

THE NUMBER OF TIMES THE WORD **אמת** APPEARS WITHIN THE **אמת ויציב** OF **ברכה**

In **נוסח** **אשכנז** the word **אמת** appears six times in the **ברכה** of **אמת ויציב** while in **נוסח** **ספרד** and in **מנהג ספרד** the word appears eight times. The two additional references are as the first word of two lines within the paragraph beginning with the words: **עזרת ישראל**:

אמת, אשרי איש שישמע למצותיך, ותורתך ודברך ישים על לבו. אמת, אתה הוא ארון לעמך, ומלך גבור לריב ריבם לאבות ובנים. אמת, אתה הוא ראשון ואתה הוא אחרון, ומבלעדיך אין לנו מלך גואל ומושיע. אמת, ממצרים גאלתנו, יי אלהינו, ומבית עבדים פדיתנו.

In a footnote contained in the **סידור מה"ר שבתאי סופר** published in 2002 by Yeshiva Ner Yisroel, the editors note that the language followed by **נוסח ספרד** and **מנהג ספרד** can be traced to the **אבודרהם** and that a justification for the **נוסח** is found in the **זוהר** as follows:

The same Rab Hamnuna further said, that to concentrate the whole idea of unification in the term "אהר" is a still better way; and it is for this reason that we dwell long over the enunciation of the word "אהר", during which we effect the fusion into one of the upper and the lower worlds. As we have learnt, "אהר" 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** (Infinite). After the recital of "שמע ישראל", we have to recite the section containing mention of the Exodus from Egypt (במדבר טו', לז'-מא'), for the reason that the **שכינה** was in the Egyptian exile, and as long as She¹ is in exile there is no union between the upper and the lower worlds. But the redemption from Egypt, attended by all those signs and wonders, set Her free; and that redemption has to be mentioned by us to show that though She was in chains, She is now free, so as to join her heavenly Spouse. It is hence incumbent on us to let the recital of the Redemption be followed closely by our petitionary prayers, as a sign of perfect unity (between the divine aspects) without a rift and without any separation whatever. The source for this is the verse: (ויקרא כא', ז') **אשה גרושה מאישה לא יקחו**. But, you may say, is She not at present in exile, and so divorced? This is not so. She is indeed in exile, but only for the sake of Israel, so as to dwell with them and to shield them, but She is not divorced. Now the **שכינה** appeared neither during the first Temple nor during the second Temple. In the second Temple, before Israel were driven into exile, She ascended on high, and only after the exile did She make Her abode with them. But She was not divorced. Hence the importance of the first redemption, the one from Egypt which incorporated all the four redemptions. The esoteric exposition of the matter is as follows. When the **שכינה** left the exile of Egypt, She besought the Holy One, blessed be He, that She might there and then be redeemed with a fourfold redemption, corresponding to the four exiles, so that She might remain free and never again be divorced. This request was granted and the

1. The **שכינה**

exodus thus embraced for the **שכינה** all the four redemptions. At the moment, therefore, of Her union with Her heavenly Spouse there is need for the display, so to speak, of the redemption from Egypt, including as it does the four redemptions. Hence, we have, in the recital of that redemption, to repeat four times the term “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”, the term “אמת” recurs again four times, whereby we fortify, confirm and corroborate, as it were, the same four redemptions with the seal and signet of the King. Were not the four redemptions included within the Exodus during the whole of the exile She would not obtain Her adornments so as to manifest the unity of the Divine Name. We have thus to make mention of the redemption from Egypt in every recital of Sanctification offered to the Holy One, blessed be He, for ever and to all eternity.

(Reproduced from the *Davka Soncino Translation of the זוהר*).

In **נוסה אשכנו** as well as in **נוסה ספרד** and **מנהג ספרד**, the word “אמת” appears four times before the paragraph: **עזרת אבותינו**:

אמת ויציב, ונכון וקיים, וישר ונאמן, ואהוב וחביב, ונחמד ונעים, ונורא ואדיר, ומתקן ומקבל, וטוב ויפה הדבר הזה עלינו לעולם ועד. **אמת** אלקי עולם מלפנו, צור יעקב, מגן ישענו, לדר ודר הוא קיים, ושמו קיים, וכסאו נכון, ומלכותו ואמונתו לעד קיימת. ודבריו חיים וקיימים, נאמנים ונחמדים לעד ולעולמי עולמים. על אבותינו ועלינו, על בנינו ועל דורותינו, ועל כל דורות זרע ישראל עבדיך. על הראשונים ועל האחרונים, דבר טוב וקיים לעולם ועד, **אמת** ואמונה חק ולא יעבר. **אמת** שאתה הוא ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, מלפנו מלך אבותינו, נאלנו גאל אבותינו, יוצרנו צור ישועתינו, פורנו ומצילנו מעולם שמה, אין אלקים זולתך.

The inclusion of the word **אמת** in two additional lines of **עזרת אבותינו** can be traced back further in history to the **סידור רב סעדיה גאון**:

עוזר את אבותינו אתה הוא מעולם, מגן ומושיע בניהם אחריהם בכל דור ודור. **אמת** אשרי איש שישמע למצותיך, ותורתך ודברך ישים על לבו. **אמת** אתה הוא אדון לעמך מלך גבור לריב ריבם. **אמת** אתה הוא ראשון ואתה הוא אחרון, ובלעדיך אין לנו מושיע. **אמת** ממצרים גאלתנו, יי אלהינו, ומבית עבדים פדיתנו.

What makes matters interesting is that in the **סידור רב סעדיה גאון** the word: **אמת** only appears three times in the section before **עזרת אבותינו**:

אמת יציב, ונכון וקיים, וישר ונאמן, ואהוב וחביב, ונחמד, ומתקן ומקבל, וצדיק ונורא ונעים וטוב ויפה הדבר הזה עלינו לעולם ועד. **אמת** אלקי עולם מלפנו, צור יעקב, מגן ישענו, לדר ודר הוא קיים, ושמו קיים כסאו נכון, ומלכותו קיימת. ודבריו קיימים נאמנים נחמדים לעולם ולעולמי עולמים. עלינו ועל אבותינו על בנינו ועל דורותינו, ועל כל דורות זרע עמך ישראל עבדיך. הראשונים והאחרונים, דבר טוב קיים לעולם ועד, חק ולא יעבר. **אמת** שאתה הוא ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, מלפנו ומלך אבותינו, גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו, יוצרנו צור ישועתינו, פורנו ומצילנו מעולם הוא שמה, ואין לנו עוד אלקים זולתך.

SUPPLEMENT

In this week's newsletter we find how the **זוהר** justifies some of the language we find in the **ברכה** of **אמת ויציב**. Here are two more excerpts from the **זוהר** that concern **תפלה**. The second excerpt precedes the part of the **זוהר** that we studied in the newsletter.

Zohar page 202 Parshat Va'Yakheil-R. Jose further discoursed on the verse: **וַיֹּאמֶר לִי** **עֲבַדֵי-אֲתָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-בְּךָ אֶתְפָּאֵר** “And He said unto me: Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified” (Isa. XLIX, 3). ‘Observe’, he said, ‘that there is an outer and bodily worship of the Holy One, blessed be He, and an inner and spiritual worship which is the true and genuine worship. The body possesses twelve members that participate in rendering worship. These are the outer members of the body, but there are also twelve inner members whose act of worship is of benefit to the spirit. For this is the inner and precious worship of the Holy One, Blessed be He, as expounded among the mysteries taught by R. Simeon, and as belonging to the mysteries of supernal wisdom known to the Companions, happy is their portion! Prayer is spiritual worship. Deep mysteries are attached to it, for men wot not that a man's prayer cleaves the ethereal spaces, cleaves the firmament, opens doors and ascends on high. At the moment of daybreak, when light emerges from darkness, a proclamation resounds through all the firmaments, saying: Make yourselves ready, ye sentinels at the doors, chiefs of the Palace—each one to his post! For the day-attendants are not the same as the night-attendants, the two groups replacing each other with the succession of day and night. This is alluded to in the passage, **וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת-הַמְּאֹר הַגְּדֹל לְמִשְׁלַת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמְּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמִשְׁלַת לַיְלָה** “the greater light for to rule the day”, etc. (Gen. I, 16), **וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת-הַמְּאֹר הַגְּדֹל לְמִשְׁלַת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמְּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמִשְׁלַת לַיְלָה** “the rule of the day” and **וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת-הַמְּאֹר הַגְּדֹל לְמִשְׁלַת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמְּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמִשְׁלַת לַיְלָה** “the rule of the night” signifying the day-attendants and the night-attendants. When night arrives proclamation is made, saying: Make yourselves ready, O ye rulers of the night—each one to his place! Similarly, when day breaks a proclamation goes forth: Make yourselves ready, ye rulers of the day—each one to his place! Each one thus, following the proclamation, is assigned his suitable place. The Shekinah then descends whilst Israel enter the Synagogue to offer praise to their Master in song and hymn. It behoves, then, every man, after equipping himself with emblems of holiness, [Tr. note: Fringes and phylacteries.] to attune his heart and his inner being for that act of worship and to say his prayers with devotion. For the words that he utters ascend on high, for the scrutiny of angelic supervisors. These abide in ethereal space on the four sides of the world. On the eastern side there is the chief supervisor, whose name is Gezardiya, and who is attended by a number of other chieftains, all awaiting the word of prayer that is about to ascend to the ethereal realm on that side. The moment it does so the supervisor takes it up. If it be fitly uttered, he, together with all the other chieftains, kisses that utterance and carries it aloft into the supernal firmament, where other chieftains are awaiting it. When kissing the utterance of prayer they

say: “Happy are ye, O Israel, who know how to crown your Master with holy crowns. Happy is the mouth from which issued this utterance, this crown.” Then the letters of the Divine Name that abide in the ethereal space soar upwards. That Divine Name is formed of twelve letters, and is the one by which Elijah flew to the ethereal regions until he reached heaven. This is indicated in the words that Obadiah spoke to Elijah, saying, וְרוּחַ ה' יְשָׁאֲךָ “...that the spirit of the Lord (TETRAGRAMMATON) will carry thee...” For it was that Name by which Elijah flew upwards, and it is that Name that rules the ethereal space. The letters, then, of the Name fly upwards with the prayer-utterance, in company with the chief who holds the keys of the ether, and all the other chiefs, until heaven is reached, where the prayer is taken in charge by another chief to carry it still higher. On the southern side there is another chieftain ruling over the ethereal space of that region and having under him a number of supervisors and officers. His name is Pesagniyah, and he is in charge of the keys of the ethereal space in that quarter. Now the prayer of persons in deep sorrow and anguish, if uttered with due devotion, ascends into that region and is taken up by the chief, who kisses it and pronounces over it the words, “The Holy One, blessed be He, be merciful towards thee and be filled with compassion on thy behalf.” Then all the chieftains and officers administering that region accompany it upwards, along with the letters of the Divine Name-to wit, the Name of four letters that rule that region-until it reaches the heaven over that region. There it is taken in charge by the chief of that region. The name of the one in charge of the northerly region, who also has under his command a number of chieftains and officers, is Petahyah. He is appointed over that side to which prayers offered for deliverance from enemies ascend. If such a prayer be found worthy, the chief takes it up and kisses it. Then a spirit emerges out of the abyss in the North who makes proclamation through all the ethereal spaces, so that they all take up that prayer and carry it into heaven, all the while kissing it and exclaiming, “May thy Master cast thy enemy down before thee.” It then ascends and cleaves the heavens. When it reaches the first heaven it is met by the chief of the West, whose name is Zebuliel, and who presides over numerous chieftains and officers that stand sentry over nine doors. The same Zebuliel would fain minister in that heaven in the daytime, but he is not permitted until moonlight appears, when he comes out with all those legions and chieftains. But when day breaks they all retire through one, the most prominent of the nine doors. Now any ascending prayer enters through that door, and then all officers and chieftains, under the guidance of Zebuliel their chief, emerge through that door. They embrace it, and accompany it to the second heaven. That heaven is fitted with twelve gates, at the twelfth of which there stands a chief, named ‘Anael, who is in command of numerous hosts and legions. And when the prayer arrives there that chief loudly orders all those doors to be opened, exclaiming, פְּתוּהוּ שְׁעָרִים וַיִּבְנֶה גוֹי־צַדִּיק שֹׁמֵר אֲמוֹנִים “Open ye the gates”, etc. (Isa. XXVI, 2). All the gates then open, and the prayer enters through all the doors. Then arises a chief, ancient of days, who is placed at the northern side, and whose name is ‘Azriel the Ancient, though sometimes he is called Mahniel (lit. mighty camp). This other name is given him because he commands sixty myriads of legions. All these legions are winged, part of them are full of eyes, and by their side are others full of ears. These are called “ears” because they listen to all those who pray in a whisper, from the heart, so that the prayer should not be overheard by anyone else. Only such a prayer is accepted by these “all-eared” legions, whereas 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 behoves man to be careful not to let others hear his prayer. Furthermore, prayer becomes absorbed in the upper world, and the speech of the upper world should remain inaudible. Similarly, in the reading of the Book of the Law, while one reads, the other standing by him should be silent. 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; so that if there are two voices and two utterances there is a diminution of Divine Faith. When the silent prayer soars aloft, all those sixty myriads of legions, all those “all-eye” and “all-ear” hosts, come forward and kiss it. So Scripture says: **עֵינֵי ה' אֶל-צְדִיקִים וְאָזְנוּ אֶל-שׁוֹעֲתָם:** “The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry” (Ps. XXXIV, 16), indicating the “all-eye” and the “all-ear” legions. From thence the prayer mounts to the third heaven, the chief of which is Gedariah, who has under him numerous officers and chiefs. He ministers three times a day in the presence of a ray of light that is constantly shooting up and down in that heaven without ever being still. And when the prayer mounts up there that ray descends and bows down before it. Then the chief of that heaven, after bowing down to the prayer, strikes with the ray of light against a mighty rock that is placed in the centre of that heaven, and there emerge from it three hundred and seventy-five legions that have been confined within it since the day the Torah came down to earth. They were so confined because they endeavoured to prevent the Torah descending on earth, and God rebuked and shut them up in the interior of that rock, whence they do not emerge save at the time when prayer ascends. They then break forth into song, chanting: **ה' אֲדֹנָינוּ מָה-אֲדִיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכֹל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-תָּנָה הוֹדֶךָ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם:** “O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is thy name... above the heavens” (Ps. VIII, 2). They then bow to the prayer, after which it is crowned with supernal crowns and mounts up into the fourth heaven. Then comes forth the sun and Shamshiel, the chief, enters that heaven accompanied by three hundred and sixty-five legions called days of the solar year, and they all crown that prayer with crowns of sweet perfume of the Garden of Eden. There it tarries until all those legions accompany it into the fifth heaven, the chief of which is Gadriel. This angel is in charge of the wars waged among the nations, but as soon as the prayer arrives there a trembling seizes him with all his hosts so that their strength is enfeebled; and they come forward and bow down to the prayer, and crown it and accompany it into the sixth heaven. There numerous hosts and legions come out to receive it and ascend with it until they reach a series of seventy gates in charge of a chief whose name is Anpiel. He crowns the prayer with seventy crowns. Then all the hosts and legions of all these heavens join together and take up that prayer, crowned with all these crowns, into the seventh heaven. Finally Sandalphon, the supreme chief, the keeper of all his Master's keys, introduces the prayer into the seven Palaces, to wit, the Palaces of the King. When the prayer enters there, decorated with all those crowns, it combines them all into one heavenly crown, each prayer according to its rank. And the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, is crowned on all sides, above and below, so that the whole forms a unity. Of this Scripture says: **בְּרָכוֹת לְרֹאשׁ צְדִיק** “Blessings are upon the head of the righteous” (Prov. x, 6). Happy is the portion of the man who knows the proper way in which to order his prayer. The Holy One, blessed be He, being glorified in such a prayer, awaits the completion of all the prayers of Israel, so that the whole is fitly harmonized, both the above and the below.

‘So far we have spoken of prayer. But there are in addition certain precepts that are bound up, not with action, but with the words of prayer. These are in number six. The first is אִם-לֹא תִשְׁמַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבַרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת הַכְּתוּבִים בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה לִירְאָה אֶת-הַשֵּׁם הַנּוֹכָח לְלֶכֶת בְּכָל-דְּרָכָיו וְלֹא-אֶהְיֶה אִתּוֹ וְלִעֲבֹד אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשֶׁךָ: “to fear the glorious and awful Name” (Deut. XXVIII, 58); the second is לְלֶכֶת בְּכָל-דְּרָכָיו וְלֹא-אֶהְיֶה אִתּוֹ וְלִעֲבֹד אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשֶׁךָ: “to love Him” (*Ibid.* x, 12); the third is to bless Him; the fourth is to proclaim His unity; the fifth enjoins the priests to bless the people; the sixth bids man to surrender his soul to Him. These six precepts are bound up with the words of prayer, just as there are other precepts that are connected with the action of prayer, such as those of the fringes and phylacteries. Now the injunction “to fear the Name” is accomplished by means of the hymns and songs that King David chanted, and of the sacrifices ordained by the Torah. For it behooves man to be filled thereby with fear of his Master, for those hymns belong to a region called “Fear” (*yir'ah*), [Tr. note: *Malkuth*.] and all the *Hallelukahs* are emblematic of the fear of the Holy One, [Tr. note: Because the word *Hallelukah* has the same numerical value as *Elohim*, signifying the attribute of Justice.] blessed be He; it thus behooves man to attune his mind to a spirit of awe in the recital of those hymns. In arriving at יִשְׁתַּבַּח “Praised be” it behooves a man to concentrate his thoughts on the Holy One, blessed be He, in that benediction which reads: יוֹצֵר אוֹר “Blessed art Thou... who formest light... יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת Blessed art Thou, O Lord creator of the universe.” The precept, “to love Him”, is realized in the benediction commencing with אַהֲבָה רַבָּה “With abundant love”, which is followed by the reading of וְאַהֲבַת אֵת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God...”, containing the mystery of the love of the Holy One, blessed be He. And we proclaim His unity when we recite שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One”, as that declaration contains the secret of God's oneness. After the reading of these sections comes the passage wherein we mention our exodus from Egypt, in fulfilment of the injunction, וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּפְדֶּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם עַל-כֵּן: “But thou shalt remember that thou was a bondman in Egypt” (Deut. XXIV, 18). There follows the pronouncement of the blessing of the people by the priests in order to embrace all Israel at the moment when they receive blessings. For at that moment the Community of Israel receives blessings, and it is a propitious moment to surrender our souls to Him in the full willingness of our heart when we fall on our faces and recite the Psalm: אֶלֶיךָ ה' נִפְשִׁי אֲשָׂא: “Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul...” (Ps. xxv, 1), which should be the expression of our full and complete self-surrender to Him. These are the six precepts that are bound up with our daily prayer, and that comprise in a way the six hundred precepts of the Torah. If you ask, What of the thirteen left over, [Tr. note: There being, according to the Rabbinic reckoning, six hundred and thirteen precepts.] these are a category apart designed to draw upon us the thirteen attributes of mercy that comprise all the precepts. These are the six precepts by which prayer is embroidered. Happy is the portion of whoever concentrates his heart and will on them and realizes them every day. With these precepts many others are interwoven, but at each particular passage it behooves man to concentrate his heart and will on the particular precept contained in that passage. Such a man is praised aloud in the words contained in the

passage: “וַיֹּאמֶר לִי עַבְדֵי־אֲתָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־בְּךָ אֶתְפָּאֵר:” “And He said unto me: Thou art My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified” (Isa. XLIX, 3).’

Zohar page 216 Parshat V'Yakheil-He further discoursed as follows. ‘It is written: אֲתָהּ: “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God” (Deut. x, 20), and also, וַיִּרְאֵתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי ה': “and thou shalt fear thy God (*m'elohekho*, lit. from thy God)” (Lev. XIX, 14). Why in the latter passage is it written, “from thy God” and not simply “thy God”, as in the former passage? The preposition “from”, however, points to the place which is attached to the “brain” and surrounds it. That spot is the central fire that surrounds the innermost fire. For there are three varieties of fire in that connection. The first is the fire that receives fire with joy, the two meeting each other in love and joy; the second is that of which it is written, וְנִגְהָ לְאֵשׁ וּמִן־הָאֵשׁ יוֹצֵא בָרָק: “and there was brightness (*nogah*) to the fire” (Ezek. I, 13); it is the inmost fire which is joyful at the presence of the other fire. Then comes the third fire which surrounds that brightness, and wherein resides the terror of Severity for the punishment of the wicked. Indeed, there is also a teaching that speaks of four varieties of fire-four that are in essence one. However, it is in the aforementioned fire that the terror of Severity resides. Hence “thou shalt fear (that which comes) *from* thy God”, meaning: “Thy fear shall start from, or be inspired by, His punishment.” Furthermore, we should combine fear with love, fear on one side and love on the other. We have to fear on account of the punishment that proceeds from the one side for the transgression of the precepts of the Torah-for once this is begun, the side that inflicts it never relaxes until the transgressor is exterminated from this world and from the world to come. Man has thus to fear that fire which is the seat of fear. That fire spreads out into another fire outside, belonging to another object of fear, in regard to which it is written, לֹא תִירְאוּ אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם יוֹשְׁבִים בְּאֶרְצָם, “ye shall not fear the gods of the Amorites” (Judges VI, 10). But the aforementioned fire belongs to the holy side, and is the one that surrounds that brightness (*nogah*) mentioned before. The other and extraneous fire at times joins this fire, and at other times moves away from it. When it does join, it turns into darkness so as to darken and shut out the light of the other fires. After fear comes love. This is esoterically expressed by saying: “After fear has hovered over a man's head there awakens love, which belongs to the right side.” For he who worships out of love attaches himself to a very sublime region and to the holiness of the “World-to-be”, by reason of love ascending to the “right side” for its attachment and adornment. Think not, however, that worship coming from the side of fear is no worship at all. In truth it is worship highly to be prized. It does not ascend, however, so as to join the highest part of the supernal sphere. This is reserved for worship inspired by love, and he who worships in a spirit of love is the man destined for the future world. Happy is the portion of such a one in that he exercises dominion over the region of fear, love being the sole power dominating fear in virtue of its belonging to the recondite influence of the right. It is further essential in the performance of our worship to avow the unity of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, and to avow the oneness of the upper and lower members and grades, and to combine them all in the spot to which they fittingly converge. This is the recondite significance of the declaration: שִׁמְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ

ה' אחד

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. VI, 4). The term שמע SH e M a’ (hear) is esoterically analysed into SH e M (name) and the letter “ע” Ain (= 70), that is, one Name comprising seventy names whilst remaining a unity. “Israel” here signifies “Ancient Israel”, in contrast to “Little Israel”, of whom it is written: **כִּי נֶעַר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶהְיֶהוּ** “When Israel was a child, then I loved him” (Hos. XI, 1). “Ancient Israel” symbolizes the union of the Shekinah with her Spouse, and in pronouncing that name we have to concentrate our mind on the principle of unity, on the union of the two habitations; we have to put all our being, all the members of our body, our complete devotion, into that thought so as to rise and attach ourselves to the *En-sof* (Infinite), and thus achieve the oneness of the upper and the lower worlds. The words, “the Lord our God” are to reunite all the Members to the place from which they issued, which is the innermost Sanctuary. The same thought is continued in the words, **ה' אחד** the Lord is one”, in the recital of which we have to make our thoughts range throughout all the grades up to the Infinite (*En-sof*) in love and fear. This is the method of avowing the unity of God practised by Rab Hamnuna the Venerable, who learnt it from his father, who had it from his master, and so on, till it came from the mouth of Elijah. And it is the correct and proper method.

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