wanted to remain at the head of the word כוכ (kisse), the divine “throne.” See above, page 98 (transmitted in the name of Rav Hamnuna Sava), where the throne begins to tremble when כ (Kaf) descends from it.

248. samekh (Samekh) did not want... The letter samekh (Samekh) stands for the word samekh (samekh), “supporting.” See above, page 95, where God tells her: “You are needed where you are; do not move! If you leave, what would happen to the fallen, who depend on you?”
embracing me. She wept with me, saying, 'My son, what can I do for you? But look, I will ascend and fill myself with goodness—with hidden, celestial, splendid letters! Then I will come to you, serving as your support. I will endow you with two letters, higher than those that departed, namely, ש (yesh), substance—celestial י (yod) and ש (shin)—as your treasuries filled with everything. So, my son, go and goad donkeys.' That is why I go like this. 249

Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba rejoiced and wept. They said, 'Go ride! We will goad the donkeys behind you.'

He said to them, 'Didn't I tell you it is the command of the King, until the one driving donkeys arrives?' 250

They said to him, 'But you haven't told us your name. The site you inhabit—what is it?'

He replied, 'The site I inhabit is fine and lofty for me: a certain tower soaring in the air, 251 grand and splendid. Those dwelling in this tower are the blessed Holy One and a certain poor person. 252 This is where I reside, but I have gone into exile, goading donkeys.'

249. ש (yesh), 'substance'... Composed of the two letters י (yod) and ש (shin). ש (Yesh) designates the flow of emanation from Ḥokmah ('Wisdom') and Binah ('Understanding'), which is the ultimate substance, more valuable than wealth.

The ginatriyya of ש (yesh) is 310, and according to Rabbi Yehoshua's son of Levi (M. Uqsin 3:12), "In the world to come, the blessed Holy One will endow every righteous person with 310 worlds, as is written: So that I may endow those who love Me with ש (yesh), substance, and fill their treasuries (Proverbs 8:21). See Gikatilla, Sha’arei Orak, 93a–b.

250. Until the one driving... Until the Messiah arrives riding on a donkey. See Zechariah 9:9: Behold, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and triumphant, humble [or: poor] and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of an ass.

251. Tower soaring in the air... The expression originates in the Talmud (BT Haggigah 13b; Sanhedrin 106b), where the phrase counter of the towers (Isaiah 33:18) is interpreted as: "one who counted 500 fixed laws concerning a tower soaring in the air." The laws are apparently laws of defilement (see M Oholot 41). Rashi (on both Talmudic passages) offers several interpretations, including one from his teacher that the tower refers to the letter ל (lamed), highest letter of the alphabet. Todros Abulafia, in Otsar ha-Kavod, discusses this interpretation of the Haggigah passage (ad loc.); cf. Shoshan Sodot, 108. In several Qumran texts the ל [lamed] is written above the normal line of letters. See Birnbaum, The Hebrew Script, 1127, 143.

In the Zohar, the tower is Binah, towering over the lower sefirot. See 2:91a, 102a; ZḤ 58a, 70a (ShS), and 66a–b (ShS), where the connection between ל (lamed) and the tower is cited from the Book of Rav Hama the Savi. Cf. Moses de Leon, Sheqel ha-Qodesh, 89–90 (112–14); Zohar 1:91a, 37b, 96b; 3:164a–b.

252. The blessed Holy One and a certain poor person. Tiferet and Shekhinah, who is poor in the sense that She has no emanation of Her own but receives emanation from the other sefirot. These two sefirot are joined in the tower of Binah, the ל (lamed). According to Todros Abulafia, Otsar ha-Kavod, Haggigah 13b, the ל (lamed) is composed of the two letters ד (dalet) and ו (vav). In Kabbalah ד (dalet) symbolizes Shekhinah, who is נביא (nasha‘), "poor," while ו (vav),
Rabbi Abba and Rabbi El'azar gazed at him. He had flavored his words for them as sweet as manna and honey.

They said to him, “If you tell us the name of your father, we will kiss the dust of your feet.”

He said, “Why? It is not my habit to boast of Torah. But my father’s dwelling was in the great ocean. He was a fish, circumnavigating the vast ocean from one end to the other. So grand and splendid, ancient of days, he would swallow all the other fish in the ocean, then spew them out alive, thriving, filled with all goodness of the world. So strong, he could swim the ocean in one moment. He shot me out like an arrow from the hand of a mighty warrior, secreting me in that site I described. Then he returned to his site, disappearing into the ocean.”

Rabbi El'azar contemplated his words. He said, “You are the son of the Holy Lamp. You are the son of Rav Hamnuna Sava, son of the radiance of Torah, and you are goading donkeys behind us?”

whose numerical value is six, symbolizes Tiferet, who joins with the five sefirot around Him (Hesed, Gevurah, Netsah, Hod, and Yesod) to form the sixfold sefirotic torso. The three letters joined together spell יה (Yod), the city of Lydda (cf. KP), and the donkey-driver is apparently hinting that on the material plane he resides there. On the messianic implication of “poor,” see Zechariah 9:9, cited above, note 250.

253. It is not my habit to boast... See Sefer Hasidim, ed. W istinetzki, par. 1945 (ed. Margoliot, par. 522): “A person whose father is called ‘Rabbi,’ e.g., ‘Rabbi Ya’akov,’ and his son [i.e., he himself] is called ‘Reu’ven,’ should not sign his name ‘Reu’ven son of Rabbi Ya’akov,’ but rather simply ‘Reu’ven.’”

254. fish הונ (Yona), swimming in the ocean of Torah. Sefirotically, the fish is Yesod, swimming the ocean of divinity.

255. like an arrow... See Psalms 127:4: Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. Cf. BT Hagigah 15a: “Shemu’el said, Any emission of semen that does not shoot forth like an arrow does not fructify.”

256. Holy Lamp יאיר קדש (Bosina Qadisha), the title usually reserved by the Zohar for Rabbi Shim’on son of Yohai. See above, note 124.

257. Rav Hamnuna Sava Rav Hamnuna the Eikar, a Babylonian teacher who lived in the third century, though the Zohar assumes that he died in the lifetime of Rabbi Shim’on, before the story related here. The donkey-driver had hinted at the name Hamnuna by saying that his father was a יונ (Yona), “fish.”

See Zohar 3:187a; Tosafot, Qiddushin 25a, s.v. hamnuna karmuna; Beredit Rabbiat 97:3. The fish carries messianic overtones in both Judaism and Christianity; see Stroumsa, “The Early Christian Fish Symbol Reconsidered.”

In the Talmud Rav Hamnuna occasionally transmits teachings of Rabbi Shim’on (e.g., BT Hullin 23a; Temurah 15a), and several prayers are attributed to him (BT Berakhot 1b, 17a, 58a). Cf. BT Gittin 39b. In the Zohar, roles are reversed and Rabbi Shim’on cites Rav Hamnuna (e.g., 18a–b). Throughout the Zohar, Hamnuna is greatly revered, and several original ritual acts are attributed to him.

See 1:240a, 250a; 2:88a, 124a, 130b; 3:87b, 109b, 145b (IR), 188a; Scholem, Das Buch Bahir, 68; idem, Major Trends, 368, n. 134;
They both wept together, kissed him, and went on.

They said to him, “If it pleases our master, let him reveal his name to us.”

He opened, saying, “Benayahu son of Yehoyada (2 Samuel 23:20). This verse has been established—which is fine—but this verse alludes to supernal mysteries of Torah. Benayahu son of Yehoyada appears on behalf of a mystery of wisdom—a concealed word, and the name prevails. Son of a living man (ibid.)—דומא (Tsaddiq), Righteous One—Vitality of the Worlds. Master of deeds (ibid.).—Master of all action, of all celestial powers, for all emerge from Him. He is הוהי ב.pixel (YHWH Tseva’ot), Lord of Hosts, insignia of all His hosts. Distinguished and supreme, He is called Master of deeds.

“From Qavtsel (ibid.)—this grand and dignified tree, supreme above all, from which site did it emerge? From which rung did it come? The verse goes on to say: From Qavtsel—a high, concealed rung that [6b] no eye has seen... (Isaiah 64:3), a rung containing all, gathered in from upper light, and from which all emerges. It is the holy, hidden palace, in which all rungs are


258. Benayahu son of Yehoyada The verse continues: son of a living man, abounding in deeds, from Qavtsel. He smote the two Ariel of Moab. He went down and slew the lion within the pit on a snowy day. The donkey-driver begins to answer the question of his identity with a verse about Benayahu, a loyal follower of King David, one of the heroes mentioned in 2 Samuel 23.

259. This verse has been established See BT Berakhot 18a–b: “Rabbi Hiyya said... Son of a living man. Are all other people then sons of dead men? Rather, son of a living man, for even in his death he was called living...”

Cf. Gilatilla, Sha’arei Tsedeq, 7a; Zohar 1:132a, 136a.

260. the name prevails...דומא (Tsaddiq), Righteous One... The name דומא (Benayahu) indicates Yesod, who is כ (ben), “son of,” 실 (yod, he, va), three letters symbolizing Hokhmah, Binah, and Tiferet. See Zohar 1:136a, 164a.

Yesod, “Vitality of the Worlds,” animates all of existence. On various senses of this title see above, note 176. On the notion that “the name prevails,” see BT Berakhot 7b; Zohar 1:56b; 2:179b.

261. Master of deeds The donkey-driver interprets the biblical word דומא (rav), abounding, according to its alternate meaning: “master.”

262. insignia of all His hosts See BT Hagghah 16a, in the name of Rabbi Yohanan: “He is the insignia among His myriad.” Cf. Zohar 2:232a.

263. this grand and dignified tree... Yesod, often identified with the Tree of Life.

264. Qavtsel The root כַּפָּ (qets) means “to gather,” and Qavtsel refers to Binah, who gathers in the upper light of Hokhmah.

265. no eye has seen The verse continues: O God, but You, what You will do for one who awaits You. See BT Berakhot 34b: “Rabbi Hiyya son of Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yohanan, ‘All the prophets prophesied only concerning the days of the Messiah, but as for the world that is coming, No eye has seen, O God, but You, [what You will do for one who awaits You]... All the prophets prophesied only concerning masters of return [those who succeed in turning back
gathered and concealed. In the trunk of this tree all worlds exist; from it, all holy powers are nourished and deployed.

"He smote the two Ariel of Moab (2 Samuel, ibid.). Two sanctuaries existed because of Him, were nourished by Him: First Temple and Second Temple. As soon as He departed, the flow flowing from above ceased. He, as it were, smote them, destroying and obliterating them, and the Holy Throne fell, as is written: And I was in the midst of the exile (Ezekiel 1:1)—that rung called 269 was in the midst of the exile. Why? By the River Kevar (ibid.), River of Already, on account of the river gushing and flowing, whose waters and springs ceased, so that it did not flow as before, as is written: A river dries up and is parched (Job 14:11). Dries up—in the First Temple; is parched—in the Second. So He smote the two Ariel of Moab. רבי (Mo’av), Moab—for they originated רבי (me-av), from Father, in heaven and were destroyed and obliterated because of Him. All the lights illuminating Israel darkened.

"Further, He went down and slew the lion (2 Samuel, ibid.). In former times, when this river gushed its waters below, [the people of] Israel were fulfilled, offering offerings and sacrifices to atone for their souls. Then from above would descend the image of a lion, whom they could see on the altar, to God, but as for the completely righteous, No eye has seen, O God, but You.”

In the Zohar, this verse often refers to בירה, who is identified with “the world that is coming.” See 1:4b; 2:9b, 16a; above, note 39.

266. holy, hidden palace… בירה, the Divine Mother, contains within Herself—and then gives birth to—all the lower sefirot.

267. Two Ariel…Two sanctuaries… The meaning of the word Ariel in the verse in Samuel is unclear. In Ezekiel 43:15–16 it apparently means “hearth” of an altar; in Isaiah 24:1 the name is applied to Jerusalem. In rabbinc sources Ariel of Moab refers to the Temple, since King David was descended from Ruth the Moabitite. See M Middot 47; and BT Berakhot 18a–b: "Rabbi Hyya said…, ‘He smote the two Ariel of Moab, for he did not leave his like in either the First Temple or the Second.”

268. Holy Throne fell Shekhinah fell into exile.

269. that rung called I Shekhinah, who reveals the full spectrum of divine personality.

270. River Kevar,…River of Already The prophet Ezekiel experienced his vision by the River Kevar, a stream near Nippur in Babylon. In Hebrew, though, the word רבי (kevar) means “already,” “long ago.” The point here is that the river of Yossed was of the past and had ceased to flow, causing the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Shekhinah.

See Re’tuyot Yehezqel, ed. Gruenwald, in Temirin 1 (1972): 111–14; Matt, Essential Kabbalah, 126, 205; Zohar 1:85a, 149a–b.

271. A river dries up and is parched See Zohar 1:12a (TJ), 67a: 2:16b; 3:51ab.

272. they originated…were destroyed The two Temples came into being through the flow of divine emanation, and when that flow ceased they were destroyed.

273. He went down and slew the lion The verse continues: within the pit on a snowy day.
crouching over its prey, consuming sacrifices like a fierce warrior, while all dogs hid themselves away, not venturing out.

"When sins prevailed, He descended to the rungs below, and He killed that lion, no longer willing to provide its prey. He, as it were, killed it. He slew the lion, really! Within the pit (ibid.)—in plain sight of the evil Other Side—Seeing this, that Other Side was emboldened to send a dog to eat the offerings. What is the name of that lion? (Uri'el), for his face is the face of (aryeh), a lion. What is the name of that dog? (Bal'adan) is its name, for it is excluded from the category of (adam), human, but is rather a dog—its face a dog. On a snowy day—a day when sins prevailed, and

274. image of a lion... See BT Yoma 21b: “Five things were reported about the fire of the pile of wood on the Temple altar: it crouched like a lion, it was as clear as sunlight, its flame was of substance, it devoured wet wood like dry wood, and it caused no smoke to rise.” Cf. Zohar 3:32b, 211a, 241a; Todros Abulafia, Sha’ar ha-Razim, 90.

275. dogs: The demonic powers.

276. He descended... Sin severed the connection between Yesod and Shekinah, and the flow of emanation became available to “the rungs below,” the demonic forces. The holy lion no longer received its prey and was thus killed, as it were, by Yesod.

277. evil Other Side אַשְׁרֵי יָרֵא אֵל (Sitra aher bisha), the demonic realm, which represents the shadow of the divine.

278. אֶלֶף (Uri’el).... Literally, “God is my light,” though here connected by the Zohar with the similar-sounding וַעֲרָא (aryeh), “lion” and with וַעֲרָא (Ariel), symbol of the Temple. Uriel is one of the four angels of the Presence (along with Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael), who surround the divine throne. In Kabbalah these angels of the Presence are identified with the four holy creatures seen by Ezekiel. Uriel appears sometimes as the figure of the eagle, sometimes as the lion.

See 1 Enoch 9:1; 2 Esdras 4:13; Pesiqta Rabbati 46; Bemidbar Rabbah 2:10; Midrash Konen (Beit ha-Midrash, 2:39); cf. Zohar 3:32b, 211a.

279. name of that dog? (Bal’adan).... The name derives from Merodach Baladan, king of Babylon (722–710 B.C.E.), with whom King Hezekiah of Judea had contact. See 2 Kings 20:12–13; Isaiah 39:1–2, where he is named Merodach Baladan son of Baladan. On this the Talmud (BT Sanhedrin 96a) comments: “Why was he called [Merodach-] Baladan the son of Baladan? It has been told: Baladan was a king whose face turned into that of a dog, so his son sat upon his throne instead. In his documents he wrote his own name and the name of his father, King Baladan.” Baladan’s dog-face is probably a rabbinic explanation of the dogs seen on Assyrian-Babylonian monuments (Ginzberg, Legends, 6:368, n. 82).

Here הַבָּלָדָן (Bal’adan) is a demonic figure whose name is taken to mean: בָּלָד (bal adam), “not human.” KP refers to non-Jewish magical traditions concerning בָּלָד (Bal’ad), prince of the demons. See OF; Shoshan Sodot, 104; Scholem, in Mad’adi ha-Yadidut 1 (1926): 112–27. In the continuation of the passage cited above (note 274), BT Yoma 21b observes that in the First Temple the fire on the altar appeared crouching like a lion, while in the Second Temple it crouched like a dog. See Zohar 3:32b, 211a.

Here the donkey-driver blends several of these traditions to describe a demonic figure with the face of a dog who is empowered to devour the sacrifices.
judgment was decreed above by the celestial court. Of this is written: She is not afraid of snow for her household (Proverbs 31:21)—judgment on high. Why? Because her whole household is clothed in crimson (ibid.) and can endure the fierce fire.

“Until here, mystery of the verse. What is written next? He slew an Egyptian, a man of good appearance (2 Samuel, ibid., 21). Here the mystery of the verse discloses that whenever Israel sinned He departed, withholding from them all the goodness, all the light illuminating them. He slew an Egyptian man—the light of that light illuminating Israel. Who is it? Moses, as is written: They said, ‘An Egyptian man rescued us’ (Exodus 2:19). There he was born, there he was raised, there he rose to the highest light. A man of יִשְׂרָאֵל (mar’eh), good appearance, as is said: יִשְׂרָאֵל (u-mar’eh), In appearance, not in riddles (Numbers 12:8). Man, as is said: Man of Elohim (Deuteronomy 33:1)—husband, as it were, of that יִשְׂרָאֵל (mar’eh), appearance, of the Presence of YHVH, for he was worthy of conducting this rung on earth in any way he wished—something no other human attained.

280. On a snowy day...sins...judgment... Water symbolizes Hesed, but snow symbolizes Gevurah and Din ("judgment"), the congealing and hardening of water. See Zohar 1:16a; and Aggadat Olam Qatan (Beit ha-Midrash, 538): "Snow is human sin." According to rabbinic literature, the yearlong punishment of the wicked in Hell is equally divided between fire and snow. See JT Sanhedrin 10:3, 29b; Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana 10:4; Zohar 1:62b, 68b, 107b, 238b.

In Zohar 2:97b, 104a, 109a, the donkey-driver who confounds the rabbis refers cryptically to a snowy day on which he and Rabbi Shim’on son of Yohai "sowed beans in fifty-two colors," alluding to the fifty-two-letter name of God and to the word פֹּלֶק (polak), "son," whose הֶהֱרִי is fifty-two. See Liebes, in Edel Be’er Shave 4 (1996): 200.

281. She is not afraid... The She of Proverbs 31 is understood as Shekhinah, who does not fear the power of Din ("judgment").

282. clothed in crimson... Shekhinah has an affinity with Gevurah and Din, symbolized by the color red, and She executes the decrees of Judgment, so She does not fear Judgment’s fire or snow. See Zohar 1:128b.

283. He Yesod.

284. The light of that light... Moses attained the selihah of Tiferet and transmitted some of its light.

285. ‘An Egyptian man...’ A description of Moses given by Jethro’s daughters to their father after Moses rescued them from aggressive shepherds.

286. There...there...there... In Egypt. See Zohar 2:34a.

287. המלך (u-mar’eh), In appearance... In plain sight. God appears to Moses directly, unlike the experience of other prophets.

288. Man of Elohim—husband, as it were, of that יִשְׂרָאֵל (mar’eh)... Shekhinah is the יִשְׂרָאֵל (mar’eh), appearance of the Presence of YHVH, the site of divine manifestation. She is also known as Elohim. Moses is on such intimate terms with Shekhinah that he is called Her husband, as indicated by his title: Man of Elohim (Deuteronomy 33:1; Psalms 90:1).

See Midrash Tehillim 90:5; Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana, nispalim, Ve’erot Haberakkah, 43–44, 448 (variants); Tanhuma, Ve’erot Haber-
"The Egyptian had a spear in his hand" (2 Samuel, ibid.). This is the staff of God, handed down to him, as is said: With the staff of God in my hand (Exodus 17:9). This is the staff created on the eve of Sabbath at twilight, engraved with the holy name, a holy graving. With this he sinned at the rock, as is said: He struck the rock with his staff twice (Numbers 20:11). The blessed Holy One said to him, Moses, I did not give you My staff for this. By your life! From now on, it will no longer be in your hand. Immediately He went down to him with a club (2 Samuel, ibid.)—with severe judgment. And wrenched the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, for from that moment it was withheld from him and was never again in his hand. And killed him with his own spear. Because of the sin of striking with that staff, he died and did not enter the Holy Land, and this light was withheld from Israel.

"From the thirty, he was most honored" (2 Samuel, ibid., 23). These are the thirty celestial years on which He drew, conveying them below. Drawing on

- akhah 2 (Ets Yosef, ad loc.); Devarim Rabbah (Lieberman), on 33:1; Zohar 2:21b–22a, 14b, 15a–b, 23b; 2:22b, 23a, 23b, 24b (Heikh).

According to rabbinic tradition, after encountering God on Mount Sinai, Moses abstained from sexual contact with his wife and maintained union with Shekinah.

See Sifrei, Numbers 99; BT Shabbat 87a; Tanhuma, Tsav 13; Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah 7:6; Zohar 1:22a, 15b, 23b; 2:222a; 3:48a, 180a.

- staff of God, handed down to him
- The staff with which Moses performed miracles before Pharaoh, split the Red Sea, and struck the rock to produce water. According to Pirke de-Rabb Eliezer 40, the rod had previously been in the possession of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Jethro. See Targum Yerushalmi, Exodus 2:21; Ginzberg, Legends, 6106, n. 600.

- staff created on the eve of Sabbath
- One of the ten things created in the last moments of the week of Creation, just before the first Sabbath began. See M Avot 5:6.

- engraved with the holy name
- The Ineffable Name, YHVH. See Targum Yerushalmi, Exodus 2:21; Devarim Rabbah 3:8; Midrash Tehillim 11:49; Sefer ha-Yashar, Shemot, 307; Zohar 2:28a, 48a.

- He went down to him with a club
- The verse continues: and wrenched the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand and killed him with his own spear. As the donkey-driver interprets the verse, the subject, Benayahu, is really Yesod, who confronts Moses the Egyptian. See Zohar 2:11b (RM).

- And killed him with his own spear
- that staff
- Benayahu killed Moses the Egyptian with Moses’ own staff, i.e., because of Moses’ own misuse of the staff. The notion that Moses was an Egyptian who was killed by an Israelite foreshadows Freud’s thesis. See Amado Lévy-Valensi, Le Moïse de Freud; Goldreich, in Masoi’t, 486–87.

- From the thirty, he was most honored
- The verse continues: but the three he did not attain. David set him over his guard. The actual biblical verse does not include the word most (הַשִּׁלָּמָה [ha-shélama]). Apparently the Zohar’s author or a later scribe replaced this phrase with a different one, several verses earlier, describing another of King David’s warriors, Avishai: Of the three, he was most honored (2 Samuel 23:19). See Zohar 1:105b.

- thirty celestial years
- The three seferot, Hesed, Gevurah, and Ti’eret, each reflect
them, He drew near. But the three he did not attain. They approached Him, giving to Him wholeheartedly, but He did not approach Them.\textsuperscript{296} Still, although He was not counted as one of Them, David set him over his bodyguard, for He never faded from the tablet of His heart.\textsuperscript{297} They are never separated. David set His heart on Him, not He on David for with the praises, songs and love that the moon offers to the sun,\textsuperscript{298} She draws Him toward Her, so that He dwell with Her. This is: David set him over his bodyguard.

Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba fell before him. Meanwhile they did not see him. They rose, looking in every direction, but could not see him. They sat down and wept, and could not speak to one another. After a while Rabbi Abba said, 'This is precisely what we learned: On whatever path the righteous walk, with words of Torah between them, virtuous ones of that world come to them.\textsuperscript{299} This was indeed Rav Hammuna Sava\textsuperscript{300} coming to us from that world to reveal these words to us. Before we could recognize him, he vanished!'

the full decade of the serpent; so together
They form a total of thirty, which flow into
and through Yesod. See Gikatilla, Sha'arei
Orah, 48a.

296. They approached Him... The
highest triad of serpents, Keter, Hahmrah, and
Bina, emanate to Yesod, but He has no di-
rect contact with Them.

297. David set him... bodyguard...
King David, who symbolizes Shekhinah,
yearns to unite with Yesod. Bodyguard ren-
ders the Hebrew בנה (shama), "his obedi-
ent hand," from the root ש ב (shama),
to hear.

Liesbes (oral communication) suggests that
the use of the word in this passage is in-
fluenced by the Arabic Sufi term sama,
"hearing," the ecstatic song and dance of
the Dervishes. Note the reference to "songs
and love" in the following lines. One Sufi
defense of sama invokes the Koranic tradi-
tion (34:30) that David sang praises to God
(BR 113:30–31). See Schimmel, Mystical Di-
visions of Islam, 178–86.

298. moon...sun Shekhinah and Her
partner, Yesod.

299. On whatever path... with words
of Torah... See M Avo 3:2: "Rabbi Hananya
son of Teradyon said, '...If two are sitting
engaged in words of Torah, Shekhinah dwells
between them.' Here the seekers are walk-
ing, not sitting, and they are visited not by
Shekhinah, but by a righteous soul who has
reincarnated and comes to puzzle and en-
lighten them.

On the importance of engaging in Torah
while on a journey, see Deuteronomy 6:7; BT
Eruvin 54a; Ta'anit 10b; Zohar 1:58a, 69b–
70a, 76a, 87a, 115b.

300. Rav Hammuna Sava Earlier, the
donkey-driver had hinted at the name
Hammuna when he said that his father was a כּוֹנָה (nana), "fish" (above, page XXV4). The
rabbis concluded that he was the son of the late Hammuna, but now they realize that he was really Hammuna himself, re-
incarnated as a lowly donkey-driver. Father
and son are one and the same. Hammuna's
reincarnation is referred to (by his son) in
Zohar 3:186a–88a; cf. Zohar 2:94b–95a; ZH
97b–c (Tiq).

According to BT Berakhot 18a–b, the
phrase son of a living man (2 Samuel 23:20)
describing Benayahu refers to the fact that
Benayahu (or the righteous in general) are
called living even in death. In the Zohar, Rav
Hammuna, the donkey-driver, embodies
Benayahu anew.
They rose and tried to goad the donkeys, but they would not move. They tried to goad them, but they would not move. Frightened, they left the donkeys behind. Still today that spot is called Donkeys' Site.

Rabbi El'azar opened, saying, “How immense is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those in awe of You! . . . (Psalms 31:20). How great is the precious, supernal goodness the blessed Holy One intends to lavish upon humanity—for the supremely righteous, dreading sin, engaging in Torah—when they enter that world! The verse does not read Your goodness, but rather Your immense goodness. Who is that? The memory of Your immense goodness they express⁵⁰¹ (Psalms 145:7)—joy of life flowing from the world that is coming⁵⁰² to Vitality of the Worlds,⁵⁰³ who is the memory of Your immense goodness—immense goodness for the house of Israel . . . (Isaiah 63:7).⁵⁰⁴

“Further, How immense is Your goodness. Here is engraved a mystery of wisdom, all mysteries intimated here. מ (Mah), How, as has been explained.⁵⁰⁵ Immense—the immense and mighty tree,⁵⁰⁶ for there is another, smaller tree,⁵⁰⁷ but this one is immense, penetrating the vault of heaven. Your

In Kabbalah “the world that is coming” often refers to Binah, the continuous source of emanation. See Zohar 329b (IZ): “the world that is coming, constantly coming, never ceasing.”

⁵⁰¹ Cf. Bahir 106 (160); Asher ben David, Petirush Shelosh Eshre Middot, in Kabbalah 2 (1997): 593; Moses de Leon, Shegel ha-Qodesh, 26 (30); idem, Sod Eser Sefirot, 375; Zohar 1:83a, 92a.

⁵⁰² Vitality of the Worlds Yesod, who channels the flow of emanation to Shekhinah and the worlds below. On this title, see above, note 176.

⁵⁰³ house of Israel Shekhinah, also known as Assembly of Israel. See above, note 350.

⁵⁰⁴ Mah, How, as has been explained. Earlier (above, page XX30) Rabbi El’azar had explained that מ (mah), “what” or “how,” is a name for Shekhinah.

⁵⁰⁵ immense and mighty tree Tiferet, trunk of the cosmic tree. See Daniel 4:8.

⁵⁰⁶ another, smaller tree Shekhinah. See Zohar 2:95b; 3:70a; Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, 2:696.
goodness—the light created on the first day. That you have hidden away for those in awe of You, for He concealed it for the righteous in that world.

“That You made” (Psalms 31:20)—the upper Garden of Eden, as is written: The place You have made to dwell in, O YHVH (Exodus 15:17). This is the purpose of human beings—the lower Garden of Eden, where all the righteous abide in spirit clothed in a splendid garment resembling the image of this world. This is in the presence of human beings. The human beings of this world. There they stand, then fly through the air, ascending to the Academy of Heaven in that upper Garden of Eden. They soar and bathe in the dew of rivers of pure balsam, then descend and dwell below. Sometimes

308. light created on the first day Hevesed, the first of the lower seven se'hot, the seven primordial days. In the Torah, the word “good” appears for the first time in the verse describing this light: God saw that the light was good (Genesis 1:4).

309. He concealed it. . . See BT Hagigah 12a: “Rabbi Elazar said, ‘With the light created by the blessed Holy One on the first day, one could gaze and see from one end of the universe to the other. When the blessed Holy One foresaw the corrupt deeds of the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersion [the generation of the Tower of Babel], He immediately hid it from them, as is written: The light of the wicked is withheld (Job 38:15). For whom did He hide it? For the righteous in the time to come.’”

See Bereshit Rabbah 3:6; 41:3; Shemot Rabbah 35:1; Tanhumah, Shenini 9; Bahir 97–98 (147); Zohar 1:31b–32a, 45b–46a, 47b; 2:127a, 148b–149a, 220a–b; 3:88a, 173b.

310. That you made The verse continues: for those who take refuge in You, in the presence of human beings. Rabbi Elazar now concludes the verse that he began.

311. upper Garden of Eden Shekinah, the divine presence and dwelling, the culmination of the emanation that was made. Shekinah actualizes the various divine qualities.

312. all the righteous abide. . . Righteous souls who have departed this world abide in the Garden of Eden clothed in an ethereal body resembling their previous human form. The soul is clothed in this garment before descending to earth, retains it while in the physical body until shortly before death, and then regains it upon ascending.

See Zohar 1:38b (Heikh), 81a (ST), 90b–91a, 130a, 219a, 220a, 227b; 2:96b, 150a, 168b; 3:43a–b, 104a–b; Sion, in Tarbiz 24 (1955): 293–95; idem, Kabbalah, 158–59; idem, On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead, 291–73; Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, 2:770–73. Cf. Rashi on BT Hagigah 12b, s.v. ve-ruhot unshamot.

313. in the presence of. . . in the image of. . . The Hebrew word means both “in the presence of” and “corresponding to.”

314. Academy of Heaven. . . Where the souls of the righteous study Torah with God.

315. dew of rivers of pure balsam. Thirteen rivers of pure balsam await the righteous in the world that is coming. See BT Ta’anit 25a; Bereshit Rabbah 62:2.

In the Zohar, the rivers of balsam are the fragrant flow of emanation from Binah, who is known as “the world that is coming, constantly coming, never ceasing” (Zohar 3:290b [IZ]); see 2:127a; 3:181a.

The reference to dew recalls the rabbinic notion that God will resurrect the dead with dew. See BT Shabbat 88b; JT Berakhot 52a, 9b.
they appear in the presence of human beings, enacting miracles for them like celestial angels—as we just saw the radiance of the High Lamp, though we were not privileged to contemplate and discover further mysteries of wisdom."

Rabbi Abba opened, saying, "Manoah said to his wife, 'We will surely die, for we have seen God!' (Judges 13:22). Even though Manoah did not know its nature, he said, 'Since it is written: No human shall see Me and live (Exodus 33:20), and we certainly have seen, so we will surely die.' As for us, we have seen and attained this light moving with us, yet we are still alive, for the blessed Holy One sent him to us to reveal mysteries of wisdom. Happy is our share!"

They went on. They reached a certain mountain, as the sun was inclining. The branches of the tree on the mountain began lashing one another, emitting a song. As they were walking, they heard a resounding voice proclaim: "Holy sons of God, dispersed among the living of this world! Luminous lamps, initiates of the Academy! Assemble at your places to delight with your Lord in Torah!"

They were frightened, stood in place, then sat down. Meanwhile a voice called out as before, proclaiming: "Mighty boulders, towering hammers, behold the Master of Colors embroidered in figures, standing on a dais. Enter and assemble!" That moment, they heard the branches of the trees resounding intensely, proclaiming: The voice of appears cedars (Psalms 29:5). Rabbi El'azar and Rabbi Abba fell on their faces, immense fear falling upon them. They rose hastily, went on, and heard nothing. Leaving the mountain, they walked on.

317. High Lamp Rav Hama huna Sava.
318. its nature The divine nature of the angel, as indicated in Judges 13:16: Manoah did not know that he was an angel of . See BT Berakhot 61a; Gikatilla, Sha'arei Orah, 36b.
319. this light… Rav Hama huna Sava.
320. Holy sons of God… Souls of the righteous, such as Rav Hama huna, who circulate among humanity, spreading wisdom.
321. towering hammers See BT Berakhot 28b, where Yohanan son of Zakkai is addressed by his students as "Mighty Hammer." Cl. Zohar 3:206a, and 187a: "Rabbi Yehudah wept and said, 'Rabbi Shim'on, happy is your share! Happy is the generation! On account of you, even schoolchildren are towering, mighty hammers!'"
322. Master of Colors Apparently Metatron (see KP). According to TZ, intro, 73; 70, 119b, Metatron has the appearance of the rainbow (Ezekiel 1:28). He is often associated with the Heavenly Academy.
323. a dais . See Targum to 2 Kings 11:24; Radak, ad loc.
324. branches of the trees… In Perek Shirah (2:80), an early mystical text according to which every created thing sings a biblical verse to God, the trees of the field sing differently: Then all the trees of the forest
Upon reaching the house of Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya,\(^{325}\) they saw Rabbi Shim'on son of Yohai and rejoiced. \([7b]\) Rabbi Shim'on rejoiced, saying to them, 'Indeed you have traversed a path of heavenly miracles and signs. For I was just now sleeping, and I saw you and Benayahu son of Yehoyada, who was sending you two crowns\(^{326}\) by the hand of a certain old man to crown you. The blessed Holy One was certainly on this path! Further, I see your faces transfigured.'

Rabbi Yose said, 'Well have you said, 'A sage is preferable to a prophet.'\(^{327}\)

Rabbi El'azar approached, placed his head between the knees of his father\(^{328}\) and told him what happened. Rabbi Shim'on was frightened and wept. He said, "\(\text{YHVH, I heard what You made heard; I am awed}\) (Habakkuk 3:2). This verse was spoken by Habakkuk when he saw his death and was restored to life by Elisha.\(^{329}\) Why was he named הָבָאִיק (Havaaqeq), Habakkuk? Because it is written: \(\text{At this time next year, you will be שֶׁפֶת (hoveqet), embracing a son}\) (2 Kings 4:16). He\(^{330}\) was the son of the Shunammite! Furthermore there were two embraces\(^{331}\)—one by his mother, one by Elisha—as is written: \(\text{He placed his mouth on his mouth}\) (ibid., 34).

will sing before \(\text{YHVH}\) because He is coming to judge the earth (Psalms 96:12–13; 1 Chronicles 16:33).

Elsewhere too the trees exult in song at the revelation of secrets of Torah. See JT Hagigah 2:1, 77a; BT Hagigah 14b; Zohar 1:77a; Seder Gan Eden (Beit ha-Midrash, 3:138).

325. Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lekonya. See the beginning of this story, above, page XX295. As noted there, the Zohar changes Shim'on son of Yose into Yose son of Shim'on, transposing father and son. Similarly, the apparent son of Hamnuna turned out to be Hamnuna himself.

326. Two crowns. Two new words of Torah, each of which becomes a crown. The donkey-driver presented the rabbis with new interpretations of two biblical passages, one concerning the Sabbath, the other concerning Benayahu son of Yehoyada. See BT Shabbat 88a; Zohar 1:4b; 3:29a (IZ).

327. A sage is preferable to a prophet. See BT Bava Batra 12a, in the name of Amemar; Zohar 1:183b; 2:6b; 353a. Rabbi Shim'on's visionary power is unrivaled.

328. Placed his head... Placing one's head between one's own knees was a meditative posture in early rabbinic mysticism. See 1 Kings 18:42; Zohar 3:166b. Here Rabbi El'azar places his head between his father's knees before relating what has happened to them on the road.

329. Spoken by Habakkuk when he saw his death... The son of the Shunammite, who was born miraculously, died suddenly, and was restored to life by the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4), is identified by the Zohar with the prophet Habakkuk. See 2:4b–43a; 3:195a; and El'azar of Worms, Rimzei Haf-tarot for Shaw'ot (Scholem).

Habakkuk's desire to know secrets and his special intimacy with God are noted in Midrash Tehillim 7:17, 77a; cf. BT Ta'anit 23a. He appears as a paradigmatic mystic in Bahir 46–67 (68–69). This particular verse, which opens Habakkuk's theophany, appears again in Zohar 2:45a; 3:128a, 138b (IR). See Liebes, Studies in the Zohar, 34–35.

330. He Habakkuk.

331. Two embraces מֶשֶׁך (Habuqin), which explains the doubling in the name הָבָאִיק (Havaaqeq).
"I have discovered in The Book of King Solomon. He inscribed on him in words the engraved name of seventy-two names. For the letters of the alphabet that his father had originally inscribed on him flew away from him when he died. Now that Elisha embraced him, he inscribed on him all those letters of the seventy-two names. The letters of these seventy-two engraved names are 216 letters, all of which Elisha inscribed with his breath to restore him to life through the letters of the seventy-two names. He called him הַבָּנָק (Havaqqeq), a name fulfilling all sides: fulfilling embraces, as explained, and fulfilling the mystery of the 216 letters of the holy name. He was revivified with words, restoring his spirit, and with letters, reviving his entire body

332. The Book of King Solomon One of the many volumes housed in the real or imaginary library of the author of the Zohar. See 1:3b, 33b, 225b; Matt, Zohar, 25; and the comment on this passage by Shim'on Lavi, KP. ‘All such books mentioned in the Zohar have been lost in the wanderings of exile…Nothing is left of them except what is mentioned in the Zohar.’

333. He inscribed on him Elisha inscribed on Habakkuk, the son of the Shunamite woman.

334. engraved name of seventy-two names The divine name derived from the description of the splitting of the Red Sea: Exodus 14:19—21. Each of these three verses contains seventy-two letters. The name is composed of seventy-two triads (or "words"), according to the following pattern: the first letter of the first verse, the last letter of the second verse, the first letter of the third verse (forming the first triad); the second letter of the first verse, the penultimate letter of the second verse, the second letter of the third verse (the second triad); etc.

Revival by means of a divine name recalls the legend of the Golem, according to which dust could be animated by the recitation of magical names, and in fact Abraham Abulafia notes that the seventy-two-letter name animates the Golem. See Idele, Golem, 98–101; Liebes, in Kiryat Sefer 63 (1990–91): 1358–21. According to a magical text (British Museum 752:17, 107a), Elisha used the forty-two-letter name of God to revive the son of the Shunamite (see Scholen). Sefer Hasidim (ed. Wistinetzki, par. 219) states that Elisha was punished with illness for using the forty-two-letter name of God to curse a group of children who had insulted him by calling him "Baldhead" (2 Kings 2:23–24). As a result of his curse, forty-two of the children were killed by two she-bears.

On the seventy-two-letter name, see Legah Tov, Exodus 14:21; Bereshit Rabbah 44:19; Vayiqra Rabbah 23:2; Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah on 2:2; Hai Gaon, Otsar ha-Genim, Haggah, 23; Rashi on BT Sukkah 45a, s.v. ani; Ibn Ezra on Exodus 14:19; Bahir 79 (110); Zohar 1:17a; 2:51b, 132b, 270a; 3:150b–151a; Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition, 95–97; Kasher, Torah Shelema, 14:67, 284–86.

335. letters…that his father… Habakkuk, the son of the Shunamite, was born through the power of the letters of the alphabet, but not the particular combination of seventy-two triads of letters that Elisha employed.

336. 216 letters The total number of letters in the seventy-two triads derived from the three verses (Exodus 14:19–21).

337. הַבָּנָק (Havaqqeq) 216 letters… The name הַבָּנָק has a numerical value of 216.

338. with words The seventy-two triads, whose greater spiritual potency is required for the restoration of the spirit.

339. with letters The 216 individual letters, whose potency suffices to restore the body.
enduringly. So he was called Habakkuk; it was he who said, ‘יהוה, I heard what You made heard; I am awed. I heard what happened to me, my tasting of that world, and I am frightened.’ He began begging for compassion for his soul, exclaiming, ‘יהוה, Your action that You did for me, in the midst of years (hayyehu), may its life be’ (Habakkuk, ibid.). (hayyehu), like ציتو וחי (hayayv): its life. Whoever is bound to those primordial years, life is bound to him. Convey it in the midst of years (ibid.)—Convey it to that level that has no life at all.

Rabbi Shim'on wept and said, “From what I have heard, I, too, am afraid of the blessed Holy One.”

Raising his hands above his head, he exclaimed: “What a privilege that you saw Rav Hamnuna Sava, radiance of Torah, face-to-face! I was not so privileged.”

He fell on his face and saw him uprooting mountains, kindling lights in the palace of King Messiah. He said to him, “Rabbi, in that world you will be neighbors, empowered masters in the presence of the blessed Holy One.”

From that day on, he called Rabbi El'azar, his son, and Rabbi Abba ה' (Peniel), Face of God, as is said: For I have seen God face-to-face (Genesis 32:31).

Rabbi Hiyya opened, “The beginning of wisdom is awe of יהוה; all who actualize it gain good insight. His praise endures forever (Psalms 111:10). The beginning of wisdom—this verse should read The end of wisdom is awe of יהוה, because awe of יהוה is really

340. my tasting of that world My brief experience of death.
341. Your action … in the midst of years The verse concludes: ציינו וחי (hayyehu), revive it. Rabbi Shim'on reads this last word not as a verb but as a noun: its life.
342. those primordial years See Malachi 3:4. Here the phrase refers to the sefirot from הִסֵד through יסוד, flowing into שֵׁכִּינָה. See Zohar 1:38b; 2:105b; 3:134b, 138b (BR). They are also the six primordial days of the week culminating in the Sabbath of שֵׁכִּינָה.
343. that level that has no life at all שֵׁכִּינָה, who has nothing of Her own and is dependent on the flow from above.
344. him Rav Hamnuna Sava.
345. uprooting mountains In BT Berakhot 64a, Rabbah son of Nahamani is called “Uprooter of Mountains,” based on his sharp mind.
346. palace of King Messiah Also known in the Zohar as “the bird’s nest” (2:7b–8b). Cf. 3:164b; Seder Gan Eden (Beit ha-Midrash, 3:132).
347. He said to him Rav Hamnuna said to Rabbi Shim'on.
348. For I have seen God face-to-face The verse continues: and my life has been saved. After surviving his wrestling match with the angel, Jacob names the site Peniel. Perhaps here the name is understood in the plural: Penei El, Faces of God, referring to both rabbis.
the end of Wisdom. However, it is the beginning of entering the level of supernal Wisdom, as is written: Open for me gates of righteousness. This is the gate to YHVH (Psalms 118:19–20). Truly! For unless one enters this gate, one will never enter.

“This can be compared to an exalted king—high, concealed and hidden away—who built gates for himself, one above the other. At the end of all the gates, he fashioned one gate with many locks, openings, palaces—one above the other. He said, ‘Whoever wishes to enter my presence, this gate will be first. Whoever enters, will enter through this gate.’

“Similarly, the first gate to supernal Wisdom is awe of YHVH. This is כשעט ( reshit), beginning: ב (bet)—two joined together as one. These are two points: one hidden and concealed, one existing overtly. Since they are inseparable, they are called כשעט ( reshit), beginning—one, not two. Whoever attains one attains the other. All is one, for He and His name are one, as is written: They will know that You, YHVH, alone are Your name (Psalms 83:19).

“Why is it called awe of YHVH? Because it is the Tree of Good and Evil. If a person is deserving, it is good; if not, evil. [8a] So awe abides at this site, gateway to all goodness of the world.

349. awe of YHVH is really the end of Wisdom. Sh’kinah is called awe of YHVH because She is characterized by the power of judgment and inspires awe. See above, page XX230. She is also lower Wisdom, culmination of the process of emanation that begins at upper Wisdom.

350. gates of righteousness. This is the gate. Through Her one enters the realm of sefirot and can eventually ascend to Wisdom. See Zohar I:11b, 36b–37a, 141b; Gikatilla, Sha’arei Orah, 4b.

351. Similarly... The king in the parable symbolizes supernal Wisdom, who has fashioned the various gates (sefirot). The last gate, first to be encountered, is Sh’kinah, but even before reaching Her, one must pass through several levels of camps of angels, chariots, and palaces. See BT Shabbat 31a–b.

352. This is כשעט ( reshit), beginning: ב (bet)—two. The opening word of the Torah, כשעט (Be-reshit), In the beginning, alludes to both Wisdom (Hokmah) and Shekhinah. The letter ב (bet), the second letter of the alphabet, signifies “two,” and both of these sefirot are called כשעט ( reshit), beginning: Wisdom is the beginning of emanation, while Sh’kinah is the first gate on the spiritual path.

353. two points Hokmah and Sh’khinah. See above, page XX240.

354. Whoever attains one... Upon entering Sh’kinah, lower Wisdom, one encounters higher Wisdom, reflected in Her.

355. He and His name are one Sh’khinah reveals the sefirot, the various divine qualities, and is therefore called the name of God. See Zohar I:11a; 213a, 161b.

356. Tree of Good and Evil The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, whose fruit was eaten by Adam and Eve. In Kabalalah this Tree symbolizes Sh’kinah, who transmits either reward or punishment, depending on human behavior.