

PART 1

רבון עלמין דאנת הוא חד

Usually translated, incorrectly, as: Master of the Universe. You are One.

But no one needed the prophet Elijah to tell us God is One. The proper translation is: Master of the Multiverse - (there is no universe) because only You, God are One.

What we call the Universe is full of opposites and pluralities; hardly a unity, at all.

The letter *Dalet* attached to the front of the word, דאנת - *D'Ant* 'That You', tells the real story. We call God, *Ribon Almin* רבון עלמין - Master of the Multiverse and not רבון עלמא *Ribon Alma* because we want to emphasize that Oneness is Godly - only God is really One.

רבון עלמין דאנת הוא חד

Immediately after Elijah explains why we refer to God as רבון עלמין *Ribon Almin* - Master of the Multiverse and not *Ribon Alma* because we want to emphasize that Oneness is Godly - only God is really One; Elijah hastily interjects the caveat - 'but not a number.'

ולא בחושבן

But not, God forbid, a number. 'You, God, are not Numero Uno, neither First not Prime. Your Oneness is not numerical at all.'

Elijah is afraid we may think of God as one - 1, where 1 is an integer. It's too definite.

God is ONE! One is a word; and who can define one, the word? Keep it vague.

אנת הוא עלאה על כל עלאין

'You are higher than all highs,' Elijah continues, cryptically. Now, if Elijah is referring to a hierarchical world of angels and supernatural beings, we hardly need reminding that God is higher than those. God is *Elyon* - Most High, yeah, so?

We live in a world where most people think that Love is the highest thing there is. Entire religions and anti-religions are based on ideas like these, that love or loving-kindness or transcendent non-judgment, or unqualified acceptance, or boundaryless sharing are the highest possible ideals. These concepts themselves are subject to changes in fashion. In ancient times people revered loyalty, bravery, fealty and honesty, while in different places at other times, Majesty, Glory and Power seemed to do the trick.

That none of it has anything to do with what or who God is, is what Elijah is pointing out. While we are happy to call God Powerful and Loving and True and Glorious, these things have absolutely nothing to tell us about God and nothing to do with the truth of who God is. Nada, *Gornisht*, because God is higher than all highs. No matter how high you can think an ideal might be, it's still not God.

So, while it's ok to say 'God is good,' it's not ok to think we are actually describing God.

סתמא על כל סתימין

'More inscrutable than any obscure thing!'

D'you know what the most hidden things in the universe are? They're the laws of nature governing the universe.

Where does it say that a photon cannot go faster than the speed of light, just where is it written? Does the photon know how to read the law even if it is written somewhere?

Obviously not. If that's the case, then you have to say the laws of nature are written into the things themselves. But scientists are looking and looking all the time, and the closer they come to finding a theory explaining why things behave as they do the further away they end up, because the secrets go deeper and deeper. Chemical elements behave the way they do because of the properties of the atoms of which they are made. Atoms behave the way they do because of the four basic forces governing matter. Matter behaves the way it does because of mathematical formulae that

say it must be so, it cannot behave any other way and remain consistently true to itself.

So, Elijah warns us, 'Don't go thinking, now, that God behaves the way He does because of the way He is. God is not God just because of the stuff of which He is dictates it be so. God is not dictated to by the laws governing HisSelf. There are no hidden blueprints for God's consistency, constancy and constitution intrinsic, somehow, to the truth of God.'

Divine hiddenness is way beyond such elementary, gross and corpuscular hiddennesses.

לִית מַחְשְׁבָה תִפְסָא בְךָ כָּלֵל

'There is no thought that grasps anything about You, at all.'

We think of God, we talk about God, we pray to God and meditate on God, but as soon as we examine our own words they appear deficient. God is One - Yeah. But not a number. God is everything Great - Yeah. But not with greatness. God is everything Hidden - Yeah. But not with hiddenness. So we stop talking and ponder a moment, gathering our thoughts.

"Now," says Elijah. "It's obvious that thinking is no help. No help at all. Thinking about You doesn't help us collect our mind because mind is not the vehicle to carry the Self to You, or You to us. Mind is a construct of the brain whereby it is capable of examining itself, as though from the outside. We don't have the tools to grasp God, who is everywhere."

But, wait a minute. Perhaps thinking of God as the mind of the Universe is the way to overcome all our difficulties?

Neh! 'There is no thought that grasps anything about You, at all,' is another way of saying that trying to describe God as Mind - Thought solves nothing.

God is not a thought.

אַנַת הוּא

"You are Him,"

Why, when talking to God in the second person, 'You', do we suddenly have to swap, change and move to the third person, referring to God as Him?

Because when we talk to God, saying, 'You', as in '*Baruch Ata Adonai*,' 'Blessed are You, God', we are talking to ourselves.

When I am speaking to God I am speaking into the deepest inside of the inside of myself, not to something or someone outside of me. When I whisper, 'You', to my God, I am shouting into the well of my soul which bubbles up from the abyss where the source of Life pulses like the heart of a supernova.

But when I talk about the Creator, I need a reality outside of me, or else I end up with a solipsistic view of the world, that nothing exists outside of me and my sensations. If I believe that my mind is the whole of reality and God; that the external world has no independent existence, I'm really asserting 'I and only I, myself, exist', in other words, no reality exists other than my own mind.

But I desperately want to be able to talk about the Creator.

דְּאַפִּיקַת עֶשֶׂר תִּיקוּנֵינִי

'Who extrudes the ten *Tikunim*' *Tikunim* cannot be translated into English, but a close approximation might be to think of these 10 effects, somehow, the way we think of Space and Time; familiar things we all know and recognize, without necessarily being able to define or explain.

וְקָרִינֵן לְהוֹן עֶשֶׂר סְפִירֹת לְאַנְהָגָא בְּהוֹן

"Which [10 Effects] we refer to as Ten Sefirot, in order to use them."

'We can't use electromagnetism, thermal expansion or atomic decay directly in our religious, spiritual or emotional lives, but that doesn't mean we don't want to,' says Elijah. 'We want to be in *Imitatio-Deo*, copying everything God does; to be like Him as much as possible. But the Ten *Tikunim* - Effects with which God runs things simply don't

translate into useable techniques or tools for people.'

What we've done, instead, is to call on a microcosmic system of Sephirot to mirror the macrocosmic system of Tikunim. My favorite example of this micro/macro substitution is something called Asymptotic Freedom.

Asymptotic freedom is a feature of quantum chromodynamics (QCD), the quantum field theory of the nuclear interaction between quarks and gluons, and of little interest or practical application to individuals not fascinated with cosmology and physics. But listen, when it is boiled down it means this. Protons, the solid bits at the center of atoms are comprised of quarks which come in sets of three. When they are infinitely close to one another, pay careful attention, the three act as though they are completely free of one another and are free to travel in the direction of their choice at the speed of light, or as close as makes no difference. They are so tightly bound to one another that they are, to all intent and purpose, completely free to go their own ways. Try to separate them and they start slowing down. But you cannot pull one completely apart from the other two. It takes so much energy to remove one quark from the other two that doing so actually creates a new quark, because $E = mc^2$.

That bit of physics is a consequence of 10 Tikunim - Effects.

As a consequence of the 10 Sephirot that we use, we extrapolate that God, Torah and Israel are One (Zohar III 73a) displaying asymptotic freedom of the most blatant and sublime kind. Because of our infinite closeness to God and Torah we are in a state of perpetual Herut - Freedom from them, free to go and do as we wish without them stopping or interfering with us. But as soon as we attempt to leave the union we slow down and cease displaying that degree of freedom of choice and movement. And because we are in infinite union with God He acts as though we were not there at all. The Torah is so much a part of us and who we are that it does not appear to interact with us in the least bit; remaining aloof, pristine and

unaffected.

עלמין סתימין דלא אתגליין

"Closed worlds, not revealed,"

A closed world is anywhere or anything wherein God is hidden.

God tells Adam not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, for on the day that he eats of it he will surely die. God's reasons are hidden because it is a closed world, not revealed. All Adam is told is the consequence of eating. Along comes the serpent and reveals God in the eating, 'God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God,' the serpent tells Eve, without permission. 'You'll know good and evil.'

Whenever you expose and reveal God from a closed world, God departs and the revelation is a dead one.

'Here's the stuff God doesn't want you to know,' explains the serpent. 'I'm giving you all the insider information because it's important for you to know what's going on. It's very serious.'

The serpent knows everything, but has no sense of humor whatsoever, doesn't 'get' the concept of laughter and cannot even imagine what kind of joke God is telling with Creation, Humanity and the Tikunim - Effects.

'It is much easier,' says G. K. Chesterton. 'To write a good Times leading article than a good joke in Punch. For solemnity flows out of men naturally; but laughter is a leap. It is easy to be heavy: hard to be light. Satan fell by the force of gravity.'

דאתגליין [סתימין] ועלמין

"And [closed but] revealed worlds."

All we had to do was say, 'Thank you,' to the serpent. 'For the information,' and live on with it for a short while longer. We needed to sit with the knowledge that by eating the fruit of the tree our eyes would be opened and we would know good and evil. Think about it.

Ponder it. Shrug our shoulders and move on, while carrying it. Allow the information to become part of our consciousness.

By acting on it immediately we revealed what God wanted hidden, convincing God to leave that hidden world; our revelation was a dead one.

If, instead, we had lived with the closed world, if we had made the hidden part of it a part of us through our practice and usage, which is to say, had we avoided eating from the tree of knowledge while maintaining our awareness of God's reasons, a short time would have passed and it would have become part of us. As soon as God's hiddenness becomes a real part of us, humans, God no longer departs when we reveal it or Him.

וְאֵת הַיָּדוּעַ הַזֶּה לֹא יִשְׁכַּח לֵן וּמִיִּיחָד לֵן

"And You are the One binding them and unifying them"

The Hebrew word, קשר *Kesher* doesn't actually mean a knot, the way it's usually translated. As we see from the Mishna in Shabbat the word means a splice. The forbidden *Kesher* of Shabbat is something done to the rope that passes through the nose of a camel or closes the mouth of a fish net which makes knotting unnecessary. The loop through the nose of the camel is not a bulky knot because splicing interweaves the strands of rope to become seamless. Knotting is done by interlacing, twining or looping the cord or rope into a knob or lump.

When the Gemara talks of God, קושר כתרם *Kosheyr Kesbarim* - tying crowns to the Hebrew letters, it means weaving strands, the way ancients used to weave wreaths of laurel, oak and other thin branches to put around the foreheads of victors as crowns. They are not tied or knotted, they are plaited, interwoven or spliced, so as to become a single circlet of leaves.

The Tikunim and the Sephirot are seamlessly interwoven into a loop, a singular whole whose effect is continuous and flawless. To the mind's eye they appear as one circular

strand of cause and effect, joining everything that has existed since the beginning of time with everything that will happen until the end of time. There is no way that I can look at your face and see the protons and electrons from which your atoms are made. Similarly, there is no way I can look at the universe and see the individual Tikunim and Sephirot of which it is shaped and warped.

וּבְגִין דְּאֵת מְלֵגוּ כָּל מְאֵן דְּאֶפְרִישׁ חַד מִן חֲבֵרֵיהּ מִן
אֵילִין עֲשֵׂר

"And because You are inside, whoever separates one of these ten from another"

Before elaborating on the Sephirot in the form we are grown familiar with, Elijah wraps up his mention of the Ten *Tikunim* - Effects with a clear warning. Be aware that the universe is ten-dimensional. (3 dimensions of space, 1 added dimension of Time, plus 6 more we will simply refer to as *Nefesh* - rather than try a quick synopsis of N=8 Supergravity) God is the inside of Life, the Universe and Everything, with emphasis on the Everything. When we said earlier that God extrudes the Ten Tikunim, we did not mean to say they are now apart from God, disconnected or self-contained after having been brought into autonomous existence. That we can somehow create a Large Hadron Collider under a mountain, using it to accelerate particles so powerfully that we bring new particles into existence, which we immediately smash and observe so as to understand how things really ARE, does not mean that God is not present. Suggesting that God is not in a particle, in an event or in any particular place is a pagan idea. Whoever separates one Tikun - Effect from another,' says Elijah

אֶתְחַשֵּׁב לִי הָאֵילִין אֶפְרִישׁ בְּךָ

"Is considered to have made a separation in You" It is not as though God were sitting there, in Heaven, with a wreath around His forehead woven of Ten Tikunim, so that pulling the strands of Tikunim apart from one another it of no great moment, no big deal. That is not the picture we need to have in mind. The wreath, so to speak, does not sit

upon the forehead of God like a crown. There is no forehead of God. There is no sitting there in heaven. There is no there, there. God is the inside of every strand, because, **אין עוד מלבדו** *Ain Od Mihvado* - there is nothing else, but Him.

וְאֵלֵּין עֶשֶׂר סְפִירוֹת אֵינֻן אֲזַלִּין כְּסֵדֶרָן

"These ten Sephirot go in order"

In order, means beginning with the first, ending in the last.

'You should know, says the Izbicy. 'All Jewish leaders who over-exert their energies, putting too much effort into ushering the final redemption - to bring the Messiah, before such time as it has arisen in the Divine Desire to complete the redemption, are called *Moshiach ben Yosef*. Almost before our history began, the Tribe of Ephraim tried forcing the issue, fighting their way out of Egypt, marching for the Land of Canaan, even before Moses was sent to redeem us. Their corpses lay strewn, by the thousands, on the road through Gaza; a reason, as we read in the Gemara, Sanhedrin, why God did not take us by the Palestine Road out of Egypt. The cause for this behavior is rooted inside Joseph - *Yesod* - Fundament, and is a part of him. It stems from the terror of being assimilated, of being mixed into the seed of gentile nations. Those very Jewish leaders, our shepherds, suffer horribly, as the prophet, Isaiah, describes, '... he is pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brings us peace is upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray'...'

None knows better than Elijah, the Harbinger, that the Sephirot proceed in order, implacably and inexorably.

The redemption will be brought about by God, through the good offices of His servant, David - *Malkhut* - Sovereignty, in good time, because even the miraculous is orderly.

חַד אַרְיָךְ, וְחַד קָצֵר וְחַד בֵּינֻנִי

"One long, one short and one in between."

I won't go as far as claiming it is equal to Maxwell's equation, but these six words describe 'lines of force' almost identical to those posited by Michael Faraday to explain why an electric current is induced in a closed electrical circuit when the magnetic flux enclosed by the circuit changes in either magnitude or direction.

We see it most clearly with the sounds of the Shofar

1st) *T'kia*, an unbroken 'Long' sound: _____ it neither starts nor stops. A continuous sound.

2nd) *Sh'varim* which is a broken 'Short' sound: ___ ___ ___ it starts and stops in gaps and breaks. Not a continuous sound.

3rd) *T'rua*, an alternating current of sound: _ _ _ _ _ starts and stops so fast there are no gaps or breaks. It is a continuous sound even though it is made of broken pieces strung together.

Faraday realized that an electric force is only induced when there is CHANGE in the magnetic field, that a magnetic field is only created when there is change in the electric charge.

When something changes all the time, over and over, without ceasing, the changes produce an effect that is, itself, unchanging, like the a/c current powering all our kitchen equipment. All our electric generators, dynamos, motors and such are examples of Faraday's thoughts in action.

Faraday and the Izbicy were contemporaries. The year 1840 saw the opening of the Gates of Wisdom, according to the Zohar, and both these men saw visions along similar lines.

The Izbicy notes in many places that spikes of force, perpendicular to the current of events, shoot outward whenever there is a sharp change in the flow. Extra caution is required at times of changeover, because its effects are felt everywhere in unpredictable ways. So, for instance. If we had understood that there was a major change happening at the time, we

would not have been so surprised when the Jewish People began complaining about the manna; being bored and sick of it, demanding meat in the wilderness.

Moses' time was over, it was Joshua's time to lead us into the land. Although nothing appeared different on the surface of things, Moses was still the authority and leader, Eldad and Medad were spontaneously prophesying 'Moses dies; Joshua brings us into the land,' and we, the people, suddenly felt a desperate craving for meat because meat represents what comes after and beyond manna-bread, a taste of the world to come, a glimpse of the Promised Land, a place Moses was not privileged to visit or dwell. Because the effects of changes can be felt even before the changes themselves are apparent.

When epochs ends, when fields collapse, new charges are born, spreading outward at the speed of light, unseen perhaps, but always sensed in some manner.

וְאַתָּה הוּא דְאֵנְהִיג לָוֶן וְלִית מָאן דְאֵנְהִיג לָךְ

"It is You who drives and guides them, while no one is driving or guiding You,"

Newton's third law states: To every action there is always an equal and opposite reaction.

What this means in practice is that when I jump six inches into the air, the entire globe of Planet Earth reacts by moving away from me equally and oppositely. It may sound and feel counterintuitive, but it's true nonetheless. The size of Planet Earth matters not at all to the truth and consequence of Newton's law.

I might have thought that the same is true of God, that the things I do for or against God have an impact and cause a reaction. or, conversely that every act of God has an equal and opposite reaction in God, therefore Elijah emphasizes, yet again, God's unassailable inviolability and imperviousness.

לֹא לְעֵילָא וְלֹא לְתַתָּא וְלֹא מְכַל סְטָרָא

"Neither above nor below, nor from any direction."

In the words of Job, 'If you sin, how does that affect God? Even if you sin again and again, what effect will it have on Him? If you are good, is this some great gift to Him? What could you possibly give Him?' (35:5-6)

'Above' and 'Below' refer to good and evil, respectively. Neither all our highest righteousness nor any lowest sin makes a difference to God. Any changes that occur, do so in our perception, nowhere else.

'Nor from any direction,' means from any side of God. 'Sides of God' is a reference to angels, as in Biblical literature God is described as surrounded by angels. The words that God utters, as it were, are the angels carrying out His directions.

The words God speaks do not affect God.

Try, if you can, to wrap you head around that concept.

לְבוּשֵׁי תְקִינַת לָוֶן

"You effected clothing for them,"

We originally tried understanding the Ten Tikunim whereby God fashions the Universe, and imagined Ten Sephirot instead. The Tikunim are universal laws governing the nature and behavior of Space, Time and Soul; familiar things we all know and recognize, without necessarily being able to define or explain.

It is one of the most ancient beliefs of man that 'this visible world is but a portrait of the invisible.' Elijah, in his speech, explains why the universe appears that way to us and how it can be integrated into Torah and Worship.

The Sephirot have clothing, he says, that God made.

Tikunim have clothing, too. When galaxies collide, or when apples fall off trees to the ground, for example, the Tikunim are clothed in laws of gravity first described by Isaac Newton: *'every point mass in the universe attracts every other point mass with a force that is directly proportional to the product of their masses and*

inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them.' There's a way of writing that sentence in mathematical notation which my email program does not support. The question is, of course; Where is it written - where in the world are the laws governing the world written?

The answer is that they are written in the Word of God which creates the world on a moment-by-moment basis.

We took the laws of the universe, re-imagined them as behaviors, *Midot* - Characteristics of Personality, and divine Intentions, and called them Sephirot. Now, Elijah tells us, God helps the process along by assigning words to the Sephirot, by clothing the Sephirot in Divine Breath, by describing them and naming them, they evolve from ideas into processes. As soon as that happens,

דְּמִינֵיהוּ פְּרָחִין נִשְׁמָתִין לְבָנֵי נֶשָׁא

"so that from them souls can fly to people."

People's souls are uttered and breathed from the Mouth of God.

Humans are not born human. Humans are born Golem. We have to be taught language in order to become human, that's how God made Adam, changing him from a Golem of earth to a Speaking Soul. God breathed into him. God breathed words into him. What words?

The words that clothe the Sephirot, the words that describe and shape them. And just as humans are a product of language, Elijah maintains, so, too, are the Sephirot a product of language.

וְכַמָּה גּוּפִין תִּקְיֵנַת לוֹךְ

"You effected a variety of bodies for them [the Sephirot]"

If someone is completely invisible, how do you discern his shape?

You could touch him; feel him all over from head to toe, that would give you lots of information. But what if he cannot be touched, felt or reached by any of the senses

how can you tell his shape?

Put clothes on him, dress him.

The tighter the clothing the more information you'll have about the invisible man. If you can get latex gloves on his hands you can see everything but his fingerprints. The more constrictive the dress, the more information you'll have.

So, God dressed the Sephirot in words and description, the result of which is that they are now:

דְּאֵתְקָרְיָאוּ גּוּפָא לְגַבֵּי לְבוּשֵׁין דְּמַכְסֵינָן עָלֵיהוֹן

"Called bodies, relative to the clothing covering them."

They now have added physical shape or dimension relative to the clothing of names and words in which they are described. 'Not only are people a product of human language, the Universe is a product of language, too,' says Elijah.

Does the shape of the universe dictate the shape of the human body, or does the shape of the human body dictate the universe? If I see the humanity of Adam and Eve as a product of their language, and language itself the product of God's breath breathed into Adam, then it is not so far fetched to see the universe shaped by human language.

וְאֵתְקָרְיָא בְּתִקְוָנָא דָּא

"They are named to this effect"

Both body and clothing of the Sephirot are effects of naming, and naming is an effect of language. Language is an effect of word sounds and letter combinations breathed into Adam by God, so you might expect the results of naming to be Godly, Divine, Spiritual or at least, Ethereal. But it is left to Adam to do the naming, and the results are only too predictable; look, even God has a human shape now! A head, hands and legs, a heart, a mouth and eyes...

The Sephirot are just so, only more so.

חֶסֶד דְרוּעָא יְמִינָא

"*Hesed* arms the right,"

One of the mysteries of humanity is its right-handedness. After more than 150 years of serious research dedicated to understanding the causes of 'handedness' no one has a decent hypothesis to explain why humans are at least 70% right-handed. (Some put the figure much higher; 95%) If it were a simple correlation between left brain language dominance and right handedness, you'd expect to find at least some right-brain language dominance in left handed people, but you don't.

Elijah explains it thus: Between brain and hand there is a lever 'arming' it. In the case of the right it is *Hesed*. Arm is a noun, verb and adjective.

גְבוּרָה דְרוּעָא שְמָאלָא

"*Gevurah* arms the left"

Hesed arms the right while *Gevurah* arms the left; but where do they both come from?

King David explains it most poetically in Psalm 145:4-7

דָּוִד לְדֹר יִשְׁבַח מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וּגְבוּרָתֶיךָ יְגִידוּ

Usually translated as: 'Generation to generation praises Your works, And Your mighty acts they declare,' what it actually means is, 'Generation upon generation giving praise, is Your work, God. And it is Your might in them making them able to recite things.'

הָדָר כְּבוֹד הוֹדֵךְ וְדַבְרֵי נְפִלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֶשְׁיַח

Usually translated as: 'The honor - the glory of Your majesty, and the matters of Your wonders I declare,' what it really means is, 'It is the glorious honor of Your beauty speaking, and You, miraculous, talking in me.'

וְעֲזוֹ נִוְרָאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ וּגְדוּלוֹתֶיךָ אֶסְפְּרָנָה

Usually translated as: 'And the strength of Your fearful acts they say, And Your greatness I recount,' what it really means is, 'It is Your

awesome power saying their words, and Your *Hesed* in me making me declare.'

זָכַר רַב טוֹבְךָ יְבִיעוּ וְצִדְקֹתֶיךָ יְרַנְּנוּ

Usually translated as: 'The memorial of the abundance of Your goodness they send forth. And Your righteousness they sing,' but what it actually means is, 'It is the memory of Your great goodness in them speaking, and Your righteousness in them that sings.'

God, says Elijah, breathed not just words into Adam, but the essence, if such can be said to exist, of God. God animates us with Himself, arming us, right and left with everything He, so to speak, is.

תִּפְאֶרֶת גּוּפָא

"*Tiferet*, body"

'You don't have a soul,' thunders C. S. Lewis. 'You are a soul. You have a body.'

Judaism takes another view, entirely. Christians believe that when God takes on a body, that body is another god like *yoshke*.

We, Jews, believe that when God clothes Himself in the flesh it is in *Tiferet* - Glory, inside us human beings, in our bodies. Because God, Torah and the Jewish People are One, and *Tiferet* is in the holy kishkes, the bowels and viscera of the Yid where God roils in love and longing, where the Torah burns hot and sour, sweet and salty. Where a Yid knows what's what.

When my father, of blessed memory, used to rebuke me for doing something wrong, he would say, 'Hershy, can't you feel it in your water; didn't you feel it in your kidneys that it was the wrong thing to do?'

I would generally shake my head vehemently and sullenly, refusing to acknowledge the truth of it. But the truth of it was, Yes. I felt it there.

Where else?

נְצַח וְהוֹד תְּרִין שׁוֹקֵיךָ

"*Netzach* and *Hod*, two thighs"

Not, 'Netzach, right thigh; Hod, left thigh', rather, Netzach and Hod - two thighs.

Regarding Chesed and Gevurah there's no contest, everyone knows which is the greater, which is preferable and which triumphant. Chesed wins, we want it to win; we pasken like Hillel not Shamai. We wrap the left inside the right and attempt at every turn to quash the left and frustrate its evolution.

The triumph of the right is Netzach, a robust and perpetual state of benevolence, while the evolution of the left is Hod - Beauty. Greater fragility than Hod; a more sensitive equilibrium of systems is difficult to imagine. More unique than a single captive snowflake, and more easily destroyed; so much as breathe on Hod and it is no more, fix it only with your eyes and it is ruined.

Elijah reminds us that Netzach is not the ascendant, transcendent or supersessionary value we intuit or think proper. Netzach and Hod are equal in weight and significance, a balance of force.

Benevolence without super-sensitivity is just another tyranny, an omelet of broken hearts, a never ending feast of fast food.

Beauty on its own is a high priest without a temple, without a religion or even an appointment.

Who is more indispensable, rabbi or cantor, lawyer or schoolteacher, farmer or cook?

The Shulchan Aruch *paskens* that we hire the cantor over the rabbi when we can only afford the salary of one.

Moses or Aaron, if you had to, which would you choose?

Who is greater, it is possible we suggesting they are both greater?

Netzach and Hod, Elijah tells us are a matched pair, both paradoxical and miraculous (because the miraculous is always paradoxical) two mutually exclusive opposites coexisting in perfect balance and harmony.

וְיֵסוֹד סִיּוּמָא דְגּוּפָא

"and *Yesod*, the completion of the body"

The body is Tiferet and the completion of the body is Yesod.

The Daughters of Zelafechad occupy the very last portion of the Torah, as was discussed. The Sons of Joseph came complaining to Moses that their tribal inheritance would be diminished by a fraction if the Zelafechad women were to marry out into another tribe. At the time we wondered how the Torah could finish on such a petty, small-minded and peevish note?

Here Elijah explains it. Yesod is represented by Joseph and Joseph is the completion of the Written Torah. What comes after Yesod is no longer the Written Torah. The written Torah ends with Joseph, and not some big-shot from the tribe; not a tribal leader or prince, but with the women of one outcast family, whose father desecrated the Sabbath and interfered with the coming of the Messiah. Had he not committed his act of public disgrace, the whole of history would have been wound up in short order, the mystery of all mysteries would have revealed itself immediately. Had the Jewish People kept two Sabbaths, the Gemara says, we would have been redeemed immediately.

The Sabbath belongs to Moses, it is his gift to the Jewish People because God gave it to us in Moses' honor. Zelafechad ruined it purposefully and willfully. Messiah son of Joseph has to die whenever he tries to manifest, that's how history works. It's a deep worn groove, too deep to simply jump out of. You can try changing history, but it is built on a powerful spring that will bend so far and suddenly readjust itself to its original path. Lots of people have tried to change its direction without noticeable success. Zelafechad was not even the first.

'Not to worry,' says Elijah. 'That too is the course of history, for Yesod completes Tiferet, by reintroducing it to the paradoxical nature of Life, which is to say, the pure and simple word

of the heart after it has been remixed, blended and synthesized through Netzach and Hod, kidneys, thighs and testicles.'

How do the pure and noble feelings we have in our heart for the one we love get translated into sex?

It's messy. Tiferet ends in Yesod.

אות ברית קדש

"letter/sign of the sacred covenant"

The final letter in the Book of Numbers is the letter ו *Vav*, the sign of the sacred covenant, the Great Connector.

חכמה מוחא

"*Chokhma*, brain"

In describing the Sephirot Elijah began with arms and legs, torso, thighs, genitals and then mouth, the lower functions, so to speak, finite and measurable. Why only now does he approach the Sephirot of the upper triad, dealing with *Mochin* - the mind?

Possibly because brain function, what makes *Homo-Sapiens Sapiens* is frankly not all that pretty. *Homo-sapiens* is a bit of a monster, actually; just read a little history and see it for yourself. It's *Homo-Spiritualis* who is the marvel, and he's a product of action; often in spite of his thinking or in defiance of it. So, first we are introduced to the 'lower' Sephirot, those of action, beginning with *Chesed* -Loving-kindness, just to make sure we know what's what.

But the deeper reason is this. *Malkhut*, the mouth utters speech, which is the Oral Torah, i.e. the *Shechina*, an expression of the divine reflected inside each of us, our individual mirroring of God. But *Shechina* does not originate in the human mouth, She is expressed in speech, but speech itself is an expression of something deeper.

ואיהי מחשבה מלגא

"Which is thought on the inside."

בינה לבא

"*Binah*, heart,"

If Chokhma is brain, Binah is heart. If the brain thinks, the heart feels emotions. But this seems a purely arbitrary designation, to have chosen some interior body part and attribute all sorts of mysterious workings and arcane knowing to it. Why did the ancients not keep Binah inside the head, why not think of emotions as happening in the brain, together with cogitation?

We generally use the word 'emotion' without understanding where it comes from, but it derives from the French *esmovoir*, and describes something which, Stirs, Agitates, Moves, Disturbs or Excites us. Earlier it came from the Latin *exmov?re*, to Move Outward, to Remove. In modern times we think of emotions as noticeable physiological changes in the body accompanying certain types of thoughts. Changes in heart-rate, quickened breathing, reddened skin color and sweating, increased secretion of hormones like adrenalin as a reaction to certain stimuli. But we can have all these physiological reactions to a thought, we don't actually need sensory input for emotions to grab us.

Elijah is struggling with the same fluid definition when he says Binah is Heart. Binah literally means Understanding. Understanding happens in the mind, in the brain, in a similar location to Chokhma - Wisdom. But Binah in Kabbalah does not mean understanding, it means the stage after pure thought, the next step. What happens when a thought moves us to act; what do we call that process, when the idea is *exmov?re* - moving outward from the brain to the body, when we switch from thinking to acting?

ובה הלב מבין

"With it the heart understands."

The heart is not in the head, it is right at the center of the seven lower Sephirot, where all the action occurs. Binah - Understanding is what happens when a thought moves outward from Chokhma - Thought, to the tools of

action, i.e. the arms and legs. That thought has to pass through Binah - Heart, that indefinable organ of dynamic fluidity where e-motions are processed, manufactured and expressed.

ועל אלן תרין כתיב הנסתרות ליהו"ה אלהינו

"It is about these two [Chokhma & Binah] the verse says, 'Hidden things [belong] to the LORD our God.'"

We know exactly what our Chokhma - Wisdom thinking is, don't we. Or, do we?

Subjectively, I know I'm writing this sentence because I'm thinking the thought of it as I write this, but we have very little idea of the mechanics of thinking. I know nothing of what's going on inside my skull, in the grey matter called brain, how these thoughts are coming at me and how the 'me' in me fits into this process of thinking. I wouldn't actually know I have a brain unless someone who has seen one told me about it or showed me pictures of a skull like mine with the top removed. And there's nothing in those pictures to teach me the smallest thing about thinking or thought processes. You can show me a living heart and I can see it pumping blood. I believe there are certain living creatures so delicate and transparent that their beating hearts can be seen through the skeleton. I have never heard of a brain that can be seen, heard or smelled thinking.

Scientists have created all sorts of mechanical models, CAT, MRI and other sort of scanning devices, some much more sophisticated than those. But they are no more than representations. They don't explain thinking any more than the computer programs which convert music into two dimensional representation that you can see on your computer screen explain what the sound of music is.

Creative thoughts, Elijah emphasizes, are very mysterious, emotions even more so; who but the Creator really understands the process?

It's not important, says Elijah, for us to spend our energies trying to delve into the interface between brain and endocrinal systems in order

to worship God and study Torah. Such mysteries may safely be left to the Creator. The lower functions, on the other hand, the seven Sefhirot, of the arms, thighs, torso and genitals, are very much a part of our own domain, our property to rule or not as we would. It is, absolutely, worthwhile exerting all the energy at our command in order to understand the workings of Chesed - Lovingkindness and Gevurah - Withholding. The more we understand, the better equipped we are to learn Torah, worship and grow. That's why we attribute biblical personalities and archetypes to each of the seven lower Sefhirot, so that we can project ideas and model behaviors around them. We can create a narrative out of their lives whereby we educate ourselves and others.

Chokhma and Binah, however, are too complex, counterintuitive and mysterious for those sorts of comparisons and analyses. Leave them be and trust them to function without research.

כתר עליון איהו כתר מלכות

"*Keter Elyon*, the Crown Most High, is *Keter Malkhut* - Crown of Sovereignty"

The crown of God is the crown of *Malkhut*. Two sentences previously Elijah said that *Malkhut* is the mouth, what we call Oral Torah, i.e. Torah not read from a text but recited (by mouth) from memory.

Now Elijah says that the two crowns - of *Elyon* the Most High and *Malkhut*, Sovereignty - are identical; the two Sefhirot, the first and last, *Keter* and *Malkhut* are virtually the same thing.

This is a touchy subject. If I try and put into words what Elijah is hinting at in this opaque sentence I may be misunderstood and/or accused of heresy, profanity or silliness. That's why Elijah doesn't say explicitly what he means; doesn't say anything much about the Sefhira of *Keter* except to compare it to another Sefhira and leave it to us to do the deduction. Humans don't really have words for this sort of stuff. But, the English language is different to anything previously spoken by humans, and there may be things that can be

said now that were never previously possible.

The history of the world is the narrative of how God goes from being [the] Nothing to being the I Am. Did you notice that linguistic trick I just used?

Can you see the vast difference between calling God, Nothing and calling God, the Nothing?

Nothing is not something, because nothing is not anything. The Nothing, however, is definitely something because it has the definite article, 'the', in front of it.

There is a Hebrew word **אין** *Ain* - Nothingness. The three letters of that word, *Alef Yod Nun* can be rearranged to spell the word **אני** *Ani* - I am.

In the first Sefhira, God is *Ain* - Nothing, in the last Sefhira, God is *Ani* - I Am. How God can ever be nothing, is not merely a mystery, it's silly. Let's just assume that the word, Nothing, is used relative to what God is in our mind at this time. Now, God is the great, I Am. The difference between God, the Nothing and God, the great I Am is a process called 10 Sephiroth. It begins with God in one state and ends with God in another.

God, it goes without saying, does not actually change from one state to another. But the process of the Sephiroth that Elijah is describing, begins with *Keter*, something indefinably outside, something that is nothing actual, something crown-like, and ends with a mouth. The mouth speaks, saying, I Am.

וְעַלֵּיהּ אֶתְמַר מִגִּיד מְרֵאשִׁית אַחֲרֵית

"About [Keter] it was said, "Tells the end from the beginning."

About *Chokhma* and *Binah*, Elijah told us, things are written. About *Keter*, Elijah tells us, however, things are said. Because speaking puts the finishing touch to the act, beyond which no changes are possibly.

Elsewhere we discussed the various stages of Creation:

The world of *Atziluth* - Archetypes. I decide to build me a house where I will be comfortable and raise my kids once I get married.

The world of *Briyah* - Creation. It will be a dwelling house, on two floors with an excavated cellar, four bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, a 4 car garage and a tennis court.

The world of *Yetzirah* - Formation. I will make 3245 red bricks for the walls, 2200 sq feet of windows, 700 sq feet of roofing slates, and 4 cubic yards of asphalt, 22 mahogany doors, 4300 2" nails etc. etc.

The world of *Assya* - Doing/Fixing. The foundations over on that side of the house will have to be extra strong because the ground there is undermined by the creek, and the trees over that corner will shed their leaves into the guttering unless I cover them with mesh, and windows facing south had better have blinds or shutters or the sunlight will perish the varnish on the floors, etc etc.

The world of *Dibbur* - Speech. "I did not intend this room as a playground, this is the spare bedroom, which will remain neat and tidy in case guests arrive unexpectedly. So, you kids had better get all these toys back into your own room, or else I will trash them."

Speech has the last word, even beyond the final act. Because speech can give meaning to the final act in ways that even change the act after the fact.

But with God, Elijah reminds us, the 'telling' of the end is right there, in the beginning. Once God decided on Creation, on the evolution of you and me, the final word had been spoken.

וְאִיהוּ קְרִקְפֵתָא דְתַפִּילִי

"It [Keter] is the skull of the Tefillin."

Skull is to the the brain what *Keter* is to *Chokhma*, which is to say it is outside, beyond, surrounding it, not inside and part of it.

Tefillin is to *Keter* what *Keter* is to *Malkhut*, it is

the evolution of a concept from being merely a prominent idea, into a knob of hard substance; a physical projection.

Malkhut is the mouth.

The mouth is not just a hole in the head for eating and ingesting food. Mouth expresses all the higher worlds of ideas and feelings. Mouth says things.

Tefillin are to the skull what the skull is to the brain. Mouth is to Tefillin what Tefillin are to the skull. Words are to Mouth what mouth is to Tefillin. One is to Word what word is to Mouth.

In the Tefillin God wears on His skull, what does it say? "Who is like Your people, Israel - a nation of One, on earth."

In the Tefillin we wear on our skull, what does it say? "Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One."

מִלְגָּאוֹ אֵיהוּ יוֹד הָא וְאוֹ הָא

"Inside is the divine name, *Yod Heb Vav Heb* (YHV"H),"

Here we are little technical, but it cannot be entirely avoided. So, bear with me.

Inside the Sefhirot, which is to say, at the center, in the Sefhira of Tiferet, the torso, body or kishkes of this archetypal human we have been examining, there is a Name of God, a Tetragrammaton written with the four letters *Yod Heb Vav* and *Heb*.

But each of those four letters is itself a word. The letter *Yod* is also the word *Yod*, and as such has its own spelling, it is written thus, יוד *Yod Vav Dalet*.

Heb is written thus, הֵא *Heb Alef*.

Vav is written thus, וָאוֹ *Vav Alef Vav* and the final *Heb* is again written הֵא *Heb Alef*.

The four letter name of God *YHV"H* has a Gematria - numerical value of 26. But once it is written in full using these ten letters (*Yod He Vav He*) instead of four letters, it has the

Gematira of 45. There are four ways of writing out these four letters as words, each having a distinct and separate Gematria, and each has a distinct personality, attributes and effects, the way that carbon dioxide has completely different effects from carbon monoxide, though both are simply carbon and oxygen. Elijah is very specific here about which of the four permutations he is talking about. The Name with the Gematria of 45 is the name of מ"ה *MAH*.

The Hebrew word, *MAH*, means, 'what'. At the center of all Sefhirot and, by extension, at the core of existence itself is the question, What? Or, to phrase it the way Elijah wants us to parse the conundrum; at the core of all Existence is the statement, "God = What?"

דְּאֵיהוּ אֶרְח אֶצִּילוּת

"This is the path of *Atziluth* - Archetypes."

There are four Gematiras - Numerical Values of the fully evolved Divine Name, *YHV"H*; they equal 72, 63, 52 and 45. In this sentence Elijah emphasizes the primacy of the Name of 45, the Name of מ"ה *MAH* - What?

What is the World of *Atziluth*? Well, the first time the concept of *Atziluth* appears in the Torah, its headquarters so to speak, is in a complaint uttered by Esau against his father upon discovering that Isaac had bestowed his blessing upon Jacob, as we read:

After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, "My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing."

His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?"

"I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn, Esau."

Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game

and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him - and indeed he will be blessed!"

When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me - me too, my father!"

But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing."

Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" Then he asked, "Didn't you **אצלת** - *Atzalta* set aside blessing for me?" (Gen. 27)

Atzilut is to set aside, whether physically or mentally, by deed or word or thought, to reserve something. This is What God has done to us and for us. This is how God has done us, by thinking us in thinking of Himself, asking the question and making the statement which boils down to the same thing, What am I, God?

אִהוּ שְׁקִי דְאִלְנָא בְּרוּעוּי וְעִנְפוּי

"It [YHV^H] saturates the tree, through its limbs and branches,"

I heard a Torah from Dr. Moshe Rothkopf in the name of Reb Shlomo Carlebach from whose mouth he heard it.

Esau cried bitterly to Isaac about the ways in which Jacob cheated him out of a blessing. But Jacob's response merely quotes Esau's own words back at him. Esau asked his father Isaac, 'Didn't you **אצלת** - *Atzalta* set aside blessing for me?' (Gen. 27:36)

'In the world of *Atziluth*,' Jacob says to Esau. 'You're the one who gets blessed. All I get is the laying on of the hands and the words, while you get the first primary gush of love and emotion.'

'You see what it is,' says Reb Shlomo. 'When I say to my daughter, 'Come here; I want to give you a hug. I can't go another instant without holding you in my arms.' I have already

blessed her in my love. Even before she comes to me for the hug, I have already inundated her completely with the feelings I have for her. The physical hug is merely an acting out of the original wave of feeling and blessing.'

'Compared to what our father Isaac gives you when he says, 'Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die,' Jacob argues with Esau. 'What I receive is a mere shadow of a blessing; the actions and the words. You have the *Atziluth*, the meaning, the purpose, the intent of it all.'

But Esau was implacable. 'No,' he shouted and raged. 'No!' For Esau, as his name, **עשו** indicates, respects and values only what counts in the world of **עשיה** *Assiya*, he doesn't give a toss for what rules in *Atziluth*.

But you see what Elijah is telling us here, YHV^H of *Atziluth* is what flows through the Tree of Life, the Name of **מה** *MAH* - What? is the primary blessing, the only real source of Life. Anything else, all other possible permutations of the Name (**ע"ב** *AV* = 72, **ס"ג** *SAG* = 63 and **ב"ן** *BON* = 52) are temporal and temporary, arguable and qualified.

Nothing is as authoritative as the original Thought of God and the reason why He chose to create us all. No matter how far from the source, from the stem we deviate, limb to branch to twig to shoot, we are an extension of the original thought of God, nothing less. But for Esau to accept that he had already received the essential blessing when his father said, "so that my soul may bless you before I die" Esau would have to internalize the truth of *Atziluth* that the end is right there in the first thought, at the beginning and from the beginning the end is always present and right there, the way *Keter* is inside *Malkhut*, the way the head is already there inside the *Tefillin*, the way One is already there inside the Word. But for Esau to accept such a truth he would have to accept the primacy of *Kavvanah* - Intention. For Esau that would be tantamount to affirming that Israel is both First Thought and final objective, something he has dedicated every shred of decency and all eternity to

denying...

כְּמִיָּא דְאֵשְׁקִי לְאֵילָנָא

"Like water suffusing a tree,"

Ever wonder how a tree as tall as a redwood can get water all the way from its roots to its top leaves? Water is pretty heavy, yet the redwood tree moves thousands of gallons of water (that's 8,000 pounds, or 4 tons) up into its canopy every day, more than 400 feet off the ground, without using muscles or pumps. The basic, mechanical engineering answer is that the water is moved through 'Capillary Action' of the thin fibers of cellulose in the structure of the wood. But the deeper, molecular engineering answer is that the 'Hydrogen Bond' in the Oxygen/Hydrogen molecule has properties which make a water molecule act as a polar magnet, which also explains the extraordinary properties of that strange polymer we call water. The double helical structure of DNA, for example, is due largely to hydrogen bonding between the base pairs, which link one complementary strand to the other and enable replication.

I would love to take some time out here to explain the Hydrogen Bond, it's by far the most important component of Life as we know it, and utterly fascinating. But it would be an indulgence. For reasons I am unable to fathom, people's eyes tend to glaze over when the subject is discussed in any depth. One of life's mysteries, I assume.

Life, as Elijah repeats for emphasis, is water in all its miraculous uniqueness. And 'miraculous uniqueness' itself is nothing less than the Name *YHV"H* written to spell the word *MAH* - What. God calls Himself into question, and that question resounds backwards and forwards through time in the oscillating rhythm we discussed earlier; in the on-off-on-off-on-off alternating current we know as reality.

וְאֵתְרָבִי בְהִוְוֵא שְׁקִי

"Making it grow by that watering."

What's the 'it' that grows through watering,

the tree, really? Just how many times does Elijah have to say the same thing over again?

It's not just the tree that grows through the watering of the tree, it's not the chief beneficiary of the watering, at all; water grows too. In the tree water grows in height, it grows in complexity and it grows in bio-purposeful ways we haven't even imagined yet. "Life, you could say, was invented by water because it wanted to be carried to every nook and cranny on the globe of planet Earth."

Which is how Elijah wants us to think of the divine Name. By watering, irrigating and inundating the 'Tree of Life, *YHV"H* of *Atziluth* grows in stature, in complexity and in purposeful ways we have not begun to fathom. Chiefly in the questions we ask, in the power of the word *מה MAH* - What? God called Himself into question, we exist to affirm His existence and power. The on-off-on-off-on-off alternating current generating ever new fields and dying fields of faith, rippling outward like the beauty of Maxwell's Equation discussed earlier in this meditation, forms the matrix of our relationship to God and His with us. We have faith in Him that He gives us existence, and God has faith in us that we give Him His.

That's the Original Thought.

Part 2

"*Ribon Ha'Olamim* - Master of all worlds"

Elijah chose this phrase for one purpose only; to emphasize the point that this is the actual beginning of the meditation, although it appears to be more than half way through.

What I mean is this. *Patach Eliyahu*, this entire teaching, began with the phrase *רבון עלמין Ribon Almin* - Master of All Worlds. Now Elijah begins again with precisely the same phrase except that he uses the Hebrew instead of the Aramaic. Nowhere in all the Zohar or Zoharic literature does the phrase *Ribon Ha'Olamim* appear in Hebrew, this is the sole occasion; for emphasis, no other reason.

Originally Elijah meant to say whatever it is he's going to say now, but got sidetracked,

majorly so. He called on God, Master of All Worlds and then felt the need to qualify that phrase, explaining why it was necessary to talk about worlds in the plural; because only God is one. Then he hastened to add that God's oneness is not numerical, that nothing we say about God is useful except to provide a vehicle for our meditation, not as any kind of accurate description of God. That led to a lengthy albeit dense qualification on the nature of reality and the evolution of consciousness through the development of the Tree of Life in which the cycle or evolution of divine and human faiths are self evident.

Up to this point we have learned many important principles about the Kabbalah and Jewish theology, but most impressive has been the way in which Elijah developed the notion of interdependence. That God's most significant name is but a work in progress evolving through the life-cyclical natures of Keter in Malkhut in Keter in Malkhut *ad infinitum*, with all the ends inserted into their beginnings, and all goals scored before the first movement in play.

We learned that God extrudes the 10 Tikkunim we also refer to as 10 Sephirot, whence souls fly to people. This was only briefly mentioned without being elaborated upon; now Elijah returns to it again to complete the thought he was embarked upon at the outset. We needed some sort of picture of the architecture of the Universal Supernal Man, the image to bear in mind when reading the verse, "Let us make man in our image," from the first chapter in Genesis. Elijah provided us with a thumbnail picture to bear in mind when meditating on the interconnectedness of humanity and divinity, because we are deep in the landscape of the Zohar, and in the Zohar every act of man has momentous, cosmic significance, affecting not merely local conditions, but the state of the entire world of man and God.

After talking about God's Name *YHV''V* and the ways in which it flows through Creation, Elijah now addresses God directly.

"Master of Worlds You are Him."

All this time we have been talking about the shape of cosmic things, the architecture of the Sephirot and the relationship between the seven 'lower' Sephirot and the human body, as well as the relationship of the three 'upper' Sephirot to the human mind, we have been drawing a word-picture of our teleological reality; describing a world based on the idea or doctrine that final causes, design, and purpose exist everywhere in nature. Elijah is alerting us to the dangers in drawing too detailed a picture of our philosophical or theological ideas; we often end up objectifying and fetishizing the very thing we want to relate to.

Elijah opened the meditation saying, "Master of Worlds, You are..." Then we talked about ourselves talking about God, stopping ourselves again and again to qualify and clarify our own speech, saying, "not that I really meant to say God was X or Y."

We went as far as to say that all we experience is a Name of God with the numerical value of 45, a name comprising a precisely defined permutation of Hebrew letters, translatable as a word whose gestalt is the question, 'What?' This Name is like water flowing through and feeding everything in existence.

But now Elijah dispenses with all that circumlocution, attempting to bring the conversation back to a speech with God, instead of a meditation about God. Elijah wants to do what he set out to do from the outset, to create an opening. That's why the chapter is called after its opening phrase, **פתח אליהו** *Patach Eliyahu* 'Elijah Opened'. He opened a new gateway, a fresh approach and protocol for talking to God, something we are all invited to use.

Elijah is uniquely qualified to speak because he is an avatar, a personification of a principle, a visible embodiment of an abstract concept; an archetype. Elijah, the historical person, the prophet, first appears in the Book of Kings. Unlike everyone else in the Bible, though, his end is not a death. The verse describes the scene.

"As they were walking along and

talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" (II Kings 2:11)

Elijah may have ascended to heaven alive, but his career was only just beginning. Malachi the Prophet says of Elijah that God will send him, in the future, before 'the great and dreadful day', (Mal. 3:23) as a harbinger of the Messiah. In the Talmud Elijah often appears in the least expected places, among the ruins of Jerusalem, disguised as an Arab, outside a cavern or in the marketplace. He has reappeared, manifesting in his physical body, in times of need, before many different people over a period of almost three thousand years. He is a zealot, arguing and campaigning on behalf of our covenant with God, and, as such, is identified with the Biblical Pinchas, (Phineas). He is also a peacemaker and reconciler, miracle-worker, *rebbe* and *schnorrer* - holy beggar.

In the Zohar we often find Elijah inside the *Beit Midrash* - Study House, taking an active and very emphatic part in learned discussions of esoteric matters. And it is in this persona that we find him here in this teaching; sage and teacher of sages. Elijah can teach us most about the Operating System of the World because he is a very visible and basic component of that OS.

The gateway Elijah is opening for us is this. All Torah study is prayer and all prayer is Torah study. If we attempt to learn 'about' God in any abstract sense we are just imitating pagans, like the Greeks. Unless we are talking directly to God we aren't studying anything. If learning about God is not also a prayer it is not about God. The only way to relate to God is to learn Him. The only way to learn God is to be in prayer, in a state of intimacy, taking risks and unfolding secrets.

"You, God are Him," I whisper to myself.

אנת הוא עלת העלות וסבת הסבות

"You are Him who is the Cause of causes and the Reason for reasons."

"I'm sorry I called You a Name," says Elijah. "You aren't. It's You not Your Name, who causes everything directly, without any sort of medium.

"You didn't do any of this in order to achieve anything, You don't create any of Creation in order to cause us or anything apart from You to exist, in any circular I-make-You-while-You-make-me, sort of M?bius loop. You are the cause, You are the reason, the cause of causes and reason for reasons.

"All those thing I said earlier about Your Divine Name flowing like water into limb, branch and twig, irrigating the Tree with life-giving moisture, etc., that was all Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil stuff. The truth is much simpler, God. It's You. That's all there is. You.

דאשקי לאילנא בהווא נביעו

"Who waters the tree with that flow."

"Not some conceptual, numerically complex, letter-word and mystical Tetragrammaton.

"That, earlier, was just me scraping my palette clean of old paint, squeezing fresh blobs of pigment, mixing linseed oil and making sure I have a pile of clean rags, enough thinner and some spare tubes of color in case I need fresh and unmuddied hues when I get going on my real work, the next attempt at Your portrait. That previous talk was just background and undercoat primer.

"It's You, God who nourishes the tree with that flow. That's all."

וההווא נביעו איהו כנשמתא לגופא

"That flow resembles the *Neshama* - Breath in the body"

You, God, flow through everything which exists, like the *Neshama* flowing through a body. But what precisely is a *Neshama*?

We encounter the *Neshama* first in Genesis 2:7, where "The LORD, God, formed the man of dust from the earth, breathing into his nostrils the *Neshama* - breath of life, and man became a living soul."

You can chop a living body up into its components and examine all the pieces but you will not find its soul. You can look at those pieces under a microscope, you could get a finer, electron microscope and look at individual cells and even smaller than that, but you will not find a soul. Nonetheless, it's still pretty obvious when a body is alive and when it's dead.

It stops breathing, it's dead.

The English word, spirit, means breath.

Inspiration, suspiration, aspiration and expiration all refer to breathing. And though we may think of these words in completely different ways, e.g. the 'expiration date' imprinted on the crimp of my toothpaste tube does not suggest the end of anyone's breathing. The meaning has drifted, but the breath is still there in the word, 'expire', all the same.

We, Jews, have complicated it still further by classifying levels of soul, in a fivefold hierarchy, *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*, *Chaya* and *Yechida*. On top of the classification of levels of the soul, on Shabbes the Talmud says, a person receives a *Neshama Yeteira* - extra *Neshama*. So, it's possible to have a double dose of *Neshama* for a 24 hour period once a week.

Clearly the analogy between breath and *Neshama* is a tenuous one.

דאיהו חיים לגופא

"Which is Life to the body."

Elijah cuts through all the ambiguity in one, single phrase, like Occam's razor. "By '*Neshama* in the body,'" Elijah adds, unequivocally. "I meant nothing ambiguous. *Neshama* in the body is nothing else but the life in the body."

"You, God, are not some force or system or order, instruction, equation or purpose added to the universe, just as the *Neshama* is not some addition to the human soul. Without *Neshama* there is no soul, no life, no body, no nothing. So, without You, God, there is no life in the universe, no movement in atoms, no force, no mass, no change and no charge. No Nothing. You are all there is."

ובך לית דמיון ולית דיוקנא מכל מה דלגו ולבר

"In You there is nothing to compare, there's no resemblance to anything inside or outside."

We've just said that You, God are to the world what the soul is to the body, which is to say, You are the life of the Universe. Earlier when we were talking about the way the Universe flows from those 10 Tikunim we call 10 Sefirot, we mentioned how souls fly from the Sefirot, from the clothing which are shapes of the ideas that the Sefirot represent, becoming human characteristics, mannerisms, traits and qualities, but now we are saying they come directly from You, God.

Not that You, God, have either a facade or characteristics. 'In You there is nothing to compare.'

Note, Elijah did not say, 'there is nothing to compare You to', or, 'there is nothing to compare to You'. Elijah doesn't say לך *Loch* - To You. He says בך *Boch* - in You.

When you, dear reader, look at me and talk to me, what are you talking to; the flesh, the skin coloring, the pores and hair and epidermis that your eyes are showing you. Or are you talking, hopefully, to some sentient being who resides within the confines of this body? I have an inside and an outside, so to speak. I have many, but primarily I have something we call a visible face, whence my voice issues, I have facial mannerisms and body language, as well. I tell you a lot about what I think and believe in, what group ideas I subscribe to, just by the way I dress. Still, when you talk to me you wish the response to be coming out from the inside of me, not just from the surface.

When I talk to You, God, I see no faces, no clothing, no body language. In You, God are no ideas or shapes of qualities, mannerisms or characteristics. That which I am inside me does not mirror that which You are inside, God. And just because people have formulated terms, agreed on a lexicon for talking about the soul, about Your divine breath which animates me, it does not reflect whatever it is in You, God. Nothing inside or outside me says anything about what is in You. Nor can it. Having said that, I can state categorically that You, God:

ובראת שמיא וארעא ואפיקת מנהון שמשא וסיהרא
וכוכביא ומזלי ובארעא אילנין ודשאין וגנתא דעדן
ועשבין וחיוון ועופין ונונין ובני נשא

"You created Heaven and Earth, producing out of them, sun and moon, the stars and constellations, and, on Earth, trees, shrubs, the Garden of Eden, grasses, animals, birds, fish and humans."

The following three phrases are so obscure, I am sure scribal errors have fallen into the text; a comma here and there, a superfluous וו *Vav* or אלה *Alef*. Jewish copyists, typesetters and printers, of kabbalistic texts in particular, are prone to the suspicion they have erred as they cannot make literal sense of the text they have just transposed, so they may occasionally make what seems to them to be a helpful correction, and then... But it is not my place or job to emend a Zoharic text because of a certainty I have, so, here is what I think it means.

Elijah had said previously, "God, You created everything heavenly in the cosmos, everything mundane on earth, and humans."

Now he adds,

לאשתמודעא בהון עלאין

"To be known through those supernals,"

There is something about the cosmos that points to God.

Atheists worldwide happily resort to "coincidence" to explain every improbability they encounter. I'm afraid to go into detail for

fear of losing my readers here, the subject, apparently, is not that fascinating to others. But everyone needs to know just how improbable those coincidences are, if only because you deserve a good laugh. When coincidences start piling up on one another to the point where common sense steps in saying, "No, that's not acceptable, no thinking person should be expected to accept that level of improbability as a coincidence without design," the atheist invents a theory to explain the necessity for accepting the stupid. It's called the 'Anthropic Principle'. It goes like this. Since you are the one who is wondering about the coincidences you find in the cosmos, you must obviously exist. Since you exist, you hardly have the right to argue that the coincidences are too improbable for you to have come into existence.

I kid you not. And that's just the 'weak anthropic principle'. There's a strong one, too, and a third one called the 'final anthropic principle' which basically argues, 'the universe is the way it is because, how could the cosmos be otherwise?'

I worked for a short while as a therapist, at a prison in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. The psychiatrist on the unit, a wise old fellow, saw me reading DSM-III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual). He took me aside and told me gently, "Remember this, Hershy. If we observe someone going *Mesbugge Oif Toit* every time he is confined in a small enclosed in space, we say, 'Ahahhh, we have the perfect diagnosis. He's claustrophobic.' Now, if I take a few moments to reflect on my diagnosis I have to ask myself, what exactly is claustrophobia? And the best answer I can give myself is this. Claustrophobia is a condition you find in people who go *Mesbugge Oif Toit* every time they are confined in a small enclosed in space! Nu, so what good does it do to stick a label on a phenomenon? Well, it helps you to ignore it, to stop thinking about what the phenomenon really means. So think about that."

The study of cosmology, the world 'out there', says Elijah, is the swiftest way of absorbing knowledge of God inside us.

ובר מינך לית יהודא בעלאי ותתאי

"Outside of You there is nothing singular among the higher or lower [worlds],"

Singular means both unique and solitary. In the very first sentence of the meditation Elijah said, "You are higher than all highs," which was explained to mean that while we are happy to call God Powerful and Loving and True and Glorious, these things are nothing to do with the truth of who God is. So, while it's appropriate to say "God is good," it's not ok to think we are actually describing God.

Now Elijah reminds us why this is true; because outside of God nothing is one. In medieval Yeshivot this was one of the most studied and talked about subjects. It was an exercise in logic, like this.

All composite beings have to have had a beginning; physical things are comprised of elements which themselves are composed of matter and form, of substance and accidental qualities, such as warmth and cold, state of motion and of rest, and so forth. Since the parts a thing is made of must have preceded the thing, the thing has to have had a beginning.

The parts of which a thing is made must have come before the thing, but those parts are also comprised of more than one thing. If something has matter and form it is not a singularity.

The only non-composite is God. Even emotional or spiritual states are composite. Goodness may seem like a solitary state of mind or heart, but it is soon perceived as multi-faceted once you pay it some attention. It has extent, duration, boundaries, etc. And the same goes for all the other 'Higher worlds.' None is singular or undifferentiated. Every virtue can be measured and classified, hence, none is God, or in God.

The same is true of the lower worlds.

There can only be one 'substantial unity', God.

Every other unity in heaven and earth is a

composite, an accident, a temporary construct, having plurality somewhere in its background.

ואיך יתנהגון בהון עלאין ותתאין ואיך אשתמודעאן
מעלאי ומתתאי

"and how to behave through the supernal and mundane, and how they can be known from the supernal and mundane."

Previously Elijah had said that by looking at the cosmos we can observe God's presence, as it were, and that's why God created the Heavens, so that we could observe them and take note of their Creator. Now Elijah explains why humans aren't simply cosmic wayfarers, why it is necessary to have planet Earth and this immensely complex and sophisticated biosphere, containing the overwhelmingly non-human abundance of life.

Because while we may have learned of God's existence from observing the heavens, we would have nothing to model ourselves on, no examples of proper behavior or manners. God created the Earth and every living thing on it to be our teachers, as we read in the Talmud,

R. Chiyah asked, what does this verse mean, "Who teaches us from the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser from the birds of the heavens?" (Job 35:11) 'Teaches us from the beasts of earth,' suggests that we learn from the mule which crouches and urinates, and, 'makes us wiser from the birds' suggests we learn from the rooster, which is conciliatory before mating.

R. Johanan says, 'Had the Torah not been given, we would be learning decorum from the cat (which first does not defecate in front of people, and then covers its feces - Rashi). Theft from the ant (which stores up its own stock of food in the summer, and never steals from its neighbor - Rashi). We would learn fidelity from the dove (which refuses to copulate with any but its own life-mate - Rashi). Decorum from the rooster which is conciliatory before mating.'

What does the expression 'conciliatory before mating' mean? R. Yehudah in the name of Rav explained it thus. This is what the rooster's courtship behavior (dropping one wing and dancing in a circle) says to her, "I will buy you a gown that comes down to your knees if you mate with me." After copulation (when the rooster dips its head down to the ground, toward the hen - Rashi) what does its behavior say? It says, "Let this rooster's cockcomb be forfeit if it has funds to purchase your gown and fails to keep its bargain." (Eruvin 100b)

"The purpose of it all," Elijah suggests. "The creation of this cosmos, these immense interstellar heavens, the earth and its teeming, manifold life-forms, is to inform and enable us, humans, to learn and know as much as we can about You, God."

ולית ידיע בך כלל

"and no one knows anything in You, at all."

Reb Chaim of Sanz (1793–1876) once saw a child crying on the street. When he stopped to ask the problem, the girl explained that she had been in the middle of a game of 'hide-and-seek' with her playmates. She had hidden herself but they had given up the game and gone home without anyone coming to search for her. She had been waiting for someone to find her but realized after a while that no one was even going to come looking. They had abandoned the game and her, in the middle of play, that's why she was crying.

Reb Chaim broke down, sobbing, right there in the street, and could not be consoled. "Oh, Master of the Universe," he whispered. "Divine Shechinah, what have we done to You, what have we done?"

ואנת אשתמודע ארון על כלא

"And You are known as master over everything."

After all that cerebral and intellectual rationality, after alluding to the ideas

expounded by philosophers like Saadia Gaon and Ibn Paquda, Elijah reverts to basics.

How can a person 'know' that God is in charge of everything?

טעמו וראו כי טוב יהו"ה

"Taste and see that God is good." (Ps. 34:9)

The Aramaic Targum translation of the word טעמו *Taamu* - 'Taste' in the Psalm is the identical to the Aramaic word, אשתמודע *Isbtamoda* - 'Know' we find here in the Elijah's sentence.

We can know God is in charge of His world by tasting Him in everything around and inside us.

וכל ספירן כל חד אית ליה שם ידיע ובהון אתקריאו
מלאכיא

"And all the Sephirot, each one has its own specific name whereby angels are called."

At the beginning of his meditation Elijah had referred to the Sephirot thus: "You are He who extrudes Ten Tikunim (effects) which we refer to as Ten Sephirot, in order to use them."

They were discussed in terms of the body, as arms, legs, torso and mouth etc. because Elijah wanted to teach us their function in the abstract sense, hence the phrase, 'in order to use them'. Hesed - Loving-kindness and Gevurah - Withholding, right and left arms respectively, so that we can visualize the Sephirot in a recognizable pattern, and emulate them in our lives, in *Imitatio Dei*.

Now Elijah returns with a fresh approach to the Sephirot, examining them from God's point of view, so to speak. Not simply as models we can emulate, but as tools of God's will, the medium through which God acts in the world. This is where a discussion of angels happens. Angels are personifications of God's commands.

I think it would be a good idea to quote Maimonides directly. He has the final word, in

my opinion.

How dangerous is the blindness of ignorance!

Tell someone generally considered a wise Jew that God sends His angel inside a woman's womb to mold and shape the fetus, and he will be satisfied with the account. He will believe it, and even find in it a description of the greatness of God's might and wisdom. He also believes that the angel consists of burning fire, and is as big as a third of the Universe, but considers it all possible as a divine miracle. Tell him, however, that God gave sperm and ovum a formative power which produces and shapes the limbs, and that this power is called "angel," or that all shapes and forms are the result of the influence of the Divine Active Intellect, (and that the latter is the angel [Metatron], the Prince of the world, frequently mentioned by our Sages) and he will reject your words; because he cannot comprehend the true greatness and power of creating forces that act in a body without being perceived by our senses.

Our Sages have already stated--for him who has understanding--that all forces that reside in a body are angels, much more the forces that are active in the Universe. The theory that each force acts only in one particular way, is expressed in Genesis Rabba (chap. 1.) as follows: "One angel does not perform two things, and two angels do not perform one thing"; this is exactly the property of all forces.

We may find a confirmation of the opinion that the natural and psychical forces of an individual are called angels in a statement of our Sages which is frequently quoted, and occurs originally in Genesis Rabba (chap. lxxviii.): "Every day God creates a legion of angels; they sing before Him, and disappear." (Guide I. VI)

Elijah might as well be paraphrasing Maimonides. Sephirot have names because they are forces whereby the world is governed. Forces are angels, and angels always take on the name of the Sephirah - Force they are acting out.

ואנת לית לך שם ידיעא

"You have no known name"

What does Elijah mean when he says that God has no known name?

I look at my fingers, I see a pinky and a thumb, they're Hershy's fingers, attached to Hershy's hand, attached to his arm which grows out of his shoulder that belongs to his body. Hershy's body belongs to Hershy, but where is Hershy? Hershy is the name of the person to whom these fingers, hands, arms, shoulders and body belong. Can you show me Hershy? No, no one can. You can only see Hershy's limbs, his physical corpus and assume that there is a Hershy.

But is a Hershy not a thing? Well, yes and no.

The fingers and hands, etc., belong to a fairly (sub) standard issue, common or garden *homo-sapiens sapiens* who was named Hershy soon after his birth, by his parents who were also fairly standard, common or garden *homo-sapiens sapiens*. Nevertheless, there's no mistaking one Hershy for one Jacob, regardless of the fact that that they are identical members of the *homo-sapiens sapiens* family. So, we assume that besides membership of the species there's something else that defines a Hershy, distinguishing it from a Jacob. The only way we have of understanding the difference between one human and another is by saying a Hershy is not a Jacob. They act differently, have different narratives and know different things. If I try defining a Hershy on its own I would have to say it is *Sui Generis* - it is its own type of thing, and leave it at that. The name Hershy is about as close as I can come to a full understanding of what a Hershy is. It *is* what it is, and fertig.

Now at the beginning of the meditation

Patach Eliyahu we said that God extrudes these Tikkunim we will refer to as Sephirot. Some are short, others long, and all of them have characteristics like limbs and parts of the human body. Now we have returned to the subject of the Sephirot and have added the information that each has a divine name and angel associated with it. God's torso, so to speak, the Sephirah of Tiferet is called YHV"H and the angel associated with it is Raphael. But if I work my way back up the tree the way I did with my fingers to my hands to my arms, shoulders and body, I do not get to the name of a thing, the way I got to the name of thing called Hershy. There is no thing called YHV"H, because God is no thing. Not even *sui generis*, God is not generic. None of the names we have for God describe or even name God, the way your names for me both name and describe me.

דאנת הוא ממלא כל שמחן ואנת הוא שלימו דכלהו

"Because You fill all names and complete everything"

As was said previously, if I work my way back up the tree of the Sephirot the way I did with my fingers to my hands to my arms, shoulders and body, I do not get to the name of a thing, the way I got to the name of thing, a human called Hershy. There is no thing called God.

Now Elijah explains why this is so. Because Divine Names, Angels and Sephirot are concepts, and concepts are word ideas assembled by a thinking mind, and thinking minds are just aspects of human behavior. In the story *The Surprising Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, the main character pulls himself out of a swamp by his own hair (specifically, his pigtail). We call this pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps. All theories or pictures we try to form about God are just us trying to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. If we examine a Sephirah to find the Name of God associated with it and then examine the Name to find God inside it we are only looking at ourselves, because the words we are using are reflections of us. In fact we are not looking out, at all; the Sephirot are not a window on God, they are a mirror.

If that's the case, and we aren't even talking about God when we talk about God, what do the names of God signify?

'God,' says Elijah. "Is all there is. Any name we all agree to use when we talk about God, is good enough. Because God fills every name and completes everything.'

אנת חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא

"You are *Chacham* - Wise, but it is not with *Chokhma* - Wisdom that You comprehend things."

Previously Elijah had said that even the word God, i.e. God's Name, is full of God without being God. Because names, even divine names are constructs and constructs by definition are not God. But what about that moment or place where God first said, "I AM", that period or position referred to in Kabbalah as *Atzilut* - that first ray of process where God projects Himself, so to speak. Is not that first ray of light God, as we understand Him?

The first of anything and everything is called *Chokhma* - Wisdom, which is why *Chokhma* is the first Sephira. The Aramaic Jerusalem Targum on the first word in the Book of Genesis, *Bereishith* - In the Beginning translates it as *B'Chokhma* - With Wisdom.

Maimonides in Part 1 Chapter 68 of the Guide discusses a subject very close to Elijah's meditation. The Greeks, Plato and Aristotle had already argued over the concept of God as *intellectus*, the *intelligens*, and the *intelligibile*. Which is to say God is at once **שכל** the Power of Understanding, **משכיל** the One Doing the Understanding and **מושכל** the Thing Understood. Maimonides knows the futility of trying to explain such an esoteric idea. He says:

"To ignorant people, our principle that the *intellectus*, the *intelligens*, and the *intelligibile*, are in God one and the same thing, will appear as unintelligible as if we said that the whiteness, the whitening substance, and the material which is whitened are one and the same thing. And, indeed, many

ignorant people refute at once our principle by using such comparisons."

If God 'knows' things, and it would appear silly to argue that He does not, then His knowledge is not knowledge as we understand knowledge. It simply cannot be. It doesn't matter whether we use the word Knowledge, Wisdom, Understanding, or any other term, in trying to talk about God's projection of HisSelf into **אצילות** *Atzilut* - that first ray or idea. We are always stuck trying to get a fix on the nature of that ray, idea or byte, the substance or essence of it - we get bogged down by the inadequacy of our own words.

אנת מבין ולא מבינה ידיעא

"You are *Maven* - Understanding, but it is not out of *Binah* - Understanding that You comprehend things."

Previously Elijah had said, "You are *Chacham* - Wise, but it is not with *Chokhma* - Wisdom that You comprehend." Here Elijah phrases it differently; "...but it is not out of *Binah* - Understanding that You comprehend."

With *Chokhma* - Wisdom. Out of *Binah* - Understanding.

If God cannot be identified or located in *Chokhma* - Wisdom, in that first ray or projection of HimSelf into the world, because our perception of God in the present moment is a convenient illusion and not a fact, is it possible, perhaps that we may be able to identify God in His immediate passage?

Perhaps if we examine what we has just happened, rather than what is currently occurring, we will be able to identify the absence of and recent presence of God?

Binah - Understanding means inferring one fact from another. *Binah* always depends on some previous event from which something hitherto unrealized may be understood. Something from something.

Now, Elijah posits, having accepted that God is not visible in *Chokhma* - Wisdom, in the sudden appearance of something from

nothing, because God is not something. Perhaps God may be studied in His immediate absence, the way God responded to Moses, as we read in Exodus chapter 33.

Then Moses said, "Now show me Your glory."

Then the LORD said, "There is a place near Me where you may stand on a rock. When My glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove My hand and you will see My back; but My face must not be seen."

"It cannot be done, though," says Elijah. "For just as we cannot see God's presence in the room because God's presence **is** the room, so we cannot see God's absence from the room because without God's presence there **is no** room.

לית לך אתר ידיעא

"You have no knowable room."

Mostly because wherever God is, that's where there is no room for us.

**אלא לאשתמודעא תוקפך וחילך לבני נשא ולאחזאה
לון איך איתנהיג עלמא**

"But that Your power and might be made known to people, allowing them see how the world is governed"

If, as was said previously, God is *Chacham* - Wise, but not with *Chokhma* - Wisdom, and *Maven* - Understanding, but not out of *Binah* - Understanding; that God has no knowable room, then why build such an elaborate architecture of awareness and consciousness in us, humans? If all the Divine Names of God are no more than letters, words and human constructs, as was said above, why are they endowed with such power and legal standing? If angels are nothing but clothing for God's purposes and designs, why do they have names and personalities?

The answer Elijah emphasizes yet again in his conversation with God is that by allowing us to imagine God in human terms we are able to formulate ideas about the way the world is

governed. And that characteristic alone distinguishes us from everything else in the universe. We are forced to make judgments and form relationships every single day. We may think of ourselves as non-judgmental, and indeed, attempt to pass through life without making judgments. But we are only fooling ourselves if we think we are judgment free. Being a human adult means judging right from wrong, all the time. Societies only continue to exist, and individuals only coexist because humans have this ability to discern, make judgments and evaluate situations.

What we see in the world around us prompts us to suggest comparisons with the invisible and intangible, to imagine God ruling the world according to rules we can appreciate and even emulate. The most important of these, the most significant human insights which have evolved over time concern the ubiquity of restricting evil, loving unconditionally, valuing and honoring virtue and empowering the rule of law.

בדינא וברחמי דאינון צדק ומשפט כפום עובדיהון
דבני נשא

"With Strictness and Love, which are Virtue and Law, according to the actions of people"

It's very significant that Elijah does not mention *Chesed* - Lovingkindness among the characteristics of God ruling the world, for us to emulate. He mentions *Tzedek* and *Mishpat* neither of which come free of charge. *Tzedek* - Justice and *Rachamim* - Compassion are compounds, balancing harsh, letter of the law demands against the nature of the law-breaker and his circumstances. While the penalty for theft may be imprisonment, the judge weighs the thief's circumstances, his intentions and his options, thus mitigating the crime. *Mishpat* and *Din*, Law and Strictness are even more forceful and demanding than *Tzedek* and *Rachamim*, with even less room for the judge to be lenient or liberal.

Because the purpose of it all is God's plan to pay us for everything we have worked for, so that we never have to feel we are being given anything free of charge, because of God's

Chesed - Lovingkindness. God wants us to feel we have earned our rewards, so that we can enjoy them for all eternity. Whereas if we internalize God's *Chesed* - Lovingkindness we begin to see through the charade to the reason God made the world, not because of any need He has, rather because He wants to create people who can enjoy life and appreciate it. For humans, enjoying life requires us to feel deserving, hence the need for a model of reward and punishment. In this system *Chesed* - Lovingkindness is not a significant component.

ולאחזאה לון איך איתנהיג עלמא בדינא וברחמי דאינון
צדק ומשפט כפום עובדיהון דבני נשא

"But that Your power and might be made known to people, allowing them see how the world is governed with *Din* - Strictness and *Rachamim* Love, which are *Tzedek* - Virtue and *Mishpat* - Law, according to the actions of people"

As Elijah approaches the end of his meditation, words and ideas seem to flow with ever increasing intensity and density. The difficulty we face when studying this prayer is in trying to separate the strands of thought running through its fabric. Nowhere else, for example, do we find *Din* and *Rachamim* equated with *Tzedek* and *Mishpat*. All these words carry multiple translations, it is often the context in which they are being used that dictates their meaning

Throughout kabalistic literature, *Din* is always identified with the harshest application of the Law. *Rachamim* is always, at the very minimum, identified with Compassion and Mercy, though occasionally with Love. *Tzedek* is always identified with Justice, while *Mishpat* is always identified with Judgment. What is Elijah hinting at?

The eleventh blessing of the Amidah - silent meditation reads as follows:

'Restore our judges as [they were] in the beginning, and our counselors as at first;

Take sorrow and sighing away from us,

and reign over us, You alone, O LORD,

In Lovingkindness and compassion, with righteousness and justice.

Blessed are You LORD, King who loves righteousness and justice.'

The Amidah prayer speaks of many important things, but does not talk about emotions. While Peace and Love may arguably be classed as emotions, and are mentioned in the Amidah, the reference to love is to God's love, while peace is a very complex state of affairs and not, strictly speaking, an emotional experience.

The only direct reference to emotional states in people is this statement, 'Take sorrow and sighing away from us'. Presumably when God gives us back our judges and counselors we will no longer be sad.

Another anomaly in this blessing is the reference to God as King of something other than the world at large. Here we name God 'King who loves righteousness and justice.'

The key to understanding this prayer is to know that our least sympathetic judges are our own heart and our lips. First we condemn ourselves or justify ourselves in our hearts, and then speak our verdicts for or against ourselves with our mouths. The sorrow in our hearts and the sighs on our lips bear witness to the bias of these judges.

When God gives us back our proper judges we will no longer judge ourselves so harshly.

The counselors we once enjoyed at the start, are a reference to our own kidneys, the vital organs associated with balance. Acid-base balance, blood-pressure and electrolytes, even red blood-cell levels. Our sages refer to the kidneys as 'counselors' because counselors are supposed to provide the decision maker with balanced opinions on which he can depend. Without proper kidney function the body makes itself ill. And so some of the blame for our poor judges and their biased judgments must fall upon the counselors on whose

opinions they base their decisions, our own internal organs.

R. Shlomo Radomsker speaks of the situation we find ourselves in, these days, where we are so judgmental of ourselves that we cannot even bear it when anything nice happens to us. We are so ashamed to stand before God in the awareness of our states of weakness and brokenness, we blame ourselves so much, that with every good thing God does for us we feel worse and worse. All God has to do to punish us for our sins is to shower greater and greater *Chesed* upon us, while we stand there in the full awareness of His forbearance and our iniquity.

The Radomsker says, 'Imagine you've done someone a great wrong, say you broke something precious or hurt someone beloved to them. Now, instead of rebuking you or punishing you, they take care of you with love, without breaking off eye contact they nurture you, showering you with affection and kindness. The more they give you unconditionally, the worse you feel for being you and lashing out at them.'

"King who loves *Tzedaka* and *Mishpat* - charity and justice", can now be understood to mean that when people need punishing, God loves to do it with charity; by pouring love and kindness on them, rather than with punitive acts that hurt or deprive

Now when we look at Elijah's speech we find he is talking to us about ourselves. God shows us how the world is governed in order to teach us how to govern ourselves. The real world is governed with *Din* - Strictness because the harshest strictness is that with which we condemn ourselves, and also with *Rachamim* Love, because the most painful punishment God has for us is to heap us with favors in ever greater measures.

They are the *Tzedek* - Virtue and *Mishpat* - Law, we need to learn to apply to ourselves and one another, the way God loves it.

דין איהו גבורה

"*Din* is *Gevurah*"

As was said above, *Din* - Law is punitive, in the sense that it represents inexorable consequences. If someone steps out of a fifth floor window, the law of gravity takes over and they hit the ground accelerating at the rate of 32 feet per second - per second. Gravity isn't just a good idea, it's the Law!

The world runs on laws, which is like saying that *Din* governs everything. Now comes Elijah reminding us that *Din* is *Gevurah*. Virtually everything satisfying in your life is a product of *Gevurah*. *Gevurah* is red. It is joy and laughter, meat and wine, it is sexual foreplay and the *Shechinah*. *Gevurah* is God constricting Himself to make room for you. How bad can *Gevurah* be? We have grown so afraid of it, we have lost sight of it. *Din* terrifies us, which is why we need Elijah to remind us that it is *Gevurah*; that the sum of all our fears is nothing but a projection of our character flaws onto God.

If we stopped to think for a minute it would be obvious to us that we only ever afraid of the *Din* inside ourselves, not God's *Din*. People who think God hurts His children are merely projecting their own fears and neuroses.

משפט עמודא דאמצעייתא צדק מלכותא קדישא

"*Mishpat* - Judgment is the central column - *Tzedek* - Justice is Holy *Malkhut*"

In the commonly studied kabbalistic picture of the Tree of Life, the central column of the Kabbalistic tree has four Sephiroth on it, *Keter* at the top, *Tiferet* below it in the middle, *Yesod* beneath it, and *Malkhut* on the bottom.

Earlier in the meditation Elijah called *Tiferet* the torso, *Yesod* the summation or end of the body, and *Malkhut* the mouth or *Torah Sh'Ba'al Peh*. Now, here Elijah refers to *Tzedek* as *Malkhut*. The question is, under what circumstances is the mouth the representative organ of Justice?

Well, previously Elijah had said the *Din* is *Gevurah*, which we interpreted to mean that *Din* is not that bad, and not so much to be feared as respected. Now we can read this next

statement in a similar vein.

Normally, in the general run of things, Justice is a fearsome thing. Few things are designed to strike as a paralyzing a fear into the average heart as the naïve announcement that "The Innocent Have Nothing To Fear." Genghis Khan used to refer to himself by such names as 'Flail of God', 'Blade of God' and, no doubt, 'Justice of God'. As King Solomon said, "All this have I seen in my days of vanity: there is a *Tzadik* who perishes in his *Tzedek*." (Eccl. 7:15)

Now comes Elijah to remind us that *Mishpat* - Judgment is the middle column, and that makes all the difference in the world. Down the middle column flows the unchecked benignity of *Keter*, the supreme and primal divine desire to be one with all of us. *Tzedek* coming out of *Mishpat*, or as Elijah phrases it here, *Malkhut* flowing from *Tiferet* is utterly benign, absolutely nothing to be afraid of.

This also why Elijah calls the mouth *Malkhut*. The mouth is the only part of the body that both receives and bestows. We breathe inward the divine soul God is constantly breathing into us, and we breathe it out again in the form of kisses into those whom we love. *Malkhut* teaches Torah and speaks kind words. *Malkhut* can be the most giving part of the body as well as the most receptive. But only when it is *Tzedek* connected to *Tiferet* the heart; that which Elijah refers to as *Mishpat*.

מאזני צדק תרין סמכי קשור

"The twin scales of justice are the two props of truth"

"Since we are discussing *Mishpat* and *Tzedek*," Elijah says. "Let us look at what the Torah says about them both; "Don't be corrupt when administering *MISHPAT* - Justice concerning length, weight, or measuring liquid." (Lev. 19:35)

What it suggests is that the shopkeeper is a *Dayan* - Judge, and all the admonishments against perverting justice applies just as much to the grocer in his weights and measures, as it does to a Judge sitting on the Sanhedrin.

We are all judges, and as such have to be careful down to the nth degree, not to pervert and corrupt *Mishpat*. The next verse in the Torah says; "You shall have just balances, just weights, a just *ephah*, and a just *hin*: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." (ibid. 36)

The phrase for 'just balances' is **מֵאזְנֵי צְדָקָה** *M'oznay Tzedek*, the precise phrase Elijah uses here when he remarks that the twin scales of justice are the two props of truth.

If we think of the middle column of the Sephirot, the central column of the Tree of Life as the spine in the human body, with *Keter* the Crown of the Head, *Tifferet* the Heart and *Malkhut* the Mouth which passes judgment, then the scales by which the justice is measured must also be in the body. The human body when it is centered is a finely balanced thing, capable of judging honestly and compassionately. But it has to be standing properly, with both feet squarely on the ground.

The two props of the truth are the Sephirot of *Netzach* and *Hod*. In this picture Elijah has drawn, the two scales of justice are the two kidneys which provide advice to the heart, like two streams of clear water. The heart represents the Sephirah of *Tifferet* also associated with "Truth". *Netzach* and *Hod* are the two pillars upon which *Tifferet*, the truth can stand.

The proof that someone is living the truth is in the next statement Elijah makes, also from the verses just quoted;

הֵינְךָ צְדָקָה אֹת בְּרִית

"A Just *Hin* is the sign of the covenant."

The verse said there were three types of measure that could be perverted by the dishonest judge, Measure of Length, Weights and Liquid Measures. Measures can be dry or wet; a pan called and *Epha* for dry goods and a beaker called a *Hin* for liquids.

The measure of honest liquid coming from the body will be reflected in the semen issuing

from the penis. So the sign of the covenant, i.e. the circumcision is the metaphor containing the honest *Hin*. The word *Hin* is often used in Talmudic literature to mean, Yes. Sex is a way of saying Yes to someone. But it can also be falsified and perverted. Sex can be a lie. *HIN TZEDEK* is also a sign of the covenant of the tongue, as we read in the second Mishna of Sefer Yetzira, there is a covenant between the ten toes paralleled by the covenant between the ten fingers of the hands. Tongue and penis are both conduits of truth and falsehood, of peace and strife. Both are measures of a person's balance.

כֹּל לֹא לֵאחֲזָאָה אֵיךְ אֵתְנָהּ עֲלֵמָא

"Everything just in order to show us how the world is governed"

As has already been stated, Judaism is predicated on the belief that God is good; which is to say His purpose for creating us was entirely benign. Simply doing us favors and giving us things free of charge is not God's way of being Good. True goodness means giving us the opportunity to earn our rewards justly, so that we might feel satisfaction in a job well done. This means allowing for evil, for alternative choices, opposition and rebellion.

In order for there to be a system of reward and punishment there has to be a concealment of the divine presence, and a way of preventing the infinite Light from overwhelming everything. That system is the Universe as we know it.

And just as the physics of the universe only make sense to people who study it in depth, so the governance of the world only makes sense to those who study it in depth. The construct of the Sephirot is the system our sages have evolved over the millennia to help us understand how God runs things.

אֲבָל לֹא דֵאִית לְךָ צְדָקָה יְדִיעַ דֵּאִיהוּ דִּין

"Which is not to suggest that You have any sort of knowable Justice; which would be Law."

Din - Law, it was said previously is *Gevurah* - Power, while *Tzedek* - Justice is *Malkhut* -Sovereignty. Now, to confuse things, Elijah mixes them up: *Tzedek* has become *Din* which is also *Gevurah* which is also *Malkhut*.

It has been said that there is no sovereignty without a people. You cannot be a king or queen if you don't have a people who pledge allegiance to you, who fix a crown on your head and invite you to rule over them. So, I ask you, does God need us as a people in order to be King of the World, *Melech HaOlam*?

The answer to that is an ancient poem, *Adon Olam Asber Malach Beterem Kol Yetzir Nivra* - Master of the world who was King before any creature was created...

None of these Sephirot supposedly mirroring the divine really have much to do with the reality of God. God can be King without a world, He rules over sovereignty as well.

ולא משפט ידיע דאיהו רחמי

"Nor any sort of knowable Judgment; which would be Compassion."

Earlier it was said that *Tifferet* - Glory is also *Mishpat* - Judgement which is also *Rachamim* - Compassion.

The basic premise upon which Judaism is predicated, that God is Good, is not really true, says Elijah. It works for us, so we insist

on professing our belief in it. But we know nothing of God, we cannot know anything about his attributed because He doesn't have any. We work with what we know from looking at ourselves, we extrapolate that the best qualities we possess are gift reflecting God's qualities. But in the final analysis, we must admit that God doesn't have those qualities mentioned earlier.

ולאו מכל אלין מדות כלל

"Nor any of these qualities, at all."

The abrupt truncation of Elijah's meditation/speech here, suggests to R. Moshe Cordevero that it is a fragment of a larger work.

In the *Pardes Rimonim*, (Sec. 4 Ch. 5) Cordevero lists some of Elijah's aims in the composition of the piece. It covers areas of the following :

- *Ein Sof* - The Infinite in its simplest unity, and the *Atzilut* - Archetypes.
- *Atzmut* & *Keilim* (Light and Vessels) and the reason for *Atzilut* - Archetypes.
- The ordering of the Sephirot and the necessity for them.