

837 Zohar Passages

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From the Soncino Press Translation of *The Zohar*, 1934
by Maurice Simon, Harry Sperling and Dr. Paul Levertoff

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INTRODUCTION

The following pages represent a large selection of hundreds of non-esoteric or, more correctly, less-esoteric, portions of the Zohar, Judaism's most fundamental and influential work on the Kabbalah.

As a rule, the sections chosen relate to what could be called "rules of conduct" (Halakhah or custom), moral and ethical lessons, and wise and pithy insights from our Sages. Many these quotes are also found, in one form or another, in other classic Jewish sources, particularly the Babylonian edition of the Talmud.

In order that no one be misled, I must state at the outset that the reader should be aware that pure Biblical exegesis, typically that of a mystical nature, has been avoided, in spite of the fact that the Zohar is actually constructed as a commentary on the Torah.

Also not included are passages which deal with fundamental Kabbalistic concepts such as the Siferos, the Emanations, the symbolism of materials and colors, the Shechina, the higher and lower spheres, definitions of Gan Eden and Gehenna, angelology, the concept of the "Grades", or of the "Other Side", Male and Female, Right and Left, Divine Attributes, the Divine Chariot, numerologies, permutations of the letters, etc.

Notes

- 1) Each passage concludes with a reference to its page number in the Mantua edition of the Zohar and may differ from other editions of the Zohar.
- 2) A number of ideas are repeated, even multiple times, throughout the Zohar. As a rule, I have quoted the first presentation of the concept. In those cases where I do repeat a seemingly redundant passage, it is when there is an interesting nuance.
- 3) The commentary is skewed heavily towards Sefer בראשית (Genesis) which contains a proportionally greater amount of the commentary, and peters out nearer to the end of the Chumash. Some of the latter Sidras are not represented at all.
- 4) Because of ambiguity in the text regarding the speaker, there are numerous passages quoted anonymously. Most should probably be attributed to R. Shimon bar Yochai, the chief protagonist of this work.

Abbreviations

SO—Shulchon Oruch

YD—Yoreh Deyoh

OC—Orech Chaim

CM—Choshen Mishpot.

Acknowledgements

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The selections have been drawn (with minor editorial adjustments) from the Simon/Sperling/Levertoff English translation of the Mantua Edition of the *Zohar* (Soncino Press, 1934). This is the most complete English-language translation available, although the authors indicate that they left un-translated several "untranslatable" sections.

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2nd Day Rosh Chodesh Adar 5772

Based on my earlier edition of 5761

1. *In the Beginning*.¹ Rav Hammuna the Venerable said: We find here a reversal of the order of the letters of the Alphabet, the first two words, בראשית ברא, “*In the beginning He created*” commence with ב, whereas the following two words, אלוקים את, commence with א. The reason is as follows.

When the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to make the world, all the letters of the Alphabet were still embryonic. For two thousand years the Holy One, blessed be He, had contemplated them and toyed with them. When He came to create the world, all the letters presented themselves before Him in reverse order.

The letter ה advanced in front and pleaded, “May it please You, O Lord of the world, to place me first in the creation of the world seeing that I am the concluding letter of אמת, Truth, which is engraved upon Your seal. Seeing that You are called by this very name of אמת, it is most appropriate for the King to begin with the final letter of אמת and create the world.” The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her, “You are worthy and deserving, but it is not proper that I begin the Creation of the world with you since you are destined to serve as a mark on the foreheads of the faithful ones [vide Ezekiel 9:4²] who have kept the Torah from א to ה. Through the absence of this mark, the rest will be killed. Further, you form the conclusion of מות (death). Hence, you are not suitable to initiate the Creation of the world.”

The ו then came to the fore and pleaded, “O Lord of the world, may it please You to begin the world with me, seeing that I am the initial letter of Your Name ו-ד (Almighty), and it is most fitting to create the world through that Holy Name.” Said He in reply, “You are worthy, you are good, you are true, but I may not begin the creation of the world through you since you form part of the group of letters expressing forgery, שקר (falsehood) which is not able to exist unless, the ק and the ר draw you into their company. Hence, a lie, to obtain credence, must always commence with something true. For the ו is a letter of truth, that letter by which the Patriarchs communed with G-d³. But the ק and the ר are letters belonging to the Evil Side⁴ which, in order to stand firm, attach themselves to the ו, thus forming a conspiracy (שקר).” Having heard all this, the ו departed.

Enters the צ and says, “O Lord of the world, may it please You to create the world with me, since I am the sign of the righteous, צדיק and of Yourself Who is called Righteous, as it is written, ‘*For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness*’ [Psalms 11:7]. Hence, it is proper to create the world with me.” The Lord answered saying, “O צ, you are צדיק, and you signify Righteousness. But you must be concealed. You may not come out in the open so much lest you give the world cause for offense. For you consist of the letter י surmounted by the letter ך (representing together the Male and the Female principles).” And this is the mystery of the creation of the first man, who was created with two faces (male and female combined). In the

¹ This long discussion is absent in some other editions of the Zohar.

² “And G-d said to him, ‘Pass through the midst of the city...and mark a sign (תו) on the foreheads of men, etc.’” i.e. the righteous, as protection from the fate of the sinners.

³ The reference here is unclear.

⁴ There is no explanation as to the meaning of this here. Neither of these letters makes any independent attempt to promote itself for the job at hand.

same way, the ן and the ך in the ץ are turned back to back and not face to face⁵, whether the ץ is upright or turned downwards⁶. She then departed.

The letter פ presented herself and pleaded thus, “May it please You, O Lord of the world, to create through me the world seeing that I signify redemption and deliverance (פּוֹרְקִינִיָּה and פְּדוּת) which You are to vouchsafe to the world. It is hence fitting that through me the world be created.” The Lord answered, “You are worthy, but you represent transgression (פֶּשַׁע) and, moreover, you are shaped like the Serpent who had his head curled up within his body, symbolic of the guilty man who bends his head and extends his hand.”

The letter ץ was likewise refused as it stands for iniquity (עוֹן), despite her plea that she also represents humility (עֲנוּוָה).

Then the ס appeared and said, “O Lord of the world, may it please You to create through me the world, inasmuch as I represent upholding (סוֹמֵךְ) of the fallen, as it is written, “*The Lord supports all that falls*” [Psalms 145:14]. The Lord answered her, “This is just the reason why you should remain in your place. For should you leave it, what will be the fate of the fallen, seeing that they are upheld by you?” She immediately departed.

The ן entered and pleaded her merits as being the initial letter in “*Too awesome (נורא) for praises*” [Exodus 15:11], as well as in “*Comely (נאוה) is praise for the righteous*” [Psalms 33:1]. The Lord said, “O ן, return to your place, for it is for your sake (as representing the falling, נוֹפְלִים) that the ס returned to her place. Remain, therefore, under her support.” The ן immediately returned to her place.

The מ came up and said, “O Lord of the world, may it please You to create the world by me inasmuch as I commence the word מֶלֶךְ (king) which is Your title.” The Lord replied, “It is so assuredly, but I cannot employ you in the creation of the world for the reason that the world requires a King. Return, therefore, to your place, you along with the ל and the כ since the world cannot exist without a מֶלֶךְ”.

At that moment the כ descended from its Throne of Glory, and quaking and trembling said, “O Lord of the universe, may it please You to begin the creation of the world through me seeing that I am Your own כְּבוֹד (honor).” And when the כ descended from its Throne of Glory, two hundred thousand worlds began to shake, the Throne trembled, and all the worlds quaked and were about to fall to ruins. Said to her the Holy One, blessed be His Name, “כ, כ, what are you doing here? I will not create the world with you. Go back to your place, since you stand for extermination (כְּלֵה). Return, then, to your place and remain there.” Immediately she departed and returned to her own place.

The letter ך then presented herself and said, “May it please You, O Lord, to bestow me first place in the creation of the world, since I stand first in the Sacred Name.” The Lord said to her, “It is sufficient for you that you are engraved and marked in Myself and you are the channel of My Will. You must not be removed from My Name.”

The ם then came up and said, “O Lord of the universe, may it please You to place me at the head in the creation of the world, since through me You are called Good (טוֹב) and upright.” The Lord said to her, “I will not create the world through you, as the goodness which you

⁵ This is in accordance with the Ksav Ha’Ari whereby the right side of the ץ faces to the right. The more popular Ksav Beis Yosef has the “ך” face left, as with the “ג” portion. This is one of several letters which are different between the two types of script used by Ashkenazim for Sifrei Torah, Tefillin and Mezuzahs (STAM). Sephardim use a squarer script called וליש.

⁶ I believe that upright refers to the ץ while downwards refers to the ף.

represent is hidden and concealed within you, as it is written, ‘*How abundant is Your goodness (טובך) which You have stored away for those who fear You*’ [Psalms 31:20]. Since then it is treasured within you, it has no part in the world which I am going to create, but only in the World to Come. And further, it is because your goodness is hidden within you that the gates of the Temple sank into the ground as it is written, “*Her gates are sunk (טבעו) in the ground*” [Lam. 2:9]. And furthermore, the letter ן is at your side, and when joined you form sin (חט). (It is for this reason that these two letters are not to be found in the names of any of the tribes.) She departed immediately⁷.

Then the י presented herself and put forth her claim, saying, “O Lord of the world. May it please You to put me at the head of the Creation, since I represent the observance of the שבת, as it is written, ‘*Remember (זכור) the Sabbath day to keep it holy*’” [Exodus 20:8]. The Lord replied, “I will not create the world through you, since you represent war, being in the shape like a sharp-pointed sword or lance.” The י immediately departed from His Presence.

The ו entered and put forth her claim saying, “O Lord of the world. May it please You to use me first in the creation of the world inasmuch as I am one of the letters of Your Name.” Said the Lord to her, “You, ו, as well as ה suffice it for you that you are of the letters of My Name, part of the mystery of My Name, engraved and impressed in My Name. I will thus not give you first place in the creation of the world.”

Then appeared the letter ך as well as the letter ך and put forth similar claims. The Lord gave them a similar reply, saying, “*The poor will not cease from the Land*” [Deut. 15:11], who will thus need benevolence. For the ך signifies poverty (דלות) and the ך beneficence (גמול). Therefore, separate not from each other, and let it suffice you that one maintains the other.”

The ך then entered and said, “O Lord of the world. May it please You to put me first in the creation of the world since I represent the benedictions (ברכות) offered to You on High and Below.” The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her, “Assuredly, with you I will create the world, and you shall form the beginning in the creation of the world.”

The ם remained in her place without presenting herself. Said the Holy One, blessed be His Name, “א, ם, why do you not come before Me like the rest of the letters?” She answered, “Because I saw all the other letters leaving Your Presence without any success. What, then, could I achieve there? And further, since You have already bestowed on the letter ך this great gift, it is not befitting for the Supreme King to take away the gift which He has made to His servant and give it to another.”⁸ The Lord said to her, “א, ם, although I will begin the creation of the world with the ך, you will remain the first of the letters. My unity shall not be expressed except through you. Through and by you shall be based all calculations and operations of the world and unity shall not be expressed save by the letter ם.” (Prologue 2b-3b⁹)

2. R. Shimon¹⁰ opened his discourse with the text: “*And I put My words in your mouth*” [Isaiah 51:16]. How greatly is it incumbent on a man to study the Torah day and night! For the Holy One, blessed be He, is attentive to the voice of those who occupy themselves with

⁷ There is no separate discussion regarding the letter ן. Maybe it is obvious that since it is the first letter of חטא, as just pointed out, it was not a worthy candidate.

⁸ In other editions of the Zohar the ם is rejected because it is the first letter of the word ארור, cursed.

⁹ This section is from a short Prologue which is found prior to the main body of the Zohar. It appears as part of the main body of text in other editions.

¹⁰ This being Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai who is quoted extensively throughout the Zohar and to whom authorship of the Zohar is traditionally attributed.

Torah, and through each fresh discovery made by them in the Torah a new Heaven is created. Our teachers have told us that at the moment when a man expounds something new in the Torah, his utterance ascends before the Holy One, blessed be He, and He takes it up and kisses it and crowns it with seventy crowns of graven and inscribed letters. (Prologue 4b)

3. Each word of which the purpose is not obvious contains some lesson of special value. (Prologue 5a)

4. ויכלוי¹¹ contains thirty-five words and the קדושה (sanctification blessing) contains thirty-five¹² words, making together seventy, corresponding to the seventy names of the Holy One., blessed be He. (Prologue 5b)

5. R. Abba said: It is assuredly true, as we have been taught, that whenever the righteous on their journey busy themselves with expositions of the Torah, they are favored by visits from the Other World. (Prologue 7a)

6. The sage is superior to the prophet. (Prologue 7b)

R. Hamnuna discoursed: *“Let not your mouth bring guilt on your flesh”* [Eccl. 5:5]. This is a warning to man not to utter with his mouth words that might suggest evil thoughts and so cause to sin the sacred body on which is stamped the holy covenant. For he who does this is dragged into גהינום. (Prologue 8a)

7. The incident of Bath-Sheba happened on the twenty-fourth of Elul. Another account—the incident of Bath-Sheba happened on the fifteenth of Elul. (Prologue 8b)

8. Everyone who keeps vigil with Her this night¹³ will be guarded Above and Below and will complete the year in peace. (Prologue 9a)

9. The holy angels do not pay attention to Aramaic, and do not understand it. (Prologue 9b)

10. At the beginning of the day, when one rises in the morning, it is his duty to bless his Master as soon as he opens his eyes. The pious men of old would keep a cup of water by their side. When they awoke in the night they would wash their hands, rise up and occupy themselves in the study of Torah, having first pronounced the appropriate blessing¹⁴.

When the cock crows, it is precisely midnight, and at that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, is to be found in the company with the righteous in the Garden of Eden (גן עדן). It is then, therefore, proper to pronounce the benediction and study Torah.

One may not pronounce the benediction with unclean hands. So too, at any time when one rises up from his sleep. For while one is asleep, his soul departs from him and an impure spirit comes forth and settles on his hands and defiles them. Hence, one may not pronounce a blessing without first washing them.

Why then, one may ask, is it forbidden, after one has been to the toilet, to pronounce a blessing or to read even one word of Torah, even in the daytime, without washing the hands, although one has not been asleep and one’s soul did not depart, and one’s hands have not been defiled by an evil spirit? Why is it forbidden even if one’s hands are quite clean? The answer is: Woe to those who pay no heed to the majesty of their Master, and do not realize on what this world is founded. There is a spirit in every toilet which feasts on filth and excrement, and settles forthwith on the fingers of a man’s hands. (Prologue 10b)

¹¹ Referring to the paragraph recited at the beginning of the Friday night Kiddush.

¹² The standard version contains 45 words. Some recite a version shortened to achieve the total of 70 words, in conformance with this Mystical lesson.

¹³ i.e. Learns Torah on Shavuot night.

¹⁴ Presumably the ברכת התורה

11. Whenever a banquet is given, the Accuser comes to spy out whether the owner has first dispensed charity and invited poor people to his house. If he finds that it is so, he departs without entering the house. But if not, he goes in and surveys the merry-making, and having taken note that no charity had been sent to the poor nor had any been invited to the feast, he ascends Above and brings accusations against the owner. (Prologue 10b)

12. It is incumbent upon a man to occupy himself in the study of Torah day and night without cessation, in accordance with the text “*and you shall meditate thereon day and night*” [Joshua 1:8]. If he abandons such study, it is as though he abandons the Tree of Life. (Prologue 11a)

13. When one goes to bed at night, he should wholeheartedly acknowledge the kingship of Heaven and entrust his soul to the keeping of Heaven. He will then immediately be guarded against all diseases and evil spirits, and they will have no power over him. In the morning, when he rises from his bed, he should bless his Master and proceed to His house, bow down before His sanctuary with awe¹⁵, and then offer up his prayer. (Prologue 11a)

14. It is fitting to invoke the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob first¹⁶, and then enter the synagogue to offer up one’s prayer. (Prologue 11a)

15. There are three types of fear; two have no proper root, while the third is the real fear. There is the man who fears the Holy One, blessed be He, in order that his children may live and not die, or lest he be punished in his body or his possessions, and so he is in constant fear. Evidently, this is not the genuine fear of G-d. Another man fears the Holy One, blessed be He, because he is afraid of punishment in the Other World and the tortures of גהינם. This is a second type which is not genuine fear. The genuine type is that which makes a man fear his Master because He is the Mighty Ruler, the Rock and foundation of all worlds, before Whom all existing things are as nothing, as it has been said, “*And all the inhabitants of the earth are as nothing*” [Daniel 4:32], and place his goal in that spot which is called יראה (awe)¹⁷. (Prologue 11b)

16. He who cherishes fear observes the whole Torah, and he who does not cherish fear does not observe the other precepts of the Torah, since it is the gate of all. (Prologue 11b)

17. One should love his Master with perfect love, that which is called “Great Love”. R. Eleazar explained: “Great Love” is the love which is complete through the union of two phases, without which it is not genuine love. This is signified by the dictum that the love of the Holy One, blessed be He, has two aspects. There is, for instance, the man who loves Him because he has riches, length of life, children, power over his enemies, success in all his undertakings—all these form the motive of his love. Should the Holy One, blessed be He, turn the wheel of fortune against him and bring suffering upon him, he will change and his love will be no more. This kind of love has no root. Perfect love is the kind which remains steadfast in both phases, whether of affliction or prosperity. (Prologue 11b-12a)

18. Through chastisement, a man becomes filled with the true fear of G-d and does not harden his heart. (Prologue 12a)

¹⁵ The Mogen Avrohom at SO OC, Siman 93, Sif Koton א says, “Upon entering a synagogue, one should stop a moment and, in awe, say: ‘ואני ברוב חסדיך וכו’ As for me, in the abundance of Your kindness, I will enter Your house; I will bow down before Your Holy Sanctuary in awe” (Psalms 5:8).

¹⁶ The Zohar explains that ואני ברוב חסדיך refers to Abraham, אשתחווה אל היכל קדשך refers to Isaac, and ביראתך refers to Jacob.

¹⁷ Although typically used interchangeably, I offer that there is a difference between the terms פחד and יראה, the first designates fear of punishment or harm, and the latter term refers to awe in the sense of wonderment and overwhelming amazement which causes a person to reflect on how relatively small and insignificant he is, thus leading to veneration and respect.

19. We are to combine the names of אֱלֹהִים and יְיָ in the consciousness that they form an indivisible unity. (Prologue 12a)

20. It behooves a man to labor in the study of Torah and to strive to make progress in it daily, so as, thereby, to fortify his soul and his spirit. For when one occupies himself in the study of Torah, he becomes endowed with an additional and holy soul. (Prologue 12b)

21. The man who does not occupy himself with the study of Torah has no holy soul, and the Heavenly holiness does not rest upon him. (Prologue 12b)

22. Marital intercourse of the wise and learned men is weekly, from שבת to שבת. (Prologue 14a/b)

23. People who perform their conjugal intercourse immodestly and by the light of the candle have the result that the children born of such intercourse are epileptics, being possessed by spirits of the “evil power”, which are the nude spirits of the wicked, called demons (שדים). (Prologue 14b)

24. Our teachers, of blessed memory, said: There are three persons who bring evil upon themselves. One is the man who utters a curse against himself. The second is he who throws a piece of bread the size of an olive onto the floor. The third is he who lights his candle at the close of שבת before the congregation has reached the recital of “Sanctification” at the close of the Service. (Prologue 14b)

25. It is not lawful to kindle a light at the close of שבת before Israel has pronounced the “Separation Blessing” in the prayer, and the “Separation Blessing” over the cup as, until that time, it is still שבת and the sanctity of שבת still rests on us. (Prologue 14b)

26. A woman enjoys no honor save in conjunction with her husband. (Genesis 20a)

27. The male rules by the day to regulate his household and to bring food and sustenance to it. When night arrives, the female takes command. The dominion of the day belongs to the male and dominion of the night to the female. (Genesis 20b)

28. Man’s fingers symbolize the mystic Grades of the Upper World which are divided into front and back. The latter are outside and are symbolized by the fingernails. It is, therefore, permissible to look at the fingernails at the expiry of שבת by the light of the candle. But it is not permissible to look at the fingers from the inside by the light of the candle. Therefore one should not look at his fingers from the inside when he recites the blessing “*Creator of the lights of the fire*”. (Genesis 20b-21a)

29. It is well to preface one’s prayer with the verse “*But He is merciful and forgives iniquity, etc.*” [Psalms 78:38] (Genesis 23b)

30. When reciting the Amidoh prayer during the weekdays, one should stand like a poor man at the king’s gate on account of the שכינה, and he should clothe it in the vestment of the fringes. He should stand in his תפילין like a beggar at the gate when he begins with the א-דני. (Genesis 23b)

31. The study of the Talmud is bitter compared with that of the esoteric wisdom¹⁸. (Genesis 27a)

32. Idolatry has its root in the liver. Bloodshed has its root in the gall. Incest has its root in the spleen. (Genesis 27b)

33. The moon is the cause of croup in children. It is also the cause of other misfortunes. (Genesis 33b)

¹⁸ I would imagine that many Talmudic scholars would disagree with this statement. This statement may also be a reflection of the tension that existed between strict Talmudists/Halakhists and those who gravitated towards the Kabbala. Sort of a dig.

34. It is forbidden to make an appointment with a woman without her husband, for fear of suspicion of adultery. (Genesis 36a)

35. This sin (Eve's taking the fruit) is the cause of menstruation which keeps a woman apart from her husband. (Genesis 36a)

36. We require protection against demons and, therefore, the recital of the "*Hymn of Accidents*¹⁹" [Psalms 41] has been prescribed for every occasion when danger is threatened from them. (Genesis 48a)

37. The world is under special protection on שבת eve, and we are not required to say the prayer "*Who keeps his people Israel for ever, Amen*". This prayer has been prescribed for weekdays when protection is needed. But on שבת, a Tabernacle of Peace is spread over the world which is thus sheltered on all sides. Even the sinners in גהינום are protected and all beings are at peace, both in the Upper and Lower Spheres. Therefore, we conclude our prayer with the words "Who spreads a Tabernacle of Peace over us and over all his people Israel and over Jerusalem." (The reason why Jerusalem is mentioned is because it is the abode of the Tabernacle.) (Genesis 48a)

38. On Friday night, one should have a full course meal to show that this Tabernacle of Peace has been formed by a union of all principles, provided only that he leaves himself enough for one meal the next day or, according others (and this is more correct), for two meals. All the more so, of course, if he has more than enough left for the next day. For children, two dishes are enough (or the minimum) and so the Colleagues agreed. (Genesis 48b)

39. The function of lighting the שבת light has been entrusted to the women of the holy people. The Colleagues put it, "Woman put out the light of the world and brought darkness, etc.", and so we agree. A woman should kindle the שבת light with zest and gladness, because it is a great honor for her and, further, she qualifies herself to become the mother of holy offspring who will grow to be shining lights of learning and piety, and will spread peace in the world. She also procures long life for her husband. (Genesis 48b)

40. The Oral Torah must not be studied by itself, but in conjunction with the Written Torah. (Genesis 48b)

41. When a man gives his daughter in marriage, up to the time of the wedding, the father and mother are responsible for her upkeep. Once she is married, the husband must support her and provide all her necessities. (Genesis 48b)

42. Throughout Scriptures, worshippers of the sun are called Servants of Baal, and worshippers of the moon, Servants of Asherah. (Genesis 49a)

43. It is incumbent on the father and the mother of the bride to transfer her to the charge of the bridegroom. (Genesis 49a)

44. Of the father and mother it is written that they "brought", but of the husband, he "came", to show that he must obtain her permission (to marry). (Genesis 49a)

45. A man who desires his wife's society must first entreat and coax her. If he cannot persuade her, he must not stay with her, for her companionship must be loving and unconstrained. (Genesis 49a/b)

46. Sexual intercourse is forbidden during the day²⁰. (Genesis 49b)

¹⁹ אשרי משכיל אל דל

²⁰ Actually, marital relations are only forbidden in a lit room. See SO OC 240:11. There it states "It is forbidden to have marital relations during the day, unless the house is darkened." The Mishneh Brura adds: "for doing so would be immodest behavior".

47. Even a king who has a bed of gold with precious coverings, if his wife prepares for him a bed of stones, must leave his own bed and sleep on the one she prepares²¹. (Genesis 49b)

48. One should pray to G-d before he starts out on a journey in order to draw to himself the presence of his Master. (Genesis 49b)

49. All the time that one is on travel, he should be very careful of his actions in order that the Celestial Partner may not desert him and leave him defective, through lacking the union with the female. (Genesis 49b-50a)

50. When he does reach home again, it is his duty to give his wife some pleasure because it is she who procured for him this Heavenly Partner. He should be as diligent to procure this gladness as to procure the gladness of the שבת. "You shall know that your tent is peace". That is, since the שכנינה comes with you and abides in your house "you shall visit your house and not sin"—by performing with gladness the religious duty of conjugal intercourse in the presence of the שכנינה. (Genesis 50a)

51. When שבת comes, it is incumbent on students of the Torah to gladden their wives for the sake and honor of the Heavenly Partner, and to seek to perform the Will of their Master. (Genesis 50a)

52. It is the husband's duty to gladden his wife through the happy performance of a religious precept. (Genesis 50a)

53. For when one is at home, the foundation of his house is the wife. For it is on account of her that the שכנינה does not depart from the house. (Genesis 50a)

54. All colors seen in a dream are of a good foreboding, except blue²². (Genesis 51b)

55. When G-d judges the world, He passes sentence only in accordance with the conduct of the majority. (Genesis 53a)

56. When men sleep on their beds at night, and Night spreads her wings over the world, they have a foretaste of death and, in consequence, the unclean spirit is let loose in the world carrying pollution. In particular, it rests upon a man's hands and defiles them so that when he wakes up and his soul is restored to him, everything which he touches with his hands is rendered unclean. Hence, one should be careful when dressing not to take his garments from a person who has not washed his hands because, in this way, he draws upon himself the unclean spirit and becomes defiled. This spirit is authorized to settle in every place where there is the merest trace of the Side from which it issues. Hence, one should not let water be poured over his hands by one who has not yet washed his own hands because, in this way, he draws on himself the unclean spirit from contact with the one who pours the water over him. (Genesis 53b)

57. The entire Torah can be expounded in seventy ways. (Genesis 54a)

58. When one walks the path of truth, he goes towards the Right and attracts to himself a Holy Spirit from Above which, in turn, ascends with holy intent to attach itself to the Upper World and cleave to the Supernal Holiness. When, however, one walks in the path of evil, he draws to himself an unclean spirit belonging to the Left Side which renders him impure. (Genesis 54a)

59. Lilith brings epilepsy on children. (Genesis 55a)

60. When Adam was in the Garden of Eden, G-d sent down to him a book by the hand of Raziel, the angel in charge of the holy mysteries. (Genesis 55b)

²¹ This, as well as many other dictums, is repeated elsewhere, and sometimes often, in the Zohar. As a rule, I have quoted only the first place an adage is mentioned, unless there is an interesting nuance later.

²² We shall see this repeated again below, and in more detail. The blue referred to is probably the תכלת.

- 61.** G-d does not place His abode in any place where male and female are not found together. (Genesis 55b)
- 62.** The good die young in order that they may not degenerate. The wicked live on in order that they may have a chance to repent or in order that a virtuous progeny may issue from them. (Genesis 56b)
- 63.** If one cleaves to the evil imagination and follows after it, not only does he defile himself thereby, but he is led further into defilement. (Genesis 56b)
- 64.** One is called רשע (wicked) if he merely lifts his hand against his neighbor without doing him harm. One is called רע (evil) if he corrupts his ways and defiles himself. (Genesis 57a)
- 65.** Whenever destruction of the wicked takes place, there is grief for them Above. (Genesis 57b)
- 66.** R. Jose said: The names of the righteous influence their destiny for good, and those of the wicked for evil. (Genesis 58b)
- 67.** The desire of the female towards the male only awakens when a certain spirit enters into her and the flow ascends to meet the male. (Noah 60b)
- 68.** When a son is good, people mention his father's name with praise. But if he is bad, they mention his father with reproach. (Noah 60b)
- 69.** We have a dictum that when death rages in a town or in the world at large, no man should show himself in the street because the Destroying Angel is then authorized to kill immediately²³. (Noah 63a).
- 70.** As long as the Destroyer does not see the face of a man, he has no power over him. (Noah 63a)
- 71.** The possessions of one which are hidden from sight are receptive of the Heavenly blessing, whereas the things which are exposed to view attract the notice of the Accuser and are subject to the influence of him who is named the Evil Eye²⁴. (Noah 64b)
- 72.** Jealousy provokes love. The male is incited to love the female through jealousy. (Noah 66b)
- 73.** A woman should not admit a guest into her house without the consent of her husband. (Noah 67a)
- 74.** One should not admit into his house any guest whom he suspects of wrong-doing, but only such a one as is above all suspicion in his eyes. (Noah 67a)
- 75.** When endeavoring to appease a man who is angry with his neighbor for an offense committed against him, one should not magnify the offense but, on the contrary, should seek to minimize it. Whereas subsequently, when speaking to the offending person himself, he should emphasize the enormity of the offense. (Noah 67b)
- 76.** R. Isaac said: When the wicked spread, it is the righteous man in their midst who first suffers for their sins. (Noah 68a)

²³ This basic concept is repeated numerous times in the Zohar with slightly different meanings, e.g. "When the Destroying Angel is at large in the world, a man should take shelter in his house, remain under cover and not show himself in the open, so that no hurt may befall him" (Vayairah 101b-102a), and "For when the Angel of Destruction obtains authorization to destroy, he does not discriminate between innocent and guilty. It is for this reason that when punishment falls upon a town, a man should flee from there before he is overtaken" (Vayairah 113a), etc.

²⁴ This, as with many other dictums herein are to be found in the Talmud, as well.

77. He who warns the wicked, even if his warning is disregarded, saves himself and is not involved in the punishment which befalls them. If it is asked, how long should one go on warning, the answer is until he is absolutely forbidden²⁵. (Noah 68b)

78. It was the wicked among mankind who brought about the unnatural intercourse in the animal world and who sought, thereby, to undo the work of Creation. (Noah 68a)

79. When one sins before his Master and uses all devices to conceal himself, the Holy One, blessed be He, chastises him openly. Should, however, the man purify himself of his sins, G-d will then shield him so that he shall not be visible in the day of the fierce wrath of the Lord. (Noah 68a)

80. It is necessary to beware of a man with an evil eye. (Noah 68b)

81. For as long as Judgment hangs over the world, there is no communion of man with G-d and the Destroying Angel is rampant. But as soon as Judgment has run its course and wrath has been allayed, everything returns to its previous state. (Noah 69b)

82. He who manifests an eagerness to examine things and to acquire new knowledge, although he lacks talent, merits praise and receives praise from all around him. (parenthetically at Noah 69b)

83. He who keeps himself in the midst of his own people does not draw attention to himself and so escapes criticism. (Noah 69b)

84. R. Yesa said: We have been taught that no man should proceed on a journey unaccompanied. We have been taught that he who makes a journey unaccompanied by discussions of Torah exposes himself to danger. (Noah 69b)

85. There is no smoke without fire. (Noah 70a)

86. It is the master of the house who takes in the guest, and it is the wife who speeds him forth. (Noah 70b-71a)

87. It is proper for the guest, on departing, to leave presents for the mistress of the house as she is always in the house and supervises it. It is fitting to give her those presents, not in her own hand directly, but through the agency of her husband, so as to enhance their mutual affection. (Noah 71a)

88. When men transgress the precepts of the Torah, their visages change. (Noah 71a)

89. It is not permitted to gaze at the rainbow when it appears in the heavens as that would be disrespectful to the שכינה since the hues of the rainbow here Below are a replica of the vision of the supernal splendor, and are not for a man's gaze. (Noah 71b)

90. The study of Torah must be approached with proper preparation, not only of the mind, but also of the body. (Noah 72a)

91. The study of Torah requires a seemly garb as well as an attentive mind. (Noah 72a)

92. The words of the Torah must be clearly articulated. (Noah 72a)

93. R. Judah said: The rainbow that appears in the sky has a profound mystic significance. When Israel will go forth from exile, that rainbow is destined to be decked out in all the finery of its colors, like a bride who adorns herself for her husband. (Noah 72b)

94. Do not expect the coming of the Messiah until the rainbow will appear decked out in resplendent colors which will illumine the world. Only then expect the Messiah. (Noah 72b)

95. At present, the bow appears in dull colors since it is only designed as a reminder that there shall be no return of the Flood. (Noah 72b)

²⁵ To do so by Halakhah. After which any further rebuke may affect the opposite result.

96. When one commits a sin once before G-d, it leaves a mark. When he repeats the same sin, that mark is deepened. After a third time, it becomes a stain spreading from one side to the other. (Noah 73b)

97. R. Shimon replied: Such is the way of the Holy One, blessed be He. Although a woman is destined for a certain man, He first allows her to be the wife of another man until his time arrives. As soon as that time arrives, he departs from the world to make way for the other, although the Holy One, blessed be He, is loathe to remove him from the world to make way for the other man before his time arrives. (Noah 73b)

98. In the utterance of prayer, it is Hebrew words which fully express the purpose of the heart and, thus, help to the attainment of the desired goal. (Noah 75b)

99. The angels on High do not understand any language save the sacred language. For whatever men utter Below in the holy tongue all the hosts of Heaven understand and take heed of, but any other language they do not understand. (Noah 75b)

100. It is incumbent upon a man to guard himself against sin, and to purify himself. (Noah 76a)

101. When the Torah forms a crown over a man's head, the שכינה does not depart from him. (Noah 76a)

102. R. Jose said: Quarrelsome folk soon come to grief. (Noah 76b)

103. R. Hezekiah said that those who keep themselves far from G-d and refuse to draw near to G-d are far from righteousness. And because they are far from righteousness, therefore, they are far from peace and they have no peace, as it is written: "*There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked*" [Isaiah 48:22]. (Lech Lechoh 76b)

104. Just as sinners are stiff-necked in this world, so they are stiff-necked even when they are at the point of departing from the world. Happy, therefore, is he who learns the Ways of G-d in this world, and walks in them. But sinners, even though they observe the righteous, are too stiff-necked to learn from them. Therefore, it behooves the righteous to importune them and, even if the sinner be stiff-necked, not to relax his hold of him. For if he lets him go, he may depart and destroy the world. (Lech Lechoh 79a)

105. A man is not permitted to take his wife with him to another country without her consent. (Lech Lechoh 79a)

106. Famine comes only when Mercy ceases to temper Justice. (parenthetically at Lech Lechoh 81b)

107. At midnight, all the truly righteous arise to read the Torah and sing Psalms. (Lech Lechoh 82b)

108. It is the praises which are sung at night which constitute the most perfect praise. (Lech Lechoh 82b)

109. Whoever associates with a sinner eventually follows in his footsteps and so brings punishment upon himself. (Lech Lechoh 84a/b)

110. In the time of the First Temple, before Israel defiled the Land, the Gentiles could not rule over it. But when Israel sinned and defiled the Land, they drove the שכינה from Her place and other nations were allowed to rule over the Land. For no angel has control of the Land of Israel, but only G-d. When Israel sinned and burned incense to other gods in the Holy Land, the שכינה was driven from Her place. (Lech Lechoh 84b)

111. We do not say Grace over an empty table, since blessings from Above do not rest on an empty table. (Lech Lechoh 88b)

112. Before a man is circumcised, he is not attached to the Name of G-d. But, when he is circumcised, he enters into the Name and is attached to It. (Lech Lechoh 89a)

113. When desire brings man and woman together, there issues from their union a son in whom both their forms are combined, because G-d has fashioned him in a mold partaking in both. Therefore, a man should sanctify himself at that time in order that the form may be as perfect as possible. (Lech Lechoh 90b)

114. Elijah traverses the world in four sweeps and presents himself at the circumcision ceremony. For this reason we have been taught that it behooves the father to prepare an extra chair for his honor and says, "this is the chair of Elijah." If he neglects to do so, Elijah does not visit him nor goes up and testify before the Almighty that the circumcision has taken place. Why has Elijah to testify? For this reason. When G-d said to him, "*What are you doing here, Elijah?*" [I Kings 19:9]. He answered, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the G-d of Hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant" Said G-d to him: "As you live, wherever My sons imprint this sign upon their flesh, you shall be there, and the mouth which charged Israel with forsaking the covenant shall testify that they are observing it." Our teachers have also taught that the reason why Elijah was punished was because he brought false charges against G-d's children. (Lech Lechoh 93a)

115. As long as Israel observes this covenant, the heavens and earth go on in their appointed course. But if Israel neglects this covenant, then Heaven and earth are disturbed and blessing is not vouchsafed to the world. Now in the time of the Judges, the Gentiles gained power over Israel only because they neglected this covenant. (Lech Lechoh 93b)

116. One should first pray for himself and then for his neighbor, as it is written, "*and (the Kohen Godol) shall make atonement for himself and for all the congregation of Israel.*" For himself first, and then for the congregation. (Lech Lechoh 94b)

117. It is fitting that they should make a kind of altar in the shape of a vessel full of earth over which the circumcision may be performed, that so G-d may reckon it to him as if had sacrificed on it burnt offerings and peace offerings, sheep and oxen, and be even better pleased therewith. (Lech Lechoh 95a)

118. A proselyte of righteousness who enters in this way is called by the name of the first pioneer "Abraham". (Lech Lechoh 96a)

119. Royalty is always anointed from a horn. (Lech Lechoh 96a)

120. The "children of the East" possessed some books of Wisdom within which were written that, according to the goal which one sets for himself in this world, so does he draw to himself a spirit from on High. If he strives to attain some holy and lofty object, he draws that object from on High to himself Below. But if his desire is to cleave to the Other Side, and he makes this his whole intent, then he draws to himself the "other influence" from Above. Further, that all depends on the kind of speech, action and intention one habituates himself, for he draws to himself here Below from on High that Side to which he habitually cleaves. Further, if one follows a certain direction in this world, he will be led farther in the same direction when he departs this world. As that to which he attaches himself in this world, so is that to which he will find himself attached in the other World. If he cleaves to holiness, he will, on High, be drawn to that Side and be made a servant to minister before the Holy One among the angels and will stand among those holy beings who are referred to in the words, "*then I will give you free access among these who stand here*" [Zechariah 3:7]. Alternatively, if he clings here to impurity, he will be drawn there towards that Side and be made one of the unclean company and be attached to them. (Vayeroh 99b-100a)

121. All this is similar to what we learn in our Torah. Nevertheless, you should keep away from these books so that your hearts should not be led astray after those idolatrous services and Sides mentioned therein. (Vayeroh 100a/b)

122. The Holy One makes Himself known to everyone according to the measure of his understanding and his capacity to attach himself to the spirit of Divine wisdom. (Vayeroh 103b)

123. Man's soul cannot be known directly save through the members of the body which are the Grades forming the instruments of the soul. The soul is thus known and unknown. So it is with the Holy One, blessed be He, since He is the Soul of souls, the Spirit of spirit, covered and veiled from everyone. (Vayeroh 103b)

124. It behooves a man to partake of the cup of blessing after a meal in order that he merit the blessing from on High. (Vayeroh 104a)

125. It is highly incumbent on a man to escort a departing guest, for this crowns the good act. (Vayeroh 104a)

126. When one escorts his departing friend, he draws the שכינה to join him and to accompany him on the way for protection. (Vayeroh 104b)

127. Any place inhabited by wicked people is doomed to destruction. (Vayeroh 105a)

128. R. Hiya said: Whoever grudges assistance to the poor does not deserve to exist in this world and he also forfeits life in the World to Come. Contrariwise, whoever is generous towards the poor deserves to exist in the world, and it is for his sake that the world exists. The fullness of life is reserved for him in the World to Come. (Vayeroh 109a)

129. A miracle is not performed in halves, rescuing half and leaving half to be destroyed. Either the whole is miraculously saved or left to its doom. (Vayeroh 113a/b)

130. The Holy One does not punish the guilty until the measure of their guilt is full. (Vayeroh 113b)

131. R. Judah said to R. Jose: Whenever the Torah is studied earnestly, the שכינה comes and joins. All the more so on the road where the שכינה comes in anticipation. (Vayeroh 115b)

132. R. Jose discoursed: So long as a woman abides in the innermost parts of the house, she remains chaste and is fit to bear worthy children. She is like a vine, for just as a vine is never grafted with another kind, but only with its own, so the worthy woman does not bear offspring from a strange man, but only from her husband. (Vayeroh 115b)

133. In the human courts here Below, the age of liability is reached at thirteen years. In the Heavenly court, it is reached only at twenty years. Before that age, even if one is guilty, he is not punishable. Said R. Eleazar: If that is so, why should anyone be punished by dying before twenty? R. Hiya replied: The Holy One has mercy on such a one so that he should die while still innocent and obtain a reward in the other World instead of dying in guilt and receiving punishment in that World. (Vayeroh 118b)

134. Every night, when one retires to his bed, his soul leaves him and ascends to be judged before the King's tribunal. If She is found deserving to continue in her present state, She is allowed to return to this world. (Chayei Soroh 121b)

135. The שכינה does not dwell in a house unless the master of the house is married and is united to his wife for the purpose of bearing offspring. (Chayei Soroh 122a)

136. "A Psalm. Oh Sing unto the Lord a new song; for He has done wonderful things: His right hand and His holy arm have achieved for Him victory" [Psalms 98:1]: This verse is uttered by the cows²⁶. (Chayei Soroh 123a)

137. All sorceries are called נחשים (literally, serpents). And whoever becomes addicted to them pollutes himself, nay more, he has first to become polluted in order to attract to himself the Side of the unclean spirit. For it is a dictum of our teachers that corresponding to the impulses of man here are the influences which he attracts to himself from Above. Should his

²⁶ This does not correspond with our version of Perek Shira which lists those verses which were sung in praise of the Creator by various of His creations including the celestial bodies, the birds and animals, etc. Neither cows, per se, nor this verse are found in our version of Perek Shira.

impulse be towards holiness, he attracts to himself holiness from on High and so he becomes holy. But if his tendency is towards the Side of impurity, he draws down towards himself the unclean spirit and so becomes polluted.

For this reason, in order to draw towards himself the unclean spirit from that supernal serpent, the wicked Balaam besmirched himself nightly by bestial intercourse with his ass, and he would then proceed to his divinations and sorceries. To begin with, he would take one of the familiar serpents, tie it up, break its head and extract its tongue. Then he would take certain herbs and burn them as incense. He would then take the head of the serpent, split into four sections and offer it up as a second offering. Finally, he traced a circle around himself, mumbled some words and made some gestures until he became possessed of the unclean spirits who told him all that they knew from the Side of the heavenly dragon. He thus continued his magical practices until he became possessed of the spirit of the primeval serpent. It is, thus, that we understand the passage, “*he did not go, as every other time, toward נחשים*” (divinations or enchantments, lit. serpents) [Numbers. 24:1].

Said R. Jose: Why is it that many kinds of magic and divination are only found in women? R. Isaac replied: Thus I have learned. When the serpent had intercourse with Eve, he injected defilement into her, but not into her husband. (Chayei Soroh 125b-126a)

138. Greater numbers of women are found to be addicted to magic and lasciviousness than men. (Chayei Soroh 126b)

139. During the period of a woman’s menstruation, a man must keep away from her as then she is in close touch with the unclean spirit. Therefore, at such a period she will be more successful in the use of magical arts than at any other time. Whatever thing she touches becomes unclean, and all the more so any man coming too near her. (Chayei Soroh 126b)

140. Whoever looks at the form of Adam cannot escape death. For when a man is about to pass out of this world he catches sight of Adam, and at that moment he dies. (Chayei Soroh 127a)

141. Had Ephron seen inside the cave what Abraham saw, he would never have sold it to him. But he never saw there anything, since such things are never revealed except to their rightful owner. (Chayei Soroh 127b)

142. R. Jose said: We have been taught that the place assigned to the penitent in the Next World is one where even the wholly righteous are not permitted to enter, as the former are the nearest of all to the King; they are more devoted and strive more intently to draw near to the King. (Chayei Soroh 129b)

143. When men sleep at night and their souls leave them and flit about through the world, not everyone alike rises to behold the glory of the Ancient of Days, but each one in proportion to a man’s constancy of attachment to G-d and his good deeds. (Chayei Soroh 130a)

144. Happy are the righteous for whom many blessings are reserved in the Next World. But for none is the more interior abode reserved than for those who penetrate into the Divine mystical doctrines and enter each day into close union with their Divine Master. (Chayei Soroh 130b)

145. The women of the idolatrous nations pollute their husbands and those who come into close contact with them. (Chayei Soroh 130b)

146. Whoever forms an attachment with a woman of any of the idolatrous nations becomes defiled, and the offspring born from such an attachment receives a defiled spirit. It may be asked why, seeing that the father is an Israelite, the offspring should receive a defiled spirit? The reason is that as soon as the father attached himself to that woman, defilement entered into him. Now, if the father became defiled through the unclean woman, how much more must the offspring born of her be defiled to its very spirit. (Chayei Soroh 131b)

147. When one applies himself to the study of Torah, all the nations of the world cannot prevail against him. (Chayei Soroh 131b)

148. It is an established rule that one, while praying, should not let anything interpose between himself and the wall, as it is written, “*Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to G-d*” [Isaiah 38:2]. It is further forbidden to pass within four cubits of a man who stands in prayer. They have now laid down that this means on any side save directly in front of him²⁷. Further, one may not pray standing behind his teacher. (Chayei Soroh 132a)

149. Prayerful tears ascend before the King. No gate can withstand them, and they are never turned away empty²⁸. (Chayei Soroh 132b)

150. There are two categories of prayer; one is to be said standing and the other sitting, although they form but one whole. There are also two תפלין, one for the arm and one for the head, corresponding to day and night. The two again make one whole. The sitting prayer corresponds to the arm phylactery which prepares and adorns it like a bride before entering under the bridal canopy. So the prayer is surrounded and escorted, mystically speaking, by chariots and legions mentioned in the prayer “Creator of ministering spirits...and the Ofanim and Holy Chayos...” This prayer, therefore, is recited sitting. But when the prayer approaches the Supreme King and He is about to receive it, then we are to stand up before the most High King, for then the Male is united with the Female. Hence, there must be no interruption between the redemption benediction at the end of the sitting prayer and the beginning of the standing prayer. Since one is standing before the Supreme King, he must, on concluding, step backward four cubits²⁹ which has been explained to be a Divine measure. Thus, whatever part of the prayer is symbolic of the Male principle must be recited standing. The supplicant bends his knee at the utterance of ברוך and erects himself to his full height at the utterance of the Divine Name to symbolize the superiority of the Male over the Female. (Chayei Soroh 132b)

151. One should not, while praying, stand immediately behind his teacher. This reason is this. It is written “*You shall fear the (תא) Lord your G-d*” [Deut. 6:13]. The particle תא here indicates that the teacher is associated with G-d as the object of fear. Hence, during prayer, one should not be faced with that object of fear so that he may be filled exclusively with the fear of the Holy One alone without any adjunct. (Chayei Soroh 132b)

152. One should be careful not to miss the afternoon prayer. (Chayei Soroh 132b)

153. The evening is an opportune time for one to busy himself with the study of Torah. (Chayei Soroh 132b)

154. A maidservant may not be the heir to her mistress. (Chayei Soroh 133b)

155. Whoever labors in the Torah upholds the world and enables each part to perform its function. For there is not a member of the human body which does not have its counterpart in the world as a whole. For as a man’s body consists of members and parts of various ranks all acting and reacting upon each other so as to form one organism, so does the world at large consist of a hierarchy of created things which, when they properly act and react upon each other, together form literally one organic body. Thus the whole is organized on the scheme of the Torah which also consists of sections and divisions which fit into one another and, when properly arranged together, form one organic body. (Toldos 134b)

²⁷ The translation is misleading. The Zohar’s position, as explained by the Mogen Avrohom (SO OC 102:4) is that one may neither pass in front of nor to the sides of one standing for the Amidoh. The Eliyah Rabboh, however permits passing to the sides. The Halakhah is that one may pass to the side of and behind one who is praying Shmone Esrei, but not within four cubits in front of him.

²⁸ This notion is one of the most frequently repeated ideas in the Zohar.

²⁹ Although the Halakhah is to take three steps back (SO OC 123:3), there is no indication in the Shulchon Oruch that these three steps have to total four cubits. The Chida in Birkei Yosef does say that the three steps should equal four cubits but, curiously, does not quote the Zohar as his source for his ruling.

156. G-d constantly mates couples of opposing natures so that the world preserves its balance. (Toldos 137a)

157. All creatures of the same kind love one another and are drawn to one another. (Toldos 137b)

158. Lentils form a red pottage which is cooling to hot blood. (Toldos 139b)

159. The Almighty does not mete out punishment to a man in strict accordance with the evil deeds to which he is addicted or else the world could not endure. G-d is thus long-suffering with the righteous and even more so with the wicked. He is forbearing with the wicked in order that they may change in their ways in complete repentance and so establish themselves in this world and in the World to Come, as it says, *“Have I any desire, says the Lord G-d, in the death of the wicked, and not rather that he should return from his ways and live?”* [Ezekiel 18:23], i.e. that he may live in this world and in the World to Come. The Almighty is also forbearing with the wicked for the sake of the goodly seed which may spring from them for the benefit of the world, as there issued from Terach the goodly scion Abraham who was a blessing for the world. But with the righteous, G-d is strict as He knows that they will turn aside neither to the right nor to the left and He, therefore, puts them to the test, not for His own sake, since He knows the firmness of their faith, but so as to glorify them the more. (Toldos 140a)

160. R. Eleazar said: The שכינה does not abide outside the Holy Land. (Toldos 141a)

161. G-d is found in the man who crowns himself with תפילין and envelops himself in ציצית. Whoever does not envelop himself in the latter nor crown himself with the former each day to invigorate himself in faith, makes it appear as though faith does not dwell within him and fear of his Master has departed from him. And so his prayer is not as it should be. (Toldos 141a)

162. One should not confidently affirm “G-d will deliver me or will do for me this or that”. Rather, he should endeavor to fulfill the precepts of the Torah and walk in the path of truth. He should put his full trust in Him that He will help him. For assuredly, whenever one sets out to purify himself, he is helped from on High. One should thus put his trust in G-d and not anywhere else. (Toldos 142a)

163. One should purge his heart of all strange thoughts so as to make it like a path that leads straight to the desired destination. (Toldos 142a)

164. One should study the Torah with single-hearted devotion to the Almighty, for whoever labors in the Torah from worldly motives had better not have been born. (Toldos 142a)

165. One should not go out alone in the nighttime. How much less then in the night when the lights were created (the fourth night of the week)³⁰ since the moon is defective and on such a night the Evil Serpent is especially powerful. (Toldos 146a)

166. Anyone who invites a king should strive to entertain him in some novel fashion so as to afford him special pleasures. If, for instance, it is the king’s wont to be entertained by ordinary clowns and jesters, he should provide for him specially refined and courtly entertainers. (Vayitzei 148a/b)

167. In his own house, one may arrange things as he pleases. But when invited out, he must be at the command of his host and conform to his desires. (Vayitzei 148b)

168. Even a king, when he desires to visit his consort, should coax her and use words of endearment, and not treat her as mere chattel. And though he should have a golden couch

³⁰ I am not familiar with any such Halakhah. However, SO YD 179:2 on the Laws of Sorcery rules that one should not “begin something (new?) on Mondays or Wednesdays”.

with embroidered coverings in a grand palace, and she prepares for him a bed on a floor of stones with a straw mattress, it is incumbent on him to leave his own couch and lie down on hers so as to give her satisfaction and so that their hearts may be united without any constraint. (Vayeitzei 148b)

169. The style of an invitation must accord with the rank of the recipient. (Vayeitzei 149a)

170. The custom is that whoever sits at a table with a bride and bridegroom gives them presents and gifts. (Vayeitzei 149a)

171. A little hurt from one's kin is worse than a great hurt from a stranger. (Vayeitzei 151b)

172. A man is not naturally tempted by his mother. Hence, he may remain alone with his mother in any place whatever without scruple. (Vayeitzei 154b)

173. Mandrakes are a help to women who are slow in childbearing, but not barren. The latter being under the influence of Mazal³¹. (Vayeitzei 156b-157a)

174. There is no species which is not divided into male and female. Further, whatever being exists on the dry land has its counterpart in the sea. (Vayeitzei 157b)

175. Whoever diligently studies Torah inherits the World to Come and the inheritance of Jacob. (Vayeitzei 158a)

176. When one prays, he should not say "Oh remember me and visit me" since remembrance and visitation can be for evil as well as for good. The evil forces are ready to take the word out of the mouth of the suppliant and thus make remembrance of his sins bring punishment on him. Unless, indeed, he be a perfectly righteous man so that when search is made for his sins, he will be unaffected. (Vayeitzei 160a/b)

177. When one prays, it is best that he should merge himself in the general mass of the community. It is requisite for a man to mingle himself among the mass and not to isolate himself so that no special notice may be taken of his sins. (Vayeitzei 160b)

178. A blessing from on High never results in less than a thousand of each kind. (Vayeitzei 161a)

179. We have learned from tradition that some blessings from Above are obtained by action, some by speech, and others by devotion. Thus, whoever wishes to draw down to himself blessings must employ prayer which consists of speech and devotion. Yet, there are blessings which cannot be obtained by prayer, but only by action. (Vayeitzei 161a)

180. No man should ever treat slightly another man. (Vayeitzei 164a)

181. It is not right for one to swear, even a true oath, by the most High realm. (Vayeitzei 165a)

182. A blessing does not reside save in a spot where there are male and female. (Vayeitzei 165a)

183. G-d always delights in the prayer of the righteous. (Vayishlach 167b)

184. The bodies of the righteous who have labored in Torah remain undefiled after death. (Vayishlach 168a)

185. One should always go in fear and offer up prayer to the Almighty. (Vayishlach 168a)

186. The prayer of (most) people is just a prayer, but the prayer of a poor man breaks through all barriers and storms its way to the presence of the Almighty³². (Vayishlach 168b)

³¹ I do not understand the theological implication of this statement and several others below which discuss מזל. Is life random or predetermined and at the behest of "the stars"? Dr. Alain Frey of Raanana suggests that מזל is a derivative of the root לזל, flow-down (from Heaven); i.e. this matter would not be successful without G-d's Help.

- 187.** When offering prayer, first recite the praises of the Master and only then present the petition. (Vayishlach 169a)
- 188.** When praying, one should state in precise terms what he requires. (Vayishlach 169a)
- 189.** When one is sleeping and is not in control of himself, he is assailed by an unclean spirit. (Vayishlach 169b)
- 190.** One should not pass his hands over his eyes when he wakes in the morning due to the unclean spirit over his hands. (Vayishlach 169b)
- 191.** No one should ever go on a lonely road, even in a city, but only where people are about. One should not go out in the nighttime when people are no longer about. (Vayishlach 169b)
- 192.** When one has been long shut up in darkness, it is necessary, on bringing him into the light, first to make for him an opening as small as the eye of a needle, and then one a little larger and so on until gradually he can endure the light. (Vayishlach 170a)
- 193.** A sick man who is recovering cannot be given a full diet all at once, but only gradually. (Vayishlach 170a)
- 194.** When scholars are not encouraged and no one gives them pecuniary support, Torah is forgotten from one generation to another and its strength is weakened, those who toil in it having no support, and the sinful kingdom increases in power with each day. Much evil, therefore, results, since the upholders of the Torah become weaker. (Vayishlach 171a)
- 195.** It is incumbent on a man to praise G-d and give Him thanks for any miracle or any kindness that He has shown him. (Vayishlach 173b)
- 196.** One to whom a miracle is vouchsafed must himself offer thanks, just as he who has eaten a meal should say grace, and not one who has eaten nothing. (Vayishlach 173b)
- 197.** Whomsoever holds firmly to the Torah, hold firmly to the Tree of Life. (Vayishlach 174b)
- 198.** It is incumbent on a man to walk in the path of truth so that the accuser should be turned into his defender. (Vayishlach 174b)
- 199.** The curse of a righteous man, even if pronounced under a misapprehension, once uttered, is caught up by the Evil Prompter (יצר הרע) to be used at a moment of danger. (Vayishlach 175b)
- 200.** One should never open his mouth to Satan. (Vayishlach 175b)
- 201.** The שכינה is always present whenever marital intercourse is performed as a religious duty. (Vayishlach 176a)
- 202.** Whoever is afraid of his sins has cause to fear. (Vayishlach 178a)
- 203.** One should continually offer praise to G-d since He takes delight in songs and hymns. When one knows how to offer praise to G-d in the proper manner, He accepts his prayer and delivers him. (Vayishlach 178b)
- 204.** It is incumbent on a man to be on his guard against the Evil Prompter. (Vayishlach 179a)
- 205.** Beasts, from the day they are born, are able to take care of themselves and avoid fire and similar dangers, whereas man, on the other hand, seems to feel at first a natural propensity to throw himself into the fire. The reason is that the Evil Prompter dwells within him and from the beginning lures him into evil ways. (Vayeishev 179a)

³² Another oft-repeated idea in the Zohar.

206. A judge who receives the pleadings of one litigant in the absence of the other is comparable to acknowledging strange gods. (Vayeishev 179b)

207. When G-d surveys the world and finds it misbehaving and ready for chastisement, He first removes from it any righteous man who is present in it so that chastisement should be visited on all the others and there should be none to shield them. For as long as there is a righteous man in the world, chastisement cannot befall it. (Vayeishev 180a)

208. When suffering befalls a righteous man, it is on account of the love which G-d bears for him. He crushes his body in order to give more power to his soul so that He may draw him nearer in love. For it is needful that the body should be weak and the soul strong, that so one may be beloved of G-d, as the Companions have affirmed, that the Holy One inflicts suffering on the righteous in this world in order that they may merit the World to Come. But he who is small of soul and strong of body is hated by G-d. It is because G-d has no pleasure in him that He inflicts no pain upon him in this world, but permits his life to flow smoothly along with ease and comfort, in that for any virtuous act he may perform he receives his reward in this world, so that no portion should be left him in the Next World. (Vayeishev 180b)

209. The שכינה does not dwell amid sad surroundings, but only where there is cheerfulness. (Vayeishev 180b)

210. Children, life and livelihood do not depend on one's merits, but on Mazal. (Vayeishev 181a)

211. Since a dream contains both falsehood and truth, the word has power over it. Therefore, it is advisable that every dream be interpreted in a good sense. (Vayeishev 183a)

212. When one retires to rest, it behooves him to first acknowledge the Kingdom in Heaven (i.e. recite the Shema) and then to say a short prayer. For when one goes to bed and sleeps, his soul leaves him and soars aloft. (Vayeishev 183a)

213. One should not tell his dream save to a friend, otherwise the listener may pervert the significance of the dream and delay its fulfillment. (Vayeishev 183a)

214. R. Shimon said: It is written, "*I will wash my hands in innocence, and circle around Your altar O Lord*" [Psalms 26:6]. The inner implication of this verse has been explained as follows. Every man has a foretaste of death during the night because the holy soul then leaves him and the unclean spirit rests on the body and makes it unclean. When, however, the soul returns to the body, the pollution disappears save from one's hands which retain it, and thus remain unclean. Hence, one should not pass his hands over his eyes before washing them. When he has washed them, however, he becomes sanctified and is called holy. For this sanctification, two vessels are required. One is held above and the other is placed beneath so that he may be sanctified by the water poured on his hands from the vessel above. The lower vessel, then, is the vessel of impurity receiving, as it does, the water of contamination, while the upper vessel is a medium of sanctification. The upper one is to be referred to as "blessed" and the lower one as "cursed". (Vayeishev 184b)

215. The water of contamination should not be emptied in the house in order that no one may come near it, for it forms a gathering place for the elements of the Unclean Side and so no one may receive injury from the unclean water. (Vayeishev 184b)

216. Neither may one pronounce a benediction before the pollution is removed from his hands. Thus, before he sanctifies his hands in the morning, one is called unclean, and after he is called clean. For this reason one should not allow water to be poured over his hands save by someone who has already washed his own hands, in harmony with the precept: "*And the (ritually) clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean*" [Numbers 19:19]. We see that the one with his hands washed is the clean person, the other is unclean. Similarly with the two vessels. The upper and lower, the one being the holy vessel and the other the unholy. (Vayeishev 184b)

217. Nor is it permitted to put the polluted water to any use or even let it stay overnight in the house, but it must be emptied in a spot where people do not pass as it is liable to cause harm through the Unclean Spirit that clings to it. It is quite permissible, however, to let it flow down a slope into the earth. It must not be given to witches as by means of it they can do harm to people. One should, then, avoid this water since it is water of curse and the Holy One desires to purify Israel so that they may be holy as it is written: “*And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your impurity, and from all your idols will I cleanse you*” [Ezekiel 36:25]. (Vayeishev 184b)

218. Whoever repents of his sin, G-d preserves in this world and in the World to Come. (Vayeishev 185b)

219. While the holy soul is still within one’s body, it is incumbent upon him to multiply the image of the King in the world. (Vayeishev 186b)

220. Of all the sins which defile a man, that which defiles him the most, both in this world and in the World to Come, is the sin of spilling one’s seed. One guilty of this sin will not enter within the Heavenly Curtain and will not behold the presence of the Ancient of Days. (Vayeishev 188a)

221. There is no greater reward in the Next World than that of the man who has trained his children in the fear of their Master and in the ways of the Torah. (Vayeishev 188a)

222. Joseph exposed himself to his accusations because he used to pay great attention to his personal appearance. (Vayeishev 189b)

223. R. Jose said: When one perceives that evil thoughts are assailing him, he should study Torah, and that will drive them away. (Vayeishev 190a)

224. Once a man yields to the Side of the Unclean Spirit, he is more and more drawn towards it and defiles himself with it in this world and in the Other World. (Vayeishev 190b)

225. Said R. Jose: It behooves one to be on his guard against sin and to turn neither to the right or the left. However careful he may be, he should still search himself daily for sin. (Vayeishev 191a)

226. Whoever contemplates that which he learns from his master while, at the same time, seeing that wisdom reflected in his face, can thereby obtain an additional measure of spirit. (Vayeishev 192a)

227. A river seen in a dream is a presage of peace. (Mikeitz 193b)

228. R. Judah said: What one is shown in a dream corresponds to his own character. (Mikeitz 194a)

229. R. Isaac said: Although it has been affirmed that no man is shown anything in a dream save what falls within his own Grade, it is different with kings who are permitted to see more deeply than other men. For inasmuch as a king’s Grade is higher than that of other men, he is permitted to see that which falls within a higher Grade than that of other men. (Mikeitz 194b)

230. G-d does not reveal what He is about to do except to the prophets, saints and sages of the generation. (Mikeitz 194b)

231. A dream is determined by its interpretation. (Mikeitz 194b)

232. Everything is dependent on man’s free will. (Mikeitz 195b)

233. One ought never begin his speech with an ill-omened utterance as he does not know who will take it up, and he may come to grieve over it. The righteous thus always begin their discourse with words of peace. (Mikeitz 195b)

234. The way of the Almighty is to provide the cure before inflicting the wound. (Mikeitz 196a)

235. If one has not acquired merit in this world, he will not acquire it any more in the Other World. (Mikeitz 196b)

236. The term “way” everywhere in Scripture denotes an open road, accessible to all. (Mikeitz 197b)

237. Nothing happens in the world which does not depend on Mazal. (Mikeitz 198a)

238. All those imbued with severity take no pity on men when they fall into their hands. (Mikeitz 198b)

239. One ought to remember a good dream because, although there is no forgetfulness before the Holy One, yet if one forgets the dream he also will be forgotten. A dream that is not remembered might well have not have been dreamt. Therefore, a dream forgotten and gone from the mind is never fulfilled. (Mikeitz 199b)

240. Some dreams are altogether true and others are a mixture of true and false. But to the truly righteous, no false messages are ever communicated, but all they are told is true. (Mikeitz 199b)

241. How is it that a good man is often shown a bad dream? The explanation is that what he sees in such a dream is the evil that is to cleave to those who transgress the commands of the Torah and the punishments which will be meted out to them in the Other World. The good man sees all these in his dreams in order that the fear of his Master may constantly be upon him. (Mikeitz 200a)

242. When one has had a dream, he should unburden himself of it before his friends so that they should express to him their good wishes and give utterance to words of good omen. (Mikeitz 200a)

243. One’s friends should affirm the good interpretation, and so all will be well. (Mikeitz 200a)

244. When people live in peace and harbor no quarrelsome persons in their midst, G-d has compassion on them and rigorous Justice is not invoked against them, even though they worship idols. (Mikeitz 200b)

245. When ten assemble together in the Synagogue and one of them slips out, G-d is wrathful with him. (parenthetically on Mikeitz 201a)

246. It is only one’s sins that break his courage and deprive him of strength. (Mikeitz 202a)

247. Whoever is burdened by sins is constantly in fear as it says, “*and you shall fear night and day*” [Deut. 28:66]. (Mikeitz 202b)

248. One, when praying to the Almighty, should not observe too closely whether his prayer is answered or not, lest the numerous Accusers who are about will come to scrutinize his deeds. (Mikeitz 202b)

249. Whoever desires that the Holy One, blessed be He, should accept his prayer, should be diligent in the study of Torah. (Mikeitz 202b)

250. From the time when the Temple was destroyed, no day has passed without its curses. For as long as the Temple was in existence, Israel performed Divine service, offering up burnt-offerings and other offerings, while the שכינה in the Temple hovered over them like a mother hovering over her children. All faces were lit up and all found blessing both Above and here Below. No day passed without its blessings and joys. Then Israel dwelt securely in its Land and all the world was provisioned through them. But now that the Temple is destroyed and the שכינה is in exile with Israel, there is not a day which does not bring its curses. The world is under a curse and joylessness reigns on High and Below. Nevertheless, the Holy One, blessed be He, will, in due time, raise Israel from the dust and suffuse the world with joy. (Mikeitz 203a)

251. It is incumbent on every man not to bring offspring into the world during years of famine. (Mikeitz 204a)

252. When one sets out on a journey, he should prepare himself for three courses: for making presents (greetings for peace), for fighting, and for praying. (Mikeitz 204b)

253. That it is forbidden to salute a sinner we know from the verse, “*There is no peace, says the Lord, concerning the wicked*” [Isaiah 48:22] (Miketz 205a)

254. The soul is a compound of three Grades and, hence, it has three names. To wit: נפש (vital principle), רוח (spirit) and נשמה (soul proper). נפש is the lowest of the three, רוח is a Grade higher, while נשמה is the highest of all and dominates the others. These three Grades are harmoniously combined in those men who have the good fortune to render service to their Master. For, at first, man possesses נפש which is a holy preparative for a higher stage. After he has achieved purity in the Grade of נפש he becomes fit to be crowned by the holy Grade that rests upon it, namely רוח. When he has thus attained to the indwelling of נפש and רוח and qualifies himself for the worship of his Master in the requisite manner, the נשמה, the holy superior Grade that dominates all the others takes up its abode with him and crowns him so that he becomes complete and perfected on all Sides. He becomes worthy of the World to Come and is beloved of the Holy One, blessed be He. Of him Scripture says, “*I have what to bequeath to those who love Me*” [Proverbs 8:21], the “those who love Me” being those who have attained the holy נשמה. (Vayigash 205b-206a)

255. For up to the fifty-ninth breath, the sleeper is still completely alive. From that point, he has a foretaste of death and the spirit of impurity obtains power over him. (Vayigash 207a)

256. For at midnight, when the supernal holiness is awakened, the man who remains asleep in his bed without regarding the glory of his Master falls under the spell of death and is attached to the Other Place. (Vayigash 207a)

257. Whatever G-d does in the world has a deep symbolic significance and is all as it should be. (Vayigash 207a)

258. We have to get up early in the morning and recite His praises in the proper order and bless His Name before we are allowed to salute any living person. (Vayigash 207b)

259. R. Judah said: Happy are those righteous ones whose coming together brings peace to the world, since they know how to affect unity. (Vayigash 208a)

260. Those who collect for charity receive as great a reward as those who give the charity all together. (Vayigash 208a)

261. The righteous should not put their Master to trouble by exposing themselves to an obvious danger. (Vayigash 209a)

262. When a female becomes pregnant from a male, it is mostly the result of an equal and reciprocal desire or less often of the predominating desire of the female. When the desire of the male predominates, then the soul of the child who is born has great vitality inasmuch as the whole of its being is the result of the desire and yearning for the Tree of Life. (Vayigash 209a)

263. Before offering his prayer to his Master, one should first recite some thanksgiving. (Vayigash 209b)

264. In praying before his Master, one should not make his voice heard, as if he does so his prayer will not be accepted. It thus behooves one to pray silently, to pray with that voice which is inaudible. (Vayigash 209b-210a)

265. R. Jose said: The שכינה does not rest on a place which is defective or disturbed, but only in a place properly prepared, a place of joyfulness. (Vayechi 216b)

266. R. Jose said: When one's appointed time draws near, proclamation is made concerning him for thirty days, and even the birds of heaven announce his doom. If he is virtuous, his coming is announced for thirty days among the righteous in the Garden of Eden. We have learned that during those thirty days, his soul departs from him every night and ascends to the Other World and sees its place there. During those thirty days, the man has not the same consciousness or control of his soul as previously. R. Judah said: From the first arrival of those thirty days, a man's shadow becomes faint and his form is not outlined clearly on the ground. (Vayechi 217b)

267. At the hour of a man's departure from the world, his father and relatives gather around him and he sees them and recognizes them and likewise all with whom he associated in this world, and they accompany his soul to the place where it is to abide. (Vayechi 218a)

268. So when man's judgment hour is near, it commences to call to him and no one knows save the patient himself, that when one is ill and his time is approaching to part from the world, a new spirit enters into him from Above in virtue of which he sees things which he could not see before, and then he departs from the world. So it is written, "*For man shall not see me and live*". In their lifetime they may not see, but at the hour of death they may. We have further learned that at the time of one's death he is allowed to see his relatives and companions from the Other World. If he is virtuous, they all rejoice before him and give him greeting. If not, then he is recognized only by the sinners who every day are thrust down to גהנום. They are all in great gloom and begin and end their conversations with "Woe"! Raising his eyes, he beholds them like a flame shooting up from the fire, and he also exclaims, "Woe"! We have learned that when one's soul departs from him, all his relatives and companions in the other world join it and show it the place of delight and the place of torture. If he is virtuous, he holds his place and ascends and sits there and enjoys the delights of the Other World. But if he is not virtuous, his soul remains in this world until the body is buried in the dust. Then the executioners take hold of him and drag him down to Dumah and to his appointed storey in גהנום.

R. Yehuda said: For seven days the soul goes to and fro from his house to his grave and from his grave to his house, mourning for the body, as it is written, "*His flesh shall suffer pain for him, and his soul shall mourn for it*" [Job 14:22] and it grieves to behold the sadness in the house.

We have learned that, after seven days, the body begins to decay, and the soul goes to its place. It enters the cave of Machpelah where it is allowed in up to a certain point according to its deserts. It then reaches the place of the Garden of Eden and meets the Cherubim and the flashing sword which is in the Lower Garden of Eden. If it is worthy to enter, it enters.

We have learned that four pillars (angels) are waiting there with the form of a body in their hands. With this the soul gleefully clothes itself and remains in its appointed circle in the Garden of Eden for its allotted time. Then a herald makes proclamation and a pillar of three colors is brought forward, which is called "*the habitation of Mount Zion*" [Isaiah 4:5]. By means of this pillar, it ascends to the Gate of Righteousness in which are Zion and Jerusalem. If it is worthy to ascend further, then happy is its portion and lot that it becomes attached to the Body of the King. If it is not worthy to ascend further then, "*he that is left in Zion and he that remains in Jerusalem shall be called Holy*" [Ibid. 3]. But if it is privileged to ascend further, then it beholds the glory of the King and enjoys the supernal delight from the place which called Heaven. Happy is he who is awarded this grace!

269. R. Jose said: There is a Superior Grace and an Inferior Grace. The Superior Grace is above the Heavens, as it is written, "*For great above the Heaven is Your kindness*" [Psalms 108:5]. Of the Inferior Grace it is written, "*For great unto Heaven is Your kindness*" [Ibid. 57:11] and to this class belong the "*faithful kindnesses (promised) to David*" [Isaiah 55:3]. (Vayechi 218b-219a)

270. A man should not cease from propagating his kind until he has a son and a daughter. (Vayechi 219a)

271. R. Isaac said: The word רע (ill) in this passage refers especially to him who willfully spills his seed, like Er the son of Judah. Such a one is thrust down lower than all the others in that world. All others have a chance to ascend, but not he. Is he even worse, it may be asked, than a murderer? A murder kills another man's children, but he kills his own, and he spills very much blood. Hence, it is written of such a one particularly, "*And that which he did was evil in the sight of the Lord*" [Genesis 38:10]. R. Judah said: Every sin admits of repentance, barring this, and every sinner may hope to see the face of the שכינה, barring this one. (Vayechi 219b)

272. Whoever prays with tears before the Almighty can procure the cancellation of any chastisement that has been decreed against him. (Vayechi 223a)

273. Wisdom is not acquired by a man save when he sits and rests. (Vayechi 223a)

274. Said R. Hiya: Study of Torah for worldly ends does not ascend aloft. (Vayechi 223b)

275. R. Eleazar said: Though one should live a thousand years, yet at the time of this departure from the world it seems to him as if he had only lived a single day. (Vayechi 223b)

276. Woe to the generation the members of which do not rise when the Scroll of the Torah is displayed. (Vayechi 225a)

277. When the father dies, the son ought to put dust on his eyes at the time of his burial³³. This is a mark of respect for him being a sign that the world is now concealed from him, and his son inherits the world in his place. (Vayechi 226a)

278. When one departs from this world, his soul is still enclosed in him. Before his eyes are closed they see certain recondite things, as we have explained in connection with the verse, "*For a man shall not see me and live*", indicating that they see things in their death which they do not see in their lifetime.

It behooves those who are present (at the death) to place their hands on his eyes and close them and, as we have learned in connection with customs and manners, if he has a son, it behooves the son in the first place to do so, as it is written, "*and Joseph shall put his hand on your eyes*". The reason for the closing of the eyes is because some sight the reverse of holy might present itself and it is not befitting that the eyes which have just beheld a holy vision should now dwell on a sight of a different character.

A further reason is that the soul is still attached to him in the house and, if the eye is open with that unholy vision still resting upon it, everything it looks upon is cursed. This is not respectful to the eye, to allow it to gaze upon anything improper. The best sign of respect, therefore, is that the man's eyes should be closed by the hand of the son whom he has left behind. (Vayechi 226a)

279. For seven days, the soul goes to and fro between the house and the grave, mourning for the body. Thrice a day, the soul and the body are chastised together, though no one perceives it. After that, the body is thrust out and the soul is purified in גהינום, whence it goes forth roaming about the world and visiting the grave until it acquires a vestment. After twelve months, the whole is at rest. The body reposes in the dust and the soul is clad in its luminous vestment. The spirit regales itself in the Garden of Eden and the higher soul (נשמה) ascends to the place where all delights are concentrated. (Vayechi 226a/b)

280. In truth, books are opened every day and acts are recorded. Though no one notices or inclines his ear, the Torah testifies against man every day, and a voice cries aloud: "Who is simple, let him turn in here", but no one listens. We have learned that when a man rises in the morning, witnesses stand by him and adjure him, but he pays no heed. His higher soul

³³ See Geshet Hachaim, Vol. 1, Chapter 10, Para. 3.

adjures him at all times and seasons. If he heeds her, it is well, but if not, then the books are open and the deeds recorded. (Vayechi 227a)

281. The holy נשמה is withheld from man for thirty days before he departs from the world. During that time, he observes that he throws no shadow. The reason being that his נשמה is withheld from him. For it does not wait until he is at the point of dying, but even while he is still in his full vigor, it passes out of him. It does not illumine the spirit which in turns does not illumine the vital soul, so that his shadow no longer shows. From that day, all proclaim his coming fate, even the bird of the heaven.

When the spirit ceases to illumine the vital soul, the latter becomes weak and rejects food and all bodily enjoyments.

R. Judah said further: Also, whenever a man is on a sick-bed and is not able to say his prayers, his נשמה leaves him and the spirit does not illumine the soul until he is judged. If the judgment is favorable, then the נשמה returns to its place and illumines the whole. We have learned that when one is judged Above, his נשמה is brought to trial and she confesses all and testifies to all the thoughts of a man, but not to his deeds, since they are all recorded in a book. While the trial is going on, the body is in greater pain than at other times. If he is judged favorably, he obtains ease and sweat breaks out over his body and his נשמה returns to its place and illumines the whole. But a man never rises from his bed of sickness until he is judged. How is it, then, it may be asked, that so many sinners and transgressors are alive and active? The reason is that G-d looks ahead and, if he sees that a man, though sinful now, may become virtuous subsequently, He judges him favorably or it may be because he is destined to bear a son who will be virtuous. All G-d's judgments incline to beneficence, as it is written, "*Have I any desire in the death of the wicked, says the Lord G-d, and not rather that he should return from his ways and that he may live?*" [Ezekiel 18:23]. (Vayechi 227a/b)

282. The blessing of a man's sons is his own blessing. (Vayechi 227b)

283. Wherever blessings are to be bestowed, G-d should be blessed first. Otherwise, the blessing will not be fulfilled. (Vayechi 227b-228a)

284. In the morning, one should first bless G-d, and only then give his greetings to his fellow men. (Vayechi 228a)

285. Anyone who is conscious of a sin for which he means to ask forgiveness, should first form a resolution to cure himself of that sin and then offer his prayer. (Vayechi 228b)

286. The possession of a good wife comes to a man only from G-d. For G-d mates couples before they are born, and when a man is worthy, he obtains a wife according to his deserts. Sometimes it happens that after the lot has been cast, that man perverts his ways and then his mate is transferred to another until he rectifies his ways or else until his time comes and then the other is removed to make way for him and he comes into his own. But it is grievous in the sight of G-d to remove one man to make way for another. Nor is it only a prudent wife who is from G-d. For if G-d has purposes to bestow benefits on a man, but he goes astray to the Other Side then from that Other Side to which he cleaves there shall come to him one who shall bring upon him all accusations and all ills. (Vayechi 229a)

287. R. Jose discoursed on the verse: "*Serve the Lord with gladness, come before Him with singing*" [Psalms 100:2]. The service of prayer offered by man to the Holy One, blessed be He, should be carried out with gladness and with singing so that he may associate the Community of Israel with him. He should then proclaim the unity in the fitting manner, as it says "*Know that the Lord, He is G-d*" [Psalms 100:3]. These two activities of gladness and song correspond to the two prayers of morning and afternoon, and to the two daily sacrifices—gladness in the morning and singing in the afternoon. The evening prayer, on the other hand, is optional, because at that time the שכינה is distributing sustenance to all Her hosts and it is not the time for blessing. In the daytime, She is to be blessed from these two

Sides, morning and afternoon, out of gladness and singing. At night, She divides the blessings among all in the fitting manner. (Vayechi 229b)

288. The Incense symbolizes universal joy and union. (Vayechi 230a)

289. One should say the afternoon prayer with special devotion, even more than other prayers. (Vayechi 230a)

290. One should not rely on a miracle for G-d does not perform miracles at all times. (Vayechi 230b)

291. A eulogy should not be extravagant. To ascribe to another merits which he did not possess is really to reproach him. Therefore, in recounting the praises of a deceased person, we should say only what he deserves and no more, otherwise through trying to praise him, we shall really blame him. (Vayechi 232b)

292. The word הללויה (lit. praise be Yoh) contains the highest of all praises of the Lord. (Vayechi 232b)

293. Women derive blessings only from the blessings of the men. (Vayechi 233a)

294. G-d gives extra blessings to a man who is married in order that his wife may be blessed through him. So he receives two portions, one for himself and one for his wife. (Vayechi 233a/b)

295. When one is virtuous in this world, his days are blessed Above. (Vayechi 233b)

296. The prayer of an individual man only enters before the Holy King with great difficulty because before it can be crowned in its place G-d examines it closely and weighs the merits and defects of that individual. He does not do so with the prayer of the congregation. For congregational prayers are offered by many who are not virtuous and yet they all come before G-d and he does not regard their sins. Therefore, it says, "G-d turns to the prayer of the solitary one" and weighs and considers it and examines in what spirit it is offered and who is the man who offers it and what is his conduct. Hence, one should pray with the congregation because "G-d does not despise their prayer" even though they do not all pray with devotion. (Vayechi 234a)

297. One who praises his Master and addresses supplications to Him, establishes his Master more firmly by showing that all depends upon Him and not upon any other power. (Vayechi 234b)

298. R. Eleazar put the following question to R. Shimon: "Since it is known to G-d that men will die, why does He send souls down into the world?" He answered: "This question has been discussed many times by the teachers and they have answered it thus. G-d sends souls down to this world to declare His glory and takes them back afterwards." (Vayechi 235a)

299. He who dwells by the seashore has access to all luxuries. (Vayechi 235b)

300. The sons of Reuven have been scattered in captivity to all four quarters of the world, having been taken captive four times. Correspondingly, they are destined to make war in the four quarters of the world and to carry all before them and to conquer many peoples and rule over them. (Vayechi 236a)

301. "*I will divide them in Jacob*". R. Hiya said: From this verse we learn that the tribes of Shimon and Levi were never again united. There is no generation in which their punishment does not descend upon the world and great is the number of beggars among them. (Vayechi 236b)

302. R. Jose discoursed: How little do men care for the glory of their Master or pay heed to the words of Torah! At first prophecy was vouchsafed to men and through it they know the glory of G-d. When prophecy ceased, they had the בת קול, but now they have nothing but

dreams. Dreams are a Lower Grade, being one-sixtieth of prophecy, and they are bestowed to everyone. (Vayechi 238a)

303. R. Hezekiah said: Sinners are punished in גהינום for twelve months, half with fire and half with snow. (Vayechi 238b)

304. The Holy Spirit spoke to David: Do not challenge a wicked person because you do not know if you have the strength to prevail against him. Perhaps he is a tree which has never been uprooted (i.e. perhaps his soul is the first time on earth and yours is the second time) and you will be repulsed by him. Do not look at the works of those who do unrighteousness so that you will not become indignant with them. For whoever sees their works and is not zealous for G-d transgresses three negative precepts, namely: “*You shall have not strange G-d before me*”, “*You shall not make for yourselves any graven image*”, and “*Those shall not bow down to them nor serve them.*” Therefore, one should keep away from them. (Vayechi 239a)

305. Grace after meals should not be said over an empty table, but there should be bread on it and a cup of wine. The wine should be taken in the right hand. (Vayechi 240a)

306. He who supports a student of Torah is blessed from Above and Below. He is privileged to eat of two tables, a privilege granted to no other man. He is granted wealth in this world and he is granted a portion in the Next World. (Vayechi 242a)

307. Whoever is able to discuss Torah and does not do so, renders his life forfeit and is further subjected to the burden of worldly cares and the domination of others. (Vayechi 242b)

308. R. Jose and R. Hezekiah were once going to see R. Shimon in Cappadocia. Said R. Hezekiah: We have laid down that one before praying should first pronounce G-d’s praises. But what of the man who is in great distress and is in haste to pour out his prayer and is not able to pronounce the blessings of his Master fittingly? He replied: That is no reason why the praise of his Master should be omitted. He should pronounce it, even without proper devotion, and then say his prayer. Thus it is written: “*A prayer of David. Hear, O Lord, righteousness, listen to my song*” [Psalms 17:1]—first praise, then prayer. Of him who is able to pronounce the praise of his Master and does not do so, it is written, “*When you offer many prayers I will not listen*” [Isaiah 1:15]. (Vayechi 243b-244a)

309. Prayers were ordained to correspond to the daily offerings. (Vayechi 244a)

310. The most perfect form of praising G-d is to unify His Name. (Vayechi 244a)

311. When one is about to depart from this world and sees strange things, his spirit courses through all his limbs and goes up and down like a boatsman without oars who is tossed up and down on the sea and makes no progress. It then asks leave of each limb and its separation is only effected with great violence. (Vayechi 245a)

312. Love without jealousy is not true love. Hence we learn that a man should be jealous of his wife in order that his love for her may be perfect, for then he will not look at any other woman. (Vayechi 245a)

313. Silence is good everywhere, except in connection with the Torah. (Vayechi 245a)

314. Esoterically speaking, the ק"ץ is the foundation of the Upper World and the foundation of the Lower World. (Vayechi 245b)

315. It is forbidden for one to bless his neighbor in the morning until he has blessed G-d. (Vayechi 248a)

316. Anyone who desires to praise G-d with singing should have an agreeable voice in order that those who listen may derive pleasure from hearing him. If not, he should not come

forward to sing. The Levites were commanded to retire from service at the age of fifty³⁴ because at that age, a man's voice begins to fail and is no longer so agreeable. (Vayechi 249b)

317. He who blesses G-d is blessed, and he who does not bless G-d is not blessed. (Vayechi 250a)

318. A cup (of blessing) should be taken in the right hand and not in the left. The table over which the blessing is said should not be devoid of both bread and wine. The cup should be raised both by the right hand and the left hand so as to be set between. It should be filled with wine. He who says the blessing should fix his eye upon the cup to bless it with four blessings³⁵. (Vayechi 250a/b)

319. R. Shimon said: With Jacob's admission, the Cave of Machpelah obtained its full complement and it never again received another occupant, nor will it ever receive one. (Vayechi 250b)

320. One who is accustomed to pain, bears it patiently. But if one is not accustomed to pain and has always lived at ease, when pain comes upon him he really feels it keenly and deserves to be pitied. (Exodus 2b)

321. Wherever Israel went into captivity, the שכינה went with her. (Exodus 2b)

322. R. Hiya said: The bread or any other blessing offered by an evil-eyed man is not worth partaking of or enjoying.³⁶ (Exodus 3a)

323. R. Isaac said: Though a man should have a vigorous appetite and be a hearty eater, yet if he encounters an evil-eyed man, it would be better for him to take his own life than partake of his bread³⁷. (Exodus 3a)

324. There are three types of men who drive away the שכינה from the world making it impossible for the Holy One, blessed be He, to fix His abode in the universe and cause prayers to go unanswered.

One, is he who cohabits with a woman in the days of her separation. There is no impurity comparable with this. He defiles himself and all connected with him. A child born of such a union is shaped in impurity, imbibes the spirit of impurity and its whole life is founded on impurity.

Next, is he who lies with a heathen woman, for he profanes herewith the sacred sign of the covenant³⁸ which constitutes the support of the sacred Name and the essence of faith. As soon as "*the people committed whoredom*" with the daughters of Moav, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel³⁹. The leaders of the people who did not endeavor to prevent them were the first to be punished⁴⁰. In every generation it is the leaders who are made responsible for all the members of the community in regard to the profanation of the sign of the covenant which is the "*sun and shield*" [Psalms 84:12]. As the sun gives light to the world, so does the holy sign give light to the body. As the shield protects, so does the holy sign protect. He who keeps it in purity is guarded from evil. But he who transfers this sign of

³⁴ See Numbers 8:25. The Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Klei Mikdosh 3:8 rules, "That which it says in the Torah with regard to the Levites, 'One who is fifty years old shall retire from Service' refers to the time when they carried the Sanctuary from place to place. This is not a Mitzvah 'for the generations'. However, in subsequent generations the Levite was not disqualified neither due to age or blemish. Only if his voice faltered due to his advanced years was he disqualified from singing the Song. He becomes a gatekeeper."

³⁵ The four blessings in the ברכת המזון.

³⁶ See Baba Metziah 22a, Shach CM 358, Sif Koton 'א

³⁷ Surely, allegorically-speaking.

³⁸ The Bris Miloh.

³⁹ See Numbers 25:1-3

⁴⁰ Ibid. 4

holiness into a strange domain breaks the commandment, “*You shall have no other gods but Me*”. For to deny the king’s seal is equivalent to denying the king himself.

Next, is he who purposely prevents the seed from coming to fruition, for he destroys the King’s workmanship and so causes the Holy One to depart from the world. This sin is the cause of war, famine and pestilence and it prevents the שכינה from finding any resting place in the world.

For these abominations the Spirit of Holiness weeps. Woe to him who causes this. It were better that he had never been born. (Exodus 3a/b)

325. R. Hiya said: Whatever is in Heaven, the Holy One, blessed be He, has made a counterpart thereof on earth. (Exodus 5a)

326. The reason why the Holy One did not reveal Himself fully by signs and wonders in Babylon was because the Israelites took for themselves foreign wives and profaned the sign of the Holy Covenant. (Exodus 7a)

327. “*Sanctify yourselves and be holy*” [Leviticus 11:44]. When a person so sanctifies himself here Below, the Holy One adds His sanctification from Above. (Exodus 11b)

328. Said R. Shimon: There is not a word in the Torah which does not contain sublime and precious teachings. (Exodus 12a)

329. Said R. Judah: Man’s fate depends in the last resort upon repentance and prayer, and especially prayer with tears. For there is no gate which tears cannot penetrate. (Exodus 12b)

330. The שכינה always hovers over Israel like a mother over her children, and pleads in her defense against her accuser. (Exodus 12b)

331. R. Abba has said: There are many wicked parents who beget more good sons than righteous parents. A good son born of wicked parents is of special excellence, being pure out of impure, light out of darkness, and wisdom out of folly. (Exodus 12b)

332. R. Judah said: The Holy One, blessed be He, delights more in the prayer of the righteous than in any other thing whatsoever. Yet though it pleases Him better than all else, He does not always grant their requests or do all that they ask. He sometimes refuses to fulfill their wish. (Exodus 15a)

333. It was recounted by the disciples that on one occasion when there was a shortage of rain, R. Eleazar decreed that the congregation should fast for forty days. But no rain fell. Then R. Akiva prayed, and as he spoke the words “You caused the wind to blow” the wind blew, and when he said “and the rain to fall”, the rain fell.

R. Eleazar was much chagrined at this. R. Akiva read his feelings in his looks, so he stood up and said to the congregation, “I will tell you a parable. R. Eleazar is like unto one who is the king’s own friend and dear companion. When he goes to the palace to entreat some favor, it is not granted at once since the king delights in his friend’s presence and so keeps him with him as long as possible. I, on the other hand, am like the king’s servant, whose requests are quickly granted, the king only desiring to get rid of him at once and be no more troubled. Therefore he says, “Give the man what he wants at once so that he should not have to enter my chamber!” On hearing this, R. Eleazar was comforted. (Exodus 15a)

334. A voice from the grave cried out. Said R. Judah to him, “Do the dead know of the sufferings of the living?” He replied, “If it were not for us, the dead, who intercede before the angel of the grave for the living, they would not remain alive for half a day. (Exodus 16a/b)

335. Said R. Abba: That the prayers of the dead protect the living we learn from Caleb who went to Hebron to beg for the intercession of the Patriarchs⁴¹. (Exodus 16b)

336. R. Tanhum said: Every nation has its own representative Above. When G-d elevates one He degrades another. When He gives power to this one, it is only on account of Israel, as it says, *“Her adversaries have become (her) masters”* [Lam. 1:5].

R. Isaac said: Israel singly is equivalent to all the other nations together as seventy is the number of children of Israel when they came into Egypt; and whoever rules over Israel rules over the whole world.

R. Huna said: Why is Israel subjected to all the nations? In order that the world may be preserved through them, since they are on a par with the whole world. As G-d is One, so is Israel one, as it says, *“And who is like Your people, one⁴² nation on earth?”* [II Samuel 7:23]. And as His Name is one and yet has seventy ramifications, so is Israel one, and yet divided into seventy.

R. Judah applied the words, *“Because of three things the earth is disquieted...because of a servant when he reigns...and a maidservant who inherits (the place of) her mistress”* [Proverbs 30:21-22], to Egypt and Ishmael (Islam)⁴³. There is no nation so despised by the Holy One as Egypt, and yet he gave them dominion over Israel. The maidservant is Hagar who bore Ishmael who tormented Israel so cruelly in the past and still rules over her and persecutes her for her faith. In truth, the exile under Ishmael is the hardest of all exiles.

Once when going up to Jerusalem, R. Joshua saw an Arab and his son meet a Jew. The Arab said to his son, “See! There is a Jew whom G-d has rejected. Go and insult him. Spit in his face seven times for he is of the seed of the exalted ones and I know that the seventy nations shall be ruled by them.” The boy went and took hold of the Jew’s beard, whereupon R. Joshua said, “Mighty ones. Mighty ones. I call upon the Supernal Ones to come down Below!” Even before he had finished, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the Arabs. (Exodus 16b-17a)

337. Said R. Isaac: The King (G-d) punishes principally and, first of all, the members of His own family in order that they may guard themselves from sin, more than outsiders, as it says, *“Only you have I known from among all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities”* [Amos 3:2]. (Exodus 17b)

338. G-d punishes the students of Torah in order that they may not be separated from the Tree of Life even for a single moment. (Exodus 17b)

339. First the gods of a nation are punished, and then the nation itself. (Exodus 18b)

340. Said R. Tanchum: The seed of Levi is always joined to the שכינה—in Moses, Aaron, Miriam and in all his descendants. (Exodus 19a)

341. R. Isaac said: We have to distinguish between the terms “sighing”, “imploring” and “crying”, all three of which are applied here to the children of Israel.

Said R. Judah: In fact they only implored and cried, as the sighing mentioned in the verse refers to the Supernal Beings. What is the difference between imploring and crying?

Said R. Isaac: The former means prayer in actual words⁴⁴, the latter, crying, is without words.

⁴¹ Numbers 13:22

⁴² Alternatively – “a unique”.

⁴³ Soncino has this word in parentheses.

⁴⁴ See Psalms 39:13, 88:14, 30:3

R. Judah said: Hence crying is more poignant than all other expressions of grief because it is entirely a matter of the heart, as it says, "*If he (the orphan) cries unto Me, I will surely hear his cry*" [Exodus 22:20].

R. Berechiah said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Samuel, "*It repenteth Me that I have to set up Saul to be king*", what did Samuel do? "*He cried to the Lord all night*" [I Samuel 15:2]. He put aside everything and cried, as this finds the readiest access to the Holy One, blessed be He. Thus we read here, "*Now, therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel unto Me.*" [Exodus 3:9]. When one prays and weeps and cries so intensely that he is unable to find words to express his sorrow, his prayer is prayer in the truest sense for it is in the heart, and shall never return to him void.

Said R. Judah: Great is such crying in that it can affect a change in the Divine sentence of judgment.

R. Isaac said: Great is such crying in that it dominates the supernal attribute of Justice.

Said R. Jose: Great is such crying in that it dominates both this world and the World to Come, and makes man the heir of both, as it says, "*They cried unto the Lord due to their distress, and He delivered them out of their straits.*" [Psalms 107:13]. (Exodus 19b-20a)

342. R. Abba was once walking in company with R. Isaac. On the way, they saw some lilies and R. Abba plucked one. R. Abba smelled the lily and said, "What would the world be without smell? For I perceive that without smell, the soul would pine away. Therefore, we burn myrtle spices at the conclusion of the Sabbath." (Exodus 20a)

343. R. Judah said: How are the righteous recognized? By contrast with the wicked! If it were not for the one, the other would not be known. (Exodus 20b)

344. Said R. Jose: As a good shepherd keeps his flock in the open and will not let them stray into private ground, so does G-d keep Israel in the straight path and will not let them turn right or left. (Exodus 20b)

345. As the shepherd tends with special care to the newly-born lambs and carries them in his bosom or gently leads them after their mother, and is compassionate with them, so must Israel's shepherd (leader) be compassionate and not cruel. As the good shepherd saves the sheep from wolves and lions, so does the good shepherd of Israel save them from pagan nations, from judgment here Below and from judgment Above, and prepares them for the life in the World to Come. (Exodus 21a)

346. Balaam was the counterpart of Moses. As the works of the one were from Above, so were the other's from Below. Moses wrought his works by means of the Holy Crown of the All-highest King, Balaam by means of the unholy crowns from Below. (Exodus 21b)

347. Said R. Judah: As Moses excelled all prophets in Israel in respect to the superior, holy prophecy, so Balaam excelled all other pagan prophets and soothsayers in respect to the inferior, unholy prophecy. In any case, Moses was Above, Balaam Below, and there were numerous stages between them. (Exodus 21b-22a)

348. Humanity should base its life on justice and not depart from the way of righteousness. (Vo'eroh 22b)

349. One must fear the Lord even before one has an intellectual knowledge of Him in His revelational individual aspects⁴⁵. (Vo'eroh 25a)

350. R. Judah replied: A blind man is counted as dead. (Vo'eroh 26a)

⁴⁵ Taken from a section of another Kabbalistic work entitled *Ray'a Mehemna* ("Faithful Shepherd", [i.e. Moses]), but inserted, along with many other selection from this work, into the text of the Zohar. The Chida writes in *Shem Hagedolim* in the name of the book *Chesed L'Avrohom* that *Ray'a Mehemna* was also written by R. Shimon bar Yochai after he visited the "World of Souls" and consulted with the soul of the Faithful Shepherd himself.

351. How careful should a man be not to sin in secret before the Holy One, blessed be He, imagining that no one can testify against him. The stones and sticks of a man's own house shall cry out against him. (Vo'eroh 28a)

352. A curse on those who say that the Holy One will not raise the dead because it seems to them an impossibility! Let those fools who are far from the Torah and from the Holy One think a little.

Aaron had in his hand a rod made of dry wood and the Holy One turned it to be a living creature for a short time, with spirit and body. Can He not also then, at the time when He will gladden the world, turn into a new creation those bodies which once had spirits and holy souls in them, who kept the commandments and studied Torah day and night and which He had hidden for a time in the earth?⁴⁶

Said R. Hiya: And what is more, from the words, "*Your dead ones will come to life*" [Isaiah 26:19] it is evident that not only will there be a new creation, but that the very bodies which were dead will rise. One bone remains intact, not decaying in the earth and on Resurrection Day the Holy One will soften it and make it lie like leaven in dough and it will rise and expand on all sides. The whole body and all its members will be formed from it and then the Holy One will put spirit into it.

Said R. Eleazar: Assuredly so. And the bone will be softened by the dew as it says, "*Your dead ones shall come to life...for Your dew is like the dew which (revives) vegetation*" [ibid.]. (Vo'eroh 28a/b)

353. Woe, woe that Ishmael was born into the world and was circumcised! What did the Holy One do? He banished the children of Ishmael from the Heavenly communion and, instead, gave them a portion Below in the Holy Land because of their circumcision. And they are destined to rule over the Land a long time, so long as it is empty, just as their form of circumcision is empty and imperfect. They will prevent Israel from returning to their own Land until the merit of the children of Ishmael shall have become diminished.

The sons of Ishmael will fight mighty battles in the world and the sons of Edom will gather against them and make war against them, some on land, others on sea and some close to Jerusalem. One shall prevail over the other, but the Holy Land will not be delivered to the sons of Edom. Then a nation from the furthest ends of the earth will rise against the wicked Rome and fight against her for three months. Many nations will gather there and fall into the hands of that people until all the sons of Edom will congregate against her from all the ends of the earth.

Then the Holy One will rise against them as it says, "*A sacrifice of the Lord in Botzroh, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom*" [Isaiah 34:6]. He will "*grasp the ends of the earth and shake the wicked from it*" [Job 38:13]. He will wipe out the children of Ishmael from the Holy Land and crush all the powers and principalities of the nations in the supra-mundane world. Only one power will remain Above to rule over the nations of the world, namely the power representing Israel, as it is written, "*The Lord is your protective shade at your right hand*" [Psalms 121:5] (Vo'eroh 32a)

354. R. Judah exclaimed: How important it is for man to walk in the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, and keep the commandments of the Torah that so he may be worthy of the World to Come and triumph over all accusations, both on earth and in Heaven. For as there are Accusers of man here Below, so there are also accusers Above. But those who keep the commandments of the Torah, and walk in righteousness, in fear of the Lord, will never lack intercessors in Heaven. (Bo 32b)

⁴⁶ I do not understand this reasoning. If one denies the concept of resurrection as being "fantastic", would he similarly not deny the "proof" of Aaron's rod? Why is it easier to believe the story of the rod than that of resurrection?

355. Satan has the right to accuse individuals, not humanity as a whole. For the judgment of the world is executed by the Holy One Himself. (Bo 33b)

356. On New Year's Day, two Sides stand before the Holy One, blessed be He, for the reception of mankind. Those men of whom good deeds and repentance can be recorded are privileged to be inscribed in the roll of that Side which is life and which brings forth life. Whoever is on its Side is inscribed for life. But for those whose works are evil are assigned to the Other Side, which is death. Sometimes, however, it happens that the world is, as it were, exactly balanced between the two. Then if there is but one righteous person to turn the scale, the world is saved. But if there is one wicked one, then the whole world is condemned to death. (Bo 33b)

357. It is wrong to isolate oneself and be separated from the corporate community, since one is then liable to be singled out and accused in the Upper Realm. (Bo 33b)

358. Only when a thought, be it good or evil, is translated into action, does it bring about its due result Above, whether reward or punishment, saving only the intention of idolatry, of which it says, *"Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not seduced"* [Deut. 11:16]. (Bo 35b)

359. When the head of the people is punished the people escape punishment, for then the attribute of Justice can claim no power over them (having already been appeased). (Bo 36b)

360. G-d is patient with the wicked and waits for their repentance. (Bo 38b)

361. The rabbis have warned us to live only in a place which is the abode of men of pious deeds. Woe betide him who fixes his dwelling among the wicked! He will surely be "seized" for their sins! Conversely, when one lives among pious people, one shares the reward of their goodness. (Bo 38b)

362. The world is upheld only by the merit of the "breath" of little school children who have not yet tasted sin. (Bo 39a)

The next several excerpts until the end of Sedras Bo are from Ray'a Mehemna from where numerous other passages have been taken and inserted into the printed texts of the Zohar.

363. *"And the people took their dough before it was leavened."* On the strength of this is founded the precept that the leaven should be burned on the Passover Eve. "Leaven" and "unleaven" symbolize the evil and the good inclinations in man.

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

Similarly, one should acknowledge and proclaim any wonder that G-d has wrought for him. This should he do, not in order that the Omniscient should become aware of all His wonderful acts, since to Him all things of the past, as well as of the future, are already known, but rather in order that the praises may ascend even to the highest spheres and awaken among the supernal beings a responsive outburst of praise and worshipful delight in the faithfulness of His people and in the invincible greatness of His glory, who is Himself rejoiced at the rejoicings of His people and His Heavenly hosts.

Conversely, with the confession of sin: the Holy One is aware of all man's sins and needs no reminder of them. Yet since Satan, the Supernal Adversary and Accuser, continually lies in wait, ever ready to bring man's sins before the Holy One, it is but a natural precaution to hasten on in advance of him, making full confession of one's sins, so that the Accuser, when he comes, may find himself anticipated and left without grounds for his denunciations, and so be discouraged and leave his intended victim alone. Then, should the sinner carry out his repentance fully, he will be fully exonerated, and all will be well. And if not, Satan will thus obtain a just opportunity to rise up against the impious one, saying, "Here is a man who has had the audacity to appear before You, and yet has rebelled against his Lord!" Therefore, man should at all times beware lest he falter in his fealty, and strive ever to be found a faithful servant before the Holy One, blessed be He.

Then follows the command that we should eat unleavened bread during Passover, it being a memorial, throughout the generations, of the true secret of Faith. For, as already stated elsewhere, Israel at that time emerged from the association with idolatry and entered into the mystery of Faith. (Bo 40b-41a—from Ray'a Mehemna)

364. "With *bitter herbs they shall eat it...neither shall you break a bone thereof.*" The bitter herbs signify the שכינה's exile with Israel in all their bitter afflictions in Egypt. Why were the bones of the Passover lamb not allowed to be broken? So that the dogs might drag them about and the Egyptians be thus made to realize the nothingness of that which they worshipped and so be put to shame, and the Holy One be glorified. (Bo 41b—from Ray'a Mehemna)

365. The עַם הָאָרֶץ (ordinary man) requires redemption from the power of the Evil Impulse, which is his lord and master. (Bo 41b—from Ray'a Mehemna)

366. In this world, the Evil Impulse is indeed the lord, because of the multitude of sins and evils which attack the body of man. (Bo 41b—from Ray'a Mehemna)

367. When there is a preponderance of meritorious works, the spirit ascends and becomes master of his animal nature. As for the intermediate person, a war is continually being waged between the principalities of justification and of condemnation to gain control of him. When the Side of condemnation sees that it cannot prevail against him, it tries to make him forget all his Torah. (Bo 41b—from Ray'a Mehemna)

368. If he is unworthy and possesses no heritage of righteousness to assist him, four powers of evil shall be his companions when he enters into this world, namely Anger, Destruction, Depravity and Wrath. (Bo 41b—from Ray'a Mehemna)

369. Very evil can be turned into good by repentance. (Bo 43a—from Ray'a Mehemna)

370. A spiritual ignoramus can be redeemed from the exile of darkness and be included in the redemption of Israel. But, if he does not repent, he will be blotted out from the Book of Life. (Bo 43a—from Ray'a Mehemna)

371. שְׁגִיּוֹן לְדוֹד [Psalms 7:1]. שְׁגִיּוֹן refers to a musical instrument which was used by all the prophets, except Moses who was independent of external aids to prophecy, in order to enter into an ecstatic mood before receiving the spirit of prophecy⁴⁷. (Beshalach 45a)

372. R. Isaac was reminded of the verse: "*Fret not yourself because of the evildoers*" [Psalms 37:1]. He said: 'Evildoers', as opposed to 'sinners' or 'wicked men', are those who defile themselves and all who come into contact with them.

Said R. Judah: One must indeed beware of making friends (רעים) with the evildoers (מְרעים) lest one should suffer for their deeds and be included in their judgment. Mark this. Were it not for that "mixed multitude" which joined and mingled with Israelites, the sin of

⁴⁷ cf. I Samuel 10:5; II Kings 3:15

the golden calf would never have been perpetrated and the children of Israel would not have had to suffer for it as they did. No, but for that sin Israel would have been, then and forever, that which the Holy One had ordained for them to be, namely, pure as the angels and free from all evil, free from death and free from the dominion of earthy powers. But that sin brought upon the earth death and subjection and through it the tablets were broken and many thousands were slain. All this came from their association with the “mixed multitude”. It was on their account that they are called here not “children of Israel” nor “Israel” nor “my people”, but simply “the people”. (Beshalach 45b)

373. R. Judah answered: The “mixed multitude”⁴⁸ were not Egyptians, but members of other peoples living in Egypt. They were accepted as proselytes on the authority of Moses, for which reason it says in a later passage, “Go, descend for your people who you have brought out of Egypt have become corrupt” [Exodus 32:7]. (Beshalach 45b-46a)

374. Torah must be studied by day and by night. As the day is not complete without the night, so the study of Torah is not complete unless it is carried on by night as well as by day. The word “night” is commonly taken to include the evening hours before midnight, but real night only begins with the actual stroke of midnight, for at that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, enters the Garden of Eden in order to have joyous communion with the righteous. For this reason, it behooves the pious man to rise also at that time. (Beshalach 46a)

375. Israel does not turn to the Almighty when they are at ease, but only when they are “in trouble”. When He chastises them, then “they pour out prayer”. (Beshalach 47a)

376. The Sabbath is equal in significance to the whole Torah. He who keeps the Sabbath keeps, as it were, the whole Torah. (Beshalach 47a)

377. Every word that one speaks, whether it be good or bad, causes a vibration in the Higher Spheres. He who disturbs the Sabbath joy by uttering profane words causes a blemish in the holy day. When one has been invited to the king’s banquet, he would commit a great offense against the king if he were to neglect him in order to converse with some other person. The Sabbath is such a banquet. The weekdays must be devoted to all needful occupations, with their corresponding vibrations Above. On the Sabbath, however, the vibration must be caused entirely by religious acts and words, by the sanctification of the day. (Beshalach 47b)

378. The Kohanim who ministered in the Sanctuary (were to) unite Israel with G-d. (Beshalach 49b)

379. Sometimes, the title is “*Of David, a Psalm*” and sometimes “*A Psalm of David*”. What is the difference? “*Of David, a Psalm*” signifies that David sang concerning the Community of Israel. “*A Psalm of David*” signifies that he sang concerning himself. (Beshalach 50a)

380. The bond of Faith dominates all. (Beshalach 52b)

381. R. Shimon added that it is always for the sake of the Patriarchs that that Lord redeems Israel, as it is written, “*And I shall remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham, and the Land I shall remember*” [Leviticus 26:42]; the “land” representing King David, who completes a Chariot with the Patriarchs. (Beshalach 53a)

382. Whoever sings *שיר* daily with true devotion will be worthy to sing it at the Redemption that is to be, for it refers both to the past world and to the future World. It contains confirmations of faith and mysteries relating to the days of the Messiah. (Beshalach 54b)

⁴⁸ ערב רב - from where the term riff-raff is derived.

383. The true worship of the Holy One, blessed be He, consists of loving Him Above all and in all, as it is written, “*You shall love the Lord your G-d*” [Deut. 6:5]. (Beshalach 55b)

384. R. Jesse replied: Man can and must exalt Him in the sense of uniting in his mind all the attributes in the Holy Name, for this is the most supreme expression of worship⁴⁹. (Beshalach 55b)

385. He who lifts his voice in weeping and lamentation over the destruction of the Temple shall be worthy of being numbered among those of whom it says, “*they shall sing altogether*” and enjoy the privilege of beholding the Holy One when He shall inhabit His House once more. (Beshalach 55b)

386. He who engages in the battle of the Torah and struggles to penetrate into her mysteries will wrest from his struggles an abundance of peace. All other wars involve strife and destruction, but the war of the Torah is one of peace and love. (Beshalach 56a)

387. A Kohen who does not know how to unify the Holy Name cannot perform proper service, for on the achievement of that unity hangs both celestial and terrestrial worship. The Kohen must, therefore, strive to concentrate heart and mind on the attainment of this unification, so that those Above and those Below may be blessed. And if one comes to unify the Holy Name, but without proper concentration of mind and devotion of heart, to the end that the supernal and terrestrial hosts should be blessed thereby, then his prayer is rejected and all beings denounce him and he is numbered with those of whom the Holy One said, “*When you come to see My countenance (פְּנִים, literally countenances), who has required this from our hand, to tread My court?*”

All the “countenances” of the King are hidden in the depths of darkness. But, for those who know how perfectly to unite the Holy Name, all the walls of darkness are burst asunder. The diverse countenances of the King are made manifest, and shine upon all, bringing blessing to Heavenly and earthly beings. (Beshalach 57a)

388. Said R. Hiya: There is nothing which can break the power of the heathen nations save the power of Torah, in the study of which Israel is absorbed. (Beshalach 58a)

389. Contrariwise, when Israel neglects Torah, the power of heathendom and the nations rule over Israel and issue tyrannous decrees against them, and Israel is scattered among the nations. (Beshalach 58a)

390. Said R. Eleazar: It is indeed so. As long as the voices of the Israelites are heard in the synagogues and in the houses of study they are powerful. (Beshalach 58b)

391. R. Jose discoursed on the verse, “*I have seen all the works that are done under the sun and, behold, all is vanity and breaking of spirit.*” [Eccl. 1:14]. How could Solomon, the wisest of men, say that all human actions are vanity? Can this be said of acts of righteousness and loving-kindness of which it is written, “*and the product of righteousness shall be peace*” [Isaiah 32:17]. However, “all is vanity” refers to works which are done *under* the sun, while “the work of righteousness” is *above* the sun. (Beshalach 59a)

392. “*The place which You have made for Your dwelling-place, Lord, for the Sanctuary, Lord, which Your Hands prepared.*” This implies the necessity of building a Sanctuary Below corresponding to the Sanctuary Above wherein the Holy One is daily served and worshipped.

Now, prayer itself has the character of service, and is called so. A synagogue should be a handsome structure, beautifully decorated, for it is an earthly copy of a Heavenly prototype. The Temple Below had its counterpart in the Temple Above and everything there, holy vessels and holy ministers, corresponded to something Above. The same was true of the Tabernacle which Moses erected in the desert. And a synagogue must have the same object.

⁴⁹ Unification of G-d's Name and His Attributes is a central theme in the Zohar and repeated often.

It must be a true house of prayer. A sanctuary must have windows, as Daniel had in his upper chamber where he prayed⁵⁰ corresponding to the “windows” in Heaven, as it is written, “*My beloved...He looks through the windows, peering through the lattices*” [Song of Songs 2:9].

We might think that it is more proper to pray in the open air in order to allow the spirit a free ascent. This, however, is not so! There must be a house to correspond to the “House” Above. Besides, prayer and spirit must issue forth from a narrow, limited space, in a straight line towards Jerusalem without deviating right or left. This is symbolized by the sound of the Shofar which is thrust forth in a straight line from a narrow opening and breaks through the firmament in order to stir up the Spirit Above. It is true, we are told that “*and Isaac went to meditate in the field*” [Genesis 24:63], but there are special reasons for this and, besides, the field where he prayed was not an ordinary field. (Beshalach 59b-60a, from Ray’a Mehemna)

393. In Scripture, “water” stands as a symbol for Torah. The “tree” is (also) a symbol of Torah which is a “*tree of life to those who grasp it*” [Proverbs 3:18] and the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one. The “tree” is a direct symbol of the Holy One. (Beshalach 60a/b)

394. He who guards the sign of the covenant⁵¹ rises eventually to the perception of the Holy King. (Beshalach 60b)

395. The impress (circumcision) must be guarded from four things: intercourse with a menstruous woman, a bondwoman, a heathen woman, and a harlot. (Beshalach 60b)

396. Even when he has a sufficiency of food, the man of faith ought to pray for “daily bread” in order that through him there may be each day an increase of blessing in Heaven. This is the meaning of the words, “*Blessed be the Lord by day.*” For this reason it is not right to cook food on one day for the next so that one day should not interfere with another in regard to blessings from Above⁵². (Beshalach 62a)

397. Whoever prays before the Holy King must do so from the depths of his soul so that his heart may be wholly turned to G-d and his whole mind be concentrated upon his prayer. (Beshalach 63b)

398. The table must be prepared on Sabbath night so that when the blessings descend from Above they may find something upon which to rest, as it were, for “no blessing rests on an empty table”. Those who are aware of this mystery of the union of the Holy One with the *שכינה* on Sabbath night consider, therefore, this time the most appropriate one for their own marital union. (Beshalach 63b)

399. What is the meaning of the word “*שבת*”? The day in which all the other days rest. It is the day which comprises the other days and from which they derive blessing. (Beshalach 63b)

400. When one adorns himself with the supernal Holy Crown (i.e. celebrates the Sabbath), he must take great care not to utter any word which might profane the Sabbath. Similarly, he must guard his hands and feet so as not to walk beyond the permissible limit of two thousand cubits. (Beshalach 63b-64a)

401. R. Hiya replied: A strong hammer is known by the sparks it produces (i.e. a sharp mind is recognized by the problems it raises). (Beshalach 64a)

402. Amalek was the first nation who feared not to proclaim war against Israel as it says, “*and he did not fear G-d*” [Deut. 25:18]. While the other nations were filled with fear and

⁵⁰ See Daniel 6:2.

⁵¹ A warning against sexual promiscuity and the like.

⁵² I am unfamiliar with any such Halakhah.

trembling before Israel at the time of the Exodus, as it says: “*The peoples heard and were agitated; trembling took hold of the inhabitants of Peleshes*” [Exodus 15:14], in fact, apart from Amalek, there was no nation that was not awestruck before the mighty works of the Holy One, blessed be He. (Beshalach 65a)

403. Said R. Shimon: Let us not think lightly of this war with Amalek. Verily, from the creation of the world until then, and since then until the coming of the Messiah, there has been and will be no war like that, nor can even the war of Gog and Magog be compared with it. This is not because of the mighty armies taking part in it, but because it was launched against all the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He. (Beshalach 65b)

404. When a father performs the act of circumcision on his son, revealing the impress of the sign of the Holy Covenant, the sacrificial act is, as it were, an altar of propitiation. (Beshalach 66b)

405. R. Jose said: How are we to understand the words, “*and they saw the G-d of Israel*” [Exodus 24:10]? Who can see the Holy One? Is it not written, “*No man can see Me and live*”? It means that a rainbow appeared above them in radiant colors resplendent with the beauty of His grace. Therefore, the saying that he who gazes at a rainbow, gazes, as it were, at the שכינה. For the same reason, it is not right to look at the fingers of the Kohanim when they spread out their hands to bless the people (the שכינה “showing Herself through the lattice”, i.e. through the priests’ fingers). (Beshalach 66b)

406. “*The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*” R. Judah said: There never was a generation of men, nor ever will be, in this world without evil seed and The Holy One, blessed be He, carries on His war against it. Of such it is written, “*The sinners will cease from the earth, and the wicked will be no more. Bless You Lord, O my soul, Hallelujah!*” [Psalms 104:35]. (Beshalach 67a)

407. When one lifts up his hands to Heaven, he must be careful that his intention should be to pray or bless or supplicate. For if he lifts them idle (i.e. for cursing) those powers that brood over the “spreading of the hands” will curse him with two hundred and forty-eight curses. The hand must be lifted up to Heaven only as an expression of prayer or of blessing. (Yisro 67a)

408. Said R. Abba: We have frequently affirmed that whatever the Holy One has made, whether it be Above or Below has a purpose. (Yisro 68b)

409. One must beware of despising anyone, since the words of an ordinary person may be of great consequence, as it says of Moses that he “*heeded the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said*” [Exodus 18:24]. (Yisro 68b-69a)

410. The character of man is revealed in the hair, the forehead, the eyes, the lips, the features of the face, the lines of the hands, and even the ears⁵³. (Yisro 70b)

411. What then is man? Does he consist solely of skin, flesh, bones and sinews? No. The essence of man is his soul. The skin, flesh, bones and sinews are but an outward covering, the mere garments, but they are not the man. When man departs from this world, he divests himself of all these garments. (Yisro 76a)

412. When the faces of men are serene, and they are in the normal state, their shapes and features reveal to the wise the inner thoughts and propensities of the mind. So by the lines of the hands and of the fingers it is possible to discern hidden facts of one’s personality. They are the shining stars which reveal the varieties of human types and their relationship to the Upper treasures. (Yisro 76a)

⁵³ At this point, the Zohar goes into a discussion of the “mysteries of human physiognomy” describing various types of personalities which can be discerned based on facial features such as type of hair, shape of the forehead, etc. An additional discourse on palmistry appears several pages hence in the original, but was omitted in the Soncino translation. See also Drososh Haramban, Toras Hashem Temimah p. 162 (Chavel edition).

413. *“Moreover you shall provide (literally behold) out of all the people, etc.”* Said R. Shimon: It does not say “you shall choose” but “you shall behold”. This means that by means of the gift of inner sight of those characteristics which we have mentioned. All are indicated in this verse, “*you shall look*” refers to the hair; “*of all the people*” to the forehead; “*for able men*” to the face; “*G-d-fearing*” to the eyes; “*men of truth*” to the lips; and “*hating covetousness*” to the hands. All these are the signs by which to recognize men; signs, that is, to those on whom the spirit of wisdom rests.

And yet Moses had no need of these signs, for we read, “*And Moses chose able men from among all Israel*” [v. 25]. He chose them by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for we read, “*When they have a matter, one comes to me*” [v. 16]. The “he” is in the singular instead of “they” in the plural to indicate that it refers to the Holy Spirit. So there was no necessity for him to use the gift of inner sight in order to find out who were the right persons. He knew at once whom to choose through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Similarly Solomon, in all the legal cases brought before him could give his decisions without the aid of any witnesses because the Holy Spirit was present at his throne and everyone coming near to it was overcome with fear and trembling. There was an invisible figure hidden in the throne and when anyone uttered a false plea it made a sound by which Solomon knew at once that the person was not telling the truth.

The Messiah will discern persons by their odor, for of him it says, “*His scent will be in the fear of the Lord and he shall not judge by what his eyes see nor decide by what his ears hear.*” [Isaiah 11:3].

These three judged without witnesses and without warning. All others must judge in accordance with the Torah and must decide by the word of witnesses. The wise who are adept in physiognomic lore must warn men and provide healing for their souls. Blessed are they in this world and in the World to Come. (Yisro 78a)

414. Every person must converse with his fellows according to the sex and class to which they belong. (Yisro 80a)

415. If men but knew the wisdom of all that the Holy One, blessed be He, has planted in the earth, and the power of all that is to be found in the world, they would proclaim the power of their Lord in His great wisdom. But the Holy One has purposely hidden this wisdom from men in order that they should not turn from His Way by trusting in that wisdom alone, forgetting Him. (Yisro 80a/b)

416. *“You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagle’s wings.”* What do eagles’ wings denote? According to R. Judah, the “eagles” are a symbol of mercy, as it says, “*As an eagle stirs up her nest, fluttering over her young, spreading abroad her wings, taking them, bearing them on her wings (so the Lord)*” [Deut. 32:11]. As the eagle watches lovingly over its own young, but is cruel towards others, so does the Holy One manifest His loving mercy to Israel and His severe judgment to the heathen nations. (Yisro 80b)

417. We have been taught that the Holy One, blessed be He, gave six hundred and thirteen counsels to man in order that he might be perfect in attachment to his Lord, for the Holy King desires only his good, both in this world and in the World to Come, but more especially in the World to Come, since whatever good the Holy One bestows upon man in this world is taken from the sum of good which he is entitled to receive in the World to Come. Why is this? Because, as we have been taught, the World to Come is, as it were, G-d’s own possession. This is not to say, of course, that this present world is not His also but, it has been said, it is like unto an antechamber in comparison with the hall itself⁵⁴. (Yisro 82b)

⁵⁴ cf. Pirke Avos 4:21.

418. Said R. Isaac: Why was the Torah given in fire and darkness? In order to show that he who is constantly and diligently occupied with the study of it will be saved from the fire of hell (גהיגורם) and from the darkness of exile in heathen lands. (Yisro 83b)

419. R. Isaac replied: It is well known that when a person is expecting some great good fortune or misfortune to befall him, before the event happens he is in a state of great nervous tension and can hardly control himself, but once the best or the worst is known, he regains his equanimity. (Yisro 84b)

420. King Solomon was the fifteenth in descent from Abraham, the pedigree being Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Perez, Hezron, Ram, Aminadab, Nachshon, Shalmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, Solomon. Zedekiah was the fifteenth from Solomon, his pedigree being Rehoboam, Abiah, Asa, Jehoshafat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotha, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Zedekiah. (Yisro 85a)

421. Israel's exodus from Egypt is mentioned fifty times in the Torah. Fifty days passed from the Exodus to the Revelation on Sinai, and fifty years had to pass for the liberation of slaves. (Yisro 85b)

422. Said R. Jose: The engraving and painting of all forms is permitted, except the human figure. Said R. Isaac: The reason is because when a human figure is represented in sculpture or painting, it is not only the body which is fashioned in the image of the person but, as it were, the wholeness of the man is being reproduced, his inner form, namely his spirit, as well as his outer bodily form. (Yisro 86a)

423. Woe unto him against whom a poor man complains to his Master! For the poor are nearest to the King. (Yisro 86b)

424. Wherever the word "prayer" (תפילה) is mentioned, it signifies something precious, something which ascends to a supernal sphere, to the תפלה (phylactery) of the head worn by the King. (Yisro 86b)

425. R. Isaac said: One must not err in regard to the meaning of the words of the Torah, and not derive any doctrine from them which he has not learned (from books) or heard from his teachers. He who gives his own interpretations of Scripture not derived from these sources transgresses the commandment: "*You shall not make unto yourself any graven image...*" (Yisro 87a)

426. The Torah consists of His Holy Name. In fact, every word written therein consists of and contains that Holy Name. (Yisro 87a)

427. It is prohibited to say the Grace after meals over an empty table, because the supernal blessing cannot rest on an empty place. It is, therefore, necessary to put a loaf or two on the table before saying grace or at least the remnants of the former meal in order that the blessing should not, as it were, be uttered "in emptiness". (Yisro 87b)

428. R. Shimon said: It is a sin to mention the Name of the Holy One in vain, in emptiness. A man who does that were better not to have been born. According to R. Eleazar, this also means that one should not utter the Holy Name by itself but only after a preceding word, as in the Torah it only occurs for the first time after the two words: בראשית ברא. (Yisro 87b-88a)

429. One should utter the Holy Name only within a blessing or a prayer. He who takes the Name in vain, neither in a benediction nor in a prayer, will be punished when his soul will leave him. (Yisro 88a)

430. Said R. Judah: One must regale oneself on the Sabbath with three meals in order that this day may be one of satisfaction and refreshment. (Yisro 88a)

431. The mystics sanctify themselves on Sabbath night in the holiness of their Lord with deep contemplation and concentration, and bring good and holy children into the world. (Yisro 89b)

432. We have a dictum that the first five commandments include, by implication, the other five as well. In other words, in the first five, the second five are engraved, five within five. How?

Take the first commandment, *“I am the Lord your G-d”*. Does it not include the first of the second five? Indeed it does, for the murderer diminishes the likeness and image of his Master, man having been created *“in the image of G-d”*. It is also written *“And upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it”* [Ezekiel 1:26]. Said R. Hiya: It is written, *“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of G-d made He man”* [Genesis 9:6]. He who shed the blood of a fellow-man is thus considered as diminishing the Divine archetype of man as well. Thus the first commandment, *“I am the Lord your G-d”* contains the motive for the sixth, *“You shall not murder”*.

The second commandment, *“You shall have no other gods”* contains the motive for the seventh, *“You shall not commit adultery”*, for the adulterer deceitfully lies against the Name of the Holy One which is impressed upon man, a sin comprising many other sins and entailing corresponding punishments. He who is unfaithful in this, is unfaithful towards the King, as it is written, *“They betrayed the Lord, for they have begotten alien children.”* [Hosea 5:7]. One is the result of the other.

The third commandment, *“You shall not take the name of the Lord your G-d in vain”*, corresponds to the eighth commandment, *“You shall not steal”*. For a thief is certainly inclined to swear falsely, as it is written, *“Whoever is partner with a thief hates his own soul, he will hear an oath, but will not testify”* [Proverbs 29:24].

The fourth commandment, *“Remember the Sabbath Day”* corresponds to the ninth, *“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor”* for, as R. Jose said, the Sabbath is called a witness to G-d’s creative activity and man is required to testify to the fact that *“in six day the Lord made heaven and earth, etc.”* Hence, R. Jose said: G-d has *“given truth to Jacob”* [Micah 7:20] thus requiring Israel to keep the Sabbath. He who bears false witness against his neighbor, lies against the Sabbath, the witness of truth. He who lies against the Sabbath, lies against the whole Torah.

The fifth commandment, *“Honor your father and your mother”* implies the tenth *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife”* for whoever has a son born of adultery is “honored” by him on false pretences. Further, it is written in the fifth commandment, *“that your days may be long upon the Land which the Lord your G-d gives you”* is as much as to say, “what He gives you is yours, but do not covet what is not yours”.

Thus, the first five commandments imply the second five. (Yisro 90a/b)

433. *“And these are the judgments which You shall set before them.”* R. Shimon here introduced the subject of transmigration of souls saying: Onkelos translates the above words as follows: ‘These are the judgments which You shall *order* before them.’ In other words, “These are the orders of the metempsychosis, the judgment of the souls by which each of them receives its appropriate punishment.” Associates, the time has now arrived to reveal the diverse hidden and secret mysteries in regard to the transmigration of souls. (Mishpotim 94a)

434. When a human being is born into the world he is given a soul (נפש). If he is more fortunate, he will be endowed with a spirit (רוח). Should he possess still greater potential

merit he is given a [different/another⁵⁵] soul (נשמה). If the newly created being deserves still more, the soul which is put into his bodily form derives through a process of emanation (אצילות). If his merit is still greater, he will be endowed with a [yet different/another/additional] spirit (נשמה). But, if he should acquire still greater merit, the Holy Name (יקוק) is granted to him in its fullness. (Mishpotim 94b)

435. Truly much good and excellent advice is to be found in all the words of the Torah, for they are all true and lead to further truth and are comprehended as such by the wise who know that path and walk therein.

When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create the world, it pleased Him to form all the souls which were destined to be allotted to the children of men and each was shaped before him in the very outline of the body she was afterwards to inhabit. He examined each one and saw that some of them would corrupt their ways in the world. When the time of each arrived, the Holy One summoned it saying, "Go, descend into such and such a place, into such and such a body."

But often it chanced that the soul would reply, "Lord, of the world, I am satisfied to be here in this world and desire not to leave it for some other place where I shall be enslaved and become soiled." Then would the Holy One respond, "From the very day of your creation, you have had no other destiny than to go into that world". At this the soul, seeing that it must obey, would descend against its will and enter into this world. (Mishpotim 96b)

436. How careful should one be not to walk in a crooked way in this world! For if he shall have proved himself worthy in this world, having guarded his soul with all care, then the Holy One, blessed be He, will be well-pleased with him and will praise him daily to His celestial Family saying, "Behold, the holy son whom I have in that Lower World! See what acts he performed, how upright are his ways!" And when such a soul leaves this world, pure, bright, and unsullied, the Holy One illumines her daily with innumerable radiances and proclaims concerning her, "This is the soul of my son so-and-so. Let her be kept for the body which she has left." (Mishpotim 97a)

437. At a man's birth, the Holy One provides him with a soul, so also does He provide him with an "other" soul especially for the Sabbath. (Mishpotim 98a)

438. How many human beings live in confusion of mind, beholding not the way of truth whose dwelling is in the Torah, the Torah which calls them day by day to herself in love but, alas, they do not even turn their heads!

It is indeed as I⁵⁶ have said, that the Torah lets out a word and emerges for a little from her sheath and then hides herself again. But she does this only for those who understand and obey her. She is like a beautiful and stately damsel who is hidden in a secluded chamber of a palace and who has a lover of whom no one knows but she. Out of his love for her, he constantly passes by her gate, turning his eyes towards all sides to find her. She, knowing that he is always haunting the palace, what does she do? She opens a little door in her hidden palace, discloses for a moment her face to her lover, then swiftly hides it again. None but he notices it. But his heart and soul and all that is in him are drawn to her knowing as he does that she has revealed herself to him for a moment because she loves him.

It is the same with the Torah which reveals her hidden secrets only to those who love her. She knows that he who is wise of heart daily haunts the gates of her house. What does she do? She shows her face to him from her palace making a sign of love to him and straightaway returns to her hiding place again. No one understands her message save he alone and he is

⁵⁵ The Soncino translation redundantly reads "given a soul".

⁵⁶ An unnamed rabbi. Much of the Zohar consists of discourses by anonymous rabbis and unnamed persons.

drawn to her with heart and soul and all his being. Thus the Torah reveals herself momentarily in love to her lovers in order to awaken fresh love in them. (Mishpotim 99a)

439. When the soul and spirit unite, they shine with a celestial light and in their union they are designated “lamp”, as it says, “*The lamp of the Lord is the soul of man*” [Proverbs 20:27]. נר (lamp) being the abbreviation of נשמה-רוח (soul-spirit). Soul and spirit, the union of the Masculine and the Feminine bring forth light. But, if separate, they do not give light. (Mishpotim 99b)

440. After a woman has been twice widowed, no one should marry her again, for the angel of death has taken possession of her.⁵⁷ (Mishpotim 102a)

441. He who marries a widow is comparable with one who ventures to brave the ocean during a storm without a rudder and without sails, and knows not whether he will cross safely or sink into the depths. (Mishpotim 102a)

442. He who marries a widow “*knows not that it is with the peril of his life*”⁵⁸ for he knows not whether she is predestined to be his real spouse. However, if the widow does not wish to marry again, even when the man who wishes to marry her is meant to be her ideal mate, the Holy One does not condemn her for that. He prepares another wife for the man whom she had refused and she is not brought before the Heavenly tribunal for her refusal, even when she has no children, because the commandment concerning procreation is not obligatory for women. (Mishpotim 102b)

443. When a man divorces his wife he causes, as it were, a defect in the stone of the Heavenly altar. (Mishpotim 102b-103a)

444. If that woman, having been divorced, did not marry again, even if she should have misconducted herself with many men, the husband, if he wishes, may take her back, but not if she had been legally married to another man. (Mishpotim 103a)

445. The Holy One does not let any creature remain unrewarded. (Mishpotim 106a)

446. He is full of mercy towards all His works, as it is written, “*His mercies are (evident) on all His works*” [Psalms 145:9]. His mercies extend even to animals and birds, still more to human beings who know how to praise their Lord. As David expressed it, “*Many are Your mercies, O Lord, preserve me as is Your practice*” [Psalms 119:156]. Now, if His tender mercies are vouchsafed to sinners, how much more to righteous men! Who is it that needs healing? He who is sick. And who is sick if not the sinner?

Therefore, when a sinner turns to the Lord for healing and mercy, He stretches out His right hand to receive him. When G-d draws a man to Himself, He draws him with His right hand, but when He pushes him away, He does so with His left hand⁵⁹. And even as the left hand pushes away, the right draws near, for the Holy One, blessed be He, does not withhold His tender mercy from sinners.

Observe how the Scripture says first, “*And he went disobediently in the way of his heart*” and immediately afterwards, “*I have seen his ways and will heal him. I will lead him also and impart consolations unto him and to his mourners*” [Isaiah 57:17-18]. This shows that even when sinners commit sin purposely, walking according to the desires of their own hearts, and heeding not the warnings of others, even for such, when they repent and begin to walk in the way of righteousness, is healing prepared. (Mishpotim 105b-106a)

447. Is not a sinner dead, even though he is alive? (Mishpotim 106b)

⁵⁷ See Shulcon Oruch Even Haezer 9:1.

⁵⁸ Maybe Proverbs 7:23? I am not sure which verse was translated here. Soncino's reference to 7:28 seems incorrect.

⁵⁹ cf. Sanhedrin 107b.

448. The Holy One grants the sinner grace to repent and strength to accomplish his return to righteousness. “*He imparts repentance to him and consolation to his mourners*” (נחומים in the double sense of “repentance” and “consolation”), and the man himself is truly and perfectly alive. (Mishpotim 106b)

449. It is possible to commit sins which are offenses both against G-d and man, also one can commit sins which are offenses against man but not against the Holy One⁶⁰, and there are also sins which are committed against the Holy One only. (Mishpotim 106b)

450. Every man naturally uses the language of his occupation. (Mishpotim 107a)

451. Why did David commit the sin? In order to give an opening to sinners so that they might be able to say, “King David sinned, but when he repented the Holy One forgave him. If he was forgiven, there is still greater hope that common folk such as we shall receive forgiveness.” (Mishpotim 107b)

452. Members of the human body can receive foreign particles into themselves without real damage, except the heart which cannot receive even a hair without being damaged. (Mishpotim 108a)

453. A person who has had a bad dream must wear a sad and sorrowful demeanor for he stands under the attribute of אלקים and the sacrifice of the attribute of Justice must express itself through sadness and self-abasement. Such sadness is in itself sufficient fulfillment of the dream and the judgment will not exercise its sway over such a one since he has brought the fitting sacrifice to the attribute of Justice. (Mishpotim 108a)

454. The Holy One, blessed be He, despises a proud and arrogant heart. (Mishpotim 108a)

455. The Holy One, blessed be He, suffers not any man who has emasculated himself in this world to appear before Him, just as, in a similar fashion, no castrated animal was a permitted sacrifice⁶¹. It is prohibited throughout all generations to castrate any creature which the Holy One has created. (Mishpotim 108b-109a)

456. Solomon reflected and said: I consider the sad fate of these hapless oppressed ones who have been “made”, how they shed tears before the Holy One. They complain before Him and moan saying, “When a person commits a sin, he must assuredly die. But, Sovereign of the Universe, when a child is but one day old, shall he be judged?” These are “the tears of the oppressed ones who have no comforter.”

There are many different kinds among them, but they all shed tears. Here is, for instance, a child born in incest. As soon as he emerges into the world he is separated from the community of the holy people and the unfortunate bastard laments and sheds tears before the Holy One and complains, “Lord of the World! If my parents have sinned, wherein is my guilt? I have ever striven to do only good works before You.”

But the greatest grief of all emanates from those “oppressed ones” that are but little sucklings who have been removed from their mother’s breasts. These can indeed cause the whole world to wonder and say, “The Holy One’s judgments are forever righteous and all His paths are ways of truth.” But why is it necessary that these poor little ones, who are blameless and without sin, should die? Where is now the true and righteous judgment of the Lord of the world? If they must die because of their parents’ sins, then they certainly “have no comforter”.

However, the actual fact is that the tears of these “oppressed ones” intercede for and protect the living and because of their innocence and the power of their intercession, a place

⁶⁰ I do not know to what the Zohar is referring. Are not all sins against one’s fellow man also an offense against G-d? See also Sanhedrin 27a.

⁶¹ Levit. 22:24

is eventually prepared for them such as even the perfectly righteous cannot attain to or occupy. For the Holy One does, in truth, love them with a special and particular love. He unites Himself with them and prepares for them a supernal place very near to Himself. It is concerning such that it is written, “*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You established strength*”. What is it that they accomplish there and why did they go there? “*Because of Your enemies, that You might silence the enemy and the avenger*” [Psalms 8:3].

And there is also another place prepared for sinners who repent. (Mishpotim 113a/b)

457. Had not the tablets been broken, the world would not have suffered as it subsequently did, and the Israelites would have been in the likeness of the supernal angels Above. (Mishpotim 114a)

458. We have been taught that because Israel is designated “holiness” no one is allowed to apply to his neighbor an insulting epithet or bestow upon him a degrading nickname. The punishment for such an offense is indeed great. It is written, “*Keep your tongue from evil*”. “From evil”, for slander and malicious speech cause disease to enter into the world.

Said R. Jose: He who offends his neighbor by giving him an insulting nickname or by addressing him in abusive terms will himself eventually suffer for offenses which he has not committed.

In this connection R. Hiya also said in the name of R. Hezekiah,: He who calls his neighbor “wicked” will be thrown into the very jaws of גהינום. The only people whom one may legitimately call “wicked” are those who speak impudently and blasphemously against the Torah. (Mishpotim 122a)

459. R. Abba also said that the words: “*Execute judgment in the morning*” [Jeremiah 21:12] mean that judges should sit in judgment “in the morning”, that is, before they have had anything to eat or drink, since he who executes judgment after eating and drinking is not a true judge, as it is written, “*You shall not eat with the blood*” [Leviticus 19:26]. This means that a judge who eats before sitting in judgment is, as it were, guilty of shedding his neighbor’s blood. For indeed, he gives the “blood” of his neighbor to someone else. Now, this is merely in reference to money matters, how much more then in criminal cases when it is a question of life and death should the judges beware of eating and drinking before executing judgment! (Mishpotim 122a)

460. When one observes the ordinances of the Torah and diligently studies it, it is as though he diligently studied the Divine Name. For the whole Torah is an enfolding of the one Divine Name, the most exalted Name, the Name that comprehends all other names. Hence, if one diminishes it, even by a single letter, it is as though he made a gap in the Divine Name. According to our teaching, the words, “*and make not mention of the name of other gods*” signify “*you shall not add to the Torah nor diminish from it*”.

R. Hiya said: “*The name of other gods*” signifies profane books which do not issue from the Side of the Torah and, hence, we are forbidden to study them. “*Neither let it be heard out of your mouth*”, that is, we may not even mention them nor receive from them, especially concerning the Torah. (Mishpotim 124a)

461. Religious faith is closely bound up with the three festivals. (Mishpotim 124a)

462. Kissing expresses the cleaving of spirit to spirit. Therefore, the mouth is the medium for kissing for it is the organ of the spirit (breath). Hence, he who dies by the “kiss of G-d” [such as Moses and others] is so united with another Spirit which never separates from him. Therefore, the Community of Israel prays: “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth”, that His Spirit may be united with mine and never separate from it.. (Mishpotim 124b)

463. It is set forth in the mysteries of King Solomon’s book, that he who eats a composite of flesh and milk, or drinks milk shortly after eating meat, will appear for a period of forty

days to the vision of the accusing angels as a slaughtered goat⁶², with myriads of impure powers surrounding him. He causes unholy judgments to be awakened in the world. And should he beget a son during those forty days, the latter will imbibe his soul and the breath of his spirit from the Other Side.

It says, “*You shall sanctify yourself and you shall be holy*” [Leviticus 11:44]. This signifies that he who endeavors to be holy is assisted from Above, and contrariwise, he who defiles himself is drawn on to defilement by the unholy powers, as it is written in the preceding verse [43], “*You shall not make yourselves unclean...that you shall be defiled*”. This is an impurity which is exceedingly gross, and which cannot be done away with by means of purification as can other defilements. Besides, such a person, having come to look, even in the outer aspect⁶³ seeming like a goat, as we have said, goes in constant fear of wild animals, for the human image has disappeared from both his inner and his outer aspects.

R. Jesse used, at one time, to allow the eating of chicken with cheese or with milk. But R. Shimon said to him: You must not permit this, lest you thereby open the door to evil powers. Does one not say to a Nazarite, “Go away. Go away. Depart and come not near the vineyard”? I say to you, you must not do this thing! If you allow such prohibited minglings of foods it is as though you gave wine to a Nazarite. It is written, “*You shall not eat any abomination*” [Deut. 14:3], where the word “any” includes every kind and sort of food which is forbidden. There is a tradition that Daniel, Hanannah, Mishal and Azariah were delivered from their trials only because they had not defiled themselves with forbidden food.

Said R. Judah: It is written: “*And Daniel resolved in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s food*” [Daniel 1:8], and there is a tradition that the wicked Nebuchadnezzar used, apart from the other strange dishes for which he had a partiality, to eat flesh with milk, and cheese with meat. Because Daniel refrained from partaking of such food, when he was thrown into the lion’s den, he attained fully to the image of the Lord, his perfected human form not changing to any other, so that the lions were struck with awe before him and did him no harm. On the other hand, when the wicked Nebuchadnezzar was deprived of his kingdom and he dwelt with the beasts of the field, his human countenance was taken away from him, and from that day he did not bear the impress of a man, so that all the beasts of the field considered him as one of themselves, and would readily have devoured him, had it not been that it was decreed from Heaven that he should become an object of derision to all men, just as he in his time had “*scoffed at kings*” [Habbakuk 1:10].

It is written concerning Daniel and his companions that “*At the end of ten days they appeared better and healthier than did the children who ate the king’s food.*” [Daniel 1:15]. This was because the image of their Lord was not removed from them, whereas from those others it was. What was the cause of this? The fact that they did not pollute themselves with the abomination of the prohibited food. Blessed are the Israelites who are called to be a holy people! (Mishpotim 125a/b)

464. He who aspires to piety and fellowship with the Holy One, blessed be He, must not be lax or remiss in his devotion, but must be ready and willing to bring sacrifices in accordance with his strength. (Terumah 128a)

465. In the book of sorcery from which Ashmedai taught King Solomon, it is written that he who desires to remove from himself the spirit of impurity and to subdue that spirit, must be prepared to pay in return for fulfillment of his wishes whatever is demanded. For the spirit of the impurity tempts the heart of man with many allurements in order to take up its abode with him.

⁶² The Soncino translation has “in the aspect of a slaughtered goat”.

⁶³ The Soncino translation has “even in outer seeming, like a goat”, which seems to me to be either a typographical error or an incomprehensible archaic usage.

But the spirit of holiness is not so. It demands a full price and strenuous effort, purification of one's self and one's dwelling, and devotion of heart and soul. And even so, one will be lucky to win it to take up its abode with him. Therefore, one must beware and walk straightly according to the paths and ways of righteousness, turning neither to the right or left for otherwise, even if it had entered into a man, it will straightaway depart from him and, indeed, it will be hard to recall it again. (Terumah 128a)

466. How may one recognize a person with whom the Holy One is pleased and in whom He has His abode? When we observe that one endeavors to serve the Holy One in joy, with his heart, soul and will, then we can be quite sure that the שכינה has Her abode in him. Such a man is worth to be well-paid for his teaching and companionship.

Therefore, the ancients said. "*Buy yourself a companion* (i.e. a teacher)" (Sayings of the Fathers 1:6]. That is, buy him for a good price, in order to merit the שכינה's presence.

Therefore, one must also pursue and run after the sinner and "buy" him for a good price in order that the filth of sin may be purged away from him and the spirit of impurity, the emanation of the Other Side, be subdued. He who succeeds in redeeming such a sinner can justly consider himself the "creator" of the renewed and quickened soul, and such an act is the greatest praise (of G-d) imaginable. It exalts the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, more than any other circumstance or deed imaginable. (Terumah 128b)

467. He who seeks a sinner takes him by the hand and induces him to give up his evil way; such a one is elevated as none other can be. Concerning such a man it is written, "*My covenant was with him: life and peace.*" He will be worthy to see his children's children. He is worthy to enjoy this world and the World to Come and none of the lords of judgment shall retain any power whatsoever over him to chastise him, either in this world or in the World to Come. He will pass through twelve gates (of the firmament) and none will hinder him. Concerning such a one it is written, "*His offspring shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed...his righteousness endures forever. A light shines for the righteous in the darkness.*" [Psalms 112:2-4]. (Terumah 128b)

468. If only the sons of man knew and perceived what rewards follow the endeavors of the righteous to save sinners, they would assuredly run after them with the same ardor with which they run after life itself. A poor man's benefactor gains many good things, many supernal treasures, because he helps him to exist. But even he cannot be compared to him who endeavors to save the soul of a sinner. For the latter causes the breaking of the power of the Other Side, of the "other gods". He is the cause of the Holy One's exaltation on His Throne of Glory. He gives the sinner a new soul. Happy indeed is his lot! (Terumah 129a)

469. Man must be humble in this world in regard to his knowledge of Torah. Only in the future world is pride of learning permitted. (Terumah 129a)

470. The קדושה which comes at the end (in the prayer וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן) is (in part) in Aramaic and this may be recited even by an individual, that is privately, but the קדושה proper, which is in Hebrew, must only be recited in a congregation of ten persons or more, because the שכינה unites Herself with the holy tongue and all sanctifications with which the שכינה is connected can be uttered only in the presence of at least ten persons, for it is written, "*And I shall be sanctified among the Children of Israel*" [Leviticus 22:32]⁶⁴. The term "children of Israel" further implies that such sanctification must be in the holy tongue, which is Israel's, the other nations speaking other languages. (Terumah 129b)

471. One should respond in a loud voice and with a firm spirit, "Amen, May His Great Name be blessed!" [in the Kaddish] in order that the power of the Other Side may be quelled and the Holy One be exalted in His glory Above all things. (Terumah 129b)

⁶⁴ This is very odd. Is not the Kaddish in Aramaic and yet it can only be recited with a Minyon? See also SO OC 59, Ramoh OC 132:1 and the Taz and Gra there.

472. Although the evening prayer is not legally obligatory, yet it has protective influence against the terrors of the night and against the fear of גהינום. For at night the wicked receive a punishment double that which is executed upon them by day. Therefore, the Israelites introduce the evening prayer for the weekdays with the verses, “*And He is merciful, he forgives iniquity and destroys not. Many a time he turns his anger away and does not stir up all His wrath*” [Psalms 78:38]. This is recited because of the fear of גהינום.

But on the Sabbath when there is neither fear of the punishment of גהינום nor any judgment, one may not recite these verses lest he thus awaken the evil spirits causing them to appear and become more active. To counter the fear of the accuser and slanderer of souls, we conclude the השכבינו prayer (“Cause us, O Lord, to lie down in peace”) with the words, “Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who guards Your people Israel for ever. Amen”. To counter the fear of the many devils and accusers which are present in the night and have power to injure anyone who leaves his house at that time, we say, “Guard our going out and our coming in unto life and unto peace.” From the fear of all these things we deliver in trust our bodies, souls and spirits to Heaven Above, to the Supernal Kingdom which has dominion over all of them. Therefore we recite every night the evening prayers, performing all this to counteract the mysterious influences of the evil spirits now that there are no sacrifices to keep them at bay. (Terumah 130a)

473. Here is a mystery which is entrusted to “those who know the measures” of things spiritual. He who must set out on a journey in the morning should rise at the break of day and at a certain, specially-ordained moment, turn and look towards the east. He will then behold some kind of letters which break through the surface of the sky, some ascending and some descending. These are flashed forth from those letters which the heavens and the earth were created. If the watcher is cognizant of the mystery of the letters which form the mystic Holy Name of forty-two letters, and if he should in this hour be mindful of them with devout intent, with a loving heart, then will he behold in the luminous Heaven six *Yuds* (י), three upon the right Side and three upon the left. There will also be three *Vauvs* (ו) which ascend and descend and sparkle the firmament. These are the number of the initial letters of the words of the priestly blessing.

He should then say his morning prayers and set forth upon his journey, because, verily, the שכינה Herself goes before him. Happy is his lot! (Terumah 130b)

474. There were six Grades in the divine revelation to the prophets: מראה (appearance), חזון (vision), הווינון (revelation), הזוהר (aspect), “word” and “burden”. The first five aspects are all like unto the vision of one who beholds a reflection of light from behind a wall, and some of them are as the vision of one who sees the light of the sun through a lantern. But “burden” signifies that the light came with great difficulty and was barely revealed. (Terumah 130b)

475. Happy is the holy people whose Lord seeks them and beckons them to come to Him. Because of that honoring and favor, the holy people must unite and come to the Synagogue. And he who comes first unites himself with the שכינה in one bond. Indeed, blessed is he who is found in the Synagogue, for he stands in the Grade of Righteousness along with the very שכינה Herself. This the inner meaning of the words, “*Those who search for Me early will find Me*” [Proverbs 8:17]. He indeed reaches a high degree.

But, it may be objected, we have been taught that when the Holy One, blessed be He, enters a Synagogue and finds there less than the ten requisite male persons, He is angry. How, then, can you say that the one who comes first is united with the שכינה and is in the Grade of Righteousness? The following parable will explain.

A king issued an order to the citizens of his capital, to meet him, one and all, at a certain place and at a certain time. While the rest were still making ready, one hastened to present himself at the appointed place. Then the king came and found him waiting. He asked him where the rest of the citizens were. The man answered, “My lord, king, I, as you see, have

arrived first, but my fellow-townsmen are upon the road and will soon be here, as well, according to your majesty's command". This pleased the king and he entered into conversation with the man and became quite friendly with him. In the meantime, the others arrived and the king received them graciously and sent them away in peace. Now, had no man been swift and prompt to obey the command of his lord, and to inform him of the near approach of his neighbors, would not the king have been very angry?

Similarly, when the שכינה come and finds in the Synagogue one person who has arrived there before anyone else, it is to Her even as though all were indeed present, for the Holy שכינה joins company with him and together they wait for the others to come, that the prayers may be started. She becomes closely acquainted with him and promotes him to the Grade of Righteousness. But if no one had come in time, she would have said, "*Why, when I came, was there no man?*" [Isaiah 50:2]. Note that it does not say, "there were not *ten* men", but "no man", meaning, "there was no one man waiting to unite himself with Me and become My companion and friend, to be a "man of G-d" in the Grade of Righteousness. Moreover, if one day the favored man is missing, She is greatly concerned and makes inquiries about him, as it is written, "*Who among you fears the Lord, listening to the voice of His servant...?*" [Isaiah 50:10]. (Terumah 131a/b)

476. Woe unto him who engages in conversation of a secular nature in the Synagogue. Woe unto him for he has not part in the G-d of Israel since by his lack of awe before the Divine Presence, he as much as denies the reality thereof, scorning the influence of the power which comes from Above. (Terumah 131b)

477. The שיר ושבחה הלל וזמרה עז hymn enumerates thirteen aspects of praise: שיר ושבחה הלל וזמרה עז (song and praise, hymn and psalm, strength and dominion, victory, power and greatness, adoration and glory, holiness and sovereignty)⁶⁵. The worshipper must concentrate his entire mind upon these thirteen attributes and be careful not to disturb their sacred unity by conversing between the lines of the hymn. (Terumah 132a)

478. Gold symbolizes New Year's Day; silver symbolizes the Day of Atonement; brass is symbolic of the days of the Sacrifices of the Feast of Tabernacles; and blue (תכלת) corresponds to Passover. All colors seen in dreams are of good omen, except blue. Red-purple (ארגמן) is connected with Pentecost, symbolizing the giving of the written Torah. Scarlet (תולעת שני) is connected with the fifteenth of Av, the day on which the daughters of Israel used to walk forth in silken dresses. (Terumah 135a)

479. The congregation responds: "Blessed is the Lord who is blessed for ever and ever". The whole congregation must recite this every day, but on the Sabbath eve it must be recited with special devotion and gladness in order that the Sabbath be fitly blessed by the holy people. (Terumah 135b)

480. Sabbath eve is, to the pious, the night of conjugal unions, when they are thus crowned with new souls and new additional holy spirits. For being in a state of supernal holy tranquillity, they may then beget holy children. (Terumah 136a)

481. It is incumbent upon the wise to recite certain verses calculated to arouse that supernal holy spirit of the Sabbath coronation as, for instance, "*The spirit of the Lord G-d is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek. He has sent me*

⁶⁵ Two additional terms are also added: ברכות והודאות to complete fifteen praises to correspond with the fifteen steps in the Beis Hamikdash, and the number of chapters beginning with the words תהלים in שיר המלעות. In addition, there are fifteen words in the conclusion of this prayer beginning with א-ל מלך גדול, fifteen words from והאופנים until מוקדמו, fifteen terms beginning with the letter ו from ויציב through ויפה, fifteen words in צור ישראל until the Berakhah, and probably others. These calculations are in accordance with Nusach Ashkenaz. Rabbi Bruce Goldberg suggests that the significance of fifteen may be connected with G-d's Name יה-וה.

to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty for the captives, etc” [Isaiah 61:1]; or “Wherever the spirit was to go, they went, there was their spirit to go. And the wheels (אופנים) were lifted up over against them, for the spirit of the living creature (חיה) was in the wheels” [Ezekiel 1:20], in order that the act of procreation may be affected in a spirit of Sabbath holiness, through the influence of the supernal Sabbath spirit. (Terumah 136b)

482. When the Sabbath day itself lightens, a spirit of tranquil joy ascends through all worlds. This is the significance of the Psalm recited on Sabbath morning: “*The Heavens tell the glory of G-d, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.*” (Terumah 136b)

483. It has been established by the Companions that this hymn of praise [Psalms 92–מזמור שיר ליום השבת] was sung by the first man (Adam) after he had been driven out of the Garden of Eden when the Sabbath drew close to the Holy One and interceded for the created being. Then he sang this hymn in honor of the Sabbath which had delivered him. It is a hymn of praise sung by the World Below to the World Above, to a World which altogether is “שבת”, the sphere of the “King Who is the peace”. It is a hymn of the שבת Below which is like night and sings to the שבת Above which is like day. (Terumah 138a)

484. The Amidoh is recited quietly, as one would speak confidently with a king. (Terumah 138b)

485. Hyacinth (purple-blue) which use for the fringes also denotes Judgment or the Throne from which the judgment concerning capital offenses is proclaimed. Therefore, all colors seen in dreams are of good omen with the exception of purple-blue which denotes that the soul of the dreamer is being judged and the body is in danger of extermination. Much ardent prayer for mercy is needed to avert this portent. (Terumah 138b-139a)

486. Because the fringes are made of a material of this (blue) color, when the morning light begins to shine on them, they become greenish-blue like a leek and from that moment the time of the recitation of the Shema begins. For this reason, capital cases may not be tried at night because that color, blue, reigns and has the power to snatch away souls without Judgment; such Judgment does not rule at that time. When morning comes and the Right Hand is roused, the brightness appears and reaches the dark blue, and then it becomes connected with another Throne. From this moment on it is time to recite the Shema. (Terumah 139a)

487. There are twenty-five Hebrew words in the Shema corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet along with the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings, which all form one whole sum and one mystery. When the Israelites proclaim the Unity expressed in the twenty-five letters of the Shema and in the twenty-four letters of the response [ברוך שם] and each person in the congregation is doing this with devoutness, then all those letters unite as one and ascend as one unity. (Terumah 139b)

488. The Torah can be viewed from forty-nine aspects. So it is necessary to concentrate heart and mind on both the twenty-five and the twenty-four letters and to raise them with the whole force of intention to the forty-nine gates. Through concentration on this, one will concentrate on the Unity, for our Master has taught us that the “שמע” and “ברוך שם” are the summary of the whole Torah. Happy is the lot of he who concentrates, for surely these contain the Torah in its entirety, Above and Below. It is the mystery of the complete Man, Male and Female, and is the secret of the whole Faith. (Terumah 139b)

489. All souls of members of other nations who live in the Holy Land, when they leave this world, are not accepted there, but are thrust out and are forced to roam about and go through many wanderings until they leave the Holy Land behind them and reach, instead, those impure regions where they belong. But all Israelites souls that leave this world from the Holy Land ascend from there. The souls of those Israelites who have departed from this world while still outside the confines of the Holy Land wander hither and thither and roam about until they reach their appointed places. (Terumah 141a)

490. He whose soul leaves him in the Holy Land, if his body is buried upon the day of his death, is in no way dominated by the spirit of impurity. For at night, the impure spirit is given permission to rule. (Terumah 141a)

491. As for him whose soul left him outside the precincts of the Holy Land, his body is defiled by that impure spirit which remains in it until it returns to the dust. And if such a body is brought into the Holy Land to be buried, to it applies the text, “*But you entered and defiled My Land and made My heritage into an abomination*” [Jeremiah 2:7], that is, “into My Land over which the spirit of impurity has no power or dominion, you have brought your body wherein that very impure spirit has entrenched itself to be buried in the hallowed soil! You defile My Land! However, the Holy One, blessed be He, provides the Land with a means of purging from this defilement. When such a body decomposes, the Holy One causes a wind to blow from Above which thrusts the impure spirit outside, for He has compassion on His Land. (Terumah 141b)

492. Three names has the soul of man: נפש, רוח, נשמה. They are all comprised one within the other, yet they have three distinct abodes (after death). The נשמה ascends aloft to the fountainhead, the רוח enters the Garden of Eden, and the נפש finds rest in the grave. As long as the bones of their human habitation remain intact in the grave, the נפש remains there also, though unwillingly. (Terumah 141b-142a)

493. On New Year’s Day, when the world is judged and the Throne of Judgment stands by the Supernal King, every soul (נפש) hovers about and intercedes for the living. On the night following the giving of judgment, they roam about endeavoring to discover what decisions have been made concerning the fate of men in the coming year. Sometimes they communicate their knowledge to the living in the form of a vision or dream. (Terumah 142a)

494. On the last night of the Feast of Tabernacles, the final edicts are issued from the King, and the shadow is removed from those persons who are shortly to die. (Terumah 142b)

495. R. Jose spoke on these words, “*The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s*” [Song of Songs 1:1]. Said he: This song King Solomon poured forth when the Temple was erected and all the worlds, Above and Below, had reach their perfect consummation. (Terumah 143a)

496. When Moses set up the משכן in the wilderness, another such was raised in the Heavenly Spheres. (Terumah 143a)

497. When the first Temple was completed, another Temple was erected at the same time which was the center for all the worlds. It shed radiance upon all things and gave light to all spheres. Then the world was firmly established and all the supernal casements were opened to pour forth light. All the worlds experienced such joy as had never been known to them before and the celestial and terrestrial beings alike broke forth in song. The song which they sang was the “Song of Songs”. (Terumah 143a)

498. This song is superior to all the hymns of praise which had ever been sung before. It comprises the whole Torah. It is holy of holies. Why so? Because all its words are infused with love and joy. On the day when this song was revealed, the שכינה descended to earth. (Terumah 143b)

499. This is the song wherein is to be found the summary of the whole Torah, of the whole work of Creation, of the mystery of the Patriarchs, of the whole story of the Egyptian exile and the Exodus therefrom, and the Song of the Sea. It is the quintessence of the Decalogue, of the Sinaitic covenant, of the significance of Israel’s wanderings through the desert, until their arrival in the Promised Land, and the building of the Temple. It contains the crowning of the Holy Name with love and joy, the prophecy of Israel’s exile among the nations, or their redemption, of the resurrection of the dead, and of all else until that Day which is “Sabbath to the Lord”. All that was, is and shall be is contained in it. Indeed, even that which will take place on the “Seventh Day” which will be the “Lord’s Sabbath” is indicated in this song.

Therefore, we are taught that he who recites a verse from the Song of Songs as a mere drinking song causes the Torah to dress in sackcloth and to complain before the Holy One, blessed be He, “Your children have turned me into an amusement for a drinking bout”. Yes, assuredly the Torah says this. Therefore it behooves the faithful to be wary and to guard every word of the Song of Songs like a crown on their heads.

It may be asked, ‘why, then, is the Song of Songs placed among the Hagiographa (which is not as sacred as are the other two parts of Scripture)’? The answer is because it is the Hymn of Praise sung by the Community of Israel at the time when she is crowned Above. Therefore, no other hymn is so pleasing to the Holy One as this. (Terumah 144a)

500. Regarding one who sees grapes in a dream: if they are white, it is a good omen. But, if they are black in color then, if the dream occurred at a time when grapes are in season, they are of good significance. But, if not, prayer is needed to avert the omen. One who dreams that he has eaten black grapes can be certain that he will enter the World to Come. (Terumah 144a)

501. “*And purple-blue*”. Said R. Isaac: This color is obtained from a fish of the Lake of Genessareth which is in the territory of Zevulun. This color had to appear in the מִשְׁכַּן for the following reason. It is written, “*And G-d said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters*” [Genesis 1:6]. Now, the sea was dyed that purple-blue color which symbolizes the Throne of Judgment. (Terumah 149b)

502. The Angel of Death is indeed good. Why so? Because since all men know that one day they must die, many turn to repentance from fear of him before the Lord. Many fear the King because the lash looms before their eyes. Then is the lash indeed beneficial, making men good and virtuous and upright. (Terumah 149b)

503. See how great is the mercy of the Holy One towards His creatures! The most wicked sinner, if he has intended repentance, but dies without carrying out his resolve, is, it is true, punished for having gone out of this world without having repented. But his good intention is not lost. (Terumah 150a)

504. No good thought is ever lost from the remembrance of the Holy King. Therefore, blessed is he who nourishes good thoughts towards his Lord, for even if he cannot put them into practice, the Holy One takes the will for the deed. This is the case with good thoughts. With evil thoughts, however, the will is not taken for the deed, save in the case of idolatry. (Terumah 150b)

505. Said R. Judah: Why are sinners punished by the fire of גְּהֵינוֹם? Because the fire of גְּהֵינוֹם, which burns day and night, corresponds to the hot passion of sinfulness in man. (Terumah 150b)

506. There are certain sinners who pollute themselves over and over again by their own sins and are never purified. They die without repentance, having sinned themselves and caused others to sin, being stiff-necked and never showing contrition before the Lord while in this world. These are they who are condemned to remain forever in this place of “boiling filth” and never leave it. (Terumah 150b)

507. The fire of גְּהֵינוֹם never ceases to burn those souls who have never kept the Sabbath. (Terumah 151a)

508. All sinners, as long as their bodies in the graves are intact with all their limbs, are judged body and soul together, each in its own way. But as soon as the body has decayed, the punishing of the soul ceases. Those souls which are destined to leave גְּהֵינוֹם now leave it. Those souls that are to have rest now find it. And those souls which are destined to become dust under the feet of the righteous become dust. Each according to its deserts.

How excellent a thing it is, therefore, both for the righteous, as well as for sinners, when their bodies are in close contact with the earth so that decay can set in quickly and their

punishment may not be prolonged through the continued existence of the body. For there is not one of the righteous who can escape the judgment of the grave, for the angel appointed over the graves stands over the body and punishes it daily.

And if the righteous have to undergo this judgment of the grave, how much more so the wicked!

But after the body decays, judgment ceases in both cases. The only exceptions are those saints who are the pillars of the world, and who merit that their souls, immediately after death, should ascend forthwith to the regions appointed for them. They, however, are few.

It is the Destroying Angel who brings death to all people, except those who die in the Holy Land to whom death comes by the Angel of Mercy who holds sway there. (Terumah 151a)

509. The four pairs, the Patriarchs and their wives, who lie in Hebron, are asleep and not dead. Their bodies are all intact, just as when they lived on earth. They know the hidden mysteries more than any living being. They were hidden there at the gates of Paradise. (Terumah 151b)

510. When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He did so by means of the secret power of the letters. The letters were shaken about before Him and He created the world by the tracing of the Holy Name. The letters presented themselves for participation in the world's creation in a variety of permutations⁶⁶. (Terumah 151b)

511. In the book of R. Hamnuna the Ancient⁶⁷ it is written concerning the two letters ך and ם that they were not engraved upon the precious stones, those stones of perfection (on the Kohen Godol's ephod), and the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on those stones do not contain these two letters because together they form the word חט (sin). (Terumah 152a)

512. The sight of the purple-blue⁶⁸ (תכלת) reminds a man that he must keep the commandments of the Lord. So it was with the Brazen Serpent in the wilderness. They who looked upon it were filled with awe and fear of the Holy One and kept themselves clear from sin. Therefore, they were healed in a moment.

And who was it that instilled in them fear of the Holy One? The instrument of punishment—that Serpent at which they so fixedly gazed.

The same is true of the “the thread of blue” that they were bidden to put upon the fringe of their garments (ציצית) concerning which it is written: “*that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord*” [Numbers 15:39]. Therefore it was ordained that this color should be in the Tabernacle. (Terumah 152b)

513. R. Isaac began: It is written, “*When you have eaten and are satiated, then you shall bless the Lord your G-d*” [Deut. 8:10]. How blessed are the Israelites whom the Holy One has befriended above all nations and drawn near to Himself! It is for their sake that He nourished all nations. For had it not been for them, He would not have supplied the world with food. And now, when Israel is in exile, the Gentiles receive a double portion. When Israel dwelt in the Holy Land, the Holy One sent down food to them from a supernal region, the surplus of which was given to the heathen nations. But now it is just the reverse.

He deals with them like a king with his servants. So long as the servants are obedient and loyal, they are permitted to sit and eat with the king, and the remnants are thrown to the dogs. But when they are disobedient and forget their loyal service, the king gives the food to

⁶⁶ This idea forms the conceptual basis of another famous Kabbalistic work, the Sefer Yetziroh, which describes how G-d created the universe and life by utterances using the inherent “creative potencies” of the letters and vowels of the Hebrew alphabet. Such a method was used to create the famous Golems of history.

⁶⁷ This mysterious work is frequently referred to throughout the Zohar.

⁶⁸ I believe this is not a valid translation of תכלת which was actually a sky- or light-blue color.

the dogs and leaves them only the bones. The same is true of Israel. While they did the Will of their Lord, they ate from the King's table which He Himself had prepared for them, and they, out of the fullness of their joy gave to the nations their surplus.

But when Israel ceased to live in accordance with the commands of their Lord, they went into captivity and had to be content with that which the Gentiles left over. So it says, "*Thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, where I will drive them.*" [Ezekiel 4:13].

Woe to the king's son who is forced to wait at the servants' table to be fed upon the remnants. (Terumah 152b)

514. R. Jesse said to R. Hiya: It hardly accords with the dignity of a king that another person should eat with him at the same table. The king should sit alone at his table and his ministers by themselves at another table, somewhat lower. (Terumah 152b/153a)

515. R. Hiya began to discourse on the text: "*When you have eaten and are satiated, then you shall bless the Lord your G-d*" [Deut. 8:10]. Said he: should one then bless the Lord only after he has filled his belly? No, even if he eats but a morsel and counts it as a meal, that is called eating to satisfaction, for it is written, "*You open Your Hand and satisfy the wish (will) of every living thing*" [Psalms 145:16]. It is not written "you satisfy with a substantial meal", but "wish" or "the intention". So it is not the quantity of food but the intention of the eater that "satisfies". Therefore, it is necessary that, at all times, when we eat, we should offer up our thanks in order that there may be joy Above.

R. Hezekiah said: From these words it is possible to deduce the rules that an intoxicated person is allowed to say the grace after meals⁶⁹. With prayers, it is otherwise, for prayers ascend very high to the realm where there is neither eating nor drinking and, therefore, prayers are best said on an empty stomach⁷⁰. (Terumah 153b)

516. One's table can purify him of all his sins. Blessed is the man whose table exhibits these two qualities: words of Torah which ascend to the Holy One, and food for the poor. (Terumah 154a)

517. No man ever, except Moses⁷¹, was found worthy of combining the two functions of king and prophet. (Terumah 154a)

518. Where there is no vineyard, there are no grapes. Where there is no tree, there can be no fruit⁷². (Terumah 154b)

519. For the ritual washing of the hands before the meal, the vessel containing the water is taken in the right hand and poured onto the left, not from the left to right⁷³. (Terumah 154b)

⁶⁹ The Birkas Hamozone (Grace after meals) is a Torah commandment. Unless one is extremely drunk, he is obliged to say the Grace. See SO OC 185:4.

⁷⁰ See SO OC 89:3-5. The Magen Avrohom, Sif Koton 14 quotes R. Chaim Vital that (although the Halakhah is that one can eat up to Alos Hashachar [morning star]) one who rises after midnight should not eat – based on the Zohar. See also Birkei Yosef 89:2.

⁷¹ Moses was considered a king.

⁷² I am sure that there is a deeper meaning here than the benign literal meaning, but it escapes me.

⁷³ See SO OC 4:10 and Be'er Hagolah giving the Zohar (Vayeishev)/Miketz as the source. The Halakhah is the opposite of that stated here, surely with regard to washing one's hands upon rising in the morning. One is to first pick the vessel up with his right hand, transfer it to his left and twice pour the water onto the right hand. The vessel is then transferred to the right hand and the left hand is then washed. The Beis Yosef Siman 4 notes the apparent contradiction between the Zohar in Parshios Vayeishev/Miketz and the Zohar here in Terumah. Although he first suggests that the former source is referring to the morning washing and latter the washing for bread, he concludes by stating that both sources refer to the same situation. He resolves this internal conflict by implementing the procedure of transferring the cup from right to left as above, thus seemingly satisfying both sources in the Zohar.

520. When one has eaten and is satisfied, it is necessary to give the scraps and the dregs to the Other Side and particles left upon the hands after a meal must be washed away so that the Other Side may receive its due. Therefore, the washing of the hands after a meal is an imperative duty and the water must be poured away. Hence, no blessing is to be made over the washing of the hands after the meal since there can be no benediction in connection with that Side. (Terumah 154b)

521. It is written, “*But as for me, my prayer is directed unto You, O Lord, in an acceptable time (time of good will); O G-d, in the Your abundant kindness answer me with the truth of Your salvation*” (וְאֲנִי תַפְלְתִּי לְךָ) [Psalms 69:14]. We are taught that the time when the congregation is occupied with prayer is called the “time of good will”. This is certainly the case, for the congregation in this way prepares the supports for this time, so that it becomes a “time of good will”, propitious for the offering of petitions. (Terumah 156a)

522. “*As for me, my prayer is unto You, O Lord*”. This prayer is recited during the Sabbath afternoon prayer and not on weekdays because the afternoon prayer on weekdays is the time when severe judgment is in the ascendant and is not a “time of good will”. On Sabbath, Anger is absent and all the attributes are harmoniously united. Judgment, though it is aroused, is mitigated by Mercy. (Terumah 156a)

523. It was at the time of the Sabbath afternoon prayer that Moses passed away from the world. (Terumah 156a)

524. The gates of the house of study were closed at the time of the Sabbath afternoon prayer until the end of the Sabbath to show that with the passing away of Moses, the Faithful Shepherd, the study of Torah, for the time being, ceased. (Terumah 156a)

525. For this reason are the gates of all the Houses of Study closed at this hour in perpetual memory of that sad occasion⁷⁴. It is necessary for worshippers to repeat the “justification of the (Divine) judgment” contained in the verse, “*Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, Your judgments are like the great deep (waters)*” [Psalms 36:7].

There were three who passed away from this world at the time of the Sabbath afternoon service: Moses, the supreme, faithful prophet; Joseph the righteous; and King David. Therefore three “justifications of the judgment” are recited at this time. The first⁷⁵ refers to Joseph the righteous and is contained in the words, “Your righteousness is like a mighty mountain, your judgments are a great deep” for Joseph singly was comparable to the high mountains and to the mighty deep⁷⁶. Then comes Moses, the faithful prophet to whom refer the words: “*And Your righteousness, O G-d, reaches the high heavens, You who have done great things*” [Psalms 71:19], because he grasped both Sides, the Right and the Left. Then comes King David, to whom refer the words: “*Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and Your Torah is truth*” [ibid. 119:142] for “everlasting” refers to David⁷⁷.

Thus all was gathered in at that time, both the Written and Oral Torahs, and therefore, at that time, the gates of the Torah were closed, and the gates of the whole world were also closed. When Joseph the righteous died, all the wells and springs (were) dried up, and the captivity (of Egypt) commenced for all the tribes. Then the celestial beings recited the verse, “*Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, etc.*” On the death of Moses, the sun in its splendor was darkened and the Written Torah was locked up and that light of the luminous mirror. The moon withdrew its light when King David died and the Oral Torah ceased to

⁷⁴ See Tosefos to Menochos 30a. See Tur OC 292 regarding this as the reason why we say the three verses beginning with צדקתך צדק at Shabbos Minchah. The Ramoh (SO OC 292:2) states that one should not קובע מדרש (lit. “fix Medrosh” [learning?]) between Shabbos Minchah and Maariv of Motzoei Shabbos.

⁷⁵ The order of these verses is reversed in Nusach Ashkenaz, in part so that G-d’s Name, יְיָ, in the last verse immediately precedes the imminent saying of Kaddish.

⁷⁶ cf. Genesis 49:25-6.

⁷⁷ cf. II Samuel 7:16.

shine. Since that time, the lights of the Torah have remained hidden, controversy has increased over the Mishnah, the wise men dispute, and all the great thinkers are in confusion so that the joy of Torah has been lost to succeeding generations.

When a great man dies, the scholars proclaim a fast. Seeing then that the joy of the Written and Oral Torahs was gathered in this hour, is it not fitting that the gates of Torah should close then? This, then, is the reason why we repeat the three “justifications of judgment” as explained. (Terumah 156a/b)

526. The man who gives himself up with ardor and diligence to the study of Torah for her own sake will find in her a strong protection in time of need. (Terumah 156b)

527. R. Jose began: It is written, “*When you have eaten and are satiated, then you shall bless the Lord your G-d for the good Land which He has given you*” [Deut. 8:10]. It is evident from this verse that the grace after meals is a duty in the Land of Israel. But, where do we know that it is a duty in other lands as well?

Now, when the Holy One created the world, He divided it into two parts. One part that should be habitable and the other a desert. The former on one Side and the latter on the other.

Then he redivided the habitable part in such a manner that it formed a circle, the center of which is the Holy Land. The center of the Holy Land is Jerusalem and, again, the center of Jerusalem is the Holy of Holies to which all the abundance of nourishment and all good things for the whole inhabited world flow in from Above. There is no place in this inhabited world that is not nourished and sustained from that source. The desert land He also divided. There is no desert in the world so terrible and sinister as that where for forty long years Israel wandered. (Terumah 157a)

528. Although Israel lives at present outside the Holy Land, yet it is owing to the power and worth of that Land that the world is supplied with food and subsistence. It is concerning this that it is written, “*You shall bless the Lord your G-d for the good Land which He has given you*” [Deut. 8:10]. Truly, “the good Land” since for its sake there is sufficient nourishment for the whole world.

When one sits at his table and partakes of its plenty with joyous thanksgiving he should, at the same time, let his mind dwell with sadness upon the holiness of the Land and of the Temple of the King which has been destroyed. Because of his sadness there, at the table, in the midst of his feasting, G-d regards him as restorer of the House of the Holy One and all the ruins of the Holy Temple. Happy is his lot! (Terumah 157b)

529. The cup of benediction (the cup of wine taken immediately after Grace has been recited at the conclusion of a meal) is only partaken of when there are (at least) three persons present at the table⁷⁸ because it is blessed through the mystery of the three Patriarchs.

The cup must first be lifted by both hands in order that it should be placed between the Right and Left Grades but afterwards it is left in the right alone, because it is blessed from that Side.

Ten things have been enumerated in connection with the Cup of Benediction, which is quite appropriate, since there are ten aspects of it, as the Companions have pointed out.

It is necessary to look at the cup while reciting the benediction because it is written, “*The eyes of the Lord your G-d are always upon it*” [i.e. the Holy Land, Deut. 11:12]. Therefore, one’s thoughts must not be allowed to stray from the cup, but the eyes must be firmly fixed upon it. (Terumah 157b)

⁷⁸ SO OC 182:1 states that there is a divergence of opinions here and some rule that even if a person eats alone he can say Grace over a cup of wine.

530. When grace is recited, the table must not be empty, since “no blessing can rest on an empty table”⁷⁹. (Terumah 157b)

531. The word שמע consists of שם (name) and ע (seventy) indicating the combination of this Name and the other seventy from whence it derives blessing. At the recitation of the שמע, therefore, one must concentrate attention on this union of all the Divine Names. (Terumah 160b)

532. At the time of the recitation of the שמע, one must be prepared to proclaim the unity of the Divine Name and to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. On the head of him who thus recites the שמע, to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, the שכינה rests—a witness to testify of him before the Holy King that twice daily does he declare the Unity of the Name and, thus, consciously, unite the Above and the Below. Therefore is the letter ע of the שמע written large and the ה of אחד (one) which when put together make the word עה—a witness before the Holy King. (Terumah 160b)

533. Upon the head of the man who unifies the Name of the Holy One Above and Below, the שכינה descends to rest and bless him with seven blessings and to proclaim concerning him, “*You are my servant, Israel, in whom I am glorified*” [Isaiah 49:3]. (Terumah 160b-161a)

534. The Torah preceded the creation of the world by two thousand years. So when He resolved to create the world, He looked into the Torah, into its creative word, and fashioned the world correspondingly. For all the worlds and all the actions of all the world are contained in the Torah. Therefore, did the Holy One, blessed be He, look into it and create the world. (Terumah 161a)

535. G-d looked at his plan this way. It is written in the Torah, “*In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth*”. He looked at this expression and created the heavens and earth. In the Torah it is written, “*Let there be light*”. He looked at these words and created light. And in this manner the whole world was created.

When the world was all thus created, nothing was yet established properly until He had resolved to create man in order that he might study Torah. For his sake the world should be firmly and properly established.

Thus it is he who concentrates his mind on and deeply penetrates into the Torah who sustains the world. For the Holy One looked into the Torah and created the world, so man looks into the Torah and keeps the world alive. Hence the Torah is the cause of the world’s creation and also the power which maintains its existence. Blessed is he who is devoted to the Torah for he is the preserver of the world.

When the Holy One resolved to create man, there appeared before His Mind potential man in form and condition as he was to be in this world. And not alone he, but all human beings, before they enter this world stand before Him in the same way in that treasure-house of souls where they are dressed in a semblance of their earthly forms. There they wait entry into this world.

When their time has arrived, they descend into this world and the Holy One calls upon a certain emissary appointed over all the souls to go down. He says to him, “Go and bring Me such and such a spirit.” At that instant, that soul appears clad in the form of this world and is led forward by the angel so that the Holy King may look upon it.

Then does the Holy One warn that soul that when it shall have reached the earthly regions it is to remember the Torah and devote itself to it so that it may know Him and the Mystery

⁷⁹ Another oft-repeated statement in the Zohar. This idea is reflected in the Halakhah. One should have at least a morsel of bread on the table when the grace after meals is recited. See SO OC 180.

of Faith. For better were it for a man that he should never be born than not to know Him. Therefore, it is presented before the Holy King, that afterwards it may know Him in this world and be devoted to the Holy One in the Mystery of the Faith.

Concerning this it is written: *“You have been shown to know”*, that is, shown by the angel to the Holy One, in order to know, to understand, to penetrate, in this world, the mystery of the Faith, the mystery of Torah.

And he who, having come into this world, does not study Torah to know Him, better were it for him that he had never been born, since the only aim and object of the Holy One in sending man into this world is that he may know and understand that **אלוקים** is **יקוק**.

This is the sum of the whole mystery of Faith, of the whole Torah, of all that is Above and Below, of the Written and Oral Torah. All together form one unity.

The essence of the Mystery of Faith is to know that this is a complete Name. This knowledge that **יקוק** is one with **אלוקים** is indeed the synthesis of the whole Torah, both of the Written and of the Oral. For “Torah” stands for both, the former being symbolic of **יקוק** and the latter **אלוקים**. The Torah is the Mystery of the Holy Name.

It is therefore called by two names, one of which is general and the other particular. The general is complemented by the particular and the particular by the general, both combining to form one synthesis. In the Torah, we find the synthesis of the Above and the Below, for the one Name **יקוק** is Above, while the other **אלוקים** is Below. One indicates the Higher World, the other the Lower. Therefore it is written, *“You have been shown to know that **יקוק** is **אלוקים**”*. This is the essence of all things, and it is necessary that man should perceive it in this world. (Terumah 161a-162a)

536. R. Jose said: According to one authority, the evening prayer is obligatory⁸⁰ and it certainly is so, for the recital of the Shema is obligatory in the evening. The unity of the Holy One is proclaimed at night as it is during the day. The attribute of the night is included in that of the day and that of the day in the night, and one union is thus attained. (Terumah 162a)

537. R. Hiya began: *“Moreover you shall make the Tabernacle with ten curtains”* [Exodus 26:1]. Here again we have a symbolism for the Unity for the Tabernacle was made up of many parts, and yet it says, [v. 6] *“and the Tabernacle shall be one”*. Now, as the human body possesses many organs, higher and lower, some internal and not visible, others external and visible, and yet they all form one body, so also was it with the Tabernacle. All its individual parts were formed in the pattern of that Above. When they were all properly fitted together, “the Tabernacle was one”. Of the commandments of the Torah, the same is true. They are each and all members and limbs in the mystery Above, and when they all unite as one whole, they all ascend into the one mystery. (Terumah 162b)

538. R. Isaac happened to be in the company of R. Eleazar, and said to him: Verily, the love of man to the Holy One arises primarily out of the emotions of the heart, for the heart is the source of the awakening of love. This being so, why does it say also, “with all your soul” as though there were two sources from whence love could emanate, the heart and the soul? If the heart is the source, why mention the soul?

R. Eleazar replied: There are indeed two sources, yet they are united as one, for heart, soul, and possessions are united as one, though the heart remains intrinsically the center and basis of all. “With all your heart” means with the good and the evil inclinations, each of which is called “heart”. “With all your soul”, the “all” includes all aspects of the soul, viz., **נפש**, **רוח** and **גשמה**. As to “with all your possessions”, these also have various aspects, each one

⁸⁰ Berochos 27b

different from the other. True love to the Holy One, blessed be He, consists in just this, that we give over to Him all our emotional, intellectual, and material faculties and possessions, and love Him.

Should it be asked, 'How can one love Him with the evil inclination? Is not the evil inclination the seducer, preventing man from approaching the Holy One to serve him? How, then, can man use the evil inclination as an instrument of love to G-d?' The answer lies in this, that there can be no greater service done to the Holy One than to bring into subjection the "evil inclination" by the power of love to the Holy One, blessed be He. For, when it is subdued and its power broken by man in this way, then he becomes a true lover of the Holy One, since he has learned how to make the "evil inclination" itself serve the Holy One.

Here is a mystery entrusted to the masters of esoteric lore. All that the Holy One has made, both Above and Below, is for the purpose of manifesting His Glory and to make all things serve Him. Now, would a master permit his servant to work against him, and to continually lay plans to counteract His Will? It is the Will of the Holy One that men should worship Him and walk in the way of truth that they may be rewarded with many benefits. How, then, can an evil servant come and counteract the Will of his Master by tempting man to walk in an evil way, seducing him from the good way and causing him to disobey the Will of his Lord? But, indeed, the "evil inclination" also does through this the Will of its Lord.

It is as if a king had an only son whom he dearly loved, and just for that reason he warned him not to be enticed by bad women, saying that anyone defiled might not enter his palace. The son promised his father to do his will in love. Outside the palace, however, there lived a beautiful harlot. After a while the King thought, "I will see how far my son is devoted to me". So he sent the woman and commanded her, saying, "Entice my son, for I wish to test his obedience to my will". So she used every blandishment to lure him into her embraces. But the son, being good, obeyed the commandment of his father. He refused her allurements and thrust her from him. Then did the father rejoice exceedingly, and, bringing him in to the innermost chamber of the palace, bestowed upon him gifts from his best treasures, and showed him every honor. And who was the cause of this joy? The harlot! Is she to be praised or blamed for it? To be praised, surely, on all accounts, for on the one hand she fulfilled the king's command and carried out his plans for him, and on the other hand she caused the son to receive all the good gifts and deepened the king's love to his son.

Therefore, it is written, "*And the Lord saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good*", where the word "very" refers to the Angel of Death (i.e. the evil inclination). Similarly, if it were not for this Accuser, the righteous would not possess the supernal treasures in the World to Come. Happy, therefore, are they who, coming into conflict with the Tempter, prevail against him, for through him will they attain bliss, and all the good and desirable possessions of the World to Come; concerning which it is written, "*No eye has ever seen...He has prepared for he who waits for Him*" [Isaiah 64:3]. Happy are those, too, who have not come across him, for those sinners who encounter him allow themselves to be enticed by him.

What profit is it, then, to the Tempter when the sinner obeys him? Even if it profit him nothing, yet he is certainly doing the Will of His Master and, moreover, it gains him strength. He is not content until he has killed his victim, for then he gains strength and is satisfied, just as the Angel of Life gains strength when one walks in the right way.

May the Lord preserve us from becoming victims of the Tempter. Blessed are they who prevail against him, and thus become inheritors of the World to Come and continually gain strength for the Holy King. Concerning such it is written, "*Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, those whose hearts focus on the paths (to Zion)*" [Psalms 84:6]. They are blessed in this world, and shall be blessed in the World to Come. (Terumah 162b-163b)

539. Said R. Eleazar: Verily, I behold the face of the שכינה. For to see the righteous and saintly of one's generation is to see the very face of the שכינה. And why are these called the

face of the שכינה? Because in them is the שכינה hidden. She is hidden in them and they reveal Her. For they who are the friends of the שכינה and are near to Her, are regarded as Her “face”. (Terumah 163b)

540. King David showed his son Solomon, as a model, the celestial prototype of the Temple. (Terumah 164a)

541. Whenever the righteous are on a journey, the Holy One guards them continually, as it is written, “*The Lord shall protect your going and your coming in, from now and forever*” [Psalms 121:8]. (Terumah 164a)

542. Is it not written, “*for you are the fewest of all peoples*” [Deut. 7:7]? Truly, “of all peoples” taken together, but not fewer than any individual people, for there is no nation in the world as numerous and mighty as Israel. But see how numerous the Ishmaelites and the Edomites! That is so, but it must not be forgotten that all other peoples are intermixed with one another, unlike Israel, which is a pure and unadulterated race, “a holy people unto the Lord”, chosen by Him. (Terumah 164a)

543. When the Holy One enters the synagogue and the people are united in prayer and sing together praises to the King, He is honored and glorified. The Holy King is strengthened to ascend in glory and beauty. On the other hand, “in the want of people is the confusion of the prince”; that is to say, when He enters a synagogue and finds that no congregation has come to pray and praise, all the celestial hosts are degraded from the high estate to which they were raised by the glorification of that King. For when the Israelites worship the Supernal King with prayer and praise, all the celestial hosts join them and sing in unison with them, and are strengthened by that holy exercise, that the Holy One may be exalted from Above and Below in harmony. But when Israel does not assemble to worship the Lord, they lose this dignity, since they do not ascend and cannot praise their Master in the fitting manner. (Terumah 164a/b)

544. Beyond the firmament knowledge cannot penetrate. Man must close his mouth and not seek to reflect upon it. He who does so reflect is turned backwards, for it passes our knowledge. (Terumah 164b)

545. When the Kohen Godol was to stand before Him in the Sanctuary, he had to enter that holy place with joy and all things about him were to express joy. Therefore is it written, “*Serve the Lord with joy, come before Him with joyous singing*” [Psalms 100:2]. For in His service there is no room for sadness.

It may be asked, “What if a man is deep in sorrow and tribulation, and has no heart to rejoice? His trouble forces him to seek compassion from the Heavenly King. Is he to refrain from prayer because of his sorrow? What can he do? He cannot help being heavy-hearted.”

The answer is that “*all gates have been closed since the destruction of the Temple, but the gates of tears have not been closed*”. Tears are the expression of sadness and sorrow. Those celestial beings who are appointed over those gates of tears break down all the iron locks and bars and let the tears pass through. So the prayers of those sorrowful ones penetrate through to the Holy King and that Place is grieved by the man’s sorrow, as it is written, “*In all their afflictions He⁸¹ is afflicted*” [Isaiah 63:9]. Thus, the prayer of the sorrowing does not return to him void, but the Holy One takes pity on him.

Blessed is the man who in his prayers sheds tears before the Holy One. This is true even on the Sabbath, which must be a day of joy⁸². (Terumah 165a/b)

546. If one fasts because of a sorrow, it delivers him from that punishment which had been decreed for him. (Terumah 165b)

⁸¹ This is in accordance with way the word is read (לָ) and not as it is written (אָל).

⁸² Is this the Halakhah? May one cry when praying on Shabbos?

547. The way of life by which man enters into the World to Come consists in the reproofs and instructions which he receives in order that he may learn to keep away from the evil path and walk in the good way. (Terumah 166a)

548. What is the difference between אָנוֹשׁ and אָנוֹשׁ? אָנוֹשׁ (derived from אָנוֹשׁ or to be sick) indicates that he had not the same strength as Adam. Concerning this it is written: “*What is אָנוֹשׁ (man) that You should make him great?*” [Job 7:17]. A weakening of the body, but a strengthening of the soul was the heritage left by Seth to his son Enosh, a good heritage for his acceptance. The latter passed on a like heritage to his son. (Terumah 168a)

549. The guilt of Adam was not healed until the time when Israel stood at Mount Sinai and received the Torah. (Terumah 168a)

550. It is not obligatory for women to say the Grace after meals⁸³. (Terumah 168b)

551. Just as at every celebration of the covenant of circumcision a beautiful chair must be prepared for the “man of zeal” (Elijah the Prophet), since he is present there, so also at every wedding the canopy must be beautifully decorated in honor of the Celestial Bride. For as Below, so as Above. As the bride here Below is blessed with seven benedictions, so is her prototype (the שְׂכִינָה). A woman who is married is called “bride” only after the seven benedictions have been pronounced; and only then can there be conjugal union. (Terumah 169a)

552. Most benedictions are pronounced over wine. Why is this? Because wine symbolizes joy; the wine which is ever guarded in the grapes. (Terumah 169b)

553. The seventh benediction is the synthesis of them all, and from it all the universe is blessed, because it comprises what is Above and what is Below. It is the epitome of the Ten Creative Words and, therefore, ten aspects of joy are found in this benediction: “Blessed art Thou...Who created joy and gladness, bridegroom and bride, mirth and exultation, love and brotherhood, peace and fellowship” in order that the bride may be the perfection of all. Blessed are the Israelites who are worthy to represent Below what is Above. Concerning them it is written: “*And who is like Your people Israel, a unique nation on earth?*” [II Samuel 7:23]. (Terumah 169b)

554. It is written, “*And all your children shall be taught by the Lord*” [Isaiah 54:13]. Does G-d teach all the children of the Israelites the Torah? Yes, indeed, for when these little ones learn, the שְׂכִינָה comes and lends to each of them power and energy to study. For without the help of the Holy One, the strain on these babes would be too great. (Terumah 169b)

555. R. Shimon said: Prophecy at times is lodged in the mouths of children, so that they prophesize even more than the prophets of old. (Terumah 170a)

556. It has been stated [Leviticus Rabbah 8] that “*marriage unions are as difficult for the Holy One as was the dividing of the Reed Sea.*” As at the dividing of the Reed Sea those who stood on the one side of the sea were drowned, and the others were saved, so in marriages also there is weeping for some and singing for others. He allows one man to die and gives his wife to another man, and at times a bad man gets a good wife. These happenings are great mysteries. (Terumah 170b)

557. Chiefs, leaders, and ministers have been set over all the stars and constellations of the firmament. Their duty is to serve the world, each one according to his appointed station. And even the tiniest grass-blade on earth has its appointed star in heaven. Each star, too, has over it a being appointed who ministers before the Holy One as its representative, each according to his order. All the stars in the firmament keep watch over this world. They are

⁸³ See SO OC 186:1: “Women are required to recite the Birkas Hamazon. There is only doubt whether they are obligated from the Torah...or from the rabbis...”

appointed to minister to every individual object in this world, to each object—a star. Herbs and trees, grass and wild plants, cannot flourish and grow except from the influence of the stars who stand above them and gaze upon them face to face, each according to his fashion. (Terumah 171b)

558. Certain illnesses of men, as jaundice, can be cured through the patient's gazing upon shining steel, which held before his eyes and rapidly moved from side to side so that, like a comet's tail, it sends flashes of light into the face, thus healing the disease. (Terumah 171b)

559. Spirits rule over the toe- and finger-nails of men when the nail-pairings are thrown away instead of being burnt. For these nail-pairings are used by the sorcerers for their divinations. All those who throw away their nail-pairings or use them for witchcraft while this star⁸⁴ is in the ascendant, cause death, and increase the power of sorcery. (Terumah 17b)

560. When the days of the Messiah will draw near, noxious beasts and diseases will rage in the world. Evil events will occur and Israel will be in great tribulation. But when they are thus oppressed in the darkness of exile, the Holy One will cause the day to break for them "*and the Kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the Kingdom... shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High.*" [Daniel 12:27]. The reign of the heathen nations will be terminated and Israel shall rule over them. There will be fulfillment of the words, "*Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun*" [Isaiah 30:26]. (Terumah 172b)

561. The "Star of Jacob" will shine for forty days and forty nights and the Messiah will be revealed. All the nations of the world shall gather around him. Then will the verse be fulfilled which says, "*And on that day the root of Jesse which stands as an ensign for the peoples, to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his resting place shall be glorious*" [Isaiah 11:10]. (Terumah 172b)

562. All human beings experience a foretaste of death in the midst of their sleep. (Terumah 173a)

563. Holiness cannot be mixed with impurity, any more than the Israelites can be mingled with the heathen nations. (Terumah 173a)

564. All angels are formed of fire, and fire cannot receive impurity. (Terumah 173a)

565. Moses did not die. But is it not written, "*and Moses died there*"? The truth is, however, that although the departure of the righteous is always designated as "death", this is only in reference to us. For over him who has attained completeness and is a model of holy faith, death has no power. So he does not, in fact, die. (Terumah 174a)

566. R. Judah said: Woe to mankind that they neglect the worship of their Lord, though He perpetually lavishes upon them His Providential care, setting before them the precious treasure of Torah, which they neglect.

There are, as we have learned, three cardinal duties which a man must fulfill towards his son, namely, circumcision, redemption of the first-born, and the finding of a wife. All three G-d performs for Israel. Circumcision, as it is written, "*And the Lord shall circumcise your heart*" [Deut. 30:6]; redemption, as it is written, "*And the Lord your G-d redeemed you*" [Deut. 15:15]; and the finding of a wife, as it is written, "*He created them male and female. And G-d blessed them and G-d said to them 'Be fruitful and multiply'*" [Genesis 1:27-28]. Moreover, he carried his children on His wings⁸⁵.

Said R. Jose: All these benefits which He gave to Israel were great, but the Torah is the greatest of all. For there is nothing which so ennoble a man, either in this world or in the

⁸⁴ Referring to a star known by the ancient astrologers and sorcerers and which was important for their calculations and predictions.

⁸⁵ See Exodus 19:4

World to Come, as the Torah, concerning which it is written, “*By me kings reign, and princes decree justice*” [Proverbs 8:15]. (Terumah 174b)

567. Rav Huna began thus: We have been taught that in an earlier time, before Jacob appeared, illness was unknown. Mankind was perfectly healthy until their time arrived and they passed away without any previous sickness. When Jacob came he prayed to G-d saying, “Lord of the world! May it please You to grant that a man should first fall ill for two or three days, and then be gathered to his people in order that he may have time to put his affairs in order and repent of his sins”. The Holy One replied: “It shall be so, and you shall be the pledge and the sign thereof.” Therefore it is written concerning him, “*And it came to pass after these things, that Joseph was told, ‘Behold, your father is ill’*” [Genesis 48:1], this being something new to the world.

From the death of Jacob until the time of King Hezekiah, no man ever recovered from an illness. Of Hezekiah it is written, “*In those days was Hezekiah became deathly ill*” [Isaiah 38:1] followed by “*Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed to the Lord*” [v. 2]. He said to Him: “May it be Your pleasure that men should be enabled to recover from their maladies, so that they may praise Your Name and acknowledge You and turn to You with perfect repentance, and thus be found worthy before You.”

The Holy One replied, “So be it! And you shall be the first sign thereof.” So Hezekiah experienced something which no human being had previously experienced, concerning which it is written, “*A composition by Hezekiah, King of Judah, he was sick, and recuperated from his illness*” [ibid. v.9] (Terumah 174b)

568. Said R. Isaac: We have been taught that the words, “*The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness*” [Leviticus 18:7] have an esoteric reference to super-mundane relationships in addition to their obvious significance. Woe to him who “uncovers their nakedness” (by probing too deeply into the hidden mysteries of the inner aspects of the Divine Essence and the relationship of one to another). (Terumah 176a)

569. R. Isaac once said: In bygone times, a person used to say to his neighbor, “speak to me on a certain portion of Torah and I will pay you for it”. But in our days, even if one person says to another, “study Torah and I will reward you with money for doing so” no one inclines his ears to listen and none desire knowledge except a few saints. (Terumah 176a)

570. R. Shimon related: One there was a man who dwelt among the mountains and was a complete stranger to the ways of the townsfolk. He sowed wheat, but knew no better than to consume it in its natural condition. One day he went down into a city and there a loaf of good bread was placed before him. He asked what it was and was informed that it was bread and was meant to be eaten. He ate it and liked it. “What is it made of?” he asked. They told him “Wheat”. Later he was given fine cake kneaded in oil. He tasted it and again asked, “And this, of what is it made?” The reply was made as before, “Of wheat”. Finally, he was treated to some royal confectionery flavored with oil and honey. Once more he asked his question and obtained the same reply. Then he said, “I have all these at my command because I eat the essential constituent of all, namely wheat.” Thus, through his untutored taste he remained a stranger to all these delicious flavors and their enjoyment was lost to him.

And so it is with those who stop short at the general principles of knowledge because they are ignorant of the delights which may be derived from the further investigation and application of those principles. (Terumah 176a)

571. How is one to discern whether a person is one whose acquaintance is to be cultivated or shunned? By his temper. For by his demeanor when roused to anger can his character be discerned. If he guards his holy soul when he is wroth, in order that it may not be uprooted from its place and supplanted by the Other Side, then he is indeed, a servant of his Lord, complete and holy. But one who in his ire cares nothing for the welfare of his soul, uprooting it and letting it be replaced by the impure domination, such a man is a rebel against his Lord, one with whom we should shun contact of any kind, for he is one who, as it is written, “*tears*

his soul apart in his anger" [Job 18:4]. He tears and uproots his soul in his heedless rage and allows a "strange god" to usurp its place within him and to take possession of him in his stead. (Tetzaveh 182a)

572. It is prohibited to look at the face of a person in his anger. What about the anger of students of Torah? That anger is good in all aspects, since, as we have been taught, the Torah is fire and it is she who kindles that holy anger in her devotees, as it is written, "*Is not my word like a fire? says the Lord*" [Jeremiah 23:29]. The anger of scholars is for offences against the Torah, it is in her honor, it is for the sake of the Holy One's glory and majesty. Therefore it says, "*For the Lord your G-d is a consuming fire, he is a zealous G-d*" [Deut. 4:24].

But if a person becomes angry over purely secular matters, this is no service to G-d. No sin that one commits is so literally idolatry as this, since it actually sets up an idol in the very heart of him who is angered. Unto such a man one is forbidden to speak or draw close. (Tetzaveh 182b)

573. R. Judah replied: Anger, in contradistinction to sins which pollute only the body, pollutes also the soul and, in fact, the whole being. Therefore, one must beware of [angry] men. (Tetzaveh 182b)

574. We have to count the Omer standing. (Tetzaveh 183a)

575. The counting of the days of the Omer is not obligatory for women. (Tetzaveh 183a)

576. All mysteries and all glorious sanctifications are centered in the mystery of seven. (Tetzaveh 184a)

577. It is not the Will of the Holy One to destroy His handiwork. (Tetzaveh 184a)

578. Jerusalem is the center of the inhabited world. (Tetzaveh 184b)

579. No blessing from Above can rest on anything that is counted⁸⁶. (Ki Sisoh 187b)

580. No people in the world despises Israel so utterly, spitting in their faces with the utmost contempt, as do the sons of Edom, who say to them, "you are all impure like a menstruant". (Ki Sisoh 188b)

581. R. Jose replied: What is it that enables Israel to endure their exile for so long? It is those promises which the Holy One has given them. When they go to the synagogues and houses of study and see all those consolations, all those comforting and sure hopes, they rejoice in their hearts and are able to endure all that comes upon them. Otherwise, they would not be able. Said R. Hiya: True! And all depends on repentance. (Ki Sisoh 188b)

582. Said R. Jose: There will assuredly be many, as there have been in all generations, who will wish neither the long exile nor the future reward. They will break loose from the precepts of the Torah and be absorbed in the other nations! (Ki Sisoh 189a)

583. R. Abba once said that Companions who love not one another pass away from the world before their time. (Ki Sisoh 190b)

584. The "mixed multitude" consisted entirely on one people all the members of which spoke one language, namely all the sorcerers of Egypt and all its magicians. (Ki Sisoh 191a)

585. It is the way of a serpent to lie in wait on the cross-roads, lying in ambush. (Vayakhel 194b-195a)

586. R. Shimon said: I swear to you that the majority of people do not die before their time, but only those who know not how to take heed to themselves. For at that time when a dead body is taken from the house to the place of burial, the Angel of Death haunts the

⁸⁶ A comment frequently found in the Zohar, and found in the Talmud. See Taanis 8b and Baba Metzlia 42a.

abodes of the women. Why the women? Because that has been his habit since the time that he seduced Eve, through whom he brought death upon the world.

Hence, when he takes a man's life, and the males are accompanying the dead body, he mingles himself on the way among the women and he has then the power to take the life of the sons of men. He looks on the way at the faces of those who come within his sight, from the time they carry the dead body out from his house to the place of burial and until they return to their homes. It is on their account that he brings about the untimely death of many people.

Regarding this it is written, "*But there is that that is swept away without Justice*" [Proverbs 13:23]. For he, the Angel of Death, ascends and brings accusations and recounts man's sins before the Holy One, blessed be He, so that the man is brought to judgment for those sins, and is removed from the world before his time.

What is the remedy against this? When the dead body is carried to the place of burial, one should turn his face in another direction and leave the women behind him. Should the latter pass in front, he should turn around so as not to face them. Similarly, when they return from the place of burial, he should not return by the way where the women are standing and he should not look at them at all, but should turn a different way⁸⁷.

It is because the sons of men do not know this and do not observe this that the majority of people are brought up for judgment before their time. (Vayakhel 196b)

587. It was not without cause that the ancients ordained the blowing of the Shofar at the time when the dead body is taken from the house to the place of burial. This was not instituted merely for the honor of the dead. Rather its purpose is to protect the living against the Angel of Death, so that he should not be able to indict them on High, and as a warning to us to guard ourselves against him. (Vayakhel 196b)

588. R. Judah discoursed on the verse "*Surely, you should break your bread with the hungry...*" [Isaiah 58:7]. Happy is the lot of him who happens to meet with a poor man, as the poor man is a present that G-d has sent him. Whoever receives that present with a cheerful countenance, happy is his portion. See now. Whoever displays compassion on a poor man and revitalizes his soul, the Holy One counts it to him as though he had created his soul. (Vayakhel 198a)

589. It is incumbent upon the host to spread a tablecloth for the poor man for the bread and other food offered. It is the proper thing to cut the bread into slices for the poor man so that he should not feel ashamed, and that there should be no stinging. (Vayakhel 198a)

590. A city with all its inhabitants depends on its existence on the care of the people's shepherd and leader. If the latter is a good shepherd, it is well with him, well with the city and well with the people. But if he is an evil shepherd, woe to him, woe to the city and woe to the people! (Vayakhel 198a)

591. When one wills to serve his Master, his desire is first generated in the heart. (Vayakhel 198b)

592. The Holy One, blessed be He, has predestined every unique phenomenon that has ever happened in the world from the time the world was created. (Vayakhel 199a)

593. It has been affirmed that in quitting this world a man must endure seven ordeals. The first is the judgment of Heaven when the spirit leaves the body. The second is when his actions and utterances march in front of him and make proclamation concerning him. The third is when he is placed in the grave. The fourth is the ordeal of the grave itself. The sixth is

⁸⁷ See SO YD 359. The Beis Yosef brings this Zohar as the source for discouraging (lit. preventing) women from going to the cemetery. However, the Orech Mishor on Darke Moshe HaAruch points out that from this Zohar we see that women did in fact go to funerals, thus questioning the ruling of the Beis Yosef who says they should be prevented from going altogether. The problem was not that they should or should not go, he says, rather that one should not look at them there.

the suffering of גהינום. The seventh ordeal is that his spirit is condemned to roam to and fro in the world, and is not able to find a resting place until his appointed tasks have been completed. Hence, it behooves man continually to review his actions and to repent before his Master. (Vayakhel 199b)

594. Said R. Hiya: When G-d created the world, He did so for no other purpose than that Israel should one day come and receive the Torah. It was by means of the Torah that the world was created, and it is on the Torah that the world is established. (Vayakhel 200a)

595. תרומה is meant to be resolved into תרי (two) and מאה (hundred), indicating two out of a hundred. (Vayakhel 200a)

596. Prayer offered with concentrated devotion by one who fears his Master produces great effects on High. First come the songs and hymns chanted by the angels on High, and the series of hymns recited by Israel here below. (Vayakhel 200b)

597. When the worshippers reach גאל ישראל the whole assembly must stand up.⁸⁸ (Vayakhel 200b)

598. It behooves a man to concentrate his thoughts during the first three benedictions of the Shemone Esrei and to focus his mind on these great effects and the on the ordering of the prayer. His mouth, his heart, and his thoughts must all work in unison. (Vayakhel 200b)

599. A man of discernment (נבון) is of a higher degree than a wise man (חכם). A wise man knows for himself as much as is required, but the man of discernment apprehends the whole, knowing both his own point of view and that of others. (Vayakhel 201a)

600. Prayer is spiritual worship. (Vayakhel 201a)

601. A prayer that is heard by the ears of man is not listened to on High, and so remains unheard by anyone save by him who overheard it at first. Hence it behooves a man to be careful not to let others hear his prayer. Similarly, in the reading of the Torah, while one reads, the other standing by him should be silent⁸⁹. For if two read together Faith is diminished, because voice and utterance are only one. For only a single voice and a single recital must be heard. (Vayakhel 202a)

602. Happy is the portion of the man who knows the proper way in which to order his prayer. (Vayakhel 202b)

603. A man possesses a certain נפש that attracts to itself the special spirit on the eve of the Sabbath, so that that spirit takes up its abode and resides within it the whole of the Sabbath. (Vayakhel 204b)

604. The נפש of every Israelite is decorated on the Sabbath day; that decoration consisting of the special spirit within them. But at the conclusion of the Sabbath that spirit departs, and then woe to the נפש that is thus bereft. It has lost the Heavenly crown and the holy energy it thereby possessed. (Vayakhel 204b)

605. One should not go out alone either on the night of the fourth day of the week⁹⁰ or on the night of the Sabbath, and that at these times one must be on one's guard. The fourth night of the week we have to be on our guard against them (malignant spirits and the evil accusers of men) for the reason that at the creation of the lights the moon was cursed and its light diminished. Thus bands of malignant roving spirits were allowed to exercise power that night. On Sabbath night while the spirits scatter themselves in order to retire into the cavern

⁸⁸ It is our custom to stand up already by the recitation of תהלות לא-ל עליון.

⁸⁹ It is our custom for the Oleh to whisper his portion in parallel with the Reader.

⁹⁰ I am unfamiliar with any such Halakhah.

of the abyss where they are powerless to harm, a solitary man must be on his guard against them, since, although they are deprived of power, now and then they show themselves, and a solitary wayfarer must be on his guard. (Vayakhel 205a)

606. Once the holy people enter the precincts of the synagogue on the Sabbath, it is forbidden for them to concern themselves with anything, even the requirements of the synagogue, save words of thanksgiving and prayer and the study of Torah. Whoever directs his mind to other and worldly matters profanes the Sabbath and, thus, has no portion among the people of Israel. (Vayakhel 205b)

607. The verse-divisions, the tonal accents, the Massoretic readings, and all the minutiae of the text with their profound mysteries were all delivered to Moses on Sinai. (Vayakhel 205b)

608. Both on the Sabbath and on other days when the Torah is publicly read, the holy people must have a Throne prepared in the form of a reading-desk with an ascent of six steps and no more⁹¹ conforming with the passage saying: “*and there were six steps to the throne*” [II Chronicles 9:18] and having one step above on which to place the Torah that it may be seen by the whole congregation.

As soon as the Torah is placed thereon, the whole congregation below should assume an attitude of awe and fear, of trembling and quaking, as though they were at that moment standing beneath Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, and should give ear and listen attentively. For it is not permitted then to open one’s mouth, even for discussing the Torah, still less other subjects. All must be in awe and fear as though they were speechless. So Scripture says: “*And when he (Ezra) opened it (the scroll) up, all the people stood up*” [Nehemiah 8:5]; also, “*And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the Torah*” [ibid. 8:3].

R. Shimon said: When the Torah is taken out to be read before the congregation, the mercy-gates of Heaven are opened and the attribute of Love is stirred up, and each one should then recite the following prayer⁹²:

Blessed be the Name of the Master of the universe, blessed be Your crown and Your place. May Your favor accompany Your people Israel for evermore and manifest to Your people the redemption of Your right hand in Your Sanctuary so as to make us enjoy Your goodly light. Accept our prayer in mercy. May it be Your Will to prolong our life in goodness and may I, Your servant, be counted among the righteous so that You have mercy upon me and guard me, all that is mine, and all that are of Your people Israel. You are He Who nourishes and sustains all. You are the ruler over all. You are the ruler over all kings and the kingdom is Yours. I am the servant of the Holy One, blessed be He, and bow down before Him and before His glorious Torah at all times. Not in man do I put my trust nor do I rely upon angels, but G-d of Heaven who is the G-d of truth and whose Torah is truth and whose prophets are true prophets. In Him do I put my trust and to His holy and glorious Name do I sing praises. May it be Your will to open my heart to Your Torah and grant me male children, such as will do Your Will. May You fulfill the desires of my heart and that of Your people Israel for whatever is good, for life and for peace. Amen. (Vayakhel 206a)

⁹¹ I am unfamiliar with any such Halakhah.

⁹² This is the famous **ברוך שמה** prayer which is now popularly recited when the Aron Kodesh is opened before a Torah reading. This is the only full-length prayer that I have found in the Zohar. Historically, this prayer is a relatively late addition to our prayer service not being commonly recited in neither Ashkenazi nor Sephardi communities until a few centuries ago. It probably crept in when awareness of the Zohar and Kabbalistic writings become more widely known. The Sefer **שרשי מנהג אשכנז** Volume I, extensively discusses this prayer and its history. The author of this book enumerates no less than thirteen different objections to its recitation. Among these are: it was never said by our forefathers and the rabbis of earlier generations, nor by Chazal by whose rulings we live; it is not mentioned neither in the Shulchon Oruch nor the Ramoh; it is from the Toras Hanister (the Hidden or Esoteric Torah) which is not meant for the masses and not meant to be recited publicly; it contains phrases which could be misinterpreted and are theologically problematic; it may actually not have been written by Rashbi himself; not everyone has the right to say of himself that he is a “Servant of G-d”; it is of the form of a request that may not be made on Shabbos; there is a danger that it may be said hurriedly and without proper intent and respect; and most people do not understand its (Aramaic) language. Nevertheless, the Mishneh Brura rules that **ברוך שמה** should be recited.

609. As the holy tongue stands alone, so its message must be delivered by one only. For two reading simultaneously in the Torah would be a lessening of Divine Faith and a lessening of the glory of the Torah. (Similarly, in reciting the Translation only one voice should be heard.) All should be silent, only one reading, just as at Sinai, as we are told, “*G-d spoke all these words, saying*” [Exodus 20:1]. (Vayakhel 206a)

610. It behooves the reader to concentrate on the words he reads and realize that he is the messenger of his Master, charged with the duty of communicating these words to the whole congregation, he being in the place of Heaven to them. Hence, whoever would go up to read in the Torah should have rehearsed his reading at home or else not read at all. (Vayakhel 206b)

611. It is forbidden for the reader to break off anywhere save where Moses indicated a pause. Neither may he in reading the portion of one week add part of the portion of another week. (Vayakhel 206b)

612. Happy is the portion of whomever completes the reading of the weekly section⁹³ of each and every Sabbath in the proper manner and in accordance with the divisions fixed on High. (Vayakhel 206b)

613. When the Sabbath begins to come to a close, Israel must draw it out as long as possible. For it is a great and exalted day, and the שכינה has been our guest on that day. So we must make every effort to detain the celestial guest as long as possible. At the conclusion of the Sabbath, we commence prayers by reciting: וְהוּא רַחוּם יְכַפֵּר עוֹן (Vayakhel 207a)

614. At the conclusion of the Sabbath, we must inhale the odor of sweet spices in order to restore our soul and counteract the effect of the loss of the superior spirit that has left it. The best odor for this purpose is that of the myrtle, as it is the myrtle which sustains the holy place from which souls issue. (Vayakhel 208b)

615. There is, in each Heaven⁹⁴, a chieftain who is in charge of a part of the world and a part of the earth, except the Land of Israel, which is not under the rule of any Heaven or any other power but that of the Holy One, blessed be He, alone. (Vayakhel 209a)

616. As long as Israel was in the Holy Land, they averted all the evil diseases and afflictions of the world by means of the Temple Service and the sacrifices. (Vayakhel 212a)

617. When the holy and pious depart this world, their bodies are placed in an ark. Of Joseph we find it written, “*and he was layed in a coffin* (בארון) *in Egypt*”⁹⁵ [Genesis 50:26]. Because he kept unimpaired the symbol of the Holy Covenant and, therefore, he merited to be put in the ark. R. Abba wept and said: Woe unto mankind that they are unaware of this disgrace! Alas, for their offense, in that everyone who wishes is placed in an ark! For this privilege should be reserved for those who are conscious that never in their lives have they transgressed against the sign of the covenant. To put anyone else into an ark is to desecrate it. (Vayakhel 214b)

618. There is no sin so grievous in the sight of the Holy One as the sin of perverting and impairing the sign of the holy covenant. He who commits such an offense is excluded from the sight of the שכינה. (Vayakhel 214b)

619. “The path of the righteous” is the path of truth, the path the Holy One, blessed by He, delights in. (Vayakhel 215a)

⁹³ The Soncino edition points out the following. The text of the Zohar implies that there are 53 divisions (Sedras) to the Torah whereas the traditional division is of 54 sections. Some say that the sections Nitzavim and Vayelech are counted as one by the Zohar while others say that V'zos HaBerakhah is here excluded as it does not belong to any Sabbath.

⁹⁴ The Gemara (Chagigah 12b) indicates that there are seven Heavens each with its own particular function and purpose

⁹⁵ These are the concluding words of the Book of Genesis.

620. What is the difference between “path” (אורח) and “way” (דרך)? A “path” is newly opened and still little trodden, whereas a “way” is a well-worn track, already traversed by many feet. (Vayakhel 215a)

621. R. Shimon discoursed on the verse: “*You shall not eat with the blood. Neither shall you practice divination nor soothsaying*” [Leviticus 19:26]. The esoteric teaching of this verse is that if one eats before he has prayed “for his blood”, as it were, it is as though he were practicing divination and soothsaying. For in the night man’s soul mounts up into Heaven to gaze upon the mystery of the Divine Glory, each one according to its merits, and the body is thus left deriving its life-force solely from the blood. And although alive, the man has then a foretaste of death. For when man awakens from his sleep, he is not in a state of purity, because, as explained elsewhere, the Other Side has sway wherever the soul is absent.

He must purify himself with water and, although he may have been engaged in studying Torah, even then the soul does not resume its former place and sway, and he is still sustained by the blood life-force alone, the force called נפש (soul) which permeates the blood.

It is only when he worships his Master in prayer that the blood-force resumes its normal position so that the soul regains its control in its own sphere. It is thus that man attains his proper and perfect condition with its vital force Beneath and the soul Above.

Hence, if one prays before he eats he puts himself in the proper condition. But if he eats before he prays for his blood to resume its proper sphere, it is as though he were practicing divination and soothsaying, seeing that it is the way of the Diviner to elevate the Other Side and to degrade the Side of Holiness.

The term מנחש (Diviner) is related to נחש (serpent). The Diviner is so called because he gives himself over to the Serpent in order to obtain from him power and strength. Such a man is like one serving other gods and so likewise is he who eats before prayer, worshipping the blood life-force instead of worshipping the Almighty in order to fortify the Side of the soul, the Side of Holiness.

Happy is your portion, O exalted saints, in that through prayer man’s body and soul are edified so that he becomes complete.

Prayer works a fourfold process of up-building which is in essence one. First, it builds up he who prays; secondly, it builds up this world; thirdly, the up-building of the Upper World with all the Heavenly hosts and, fourthly, the process of up-building is wrought on the Divine Name. (Vayakhel 215b)

622. “*The Lord is One*”. The recitation of this phrase is to make our thoughts range throughout all the Grades of which up to the Infinite (אין סוף) Grade in love and fear. This is the method of avowing the unity of G-d practiced by Rav Hamnuna the Venerable, who learned it from his father, who had it from his master and so on until it came from the mouth of Elijah. And it is the correct and proper method.

The same Rav Hamnuna further said that to concentrate the whole idea of unification in the term אחד (one) is still a better way. It is for this reason that we dwell long over the enunciation of the word אחד, during which we affect the fusion into one of the Upper and Lower Worlds. As we have learned, “one” alludes to Above, Below and the four quarters of the universe, these being the supernal Chariot, so that all are embraced in a single unity reaching out to the אין סוף.

After the recital of שמע ישראל...we have to recite the section containing mention of the Exodus from Egypt (Numbers 15:37-41] for the reason that the שכינה was in the Egyptian exile and as long as She is in exile there is no union between the Upper and the Lower Worlds. But the redemption from Egypt, attended by all those signs, set Her free. (Vayakhel 216b)

623. The שכינה appeared neither during the First Temple nor during the Second Temple. (Vayakhel 216b)

624. We have, in the recital of that redemption, to repeat four times the term “truth” (אמת) before we reach the portion beginning with “עזרת אבותינו...”, a prayer which is a firm support for all Israel. Then, in the course of the recital, “עזרת אבותינו...” term “אמת” recurs again four times⁹⁶, whereby we fortify, confirm and corroborate, as it were, the same four redemptions with the seal and signet of the King. (Vayakhel 216b-217a)

625. R. Shimon further discoursed citing the verse, “*And they made the ציץ (headplate), the holy crown, of pure gold, etc.*” [Exodus 39:30]. Why was the plate called ציץ (literally gaze or peep)? Because it was a reflector, mirroring the character of any man gazing at it. For in that plate were graven the letters of the Divine Name. When a righteous man appeared before it the letters so engraved bulged out and rose luminous from their sockets, from which a light shone on the man’s face with a faint sparkling. For a moment, the Kohen would notice the reflection of the letters on the man’s face. But when he looked more closely, he would see nothing more than a faint light, like the reflection of shining gold.

But the first momentary glimpse that the Kohen caught was a sign to him that that man was pleasing to the Holy One, blessed be He, and that he was destined for the World to Come, inasmuch as that light was illumination from on High and a mark of Divine favor.

On the other hand, if one’s face failed to show any such sacred sign when he stood before the plate, then the Kohen knew that that man was an evildoer and in need of atonement and intercession. (Vayakhel 217b)

626. As the members of the body must follow the eyes, which are the leaders of the body, so kings, members of the Sanhedrin and other rulers, lead the way for the people to follow. (Vayakhel 218a)

627. Whoever pronounces the after-meal benediction must do so devoutly, and in a joyful mood, unmingled with an tinge of sadness inasmuch as in giving thanks he is giving of his own to someone else. Thus, as he gives thanks joyfully and unstintingly, so will sustenance be given to him joyfully and unstintingly. (Vayakhel 218a)

628. Our sages have said that the arrogant and shameless have no portion in this world nor in the World to Come. All the arrogant of Israel, when they gazed on the ציץ (plate) became contrite of heart and looked inwardly into their own deeds. For the ציץ possessed miraculous powers, and thus was a means of making all who looked on it feel ashamed of their misdeeds. In this way the ציץ secured atonement for the arrogant and the insolent.

The letters of the Divine Name engraved on it stood out shining and flashing. Whoever looked at that flashing had to cast down his eyes in fear and became contrite of heart. Thus the ציץ affected atonement.

Of similar potency was the Incense. For whoever smelled the smoke of the pillar that ascended from the “smoke-raiser” (one of the ingredients of the Incense) became cleansed of heart and intent on worshipping his Master. The taint of evil spirit disappeared from him, leaving him to serve with a single heart his Father in Heaven. The Incense thus possessed the potency of breaking completely the evil spirit in man. As the ציץ possessed miraculous powers, so did the Incense. (Vayakhel 218b)

629. For there is nothing so beloved by the Holy One, blessed be He, as the Incense. It is able to banish sorcery and all evil influences from the house. Seeing that, by means of their

⁹⁶ In Nusach Ashkenaz, אמת is recited but twice in the paragraph beginning with עזרת אבותינו.

odor and fumes, perfumes prepared by men possess the virtue to counteract the ill effects of evil things, how much more so the Incense!

It is a firmly established ordinance of the Holy One, blessed be He, that whoever reflects on and recites daily the section of the Incense will be saved from all evil things and sorceries in the world, from all mishaps and evil imaginings, from evil decrees and from death. No harm will befall him that day, as the Other Side has no power over him. But it must be read with devotion.

R. Shimon remarked: Were people to know how precious the offering of the Incense is to the Holy One, blessed be He, they would take every word of the passage where it is enjoined and make it into a crown for their heads, as it were, a crown of gold. And whoever studies it ought to reflect deeply on the way it was carried out. Through the reciting of it daily with devotion one merits a portion in this world and of the World to Come. He keeps death away from himself and from the world, from the Evil Sides, from punishments of גיהנום, and from strange powers.

When the pillar of smoke ascended from the burning Incense, the Kohen used to see the mystical letters of the Divine Name ascending on High in that pillar. Then numerous holy legions would surround the pillar on all sides until rose in the midst of light and gladness to the region where it diffused joy and knitted together the Upper World and the Lower World in complete unity, thereby achieving atonement for the evil spirit of man and for idolatry, which is of the Other Side. (Vayakhel 218b/219a)

630. The altar was placed in the innermost part of the Tabernacle for it was the repository of blessings and was, therefore, hidden from the eye of man. (Vayakhel 219a)

631. It is forbidden to burn Incense anywhere save on coals of fire taken with the censer from this altar. (Vayakhel 219a)

632. It is a custom to recite the Incense-ordinance twice a day⁹⁷, in the morning and the evening, corresponding to the precept, “*And Aaron shall burn thereon Incense of sweet spices, every morning... at dusk, he shall burn it*” [Exodus 30:7-8]. (Vayakhel 219a)

633. Observe the difference between prayer and the Incense-offering. Prayer has been instituted to take the place of the sacrifices that Israel used to offer. But none of the sacrifices had the same value as the Incense. There is, further, this difference between the two. Prayer repairs damage which has been done, but Incense does more—it strengthens, it binds together, it is the greatest light-bringer. It was the Incense that removed the evil taint (זהומה) and purified the Tabernacle so that the whole was illumined, renewed and knitted together into a combined whole. Hence, the Incense-recital must always precede our daily prayer as a means of removing the evil taint from the world, inasmuch as it acts as a daily therapeutic like the offering itself, in which G-d delights. (Vayakhel 219a)

634. The offering of the Incense used to precede all other services and, hence, its recital should be a prelude to our service of hymns and praises. (Vayakhel 219b)

635. When G-d commanded Moses to make the Tabernacle, Moses stood bewildered not knowing how to proceed until G-d showed him an actual representation of it. (Pekudei 221a)

636. Just as in the human eye there are three concentric layers surrounding a central point, which forms the focus of vision, so is the world’s vision focused in the central point, consisting of the Holy of Holies, the Ark and the Mercy Seat. (Pekudei 222b)

⁹⁷ On weekdays, the Ashkenazi custom outside of Israel is to recite the section פטום הקטורה only once, before the saying of the פטוקי דזמרה while in Israel some repeat it at the end of the Shacharis. Could it be that this curious redundant recitation of this section may be due to the fact that the Ashkenazi practice is not to recite it prior to Mincha, as do the Sephardim, thus requiring the saying of this section a second time in the morning?

637. R. Jesse said: We have been taught that whoever devotes himself to the study of Torah in this world and is able to appoint set times for it, must do so in “faithfulness”, must direct his mind toward the Holy One, blessed be He, and must study for Heaven’s sake. (Pekudei 223a)

638. Happy are those righteous who have no portion in this world but only in the World to Come. (Pekudei 224a)

639. When the Kohen spreads his hands at the time he blesses the people, the שכינה comes and hovers over him and endows him with power. When blessing, the Kohen raises his right hand above the left, so as to cause the Right to prevail over the Left. (Pekudei 225a)

640. When the Kohen spreads out his hands and begins to pronounce the blessing over the people, the celestial benedictions flowing from the celestial source at once kindle the lamps, all faces are illumined, and the Community of Israel is adorned with celestial crowns. All those blessings flow down from on High to Below. (Pekudei 225a)

641. R. Isaac put the following question to R. Shimon: Seeing that, as we have learned, no blessing dwells in whatever is numbered or measured, why were all things connected with the Tabernacle made to be numbered?

R. Shimon replied: Wherever holiness abides, there, if the act of numbering proceeds from the Side of Holiness, blessing will abide continuously, and not pass away. This we learn from the tithe which is a cause of blessing, the reason being that the act of counting is performed for a sacred purpose. How much more so, then, should that be with the Tabernacle, which was a sacred edifice and derived from the Side of Holiness! But it is not so with worldly matters, such as are not derived from the Side of Holiness. No blessing rests upon them if they are numbered. For then the Other Side, that is, the Evil Eye, may obtain dominion over them, and wherever the Evil Eye rules, there blessing cannot reach. Contrariwise, in holy affairs, through measuring and numbering, blessings continuously increase. (Pikudei 225a)

642. The blue employed in the work of the Tabernacle symbolized the mystery of the Upper World. The blue and purple together symbolized the knitting together of the Upper World and the Lower. (Pekudei 226b)

643. With regard to the אורים and תומים which were to be put in the breastplate⁹⁸, we have learned that they were called אורים (lights) because their words gave a clear and direct answer to the questions directed to them; and תומים (from תם—perfect or complete) because their words were fulfilled to perfection⁹⁹. (Pekudei 230a)

644. R. Shimon replied: The nearer a thing comes to the realm of the hidden and undisclosed, the less is it made mention of. So, contrariwise, what is nearer the realm of things revealed is to that degree more often mentioned; whereby the undisclosed is all the more covered. On the same principle, the Divine Name Sublime, the essence of the hidden and the unrevealed is never uttered; a name denoting the revealed being substituted for it. Thus, the Name signifying the unrevealed is יְקוּק, but that signifying the revealed is אֲדֹנָי. The former is the way the Divine Name is written, the latter is the way it is read. Thus it is throughout the Torah which contains two Sides: a disclosed and an undisclosed. And these two aspects are found in all things, both in this world and in the Upper World. (Pikudei 230b)

645. The pomegranate is a symbol of plenty on account of its multitude of seeds. (Pikudei 231a)

⁹⁸ See Exodus 28:30

⁹⁹ Yoma 73.

646. At the creation of Adam, the Holy One, blessed be He, made male and female together, female in the back and the male in the front. Then he sawed them apart and tricked out the woman and brought her to Adam. When they were thus brought face to face, love was multiplied in the world and they brought forth offspring, a thing that was not yet before. But when Adam and his wife sinned and the serpent¹⁰⁰ had intercourse with Eve and injected into her his venom, she bore Cain whose image was in part derived from on High and in part from the venom of the unclean and Low Side. Hence it was the Serpent who brought death into the world, in that it was his side that was the cause of it.

647. It is the way of the serpent to lie in wait to slay, and thus the one that sprang from him followed the same course. (Pikudei 231a)

648. In the act of slaying Abel, Cain bit him repeatedly after the manner of the serpent, until he caused his soul to quit him. (Pikudei 231a/b)

649. Had not Cain been, in part, the offspring of the Unclean Side he would not have behaved so toward his brother. Adam, therefore, having seen Abel slain and Cain banished said to himself, “*Why henceforth should I bear children?*” He then separated himself from his wife for a hundred and thirty years during which period unclean female spirits conceived from him and bore spirits and demons¹⁰¹, the so-called “*plagues of the children of men*” [II Samuel 7:14]. After that, Adam became jealous, rejoined his wife and begat Seth, as we read, “*and [he] begot a son in his own likeness and image; and he called his name Seth*” [Genesis 5:3], emphatically, “in his own likeness, after his image” which did not happen before, that is, with the offspring born before that time. For previously intercourse with Adam was of another kind, but now the Holy One, blessed be He, brought Eve all beautified into the presence of Adam and they joined together face-to-face. (Pikudei 231b)

650. David was king in this world and will be king in the time to come. (Pikudei 232b)

651. David declared, “I am small and despised, yet have I not forgotten Your precepts”. It behooves, indeed, every man to follow this example and to humble himself in every respect so as to become a vessel in which the Holy One, blessed be He, may find delight. (Pikudei 233a)

652. Whenever one sees a camel in his dream, it signifies that death was decreed upon him, but he was delivered. (Pikudei 236a)

653. Some sorcerers succeed in their art and others do not succeed although they use the same practices, since the success of sorcery depends upon the man himself. We have an example in Balaam who was the very man for such arts. He, as tradition tells us, was blind in one eye and looked askance with the other. (Pikudei 237a)

654. Said R. Shimon: Now I am about to reveal to you a mystery which is only permitted to be revealed to the superior saints.

The Holy One, blessed be He, has conferred power upon the place which is from where the unclean spirit may have dominion over the world in many ways and may be enabled to inflict harm. We thus dare not treat him lightly, but we have to be on our guard against him lest he indict us, even in our holy actions. We have, therefore, a secret device, namely to assign him a little space within our holy performances, since it is out of the source of holiness that he derives his power. Hence we are required to enclose inside the תפילין a hair of a calf with one end jutting out and exposed to sight.

This hair is incapable of communicating defilement since it is smaller than a barley grain. Now, when the unclean spirit beholds this hair that is within the supremely holy, and thus finds that he has a portion therein, he will abstain from assailing the wearer and will be

¹⁰⁰ I am uncertain as whether or not to capitalize serpent in these sections.

¹⁰¹ Eruvin 18.

powerless to inflict evil on him, whether on High or Below. Whereas, if nothing is given him within what is holy, he brings accusations saying that and that man who at the moment makes himself holy has done such and such a deed on such and such a day, and these and these are the sins he committed. So that the man will thus be brought to judgment and be punished.

The Israelites, who were aware of this secret, used to adopt a similar device when they began to sanctify themselves on the Day of Atonement¹⁰². They at once made provision for assigning the unclean spirit his portion so that he should not accuse them nor bring to notice the sins of Israel. (Pikudei 237b)

655. Every man's prayer is scrutinized as to whether it is recited with the proper concentration on Divine unification. If it is found to be so, the man receives blessings from the fount of blessings. (Pikudei 238a/b)

656. What Israel achieves through prayer, the Kohanim achieved through the Temple Service. (Pikudei 239b)

657. The Community of Israel cannot rise from the dust so long as the sinners from among Israel exist in the world. (Pikudei 240a)

658. Though all nations rose against them, G-d did not leave them in their hands. If they did fall, they were to rise again. So at the Future Time when the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise her from the dust of the exile, the Community of Israel will say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, though I am fallen, I shall arise." (Pikudei 241b)

659. If one invites another to eat, it is while the food is spread before him, not after he has eaten¹⁰³. (Leviticus 2b)

660. A man who is not married is defective. (Leviticus 5b)

661. There is not a word in the Torah which Moses spoke on his own authority. (Leviticus 7a)

662. R. Judah said: "*Serve the Lord with gladness*" [Psalms 100:2]. We have learned that all service of G-d must be performed with gladness and zest, otherwise it is not perfect. Now, how is this possible in the case of the offering which is brought as a sign of man's repentance for transgressing the precepts of the Torah? With what face can such one stand before G-d? Surely only with a contrite spirit and sorrowful heart. Where, then, is the joy and shouting?

The truth is, however, that this was provided by the Kohanim and Levites. Rejoicing was carried out by the Kohen because he is far from chastisement and must ever show a more joyful countenance than the rest of the people. The singing, again, was carried out by the Levites, whose function it was. So the Kohen stood by him and found suitable words to unify in joy the Holy Name, while the Levites broke out in song. (Leviticus 8a/b)

663. Before praying, one should fix his mind on the Holy of Holies, which is the Holy Name. (Leviticus 8b)

664. R. Jose said: G-d does not demand of a man more than he can perform. (Leviticus 8b)

665. The study of Torah does not require luxuries or merchandise, but only labor, day and night. (Leviticus 9a)

666. Offerings are brought on the baking- or frying-pan and heated in the same way as he heated his flesh and blood with his evil passions and set all his limbs on fire. The essence of the offering is that it is analogous to the sin. One should offer to G-d his desires and

¹⁰² I do not know to what is referred to here.

¹⁰³ See Ahavas Chesed of the Chofetz Chaim "Hachnosas Orchim", Chapter 2.

passions, for this is more acceptable than all. Blessed are the righteous that they bring this offering every day. (Leviticus 9b)

667. In the Book of Rav Hamnuna the Elder it is explained that all the inhabited world is circular like a ball, so that some are above and some below. The strange appearances of certain races are due to the nature of the air, but they live as long as other men. Further, there is a part of the world where it is light when another part is dark, so that some have night while others have day. There is a place where it is always day and where there is no night save for a very short time. This explanation is found in the books of the ancients and in the Book of Adam¹⁰⁴ and confirmed in Scriptures. (Leviticus 10a)

668. R. Nehorai the Elder once went on a sea voyage. The ship was wrecked in a storm and all in it were drowned. He, however, by some miracle, went down to the bottom of the sea and found there an inhabited land where he saw strange human beings of diminutive size. They were reciting prayers, but he could not tell what they said. By another miracle, he then came up again. He said, "Blessed are the righteous who study Torah and know the most profound mysteries. Woe to those who argue with them and do not accept their word." From that day, whenever he came into the house of study and heard the Torah being expounded, he would weep. When they asked him why he wept, he would say, "Because I was skeptical about the words of the Rabbis, and now I fear me for the judgment of the Other World." (Leviticus 10a)

669. R. Jose said: How greatly should men take heed not to sin before their Master, for every day a herald goes forth proclaiming, "Turn your hearts to the Holy King. Be on guard against sin. Arouse the Holy Soul which He has given you from the Celestial Holy Place." (Leviticus 13a)

670. R. Eleazar said: One should review his actions and rectify them before his Master and confess his sins because G-d is called merciful and gracious, and He receives those who return to Him. (Leviticus 13b)

671. R. Jose said: It is written, "*For this is as the waters of Noah unto me*" [Isaiah 54:9]. Why have we here the expression "waters of Noah" and not "waters of the flood"? The reason is that when mankind is sinful and there is a righteous man in the world, G-d speaks with him in order that he may pray for mankind and obtain forgiveness for them. G-d first promises to save him alone and destroy the rest.

Now the proper thing for a righteous man to do at such a time is to forget himself and espouse the cause of the whole world in order to appease G-d's wrath against them, as Moses did when Israel sinned. When G-d, however, said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before Me", Noah replied, "And what will You do with me?" to which G-d replied, "I will establish My covenant with you, make an ark of gopher wood". Thus, Noah did not pray for the world and the waters came down and destroyed mankind. Therefore they are called "*the waters of Noah*". (Leviticus 14b-15a)

672. It is the one of the signs of a saintly and virtuous man that the rainbow does not appear in his days and the world does not require this sign while he is alive. Such a one is he who prays for the world and shields it, like Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, in whose days the world never required the sign of the rainbow, for he was himself a sign. For if ever punishment was decreed against the world, he could annul it! (Leviticus 15a)

673. Said R. Eleazar: A punishing decree is kept in suspense for thirty days and G-d does not carry it out before making it known to the righteous, as it is written, "*For the Lord G-d will do nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants, the prophets*" [Amos 3:7]. (Leviticus 15a)

¹⁰⁴ Another mysterious book frequently mentioned in the Zohar. This account is found in the other editions of the Zohar in Bereshis on the verse *And G-d said there shall be a firmament in the waters*. There the Zohar concludes with the following. "The world exists only due to peace. G-d is called Peace (שלום), He is Peace, His Name is Peace, and all is connected by Peace."

674. In the Book of Rav Hamnuna the Elder we find: Prayer and the sound of the שופר which are produced by a virtuous man with his heart and soul, mount Above, and the Accusers Above are thrust away before it and cannot face it. Happy are the righteous who know how to be truly devout before their Master and establish the world on this day with the sound of the שופר. Hence it is written, “*Blessed is the people who know the sound of the שופר*” [Psalms 89:15].

On this day, the congregation must look for a man without blame who knows the ways of the King and how to honor Him, that he may pray for them and transmit the sound of the שופר to all worlds with concentration of thought, with wisdom and with devotion, that through him chastisement may be removed from the world.

Alas, for those whose minister is not fitting, for through him their sins will be called to mind. But, if he is truly virtuous, then the people are justified through him, and punishment is removed from them through him.

Said R. Eleazar: For this reason, the Kohen and the Levite were examined as to their character and, if they were not found satisfactory, they were not allowed to minister. And so, too, with the members of the Sanhedrin before they were allowed to judge. (Leviticus 18b)

675. The hot fiery spirit named Lilith is still in the cities of the seacoast trying to snare mankind. (Leviticus 19a)

676. The remedy is this. When a man unites with his wife, he should sanctify his heart to his Master and say, “She that is wrapped in a robe is here. You shall not enter nor take out. It is neither of you nor of your lot. Return, return. The sea is heaving. Its waves await you. I cleave to the Holy Portion. I am wrapped in the holiness of the King.” He should then cover his head and the head of his wife for a short time.

In the book which Ashmedai gave to King Solomon it says that he should then sprinkle clean water around the bed. If a woman is suckling a child, she should not join her husband while the child is awake, nor give suck afterwards until time enough has elapsed for walking two miles, or one mile if the child cries for milk.

If all this is done, Lilith will never be able to harm them¹⁰⁵. (Leviticus 19a)

677. Woe to the man at whose table the wife says grace. So when we read that “*Deborah judged Israel at that time*”, we might exclaim, “Woe to the generation which could only find a female to be its Judge!”

See now. There were two women in the world who composed praises to G-d such as the men never equaled, namely, Hannah and Deborah. Hannah opened the gate of faith to the world in the words, “*He raises up the poor from the dust, etc.*” [I Samuel 2:8]. “To make them sit with princes”, to wit, in the place where the princes, that is the Patriarchs, sit Above. According to another explanation, however, this refers to Samuel who was placed on par with Moses and Aaron.

“*And make them inherit a throne of glory*”. This refers to Samuel who placed two kings on the throne. Or it may refer to G-d, Who causes His servants to inherit His throne. (Leviticus 19b)

678. Deborah likewise praised the Holy King as it is written: “*Lord, when You went forth out of Seir, when You marched out of the field of Edom*” [Judges 5:4]—speaking in the mystery of wisdom until she began to praise herself, saying, “Until that I, Deborah, arose that I arose, a mother in Israel.” Then the spirit of prophecy left her so that she had to say to herself, “*Awake, awake Deborah. Awake, awake, utter a song*” [ibid. 12]. All this happened

¹⁰⁵ See SO OC 241:16, Hilchos Tznius and the Be'er Heitev there.

when the men were sinful and not worthy that the spirit of prophecy should rest upon them. (Leviticus 19b)

679. R. Hiya explained the verse, “*I confess my sin unto G-d, etc.*” [Psalms 32:5]. From this we learn that one who conceals his sins and does not confess them before the Holy King and beg for mercy is not allowed to enter the door of Repentance. But if he states them openly before G-d, then G-d has pity on him and Mercy prevails over Judgment. All the more so if he weeps, for tears open all doors. Thus, the confession of sin brings honor to the King by making Mercy prevail over Judgment. (Leviticus 20a)

680. Said R. Jose: Israel was not exiled from their Land nor was the Temple destroyed until they were all sinful before the King, the heads of the people being foremost in sin, as it says, “*O, my people, your leaders mislead you, and corrupt the directions of your ways*” [Isaiah 3:12]. For when the heads of the people sin, all the rest follow them.

R. Hiya learned the same lesson from the verse, “*And if the whole congregation of Israel shall err*”. Why do they err? Because the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly. The eyes being the leaders whom all the rest follow. (Leviticus 20b)

681. When G-d performs a miracle, He does it completely. (Leviticus 21a)

682. R. Hiya and R. Jose said: Torah is not an inheritance for one place only¹⁰⁶. (Leviticus 21a)

683. R. Isaac pointed out: It is exceptional for the Kohen Godol to sin, since he feels his responsibility to his Master and to Israel and to each individual. Similarly, it is very exceptional for the whole congregation to commit one and the same sin. For if some commit it, others will not. (Leviticus 23a)

684. It is through pride that one sins and forgets his sin. (Leviticus 23b)

685. When one inclines to sin before his Master, he burns himself in the flame of the evil imagination, which comes from the Side of the unclean spirit, so that the unclean spirit rests upon him. (Tzav 27a/b)

686. Said R. Hezikiah: How solicitous should men be for the honor of their Master, and how careful not to turn aside from the right way. For every day punishment impends over the world and man never knows when it may fall. If he sits in his house, judgment looms over him. If he goes abroad, judgment looms over him, and he does not know if he will return or not. Therefore, he should in time beseech for mercy from the King, for every day judgment impends over the world as it is written, “*G-d has indignation every day*” [Psalms 7:12]. (Tzav 30b)

687. The death of the sons of Aaron was deserved for many reasons. One was that they offered Incense at the wrong time, at a time when oil and Incense were not together (i.e. not when the lamp was lit)¹⁰⁷. Another was that they thrust themselves forward in the place of their father. A third was that they were not married, for such are not suitable to bring blessings in the world. And a fourth was that they were intoxicated with wine. (Tzav 33b)

688. When R. Hezikiah was once studying with R. Eleazar, he asked him: How many lights were created before the world was created? He answered: Seven, namely, the light of Torah, the light of גהינום, the light of the Garden of Eden, the light of the Throne of Glory, the light of the Temple, the light of repentance, and the light of the Messiah. (Tzav 34b)

689. He who studies Torah needs neither peace-offerings nor burnt-offerings, since the Torah is superior to all and the Bond of Faith. (Tzav 35a)

¹⁰⁶ I believe the implication here is that one should not keep Torah wisdom and knowledge to himself but must share it with others.

¹⁰⁷ Exodus 30:70

690. When the Sabbath departs and the additional soul takes leave, the soul and the spirit are separated and sad until the smell comes and unites them and makes them glad. (Tzav 35b)

691. Said R. Jose: A woman, from the time she becomes pregnant until she delivers, can talk of nothing but the child she is to bear, whether it is to be a boy or a girl. (Ki Tazriah 42b)

692. All spirits are compounded of male and female. When they go forth into the world, they go forth as both male and female and, afterwards, the two elements separate. If one is worthy, they will reunite. It is then that he meets his true mate, and there is perfect union both in spirit and flesh. But, if he is not worthy, she is given to another and they bear children whom they should not. R. Eleazar said: This is not so. All at first comprise both male and female and they are separated afterwards. But if the woman bears a male, they are then united from the Side of the Right. If she bears a female, they are united from the Side of the Left, this Side being predominant. Hence, if the male child issues from the Side of the Left, he is effeminate, but if from the Side of the Right, he has mastery over the female. (Ki Tazriah 43b)

693. R. Judah cited the verse, *“There is none so holy as the Lord, for there is none beside You, neither is there any rock (צור) like our G-d”* [I Samuel 2:2]. Are there then any other holy ones or other rocks besides the Lord? Yes, there are holy ones Above, as it is written, *“The demand is by the word of the holy ones”* [Daniel 4:14]. Israel is holy Below, but none are holy like the Lord, because *“there is none beside You”*. That is, G-d’s holiness is not like their holiness for He does not require their holiness, but they could not be holy without Him. Also, *“there is no rock (צור) like our G-d”* or, as we may translate it, *“no fashioner (יוצר) like our G-d”*, as explained elsewhere. For the Holy One, blessed be He, shapes a form within a form, and finishes it and breathes into it the breath of life and brings it out into the open. (Ki Tazriah 44a)

694. Said R. Hiya: He who reproves his neighbor in love should not let other men hear in order that he may not be ashamed. If he reproves him publicly, he does not show true friendship. So G-d in reproving a man acts with him lovingly. At first, He smites him inwardly. If he repents, well and good. But if not, he smites him under his garments, and this is called *“chastisement of love”*. If he still does not repent, G-d smites him on his face where all can see, so that they may know that he is a sinner and not beloved by his Master. (Ki Tazriah 46a)

695. Just as one is punished for uttering an evil word, so he is punished for not uttering a good word when he had the opportunity. (Ki Tazriah 46b)

696. It is incumbent upon a man when he learns wisdom to also learn a little folly since there is a certain benefit to wisdom from it, as there is to light from darkness. It is written, *“More precious than wisdom and than honor is a little folly”* [Eccl. 10:1]. R. Jose said: This means that a little folly reveals and displays the honor of wisdom and the glory of Heaven more than anything else. So the benefit of light is only felt from its contrast with darkness. Similarly, white is only known and valued from its contrast with black. R. Isaac said: It is the same with sweet and bitter. One does not know what sweet is until he tastes bitter. (Ki Tazriah 47b)

697. Man in Scripture has four names: אִישׁ, אָנוּשׁ, גִּבּוֹר, אָדָם. The highest of them is אָדָם which indicates wholeness and completeness¹⁰⁸. (Ki Tazriah 48a)

698. Everything in the world was only made for the sake of man and all things were kept back until he that was called אָדָם should appear, since his form was after the Divine prototype and when he was created all was complete.

¹⁰⁸ No explanation is forthcoming regarding the other terms.

Marital intercourse between human beings should be at fixed times that they may concentrate their thoughts on cleaving to the Holy One, blessed be He. As has been pointed out, G-d enters the Garden of Eden at midnight to have communion with the righteous, and it is then when the Community of Israel praises the Holy One, blessed be He. That is a propitious time to cleave to Him. But as for the Companions who study Torah, the time for their intercourse is at the time of another intercourse, from שבת to שבת for that is the time when all Above and Below are blessed¹⁰⁹. (Ki Tazriah 49b)

699. When one begins to set up a building, he should declare that he is building it for the service of G-d. Then the support of Heaven is with him, and G-d assigns holiness to him and bids peace be with him. Otherwise, he invites into his house the Other Side—all the more so if his inclination is to the Other Side. For then, indeed, an unclean spirit will rest on the house and that man will not leave this world until he has been punished in that house, and whoever dwells in it may come to hurt. If, it is asked, how is one to know such a house? It is one in which the man who built it has come to harm, he or his family, whether through sickness or loss of money, he and two others after him. Better one should fly to the mountains or live a mud hut than dwell there.¹¹⁰ (Ki Tazriah 50a)

700. Said R. Judah: We have learned that for healing sickness, anything may be used save the wood of an Asheirah¹¹¹. (Ki Tazriah 51b)

701. R. Eleazar said: A man obtains money through the merit of his wife, as it is written, “*A house and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife comes from the Lord.*” [Proverbs 19:14]. (Ki Tazriah 52a)

702. מצורע (leper) is derived from מוצאי שם רע (slanderer)¹¹². (Ki Tazriah 52a)

703. The prayer of an evil speaker does not ascend to the Almighty (until he repents). (Metzora 53a).

704. There is nothing so hard in the world as the separation of the soul from the body when they have to part. Similar is the love of the Community of Israel for the Holy One, blessed be He. (Metzora 54b)

705. If one wants to defile himself, Heaven helps to defile him¹¹³. Woe to a man when an unclean spirit is found in him all his life, for this indeed shows that G-d desires to clear him out of the world (to come)¹¹⁴. (Metzora 55b)

706. R. Isaac remarked: One verse says, “*Serve the Lord with awe, and rejoice with trembling*” [Psalms 2:11] and another verse says, “*Serve the Lord with gladness, come before Him with rejoicing*” [Psalms 100:2]. The apparent contradiction is explained as follows. When one comes to serve his Master, he should do so first in awe, and through that awe he will, afterwards, perform the precepts of the Torah in joy. It says, “rejoice in trembling”, because it is forbidden for one to overly rejoice in this world. But in the words and the precepts of the Torah, it is quite right that he should rejoice. (Acharei Mos 56a).

707. “*A song, a psalm of the sons of Korach*”. This Psalm is recited in the morning prayers on the second day of the week. (Acharei Mos 56b)

708. Whenever the righteous are removed from the world, punishment is removed from the world and the death of the righteous atones for the sins of the generation. Therefore, we

¹⁰⁹ Kesuvos 62b.

¹¹⁰ I am unaware of any Halakhah which reflects this passage

¹¹¹ Or anything else associated with idolatry or sorcery. See Deuteronomy 16:21.

¹¹² cf. Erchin 16a, Shabbos 97a.

¹¹³ Yoma 38b.

¹¹⁴ This parenthetical remark is in the Soncino translation.

read the section dealing with the death of the sons of Aaron on the Day of Atonement that it may atone for the sins of Israel. G-d says, "Recount the death of these righteous ones and it will be accounted for you as if you brought an offering on that day to atone for yourselves." For we have learned that as long as Israel is in captivity and cannot bring offerings on that day, the mention of the two sons of Aaron shall be their atonement. For so we have learned that Abihu was equal to his two brothers, Eleazar and Ithamar; and Nadab to all together. Nadab and Abihu were reckoned as equal to the seventy elders who were associated with Moses and, therefore, their deaths were an atonement for Israel. (Acharei Mos 56b)

709. R. Isaac said: He who has no children is counted as dead¹¹⁵. (Achrei Mos 57a)

710. R. Abba said: There are times when G-d is favorably inclined and ready to dispense blessing to those who pray to Him, and times when He is not propitious and judgment is let loose on the world, and times when judgment is held in suspense. There are seasons in the year when Grace is in the ascendant, and seasons when Judgment is in the ascendant, but held in suspense. Similarly with the months and similarly with the days of the week, and even with the parts of each day and each hour. Therefore, it is written, "*There is a time for every purpose*" [Eccl. 3:1] and again, "*My prayer is unto You, O Lord, in an acceptable time*" [Psalms 69:14]. Hence, it says here, "*Let him not come at every time to the Sanctuary.*" (Acharei Mos 58a/b)

711. "*And shall send him away by the hand of a man who is in readiness*". The words "in readiness" contain a hint that for every kind of action there are men especially suited. There are some men especially suited for the transmission of blessings as, for instance, a man of "good eye". There are others, again, who are especially suited for the transmission of curses, and curses light wherever they cast their eyes. Such was Balaam, who was the fitting instrument of evil and not of good. Even when he blessed, his blessing was not confirmed, but all his curses were confirmed, because he had an evil eye. Hence we have learned that a man should turn aside a hundred times in order to avoid a man with an evil eye. So here, "a man who is in readiness" means a man who is marked out by nature for this service.

The Kohen was able to tell such a man because he had one eye slightly larger than the other, shaggy eyebrows, bluish eyes and a crooked glance. This was the kind of man suited for such a task.

In Gush Halba (in the Galilee) there was a man whose hands brought death to whatever they touched, and none would come near him. In Syria there was a man whose look always brought ill hap, even though he meant it for good. One day a man was walking in the street with a beaming countenance when this man looked at him and his eye was knocked out.

Thus, different men are suited either for one thing or the other. Hence it is written, "*He who has a good eye shall be blessed*" [Proverbs 22:9] or, as we should rather read by a change in the voweling, (*Yebarech* for *Yeborach*) "shall bless". (Acharei Mos 63a/b)

712. R. Shimon said: King Solomon composed three books corresponding to three Supernal Attributes—שיר השירים to Wisdom, קהלת to Understanding, and משלי to Knowledge. Why does משלי correspond to Knowledge? Because all its verses are in parallel form, one half balancing the other, and when we examine them we find that they can be placed in either order. (Acharei Mos 64a)

713. R. Isaac said: When Israel is in captivity, G-d, if we may say so, is with them in captivity, for the שכינה never leaves them¹¹⁶. She was with them in Babylon and returned with

¹¹⁵ Nedorim 64b.

¹¹⁶ This point is frequently repeated in the Zohar.

them from the captivity. For the sake of those righteous who were left in the land¹¹⁷ She abode in the land, as She never left them. (Acharei Mos 66a/b)

714. “*From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord*”. It has been taught that from the beginning of the seventh month, the books are opened and the judges sit in judgment until the day which is called “*the ninth of the month*” [Leviticus 23:32] when all judgments are submitted to the Supreme Judge and a Throne of Mercy is set for the Holy King. Then it is suitable for Israel Below to rejoice before their Master because, on the next day, He intends to try them from the Holy Throne of Mercy, of Forgiveness, and to purify them from all the sins recorded in the books which are open before Him. Hence it is written, “*from all your sins before the Lord.*” (Acharei Mos 67a)

715. One should eat and drink and feast on the ninth day so as to make the affliction double on the tenth. (Acharei Mos 68b)

716. R. Judah cited the verse, “*A song of ascents. From the depths I have called unto You, O Lord*” [Psalms 130]. We have learned that when G-d was about to create man, He consulted the Torah and she warned Him that he would sin before Him and provoke Him. Therefore, before creating the world, G-d created Repentance, saying to her, “I am about to create man, on condition that when they return to you from their sins, you shall be prepared to forgive their sins and make atonement for them.”. Hence, at all times, Repentance is close at hand to men and when they all repent of their sins, she returns to G-d and makes atonement for all. Judgment is suppressed, and all is put right.

When is man purified of his sins? R. Isaac said: When he returns to the Most High King and prays from the depths of his heart, as it is written, “*From the depths I cried to You*”.

R. Abba said: There is a hidden place Above which is “the depth of the well” from where issue streams and sources in all directions. This profound depth is called Repentance, and he who desires to repent and to be purified of his sin should call upon G-d from this depth. We have learned that when a man repented before his Master and brought his offering on the altar and the Kohen made atonement for him and prayed for him, Mercy was aroused and Judgment mitigated and Repentance poured blessing on the issuing streams. All the lamps were blessed together and the man was purified from his sin. (Acharei Mos 69b-70a)

717. The Egyptians were more skilled in sorcery than all other men. (Acharei Mos 70a)

718. R. Isaac said in the name of R. Judah: Souls of the wicked are the demons of the world. (Acharei Mos 70a)

719. R. Jose said: Men should not go to the graveyard without repentance and fasting¹¹⁸. (Acharei Mos 71a)

720. When other peoples visit their dead, they do so with divinations to summon demons to them. But Israel goes with repentance before the Lord, with a contrite heart and with fasting in order that the holy souls may beseech mercy for them¹¹⁹. (Acharei Mos 71b)

721. R. Abba said: All who are not stamped with the holy sign on their flesh are not His. They are marked as coming from the Side of Impurity and it is forbidden to associate with them or converse with them on matters of the Holy One, blessed be He. It is also forbidden

¹¹⁷ It is unclear if the reference here is to the foreign country or the Land of Israel.

¹¹⁸ Interestingly Gesher Hachaim, Part 1, Chapter 29 notes that some people do not eat before visiting the cemetery but was, surprisingly, unaware of a source for this custom. Here it is.

¹¹⁹ This is a troublesome passage (and is repeated elsewhere in the Zohar) for it implies that one may pray to the dead requesting them to plead before G-d on our behalf. This concept is debated among the Rishonim. Some argue that one may only pray to G-d alone although, if one wishes, he may ask that his prayers be answered in the merit of the deceased and righteous. Although the Gemara accepts the fact that the dead do in fact listen to us and are aware of our doings, nowhere is permission given to us to pray directly to any intermediary whatsoever, be it the deceased, an angel, G-d's thirteen attributes, etc. For this reason, several of the Piyutim recited in the Elul and Tishrei Selichos were considered to be theologically problematic and were objected to. Others have no problem with the idea of beseeching the spirits (souls) of the dead to advocate our cause.

to impart to them knowledge of Torah¹²⁰, because the Torah consists wholly of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, and every letter of it is bound up with that Name¹²¹. (Acharei Mos 72b-73a)

722. R. Eleazar's father¹²² said: G-d has given this holy celestial portion to Israel and not to the nations. And Israel themselves are in two Grades, corresponding to the two Grades of Torah, the disclosed and the undisclosed. To all who have been circumcised and stamped with the holy impress, we impart those things in the Torah which are on the surface, the letters and the plain contents and the precepts, and no more. This is indicated in the words, "He tells his words to Jacob". But if the Israelite rises to a higher Grade, then "His statutes and his judgments to Israel". These are the allegories of the Torah and hidden paths of the Torah and the secrets of the Torah which should only be revealed to those of a higher degree. But to impart even a little letter to one who is not circumcised is like destroying the world and repudiating the Holy Name of the Holy One, blessed be He. (Acharei Mos 73a)

723. Even though one is circumcised, if he does not carry out the precepts of the Torah he is like a heathen in all respects and it is forbidden to teach him the precepts of the Torah¹²³. He is called "an altar of stones" because of the hardness of his heart and, therefore, his circumcision does not help him at all. (Acharei Mos 73b)

724. For three things Israel is kept in captivity: Because they pay scant respect to the שכינה in their exile; because they turn their faces away from the שכינה; and because they defile themselves in the presence of the שכינה. (Acharei Mos 75b)

725. King Solomon found a thousand and four hundred and five manners of defilement in the Book of Asmodai which can affect mankind¹²⁴. (Acharei Mos 77a)

726. Bathsheba was destined for David from the Creation. (Acharei Mos 78b)

727. When a woman comes to purify herself, she must cut off the hair¹²⁵ which grew in the days of her impurity, and cut her nails with all the filth that clings to them. (Acharei Mos 79a)

728. He who does not study Torah has no Faith and is wholly blemished. If a man does not study Torah, it is forbidden to go near him, to associate with him, to do business with him, all the more so to walk in the road with him¹²⁶. If a man walks abroad and no words of Torah accompany him, his life is forfeit. Still more one who goes with a man who has no faith and heeds neither the honor of his Master nor his own, and disregards his soul. (Kedoshim 80a)

729. It is forbidden for a man to gaze at the beauty of a woman lest evil thoughts should be provoked in him and he should be incited to something worse¹²⁷. (Kedoshim 83b/84a)

730. R. Abba said: It is forbidden for a man to fix his gaze upon heathen idols and upon Gentile women or to receive benefit or healing from them. (Kedoshim 84a)

731. It is forbidden to gaze upon a place which G-d loathes, and even on one which G-d loves. For instance, it is forbidden to gaze upon the rainbow¹²⁸ because it is the mirror of the

¹²⁰ There is a prohibition against teaching Torah to a non-Jew.

¹²¹ This is a frequently repeated and key concept of the Zohar.

¹²² Presumably this is R. Shimon.

¹²³ See SO YD Hilchos Talmud Torah 246:7.

¹²⁴ No listing is forthcoming.

¹²⁵ I do not believe that this is the Halakhah whether this statement refers to the hair on her head or her pubic hair. Maybe it means that if she has entangled hair, it must be combed or cut off.

¹²⁶ I am unaware of any such Halakhah for any of these items.

¹²⁷ Berochos 24a *et passim*.

supernal form. It is forbidden for a man to gaze upon the sign of the covenant upon him because this is emblematic of the Righteous One of the world. It is forbidden to gaze upon the fingers of the Kohanim when they spread out their hands to bless the congregation because the glory of the most high King rests there. If one must not gaze at a holy place, how much less may he at an unclean and loathsome one! Therefore, “turn not to the idols”. R. Isaac said: If it is forbidden to look at them, how much more to worship them! (Kedoshim 84a/b)

732. If one restores the soul of a poor man, even if his time has arrived to depart from this world, G-d restores his soul and gives him a further lease on life. To withhold the wage of a poor man is like taking his life and the life of his household. As he diminishes their souls, so G-d diminishes his days and cuts off his soul from the other World. (Kedoshim 84b/85a)

733. If one curses his neighbor in his presence, it is as if he spills his blood. (Kedoshim 85a)

734. The words “*You shall not put a stumbling block before the blind*” we interpret as referring to one who leads another into sin¹²⁹ and also of one who strikes his grown-up son. Or again, of one who not being competent gives decisions on points of Jewish Law, because he causes his fellow-man to come to grief in the future World. (Kedoshim 85a)

735. It behooves a man to learn Torah even from one who is not qualified in order that thus his interest may be aroused and he may eventually learn from one who is qualified and walk in the straight path of the Torah. (Kedoshim 85b)

736. When G-d created the world, He assigned all things to their respective Sides and appointed over them celestial powers so that there is not even a tiny herb without such a supervisor¹³⁰. Whatever they do is done through the power of that Heavenly control. All are rigidly assigned and none leaves its appointed sphere. All are guided by another superior regulation which gives to each its portion which comes from the Heavens. All together are called “the statutes of the Heavens”.

Hence it is written, “*Your shall keep my statutes*” because each power is appointed over a certain sphere in the world in virtue of a certain statute. Therefore, it is forbidden to confound species and mate them one with another, because this dislodges the Heavenly power from its place and is a defiance of the celestial household.

The word כְּלָאִים (diverse kinds) may be connected to כְּלֵא (prison) and it also bears the meaning of preventing, indicating that one who does this prevents the celestial powers from carrying out their function and throws them into confusion. (Kedoshim 86a/b)

737. When one does things Below in the right way, he draws upon himself a celestial holy spirit. But if he does things in a crooked way, he draws upon himself another spirit which leads him astray to an Evil Side. (Kedoshim 86b)

738. The female only produces issue from the energy of the male. (Kedoshim 87a)

739. The progeny of a woman does not reach completeness until her third delivery. Therefore, Levi was chosen from all the sons of Jacob being the third to his mother. (Kedoshim 87a)

740. “*You shall rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of an old man.*” One should rise before a man of learning because he exhibits the holy supernal image and is emblematic of the supernal Kohen. Further, we may derive from this verse the lesson that we should rise up to do good deeds before old age comes upon us. For there is not much credit

¹²⁸ Hagigah 16a.

¹²⁹ Moed Koton 17a.

¹³⁰ Genesis Rabbah 10

to a man in doing this when he is old and cannot do evil any more, but it is an honor for him if he is good while still in his prime. (Kedoshim 87b)

741. Aaron is the starting point of the priesthood because G-d chose him to make peace in the world, his conduct having entitled him to this distinction, since all his days he strove to promote peace in the world. (Emor 88a)

742. After the soul has left the body and the body remains without breath, it is forbidden to keep it unburied¹³¹. For a dead body which is left unburied for twenty-four hours causes a weakness in the limbs of the Chariot and prevents G-d's design from being fulfilled. For perhaps G-d decreed that he should undergo a transmigration at once on the day that he died, which would be better for him, but as long as the body is not buried, the soul cannot go into the presence of the Holy One nor be transferred into another body. For a soul cannot enter a second body until the first is buried, just as it is not fitting for a man to take a second wife before the first has been buried¹³². (Emor 88b)

743. So long as the body remains unburied, the soul suffers pain and an unclean spirit rests upon the body. Therefore, the body should not be kept overnight because by night the unclean spirit spreads over the earth, seeking a body without a soul to defile it further. (Emor 88b)

744. Whoever discharges his semen without purpose will never be allowed to behold the Divine Presence¹³³ and such a one is called wicked. This is not the case, however, if a man's wife does not conceive. Still, a man should pray that G-d should provide him a fitting vessel so that his seed should not be spoiled. For he who discharges his seed into a vessel that is not fitting spoils his seed. (Emor 90a)

745. Because G-d is served by the hand of the Kohen, who is holy, the Kohen is served by one who is sanctified by his purity, to wit, the Levite. The ordinary man, too, is served (have water poured over his hands) by one who has already sanctified himself. As thus, Israel is set apart in holiness to serve the Holy One, blessed be He. (Emor 90b)

746. If one humbles himself, G-d raises him. (Emor 91a)

747. When the dead will rise from the dust, they will leave it as they entered. If they went into it lame or blind, they shall rise from it lame or blind in order that it should not be said that it is another who is risen. Afterwards, however, G-d will heal them and they will be before Him, and the world will be whole¹³⁴. (Emor 91a)

748. The שופר rouses itself and men to repent of their sins. It behooves them to blow the שופר Below and the sound thereof ascends on High and awakens another supernal שופר and so Mercy is awakened and Judgment removed. We must produce from this שופר Below various sounds to arouse all the voices that are contained in the supernal שופר and, therefore, we not only use the שופר on this day, but arrange the blasts in a number of series.

With the first blast, the voice goes forth and makes its way upward to the firmaments, breaking through lofty mountains. A second mighty blast breaks down Wrath, being itself of broken notes, and all chastisement that stand in its way are broken. On this he who blows the שופר should concentrate his mind, so as to break the strength of stern judgment. With the third blast, the voice issues and ascends and cleaves to the firmaments. These three blasts form one series. (Emor 99b)

¹³¹ Moed Koton 28a

¹³² Although a man can technically marry immediately upon his wife's death, a woman must wait a minimum of 90 days after her husband's death in order to clearly establish the identity of the father in case she is pregnant.

¹³³ Niddah 13a

¹³⁴ cf. Sanhedrin 91a

749. R. Eleazar said: The Torah does not demand of a man more than he can perform, as it says, “*Each man shall give as he is able*” [Deut. 16:17]. One should not say, I shall first satisfy myself with food and drink, and what is left I shall give to the poor. But, the first of everything must be for the guests. And if he gladdens the guests and satisfies them, G-d rejoices with him and Abraham proclaims over him, “*Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord, etc.*” [Isaiah 58:14]. Isaac proclaims, “*No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper*” [ibid. 54:17]. (Emor 104a)

750. R. Hiya quoted the verse, “*It is the honor of G-d to conceal a matter*” [Proverbs 25:2]. This means that it is not permitted for a man to disclose mysteries which are not meant to be disclosed. (Emor 105b)

751. R. Shimon said: It is written, “*G-d saw all that he made, and behold it was very good*” [Genesis 1:31]. Even serpents and scorpions and fleas and all things that appear to be pests, all these are for the service of the world, though men know it not. (Emor 107a)

752. As the Sabbath is rest for all, so the Sabbatical year is rest for all, for the spirit and the body. (Behar 108a)

753. Just as an ox is put under a yoke in order that it may be of use, and otherwise it never does any work, so one must first accept the yoke and then perform religious service, and without it he will not be able to serve G-d. This yoke will not rest upon one who is subject to another and, therefore, slaves are exempt from the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven. And if they are exempt from this yoke, they are exempt from all the rest of the religion. (Behar 108a)

754. Balak was a greater master of the magic arts than Balaam. For just as the celestial holiness can be aroused both by act and by word on our part, so can they that come from the Side of Impurity. Balaam was the greatest of sorcerers, but Balak was still greater. Balaam was greater in divination, but Balak in sorcery. For sorcery depends on actions, but divination on utterances and observations. Not so holy Israel whose whole endeavor is to draw upon themselves the spirit of holiness, wherefore it is written, “*For there is no divination against (or: in) Jacob nor enchantment against (or: in) Israel*” [Numbers 23:23]. (Bechukosai 112b)

755. The poor man has nothing of his own save what is given him, and the moon has no light save what is given her by the sun. (Bechukosai 113b)

756. צדקה (righteousness) is not established without חסד (charity). (Bechukosai 113b)

757. If the head of the people is good, they are all delivered for his sake. If the head is not good, the whole people is made to suffer for his sake. (Bechukosai 114a)

758. One who is hated of another is abhorred and rejected of him, but G-d will not reject Israel because the beloved of His soul is among them, and for her sake all of them are beloved of Him. If a man loves a woman who lives in a street of tanners, if she were not there he would never go into it, but because she is there it seems to him like a street of spice-makers where all the sweet scents of the world are to be found. So “even when they are in the land of their enemies”, which is the street of the tanners, “I will not abhor or reject them”, because of the bride in their midst, the beloved of my soul who abides there. (Bechukosai 115b)

759. Said R. Jose: It is written, “*A son honors his father*” [Malachi 1:6]. We have learned that when the father is alive it is the son’s duty to honor him with food and drink. Is he free from the obligation of honoring him after death? No so, since it is written, “*Honor your father*” [Exodus 20:12]. If the son walks in the crooked path, of a surety he brings dishonor and shame on his father. But if he walks in the straight path and his deeds are upright, then he confers honor on him both in this world among men and in the Next World with G-d, who gives him a special throne of honor. An example is R. Eleazar, who honored his father in the Next World after his death as the progenitor of holy sons and a holy stock. (Bechukosai 115b)

760. The world was not completed until Israel received the Torah on Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle was set up. (Numbers 117a)

761. When Israel is not in the Holy Land, one is forbidden to display joy or gladness, as Scripture says, “*Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad in her*” to wit, only when within her. R. Abba said: This teaches us that only when Jerusalem is in joy is it permissible for us to rejoice. (Numbers 118a)

762. Whoever places his bed between north and south will have male children born to him¹³⁵. (Numbers 118b)

763. Whoever recites the Psalm *Praise of David* [Psalms 145] thrice daily may be assured that he is destined for the World to Come¹³⁶. In the morning, a man takes upon himself the yoke of Heaven by reciting this Psalm followed by the ten Hallelujahs and ending with Hallelujah with the very last of them containing ten times the expression “praise you” [ibid. 15]. Then follows the Song of Moses which contains all praises and whereby a man takes upon himself the yoke of the Holy Kingdom. This same Psalm (145) is repeated at Mincha. (Numbers 119b-120a)

764. Verses from Psalm 25 (1-22) have been prescribed as the Tachanun prayer¹³⁷. (Numbers 120b)

765. There are sins which are beyond forgiveness until one departs this world, of which Scripture says, “*Surely this iniquity shall not be atoned for you until you die*” [Isaiah 22:14]. (Numbers 121a)

766. R. Hezekiah said: Cursed be the man who allows his wife to let the hair of her head be seen. This is one of the rules of modesty in the house. A woman who exposes her hair for self-adornment brings poverty on her household, renders her children of no account in their generation, and causes an evil spirit to abide on her house. If this is so when the woman does this in the house, how much more is it when in the open road, and even so much more so does all this result from another kind of shamelessness.

Said R. Judah: The hair of the head of a woman being exposed leads to hair of another kind being exposed and impaired. Hence a woman should not let her hair be seen, even by the beams of her house, much less in the open. Observe, that as the rule is most strict in the case of a man’s hair¹³⁸ so it is with a woman’s.

Consider the harm a woman’s hair brings about. It brings a curse on her husband, it causes poverty, and it causes inferiority of her children. May the Merciful One deliver us from their impudence!

A woman thus should cover her hair in the four corners of her house. When she does this, then “*your children will be like olive shoots*” [Psalms 128:3]. As the olive does not shed its leaves either in winter or summer, but ever retains its superiority over other trees, so her children will excel over all other children. Her husband, moreover, will receive blessings from Above and from below, will be blessed with riches, with children and children’s children. So the Psalm continues, “*Behold, surely, for so shall the man be blessed...that you may see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel*” [Psalms 128:4-6]. (Nossoh 125b-126a)

767. The שכינה hastens to the Synagogue (before the worshippers). Happy is the man who is of the first ten to enter the Synagogue since they form something complete and are the first

¹³⁵ Berochos 5b.

¹³⁶ Berochos 4b

¹³⁷ This is in accordance with the Sephardi ritual. Ashkenazim recite Psalm 6.

¹³⁸ The Soncino edition says that this is a reference to the Nazir.

to be sanctified by the שכינה. But it is necessary that the ten should come together at the same time and not in sections¹³⁹, so as not to delay the completion of the body in its members. So did the Holy One, blessed be He, make man all at one time, and established all his members in one act. So we read: “*Has he not made you, and established you?*” [Deut. 32:6]. So when the שכינה goes early to the Synagogue, She desires ten to be there at the same time so that a completed body should be formed with every member in its place. Those who come later are mere “adornments of the body”. But when the people do not arrive together, the Holy One, blessed be He, exclaims, “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man!¹⁴⁰”. For inasmuch as the single members are not together, there is no complete body and so there is “no man”. (Nossoh 126a)

768. Whoever sets to purify himself is assisted from Above¹⁴¹. (Nossoh 126a)

769. The female must remove her hair before having relations with the male¹⁴². (Nossoh 127a)

770. Whoever is possessed of the fear of Heaven is rewarded with humility, and he who is possessed of humility is rewarded with the state of grace. The fear of Heaven leads to both. (Nossoh 145a)

771. Said R. Eleazar: Whoever fears sin is called “Adam”. (Nossoh 145b)

772. R. Isaac said: The Kohen (in pronouncing the benediction) must raise his right hand higher than his left hand. (Nossoh 146a)

773. The Kohen who is about to spread his hands (for the benediction) must have his hands washed by one who is himself holy, to wit, a Levite. The Kohen may not receive sanctification of the washing of hands from any commoner who is not himself sanctified. Why only a Levite? What not another Kohen? Because the other Kohen would not be complete, but the Levite is complete, being qualified for his own service. (Nossoh 146a/b)

774. The Kohen, in the spreading forth of his hands, should not have his fingers joined close together, for it is requisite that the sacred Crowns should receive the blessing each one apart in a manner proper to each, because the letters of the Divine Name require also to be kept distinct and not to run into each other.

R. Isaac said: The Holy One, blessed be He, desired that the Upper Beings should be blessed in order that the Lower Beings should draw down the blessing from Above and, on the other hand, that the most holy Above should reciprocally draw to themselves the blessings through the Lower Beings who are the most holy here Below, as we read, “*and Your devout ones shall bless You*” [Psalms 145:10].

775. R. Judah said: If a Kohen is ignorant of this inward significance of the blessing and does not know whom he blesses or what his blessing connotes, he blessing is naught. (Nossoh 146b)

776. The Kohen needs to contemplate with devotion on the inward and elevated significance of the words uttered whereby the unification of the Divine Name is achieved. (Nossoh 146b)

777. R. Shimon cited the following from the Book of Mystery¹⁴³: The Divine Name has both a revealed and an undisclosed form. In its revealed form, it is written קוק, but in its

¹³⁹ I am unfamiliar with any such Halakhah.

¹⁴⁰ See Berochos 6b.

¹⁴¹ See Yoma 38b.

¹⁴² Is this referring to the pubic hairs? Is there any such Halakhah or custom?

¹⁴³ I do not know this book.

undisclosed form it is written in other letters. This undisclosed form represents the most Recondite of all.

R. Judah said: Even the revealed form of the Name is hidden under other letters (א-דג) in order to screen more effectively the most Recondite of all. For it behooves the Kohen to concentrate on the various permutations of the Divine Name and to call down the mercies of all the Attributes through the two Crowns of Mercy. In these letters of this Name are concealed the twenty-two Attributes of Mercy.

They all combine in one composite Name on which the Kohen should concentrate his mind when he spreads forth his hands, a Name containing twenty-two engraven letters.

We have learned that when reverence was prevalent among mankind, the ineffable Name was openly enunciated in the hearing of all. But after irreverence became widespread, it was concealed under other letters. Therefore, at the time when the Name was disclosed, the Kohen would concentrate his mind on its deep and inner meaning, and he would utter the Name in such a way as to accord with that meaning. But when irreverence became common in the world, he would conceal all within the written letters. (Nossoh 146b)

778. R. Jose said: When the Kohen spreads forth his hands, it is forbidden to look at them¹⁴⁴ for the reason that the שכינה hovers over his hands.

R. Isaac remarked: Inasmuch as one is unable to see the שכינה, as it says, “*for a man shall not see Me and live*” [Exodus 33:20], to wit, not while alive but only in death, what matters is it then if one looks at the Kohen’s hands? Said R. Jose: It matters because the Divine Name is reflected in the fingers of the Kohen’s hands, so that although people cannot see the שכינה they ought not look towards the hands of the Kohanim, as that would indicate irreverence towards the שכינה.

We have learned that when the Kohanim hold their hands outspread (in blessing) the congregation should be in fear and awe, and realize that it is a time of favor in all worlds when the Upper and Lower worlds are being blessed. Peace prevails everywhere.

A teacher taught in the presence of R. Shimon: Whoever is in distress on account of a dream should recite during the time the Kohanim spread forth their hands the following¹⁴⁵: “O Master of the world. I am Yours, and my dreams are Yours...”. For that is a propitious moment, and if one then offers up prayer in his distress, Rigor is turned to Mercy. (Nossoh 147a/b)

779. A Kohen who loves not the people or whom they love not may not pronounce the blessing¹⁴⁶. (Nossoh 147b)

780. After Israel had circumcised themselves, they marked their houses with blood and with the blood of the Paschal Lamb in the three spots, to wit, “*the lintel and the two side-posts*” [Exodus 12:22]. For when the destroying angel went forth and saw the mark of the holy sign on that door, he had compassion on Israel, as it is written, “*the Lord will (compassionately) pass over the door*” [ibid. 23].

There is a certain difficulty here. For since the Holy One Himself was to come and slay in the land of Egypt, what need was there for a sign on the door, seeing that all is revealed before Him? Further, what signifies, “*and He will not permit the destroyer to enter your homes*” [ibid.]? We should have expected “*and [He] will not destroy*”.

¹⁴⁴ See Hagigah 16a.

¹⁴⁵ Berochos 55a.

¹⁴⁶ The Kohen, in fact, ends his introductory blessing with the word באהבה “in love”. However, there does not seem to be a ruling which would suggest that a misanthropic or disliked Kohen cannot go up to Duchen.

But the truth is as follows. It is written, “*and the Lord smote all firstborn in the land of Egypt*” [ibid. 29]. Now “*and the Lord*” (ו-יְקוּק) everywhere denotes “He, together with His tribunal”, and on any such occasion it behooves a man to exhibit some visible act in order to be saved. It is thus of importance to have sacrifices offered on the altar so as to keep at a distance the Destroyer during a service.

The same applies to the New-Year Day, the Day of Judgment, when the lords of the evil tongue rise up against Israel. It is then that we need prayer and supplication and, in addition, some outward and visible act. This act consists in blowing the שופר, the sound of which wakes into action another שופר. (Beha’alosechoh 149a)

781. We read that “*the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat*”. We assuredly find here a particular statement, apparently a superfluous detail. For what matter is it to us whether the ark rested in this or in another place, so long as it rested somewhere?

Yet does it contain a teaching applicable to the whole principle of the Torah. And happy is Israel to whom was given the sublime Torah, the Torah of Truth. Perdition take anyone who maintains that any narrative in the Torah comes merely to tell us a piece of history and nothing more! If that were so, the Torah would not be what it assuredly is, to wit, the supernal Torah, the Law of Truth. Now, if it is not dignified for a king of flesh and blood to engage in common talk, much less write it down, is it conceivable that the Most High King, the Holy One, blessed be He, was short of sacred subjects with which to fill the Torah, so that He had to collect such common-place topics as the anecdotes of Esau, and Hagar, Laban’s talks to Jacob, the words of Balaam and his donkey, and of Zimri, and such, and make of them a Torah? If so, why is it called the “Torah of Truth”? Why do we read “*The Lord’s Torah is perfect...The testimony of the Lord is trustworthy...The ordinances of the Lord are upright...They are more desirable than gold, even than much fine gold*” [Psalms 19:8-11]?

But assuredly each word of the Torah signifies sublime things, so that this or that narrative, besides its meaning in and for itself, throws light on the all-comprehensive Rule of the Torah. (Beha’alosechoh 149b)

782. The Levite enters his service when twenty-five years old, and remains in his service for twenty-five years until he reaches the age of fifty. When he reaches the fifty-year Grade the strong fire within him is cooled down, and in such a state he cannot but impair the Spot to which he is attached. Besides, his singing voice no longer serves him so well, whereas that voice ought not to be impaired, but should constantly gain in vigor. (Beha’alosechoh 151b)

783. Woe to the sinners who consider the Torah as mere worldly tales, who only see its outer garment. Happy are the righteous who fix their gaze on the Torah proper. Wine cannot be kept save in a jar. So the Torah needs an outer garment. These are the stories and narratives. It behooves us to penetrate beneath them. (Beha’alosechoh 152a)

784. In the time of wrath, one ought not utter anything in the nature of a curse against himself. (Beha’alosechoh 155b)

785. Sometimes in the beggar’s wallet one finds a pearl. (Shelach Lechah 157b)

786. R. Judah was once walking along with R. Abba. He said to him: I should like to ask you one question. Seeing that G-d knows that man was destined to sin and to be condemned to death, why did He create him? That he knew this is proved by the fact that in the Torah, which existed two thousand years before the universe, we find it already written, “*when a man shall die in a tent*”, and so forth. Why does G-d want man in this world, seeing that if he studies Torah he dies, and if he does not study he also dies, all going one way.

He replied: What business have you with the ways and the decrees of your Master? What you are permitted to know and to inquire into, that you may ask, and as for what you are not permitted to know, it is written, “*Let not your mouth cause your flesh to sin*” [Eccl. 5:5].

He said to him: If that is the case, all the Torah is secret and recondite, since it is the Holy Name, and if so we have no permission to ask and inquire.

He replied: The Torah is both hidden and revealed, and the Holy Name is also hidden and revealed, and the Holy Name is also hidden and revealed, as it is written, “*The hidden things belong to the Lord our G-d, but the revealed things are for us and for our children*” [Deut. 29:28]. The revealed things we may inquire into, but the hidden things are for the Lord alone. Hence men are not permitted to utter secret things and divulge them, save only the Holy Lamp¹⁴⁷, R. Shimon, since the Holy One, blessed be He, has concurred with him, and because his generation is distinguished both on high and below and, therefore, things are divulged through him, and there shall be no such another generation until the Messiah comes. (Shelach Lechah 159a)

787. He who studies must be strong-minded so as to disregard this world. He should be well provided with money, and a strong body, since the study of Torah weakens a man's strength. (Shelach Lechah 160a)

788. If a broken body will study Torah, it will find healing therein. (Shelach Lechah 160b)

789. All future generations should learn to use this address in the time of trouble, namely “*The Lord is slow to anger, etc.*” (Shelach Lechah 161b)

790. “He who interrupts shall be interrupted”¹⁴⁸. That is, if one interrupts his study of Torah to speak of idle matters, his life shall be interrupted in this world and his judgment awaits him in the other World. “He who shortens shall be shortened”. If one shortens his “אמן”, and does not draw it out, his life shall be shortened. “He who shortens shall be lengthened.” The first syllable of אהה (in the Shema) should be uttered very rapidly and not dwelt on at all. If one does so, his life will be prolonged. (Shelach Lechah 162a)

791. (Referring to the coils of the ציצית): The seven windings of blue round each one may be increased up thirteen, but not more. R. Isaac said that if there are seven, they are symbolical of the שכינה and, if thirteen, of the thirteen attributes. (Shelach Lechah 175b)

792. If one runs after that which is not his, it flies from him. What is more, he loses his own as well. (Korach 176a)

793. He who quarrels with peace, quarrels with the Holy Name. (Korach 176a)

794. If that redeemer is not willing to establish seed for his brother in this world, he must tie a shoe on his foot and the wife must loosen it and take it to herself. Why was a shoe chosen for this purpose? Because the shoe was the support of the dead man in this world, and the woman, by taking it signifies that the dead man who was wandering about among the living will now, through that shoe, no longer wander about among them.

She must dash the shoe on the ground to show that she has laid rest the body of the dead, and G-d then, or after a time, has pity on him and receives him into the future World. Therefore it was that whoever desired to confirm an undertaking took off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor. This was before-time in Israel when they were pious and holy. But when sinners multiplied, they concealed the matter under another form using the corner of a garment. (Chukkas 180a)

795. All people go to synagogue to influence the powers Above, but few know how to do it. G-d is near to all who know how to call upon Him and set powers in motion in the proper manner. But if they do not know how to call upon Him, He is not near. (Chukkas 183b)

¹⁴⁷ So R. Shimon bar Yochai is often referred to throughout the Zohar.

¹⁴⁸ The three statements in this paragraph were said by one of the many mysterious “masters of the hidden wisdom” found throughout the Zohar who was chanced upon by someone when on a journey.

796. If one does not recite the Shema at the proper time, he is under a ban the whole day. (Balak 186a)

797. One ought not say a blessing with dirty hands as this renders him liable to death. (Balak 186a)

798. It is a religious duty to wash the hands after a meal. (Balak 186b)

799. A man should not go four cubits with his head uncovered. The reason being that the שכינה rests on the head. (Balak 187a)

800. Said R. Judah: We have learned that the host breaks bread and the guest says grace¹⁴⁹. (Balak 187b)

801. One who blesses over wine should pour some water into it, since the blessing “have mercy, O Lord, upon Your people Israel” should not be said save with water in the wine¹⁵⁰. (Balak 189b)

802. Bread and wine are the essence of the meal, all the rest being subsidiary. (Balak 189b)

803. G-d cherishes enmity against all who harm Israel and takes vengeance on them. But if anything good for the world is destined to issue from them, He bears with them until that good has come forth, and then He punishes them. (Balak 190a/b)

804. It is the duty of everyone to say grace. If he cannot himself, his wife or his sons can say it for him, but a curse lights on a man who does not know how to say grace himself and must ask his wife or children. (Balak 191a)

805. [A young boy who was chanced upon by some Sages thrilled them by brilliantly expounding on verses in the Torah.] They kissed him and blessed him as before and went their way. When they came to R. Shimon they told him what had happened. He was greatly astonished and said: This is indeed excellent, but he will not make a name. When a thin stick burns, it only burns for a little time. It is written, “*His offspring shall be mighty upon earth; a generation of the upright shall be blessed*” [Psalms 112:2]. When a man is mighty on the earth, mighty in Torah and in control of his passions, then his light goes forth and is continued through many generations.

“But”, said R. Abba, “we see children who say wonderful things and afterwards become very eminent.”

He replied: When a child says one or two wonderful things by accident, then we may be confident that he will one day teach Torah in Israel. But the same cannot be said of this one whose light is already complete. (Balak 191b)

806. R. Shimon said: From a remark of the Book of the Wisdom of King Solomon—There are three signs in a man. Paleness is a sign of anger, talking is a sign of folly, and self-praise is a sign of ignorance. It is true that it says, “*Let a stranger praise you and not your own mouth*” [Proverbs 27:2]. We alter this to “*Let a stranger praise you, and if not, your own mouth*”. This only means that if you are not known, discourse on Torah so that through the opening of your mouth in Torah men should know who you are and praise you. (Balak 193b)

807. The prayer of the poor man is the most excellent of all and takes precedence over the prayer of Moses or of David or of any other man. The reason is that the poor man is broken of heart, and it is written, “*G-d is near to the broken of heart*” [Psalms 34:19]. The poor man always expostulates with G-d, yet G-d listens and hears his words. When he prays, He opens all the windows of the firmament, and all other prayers which ascend aloft have to

¹⁴⁹ Rather, he leads in the Zimmun. This whole statement is consistent with the Halakhah.

¹⁵⁰ It is not stated as to why this should be the case. In any event, the Halakhah today is that one need not dilute the wine as it does not have the same potency as did the wines of those days, being diluted in its manufacture anyway.

make way for that of the broken-hearted poor man. G-d says, as it were, "Let all prayers wait, and let this one enter before Me. I require here no court to judge between us. Let his complaint come before Me and I and he will be alone. And so G-d alone attends to those complaints, as it is written, *"and pours out his complaint before the Lord"*. (Balak 195a)

808. Said R. Eleazar: When praying, one should make himself poor and needy in order that his prayer may enter along with that of the rest of the poor, for the doorkeepers allow none to enter so readily as the poor, since they can even enter without asking permission. So if a man puts himself in the position of the poor, his prayer ascends and meets the other prayers of the poor and ascends with them and enters as one of them and is favorably received by the King. (Balak 195a)

809. King David placed himself in four categories. He placed himself among the poor, he placed himself among the pious, he placed himself among the servants, and he placed himself among those who are ready to sacrifice themselves and their lives for the sanctification G-d's Name. He placed himself among the poor, as it is written, *"For I am poor and needy"*. He placed himself among the pious, as it is written, *"Preserve my soul, for I am pious"*. For one should not consider himself wicked, nor can it be objected that if so he will never tell of his sins, for when he makes confession of his sins, then he is pious, since he comes to repent. He removes himself from the Evil Side in the impurity of which he abode until now, and cleaves to the Right Hand which is outstretched to receive him. Nor should you think that G-d does not receive him until he makes full confession of all the sins that he committed since he was born, for if so, what of those that are concealed from him?

The truth is that he need only recount those that he remembers, and if he concentrates his attention on these, all others follow them, just as in searching for leaven we do not look into every nook and cranny, but if we have searched as far as the eye can see, the rest is reckoned as cleared away along with this. So also the Kohen declared the leper clean if he could observe no mark on him without peering too closely.

So a man need not recount all his sins since the day he was born, or those which are concealed from him. Hence David placed himself among the saints.

He placed himself among the servants, as it is written, *"Save Your servant, O You My G-d"*. He placed himself among those who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sanctification of G-d's Name, as it is written, *"Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul"* [Psalms 86:4]. All these characters did King David assume before his Master. (Balak 195a/b)

810. If any man shall arrange his service thus before the Master and sincerely carry out this purpose, his prayer shall not return unanswered. At first, he must make himself a servant to arrange a service of praise and song before Him. Again he becomes a servant to recite the Amidoh, and once more after saying his prayer. ¹⁵¹A man should place himself among those who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sanctification of G-d's Name, by reciting with proper devotion the formula of unity "Hear, O Israel". Then he must make himself poor when he knocks at the doors of the highest heights in saying the prayer "true and certain". He proceeds thus to the Amidoh prayer so that he, in saying it, should feel himself broken-hearted, poor and needy. Then he should place himself among the saints by recounting his sins in the prayer, "hearkening to prayer", for so the individual should do in order to cling to the Right Hand which is stretched forth to receive sinners who repent.

We have learnt that when a man has sincerely prayed in these four styles, G-d is pleased and stretches forth His Right Hand over him. Assuredly, the prayer of such a man shall never return unanswered. (Balak 195b-196a)

¹⁵¹ This appears to be a repetition of the same information of that above in a slightly different form and slightly added to and amended.

811. Said Rav Hammuna the ancient: The oppression of Israel brings benefit to them and that the ease of the other nations brings evil to them. On every occasion G-d punishes Israel little by little in each generation, so that when they come to the great day of judgment, when the dead shall arise, Judgment shall have no power over them. (Balak 199a/b)

812. How much kindness does G-d do for men, and how many miracles does He cause to befall for them and no one knows save He! One will rise in the morning and a snake comes to kill him and he treads on the snake and kills it without knowing, but G-d alone knows. A man goes on the road and robbers are in wait for him, and another comes and takes his place and he is delivered, and does not know the kindness that G-d has wrought with him or the miracles He has done on his behalf. G-d alone does it and knows it. (Balak 200b)

813. He who constantly occupies himself with Torah is compared by the Psalmist to “*a tree planted by streams of water*” [Psalms 1:3]. Just as a tree has roots, bark, sap, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit, seven kinds in all, so the Torah has the literal meaning, the homiletic meaning, the mystery of wisdom, numerical values, hidden mysteries, still deeper mysteries and the laws of fit and unfit, forbidden and permitted, and clean and unclean. From this point branches spread out in all directions and to one who knows it in this way it is indeed like a tree, and, if not, he is not truly wise. (Balak 202a)

814. One who is afraid of a judge should bring a large audience before him in order that they may hear him judge and he may be afraid of them and conduct the case properly. (Balak 205b)

815. One should not abandon his own poor to give to another. (Balak 206a)

816. R. Abba said: We have learned that for eleven things the plague of leprosy comes upon a man, and these are they: 1) for idolatry, 2) for cursing the Name, 3) for fornication, 4) for stealing, 5) for slander, 6) for bearing false witness, 7) for perversion of justice, 8) for false swearing, 9) for encroaching on the property of a neighbor, 10) for harboring evil designs, and 11) for fomenting quarrels between brothers. Some add also, for the evil eye. All these were found in the wicked Balaam. (Balak 206a/b)

817. The mysteries of Torah are deep and not to be penetrated. Therefore, one should not make any statement about the Torah until he has heard and understood it properly. (Balak 207b)

818. Animals are not capable of receiving a rational mind. (Balak 210a)

819. If one is taking his child through a street and is afraid of the evil eye, he should cover the child's head with a scarf¹⁵² and then he will be safe from the evil eye. (Balak 211b)

820. “*I see him but not now*”. Some of these things were fulfilled at that time and some later, while some are left for the Messiah.

We have learned that G-d will one day build Jerusalem and display a certain fixed star flashing with seventy streamers and seventy flames in the midst of the firmament. It will shine and flash for seventy days. It will appear on the sixth day of the week on the twenty-fifth of the sixth month, and will disappear on the seventh day after seventy days.

On the first day it will be seen in the city of Rome and on that day three lofty walls of that city shall fall and a mighty palace shall be overthrown and the ruler of that city shall die. Then that star will become visible throughout the whole world and no faith shall be found among men.

When that star shines in the midst of the firmament, a certain powerful king shall arise who will seek domination over all kings and make war on two Sides and prevail against them. On the day when the star disappears, the Holy Land will be shaken over an area of

¹⁵² I am neither aware of the efficacy of this remedy nor its mention in the Halakhah.

forty-five miles all round the place where the Temple used to be, and a cave will be laid open beneath the ground from which shall issue a mighty fire to consume the world. From that cave shall spread a great and noble branch which will rule over all the world and to which shall be given the kingship. The Heavenly saints shall gather to it.

Then will the King Messiah appear and the kingship shall be given to him. Mankind will then suffer one calamity after another and the enemies of Israel will prevail, but the spirit of the Messiah will rise against them and destroy the sinful Edom and burn in fire the land of Seir. Hence it is written, *“And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession of his which were his enemies, while Israel doth valiantly”*.

In that time, the Holy One, blessed be He, shall raise the dead of His people and death shall be forgotten of them.

R. Abba said: Why is it written, *“For in joy you shall go out”* [Isaiah 55:12]? Because when Israel goes out from captivity, the שכינה will go forth with them and they with Her. (Balak 212b)

821. It is a rule that a Kohen who kills a human being becomes disqualified for the priesthood and, therefore, by rights, Pinchos should have been disqualified. But because he was jealous for the Holy One, blessed be He, the priesthood was assigned to him and to his descendants in perpetuity¹⁵³. (Pinchos 214a)

822. As for the tradition that Pinchos did not die, the truth is that he did not die like other men, and he outlived his generation because he kept hold of this supernal covenant. When he departed from the world, it was with celestial yearning and beautiful attachment. (Pinchos 214a)

823. When G-d desires to give healing to the world, He smites one righteous man among them with disease and suffering, and through him gives healing to all, as it is written, *“But He was wounded because of our transgressions, oppressed due to our iniquities... and with his (His?) wounds we are healed”* [Isaiah 53:5]. A righteous man is never afflicted save to bring healing to his generation and to make atonement for it, for the Other Side prefers that punishment should light upon the virtuous man rather than on any other. (Pinchos 218a)

824. How is it that of all peoples of the world, only the Jews sway to and from when they study Torah, a habit which seems to come natural to them, and they are unable to keep still? It is written, *“The spirit (or: soul) of man is the lamp of the Lord”* [Proverbs 20:27]. Now once this lamp has been kindled from the supernal Torah, the light upon it never ceases for an instant. So when an Israelite has said one word of Torah, light is kindled and he cannot keep still but sways to and fro like the flame of a wick. But the souls of heathens are like the burning of stubble, which gives no flame and, therefore, they keep still like wood burning without a flame. (Pinchos 218b)

825. When one stands in prayer he should keep his feet together¹⁵⁴ and cover his head. He should shade his eyes so as not to look at the שכינה. In the Book of Rav Hamnuna the Elder, it says that if one opens his eyes at the time of prayer or does not cast them on the ground he brings the Angel of Death on to himself before his time. When his soul leaves him, he will not behold the face of the שכינה nor will he die by a (Divine) kiss. In fact, of course, one cannot look at the שכינה, but what he should do is to know that the שכינה is before him and, therefore, there should be nothing interposing between him and the wall. (Pinchos 260b)

826. R. Jose said: Why do we find here both, *“You shall not covet”* and *“Your shall not desire”*? Because they are two different Grades. A man covets things which it is in his power

¹⁵³ See Torah Temimah on Vayikrah 25:13.

¹⁵⁴ Berochos 10b.

to obtain (wrongfully), and through coveting he does try to obtain them. A man can desire things even if he sees no way of obtaining them. (Vo'eschanon 261a)

827. R. Judah said: One should place G-d before him in all his acts. When one walks abroad, he should have three objects in view, the highest of which is prayer. Higher even than prayer is the converse of two or three companions on matters of Torah, for they shall come to no harm, since the שכינה accompanies them. (Vo'eschanon 261b)

828. The first compartment of the תפילין contains the passage, “Sanctify unto Me every firstborn”. The second compartment contains the passage commencing, “And it shall come to pass when the Lord your G-d brings you”. The third compartment contains the passage commencing, “Hear, O Israel”. The fourth compartment contains the passage commencing, “And it shall come to pass if you diligently hearken”. (Vo'eschanon 262b)

829. He who leaves his house to go to the synagogue without תפילין on his head and צצית on his garment, and yet says, “I will bow to Your holy Temple in fear”, of him G-d says, “Where is my fear? He is bearing false witness.” (Vo'eschanon 265a)

830. R. Hiya said: If one wishes to guard his steps, he should not step over water that has been poured out in front of a door, because a certain demon abides between the two posts of the door with his face to the door seeing all that goes on inside. Therefore one should not pour water between the two doorposts. (R. Isaac, however, said that if it is clean water it does not matter, provided it has not been poured out in haughtiness.) The reason is that he is authorized to do harm, and if he turns his head to the house everything on which he looks will be cursed¹⁵⁵. (Vo'eschanon 265b)

831. When one affixes a מזוזה to his door with his Holy Name inscribed in it, one is crowned with the crowns of his Master, and no “evil species” will come near to the door of his house. (Vo'eschanon 265b)

832. R. Abba said: We have learned that one should go to pay his respects to the שכינה every Sabbath and New Moon. And who is meant? His teacher. (Vo'eschanon 265b)

833. One should ever carry about with him words of Torah in order that the Evil Prompter (the יצר הרע) may be subdued by them, since there is no opponent of the Evil Prompter like words of Torah. (Vo'eschanon 268a)

834. One should pray to G-d that he be not thrust out to make room for another. (Vayeilech 284a)

835. Greater is he who answers אמן than he who says the blessing. (Vayeilech 285a)

836. When one who was careful to answer אמן departs from this world, his soul ascends and they proclaim before him: Open the gates before him as he opened the gates every day by being careful to answer. But if one hears a blessing from the reader and is not careful אמן¹⁵⁶ to answer אמן, what is his punishment? As he did not open blessings Below, so they do not open for him Above. When he leaves this world they proclaim before him: Close the gates in the face of so-and-so that he enter not, and do not receive him. Woe to him and to his soul. (Vayeilech 285b)

837. R. Jose said: There is no creature so devoted to her young as the eagle, being as kind to them as it is cruel to others. (Ha'azinu 298b)

¹⁵⁵ I know of no place that anything of this passage is mentioned in the Halakhah.

¹⁵⁶ Berochos 57b.