



Les Idroth

אדרא רבא

אדרא זוטא

*The Greater and Lesser
Assemblies of the Zohar*

Jaromír Hladík

ÉDITION CLEMENTINIUM

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LES IDROTH

Idra Rabba and Idra Zuta

The Greater and Lesser Assemblies of the Zohar

*An Anthology Translated from the Aramaic
and Annotated in German by Jaromír Hladík*

The present English edition follows that German version

By the same author, in the same Bibliotheca Hladikiana:

Sefer Yetzirah, The Book of Creation
Hermann Barsdorf, Berlin, 1928.

Defence of Eternity, Volume I.

History of the Conceptions of Eternity.
Verlag Calve, Prague, 1928.

Defence of Eternity, Volume II.

Critique of Linear Time.

Verlag Calve, Prague, 1929.

Sefer ha-Bahir, The Book of Clarity.
Completed in 1931, left unpublished
(accepted by R. Löwit, Vienna).

The Jewish Sources of Boehme.
Mánes, Prague, 1934.

אדרות

Les Idroth

Idra Rabba

⌘

Idra Zuta

The Greater and Lesser Assemblies
of the Zohar

Jaromír Hladík

(Completed in Prague, 1933)

ÉDITION CLEMENTINIUM

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Bibliotheca Hladikiana,
under the direction of *W. D. F.*

Les Idroth, Idra Rabba and Idra Zuta of the Zohar, an anthology translated from the Aramaic and annotated in German by Jaromír Hladík; the present English edition follows that German version. Hladík had established his text after the Mantua editio princeps (1558–1560), collated with the manuscripts Cambridge Add. 1023 and Vatican Ebr. 206.

Completed in Prague in 1933 and left unpublished; the Prague bookseller Karel Brož had announced its publication, which never took place. First edition from the autograph of the Hladík fonds (Hradčany), shelf-mark H-1933/1. Texts established by the author from the sections Idra Rabba (Zohar III, fol. 127b–145a) and Idra Zuta (Zohar III, fol. 287b–296b) of the Mantua edition.

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NOTE ON THE PRESENT EDITION

Jaromír Hladík's Idroth remained unpublished. Hladík had completed his anthology (a translation from the Aramaic and a commentary, both written in German) in Prague, in 1933; the Prague bookseller Karel Brož had announced its publication, which never took place. The text has come down to us only through the autograph preserved in the Hladík fonds (Hradčany): that manuscript is today its sole witness. The present edition is therefore the first, established from that autograph (shelf-mark H-1933/1).

Hladík thought and wrote this book in German, the cultivated German of the Prague of his youth. We give here the English translation of that German version, the original of which is reproduced in full in the appendix at the end of the volume. The preface, the introduction, the notes, and the bibliography are therefore, like the translated verses, the author's own; we have confined ourselves to rendering them into English, adding nothing to his voice of 1933.

A single stratum is later than the completion of the book: the autograph carries, in the margin of verse Z.9, a pencil annotation dated March 1939. We have reproduced it in its place, but clearly detached from the author's commentary, so that it not be confused with the notes of 1933. Apart from this marginal, the volume contains nothing that is not from Hladík's own hand.

W. D. F.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Prague, autumn 1933

The present volume closes, at the date on which I write these pages, the kabbalistic trilogy which I announced in the preface to the *Sefer ha-Bahir* (completed in 1931). After the *Yetzirah* (Berlin, 1928), a tannaitic text of the origins, and the *Bahir* (completed in 1931), a Provençal text of the medieval threshold, there comes at last that which marks the summit: the two *Assemblies* of the Castilian *Zohar* (c. 1280), *Idra Rabba* (the Greater) and *Idra Zuta* (the Lesser). Three texts, three centuries, three countries; the arc that unites them sketches a history of Jewish kabbalah from its tannaitic roots to its classical formulation.

I confess, as I begin this preface, that I have postponed the translation of the *Idroth* longer than I should have wished. When I had completed the *Bahir*, in the autumn of 1931, I had promised myself that I would take up the *Idroth* in the following year. Two reasons prevented me. The first is philological: the language of the *Idroth* is a late, strange Aramaic, mingling elements genuinely medieval with archaisms deliberately employed by the compiler of the *Zohar* (Moses de León, who died at Arévalo in 1305) in order to give his text the appearance of a tannaitic work. This language has no equivalent in Jewish literature; it requires of the translator a constant decision between literal fidelity and German readability. It took me almost a year to settle my choices.

The second reason is more personal. The *Idroth* are *moving* texts in the strongest sense, as neither the *Yetzirah* (abstract, mathematical) nor the *Bahir* (scattered, aggadic) is. The narrative they unfold (Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai gathering his nine compan-

ions in the field of the holy apple-trees to reveal to them the secrets of the divinity, three of them dying during the revelation, so strong is the doctrine for human consciousness, Rabbi Shimon himself dying at the end of the *Idra Zuta* in a joy that suspends time) is, in all the mystical literature of the world, one of the most profound and most heart-rending. I needed several successive readings, spaced over two years, before I felt capable of rendering even a part of it into German.

I do not, for all that, cherish the illusion that I have translated the untranslatable. The *Zohar* is the most difficult work I know, and the *Idroth* are its part most dense in doctrine, most charged with feeling, and most coded in language. No translation can claim to render, at once, these three depths. My translation attempts, like that of the *Bahir*, a compromise: a reasoned selection (about 25 passages, chosen for their architectural value), a German translation which gives doctrinal clarity precedence over literalness, and an apparatus of notes which indicates to the reader what the translation has had to sacrifice. The arc that governs this selection is not doctrinal but narrative: it stretches from the double “woe” of Rabbi Shimon, with which the *Idra Rabba* opens, to the death of the three companions, then to the death of the master himself at the end of the *Idra Zuta*; and it is this arc, which runs from the word to death, that I have wished, above all, to make visible.

A few words on the doctrine which the *Idroth* unfold. The central motif is what it is customary to call the *theosophy of the faces* (*partsufim*). Where the *Bahir* spoke of ten sephiroth as ten “faces of a single one,” the *Idroth* specify and systematise: there

are *two principal faces* in the manifested divinity, distinguished by their degree of concealment and revelation.

The first face is אַרְיָךְ אֲנַפִּין (*Arikh Anpin*, “the Long Face,” or “Macroprosopus”), associated with the sephirah *Keter* (Crown). It is the highest face, the most hidden, where the divinity is scarcely anything other than its pure transcendence. The *Idroth* describe this face with a strange anatomical precision: forehead, skull, eyes, ears, beard, each bearing a secret. But this anatomical description is, beneath its surface, a theosophical doctrine: each “organ” of *Arikh Anpin* corresponds to a metaphysical attribute of the hidden divine.

The second face is זַעִיר אֲנַפִּין (*Ze’ir Anpin*, “the Little Face,” or “Microprosopus”), associated with the six middle sephiroth (*Hesed* to *Yesod*) taken together as a unified body. It is the manifested face, the face through which the divinity acts in the world, the face which speaks in the Torah and allows itself to be perceived in prayer. Where *Arikh Anpin* is silent, *Ze’ir Anpin* speaks; where the first is absolute compassion, the second mingles compassion and rigour; where the first is motionless, the second acts.

Above the two faces there stands yet עֲתִיקָא קַדִּישָׁא (*Atika Kadisha*, “the Holy Ancient”), sometimes identified with *Arikh Anpin*, sometimes distinguished from it as an even more withdrawn dimension. It is the “Ancient of days” of Daniel 7; it is, to my mind, the most precise functional equivalent of the *Ein Sof* of the Geronese masters, but with a narrative dimension which they did not lend it: the *Atika* has a face, white hair, a white beard, and all this bears meaning.

This doctrine of the three figures (*Atika Kadisha, Arikh Anpin, Ze'ir Anpin*) is, in all later kabbalah, the fundamental framework. Cordovero systematises it in the *Pardes Rimoni* (completed in 1548), Luria completes it at Safed in the second half of the sixteenth century (erecting into distinct figures two further faces, *Abba* and *Imma*, Father and Mother, which the *Idroth* left implicit), and everything kabbalistic that will be written until the nineteenth century will refer to it. The *Idroth* are its source.

One last remark, more contemporary. I write this preface in Prague, in this autumn of 1933, after a year which has seen in Germany events whose import for our Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe is still difficult to measure. I do not cherish the illusion that a learned book in German, which the Prague bookseller Karel Brož intends to have printed in fewer than three hundred copies by a printer here, will alter in any way the consequences which these events are preparing. I nevertheless wish to record here, before those who will one day open this volume, that the translation of the *Idroth* in this year 1933 is not a neutral philological act. It is, in its modest fashion, a protest against the pretension now arising in Germany to separate definitively the Germanic spirit from the Semitic spirit. The *Idroth* are, in the history of European thought, among those texts to which the Christian West itself has owed the most: through Pico della Mirandola, through Reuchlin, through Knorr von Rosenroth, through Boehme (on whom I shall complete in 1934 a separate volume), through Schelling, through Hegel himself, the *Idra Rabba* and the *Idra Zuta* have laboured within Western metaphysics without always being acknowledged. To bring their text into German, on the eve of a possible catastrophe, is to hold fast, in that very lan-

guage, what German culture may perhaps be preparing to erase elsewhere.

What has been inscribed does not allow itself to be wholly effaced. This is, to my knowledge, the only consolation that a philologist can offer his age.

Prague, Maiselova Street, October 1933.

J. H.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The Zohar, the Idroth, the Cosmology of the Faces

I. The Zohar as a Whole

The *Sefer ha-Zohar* (“Book of Splendour”) is the masterwork of medieval Jewish kabbalah. It presents itself as a mystical commentary on the Torah (the five books of Moses), structured according to the weekly sections of liturgical reading. Its declared author is Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai (c. 100–160 of our era), a tannaitic sage of Galilee; its real historical author is, according to the thesis which Graetz established and which Scholem confirms today by philology, Moses de León (c. 1240–1305), the Castilian kabbalist who composed it between approximately 1280 and 1295 and gradually disseminated it as an ancient work miraculously recovered. The demonstration is not closed (some see in it a portion of older materials), but the bulk of the composition is his.

This fictive attribution (pseudepigraphy) is not fraud in the vulgar sense. It belongs to a literary convention common to medieval Judaism and Christianity: mystical works often present themselves under the cover of ancient authors in order to confer upon their doctrine the authority of antiquity. What is lost in historical authenticity is gained in typological value: the text presents itself as the late revelation of an eternal knowledge.

The *Zohar* as a whole comprises, according to the editions, between 1,500 and 2,500 dense pages of Aramaic. It is traditionally divided into three great parts:

- The *Zohar* proper, or *Zohar* on the Pentateuch, which occupies the principal mass;
- The *Tikkunei ha-Zohar* (“Embellishments”), a complementary commentary in seventy “gates”;
- The *Zohar Ḥadash* (“New Zohar”), a posthumous supplement.

The *Idroth* are found in the first part, within the commentary on the *parashot Nasso* (Numbers 4–7) and *Ha’azinu* (Deuteronomy 32). They form, amid a massive and often repetitive commentary, two narrative islands of remarkable intensity and coherence, where the doctrine is concentrated as nowhere else in the *Zohar*.

II. The Two *Idroth*: Structure and Differences

Idra Rabba (אדרא רבא, “the Greater Assembly”) occupies folios 127b to 145a of volume III in the Mantua edition of 1558. It stages Rabbi Shimon gathering nine companions in “the field of the holy apple-trees” (*ḥaqal tappuḥîn qaddiṣîn*) in order to reveal to them the mysteries of the “construction” (*tiqqun*) of the divine faces. The narrative extends over several hours; three companions die during the revelation, struck by the spiritual intensity of what they hear. The survivors complete the assembly, transmit what they have received, and depart.

Idra Zuta (אדרא זוטא, “the Lesser Assembly”) occupies folios 287b to 296b of the same volume. It is set several years after the first *Idra*; Rabbi Shimon, knowing that his death is near, gathers the surviving companions one last time in order to deliver to

them the ultimate doctrine. At the end of the assembly, his own soul leaves his body in an act of ecstasy during which, the text says, the day does not decline (“that day did not decline all day long,” see verse Z.10): the motion of the sun appears suspended for the time of the death. The companions witness this death in silence.

The two *Idroth* complete one another: the first develops the doctrine systematically, the second condenses it in dying. Read together, they form what may be called the *metaphysical centre* of the *Zohar*: everything that the other sections develop in verse-by-verse exegesis finds here its condensed theosophical formulation.

III. The Theosophy of the Faces: *Partzufim*

The central doctrine of the *Idroth*, as I have sketched it in the preface, is that of the *partzufim* (*partzufim*, “faces,” “figures”). Where older kabbalah (*Bahir*, the first Geronese masters) spoke of the ten sephiroth as attributes or emanations, the *Idroth* gather them into *total configurations* which have different functions and interact according to precise dynamic rules.

Three principal *partzufim*:

- עתיקא קדישא *Atika Kadisha* (the Holy Ancient), the most withdrawn figure, the functional equivalent of the *Ein Sof* but with a narrative dimension. It possesses a “face” characterised by its whiteness (*hîwarâ*) and its silence.
- אריך אנפין *Arikh Anpin* (the Long Face), the figure of infinite patience, of absolute compassion, identified with *Keter*. It is the “forehead” (*mishbâ*) which is never angered.

- זעיר אנפין *Ze'ir Anpin* (the Little Face), the manifested figure, which acts in the world, identified with the six sephirot from *Hesed* to *Yesod* taken as a unified body.

Lurianic kabbalah, which systematises this Zoharic doctrine near three centuries later, will draw out two further *partsufim* (*Abba* and *Imma*, Father and Mother) and the spouse of *Ze'ir Anpin* (*Nukva*, the Feminine), not that it invents them, for the *Idroth* already name them (the *Nukva* appears in our verses Z.5 and Z.7), but it erects them into distinct figures and orders their relations. The *Zohar* of the *Idroth* does not go so far as this systematisation; it posits the principal figures and leaves to its later readers the task of articulating them.

IV. Sacred Anatomy

A striking peculiarity of the *Idroth*, which sometimes disconcerts the modern reader, is the *anatomical* precision with which they describe the divine faces. The skull of *Arikh Anpin* is white, and his white hair falls smooth and even; it is his *beard*, not his hair, that counts thirteen “embellishments” (*tiqqunei dikna*), each designating a particular quality of mercy. *Ze'ir Anpin* has a forehead, two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth, a beard (with nine embellishments, not thirteen), arms, a torso, loins.

This anatomical description is not, for the *Idroth*, an ornamental metaphor; it is the precise expression of the doctrine. Each divine “organ” corresponds to a metaphysical attribute. The beard with thirteen embellishments of *Arikh Anpin*, for example, unfolds the “thirteen attributes of mercy” enumerated in Exodus 34:6-7 (“the Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious,” etc.).

To read these descriptions is to read a theology of divine mercy in bodily form.

The philosophical reader (schooled in Maimonides, Spinoza, or even strict Lutheranism) will find this sacred anatomy disconcerting. I invite him to remember that kabbalah is not a negative theology in the Platonising sense; it posits, on the contrary, the *reality* of the manifested divinity, and it accepts speaking of it by the only categories that human language places at our disposal: the categories of the body. This acceptance has, in my eyes, a philosophical dignity of its own: it recognises that one cannot speak of the divine without risking anthropomorphism, and it decides to assume that risk rather than remain silent.

V. The Question of Reading

How are the *Idroth* to be read? The kabbalistic tradition distinguishes two levels. On a first level, they are read as narrative accounts: Rabbi Shimon and his companions in the field, the revelation, the deaths, the departure. On a second level, they are read as a *coded doctrine*: each anatomical detail, each number, each image refers to a precise metaphysical mystery which must be deciphered through study.

In the present anthology I have privileged the second level without neglecting the first; but it is the *arc* that runs from the first word to the death of the master that I have above all wished to make legible: I have therefore retained the double “woe” of the opening, the death of the three companions, and at last the death of Rabbi Shimon. What the selection leaves aside is not the drama but its continuity: the long intervening doctrinal

developments, the narrative pauses that connect them, the detail of the circumstances in which each of the companions expires, the repeated weeping of Rabbi Shimon. The reader who wishes to read the *Idra Rabba* as a continuous narrative must turn to the Mantua edition or one of its later editions; there he will find that continuous texture which gives the text its depth of soul.

I.
Idra Rabba
The Greater Assembly
 (Zohar III, fol. 127b–145a)

Fifteen selected passages, numbered A.1 to A.15, following the order of the Mantua editio princeps.

A.1.

תנא, הוה יתיב רבי שמעון, והוה בכי. אמר: ווי אי גלינא, ווי אי לא גלינא.

Transliteration

Tanā', hāwâ yātîv Rabbi Šimôn, wa-hāwâ bākhê. 'Amar: way 'î galênā', way 'î lā' galênā'.

Translation

It has been taught: Rabbi Shimon was seated, and he was weeping. He said: woe if I reveal, woe if I do not reveal.

NOTE BY J. H.

Canonical opening of the *Idra Rabba*. The double “woe” (*way*) establishes at once the tension which structures the whole narrative: revelation is dangerous for those who receive it (the *Idra Rabba* will see three companions die), while silence is no less grave for the one who holds knowledge and conceals it. This dialectic of transmission is, in my view, the ethical centre of the text.

A.2.

ארעא אסחי דמשתעי, ועילא אסחי דשמעין. מאן דבעי ליחות יחות, ומאן דלא
בעי לא ייתי.

Transliteration

'Arā' 'asahî dē-mištāē, wē-ē'lā' 'asahî dē-šamîn. Mā'n dē-bāē
lēḥût yēḥût, û-mā'n dē-lā' bāē lā' yé'té.

Translation

The earth is purified for him who speaks, the heights are purified for those who listen. Let him who wills descend; let him who does not will not enter.

NOTE BY J. H.

Warning to the companions before the revelation. The expression “to descend” (*lēḥût*) signifies, in kabbalistic Aramaic, “to penetrate into the doctrine,” by plunging down. The simultaneous purification of earth and heights prepares the theosophical “field” in which the revelation may unfold.

A.3.

עתיקא קדישא טמיר וגניז, ולא משתכח ולא מתגלי, אלא ברעותא דרעותין.

Transliteration

'Atiqā' qaddiṣā' ṭāmîr û-gānîz, wē-lā' mištakkah wē-lā' mitgalé,
'éllā' bi-rēūtā' di-rēūtîn.

Translation

The Holy Ancient is hidden and secret; he is not found, nor does he reveal himself, save in the will of wills.

NOTE BY J. H.

First description of *Atika Kadisha*. The two participles *tamir* (hidden) and *ganiz* (reserved, sealed away) are a characteristic lexical pair of Zoharic Aramaic. The “will of wills” (*re’uta de-re’utin*) designates the inward root of every will, what might be called the *absolute will* prior to all determination. It is in this volitional abyss that *Atika* permits himself to be “touched” without for all that revealing himself.

A.4.

ובוצינא דקרדינותא איהו בטש בנקודה דריקנא. ומהווא נקודה אתפשט כל
נהורא.

Transliteration

Ū-vôṣîṇā’ di-qardîṇûtā’ ihû bāṭaš bi-nqûdâ’ dē-rêqānā’. Ū-mê-
bahû’ nêqûdâ’ itpěšêṭ kol nêhôrā’.

Translation

And the Lamp of Darkness is that which strikes at the point of the void. And from that point all light unfolds.

NOTE BY J. H.

Botsina di-Kardinuta (“Lamp of Darkness,” or “Dark Spark”) is one of the most mysterious concepts of the *Zohar*: the initial lightning-flash which springs from divine nothingness and opens the field of manifestation. It “strikes” (*bāṭaš*, a percussive verb) at the “point of the void” (*nêqûdâ’ dē-rêqānā’*). This “point of the void” will later be read as what Luria, near three centuries afterward, will think under the name of *tsimtsoum*, the withdrawal by which the *Ein Sof* makes room for creation; but it would be a retrojection to ascribe that doctrine to the

Idroth: the verse says only the point and the stroke that awakens it, and it is its later reception, not its own sense, that has read the *tsimtsoum* into it. VARIANT. Where the Mantua *editio princeps* reads *bāṭaš* (“it strikes”), the manuscript Cambridge Add. 1023 gives *dāḥiq* (“it presses, it thrusts back”); I have followed Mantua, the percussive verb according better with the image of the lightning-flash. The Bohemian doctrine of the *Ungrund*, awakening through *Sehnen* (cf. Hladík, *Indirect Jewish Sources of Jakob Boehme*, forthcoming, ch. IX), finds here its closest structural antecedent.

A.5.

רישא חירורא דעתיקא קדישא, לית מאן דידע ביה. ומיניה תליין כל נהורין,
ובאתגליא ביה לאו כלום.

Transliteration

*Rēšā' ḥīwārā' dē-ātiqā' qaddiṣā', lēt mā'n dē-yādā' bēh. Ū-minneh
tālyēn kol nēhōrīn, ū-vē-ītgalyā' bēh lāw kēlūm.*

Translation

The White Head of the Holy Ancient: none knows it. All lights are suspended from it, and in its revelation there is nothing.

NOTE BY J. H.

Reisha Ḥivara (“White Head”) is the attribute of *Atika Kadisha*, whose whiteness (the first colour in Zoharic symbolism) designates the absolute absence of determination. All lights “are suspended from it,” but its own revelation is “nothing,” that is, it is translated into no positive manifestation. A radical apophatic doctrine, to be compared with the Bohemian *Ungrund* and the *Ein Sof* of the kabbalists of Gerona.

A.6.

מצחא דעתיקא, מצחא דרצון. דלא הוה ולא משתכח רגיזא ביה לעלמין.

Transliteration

*Miṣḥā' dē-ātiqā', miṣḥā' di-r'ṣôn. Dē-lā' hāwā wē-lā' mištakkah
rēgîzā' bêh lē-ālmîn.*

Translation

The Forehead of the Ancient, Forehead of favour. Never was there, never is there found, any anger in it for ever.

NOTE BY J. H.

The forehead (*miṣḥā*) of *Atika* is called the “Forehead of favour” (*miṣḥā di-r'ṣôn*, the word *raṣôn* signifying “favourable will, favour, assent”). The essential doctrine: at this ultimate level of the divine, there is *no* anger, no rigorous judgement; only pure favour. Rigour (*Din*) will appear only in *Ze'ir Anpin*, the manifested face which must govern the world and cannot do so by mercy alone.

A.7.

תליסר תיקוני דיקנא דעתיקא, ובכולהו אתגזר ברחמי שלים.

Transliteration

*Têlêsar tiqqûnê dē-diqnā' dē-ātiqā', û-vê-khulhō 'itgêzar
bê-rahāmê šəlîm.*

Translation

Thirteen embellishments of the beard of the Ancient, and through them all perfect mercy is decreed.

NOTE BY J. H.

The *thirteen embellishments of the beard* (*tiqqunei dikna*) are among the most characteristic elements of the *Idra Rabba*. They correspond to the thirteen attributes of mercy in Exodus 34:6-7 (“the Lord, the Lord, God merciful and gracious, slow to anger...”). Each “embellishment” of the beard designates one of these attributes and its mode of theosophical action. The doctrine is, beneath its imaginal form, a rigorous systematisation of divine mercy.

A.8.

עיני דעתיקא לא אית בהון תרי, אלא איהון תרי כחד, וכלהו רחמי.

Transliteration

Ēnê dē-ātiqā' lā' 'it bēhôn trê, 'éllā' 'ihôn trê kē-ḥad, wē-kullhō raḥmê.

Translation

The eyes of the Ancient are not two, but they are two as one, and all are mercy.

NOTE BY J. H.

An essential theosophical distinction. The eyes of *Ze'ir Anpin* will be two (one of mercy and one of rigour), corresponding to the double polarity *Hesed/Gevurah*. But the eyes of *Atika* are “two as one”: at this higher level the very distinction between mercy and rigour vanishes, and the two eyes make but one. It is the *single eye* of the Ancient, which the *Idra* describes as without lids, open for ever, and which “neither slumbers nor sleeps”: the providence of the hidden divine never closes,

and all in it is pure mercy. This doctrine grounds the kabbalistic idea that rigour, in its superior root, is a hidden mode of mercy.

A.9.

זעיר אנפין הוא דאתפשט מעתיקא, ואיהו דחזי לעלמא. ובהאי אנפין דין ורחמין משתכחין.

Transliteration

Zēēr 'anpîn hû' dē-'itpěšēt mē-ātīqā', wě-'ihû dē-ḥāzē lē-ālmā'. Ū-vē-hāy 'anpîn dîn wě-rahāmîn mištakkhîn.

Translation

The Little Face is he who extends from the Ancient, and he who manifests himself to the world. And in this face rigour and mercy are found together.

NOTE BY J. H.

Introduction of the second face. *Ze'ir Anpin* “extends” (*'itpěšēt*) from *Atika*, that is, he derives from it without being separated from it; he is its manifested expression. At this level, the polarity *Din/Rahamim* (rigour/mercy) appears for the first time, because manifestation in the world necessarily requires this double polarity (without rigour, the world would not stand; without mercy, it would perish).

A.10.

מצחא דזעיר אנפין מצחא דדינא, ובו אתגלי דין כד אתגלי דין.

Transliteration

Miṣḥā' dē-zēēr 'anpîn miṣḥā' dē-dīnā', ū-vô 'itgalē dîn kad 'itgalē dîn.

Translation

The Forehead of the Little Face, Forehead of judgement; in it rigour is revealed when rigour is revealed.

NOTE BY J. H.

Major anatomical difference between *Arikh Anpin* (Forehead of favour, without anger) and *Ze'ir Anpin* (Forehead of judgement). It is through the forehead of *Ze'ir Anpin* that cosmic rigour is exercised. Doctrine of the *double face*, which will be central in Cordovero and Luria.

A.11.

תרי שערין דאתפשטו מעתיקא לזעיר, חד ימינא וחד שמאלא. ימינא חסד, שמאלא דין.

Transliteration

Trê śāārîn dē-'itpěšétû mé-'atîqā' lē-zēēr, ḥad yēmînā' wē-ḥad śēmā'lā'. Yēmînā' ḥésed, śēmā'lā' dîn.

Translation

Two locks unfold from the Ancient toward the Little, one to the right and one to the left. On the right, Loving-kindness; on the left, Rigour.

NOTE BY J. H.

Doctrine of the two “columns” (*kavím*) of the tree of the sephiroth, but formulated here as *fluxes* (currents, *śa’ārín*) which circulate between *Atika* and *Ze’ir Anpin*. The right (*yēmînā*) is the way of *Hesed* (Loving-kindness), the left (*śēmā’lā*) that of *Din* (Rigour). This right/left polarity structures the whole kabbalistic tree.

A.12.

אדם דלעילא הוא רישא דלכל אדם, ועלמא דאדם דלעילא הוא דאתבני מתליסר
תיקונין.

Transliteration

’*Ādām di-lēlā’ hū’ rēśā’ dē-lē-khol ’ādām, wē-’ālmā’ dē-’ādām di-lēlā’ hū’ dē-’itbēnē mit-tēlēsar tiqqūnîn.*

Translation

The Adam above is the head of every Adam, and the world of the Adam above is built from the thirteen embellishments.

NOTE BY J. H.

First appearance of the “Adam above” (*’ādām di-lē’lā*), the cosmic figure which Lurianic kabbalah will later name *Adam Qadmon*. The technical term is later; the *Idroth* as yet know only the “Adam above.” The *Zohar* posits here that he is the head (*re’sha*) of humanity, that is, its archetype, and that his structure derives from the thirteen embellishments (which are at once the attributes of the *Atika* and the axes of creation).

A.13.

כתב רבי אבא בשמא דרבי שמעון: כל מה דאתפשט מן עילא לתתא איהו דמותא
 דאתפשט מן תתא לעילא. עלמא תתאה דמי לעלמא עילאה.

Transliteration

*Kētav Rabbi 'Abbā bi-šmā' dē-Rabbi Šimōn: kol mā dē-ṯpēšet
 min ē'lā' lē-tattā' ṯhū dēmūtā' dē-ṯpēšet min tattā' lē-ē'lā'. 'Ālmā'
 tattā'ā dēmēb lē-ālmā' illā'ā.*

Translation

Rabbi Abba wrote in the name of Rabbi Shimon: all that unfolds from above to below is the image of that which unfolds from below to above. The lower world resembles the upper world.

NOTE BY J. H.

Law of correspondence (*sicut superius, ita inferius*), already ancient in Alexandrian occultism, but reformulated here within the framework of sephirotic cosmology: each world reflects the one above it. It is Rabbi Abba, the scribe of the Assembly, who records the sentence “in the name of Rabbi Shimon,” according to the formula by which the *Idra* ascribes to its master the words his companions gather. TEXTUAL DIFFICULTY. I must confess here an obscurity which collation has not removed: the Mantua *editio princeps* reads, in place of “in the name of Rabbi Shimon,” the reading “in the name of Metatron” (*bi-šmā dē-Meṯatrōn*), the supreme angel of the Hekhalot traditions. This angelic invocation is foreign to the manner of the *Idra*, which never cites Metatron as the source of its doctrine; I hold the mention of Rabbi Abba, given by the manuscript Vatican Ebr. 206, to be the authentic reading, and the Mantua reading to be a late contamination from the Hekhalot

writings. The reader shall judge. The same law of correspondence will be developed by Boehme in the *Natursprache* and by the hermeticists of the Renaissance.

A.14.

ובהאי שעתא נפקו תלת מן חברייא, ושכיב כל חד וחד מנייהו ולא מטא לסוף
האדרא.

Transliteration

Ū-vě-hāy šāātā' nēfaqū tēlat min ḥāvrayyā', wě-šēkēv kol ḥad wě-ḥad minnayhū wě-lā' mēṭā lě-sôf hā-'idrā'.

Translation

And in that hour three went out from among the companions, and each one of them died and did not reach the end of the Assembly.

NOTE BY J. H.

The motif of deaths during revelation, which gives the *Idra Rabba* its dramatic charge. The *Idra* itself names the three companions whom the revelation carries off: Rabbi Yose ben Jacob, Rabbi Ḥizqia, and Rabbi Yesa. The text adds that they died “in the kiss” (*bi-nšiqā*, the death by the kiss of God reserved for the righteous), that a voice blessed them, and that “seven eyes” were seen to rest upon their couch: their death is therefore not a punishment but an *absorption*, their souls drawn into the mystery they contemplate at the very moment they attain it. The inversion that structures the whole anthology must be weighed: the companions die *in the midst* of the revelation, struck by what they have not finished hearing, while Rabbi Shimon, at the end of the *Idra Zuta*, dies *of having completed* — not felled by the doctrine, but fulfilled by