

# THE BOOK OF DEVIATIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Book of Deviations* [BD] § I, appeared in *Collected Articles on the Kabbalah* (Ithaca: KoM, 1985) as “The Book of Deviations: an outline of basic concepts and terms of Kabbalah presented in the light of the Kabbalah of Maat” (pp. 1-11).

BD §§ II and III were added to BD in 1993. The material in these sections was drawn from *The Notebooks of 5-416* (1982).

BD §§ I, II, and III were included in the 1994-5 edition of *The Kabbalah of Maat*, along with a three-page “Commentary on the *Book of Deviations*,” which had been compiled in 1993. Some additions from this commentary appear in the text {in brackets}.



THE UNIVERSE BENEATH *NUKVA*'S FOOT

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## THE BOOK OF DEVIATIONS

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(1984)

## I

ISAIAH 40:18

To whom then will ye liken HYHVH? OR what likeness will ye compare unto...?

*Zohar* 1:140a

HYHVH finds delight in the soul and in the body, as the soul resembles the supernal soul, and the body is worthy to be allied to the supernal essences, for the image of the body is part of the supernal symbolism.

*Etz Hayim* 11:6

The whole universe functions according to the principle of parthenogenesis.

Anthropomorphism is one of the glosses used in developing retainable notions of the numenal. HYHVH can be thought of as the components of one deific being in organic unity, or as five deific beings in dynamic interrelation. Body parts are attributed to such beings: “the eye of...,” “the hand of...” Mortal expressions are attributed to such beings: “the love of...,” “the wrath of...” More than this, however, is the notion that we are of the image of HYHVH, but we must realize that this notion of likeness is a mere convenience, as aggrandizing as it is merciful.

Requisite to our approaching Kabbalah are the following fixed terms regarding an ultimate deity:

*Derech ha Shem* I.1:6

It {היהיא} exists.

It is perfect.

It is necessary.

It is absolutely independent.

It is simple.

It is not {לא}.

We choose whether to make of these terms monumental truths or just rules of the game. The terms are set. There is an infinite out of which all came. In anthropomorphic imagery, then, this infinite gave birth to what is, in distinction to what is not. It moved within itself to conceive.

One map of the intermediate stages between the infinite and the temporal is the tree of life. This, too, is a metaphoric device, into which numerous other schemes can be fit. The tree, with its basic ten stages and the twenty-two paths which interconnect these, can be discussed not only in the vocabulary of kabbalistic abstraction but in the terminologies of astrology, psychology, tarot, tantra, colors, various pantheons—indeed, any set of components might be accommodated to fit.

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Before entering into a discussion of the tree, thought of both as the intermediary which is set between the hidden deity and the phenomenal world *and* as the scheme which constitutes the life workings of the revealed deity, we shall start at the beginning with the first condescensions of the deity toward creation.

INITIAL MANIFESTATION AND THE CIRCULAR ASPECT OF THE *SEFIROT*

Before anything was manifest, all was in potential. Everything was infinite. It could not be said that everything was within the deity because there was no such thing as within or without. All was absolute, infinite sameness.

In order to express a condition or to isolate a form, the infinite had to withdraw. It had to remove itself from a given spot. So the infinite withdrew from a certain area in its midst, forming a vacuole within the otherwise undifferentiated infinite. This was the space for creation, for all of the myriad differentiations, to exist. Even so, this space was not entirely empty, for a residue of what had previously filled it remained.

The withdrawal, or contraction, of the infinite is called *tzimtzum*. The space is called *tehiru*. The residue is called *reshimu*.

This space was perfectly round: a circle or a sphere. The contraction was effected equally in all directions around an empty middle point.

The infinite re-entered this space in the form of a line. The upper part of the line extended from the infinite; the lower part extended to the midpoint of the spherical space. This line was like a thin pipe through which light from the infinite flowed into the space in which creation was to be. Slowly at first, the line started to flatten. Then, more rapidly, it dispersed and became like a wheel. This wheel rounded out and detached itself from the absolute sameness out of which it came. If, at this point, the wheel had touched the infinite, it would have bled back into sameness with it. Only the original line attached the great wheel to the infinite.

The wheel eventually became ten concentric circles, called attributes (*middot*). They are the means of supervision and administration through which measures of light are channeled into creation. The circles are also called counts (*sefirot*) to express that they are of fixed amounts and of a limited number. There are ten counts.

Found here, in the initial stages of creation, are the first instances of the separation of limitation (*din*—judgment) and outpouring (*rahamin*—compassion, or *hesed*—mercy).

{An excerpt from the commentary:

When the infinite contracted itself, not all of its substance was withdrawn; a residue, *reshimu*, remained. *Reshimu*, then, is the first substance which is *other* than the infinite; latent within it are

1. the desire to differentiate
2. the desire to limit
3. the desire to separate

Here is the root of all damage. Yet, here too is the foundation of existence. Lo, it was the very impulses found in the *reshimu* that the infinite desired to extricate from itself once it had corrupted itself with the thought of something other than itself. In the infinite, thought becomes itself. }

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## THE FORMATION OF THE TEN CIRCLES

As the line was extended, it coiled around to become a circle. It extended again and coiled to form a second circle. This continued until there were ten circles.

The first circle, closest to the infinite, is called “crown” (*keter*). The second is called “wisdom” (*hokhmah*). The third is “understanding” (*binah*). The fourth is “mercy” (*hesed*); the fifth is “justice,” or “judgment” (*din*); the sixth is “beauty” (*tiferet*); the seventh is “victory” (*nezah*); the eighth is “glory” (*hod*); the ninth is “foundation” (*yesod*); the midst of these is sealed with “knowledge” (*da'at*). “Knowledge” appears between “understanding” and “mercy” in the scheme of concentric circles.

These circles include all aspects of all manifest worlds. These original ten are the prototype of all creations. It is here that the process of infinite division begins.

The ten circles are but one aspect of the *sefirot*.

## THE ASPECT OF THE FIVE FACES AND THE TREE OF LIFE

The ten circles are identified with the first of the five faces (*parzufim*). Inside of the initial ten circles, the other four faces are formed, each consisting of ten circles. These four are manifest in a particular sequence, the plot of which connects with the emanation and creation of the tree of life, which is a configuration of the *sefirot* in three pillars—left, right, and middle.

The first face (*parzuf*) is also identified with that aspect of the infinite which wills things to occur—things such as *tzimtzum*, the re-entry by the line, or, as in the aspect about to be described, the evocation of primal form.

The second aspect begins with *tzimtzum*, as did the first. The space formed was again a circle, but this circle began to manifest the strains of polarization, becoming diamond shaped, with upper, lower, left, and right points. The top half of this diamond was the primal form of will, given the elemental ascription of fire (*shin* ן). The lower half was the impression of this fire, which is a reflection of the will cast into the medium of the infinite. To this impression is given the elemental ascription of water (*mem* ם). Between the two, at their meeting place, is created air (*aleph* א).

Thus, there were four components in the midst of the infinite:

1. *not*, in which the will arose to progress with creation beyond *tzimtzum*, being the first face, A”A - *Arik Anpin*, the will of wills.
2. the vessel of the will, the element fire, being the face *aba*, father, the will.
3. the vessel of the will’s impression upon the surrounding infinite, the element water, being the face *aima*, mother.
4. that which is created at the meeting place of *aba* and *aima*, the element air, being the face Z”O - *Zeir Anpin*, the son.

At this stage of creation, the son (Z”O א), rather than mediating between and harmonizing *aba* and *aima*, separated them. A”A reacted to this woeful condition by extending *nukva* (*beth* ב), the daughter, out of its own nature and substance to rectify the state of creation.

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*Nukva* is the fifth face.

*Nukva* extended from the top to the base of the creation as it was. By her actions and those of A”A, the universe was set into the form of the tree of life in three pillars, called “the aspects of rectitude”:

1. A”A remained at the top of the mid-pillar as the *sefirah keter*.
2. *Aba* was set at the head of the right pillar as the *sefirah hokhmah*.
3. *Aima* was set at the head of the left pillar as the *sefirah binah*.
4. Z”O was expelled from his position and identification with *aleph* (air) and lured into *tiferet*.
5. *Nukva* completed the tree by assuming the *sefirah yesod*, then rose to the *sefirah da’at* as a permanent station in reflection of A”A.

## THE FIVE WORLDS

ISAIAH 43:7

Even everything which is called my name: for I have created it (*barativ*) for my glory, I have formed it (*yezartiv*); yea, I have made it (*asitiv*).

*Sha’are Kedusha* 3:6

Below it there are four universes: *azilut*, *beriyah*, *yetzirah*, and *asiyah*. Below them is the physical world, consisting of the elements. The elements and their spiritual counterparts are divided just like the ten *sefirot*.

The five worlds bear a relationship to the five faces, but, unlike the faces, the worlds get progressively denser as they descend.

The first of the five worlds is that which corresponds to A”A. This is the world of the hidden lights, or flashes (*tzahtzahot*). There are three such flashes: one retained by this first world, one which is the source of *azilut*, the second world, and one which is the source of *briah*, the third world.

These second and third worlds are so bound together that they are virtually inseparable. *Azilut* is the world in which the activities of the faces take place. *Briah* is the world in which the results, or impressions, of these actions are formed and recorded. While functionally inseparable, there appears between these two worlds a curtain or covering (*massah* or *prassa*) which is a grim residue affected by the separation which Z”O caused between *aba* and *aima*.

*Azilut* corresponds to *aba*. *Briah* corresponds to *aima*.

The fourth world is *yezirah*, which corresponds to Z”O. This world echoes that which is established in *briah*, but in a denser form. It is this world which has a direct bearing on the individual spirit.

The fifth world is *asiyah*, which corresponds to *nukva* in the phase which preceded her ascension to *da’at*, being her position upon founding the base of the tree in *yesod*. *Asiah* has a direct bearing on the individual instinct.

Below these five is the physical world, or elemental realm, which reflects the movements and stresses of all of the worlds above it. In the physical world are all of the powers phenomenally actualized. It is in this realm that both the intentions of the deity and the intentions of mortals find their expression.

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The physical world is associated with *malkut*, which at one time was treated as one among the *sefirot*.

*Likutei Amarim* 2:9

The life-force in physical action is as cogent as the life-force in the letters of speech (*asiah*), which in turn is as cogent as the life-force in the letters of thought (*yezirah*), which in turn is as cogent as the life-force and level of the emotion attributes from which thought is derived (*briah*), which again is as cogent as the life-force and level and degree of wisdom (*hokhmah*), understanding (*binah*), and knowledge (*da'at*), the source of the attributes (*middot*).

## THE SEFIROT

*Keter* is the intermediary between the infinite and the *sefirot*, even as A”A is an intermediary between the infinite and the faces. It is the root and soul of the *sefirot*, yet remote from them.

*Zohar* 3:288b (*Idra Zutta*)

It is a head unlike any other; no one knows, nor can anyone know, what is in that head, for it is not attached to either wisdom or understanding.... For this reason is the holy ancient one (*keter*) called nothing....

*Hokhmah* represents the act of the beginning of creation. It is not the beginning of existence, for here existence is, as yet, a potential. It is not creation but the will to create. It is an activity, but still nothing.

*Zohar* 1:30b

*Bereshith* (in the beginning). The word *reshith* (beginning) refers to the supernal wisdom; the letter *beth* (i.e., *bayith*, “house”) designates the world, which is watered from that stream which enters it....

*Binah* is the establishment of creation, being the expansion and extension of *hokhmah*. By *binah* is *hokhmah* formed, for it is the impression of the activity of the will which is cast upon the medium of the infinite. The agent of the infinite, in this context, is *keter*. That portion of the infinite which gathers the impression becomes *binah*. Hence, there is established a basic substantive affinity between *keter* and *binah*.

*Da'at* stabilizes the interaction of *hokhmah* and *binah*. *Da'at* is also in deep affinity with *keter*; *da'at* serves as *keter*'s revelation. *Da'at*, too, functions as an intermediary, but between the supernals (*keter*, *hokhmah*, and *binah*) and the *middot* (the remaining six *sefirot*). In relation to *da'at* as revealed, the supernal *sefirot* are concealed—hidden as nothing: AYN - יאן [A = *keter*, Y = *hokhmah*, and N = *binah*].

*Hesed* and *din* reiterate the action of *tzimtzum*, for *hesed* is the merciful outpouring, whereas *din* is limitation. *Hesed* is thus thought of as kindness; *din* is thought of as law, or judgment (restriction, like *tzimtzum*).

*Tiferet* compounds *hesed* and *din*. If *da'at* is the soul of the *middot*, *tiferet* is the body of the *middot*.

*Hesed*, *din*, and *tiferet* represent the essences of the *middot*—the polarization of *hesed* and *din*, and the synthesis of their stress, *tiferet*. *Nezah*, *hod*, and *yesod* develop these essences into hosts of activity both in extension and reflection of the *sefirot* above. *Yesod* is a most important *sefirah*, for it is the foundation of the world.

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OTHER ASPECTS OF THE *SEFIROT*

When the *sefirot* are in the form of ten concentric circles, they are called *iggulim*.

When the *sefirot* are in the form of a body divided into organs they are called *yosher*:

<i>hokhmah/binah</i>	-	brains
<i>da'at</i>	-	mouth
<i>hesed/din</i>	-	arms
<i>tiferet</i>	-	torso
<i>nezah/hod</i>	-	legs
<i>yesod</i>	-	genitals

Each *sefirah* is divided into *orot* (lights) and *kelim* (vessels). The *orot* are emanations from the infinite which are not changed throughout the worlds. Their apparent levels and distinctions come from their *kelim*. Since the light of the absolute is infinite and unchanging, it is the purpose of *tzimtzum* to create *kelim*.

In a relation similar to the *orot* and *kelim* are the qualities of *pnimiyut* (inwardness) and *chitzoniyut* (outwardness). The *pnimiyut* is the innermost core and essence of a *sefirah*. The *chitzoniyut* is the outermost aspect.

## THE BREAKING OF THE VESSELS

The breaking of the vessels is an image parallel to the failure of Z"O to mediate and harmonize. Z"O is often identified with the six lower *sefirot* as a group: the *middot*. These are the vessels which shattered upon their initial reception of *orot*. This put the universe in disarray and forced the fixing of the end (*din*, rigid structure) before its time. *Tikkun* (reparation) was affected by *nukva*, who is the *shekhinah* (presence) and the *messiah*. It is she who set the universe in balance so that lower reflected upper and left reflected right. This process reflects the transition of the *sefirot* from *iggulim* to *yosher*. Through *yosher*, *nukva* was able to restore most of the fragments of the shattered vessels of Z"O. That portion of the fragments which were not restored became *kelipot* (shells, or husks) of the *sitra ahra* (other side). The *kelipot* conceal sparks of the infinite light with four layers. The sparks can be released by acts which imitate those acts performed by *nukva*, who extended from the highest to the lowest. Such an act (called *birur*, extrication) occurs when one of us approaches the *kelipot* in the knowledge (*da'at*) of their concealed divinity. This brings about a lesser *tikkun* in reflection of *nukva's* great *tikkun*.

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## THE FIVE PARTS OF THE SOUL

Our own extension from the highest to the lowest involves the integration of our five parts of soul. These five bear relation to the five faces and to the *sefirot*:

<i>yehidah</i>	A”A	<i>keter</i>
<i>hiah</i>	<i>aba/aima</i>	<i>hokhmah/binah</i>
<i>neshama</i>	<i>nukva tikkun</i>	<i>da’at</i>
<i>ruah</i>	Z”O	<i>tiferet/middot</i>
<i>nefesh</i>	<i>nukva birur</i>	<i>yesod</i>

*Yehida* is the spark of the infinite contained in our deepest parts. It cannot be apprehended directly.

*Hiah* is the life-force generated by *binah* in relation to *hokhmah*. It cannot be apprehended directly.

*Neshama* is the part of the soul through which notions of the *hiah* and *yehidah* may come. It is the intermediary between the universal and the personal.

*Ruah* is the personal life-force and spirit in a complex of three phases: *aleph*, *tiferet*, and *mem* (mind, self, and image).

*Nefesh* is the soul of instinct and feeling. It connects broadly but obscurely with *neshama*. *Nefesh* is the life-force which powers the body (*guf*).

*Etz Hayim*, Branch 5.

...from the mysticism of the ear is extended the breath and wind from within and without. This is the real *neshama*; the breath from the nose is *ruah* and that from the mouth is of the *nefesh*.

{Excerpts from the commentary:

With all of the divisions on which we base our perceptions, recall that there is no change in the infinite whatsoever.

There are two ways to attribute the parts of the soul to the *sefirot*: neither is true; both are true. The attribution preferred is based on whether one considers *keter* as transcendent or integral to the tree and its workings.

If one considers *keter* as transcendent, then *hokhmah* is parallel to *yehidah* and *binah* is parallel to *hiah*. Hence, *hokhmah* is the absconded “body” out of which the sparks of souls are extricated, each the result of its own *tzimtzum*. Here, *yehidah* is the motivator stirring *hiah*. This configuration assumes separation from the source.

If one considers each human as a total universe, then *keter* is *yehidah* as born to the entire world above it. *Hiah*, then, is the stress between *hokhmah* and *binah*, as denoted by the *shin* path with runs between them, called by some “life force.” Here, *hiah* is a development of *yehidah*. This configuration assumes perpetual—even if hidden—connection with the source.

The part of the soul called *neshamah* is parallel to *da’at* and the hidden power (or gate = *sha’ar*) within (or behind) it: לל אנה or ללנא. In this place is the deepest mystery of the mind. “It moved within itself to conceive.” This is where desire and image are [still] blended as one. This is the seat of perception and presence.

The part of the soul called *ruah* is parallel to the complex including *tiferet*, which includes *hesed*, *din*, *nezah*, and *hod*. This is the “psychological” arena. Because this part of the soul contains a parallel to *tiferet*, it is vulnerable to the influence of the *sitre ahra*, the “other side.” Woe to the person who believes that *ruah* is himself or herself.

“...behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” —JOB 28:28}



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## II

The infinite cannot be named, but certain words are used to refer to it: *en sof* (nothing), *illat ha-illot* (cause of causes), etc.

In some schemes, the infinite and *keter* are considered to be the same. In other schemes, the infinite is queen, while *keter* is the elder. Or the infinite is not revealed, while *keter* is revealed. The infinite is cause; *keter* is caused.

In the infinite are the roots of *keter*. In *keter* are the roots of emanation, and these roots are the ten *tzahtzahot* (flashes). These ten predict the *sefirot* of emanation. These flashes arise within the *mahshavah* (deep thought) of *keter*.

There is another *mahshava*: *hokhmah*, or shallow thought—that is, *hokhmah* is *keter*'s shallow thought. Some say that there are only three flashes, one flash for each of the supernals (*keter*, *hokhmah*, and *binah*, though some say the three are for *hokhmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*).

Within these flashes is all that ever may exist.

Rabbi Moses Cordovero insisted that there were three flashes bound as inextricably together as thinker, thinking, and thought; they seem to be three, yet none can be removed from the other two.

*Keter* contains the holy brain which cannot be known in any way. It is miraculous that it is known to exist at all.

The deep thought, which remains in *keter*, partially consists of the will to become. The shallow thought, which is passed to *hokhmah*, partially consists of the will to rule. Hence, the shallow thought, even within the deity, is the root of all turmoil and separation.

The entire domain is *shekhinah*, personified as *nukva*, the daughter. The subjects are *malkut*, personified in distorted and unnatural images of *nukva* as the bride.

The *shekhinah* is the presence of the infinite.

The *shekhinah* is that which brings all into actualization.

The *shekhinah* is undefilable. She is with us, however, to be drawn upon to extricate the vitality from dis-harmonious forces. [As we have stated, dis-harmonious forces have their root in *hokhmah*, for within *hokhmah* are separations created by the will toward false (or artificial) unions.]

The *shekhinah* is the method and hope of reparation and reunion.

*Zohar* 3:130b:

The name of A" A, concealed from all, is alluded to in the Torah only once. This was when Z" O swore to Abraham, "By myself I have sworn, (by) the word of the Lord" [GENESIS 22:16]. These were the words of Z" O. Further, it was said, "By you shall Israel bless" [GENESIS 48:20]. This means the ideal Israel. Further, it was said, "Israel, in whom I shall be glorified" [ISAIAH 49:3]. In both of these verses it is clear that Z" O is called "Israel," and that it is A" A that does so.

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A”A’s name for Z”O here is, of course, an insult, though it is not generally recognized as such. Indeed, the insult cuts both ways.

A”A = *keter*; Z”O = *tiferet*.

*Hokhmah* is the second *sefirah*. *Hokhmah* means “wisdom,” “sophia.”

PROVERBS 8:22

The Lord created me (*hokhmah*) at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.

JOB 28:28

And he (God) said to man, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom (*hokhmah*).”

1 ENOCH 48:1

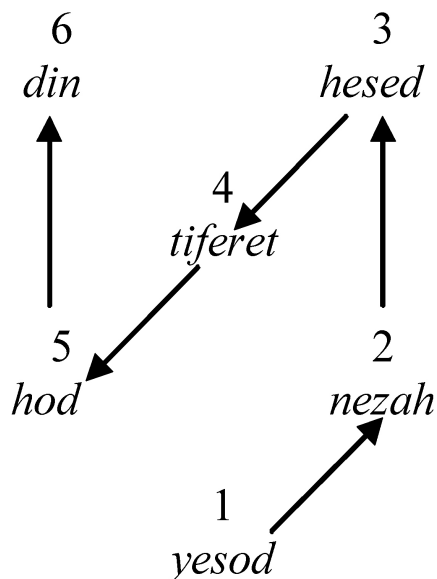
...I saw the fountain of righteousness, which does not become depleted and is surrounded completely by numerous fountains of wisdom. All the thirsty ones drink of the water and become filled with wisdom.

The ironic import of these verses is clear enough. Elsewhere (2 Enoch 30:8), this “God” shows his distance from wisdom by making commands to it.

*Binah* is the ultimate overseer of the great cycles (*shemittot*).

Each cycle is about 2000 years and has the character of one of the six lower *sefirot*. There is a seventh cycle in the chain; it is 2000 years of utter silence and darkness, for everything returns to *binah*.

The procession of *shemittot* follows the characters of the *sefirot* in the following order:



The procession’s path resembles the shape of the letter *lamed* (ל). We are now in the period with the character of *din*.

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## Tradition:

The powers of *din* (Kings of Edom) tried to construct worlds, but failed because they were dominated by the quality of judgment. But Rabbi Moses Cordovero realized that these “aborted worlds” were not really of *din*. He said they were of an aspect of *keter-in-hokhmah*, and that they failed, not because of too much *din*, but because of too little. Also, the Kings of Edom dissolved because of their nearness to the infinite.

Cordovero made a slight error—an error of implication. The *hokhmah* of which he spoke is not *in keter* in the sense of being mingled with it or necessary to it. At the stage of coming-into-being spoken of here, *hokhmah* was surrounded by the infinite (will of wills = *keter*), for there was nothing else. The failed worlds were formed by *hokhmah*’s momentum (to evolve in upon itself). Of course, these worlds failed because of *hokhmah*’s intrinsic imbalance, which made it “angry.” It was only when the infinite replicated itself (in *binah* as *tzelem*) that the universe could form, though *hokhmah* still provided it with distress and divorces.

## Resurrecting the dead kings:

By cleansing the spikes of primordial waste caused by the failed worlds’ crumbling.... The spikes are dangerous shards, but they may, in some instances, be re-assembled to form “likenesses” of un-divine worlds—tessellations of the other side (*sitra ahra*).

In the old worlds (Edomite Kings) there was a mixture of [the potentially] good and [the potentially] evil. They were not reflexively constructed [*i.e.*, constructed with understanding], so they were destroyed.

The universe is ruled by the *shekhinah*’s “right scepter,” or, better translated, “scepter of fairness” (PSALMS 45:7). This shows the blend of mercy and justice.

Her judgment flows from her love, yet her love tempers her judgment. The rule of justice is hers to sustain or suspend. She exacts this rule through (the *sefirot*) *hesed* and *din*. The *shekhinah* held (holds) back the flux that would prevent humankind its free will (a hopelessly complex pair of words). This withholding is a certain compassionate manner of self-imposed subjugation (for in sustaining our free will she must be “in our midst.” Remember that this subjugation is not necessary for the *shekhinah*; it is a demonstration of her judgment and mercy).

There is nothing *shekhinah* must do.

In her withholding, yet nearness, is the mystery of how she sustains the world, both physically and spiritually.

The body serves the mind, yet so too does the mind serve the body. And both of these serve the soul, and the soul serves both. And these three (body, mind, and soul) serve the spirit, and the spirit serves the three. And these four reify [give expression to] the spark, and the spark gives the being. All in service to all.

...or are they all put to death

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## III

There is ultimately one great soul. This great soul is set into the pattern of a perfect body, with all of its limbs and organs. This great soul is an aspect of the *shekhinah*, or *nukva*.

Each individual soul is a spark from the great soul. The nature of each soul is determined by which part of the body of the great soul it is from—its root. One living being can contain as many as three sparks, usually all from the same root.

There is also the occurrence of groups of people with an affinity of souls, or common root, working together to regain their spiritual origin. The ultimate goal of all living beings is to reconstitute the whole of the great soul.

However, though all life seems cut from one or another part of this great soul and is apparently separated from it, the great soul lacks nothing and remains forever whole.

Sparks of souls cycle through many earthly “lifetimes,” some say as many as 1000. But human lives are confused with other types of earthly existence. All things have some manner of soul, and all things evolve. It is the nature of soul [and of matter, such as it is] to perpetually change in form yet remain the same in essence.

Because of their source, all souls are good. By the fact of their existence, all souls are bad. The bad of a soul is according to its degree of separation from its source [or root].

The great soul is an aspect of the *shekhinah*, who descends and ascends. It is she who structured the universe as it is.

As *tsade* follows *pe*, so did *shekhinah*'s [*nukva*'s] building follow Z"O's shattering.

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The mystery of the *shekhinah* is hidden. The *Zohar* betrays itself.

*Zohar* 3:256b (*Raya Mehemna*)

“It is a continual burnt offering” (NUMBERS 28: 6) [continual burnt offering = *olat tamid* - עלת תמיד]

This is the *shekhinah* that (always, *tamid*) rises (*olah*) to the upper regions through this level (of Z”O, *tiferet*), as it is said of it [in the *Musaf Kedushah*]:

“Evening and morning, every day, continually, and they say twice, in love, ‘Hear, O Israel.’”

She rises through the central pillar, which is continually with her, without any separation [between her and it] whatsoever.

To what place does she rise? To that place from which she was made [in this case, emanated], which is *en sof* [the infinite], and higher than any of the *sefirot*.

Hence, they have taught: the [continual] burnt offering rises [completely and all the way] to the highest [place]. When the *shekhinah* rises, the *sefirot* cling to her [as she passes through them] and they ascend along with her.

The *shekhinah* is of the same essence [substance] as the infinite; hence, all souls are of the same essence as the infinite. This is, however, just one aspect of the soul.

\* \* \*

The *shekhinah* was hewn from the infinite; each soul was hewn from the *shekhinah*. One day, all souls will return to their places within the *shekhinah* and it will then be known that she is the *messiah*. So too will the *shekhinah/messiah* return into the deeps of the infinite and all will be one.

The shadow of the infinite is *ayin*, no-thing; materiality is *yesh*, being. The whole of *yesh* aches for its return to *ayin*.

The aspect of the infinite which extends is *nukva*. The aspect of the infinite which sustains is *shekhinah*.

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There is but one essential substance.

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