



**תאנא, ספרא דצניעותא, ספרא
דשקיל במתקלא.**

**It was taught: The Book of Concealment
[is] a book weighed on a scale.**

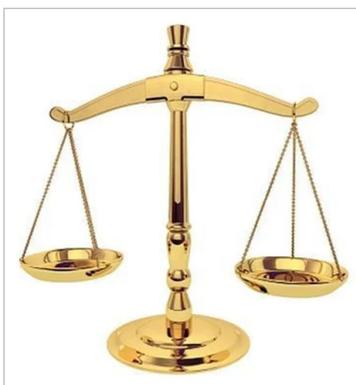
On a *Pshat* level, this part of the *Zohar* is called *Sifra D'Tzniusa, Book of Concealment*, because it deals with the most secretive *kabbalistic* matters, the highest and most abstract knowledge known to man. The scale (*maskala*) reference teaches that every word was weighed for precision on a “holy scale,”¹ so that not a single word is superfluous.

¹ *Mesok Midvash*.

The Vilna Gaon, however, saw more. First, the five words after “*Tanna*” hint to the five chapters of the entire *sefer*. After that, the word “*sifra*” alludes to the *sefirah* of *Chochmah*, which is called *Sefer* by *Sefer Yetzirah*.²

Tzniusa, the GR”A explained, refers to *Radl”a*, the concealed *sefirah* whose light is imperceptible by man. Since the purpose of Creation however is for this sublimely spiritual light to eventually be revealed on some level, it is clothed within the *sefirah* of *Chochmah* like a soul within a body. This *tikun* of light reduction allows the light to descend and create all else that is meant to exist.

Another important part of the *tikun* process was the division within the light of two opposite realities. On the level of *Arich Anpin*, *chesed* and *din*, *male* and *female*, etc., do not have distinct realities because the light is completely unified. It is this distinction that makes our history possible, and free will to make it work.



On the level of *Atzilus*, they became two different and clearly defined realities, *chesed* and *din*. As such, they are compared to the two pans of a scale that hang from a central column (*rachamim*), the *sefirah* of *Keser* when talking about *Chochmah* and *Binah*, and *Da’as* on the level of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*. But really this just refers to the three lines of *sefiros*, *Chesed* on the right side, *Din* on the left side, and *Rachamim* in the middle.

² *Sefer Sefer v’Sippur* in *Sefer Yetzirah* is a reference to *Chochmah*, *Binah*, and *Da’as*.

Therefore, the *Tanna* means with his opening statement that *Atzilus*, which being the level of *Chochmah* is called *sefer*, was created and rectified *b'sod* the *HaMasbkoles*. It is to this that “the book weighed on a scale” refers.³

תאנא, דעד דלא הוה מתקלא דלא הו משגיחין אנפין באנפין.

**It was taught: Until there was a *Maskala*,
they were not face to face.**

What did the creation of the *Maskala* really accomplish? For one, it caused *Abba* and *Imma*⁴ to finally face each other forever, essential for us, and everything we need to survive, to exist.

This requires explanation, a lot of explanation. The *Ohr Ain Sof* is the Source of all light and life, and everything else is a recipient of it. But that light is infinite, and everything created is finite, seemingly making it impossible for the latter to receive the former. Generally, any time something more spiritual enters something less spiritual, it is overwhelmed and destroyed.

³ *Sba'arei Chochmah, Sifra D'Tzniusa*, V. 1, p. 27.

⁴ *Chochmah* and *Binah*, the “they” mentioned

The solution? The *Ohr Ain Sof* created something *Kabbalah* calls *Tzimtzum*, which means *constriction*. And though the words are easy to say, the concept is impossible for a human mind to understand. It means *continuously* constricting the infinite light of God at some location *within* infinity to allow a finite world to exist. . . *without* compromising the integrity of God's infinite light or the finite reality.

It matters less *how* it was done than that it actually occurred. The result was something called the *Challal*, a massively round hollow area devoid of *Ohr Ain Sof* that surrounds it on all sides infinitely. Being completely spiritual there are no physical walls maintaining the shape, only the will of God at all times.



The creation of the *Challal* solved one problem but resulted in another. Too much *Ohr Ain Sof* means nothing can exist, but no *Ohr Ain Sof* also means nothing can exist. This meant allowing only enough *Ohr Ain Sof* to re-enter the *Challal* for the sake of Creation, but not too much that could undo the *Challal*.

The solution was the creation of the *Kav Ohr Ain Sof*—Line of *Ohr Ain Sof*. This allowed a finite amount of infinite light to re-enter the *Challal* and begin the creating process. Anything that will ever exist will be made of this light, which is really just the will of God, no matter how physical a creation it is. Should the light cease, the creation ceases.



One of the most important results of the *tzimtzum* was the creation of boundary. It is this that allows for more than one distinct reality

like up and down, right and left, *chesed* and *din*. Without these, change would be impossible and free will could not exist or have any meaning. A decision is only meaningful if it can have impact, and it can only have impact if it can cause some level of change.

Not only must will have the potential to change reality, it must also be possible to have it independent of the will of other things. But how can anything be even partially independent of the will of God? And if God knows the future, has an ultimate purpose in mind, and makes sure that nothing interferes with its progress, how free can human will be?

There are three potential answers to this question. Some have argued that man therefore has no free will, and that what we call free will is merely an illusion. Others choose to believe that God doesn't exist, or at least does not get involved in the affairs of man. Others yet chalk this paradox up to another miracle of life, meaning that while it may not make sense to us how we can have free will while God has absolute will, it *is* the reality.

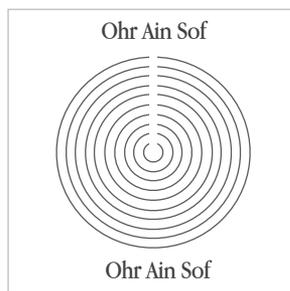
The only reason we can even have these questions is because of *sefiros*. We take it for granted that God's Presence is so invisible to us, but the opposite should be true. Everything that exists is a function of the light of God, and all of Creation exists *within* Him. This means that technically, there really is no where for God to hide. Yet, God is so hidden that some people can even believe they are atheists and use His light to deny that He is the Source of their lives!

But atheists and agnostics co-exist with believers. Each believes that the other has ignored facts and made the wrong decision. The truth is that, though they may physically stand shoulder to shoulder, spiritually and intellectually they are on different planes of reality. *Tzimtzum* is not absolute but occurs in stages, as per the will and design of God.

The method by which God regulates His light is the *sefiros*. The system of *sefiros* is *extremely* intricate and complex, but the idea is relatively straightforward to explain. They work very much like an electrical transformer which receives a high intensity of electricity before reducing it and sending it on its next stage of its journey.

There are ten general *sefiros* connecting the *Ohr Ain Sof* on the outside of the *Challal* to everything within the *Challal*. Their names are (from top to bottom): *Keser* (Crown), *Chochmah* (Wisdom), *Binah* (Understanding), *Chesed* (Kindness), *Gevurah* (Strength), *Tifferes* (Beauty), *Netzach* (Dominance), *Hod* (Glory), *Yesod* (Foundation), and *Malchus* (Kingdom).

Each *sefirah* contains a certain amount and aspect of the *Ohr Ain Sof* which, as the names indicate, results in the revelation of a specific Divine attribute. They are circles within circles, the outermost edge being the boundary of the *Challal*. However, the system replicates itself on each level countless times, resulting in systems within systems within systems, etc. aspects within aspects, etc.



For example, the *sefirah* of *Chochmah* has its own family of ten *sefiros*, the *Keser* of *Chochmah*, the *Chochmah* of *Chochmah*, etc. Viewed as its own unit of ten *sefiros* it is called a *partzuf*, literally, *face*. A face reveals to the outside what is hidden on the inside, as do the ten *sefiros* of any *sefirah*. This gives the unit a different name which, in the case of *Chochmah*, is *Abba*—Father.

As a unit of ten *sefiros*, *Keser* is called *Arich Anpin*, which means *Long Face*. It indicates that this level of *partzuf* is completely *rachamim*—mercy, since a longer face is more patient than a short one, as in the

case of *Zebr Anpin*—Short Face,⁵ which is more *din*—judgment oriented. As a *partzuf*, *Binah* is called *Imma*—Mother, being “mother” to the *sefiros* below that emerged from “her.”

Why call *partzufim* “Father” and “Mother”? Because a human being is physically structured like the *sefiros*, and a family unit acts in the same manner as *partzufim*. The *sefiros* and *partzufim* are the basis of all reality, so all of reality exists and function in similar ways to both.

For example, a human has a right side, a left side, and a middle column (torso). Similarly, there are *sefiros* on the right side (*Chesed*), on the left side (*Gevurah*), and in the middle (*Rachamim*). The human brain consists of three sections, and the *sefiros* of *Keser*, *Chochmah*, and *Binah* are considered the three brain sections (*mochin*) in any system of ten *sefiros*.

A man leaves his father and mother and marries his *zivug*—soulmate.⁶ It is this that permits physical intimacy that results in the creation and birth of a new human being that is a physical combination of both parents. Likewise, *partzufim* have *zivugim*—pairings—in order to transfer light from one level to another for the sake of the creation of a new *partzuf* as required by history and the will of God.⁷

It was the original *zivug* of *Abba* and *Imma* that gave “birth” to *Zebr Anpin*, and then the *Nukvab*. It is their ongoing *zivug*, set in place

⁵ The more filtered the *Ohr Ain Sof*, the more *din*-oriented it becomes. Since the light is increasingly constricted, the reality of God becomes less obvious which is essential for the existence of evil which is necessary for free will. This is only possible on the level of the bottom seven *sefiros* which are the basis of *Zebr Anpin* and the *Malchus*.

⁶ *Bereishis* 2:24.

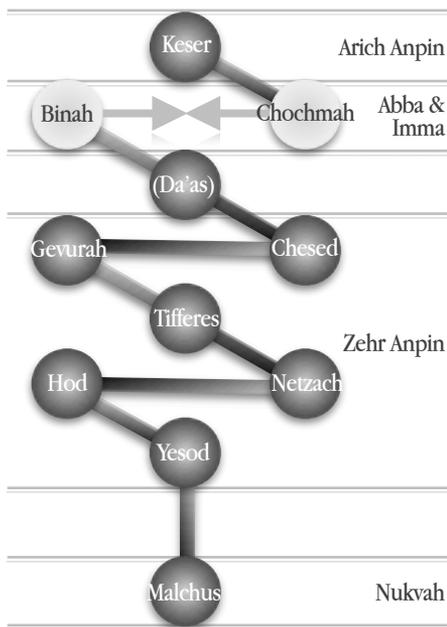
⁷ This can result in something new in history, or just an event itself. This is also the means by which God answers prayers.

from the time of *Tikun Ma'aseh Bereisbis* that maintains them and our world. “*Aim babanim sameichab—the happy mother of children*”⁸ refers to *Binah*, the “mother” of *Zehr Anpin* and his “bride,” *Nukvah*.

Should *Abba* and *Imma* ever turn back-to-back once again (which will never happen), Creation as we experience it would cease to exist. However, for the sake of the will of man, the amount of light that does flow from *Abba* and *Imma* to *Zehr Anpin* and *Malchus* can be increased or reduced based upon the actions of man, just as a child’s behavior can cause parents to restrict the good they give.

Front-to-front and back-to-back postures are easy to understand when it comes to human relationships. When people face one another they can fully communicate and share how they feel. They feel connected and able to share with others, allowing relationships to form or be strengthened, the opposite of what happens when they are back-to-back, or even just front-to-back.

Sefiros however are spiritual entities and spherical. They don’t really have a front or back per se. But it is really a matter of function over form, the latter often being dictated by the former in the material world. In other words, how a *sefirah* functions in terms of transmitting Divine light makes it *k’eehu*—as if—it is facing frontwards or backwards. If light is



⁸ *Tebillim* 113:9.

passed on unfiltered then the *sefirab* is said to be facing the receiver. If it is filtered and reduced in intensity, then it is considered to have its back to the receiver.

This is a deeply *kabbalistic* idea that explains so much on an everyday practical level, so it was reflected in the *keruim* that adorned the top of the *Aron HaKodesh*:

You shall make two golden keruim; you shall make them of hammered work, from the two ends of the ark cover. (Shemos 25:18)

They had the features of a child. (*Rashi*)

It is known regarding the *keruim* that one alluded to God, *may His Name be blessed*, and the second, to the Jewish people, His treasure. [Therefore,] their (the Jewish People's) closeness and clinging to Him, *may His Name be blessed*, or the opposite, *God forbid*, was recognizable by the stance of the *keruim*, which was miraculous and wondrous. If they (the Jewish People) faced straight to Him,⁹ *may His Name be blessed*, then the *keruim* [also] faced each other. If the opposite was the case and they turned their faces to the side somewhat,¹⁰ then it was immediately apparent from the *keruim*. If, *God forbid*, they completely turned their backs [to God], the *keruim* also completely turned away from each other at that time. (*Nefesh HaChaim, Sha'ar 1, Ch. 8*)

⁹ They fulfilled all the *mitzvos* as necessary and avoided sin.

¹⁰ They weren't meticulous in *mitzvah* performance and avoiding sin.

The back-to-back, reduced light stance of the *sefiros* serves two purposes. It does reduce the light and blessing man is able to access, making it easier for people to become confused about the existence of God.¹¹ It causes history to look more random, especially when good things seem to happen to bad people. . . even though God is as much in control of Creation and history as always.¹²

The other reason is to save Creation. The force of evil, the *Klipos*¹³ in *Kabbalah*, feed off the same spiritual energy that good does. Just as evil people use the same technology as good people but for evil purposes, the *Klipos* use energy meant for the performance of good, for evil,¹⁴ destroying much of Creation in the process. Anti-Semitism is evil, but it uses misdirected holy sparks to carry out its evil plans.¹⁵

To limit that possibility, God limits the flow of His light downward by having the requisite *sefiros* stand back-to-back during parts of history. This weakens the flow of *Ohr Ain Sof* into the world of the *Klipos*, limiting their ability to expand and carry out their plans for evil.

¹¹ What the Torah calls *Hester Panim*, the hiding of God's face (*Devarim* 31:18).

¹² *Cbullin* 7b.

¹³ *Klipos* are peels, and they are called this because, like a peel, they spiritually encase a person's heart to prevent them from connecting to God and living by truth.

¹⁴ This is what happens when the energy enters the world and not enough people use it for good. The light is not withdrawn to higher and safe levels in the *sefiros* but taken and used by the *Klipos* to do evil, often against the Jewish People.

¹⁵ Obviously this cannot happen if God does not approve (*Cbullin* 7b). The possibility is built into Creation to further the goals of history, but in a negative way. No one can interfere with God's plan for Creation, just affect, through choice, which path He takes to its fulfillment. This is what the Torah is teaching in *Parashas Bechukosai* and *Parashas Ki Savo* when discussing the blessings for Torah obedience, and the curses for the opposite.