

2. Genesis Rabbah 3:4. Cf. *Pesiqta' de-Rav Qabana'* 145b.
3. In Hebrew numerology *vav* equals six. On the six extremities corresponding to six of the seven lower *sefirot*, see *Sefer Yesirah* 1:5.
4. *Shema' Yisra'el YHVH elobenu YHVH ehad*.
5. See BT Yoma' 72b.
6. Alluded to in 4:1.
7. On the Throne and the *Shekbinah* in the west, see BT Bava' Batra' 25a. The phylacteries for the head have a large square knot, which is placed at the base of the skull behind the cranium, and this knot is now likened to the letter *dalet*. A smaller knot on the phylacteries for the arm, placed over the large muscle of the arm, is now likened to the *yod*.
8. 5:1, 2.
9. *Heikbalot* mysticism reports this statement of a celestial beast called Israel. Rabbi Jacob combines this older motif with the Kabbalistic usage of the symbol Israel as the sixth *sefirah*, *tiferet*.
10. The traditional custom is to overenunciate the *dalet* of *ehaD* whenever reciting the *shema'*.
11. Hebrew *qarney*. This word can also mean "rays of," and should be read with both meanings throughout this text.
12. Hebrew *qarney ayyelet ba-shubar*. This phrase figuratively means "the rays of the morning star." According to BT Yoma' 29a, the diffraction of the dawn light is likened to the spreading antlers of a doe.
13. Y, S, R, ', L + Y, ', Q, B = 9.
14. According to Rabbinic tradition Ezekiel mentions nine separate visions in Ezekiel 43:3. See *Leviticus Rabbah* 1:14.
15. Or upon *tet*, the letter whose shape is comprised of P and Z joined.
16. BT Berakhot 17a.
17. This idea first appears in BT Bava' Mesi'a' 85b and was subsequently incorporated into the *Treatise of the Palaces*. See A. Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-Midrash* (Jerusalem, 1938), vol. 2, p. 46.
18. *Ibid*.
19. This legend is also expressed in the *Midrash to the Decalogue*. See Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, vol. 2, p. 66.
20. See the *Treatise of the Palaces*, Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, vol. 2, p. 46.
21. In the Sefardi rite, this is recited at the beginning of the service that constitutes the public reading of the Torah.
22. The text here is corrupt.
23. The vocative "by the throne of God" of Exodus 17:16 is for the sake of this interpretation spelled incompletely. *Kes*, "throne," is normally *kise'*. *Yab*, "God," is usually *YHVH*. From these defective spellings is derived the notion that the Throne of God is incomplete until the nation of Amalek is thoroughly blotted out.
24. The "reverse alphabet" (*alfa' beta' de-TaSHRa'Q*) is a common way of expressing the Hebrew alphabet in reverse order. Scholem states that the text at this point is "apparently corrupt."

## *Treatise on the Left Emanation*

RABBI ISAAC BEN JACOB HA-KOHEN

1. I have noted your tremendous desire to ascend to the ladder of wisdom and perceive enigmas and grasp the cunning ways of the ancient Sages, the masters of inscriptions,<sup>1</sup> those who expounded upon the secrets of the souls. And having noted that the Lord God, may He be blessed, bestowed upon you an attentive and understanding heart, I have decided with much fondness to answer your question and fulfill your request. . . .

[I will do this for you] even though you are quite aware that this path was not trod upon except for "two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough" (Isaiah 17:6)—these are the ancient elders, the scholars of Spain who delved in the palace of Samael. It is a long and deep path and it eludes all masters of wisdom who are not willing to descend into the depths of the wisdom of the hidden emanation, the "depth of good and depth of evil."<sup>2</sup> [It is known] only to those few solitary individuals, "the remnant who the Lord shall call" (Joel 3:5). Moreover, to the best of my ability I will not stray my steps from the path<sup>3</sup> in order to grant your wish and quench a bit of your thirst. May His most beloved assist me in His mercy and Lovingkindness.

2. You have already dealt with the roots of the emanation of the degrees, from the top of Supreme Crown (*keter 'elyon*) to the secret of the Blessing (*sod ha-berakbah*) of life everlasting.<sup>4</sup> Now it is time to be awakened to the secret of the emanation radiating forth from

them, an emanation of degrees like the image of bodies to souls, specified with names received from the ancient Sages and from the book of Rabbi Hamai. I have not seen this book in all Provence, save for [copies] belonging to three pietists. One was in Narbonne, belonging to a wondrous, skilled scholar. It was transmitted orally from an elder rabbi. This holy and venerable rabbi testified that Elijah, may his memory be blessed, would appear to him on the Day of Atonement. The other two copies were in Arles, the large city.

The first emanation—like the image of a spiritual entity—corresponds to the primal emanation. Its name is Sabi'el, and we call him the prince of the Exalted Heights.

The second of the [emanations] is the emanation of Wisdom. Its name is Peli'i'el. He is the prince of the wonders (*pela'ot*) of Wisdom. We have received [a tradition] about him that the name by which his emanation is revealed is Zequni'el. His name is also Sagsagel, equal to the numerical value of "you shall honor the face of an *old man*" (Leviticus 19:32).<sup>5</sup> He is the planting of Wisdom, "the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified" (Isaiah 61:3). His sign is "In the day of your planting make it grow (*tesagsegi*)" (Isaiah 61:3). The *samekh* and *sin* are interchangeable, deriving from the same [sound].

The third is the prince radiated forth from the emanation of Repentance, the hidden treasure trove to all those who know Understanding and have great fear (*yir'ab*). His name is Yeru'i'el.

Scripture alludes to all three of them in one verse: "You shall rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man and fear your God" (Isaiah 19:32). These three are considered like bodies to souls, each one interlinked with the other like a flame to an ember, inwardness to inwardness.

The remaining seven degrees also have seven degrees which radiate forth like bodies to souls, and they too are spiritual. The name of the first is Memeriron. He is the prince of Lovingkindness and is associated with water. The second is Geviriron. He is the prince of awesome and invincible Strength (*gevurab*).

The name of the third is Yedideron. He is the prince of Mercy, the beloved (*yedid*) of God.

The name of the fourth is Satriron. He is the prince of the Foundation of the world which is concealed and secreted (*nistar*) in the middle pillar and is called the secret place of the most high (*seter 'elyon*). Thus "He that dwells in the secret place of the most high shall

abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalms 91:1). This should be sufficient to the enlightened.

The name of the fifth is Nashiriron. He is the prince of triumph and the victory (*nesah*) of Israel.

The name of the sixth is Hodiriron. He is the prince radiating forth from the emanation of Majesty (*bod*).

The name of the seventh is Seforiron. He is the prince radiating forth from the last (*sof*) emanation of all the degrees.

These, then, are the names of the ancient mighty ones. We have further received that the first three end their names with "-el" and the latter end with "-ron" because the first three are powers from the forces emanating from within the power of the great and mighty Will, towering above all else: the Cause of all causes and the Reason of all reasons; while the seven are like ignited candles, each one lighting his own candle (*nero*) from the seven inner [candles]. They correspond to the image of inner souls and spiritual bodies.

3. Regarding this we have also received the following: The attribute Kingdom possesses three further currents. These are like three pillars faced toward her, doing her work and guarding her watch round and about the Throne in fear and trembling and silence, from emanation to emanation up to the beloved of God who embraces her and kisses her by means of the Foundation of the world. At this point the princes of Lovingkindness and Strength receive her in great and glorious fear and trembling and in awesome silence. Then Lovingkindness and Strength—which are the inner emanations—receive her and revolve like powerful torrents of water and "coals of fire which burn intensely" (Canticles 8:6). She remains hidden and concealed in the midst of all the emanations until the approach of the prince of Understanding accompanied by his troops. They receive her with incomprehensible fear and dread and silence until they approach the throne next to the Throne of Glory associated with Repentance. From there the multitude of his warriors appear. Overseeing them all is the prince of Wisdom. Then they set down the Throne with trembling terror and great quaking into the bosom of ancient Wisdom, who accepts her with the proclamation "Come my beloved."<sup>6</sup> He plays with her like a father doting on his only daughter among many sons. The Exalted Heights pours forth his blessing on her by means of the Father [i.e., Wisdom], for it is impossible for any emanation to apprehend or perceive spiritual vi-

sion or supernal perception except through the mediation of Wisdom and Understanding.

After the acceptance of the Blessing and after the delights bow and prostrate themselves before the awesome and sublime Throne of Glory, the Throne of Kingdom, by means of these unique princes, whirls and revolves back from emanation to emanation to its origin, resting between the two cherubs which are her arms.

This great outpouring—a joy to the inner souls and a delight to the spiritual bodies—was in effect when the land of Israel was inhabited and the holy nation dwelled in her. [Earthly] Temple is mirrored by [celestial] Temple and attendant High Priest is mirrored by a High Priest of holiness and purity, of fear and trembling, knowing how to direct perfect meditations to each of the outer and inner emanations, knowing how to draw forth the secret of the holy seraphim, awakening the Holy Spirit with the beauty of poetry and music. The singers [of the Temple], each according to their position and their perception, concentrate with their fingers upon the strings of the harp and the tones which awaken the song and the chant. They direct their hearts to the Omnipresent. Then Blessing is stirred and the divine Presence dwells upon them, each according to his worship and perception. Then Jerusalem and the earthly Temple fulfill [every] desire and are a delight to all the nations, and the fear and trepidation for her inhabitants rule over anyone who sees or hears of her. As it is written: “And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord and they shall be afraid of you” (Deuteronomy 28:10). Happy is the eye that beholds all this.

4. Now let us return to the point of our departure, namely the three princes who are the three pillars to the Throne which in turn is exalted by the four encampments of the divine Presence. The first one is named Malki’el, derived from the attribute of Kingdom (*mal-khut*). The name of the second is ‘Aturi’el, derived from the great Diadem (*‘atarah*), like the image of gold which is likened to the attribute of Severity. The name of the third is Nashri’el, derived from the name of that emanation which is angry and chastises its children when they fail to conduct themselves along the straight path before their heavenly Father. But when they tip the scales toward merit by way of repentance, then they have peace and divine benevolence, and she has mercy upon her children “like an eagle (*nesher*) that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young” (Deuteronomy 32:11). And

then “the mother of the children is joyous, reclining on her beloved.”<sup>7</sup>

These three are in fact three pillars emanated from the power of the attribute of Kingdom: Each one is an emanation in its own right. Therefore, the emanation is derived from the thirteen branches which draw upon one root, for all unity depends on it. Therefore, the verse “God is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4) equals it.<sup>8</sup>

Another indication is [the mnemonic] *Na’ambaron* for “the beauty of the Diadem of Kingdom” [*ben ‘ateret malkhut*]. “Ron” [of *Na’ambaron*] is the image of our patriarch Jacob, peace be upon him, a simple man, a lower form inscribed parallel with a celestial one. He is linked to the heavens and Jacob. The indication of this is “Sing (*ranu*), O heavens” (Isaiah 44:23) and “Sing (*ranu*) with gladness for Jacob” (Jeremiah 31:7). Thus the union is complete.<sup>9</sup>

The thirteen are completely spiritual emanations and they are active, and the thirteen divine attributes mentioned in “And the Lord passed before [Moses], and he proclaimed; ‘YHVH, the Lord, merciful and gracious God . . .’” (Exodus 34:6) are activated [by them]. The active ones are causes, the activated ones are effects. They are without limitation and there is no perception of their true origin nor is there anyone who can know with a certainty their end. Only the unique Lord of all who is hidden and concealed from His creatures [can do so]. Even the thought which can never be apprehended<sup>10</sup> is incapable of perceiving His very reality. . . .

These are three [emanations] encompassed in the Crown of Kingdom, appointed and prepared to forgive and pardon the transgressions and their perpetrators, who are nothing more than rebels and sinners. These three are included in one name by virtue of their various activities. “And this is the name by which he will be called” (Jeremiah 23:6): *Na’ambaron*—pardoning transgression, rebelliousness, and sin (*Nose’ avon Mered Hata’ah*) so that the wrath (*haron af*) of God turns away from Israel and He pardons and has mercy upon those who turn away from their sins. . . .

5. Now we shall turn to the system of accusing hosts which reside in heaven, those which were created and then suddenly annihilated. When I was in the great city of Arles, a master of this tradition showed me an extremely old booklet. Its handwriting was crude and is different from our own. It was transmitted in the name of a great Rabbi and gaon. They referred to him as the Rabbi Maş-

liah. Now the venerable Gaon, our Rabbi Pelatiah, was from the holy city of Jerusalem. And this booklet was brought by a great scholar and pietist known as Rabbi Gershom of Damascus. He hailed from Damascus and lived in Arles for approximately two years, and people there told stories about his great wisdom and wealth. He showed this booklet to the elder sages of that generation. I copied from it some things, things which the sages of that generation had understood. For they were not familiar with its handwriting as were the earlier sages who had learned it directly from that scholar and pietist.<sup>11</sup>

Then I returned to Beziers, a city of Sages, where my pious brother of blessed memory had become ill. I have neither added nor subtracted from all that my brother explained, not even in the slightest detail except for stylistic concerns. Occasionally there is a small variation, but the intent is always identical.

With this I will begin to set down the system of the princes and their forces, from the first to the last. They were all created from a single emanation flowing forth from the power of Repentance. This emanation acts as a screen, separating the emanation of all the holy degrees in which there are no alien emanations. Each is a spiritual degree, pure and refined and lutescent, engraved out of the power of the Will of the hidden Lord. This dividing screen, emanated from the power of the emanated Repentance, was initially brought forth on the condition that various diverse emanations, some good and some evil, some of endless existence and others of horrible and utter disgrace, would stem forth from it. There is no one in creation, neither lofty nor low, who can perceive the secret of these worlds. Only the spiritual degrees and princes emanating therefrom [can be perceived]. There was a tradition already in the possession of the ancient Sages and studied by my brother of blessed memory, written in the composition of that perfect pious man, to the effect that the name of the ruler of this emanation is Masukhi'el, since he is a dividing screen (*masakh*).

The first emanation which flowed forth from him comprised the pure and splendid souls. And from these souls the party of angels was emanated, all but the four encampments of the divine Presence.

These souls, which are angelic emanations, existed potentially within the recesses of the Emanator, hidden from all. But before they could become actuated, another world was emanated from alien

forms and destructive images. The name of the ruler of this emanation, the prince of all its warriors, was Qamti'el. These are the cruel ones who began to rebuke and confound the emanations. Immediately a proclamation (*keruz*) went forth from Keruzi'el, the prince and voice of Repentance. He said: "Masukhi'el! Masukhi'el! Destroy what you have created and gather back your emanations, for it is not the wish of the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, that these emanations remain in the worlds."

[The emanations] then returned to their original state and were obliterated: Just as they were brought forth, so were they annihilated. The Sages of tradition likened the matter to a wick saturated with oil. When one desires to extinguish [the fire], one immerses the wick into the very oil which kept it lit. Thus it returns [to its original state] and it is extinguished: so it is annihilated.

Afterward, another world was emanated, comprised of strange forms and alien images. The name of the ruler of this emanation and the prince of its warriors was Beli'el. These were even more evil in their plotting and their disruption of the various emanations. Then a decree came forth and the word of the King of kings went forth. They were annihilated in a flash, just like the first.

Thereupon a third world was created, comprised of even stranger forms than those of the first and second worlds. The name of the ruler and prince of its warriors was 'Iti'el. These are the worst of all. It is their desire and ambition to rule the Divine and destroy Him, chopping off the divine tree along with all its branches. Then there went forth a decree from the divine Will that their annihilation be similar to the first two. A decree was then proclaimed that no similar emanation would ever again come forth into the ether of the world, nor would it ever be mentioned again. And these are the worlds about which our Sages of blessed memory said: "He constructed worlds and then destroyed them . . ." <sup>12</sup>

After the destruction of these worlds it was the desire of the Will to bring forth the souls emanated from potentiality to actuality. Among them were the myriads of angels and their encampments, seven groups in all. The leader of each of these groups is known to those who are aware of this tradition. From their power the firmaments and planets—called the seven moving stars according to the scientists—were emanated. God willing, I will write about them.

There are many other names that should not be written out for I am not completely certain what the order is and until I see the order

of their spelling and their emergence and their rank, I will not write it, for I might make a mistake, either in thought or on paper. There is, however, a tradition to the effect that in a single moment and by a single expression seven other princes were emanated along with their retinues, and they are all known. Once in response to a question from a student from Avile I was compelled to search for their names and I put them in order, inspired by a certain idea.

But before I mention their names I would like to point out to the reader of this book that the seven groups of princes belonging to the above-mentioned angels were all arrayed with bows drawn for a pitched battle. This war of enmity and jealousy between them and the seven princes will never cease (*ta'abor*) in the heavens, for their objective is the Lord of all who created them from the root of emanation according to His Will and Desire, from the power of the emanation of Repentance. We will explain this great jealousy and will interpret its reason. It is of a divine source which created beings cannot grasp. The reasons derive from the manifestations of emanation. The "secret of intercalation" (*sod ha-'ibbur*) is a spiritual mystery that none can comprehend or understand. The secret is hidden from the angels—"How much more so those that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust" (Job 4:19). Even the allusions are too awesome for man, and the secret is one aspect of the statement "Silence! Such is the decree."<sup>13</sup>

6. I will now set down the names of the princes of jealousy and enmity. Yet since their essence and their service is true and pure, their mouths are free from mendacity and neither lies nor falsehoods pass between them.

The first prince and accuser, the commander of jealousy, is evil Samael, accompanied by his retinue. He is called "evil" not because of his nature but because he desires to unite and intimately mingle with an emanation not of his nature, as we shall explain.

The second prince is called his deputy, and his name is Za'afi'el, accompanied by his entourage.

The third prince is called third-in-command, and his name is Za'ami'el, accompanied by his staff.

The fourth prince is Qasfi'el, accompanied by his retinue.

The fifth prince is Ragzi'el, accompanied by his staff.

The sixth prince is 'Abri'el, accompanied by his staff.

The seventh is Meshulhi'el, accompanied by his staff. These latter comprise the delegation of evil angels.

Now I shall allude to you the reason for all the jealousy between these latter princes and the former princes of the seven groups of holy angels which are called "the guardians of the walls." A form destined for Samael stirs up enmity and jealousy between the heavenly delegation and the forces of the supernal army. This form is Lilith, and she is in the image of a feminine form. Samael takes on the form of Adam and Lilith the form of Eve. They were both born in a spiritual birth as one, as a parallel to the forms of Adam and Eve above and below: two twinlike forms. Both Samael and [Lilith, called] Eve the Matron—also known as the Northern One—are emanated from beneath the Throne of Glory. It was the Sin which brought about this calamity, in order to bring her shame and disgrace to destroy her celestial offspring. The calamity was caused by the Northern One, who was created beneath the Throne of Glory and it resulted in a partial collapse and weakening of the legs of the Throne. Then, by means of Gamali'el and the primeval snake Nahashi'el, the scents of each intermingled: the scent of man reached the female, and the scent of woman reached the male. Ever since then the snakes have increased and have taken on the form of biting snakes. Thus it is written, "The Lord sent fiery snakes among the people" (Numbers 21:6). This requires a full explanation in a separate treatise for it is very deep—no one can find it out.<sup>14</sup>

7. Now I shall make allusions according to the tradition passed from ancient Sages to possessors of this wisdom. We know for a certainty that Rabbi Sherira and Rabbi Hai were learned and steeped in this wisdom which came to them rabbi from rabbi, sage from sage, gaon from gaon. They all utilized the secret knowledge of the *Lesser Heikhalot*, which is the secret knowledge of demons, so that they could ascend the ladder of prophecy.

It is well established that all the philosophers agree that there are no corporeal entities above the spheres. However, we have seen and heard that the learned of Israel vary on this point, some agreeing and some disagreeing with the philosophers. But according to what we have received from Rabbi Sherira Gaon, and his son Rabbi Hai, and the venerable traditionist Rabbi Joseph Ibn Abitur the great Gaon, and Rabbi Issac Ibn Ghayyat of blessed memories<sup>15</sup>—they decided the issue according to what they had received from their ancestors, elder from elder, gaon and gaon, all the way back to a tradition of Tannaim and Amoraim. They thus decided the issue in accordance with what they received from the ancient elders: that

neither in all the primordial emanations nor in the next set of emanations is there anything corporeal. There is only spiritual emanation. So too the created angels—they and their princes—and the princes of jealousy and their forces are like the form of man created in the image of the great fire. Even the forms of the fire-steeds are all spiritual forms, and their armor and their chariots are as a raging fire, though not of the essence of elemental fire. . . .

9. The four encampments of the divine Presence are nothing but spiritual emanations, in the image neither of bodies nor of bodily form. But not all the angels are this way; only those of the tenth degree are similar to the sons of Adam beheld by each prophet according to his stature. Everyone agrees that they have an appearance too awesome to apprehend.

The prophet and visionary sees all the various powers change from form to form until they take on the power of the form visible to him. Then it transforms like the form of an angel and this form changes before him and becomes able to receive the prophetic force. Then the engravings of spiritual channels are inscribed in his heart.

When he completes and fulfills his mission, the prophet then is divested of the power of the revealed form and is invested with the power of his first form. He sheds a form and dons a new form. Then everything is arrayed together, uniting and growing ever stronger. Then all his corporeal powers return to their first state. Then he speaks and functions like all other people. This, then, is the tradition of those pious men,<sup>16</sup> may they all be remembered for good. . . .

10. Another tradition: It has been transmitted by the masters of the divine Names that at various known times they used the demonic ethers to attain a few of the prophetic qualities. This is the utilization of the ether of the Holy One, blessed be He.

There are also those who can transport themselves magically by attaining the ether which includes the secret knowledge of demons. There is a great and wise traditionist whom we met in Narbonne who testified along with many others that Rabbi Eleazar of Worms of blessed memory could occasionally ride upon the form of a magic cloud to faraway places and then return, especially when a good deed needed to be performed far off. Sometimes, though, he would ride upon an animal for many days like all other men. Once he had to perform a circumcision in a far-off place and he flew off by means of his usual incantation. But he forgot something that is required by people who have mastered this wisdom and he fell from his low-

flying cloud. He became lame in his hip and no worldly remedy cured him until the day of his death.<sup>17</sup>

11. The tradition we received has it that there are three ethers above. The first ether is ruled by the great and holy prince whose name is Qedoshi'el. He is the prince of the hosts, and from his power and might spring forth battalions of princely armies and all the heavenly soldiers, the angels of the heavenly armies and those of the heavens above the heavens. All these are emanated from them, and the emanation of their emanations has neither image nor substance nor corporeality. The second ether is the secret knowledge of prophecy. It is the ether donned by the prophets and the high priest and the other priests and the Levites and all who have a supreme soul and intelligence. This is the second ether. The third ether is the ether of the secret knowledge of demons. This is the text of the *Sefer ha-Malbush*.<sup>18</sup>

12. We shall now discuss the third ether. The scholars of tradition said that it is a received tradition from their fathers that this ether is divided into three parts: an upper part, a middle part, and a lower part. The upper part was given over to Asmodeus, the great king of the demons. He does not have permission to accuse or cause confusion except on Mondays. We will expand on this in the treatise as best we can.

Even though Asmodeus is called the great king, he is subservient to Samael. He is called the great prince with reference to the emanations above him and the king of kings with reference to the emanations underneath him. Asmodeus is governed by him and is subservient to him.

Samael, the great prince and great king over all the demons, cohabits with the great Maron Lilith. Asmodeus, the king of the demons, cohabits with the Lesser [Younger] Lilith. The scholars of this tradition admit to many horrendous details concerning the forms of Samael and Asmodeus and the images of Lilith the bride of Samael and Lilith the bride of Asmodeus. Happy is he who merits this knowledge.

The middle part was given over to the king who rules spirits. Qafqafoni is his name and his young mate is Sar'ita', with whom he cohabits for half the year. For the other half of the year he fornicates with another mate whose name is Sagrirta'. Their offspring take on different forms. They have bodies and seem to be two-headed, while the sons of Sar'ita' take on the image of lepers. Some scholars of tra-

dition say that all lepers are the result of this despicable offspring. The sons of Sagrirta' have faces which are ulcerated and they wage a pitched battle among themselves. Evil spirits abound in the ether and all sorts of storms and horrors go forth from the power of these interminglings. Nevertheless, the rule and terror of Asmodeus is imposed on them. . . .

The third part of the ether is occupied by fiends created and clad in many varying forms. Some are in the form of dogs, created by human sins. And the dog formed from this evil issuance happens upon man and bites him, and to cure him is most difficult. Sometimes it changes form from a dog to a slightly different form. It barks and howls and bites again and again and finds no worldly cure until it dies and returns transfigured, mixed in this ether with the power of the form. This is its punishment and annihilation. Because of this secret there is the prayer "Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the clutches of a dog" (Psalms 22:21).

Some take the form of he- and she-goats. From these are 'Aza' and 'Aza'el. Each separately has the form of the image of real men. When they fell from heaven—a part of the above-mentioned ether—they donned the power of this ether just above us and they took on the bodies of men. Then the upper power weakened and they received the lower power. But the progeny which issued from them was more towering and powerful than all mankind.

Some take other forms, like the form of man from birth. Some take the form of men and some the form of women. The only difference is the lies and falsehoods. They are jealous of men and they seek to cheat and foil them. They would have destroyed everything they saw were it not that the attribute of Kingdom summoned her own emanation, Yufi'el, the great prince of the countenance, who is beloved and near to the divine Presence. He rules over the king of that pernicious group. Were it not that the power of his emanation and his terror fills them, they would never leave creatures alone, nor would lowly creatures be able to stand up against them. The name of the king ruling over them is Qafsefoni and the name of his mate is Mehetabel, daughter of Metrad.<sup>19</sup> Their progeny jumps in one bound from one end of the ether to the other. Sometimes they are given permission to rectify the injuries that befall mankind and to inform mankind of its future when they appear as men. They have no rule over lies or falsehoods. He who asks of them will find his answer according to [Qafsefoni's] will, depending on whether the

questioner merits an answer. If he does not merit an answer, they will appear to the questioner only by means of an incantation, but they will answer him that they do not have permission to answer his question. . . .

14. This ruling prince and all his warriors are subservient to Asmodeus the great king. Their rule and the force of their actions are commensurate to the power of emanation which reaches each of them. All that is below and above is subject to the rule of Samael, king of kings. His emanation and the emanation of his chariots will spread forth upon all the troops. All the princes will scurry about at his command until the coming of the word of the divine Will, which will reveal the time and day of revenge which is hidden in His heart and sealed in His treasury. He will then bring down the rule of this red one (*edom*), as it is written: "I will destroy his fruit from above and his roots from beneath" (Amos 2:9). Amen. Hurriedly and in our days!

15. Now we will finish the matter that we started. Occasionally the prince whose name is Qafsefoni can, commensurate to the permission granted him, unite and cohabit with one creature whose name is Lilita. She is in the image of Hagar the Egyptian according to some of the men of this wisdom, though there is some disagreement over this point. . . .

17. Back to what I started regarding the array of heavenly evil armies and their layout from first warrior to last: they were all created from one emanation which came forth from the power of the emanation of Repentance. This is the opening words of the treatise.

But before I finish discussing this issue I will speak to you of something else you need to know. The first creations of the Hidden-from-all, the Cause of causes and the Reason of reasons, were powers which were crowns before Him. They are called "the special world" or "the secluded world," and it is a world which is entirely good. He chooses only good so that the good ones would merit a world which is entirely good. Then His incomprehensible Wisdom chose to create a world that was entirely evil in order to chastise the erring: Maybe they will return in a perfect repentance to achieve merit—if not, this would be their final obliteration. Regarding these two worlds it is said: "He makes peace and creates evil" (Isaiah 45:7). . . .

The world of peace comes first in the verse because it is before the entirely evil world. And even though it has no part in the entirely good world, His first emanation is not from the evil emanation. This

is what we meant when we said that He chooses only the good. And though he formed evil from this good, we cannot understand the profundity of this hidden mystery for it is sealed.

Go and learn of this from the first man who was not the child of any woman but was created from a pure and pristine likeness [of God], lacking any evil inclination to sin. God commanded him and warned him to keep one commandment for his own benefit so that he could enjoy everlasting life. But he transgressed this first commandment.

We believe that the Creator did not want him to sin, nor did He decree that he should. He simply commanded the good. This is the case with other people and pious individuals. The patriarchs serve as an example—from them came Esau and Ishmael and Hezekiah and Manasseh and many other [sinners]. From the good came forth evil, and God neither commanded nor demanded it. All this falls under the category of silence: do not dwell on it—it is so awesome that you ought not inquire, so hidden that you ought not pursue it.

I have explained all this first in order to remove all doubts, and the enlightened will understand. Out of abundant love I have tried to hide part of the whole of which I revealed to you. At first I hinted and concealed when I laid out the order of the princes and their forces, saying that they were all created from a single emanation. I did not say that they were created from the power of a single emanation. Then I said that they were created from the power of the emanation of Repentance, but I did not write that they were from the emanation of Repentance. By this method it was my intention “to reveal a little and conceal much.”<sup>20</sup> “Happy is the man who fears the Lord, who is greatly devoted to his commandments” (Psalms 112:1).

18. This is the order of all the armies, a circle within the circles of the *sefirot*. They are above everything, surrounding and influencing in a general way all that is spiritual by means of their emanations. From the emanation of Repentance come six powers and from the sixth emanation—called Keruzi’el—the emanation of the seventh prince called Masukhi’el is brought forth. All of them are holy and God is in them. From the seventh and onward, ten groups of opposing powers are emanated, parallel to the ten holy *sefirot*. The upper three had no existence and were obliterated. The seven remaining princes along with their forces constantly instigate war with the seven princes of the pure and perfect crowns and occasion-

ally with the seven princes mentioned above in the book we have already written.<sup>21</sup> “Happy is the man who fears the Lord, who is greatly devoted to His commandments” (Psalms 112:1). God is in them: Misvati’el, Hafsi’el, Me’odi’el, the practical commandments are built in golden basis and they were emanated from these three princes who in turn were emanated from the middle pillar called *Tav*.<sup>22</sup> This is the meaning of “You shall not covet the wife of your neighbor” (Exodus 20:14)—it is a description of “the beauty of days,” which corresponds to the middle pillar.<sup>23</sup> “The wife of a neighbor”—these are evil Samael and his mate Lilith. Hemdat’el, Ishti’el, Re’uvel: From these three princes the prohibitions were emanated. They radiate forth from the emanation “Beauty of Water.” O Hemdat’el! Holy of Israel! Grant us the merit to perceive and grasp a perfect knowledge of the secrets of His Torah, as wonderful and dear as pure gold. Grant us life in the world to come. Amen.

19. In answer to your question concerning Lilith, I shall explain to you the essence of the matter. Concerning this point there is a received tradition from the ancient Sages who made use of the *Secret Knowledge of the Lesser Palaces*, which is the manipulation of demons and a ladder by which one ascends to the prophetic levels. In this tradition it is made clear that Samael and Lilith were born as one, similar to the form of Adam and Eve who were also born as one, reflecting what is above. This is the account of Lilith which was received by the Sages in the *Secret Knowledge of the Palaces*. The Matron Lilith is the mate of Samael. Both of them were born at the same hour in the image of Adam and Eve, intertwined in each other. Asmodeus the great king of the demons has as a mate the Lesser (younger) Lilith, daughter of the king whose name is Qafsefoni. The name of his mate is Mehetabel daughter of Matred, and their daughter is Lilith.

This is the exact text of what is written in *The Chapters of the Lesser Palaces* as we have received it, word for word and letter for letter. And the scholars of this wisdom possess a very profound tradition from the ancients. They found it stated in those *Chapters* that Samael, the great prince of them all, grew exceedingly jealous of Asmodeus the king of the demons because of this Lilith who is called Lilith the Maiden (the young). She is in the form of a beautiful woman from her head to her waist. But from the waist down she is burning fire—like mother like daughter. She is called Mehetabel daughter of Matred, and the meaning is something immersed (*mabu*



*tabal*). The meaning here is that her intentions are never for the good. She only seeks to incite wars and various demons of war and the war between Daughter Lilith and Matron Lilith.

They say that from Asmodeus and his mate Lilith a great prince was born in heaven. He is the ruler of eighty thousand destructive demons and is called "the sword of king Asmodeus." His name is Alefpene'ash and his face burns like a raging fire (*esh*). He is also called Gurigur, for he antagonizes and struggles with the prince of Judah, who is called Gur Aryeh Yehudah (Lion-cub of Judah). From the same form that gave birth to this war-demon another prince, a prince whose root is in Kingdom, was born in heaven. He is called "the sword of the Messiah." He too has two names: Meshihi'el and Kokhyi'el. When the time comes and when God wishes, this sword will leave its sheath and verses of prophecy will come true: "For My sword shall be drunk in the heavens; Lo, it shall come down upon Edom" (Isaiah 34:5). "A star rises from Jacob" (Numbers 24:17). Amen. Soon in our days may we merit to see the face of the Messiah our righteous one; we and all our people. . . .

22. I shall now teach you a wonderful innovation. You already know that evil Samael and wicked Lilith are like a sexual pair who, by means of an intermediary, receive an evil and wicked emanation from one and emanate to the other. I shall explain this relying on the esoteric meaning in the verse "In that day the Lord will punish with His great, cruel, mighty sword Leviathan the twisted serpent and Leviathan the tortuous serpent"—this is Lilith—"and He will slay the dragon of the sea" (Isaiah 27:1). As there is a pure Leviathan in the sea and it is called a serpent, so there is a great defiled serpent in the sea in the literal sense. The same holds true above in a hidden way. The heavenly serpent is a blind prince, the image of an intermediary between Samael and Lilith. Its name is Tanin'iver.<sup>24</sup> The masters of tradition said that just as this serpent slithers without eyes, so the supernal serpent has the image of a spiritual form without color—these are "the eyes." The traditionists call it an eyeless creature, therefore its name is Tanin'iver. He is the bond, the accompaniment, and the union between Samael and Lilith. If he were created whole in the fullness of his emanation he would have destroyed the world in an instant. . . .

When the divine Will arrives and the emanation of Samael and Lilith weakens the emanation achieved by the blind prince, they will be completely annihilated by Gabriel prince of Strength, who insti-

gates war against them with the aid of the prince of Lovingkindness. Then the verse which we have expounded according to its secret meaning will come true. . . .

24. I found written in the name of an ancient traditionist and in the name of the perfect Ḥasid of blessed memory<sup>25</sup> that Lilith is also Taninsam.<sup>26</sup> They said that this name is based on the serpent who is in the image of an intermediary between Lilith and her mate. He will eat deadly poison at the hands of the prince of Strength; it is an elixir of life for all whose inclination overcomes them. Then he participates with Michael, the prince of Lovingkindness, in defeating the rule of evil in heaven and on earth. Then the verse will come true: "For His Lovingkindness has overcome us; the truth of God endures forever. Hallelujah" (Psalms 117:2).

The secret of the covenant of salt (*melah*)<sup>27</sup> is the kingdom of the accompaniment of beauty.<sup>28</sup> Therefore they hinted with secrets regarding the salted fish [Leviathan] to feed the righteous in future times. Happy is he who understands these things as they are.

## Notes

1. A term for the Kabbalists.
2. *Sefer Yesirah* 1:4.
3. According to Psalms 44:19.
4. The *sefirah* Kingdom.
5. *SaGaSG'eL* equals 157 and "old man" (*ZaQeN*) has the same value.
6. Part of the Sabbath greeting ritual of Rabbi Yannai as recorded in BT Shabbat 119a.
7. See Psalms 113:9 and Canticles 8:5.
8. "One" (*'H-D*) equals 13.
9. Jacob, the symbol of Beauty, unites with Kingdom.
10. An expression referring to the uppermost *sefirah*.
11. For a discussion of this passage, see J. Dan, "Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah," *AJSReview* 5 (1980), p. 32.
12. *Genesis Rabbah* 9:2.
13. See BT Menahot 29b. The secret of intercalation refers to the leap month of the Jewish lunisolar calendar, and is thought to be a great secret.
14. According to Ecclesiastes 7:24. See Dan, "Samael," pp. 18f.
15. The latter two are eleventh-century Spanish rabbis. Ibn Abitur was a contemporary of Hai Gaon.
16. See beginning of chapter 5. On this and the following chapters, see Dan, "Samael," pp. 23–32.
17. See Isaiah 11:10.
18. Most of chapter 11 is in Aramaic and is the text of one version of the *Sefer ha-Malbush*, the title of several magical texts from Geonic times.

## THE EARLY KABBALAH

19. See Genesis 36:39.
20. Based on BT Nedarim 20b.
21. Scholem believes that chapter 18 was a later addition to the *Treatise* inserted by Rabbi Isaac. The list of princes varies from that in chapter 5; it refers to "the book we have already written"; it ends with a concluding formula. But in light of the admonition at the end of chapter 17, we tend to believe that chapter 18 is an integral part of the original *Treatise*.
22. The *sefirah* Beauty (*tiferet*).
23. The "beauty of days" is a term representing Kingdom, which along with Beauty is located along the middle pillar.
24. Literally: "blind serpent."
25. Rabbi Judah the Hasid?
26. Literally; "poisonous serpent," but also "blind" (*suma*).
27. See Numbers 18:19.
28. *Malkhut Leviat Hen*.

## Glossary

- aggadah**—homiletic expositions of the Rabbis.
- amora**—name for the Rabbis responsible for the *gemara*, the last literary layer of the Talmuds, between roughly 200 and 550 C.E.
- Binah**—"Understanding," the third *sefirah*. A primal female symbol, located at the top of the left column of the Kabbalistic tree.
- devequt**—"communion," usually with the divine realm.
- Eyn Sof**—literally, "No End," a Kabbalistic term for the hidden God who emanates forth the sefirotic tree.
- gematria**—numerology. Every Hebrew letter has a numerological value, and by adding the sum of letters in words the esotericist can weave and interrelate concepts and terms that at first glance have no relation.
- Gevurah**—"Strength," the fifth *sefirah*. Also called *Din* (Severity). Most often linked with the forces of evil, it is called "the raging inferno of the Lord."
- golem**—a homunculus.
- ha'asalah**—The Hebrew term for "emanation."
- halakhah**—literally, "the Way," the legal parameters of Judaism.
- hasid** (pl. *hasidim*)—literally "pious." Many Jewish groups have called themselves by this term. In this volume, *hasid* applies to the German pietists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.